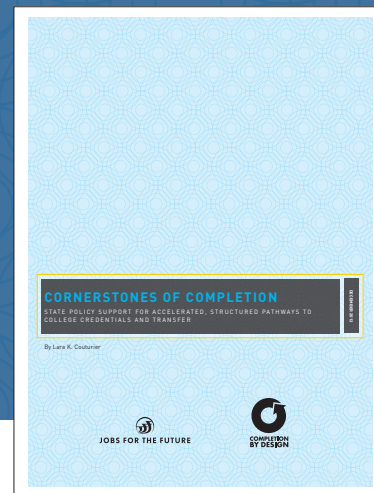


CORNERSTONES OF COMPLETION: STATE POLICY SUPPORT FOR ACCELERATED, STRUCTURED PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE CREDENTIALS AND TRANSFER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BY LARA K. COUTURIER

DECEMBER 2012



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



**COMPLETION
BY DESIGN**

In spring 2012, after a year of intensive data analysis and planning, the colleges participating in Completion by Design announced strategies for creating clear, structured routes through college for more students, often referred to as accelerated, structured pathways to completion. These strategies contain elements unique to each college, but all drive toward helping students enroll early in program streams that lead to a major, and keeping students engaged and progressing until they complete credentials with labor market value. To that end, the strategies include interventions such as strategic dual enrollment, mandatory orientation, improved advising, acceleration of developmental education, early enrollment in programs of study, and close monitoring of student progress.

Completion by Design, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is a partnership between participating colleges and state-level policy organizations. The initiative's strong policy component seeks both to change policies in ways that support the colleges' change strategies and to spread the learning and ideas stemming from Completion by Design to the other community colleges in each state.

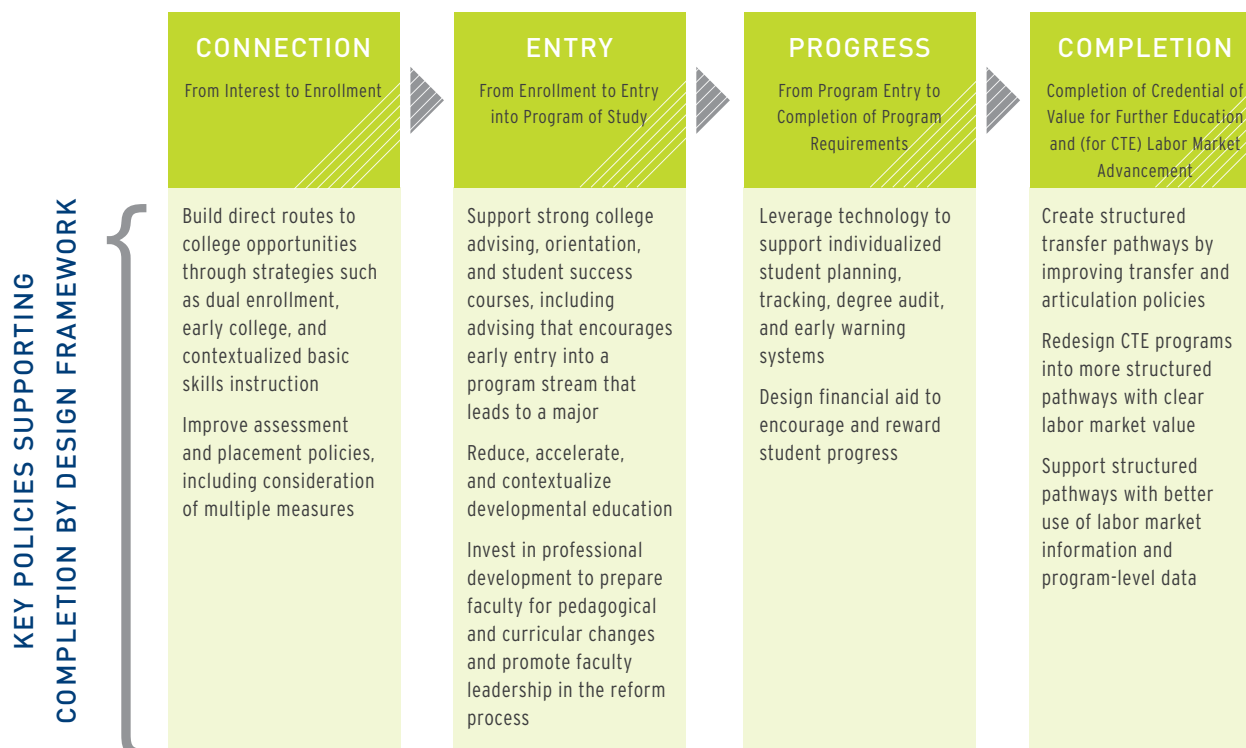
Now that the colleges have settled upon their strategies, the critical next step is for the states to assess how they can best support the institutions and scale up their best innovations as they design and implement structured pathways. However, a robust focus on strengthening student pathways represents a new frontier for both community colleges and the state policy environments in which they operate. As a result, Jobs for the Future (JFF) has looked across the participating states to develop 10 high-leverage policies that can accelerate institutional change toward systemic, student-focused structured pathways.

These recommendations are not meant to be prescriptive, nor do they comprise an exhaustive list of potential policies that

states could implement to improve postsecondary completion rates. Rather, these policies align tightly to the goal of supporting colleges as they build structured pathways. The policy recommendations, summarized in the graphic on page 2, are organized by the four phases of the initiative's Preventing Loss, Creating Momentum Framework.

This policy brief is designed to be a living document. JFF will vet the document with states, college representatives, and partners on the Completion by Design National Assistance Team, see which ideas gain traction, and revise and adapt it over time to reflect changes in the priorities and strategies of the initiative and its participating colleges and states.

POLICIES TO SUPPORT STRUCTURED PATHWAYS



Jobs for the Future works with our partners to design and drive adoption of education and career pathways leading from college readiness to career advancement for those struggling to succeed in today's economy.



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

TEL 617.728.4446 FAX 617.728.4857 info@jff.org

88 Broad Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02110
122 C Street, NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20001

WWW.JFF.ORG

