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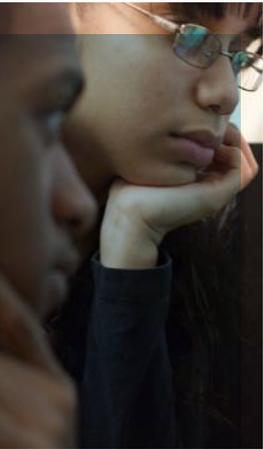
JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



THE RALLYING CALL:
BRINGING GAME-CHANGING RESULTS
TO DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

The Colloquium on State Policy Support
for Developmental Education Innovation

August 2010



THE RALLYING CALL: BRINGING GAME-CHANGING RESULTS TO DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

“AS EDUCATORS, WE HAVE TO MAKE THE COMMITMENT TO A VERY SIMPLE PROPOSITION: IF WE ADMIT STUDENTS TO COLLEGE, WE SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE SURE THEY SUCCEED. THESE REMARKS ARE NOT AN INDICTMENT BUT A RALLYING CALL. WE CAN DO MUCH BETTER.”

WITH THESE WORDS, DR. RAYMUND PAREDES, TEXAS COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, OPENED THE MAY 3, 2010, COLLOQUIUM ON STATE POLICY SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION INNOVATION, A POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF THE CONVERSATIONS THAT STATES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES MUST HAVE TO ACCELERATE THE CREATION AND SCALE-UP OF NEW WAYS TO DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WHO TEST INTO DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION.

In spurring and supporting community college innovation around developmental education, state policy represents a critical driver, and community college leaders recognize the strategic interaction between state policy and their own innovative efforts. Dr. Rey Garcia, executive director of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, immediately responded to Commissioner Paredes' rallying call: “I accept the challenge that the commissioner gave us. The college presidents accept that challenge and we will work together to find solutions.”

With those words, Commissioner Paredes and Dr. Garcia set a tone of high expectations for a daylong meeting of developmental education professionals that was honest about the issues, focused on results, and committed to the success of Texas students.

Far too many students enter higher education without the reading, writing, and math skills they need to succeed in college. In Texas, only 22 percent of high school graduates are ready for college. For many reasons, a number of developmental education programs are not very effective, even though they are specifically designed to prepare entering college students who are not yet ready for postsecondary education. The results are both clear and devastating: far too many students never complete college at a time when they need more than basic skills to support themselves and their families, and when the nation needs them to be highly skilled for the good of the economy. College completion rates for low-income students and students of color are disproportionately low, thereby worsening existing gaps in educational achievement and socioeconomic status.



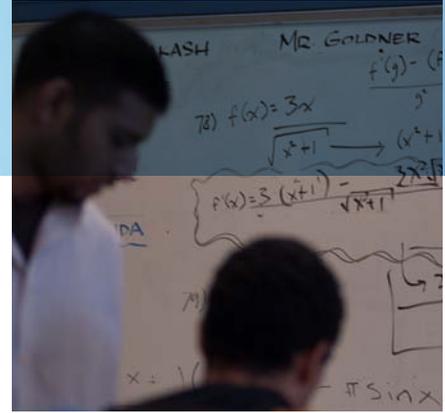
Across the nation, educators are shining a spotlight on the need to improve developmental education in big ways. As Diane Troyer, senior program officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, urged the colloquium audience, it is time to “move from incremental results to game-changing results.”

- **Approximately 60 percent of community college students take at least one developmental education course.**
- **Fewer than 25 percent of community college students in developmental education earn a degree or certificate within eight years of enrolling in college.¹**

Texas is positioned to lead the charge toward game-changing results. Texas has made a significant commitment to facing the facts, convening the right people, and supporting its colleges as they innovate. The May 3 colloquium, hosted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and Jobs for the Future, was a critical first step. It brought together representatives from some of the state’s most innovative colleges to discuss the state policies needed to support more effective developmental education programs.²

When the day came to a close, there was consensus on key points from the Texas stakeholders:

- > The work ahead will be hard, but we want to do it—and we must.
- > Despite the challenges, we know we can do it. We have ample evidence and experience to begin making changes that can improve student success.
- > Community colleges must be innovative in their approaches to developmental education—new approaches are needed.
- > The state must support the colleges as they innovate.
- > State policies must change to support and provide incentives for new approaches. Through policy, Texas can support its colleges as they take risks, pave the way for new approaches, and stimulate innovation at other institutions not only in the state but in the nation as well.



THE EVIDENCE AND THE EXPERIENCE: WHAT WORKS IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION?

While further research on what works in developmental education is necessary, a balance must be found between waiting for perfect research and acting upon what is known already. At the colloquium, it was clear that there is enough evidence about what works in developmental education to justify investments of time and energy in innovation now.

MDRC, a social policy research organization, has conducted extensive research on developmental education interventions around the country.³ Elizabeth Zachry, a research associate in MDRC's Young Adults and Postsecondary Education policy area, joined the colloquium to describe some of MDRC's most significant findings (see *the table on page 5*):

- > **Learning communities:** The most research has been conducted on learning communities, which have also produced some of the most promising findings. Positive effects include increases in course attempts and pass rates after one semester and progress through developmental education after three semesters. (The effects dissipated for students who stay in developmental education after three semesters.)
- > **Performance-based scholarships:** These represent one of the most successful efforts studied to date at community colleges. Moreover, they are unique in that their positive effects seem to be relatively long-term, including increases in both course registration and credits earned after two years. There is excitement about this strategy, and further research is underway.
- > **Student success course and tutoring:** Positive effects include increases in credits earned, GPAs, and the number of students coming off academic probation after one year. One interesting finding regarding this intervention is that the success course and tutoring must be mandatory. As Kay McClenney of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin says, "Students don't do optional."
- > **Enhanced student services:** A study of enhanced student services found higher rates of registration and credits earned in the second semester of the program, but those effects dissipated with time.

INTERVENTION	DEFINITION	COLLEGES USING THE INTERVENTION
Learning Communities	Cohorts of students take three courses together, one of which is a student success course	Kingsborough Community College
Performance-Based Scholarships	\$1,000 scholarships given for academic performance over two semesters, plus meetings with counselors	Delgado Community College, Louisiana Technical Community College
Student Success Course and Tutoring	Mandatory two-semester success course paired with tutoring	Chaffey College
Enhanced Student Services	Intensive counseling over two semesters, with a \$150 stipend per semester	Lorain County Community College, Owens Community College

Source: MDRC Opening Doors publications. Available at: www.mdrc.org/project_publications_31_2.html

COLLEGE INNOVATION

Three Texas colleges—El Paso Community College, Houston Community College, and South Texas College—presented their innovations at the colloquium. The following summary of the innovation panel highlights one of El Paso Community College’s developmental education improvement strategies.⁴

REDUCING THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION: THE EL PASO COLLEGE READINESS INITIATIVE

The El Paso College Readiness Initiative is a bold strategy designed to reduce the need for developmental education at the same time that it seeks to improve its delivery.⁵ Stemming from the work of the national initiative *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*, El Paso Community College, the University of Texas at El Paso, and the K-12 sector are collaborating to improve the college readiness of their students.⁶ They began by closely analyzing data on student outcomes and identifying students who were not successful. The initiative introduces high school students and their parents to a college placement test, and it encourages the students to take the test while in high school. Students then find out, while still in high school, whether they are ready for college. They then have the chance to improve their skills while still in high school or to participate in a summer bridge program that helps recent graduates make the transition to college. The initiative is also establishing early college high schools that encourage students to take college-level courses while still in high school.⁷

El Paso Community College’s research shows that these efforts are reducing the need for developmental education for entering students. However, EPCC leaders and faculty realize that it must do something to improve success rates for the students who place into developmental education now. The college has established standing faculty committees working toward

improvements in developmental math, writing, and reading. For example, the committee for developmental math has decided to focus on accelerating completion of developmental education by creating computer-based modules that are coupled with instructional and tutoring support, all delivered in a specially designed space called a Math Emporium. Helping development students advance to college-level courses more quickly has been shown to increase their chances of succeeding in college.

EPCC also has created a leadership structure to help ensure that college readiness and developmental education are consistent areas of focus. For example, EPCC President Richard Rhodes established a Student Success Core Team, comprised of his cabinet plus representatives from major initiatives at the college.

Several Texas colleges are implementing similar strategies, including South Texas College and the Houston Community College System.⁸ These colleges share ideas and approaches with one another, out of both a commitment to helping students and a degree of friendly competition. By creating incentives to innovate and creating a climate that encourages risk-taking, the state can play a pivotal role in the sharing and adoption of innovations at colleges around the state and nation.

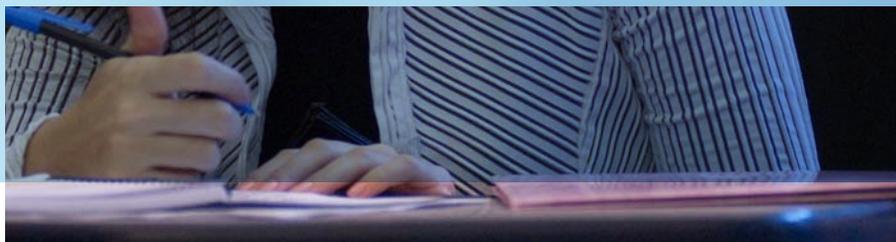
POLICY INNOVATIONS: STATE POLICY SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION INNOVATION

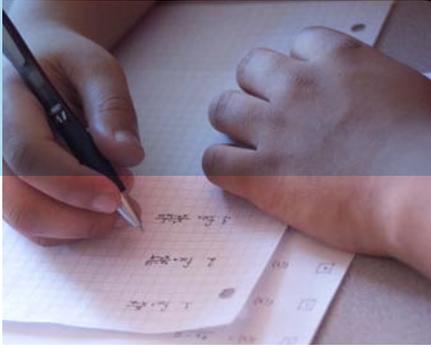
One of the primary goals of the colloquium was for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to learn from participating colleges what they need to test and strengthen new solutions in developmental education. What policies can enable the state to better support its most innovative colleges? For example, the state can provide incentives for institutions to test and refine bold new delivery and instructional models and to scale up proven strategies. Further, state policies can encourage the identification, dissemination, and implementation of strategies that improve outcomes for students in developmental education. Collectively, these state actions can create a systemic, long-term process of continuous improvement.

Over the course of the colloquium, college representatives recommended a variety of policy innovations. These clustered around three main policy areas: data; professional development; and adult basic education.

DATA

Davis Jenkins of the Community College Research Center, housed at Teachers College, Columbia University, encouraged both the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the colleges to be systemic about their approaches to using data. Jenkins described four parallel processes that should happen at both the state and college levels: track student progress; convene stakeholders to identify high performers and diagnose the leaks; implement and evaluate solutions; and create incentives for and remove barriers to innovation. High-level leadership commitment and continuous feedback and monitoring should undergird these processes.





Attendees at the colloquium voiced their commitment to creating strong data processes as outlined by Jenkins, and Texas is ahead of much of the nation because it has in place a solid data system and strong researchers.

Despite these strengths, colleges clearly feel a need for further support in the area of data collection and analysis. College representatives specifically mentioned needing help from the state in the areas of:

- > Establishing common metrics and clear data definitions;
- > Developing and reporting comparable data across the colleges;
- > Getting the right data into the hands of the right people;
- > Providing assistance for conducting consistent, systematic evaluations of initiatives; and
- > Aligning state reporting with the data called for by these initiatives to prevent overloading institutional research offices.

THECB Deputy Commissioner David Gardner recommended forming a data research group that would convene researchers from across the colleges to make recommendations to the state. There was strong support for this idea as a concrete strategy for improving data collection and analysis at both the college and state levels.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Much of the conversation throughout the day centered on how to ensure that the faculty who teach developmental education have the right experience and skills to do so effectively. A recurring question was, how might the state get the most experienced faculty to *want* to teach developmental education? Incentives would include robust professional development. At the same time, as Byron McClenney of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin stressed, faculty teaching developmental education are often adjunct. Thus, there is a pressing need for cohesive, ongoing professional development to ensure that all developmental education faculty—including adjuncts—have the right skills to ensure their students succeed.

Professional development efforts could improve the faculty's skills in a variety of ways:

- > Expose faculty to the most relevant and up-to-date content matter.
- > Support faculty working with the unique needs of developmental education students.
- > Improve fluency with the analysis and use of data about student outcomes.

- > Facilitate the adoption of new approaches (e.g., modular, integrated, and computer-based teaching methods).
- > Encourage student services staff and the academic faculty to work together.

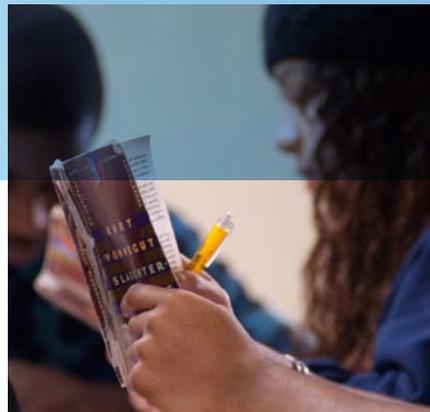
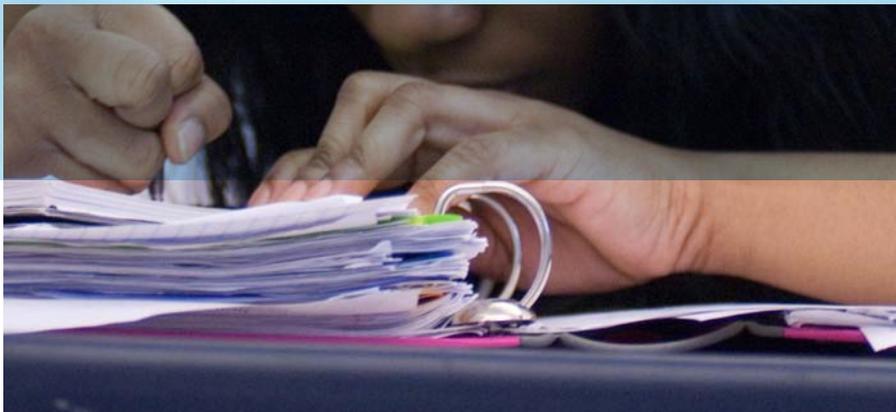
A number of concrete recommendations emerged for how THECB might begin to address professional development:

- > Support national certification for developmental education instructors.
- > Conduct or sponsor research on the effectiveness of requiring professional development. (This has been done in K-12.)
- > Bring to Texas the Kellogg Institute for the Training and Certification of Developmental Educators and make it widely available to faculty across the state.⁹
- > Utilize technology by making professional development opportunities available in a variety of formats and delivery methods (e.g., webinars, online expert presentations).

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

There is a clear need to address the disconnect between adult basic education and developmental education in Texas. This disconnect was raised several times throughout the day as a significant stumbling block for the colleges and their students.

At the moment, colleges receive contact-hour funding from the state for students in developmental education, but not for adult basic education. Furthermore, developmental education students qualify for federal and state financial aid, but ABE students do not. Finally, ABE is not considered an on ramp to college-level courses. Students are funneled into developmental education after completing ABE requirements, thereby lengthening their studies even further. The audience strongly urged THECB to address these funding and structural issues to better align ABE and developmental education.



FURTHER POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the three main areas of policy recommendations, participants in the colloquium offered other policy proposals for THECB to consider:

- > Statewide student learning outcomes for developmental education courses;
- > Statewide licensing of popular course redesign software that features interactive, technology-based instruction;
- > College-readiness testing, developmental education, and student success courses in high school; and
- > State funding for non-course-based instruction (which is underway).

NEXT STEPS: GAME-CHANGERS IN TEXAS DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

The colloquium marked an important step on a long road toward major changes in developmental education in Texas. In the immediate future, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board can take several steps to maintain the rapid pace of change that has been initiated in the state around improving developmental education. First and foremost, THECB can address three major policy recommendations described above:

- > Establish a Texas-focused data research group.
- > Create new professional development opportunities.
- > Address the disconnect between adult basic education and developmental education.

Further, THECB can focus on the following:

Raise the profile of developmental education. Often, college faculty and leaders undervalue developmental education. Real change will not come until high-level leadership makes it clear that developmental education is an invaluable, exciting, and rewarding arena of work. As Raymund Paredes said during the colloquium, “There is nothing more gratifying than helping young people succeed and achieve their dreams.”

Continue to support innovation and risk-taking backed by evaluation. The research on developmental education can be combined with the on-the-ground experience of developmental education professionals to point in promising directions. For example, both research and real-life experiences suggest that innovative strategies include creating learning communities, experimenting with performance-based scholarships, and delivering college placement tests to students still in high school. As THECB has begun doing, the state can encourage colleges to test these approaches via innovation grants. The state can also help the colleges systematically evaluate new approaches, thereby adding to the knowledge base about what works in developmental education.



Develop collaborative partnerships. For too long, we have short-changed our students by not reaching across the borders that separate higher education from K-12, education from business, community colleges from universities, and the state from its colleges. Rey Garcia, executive director of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, pointedly noted that the colleges are ready and willing to work with the state, and that working in silos is simply unacceptable. Garcia ended his remarks on a high note: "Let's get to work!"

Keep listening. Colloquia such as this one—during which state policymakers listen to college faculty and staff—are as critical as they are rare.

Set the standard for the nation. Carol Lincoln, executive director of *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*, said, "This is the right issue, this is the right state, and you are the right institutions to be working on this in partnership with universities. The eyes of the nation will be on what happens here."

APPENDIX

AGENDA: THE COLLOQUIUM ON STATE POLICY SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION INNOVATION

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

1200 EAST ANDERSON LANE

AUSTIN, TEXAS

MAY 3, 2010

FRAMING STATEMENT

State policy can play a critical role in increasing the success of underprepared students and improving outcomes for students who test into developmental education. States can create policy conditions that encourage the identification, dissemination, and implementation of strategies that improve outcomes for students whose test scores indicate the need for additional preparation prior to attempting college-level courses. Further, they can provide incentives for institutions to test and refine bold new delivery and instructional models and to scale up what works. Collectively, these state actions can cohere to create a process of continuous improvement that incents and supports developmental education innovation that is systemic and long-term.

GOALS

- > Introduce the Texas Developmental Education Demonstration Project (DEDP) and Developmental Education Initiative (DEI) Policy Strategy.
- > Identify and refine the core components of a state-level strategy for systemic support for campus-level developmental education innovation.
- > Kick off the inaugural convening of a peer learning network featuring the DEDP and DEI colleges.
- > Identify strategies to sustain and scale state support for innovation across all colleges.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

9:00 - 9:15am Welcome

Commissioner Raymund Paredes, THECB
Rey Garcia, DEI State Policy Team

9:15 - 9:45am Overview of Agenda, Meeting Goals, and Introductions

Tamara Clunis, THECB
Michael Collins, Jobs for the Future

9:45 - 10:00am The Developmental Education Challenge

Far too many community college students must take developmental education prior to enrolling in college-level courses, which not only prolongs their time to earning a credential or completing a degree, but also increases their chances of dropping out. What is the national incidence of developmental education and where is Texas situated in this national context? Michael Collins (JFF) will describe the national outcomes and Dr. David Gardner (THECB) will describe the outcomes in Texas.

10:00 - 10:40am Research Evidence on Developmental Education: What Do We Know?

The research base on what works in developmental education is weak, but there is evidence that points to approaches and strategies that can improve outcomes for underprepared students. Elizabeth Zachry (MDRC) will briefly describe the current research base and share results from selected MDRC studies that found positive outcomes from developmental education interventions.

10:40 - 11:20 am Using State Data to Improve Success for Underprepared Students

State data systems are critical to identifying approaches and strategies that increase outcomes for students who test into developmental education. The first step to identifying promising practices is to use state-level data to track outcomes that can spark institutional inquiry as to what is causing high or low performance. Davis Jenkins (CCRC) will describe how state-level data is an integral part of a state support model for systemic and long-term improvement in outcomes for underprepared students.

11:20 - 11:35am Break (Pick up lunch)

11:35 - 12:15am State Policy Driving Developmental Education Innovation

As a result of the Texas Developmental Education Demonstration Project and the Developmental Education Initiative, Texas is in a unique position to lead the nation in developing and implementing a robust state support model to augment and accelerate the progress of developmental education innovation in community colleges. Tamara Clunis (THECB) and Michael Collins (JFF) will describe the how DEDP and DEI can interact to create a national model for a state-level continuous improvement process for dramatically increasing outcomes for students who test into developmental education.

12:15 - 1:30pm Developmental Education Initiative College Innovations

The colleges participating in the DEI were required to include four strategic directions in their innovation strategies. Byron McClenney (CCLP) will describe the directions and their importance to institutional success. Afterwards, Cynthia Ferrell (TACC) will moderate a panel with the DEI colleges that will highlight the colleges' core innovations—their “biggest bets”—for improved outcomes.

1:30 - 1:45pm Break

1:45 - 3:00pm Needs Assessment for Support for DEDP and DEI College Innovations

Meeting participants will join one of four small group discussions. During these small facilitated sessions, DEDP and DEI colleges will elaborate on the innovations they are (or will be) implementing and discuss the challenges they face and the supports they believe they need to be successful. Groups will document the highest-need supports to share with the full audience.

3:00 - 3:30pm Cross Talk: Collaborating to Identify High-Leverage Supports

What are the core supports that are needed to ensure that the DEDP and DEI colleges' innovations are successful and that the state and philanthropic investment in developmental education is maximized? In this plenary session, we will share the key supports identified in the small group sessions that can make the most difference in accelerating developmental education innovation. Tamara Clunis (THECB) and Cynthia Ferrell (DEI) will facilitate discussion.

3:30 - 3:45pm Synthesizing Lessons of the Day

This session will synthesize information and discussions over the course of the day to draw out implications for successfully developing a robust model of state policy support for developmental education innovation.

3:45 - 4:00pm Next Steps

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Thomas Bailey. 2009. "Rethinking Developmental Education in Community College." New York, NY: Community College Research Center. Available at: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=672>.
- ² Jobs for the Future assisted in organizing the colloquium as part of its work guiding the policy component of the national *Developmental Education Initiative*, which seeks to identify and develop programs that increase the number of community college students who complete preparatory classes and advance to college-level studies.
- ³ MDRC's Opening Doors publications, which provide details on these interventions, are available at: www.mdrc.org/project_publications_31_2.html.
- ⁴ All three colleges participate in the national *Developmental Education Initiative*.
- ⁵ For further reading, see: Monica Reid Kerrigan & Doug Slater. 2010. "Collaborating to Create Change: How El Paso Community College Improved the Readiness of Its Incoming Students Through *Achieving the Dream*." Report No. 4 in the *Achieving the Dream* Culture of Evidence Series. New York, NY: Community College Research Center and MDRC. Available at: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=754>.
- ⁶ *Achieving the Dream* is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed. Texas participates in *Achieving the Dream*, and El Paso Community College is a "Leader College" in the initiative, having met high standards of practice and performance. Leader Colleges have demonstrated commitment to and progress on the four principles of *Achieving the Dream*: committed leadership; use of evidence to improve programs and services; broad engagement; and systemic institutional improvement. They have also shown at least three years of sustained improvement on the *Achieving the Dream* measures of student success. Leader Colleges serve as mentors within the *Achieving the Dream* community of learners, as well as advocates for the principles of *Achieving the Dream*. For more information, see: www.achievingthedream.org.
- ⁷ For more information on early college high schools, see: www.earlycolleges.org.
- ⁸ Both colleges are *Achieving the Dream* Leader Colleges.
- ⁹ The Kellogg Institute, based at Appalachian State University, is the nation's oldest continuous advanced training program for developmental educators and learning skills specialists. For more information, see: <http://community.appstate.edu/program/kellogg-institute>.



**DEVELOPMENTAL
EDUCATION
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The *Developmental Education Initiative* is a three-year effort to identify and develop programs that increase the number of community college students who complete preparatory classes and advance to college-level studies. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education, it includes fifteen colleges and six states that were early participants in *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed.



The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is dedicated to meeting the goals of the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. If Texas achieves these goals, the state's economy will experience estimated increases of \$489 billion in total spending, \$194 billion in gross state product, and \$122 billion in personal income as well as the creation of over 1,023,000 new jobs by the year 2030. The state's return on its investment in higher education is estimated at \$8.08 for every \$1 invested. Policymakers, education leaders, the business community, students and families—in fact, all Texans—have a vested interest in meeting the goals of *Closing the Gaps* to help ensure a prosperous future for our great state.



The Texas Association of Community Colleges is a nonprofit association that includes all 50 public community college districts in the state. The General Appropriations Bill and legislation affecting public community colleges in general have been and remain the principal concerns of TACC.



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Jobs for the Future identifies, develops, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In over 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers. JFF coordinates the effort to improve policies in the states that are participating in *Achieving the Dream*.

WWW.JFF.ORG

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This colloquium report was prepared by Lara K. Couturier, a doctoral candidate in history at Brown University, where she is writing a dissertation on the debates over access to college in the United States. Couturier was selected for the 2008-2009 ASHE/Lumina Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Program. Previously, she was the interim principal investigator, associate director, and director of research for the Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World, a higher education think tank founded by Frank Newman at Brown University, and she worked as a consultant specializing in higher education policy.

Special thanks to Tamara Clunis, Cynthia Ferrell, and JFF's Michael Collins for their work designing the Colloquium on State Policy Support for Developmental Education Innovation.



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

TEL 617.728.4446 FAX 617.728.4857 info@jff.org

88 Broad Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02110

85 Prescott Street, Suite 405, Worcester, MA 01605

2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 5300, Washington, DC 20006

WWW.JFF.ORG