Driving Effective Practices for Community College Workforce Education

Tess Henthorne, Program Associate
Ben Barrett, Program Manager
Who We Are

The Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership in ways that help institutions of higher education make the choices that matter most to improving student outcomes in four areas:

- Completion
- Equity
- Labor Market
- Learning
Skills Demands Still Left Unmet, Resources Strapped

The number of good jobs for workers with associate’s degrees grew by 83% between 1991 and 2016.

Yet more than half of all workers without a BA don’t have good jobs.

46% of employers reported difficulty filling positions due to available talent.

“We need more workers, but we already work with two community colleges, each with their own systems and quirks, and we can’t duplicate our investments endlessly…”

“We hear their asks, but the college budget is tight. We simply can’t expand capacity without significant resources from employers…”
The Workforce Is Diversifying and Aging

Projected Changes in Race/Ethnicity (2000 – 2044)

By 2044, nearly half of Americans will be people of color.

Understanding the Aging Workforce

Projected Percentage of Workers Ages 75 and Over of Total Labor Force (1994-2024)

This shift results from increased population and participation among older populations, compared to decreasing birth rates and increased time in school for younger populations.
And Many Remain Left Out of the Broader Economy

**4.6 million** youth between the ages of 16 and 24 are disconnected from work and school.  
*(Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, 2018)*

**27 million** adults 24 – 66 who are not working or in school, including “discouraged workers” who would like a job but have stopped looking.  
*(American Community Survey, 2017)*
What Went Into *The Workforce Playbook*?

**Data Analysis**
- Labor market outcomes, including earnings and employment
- Regional context
- Institutional data

**Literature**
- Expert testimonials
- Case studies
- Prior research

**Interviews**
- College leaders
- Students
- Employers
- Policymakers
- CBOs
- K-12/4-year partners
The Workforce Playbook Domains

1. **Advance a vision** for talent development and economic mobility

2. **Deliver high-quality programs** aligned to regional needs

3. **Support students’ career goals** from pre-matriculation through post-graduation

4. Build responsive, mutually beneficial **employer partnerships**
Advance a Vision

Advance a vision for talent development and economic mobility

• Define labor market outcomes as a central component of student success
• Understand the regional labor market and population and how these are changing
• Align offerings to needs of employers and population
How Colleges Use Data
How Do Colleges Use Data?

Many colleges focus on **enrollment and completion**

Colleges often **lack a strategic research agenda** connected to postsecondary outcomes

Colleges often **struggle to examine data** both internally and externally
How Should Colleges Use Data?

- **Prioritize Outcomes**
  Where are students going after they graduate? Are they entering high-wage, high-demand fields?

- **Develop a Research Agenda**
  How can we plan to support changing demands for new or differently skilled talent?

- **Collaborate Regionally to Drive Change At Scale**
  How can increased data sharing allow colleges, employers, and other regional stakeholders to collaborate and efficiently meet talent needs?
How Do We Help Colleges Define Strong Outcomes?
What Are Strong Outcomes?

What Do You Need to Be Stable Here?

Who are our students?
- A recent high school graduate?
- A single adult?
- An adult supporting a family?

What is our economic context?
- Cost of living?
- Typical earnings?

What Other Factors Might We Consider?

Credential Type
Cost of Degree
Other?
How Have Others Defined Strong Outcomes?

**Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce**

*Standard Metrics:*
$35,000/year for those under 45 years old and $45,000 for those 45 or over

- Accounts for degree/credential and age/experience
- Straightforward

- Does not account for characteristics of individual regional economies or family size

**MIT Living Wage Calculator**

*Typical Expense Categories:*
Food, child care, medical, housing, transportation, other

- Based on annual, regional living costs
- Adjusted for family size

- Relatively low threshold for success based on amount needed to subsist
Stop and Jot

Take 5 minutes to respond to the following questions on your handout.

• What is the living wage for your state?

• How might this be different for colleges that exist in different regions?

• Do your colleges discuss how they will define strong outcomes at an institutional level? Program level?

• As a SHEEO, how might you encourage college leaders to consider setting these benchmarks? Who do you need to talk to? What tools might you share?
Leveraging Earnings Benchmarks at Monroe Community College

Mechanical Engineering Technologies

Median Hourly Compound Growth Rate: 30.6%

n=14
How Have Successful Colleges Structured a Research Agenda?
What Questions Do Colleges Need to Ask?

1. What is my regional economy and how is it changing?
2. Who are my populations and how are they changing?
3. Is my institution aligned with the economy and populations?
Community experienced a decline in longstanding “legacy” industries, like tobacco, and needed to boost economy

Creating a Collaborative Hub at Forsyth Technical Community College

- Scan community to determine largest capacities at college and local partners
- Data and employer conversations to identify regional demand for health sciences
- Create biotechnology center with Wake Forest University, which provides training and research experience for individuals across region

125 students trained within first four years
Data shows over 100K low-income adults in Orlando region, versus 13K K-12 graduates

43% of households in Orange County are working poor

• Data pinpoints populations in the talent pipeline and which high-demand, living wage jobs require concentrated skills training

• Research reflects effective methods for outreach to student populations and employer demand for upskilling

• Create Accelerated Skills Training programs

900 Students trained as of 2018

97% Completion rate
Tool Showcase: Understanding Regional Data

DENVER, CO

- **Population**: 704,621, 16.7% growth
- **Median Age**: 34.5
- **Median Household Income**: $65,224, 6.7% growth
- **Poverty Rate**: 15.1%
- **Number of Employees**: 402,288, 4.5% growth
- **Median Property Value**: $395,100, 9.4% growth
Tool Showcase: Understanding Institution Data

EXPLORE WORKFORCE CLUSTERS IN NEW YORK.

WORKFORCE CLUSTER
- All Clusters

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP
- All Industries

REGION
- All Regions

FINGER LAKES NY
- Health Care
  - Aggregate Cluster - Healthcare
  - Certified Nursing Assistants
  - Clinical & Medical Laboratory Technology
  - Dental Assisting
  - Dental Hygiene
  - Entry-Level Healthcare Support
  - Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses
  - Radiologic Technology
  - Registered Nursing
  - Surgical Technology

Advanced Manufacturing
- Aggregate Cluster - Manufacturing
- Applied Integrated Technology/Mechatronics
Tool Showcase: Understanding Program Data
Stop and Jot

Take 5 minutes to respond to the following questions on your handout.

- How might SHEEOs with access to state data systems help colleges answer questions about in-demand sectors, populations they serve, and institutional alignment?

- What data collected from colleges might provide more information about whether, state-wide, colleges are meeting employer demand?

- What data collected from colleges might provide more information about whether, state-wide, certain populations are being left out of the most lucrative career pathways?
How Do We Collaborate for Scaled Impact?
Case Studies for Scaled Impact

While you discuss your assigned case study, consider:

- What data should colleges be looking at?
- Why might this be challenging for colleges?
- What opportunity is there for SHEEOs to help?

- What partnerships might need to be brokered?
- Why might this be challenging for colleges?
- What opportunity is there for SHEEOs to help?

- What strategy would you ultimately recommend?
- How might you enable or incentive the implementation of this strategy?
The Problem: Case Study 1

Job Demand From Employer Is Too Small to Justify Program Costs...

- A small business
- Small-scale but business-critical skill and talent needs
- Limited resources

Problem Appears With Multiple Service Areas and/or Employers

- Program development costs
- Existing resource constraints

- Talent demand continually outpaces the supply
- Employers struggle
- Partnerships become strained
The Problem: Case Study 2

Region 1: Rural
- Few good jobs
- Talent leaving region
- Extensive commute required for remaining talent

Region 2: Urban/Suburban
- High cost of living
- Job demand continually outpacing supply of workers
- Recruitment costs high

I ask: “How do we upsourc e?” We have individuals in this community who have the acumen to retrain. I think of bank tellers and others in these small towns who would like to earn more money. They’ll commute 50 miles a day just to get to that better opportunity. What if we could do that right here?” - Dean of Academic Affairs, Midwest College
The Problem: Case Study 3

Colleges struggle to build a sufficient talent pipeline, competing with one another...

Colleges have *silos* enrollment battles and independently lobbied individual employers for resources; tensions around “turf”

And employers do too...

Short-staffed, employers attempted to out-bid one another for talent in “$1 one-upmanship”

The Blame Game

Employers blamed colleges for producing ~1000 fewer graduates than needed each year

Colleges blamed funding and employers for capacity constraints
Critical jobs within the region require a bachelor’s degree to reach a living wage salary or meet entry-level requirements.

The region struggles to graduate students from high school, community college and few go on to pursue a bachelor’s.

Those students who do attempt to transfer lack guidance and support.
Case Studies for Scaled Impact

1. Big industries have left, creating an economy with **many employers**. One off trainings are not sustainable for the college.

2. The immediate service area doesn’t have a strong local economy and the local region is struggling to meet demand.

3. Educators are **competing for enrollments** and employers are **competing for talent** in the region, making it difficult to deliver enough skilled workers.

4. Critical jobs in the region require a BA. The region struggles to graduate students from high school and community college, and **few pursue a BA**.
The Problem: Case Study 1

**Aggregating Demand**

Job Demand From Employer Is Too Small to Justify Program Costs...

- A small business
- Small-scale but business-critical skill and talent needs
- Limited resources

Problem Appears With Multiple Service Areas and/or Employers

- Program development costs
- Existing resource constraints

- Talent demand continually outpaces the supply
- Employers struggle
- Partnerships become strained
Colleges and/or employers collaborate to understand and address skills gaps at a regional and/or industry level rather than service-area and/or individual employer level.
Regional economy moves from reliance on Kodak and Xerox to 97% of companies in region being small businesses with <100 employees

- Studied data to determine biggest industry clusters; convenes employers by industry
- Data and employer conversations identify common skills gaps
- Data shows multiple small businesses have need for injection molding

- Monroe VP Todd Oldham convenes 11 companies with similar skills needs, expresses that “training 15-20 is more efficient than training 1-2” for everyone

- Created 120-hr injection molding program based on just-in-time demand; 30 new hires to-date; evolved into LadderzUp programs
- **LadderzUp is now used to recruit other employers to area**
I ask: “How do we upsource?” We have individuals in this community who have the acumen to retrain. I think of bank tellers and others in these small towns who would like to earn more money. They’ll commute 50 miles a day just to get to that better opportunity. What if we could do that right here?” - Dean of Academic Affairs, Midwest College
A Solution Framework

Connect rural students/workers to jobs in nearby economies that can be performed (and potentially partially taught) in their rural communities.
Training for Tech Jobs in Jefferson, Iowa

Jefferson, Iowa

Des Moines, Iowa

65 miles

Common 10-course pathway
- Can start in high school, finish in community colleges
  - Community colleges and high schools, work collaboratively to share curriculum, train instructors
- “The Academy” capstone work-based learning with Pillar
- Entry-level software application developers
- $66K starting, $75K within 3 years

“We’re not really just bringing in jobs. We’re bringing in careers, and we’re bringing in the possibility for people’s kids and families to stay (in Jefferson). They can work on the things that they want to work on that would otherwise be out of Iowa. They can do the coolest job in the world right from there.”

Linc Kroeger, Pillar Technologies
The Problem: Case Study 3

Colleges struggle to build a sufficient talent pipeline, competing with one another...

Colleges have **siloed enrollment battles** and independently lobbied individual employers for resources; tensions around “turf”

And employers do too...

Short-staffed, employers attempted to out-bid one another for talent in **“$1 one-upmanship”**

The Blame Game

Employers blamed colleges for producing ~1000 fewer graduates than needed each year

Colleges blamed funding and employers for capacity constraints
A Solution Framework

Colleges and employers collaborate and create a regional talent pipeline rather than relying on one-college one-employer partnerships.
Industry Collaboration in Orlando, Florida

The Orlando region leveraged an industry veteran to serve as a neutral moderator.

Colleges and all hospitals came together to collectively address the talent shortage of nurses.

- **Data-Driven Constituent Meetings**: Churn rates, wage trends, and historic and projected skill gap data helped convince stakeholders that a new approach was needed.

- **Summit**: College presidents and hospitals CEOs gathered to discuss how to align curriculum and expand capacity.

- **Continuous Collaboration**: Department heads and faculty continue to meet throughout the year, providing a forum to continue to build consensus around shared goals, share best practices.

**Goals & Progress**

Since 2016, the Orlando region has opened three additional post-licensure BSN programs, representing capacity for a 109% increase in BSN admissions, or a total of 6,600 students, within the next five years.
The Problem: Case Study 4

Critical jobs within the region require a bachelor’s degree to reach a living wage salary or meet entry-level requirements.

The region struggles to graduate students from high school, community college and few go on to pursue a bachelor’s.

Those students who do attempt to transfer lack guidance and support.
Colleges ask what jobs exist in region and what credential is needed for each career step, from non-credit through bachelor’s. Connect CTE to transfer where this career ladder exists and is needed in the labor market.
“Growing Our Own” STEM Teachers

**Johnston County Public K-12 Schools**
- Students begin coursework in 11th grade
- Simultaneously admitted to Johnston Community College

**Johnston Community College**
- First two years completed at Johnston Community College
- Internship completed in Johnston County

**North Carolina State University**
- Finish BA at NC State
- Practicum completed in Johnston County (practicum location heavily influences job placement)

**“Stay the Course” Scholarship**

**NC Teaching Fellows Targeted Aid**
Next Steps and Questions
To Access Aspen CEP’s Resources

Visit our website at highered.aspeninstitute.org/research
Questions?
Thank You!

Tess.Henthorne@aspeninstitute.org
Ben.Barrett@aspeninstitute.org

linkedin.com/in/tess-henthorne/
linkedin.com/in/barrettbenjamin/

@AspenHigherEd