SPECIAL AHECB MEETING
Via Conference Call (Hosted at ADHE)

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
423 Main Street, Little Rock 72201
Wednesday, July 20, 2016
1:00 p.m.

AHECB Members

Bob Crafton, Chair
Sherrel Johnson, Vice Chair
Chris Gilliam, Secretary
Dr. Charles Allen
Dr. Jim Carr
Dr. Olin Cook
Florine Milligan
Ben Pickard
Greg Revels
Sam Sicard
Dr. Michael Stanton
Jim von Gremp

AGENDA

1. Review of Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (Director Brett Powell)

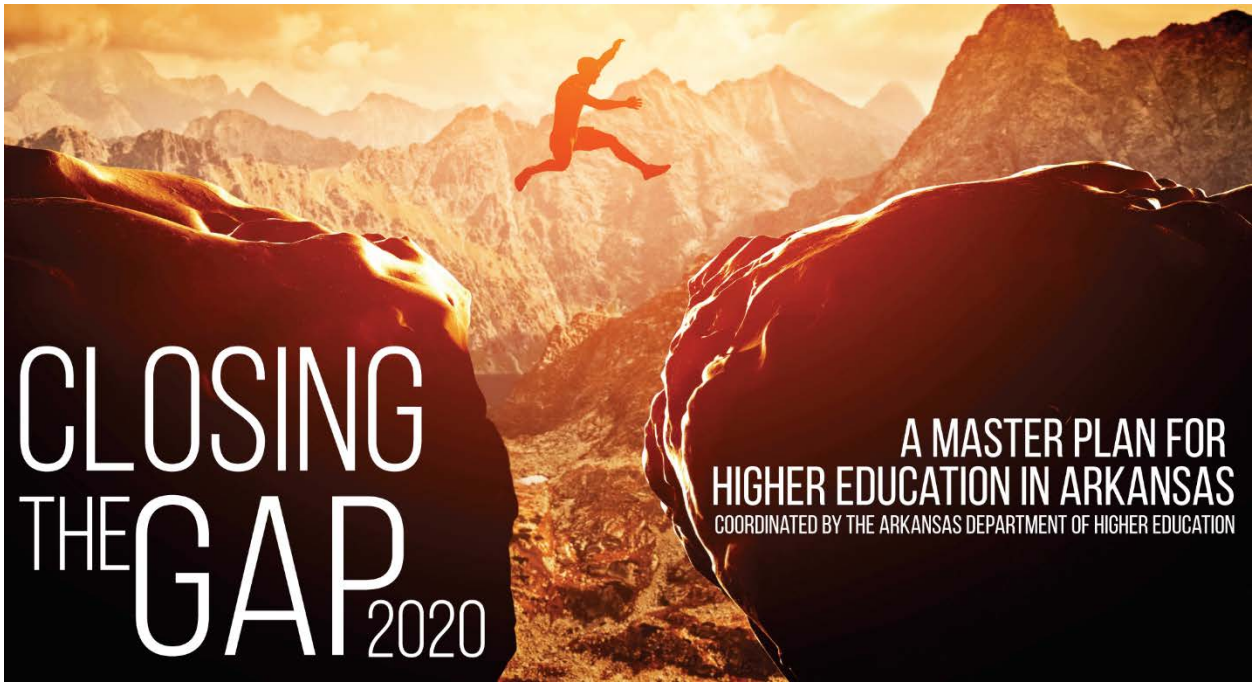
2. Review of Outcomes-Based Funding Formula (Powell)

CLOSING THE GAP 2020 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

On October 30, 2015, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) adopted the Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Arkansas Higher Education as prepared in accordance with A.C.A. § 6-61-205. In support of the Governor's priorities, the department staff collaborated with representatives from institutions across the state to draft a master plan that addressed enrollment and attainment rates of targeted populations, completion and graduation rates of students, college affordability and the alignment of state resources with these goals. These collaborative consortia have continued working to identify a range of strategies that can be adopted by the Department and by institutions to achieve the goals enumerated in the master plan. This implementation plan is a summary of that work.

Implementation Plan

To Enact Strategies Which Address the Goals and Objectives of the Closing the Gap 2020 Master Plan



Presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board

July 29, 2016

Closing the Gap 2020:
A MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS

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Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Arkansas Higher Education
Objectives and Supporting Goals

Objective

Closing the Gap 2020 covers a five year planning cycle which is a critical component in the long-term objective to reach the 2025 goal of a 60% post-secondary attainment rate in Arkansas, increasing from the current estimate of 43.4%. By 2020, we will reduce the educational attainment gap in Arkansas by increasing the number of postsecondary credentials by 40% over 2013-2014 academic year levels.

	Credentials Awarded 2013-14 Academic Year	% Increase	Credentials Awarded 2019-20 Academic Year
Career & Technical Certificates	10,472	61%	16,880
Associates Degrees	8,685	36%	11,860
Bachelor's Degrees	15,277	28%	19,520
	34,434	40%	48,260

Supporting Goals

GOAL 1: Raise completion and graduation rates of colleges and universities by 10%.

- Reduce the percentage of students needing remediation to prepare them for college-level course work
- Reduce the time needed for students to complete remedial requirements
- Raise first year retention rates of students to SREB regional averages

GOAL 2: By fall 2018, increase the enrollment of adult students, age 25 to 54, by 50%.

- Reduce the remedial course enrollments for adults by 50% through alternative means of preparing adults for college-level work
- Improve communication of the value of higher education to non-traditional students

GOAL 3: Raise the attainment rates of underserved student groups in the state by 10%.

- Raise the overall college-going rate for all student groups by 5% from 50.1% to 55.1%
- Raise the underserved student college-going rate to equal that of other students
- Raise completion rates of underserved student groups equal to other students

GOAL 4: Improve College Affordability through Effective Resource Allocation

- Reduced time to degree for students
- Allocate 25% of state scholarship funds to need-based programs
- Re-allocate institutional spending to maximize efficiency and effectiveness

Implementation Plan: Closing the Gap 2020

Overview

On October 30, 2015, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board voted unanimously to adopt of the Closing the Gap 2020 Master Plan. Immediately after adoption of these lofty and important goals to guide the next five years in Arkansas higher education, staff of the Department of Higher Education and colleges and universities began work on identification of strategies that would address them. What follows is an implementation plan that resulted from the activities of eight work groups involving over 75 individuals from colleges and universities, ADHE, and other stakeholders around the state. A listing of the work group members is included in Appendix A. In addition, the work group chairs made up a steering committee which guided the overall process.

These eight work groups were organized around the general themes that emerged from the process of identifying and refining attainment goals. Those themes were:

- College Readiness
- Student Success Initiatives
- Remediation
- Adult Learners
- Affordability
- Communication Strategies
- Institutional Funding
    - Non-Formula Funding

Each of the groups represents a key emphasis area that will be important to achieving those goals. Over the course of a six month period, work groups spent countless hours identifying strategies, initiatives and best practices that could be adopted by Arkansas colleges and universities to move us toward greater equity in post-secondary enrollment and completion rates, encouraging adults to return, or enroll for the first time, improving completion rates and enhancing the affordability of a post-secondary education.

Many of the strategies and practices identified through this work can be implemented relatively quickly and inexpensively. These could be quick wins, so to speak. An example is providing more information to incoming students regarding the responsible use of student loans to finance education expenses. Others will require more planning and additional funding. A structured micro-credentialing system or a state-wide prior learning assessment system are two such examples. Both of these systems can provide important benefits to students and institutions but require additional study for effective implementation.

In addition, the strategies outlined here represent both institutional initiatives, those that can be adopted by individual colleges and universities, and state-wide initiatives, those which will require coordination of multiple entities. As adoption of state-wide initiatives is considered, a collaborative approach involving ADHE staff and representative college and university faculty and staff is recommended.

Rather than a structured guide to improving educational attainment, this implementation plan is intended to provide state and institutional leaders with a menu of options to consider in addressing how each college and university can respond to the overarching objective and goals of the master plan.

Any strategic planning effort risks becoming no more than an academic exercise unless there is a deliberate, on-going monitoring process to ensure continued efforts aimed at achievement of the planning goals. Two mechanisms are suggested to ensure that there is continued effort to implement the strategies recommended in this plan.

1. A dashboard of metrics should be created, and prominently displayed on the ADHE website, to measure progress made by Arkansas higher education as a whole and by individual colleges and universities.
2. An oversight body should be appointed to direct continued activity and have responsibility for maintaining focus on progress toward the master plan goals. The steering committee, or a body structured similarly, could be utilized for this purpose.

Overarching all of the priorities and strategies outlined here and in the Closing the Gap 2020 master plan is the imperative to communicate the need for improved post-secondary attainment rates to the state as a whole. The Communication Strategies work group has developed a list of potential strategies to create an awareness campaign which underscores the value of education through mass media, grassroots efforts, and numerous strategies in between. Statewide communication plans in Georgia and Tennessee are examples of how coordinated efforts designed to promote higher education as a whole, then linked to institutional marketing plans, can be effective in reaching a wide audience. In addition, the Adult Learners work group has recommended strategies for targeting specific communications to non-traditional students.

Summary

Between the release of Closing the Gap 2020 and publication of this implementation plan, the Stronger Nation 2016 report was released by Lumina Foundation. That report, for the first time, included an estimate of technical certificate holders by state. Three positive developments can be gleaned from this report:

- Degree attainment among Arkansans rose from 28.8% to 29.8%, moving the state to 48th in the nation, ahead of Louisiana and West Virginia
- In certificate attainment, Arkansas ranks 4th in the country, behind only Louisiana, Arizona, and Kentucky, with an estimated 9% holding technical certificates.
- Total attainment, the combination of degrees and certificates, stands at 38.8%, which ranks the state at 45th (West Virginia, Nevada, Mississippi, Alabama, and Idaho trail)

Focused attention on the plan will ensure that educational attainment in Arkansas continues to progress and to support economic development in our state. This implementation plan is organized by the identified strategies which respond to each of the four planning goals followed by the full report of the planning work groups.

Following are specific strategies recommended by the various work groups, organized by the specific goals they address. At the end of this document, the full reports of each work group are contained in Appendix B – H.

GOAL 1: Raise completion and graduation rates for colleges and universities by 10%.

GOAL 3: Raise the credential attainment rates of underserved student groups in the state relative to other students by 10%.

Because the strategies to address goals one and three are so closely linked, they have been combined here. However, it is imperative that adoption and monitoring of strategies specifically address both goals.

Strategies identified by College Readiness Work Group

There are numerous examples of college readiness programs across the state and in other states which are designed to increase the preparedness of students entering post-secondary education, thus increasing their likelihood of success. These programs are generally organized around the following objectives:

- Create college-going culture for high school students and for adult learners
- Increase number of students taking ACT, completing FAFSA applications, applying for admission to college (recommend that all high school students to complete the FAFSA and fill out a college application)
- Offer summer bridge programs to assure students are ready for college-level courses – for both high school and adult learners
- Assure students are aware of what it takes to be successful in college – advising, college visits, student success courses
- Recommend that every middle school and high school student to be involved in college and career readiness programs and plans
- Facilitate discussions between high school and college faculty related to college readiness, academic rigor, and alignment of high school and college level courses
- Create a student-ready culture on college and university campuses
- Offer professional development opportunities for middle school and high school faculty and counselors to better equip them with tools and knowledge of all types of programs, professions, and colleges/universities to assist in creating a college going culture in the state

- Offer informational meetings and training workshops to support parents of high school students, especially of first generation college students
- Provide Teacher, Counselor, and Education Leadership preparation programs for future and existing staff with training and professional development related to college and career readiness
- Redesign and implement Educational Leadership programs to connect real world college readiness opportunities to student success
- Inform and educate the public on what it means to be "college ready"

In addition, college readiness programs generally include the following common elements.

- **College and career advising and planning** Begin college and career exploration in elementary and middle school and continue through high school to create a college-going culture through advising and student success curriculum
- **Financial education**, financial literacy, FAFSA completion, understanding of the costs of college attendance, awareness of the financial resources to enable college attendance, assistance applying for scholarships
- **Academic Preparedness**: Early college course opportunities in high school – AP courses, concurrent/dual enrollment, and IB courses – along with ACT preparatory courses, bridge courses, and transitions courses to address remediation needs
- **Mentoring/coaching** – personal preparation
- **College visits and career shadowing programs**
- **College application process**: Assistance with college application preparation, essay writing, FAFSA application, course/program selection
- **Non-cognitive skill development** – soft skills development
- **Parental Involvement**: Involve parents, mentors, guardians - Parental meetings to assist with understanding of expectations and rigors of college, expenses for HE, financial aid resources, career opportunities, types of colleges/universities
- **Professional Development** for middle and high school faculty/counselors: Training for high school and middle school faculty and counselors on college programs, application process, expectations, etc.
- **Measurable outcomes:** ability to collect data to determine success of programs

<u>Strategies identified by the Remediation Work Group</u>

Many institutions across the state have adopted various pedagogical approaches to remedial course offerings. These vary from advising models, mandatory tutoring or supplemental instruction, modified course lengths, and additional methods of evaluating student preparedness. In addition to these specific pedagogical approaches, most institutions are moving to a much more integrated model of monitoring student performance in real time. An approach supported by the recently adopted state placement policy. Some institutions are doing this with the tools they already have in place and some are investing in companies that specialize in creating student performance "dashboards". While these activities are not specifically remediation pedagogy, they do have an impact on knowing where, when, and who to

focus pedagogical approaches and what pedagogies are most successful with each individual student. Below are some of the identified strategies that have been adopted.

- Traditional courses at a variety of levels in reading, writing, math that are semester long. This approach varied between community colleges and universities in that community colleges usually had more levels based on the more pronounced needs of their students. Universities tended to have one course level that met students at different levels.
- Many institutions, both community colleges and universities, used a co-requisite approach that combined the remediation course with a gateway course. For example, a reading class might be combined with a discipline-specific course so that the reading skills can be developed for a college-level class.
- Some institutions have instituted individualized instruction within the context of a class or lab, testing specific competencies along the way in a self-paced class that is individualized instruction via technology. The faculty member is responsible for monitoring student performance, tutoring where necessary, cajoling where appropriate, and pushing students to completion. Some institutions have created the opportunity for students to immediately matriculate into the college course once they have completed the requisite numbers of modules successfully. This approach is particularly common in math remediation.
- Some institutions are using abbreviated semesters—most choosing to divide the semester into 8-week segments allowing students to complete two remediation courses or a remediation course and then the following requisite course in math or writing.
- Some institutions re-evaluate at the beginning of the semester whether a student has higher skills than prior testing and evaluation indicated and allow late entry into the appropriate class.
- Related to the above is the practice at some institutions of giving a refresher short course to students prior to placement evaluation, thereby maximizing their ability to place as high as possible and helping them to avoid unnecessary lower- level instruction.
- Some institutions are using face-to-face instruction accompanied by online exercises that students can do at home or in a study skills lab at the institution.
- Some institutions have instituted policies that preclude a student withdrawing from a **"**high stakes" remediation class.
- Some institutions have instituted evaluations of student motivation, often nicknamed "grit," in order to identify students who might need tutoring and advisement to be successful.

<u>Strategies identified by the Student Success Innovations Work Group</u>

A number of broad policy-based changes are recommended as game-changing strategies to improve student success rates. They include the following.

- Develop and publish a suite of research-based student success initiatives that propel students through to completion.
- Create financial incentives to encourage both institutional and student behaviors that increase student persistence and completion.
- Invest professional development dollars in statewide structures that create intensive, authentic faculty engagement and move efforts to increase college complication toward a deeper focus on teaching and learning.
- Support dual admission agreements between community colleges and universities allowing students to concurrently enroll.
- Set policy for common course numbering for lower division general education courses for community colleges and universities.
- Support changes to the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship to include a need based component with credit hour completion requirements.
- Policy requiring institutions publish term-by-term degree maps for undergraduate programs.
- Enforce policy guaranteeing admission with junior status for students who have met the designated lower- division transfer requirements and earned a designated transfer associate's degrees.
- Recommend cohort (learning community) models for high risk students.
- Develop a statewide data system that track students through postsecondary educational experiences and into the labor market.
- Create a statewide student success center.

GOAL 2: Increase by 50% the enrollment of adults, age 25 to 54, by fall 2018.

Strategies regarding the unique challenges and barriers facing adult students are outlined below in three broad categories: admissions, academic policy and curriculum. Other specific recommendations related to adult learners are included in the affordability goal.

Admissions and On-boarding Considerations

Remediation

Remediation is a vexing problem that challenges educators in both K12 and higher education. Most remedial programs are designed to tackle the issue of new learners and are designed with the assumption that the learner has recently exited high school. Under most programs, an assessment of some sort is administered to determine if the learner is adequately prepared for college-level mathematics, reading and writing. Learners deemed to be deficient are placed in remedial/developmental courses or, more recently, courses that combine college credit-bearing material and remedial material (sometimes co-req or co-remediation models).

The adult learner presents special challenges to this model. First, for the adult learner that is new to college, the current remedial assessment model works but may be based on a false assumption: The current remedial model assumes that someone who tests into remedial course work is lacking the necessary college skills and, more importantly, is fresh off of years of attempts to prepare the student for college work. The first time college adult learner who tests into remedial course work may have reached a level of college readiness at the time of his high school graduation but since graduation his

skills have deteriorated. It is quite possible that the adult learner has a strong academic foundation, but the years have added layers of "rust" to college-level mathematics, reading and writing skills. For this student, a full semester (or multiple semesters) of remediation may not be necessary and may, in fact, be insulting and degrading. A refresh is what is needed, not remediation.

Another class of adult learners – the stop-out--presents a different challenge. This adult learner started college and completed college-level mathematics and/or English but stopped-out of college for a number of years. The stop-out period has resulted in a degradation of previously solid college-level skills. However, unlike the previous class of adult learners, this learner cannot be placed into remedial courses or into credit-bearing mathematics or English courses because he has already received credit for these courses. The challenge for both the student and the institution is that the learner is not prepared to succeed in subsequent coursework. Like the previous class of students, a refresh is in order.

- ***Recommendation:*** All students over the age of 25 could be tested as part of the admission process in the areas of math, reading comprehension and writing. Efforts could be made to use free evaluation instruments. Where possible, high school and prior college transcripts and standardized test scores (e.g., ACT, SAT) should also be examined. First-time adult learners showing a need for remediation and with prior evidence of academic difficulty in math, reading and/or writing should be placed into co-remediation courses. Returning adult learners who have completed a college-level math and/or English course, and who indicate a need for remediation, could be provided a "refresh course" option. The refresh course option could take the form of a workshop, online learning modules, or a concurrent lab option to an existing course. It is recognized that this recommendation bleeds into the work of the remedial education subcommittee and we suggest that the unique needs of the adult learner be taken into account in their recommendations.

Prior Learning Assessment

Adult learners who have spent significant time in the workforce or the military have likely acquired skills and knowledge that may map to learning objectives of some courses. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in prior learning assessment (PLA). PLA, once popular in the 1970s, fell out of vogue as some IHEs simply began awarding college credit for having been employed. PLA, done properly, is a rigorous evaluation of knowledge already possessed by the student and the assignment of college credit. In principle, PLA is not unlike CLEP tests except credit is not awarded via a challenge exam. Instead, the student typically prepares a portfolio which demonstrates his knowledge, the portfolio is evaluated by a faculty member, and the credit is awarded. CAEL is the nation's leading authority on PLA.

It is worth noting a few concerns related to PLA. First, not all IHEs will accept credit awarded via PLA in transfer. Second, to maximize the earned credit, students most likely need assistance in preparing the portfolio. CAEL, for example, offers a portfolio preparation course. Finally, PLA presents a challenge in onboarding a student since ideally the advisor would be aware of all possible earned credits before advising a student. PLA portfolio preparation and evaluation, done properly, takes time, meaning the advisor's initial conversations most likely do not benefit from knowledge of the results of the PLA evaluation.

- ***Recommendation:*** ADHE should develop a PLA policy that facilitates the transfer of credit awarded via PLA. ADHE should also give consideration to the development of a PLA evaluation program, perhaps coordinating resources at Arkansas public IHEs. In the absence of a state-based program, Arkansas IHEs should develop PLA programs at the campus level. The ideal program will include a portfolio-preparation course and a fee to be charged for the evaluation of the portfolio. Students would not pay for the credits awarded, only for the evaluation of the portfolio.

Academic Policy Considerations

Fresh Starts/Academic Clemency

It is no secret that a great many adult learners left school due to poor academic performance. The poor performance could have multiple causes such as lack of preparation, inadequate academic support, or life issues. Regardless of the cause, the adult learner may be a completely different student upon his return to college yet prevented from doing so due to a poor academic record.

- ***Recommendation:*** It is recommended that the state of Arkansas adopt an academic "fresh start" policy that provides for academic clemency after a five-year period from the date of last attendance at an Arkansas IHE. Under such a policy, the student would have the right to reapply for admission to an Arkansas IHE and all prior academic history would be ignored in the admission decision and in the calculation of future grade point averages. The prior transcript remains a part of the academic record, but is not considered in the calculation of g.p.a., graduation requirements, and so forth. The student is not permitted to save courses that may have been passed while excluding those with failing grades. This is an all or nothing option. Some institutions have adopted a similar policy, but it is not a state requirement. A student should only be permitted to use the fresh start option one time. Some institutions have adopted a similar policy, but it is not a state requirement. A student should only be permitted to use the "fresh start" option one time.

Repeat Policy

Virtually every student will stub his toe in at least 1 course during his academic career. Depending on the student's academic standing, a failing grade can have severe consequences. Many IHEs have adopted a grade repeat or replacement policy whereby the student may retake a class in which a "D" or "F" was earned. After completing the course a second time, the new grade included in the g.p.a., the previous grade is excluded from the g.p.a, but both grades remain on the transcript.

- ***Recommendation:*** It is recommended that ADHE develop model grade repeat policy language and encourage its adoption. A model policy would permit grade replacement for an earned "D" or "F," would require both grades to remain on the transcript, and limit a student to 15 hours of grade replacement throughout his undergraduate academic career. In calculating the g.p.a., the second earned grade would be included and the first grade would be excluded.

Last Minute Returners

While not unique to adult learners, consensus was that adult learners are far more likely to make the decision to return to college just days before classes begin or literally after classes have already started. This is especially true of stop-outs who perhaps feel uncomfortable with the registration process. IHEs, perhaps out of a misplaced belief that they are helping students and also a desire for additional headcount and tuition dollars, admit these students. By a large percentage, these students are far more likely to fail and drop out.

- ***Recommendation:*** IHEs should consider a policy that closes all course registration prior to the first day of classes.

Ombudsman

IHEs are complex organizations that are difficult to navigate, even for the well-informed. Administrative offices are scattered across a large campus, university officials frequently do not communicate with others outside their silo despite the fact issues often involve multiple silos, and rules and regulations change from catalog to catalog and can be difficult to interpret. For the adult learner who is simply trying to return to school to finish what he started, this can sometimes seem overwhelming. While it is true that sometimes life gets in the way and results in a student stopping-out of school, it is also the case that sometimes we (IHEs) get in the way. Some organizations, including some IHEs, have found an Ombudsman Office an effective solution to assist students with problem-solving. These individuals are not advocates for the student or the institution but rather attempt to resolve problems and are more akin to mediators.

- ***Recommendation:*** IHEs should consider creating and Ombudsman Office, or similar position, that serves as a resource for students to resolve problems. This office is not envisioned as replacing established campus processes related to things such as grade appeals and grievances. ADHE may wish to give consideration to a similar office.

<u>Curriculum Considerations</u>

Learning Modalities for Adult Learners

Adult learners have complex lives - they work, they care for family members, they are raising children, they are in relationships. These obligations render traditional full-time MWF and TTH course schedules nearly an impossibility. Adult learners require flexible course offerings that cater to the unique nature of the adult learner such as flipped classrooms, blended schedules, online course offerings, and short courses. These options are not without expense and have significant implications for traditional data reporting metrics.

- ***Recommendation:*** IHEs should, where consistent with their mission and resources, consider learning modalities that support adult learners. These modalities might include fully online courses and degree programs, flipped classrooms that reduce the need for face-to-face instruction, short courses that allow the student to focus intensely and earn credits rapidly, and blended course

schedules that utilize online courses to reduce on-campus time. Weekend courses might be an option appropriate for some IHEs.

Competency-Based Education

In recent months, there has been increased discussion of competency based education (CBE). CBE is a method of instruction that shifts the focus from seat-time (the 3-credit hour course) to the demonstration that a competency has been mastered. In a CBE program students move as quickly – or slowly – as they need to in order to master the content. Faculty mentors are available to assist students with the content, but traditional lecture courses are typically not part of these programs. Some CBE programs bill students by the month or other time period with students having access to finish as many competencies as possible during that time period. Some believe that CBE programs are better suited for adult learners who can work at their own and perhaps leverage skills they may have acquired from the workplace.

However, there are several cautions related to CBE. For example, a student that wishes to discontinue a CBE program and transfer to a traditional program will likely find the transfer difficult since competencies do not always align with credit-bearing courses. Additionally, the US Department of Education and accreditors are still struggling with how best to approach the accreditation of these programs and access to Title IV funds.

- ***Recommendation:*** ADHE should continue to monitor developments in area of CBE and provide Arkansas IHEs with appropriate information. It is our belief that there is currently too much uncertainty surrounding CBE programs to merit aggressive implementation of these programs; however, as these programs are in the early stages of their evolution, further investigation is warranted.

Curriculum Selection and Design

While an overgeneralization, adult learners typically have different learning objectives and needs than traditional students. Generally speaking, adult learners are interested in degree programs that translate to improved positions in the workforce. While some adults undoubtedly pursue education for the sake of education, most are interested in changing careers, securing a promotion, increasing their earning power, or obtaining an initial job. This career focus has implications for the degree programs that are likely to appeal to adult learners.

- ***Recommendation:*** ADHE should actively promote the workforce needs of the state and how those workforce needs align with degree programs offered by Arkansas IHEs, including earning potential for certain careers. IHEs should offer degree programs that support the workforce needs of the state. In designing curriculum offerings, IHEs should stress the real world relevance of the curriculum.

Academic Support for Adult Learners

Returning to school after a number of years can be a daunting task as one resumes the rhythms of school. For those adults who are making their initial transition to college, the obstacles seem even steeper since faculty members and IHEs make assumptions about the baseline knowledge of students. What is forgotten is that adult learners may not have the same baseline knowledge and may simply be too embarrassed to ask for help. Minor matters such as how to properly format a paper may have changed over the years or may have never been part of the adult learner's baseline. Some educational experts refer to this as the "hidden curriculum" and efforts could be made to make the hidden curriculum explicit.

- ***Recommendation:*** IHEs should consider efforts to make the hidden curriculum explicit in programs that cater to adult learners. Academic support services should be provided, specifically targeted at adult learners, that ease the transition to college and support the adult learner's success.

GOAL 4: Improve College Affordability through Effective Resource Allocation

Strategies identified by the Affordability Work Group

Financial aid should exist to help students afford their education. However, many factors, such as lack of funding, lack of understanding the process, and financial-aid practices and policies can discourage students from using this resource to help them afford their education.

Financial Literacy - The financial literacy of students attending college can directly affect the affordability of their college experience. Often, students (and in many cases their parents) do not understand the consequences of paying for college with students loans, and are unaware of other options, including scholarships and grants, that may be available to them to help support their education. This is especially true for first-generation college students, who generally have no experience in this arena. Students who are unaware of the option of scholarships may miss deadlines and then turn to student loans as a last resort. Student loans can be dangerous for a financially illiterate student, especially one living in poverty. For these students, the promise of money *right now* could outweigh the consequences of having to pay a loan back after graduation. This may cause a student to take out the maximum student loan, which makes college seem affordable in the short-term, but is actually very detrimental to affordability in the long-term.
RECOMMENDATION: Institutions could work with K-12 educators to teach financial literacy to students early on. Institutions could also implement policies to help students understand the true cost of taking on debt through student loans, and to better comprehend ways to maximize efficiency in borrowing, either through advising or a first-year experience course.

Student Loan Debt - When students begin to pay back their student loans, they often see that loan money as "the cost of college," regardless of how any excess loan funds may have been spent. The media has also been adamant in the last few years that student-loan debt is generally a serious burden, increasing the perception that college is unaffordable. In reality, student loans can be an ideal method of financing a college education when used responsibly.

RECOMMENDATION: Institutions can do more to emphasize and encourage the responsible use of student loans for paying for college.

Financial Aid Practices and Policies – As colleges and universities expand their enrollment, administrators begin to rely more heavily on online applications and email to communicate with students. In some cases, due to the large amount of information necessary to complete an application as well as the difficulty of using unfamiliar web systems, this has become a highly complicated process for students to complete. This, coupled with a lack of interaction with staff, may cause students to avoid the process. As students may be generally uninterested in or unaware of financial aid, a lack of communication with parents also creates difficulty in meeting deadlines and completing applications for financial aid.
RECOMMENDATION: Institutions would be wise to audit their financial-aid application processes to see if they are maximally efficient and easy for students to understand.

Need-based Financial Aid Programs – The state's current need-based financial aid programs, the GO! Opportunities Grant and the Workforce Improvement Grant, are generally considered to be less effective than hoped for. In 40 years of Pell Grants, over a half trillion dollars has realized only a three percent increase in degree attainment. This demonstrates that providing more financial aid is not always enough to make college more affordable – it must also be designed to work for the students it seeks to serve. The state of Arkansas is currently at six percent of state scholarship funding being spent on needs-based scholarships. Arkansas is fourth lowest in the nation in spending on needs-based scholarship programs.

Reducing the time it takes students to receive a degree or credential. – In order to reduce time to degree and increase completion rates, the following best practices are recommended:

- Clearly defined degree plans for first-time entering students to help them better understand the path and direction that they should be taking in order to efficiently earn their degree. A clearly defined plan would ideally include the suggested program course schedule by semester for any given academic degree or credential program.
- A summer student-developmental program would help to prepare the most at-risk students to successfully begin their academic program. The state should coordinate a strategy that institutions of higher education can use to maximize effectiveness and reduce costs. For example, the state of Mississippi requires students, who have not met minimum standards of admission, to complete a summer-developmental program. (Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning – Board of Trustees Policies and Bylaws.)
- Effective advising for both class schedules and financial aid is critical to student success in completing degree or credential programs in a timely and affordable manner. Institutions could assess their advising practices to determine the current success of their advising programs. A best practice could be to proactively survey and monitor students' understanding of their financial-aid and academic-progression status to determine the effectiveness of advising.
- Institutions could review their enrollment and financial-aid online processes to determine if the application is straightforward enough for students to easily understand and navigate. If the process is too difficult, students could miss opportunities for earning or renewing scholarships. A difficult application process could also deter a student from applying to an institution at all.

Maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the spending of currently available resources to ensure that the institutional and state goals are being met. When it comes to institutional spending, the focus should be on the students, and how institutions can best prepare them to enter the state's workforce. Institutions should be more aware of the degree needs of the state, and work harder to draw students toward those degrees. In order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness with regard to increasing the core expense ratio, the following best practices are recommended:

- **Shared Services** – Institutions are encouraged to explore and consider shared services with other higher education entities. Although shared services may not always be fiscally feasible, in many cases sharing services can give institutions various financial benefits. Such sharing could produce efficiencies and promote better contract negotiation, since combined institutions would have greater bargaining power. Further, unnecessary duplication of effort could be minimized and personnel time could be streamlined. For example, the University of Arkansas System campuses recently procured a common learning management system (LMS), which reduced the proportionate cost for all of the entities, while at the same time giving them an expanded product.
- **Capital Improvement Funds –** Institutions receive no dedicated funds for capital projects and critical maintenance. This lack of funding for institutions often leads to postponing needed repairs and a deterioration of the institutions' assets. Due to the lack of financial support for capital projects and critical maintenance from the state, the cost of these repairs and improvements are passed on to the students. Students should not have to bear the entire cost of maintaining an institution's campus, as it should be at least partially the state's responsibility to maintain its assets. **RECOMMENDATION:** A dedicated fund should be established to match the institutions' investment for capital. This way, institutions would have more flexibility in funding these projects.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) –** Utilization of Public-Private Partnerships, such as privatized student housing, should be encouraged as a method of creating efficiencies. These partnerships can be mutually beneficial to both the institution and the private partner. However, the greatest beneficiary of these partnerships is the students, who realize a cost savings and enhance their college experience through better facilities with no related debt service. **RECOMMENDATION:** The Arkansas Department of Higher Education should hold forums to help institutions understand the benefits of these partnerships and to learn how to make them work to their advantage.
- **Reduce Administrative Costs –** Currently, there are no metrics for benchmarking core expense ratios for public institutions of higher education in Arkansas. Without this critical information, it is nearly impossible for institutions and policymakers to understand the ways that administrative costs compare across institutions. These reports would provide only a benchmark for institutions to understand their current expense ratio; however, this would prompt institutions to develop a plan for reducing administrative costs. **RECOMMENDATION:** The Arkansas Department of Higher Education should change and improve current financial reports to better collect information necessary for calculating the core expense ratio for an institution. Institutions should use this information in determining ways to reduce administrative costs that are unnecessarily elevated.
- **Creating a Thriving Academic Community –** While discussing affordability, it is very important to keep in mind that affordability must not come at the cost of not providing quality education

and services to students. Faculty salaries at public institutions of higher education in Arkansas currently fall below the national average. In order to retain and attract quality faculty members to our institutions, this must be corrected. **RECOMMENDATION:** Institutions should formulate realistic plans to increase faculty salaries to the national average over time by dedicating a portion of each institution's income to this goal. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) should work with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) to create a personnel policy that allows institutions more flexibility in increasing these salaries.

Strategies identified by the Adult Learners Work Group

Scholarships for Adults

Financial barriers are one of the most significant barriers for any student but particularly acute for the adult learner. The adult learner, in addition to needing tuition dollars, is also more likely than a traditional student to need financial resources for child care, mortgage, car payment, and so forth. Unfortunately, many scholarship funds are targeted at traditional-aged college students. It is not uncommon to see scholarship priority given to those just out of high school, to require the submission of ACT or SAT scores, or require full-time enrollment – all of which are likely impossible conditions for the adult learner.

- ***Recommendation:*** ADHE should set aside significant funds to support adult learners. These funds should be need-based. The scholarship requirements should be tailored to adult learners and not require full-time enrollment or the submission of standardized test scores. IHEs should be encouraged to consider similar scholarship sources for their institution.

Affordability & Payment of First Course

Tuition affordability is an issue impacting all students, not just adult learners. As noted elsewhere, adult learners do not always have access to the same scholarship opportunities which perhaps forecloses some options. Efforts to keep tuition in check will benefit all students, including adults. For adults with access to employer-supported programs, sometimes the challenge is simply paying for the first course. For these adults, once a course has been completed and an appropriate grade earned, the employer will reimburse the student for some or all of the tuition. However, securing payment for that first course to simply start the program is still required and not typically provided by the employer.

- ***Recommendation:*** Any efforts to check the increase in tuition should be pursued as it will benefit all students, including adult learners. Specifically for students with access to employer benefit programs that cover educational expenses, IHEs should consider adopting a policy that would allow students to forego payment of the first course upon proof that the employer will pay for the course upon evidence of successful completion of the program. Allowing the student to pay at the end of the course would allow students in employer-sponsored programs to begin without the need to front the costs of tuition.

Financial & Transcript Holds

When many students step away from college, they do not always do so in a manner that resolves all their financial obligations to the IHE. Parking tickets, library fines, and unpaid residence hall bills may be lingering on the student's record resulting in an enrollment hold. In some cases, these delinquent bills have multiplied several times due to late fees. The result is that a student who wishes to return to college is unable to do so without first paying the bill and he cannot pay the bill because he does not have a job with a sufficient wage to secure the funds. Without a transcript the student's new institution will not admit him or, if they do, the student is forced to walk away from credits he may have earned. This is a real barrier to many students.

- ***Recommendation:*** ADHE should work with Arkansas IHEs to determine whether options are available for students to eliminate financial holds from prior college work that prevent the return to school. Some options may include a grant or loan to cover the outstanding amount that would permit the removal of the hold.

Employer Benefits

Many adult learners are currently employed. Research has shown that employers who support the educational advancement of their employees are rewarded with a more loyal and skilled employee. While some employers have active employee benefit plans that support the educational goals of their employees, many employers do not have these programs, many programs are overly restrictive, and some employers do not actively promote the programs. Finally, virtually all employers are unfamiliar with PLA and do not cover PLA in their plans, even though credits earned via PLA are far less expensive for both the employer and the student.

- ***Recommendation:*** ADHE should work with the Arkansas State Chamber and other entities to promote the value of employer-supported education benefit programs, encourage employers to adopt and expand their programs, and to remove restrictions on the types of education supported by the program. A special effort should be made to educate employers about features of PLA and encourage the financial support of credits earned via PLA.

<u>Strategies identified by the Institutional Funding Work Group</u>

The institutional funding work group has engaged in numerous conversations around the adoption of an outcomes-based funding model that would replace both the needs-based and performance-based models currently in place. The model incorporates the guiding principles outlined below and is built on metrics which align with the priorities of the plan. These guiding principles will allow the work group to continue developing an outcomes-based funding model which is student-centered and responsive to attainment goals. The group anticipates having a fully developed model to propose during the 2017 regular legislative session.

Arkansas Outcomes-Based Funding Guiding Principles

- Student-centered:

    - The model should place at its center students and student's needs including both access to and completion of meaningful and quality post-secondary learning.
- Outcomes:
    - The model should focus on completion, and particularly on completions of under-served and at-risk students and completions in areas of need by the state and industry. This structure should recognize differences in investment associated with meeting the evolving needs of students, the workforce, and the state.
- Collaboration:
    - The model should provide incentives for cross-institutional collaboration and reward the successful transition of students across institutions.
- Supporting institutional mission:
    - The model should respect and be responsive to the diverse set of missions represented by each public institution of higher education.
- Formula structure:
    - The model should maintain clarity and simplicity.
- Flexibility:
    - The model should be adaptable in the face of a dynamic institutional and external environment.
- Stability and transition:
    - The model should support short-, mid- and long-term financial stability of the public institutions of higher education, while focusing attention on outcomes and the goals of the state. The transition from the current funding formula to a future outcomes-based funding formula should allow for a managed and intentional transition process which mitigates negative impact at any one or group of institutions.

Additionally, the non-formula funding sub-group has developed a standard definition for non-formula entities and has recommended that these entities develop a reporting process to clearly identify the results achieved as a result of the state's investment. The intent was to create a process strictly for reporting rather than attempting to tie funding to outcomes at this time. These annual reports should be a means to assess the funding needs of each unique entity, as well as an objective measure that will determine whether each institution's mission is being met.

Appendix A. Work Group Members

Adult Learners

Michael Moore, Chair	University of Arkansas System
Marie Parker	Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas
Karen Liebhaber	Black River Technical College
Rhonda Carroll	Pulaski Technical College
Jeremy Reece	Arkansas State University Mid-South
Jaqueline Faulkner	Arkansas State University Newport
Javier Reyes	University of Arkansas Fayetteville
Hazel Linton	University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
Tracy Finch	Arkansas State University Jonesboro
Ann Clemmer	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

College Readiness

Barbara Jones, Chair	South Arkansas College
Steve Adkinson	Henderson State University
Gina Hogue	Arkansas State University Jonesboro
Mary Brentley	University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
Chris Smith	Philander Smith College
Zachary Perrine	Pulaski Technical College
Diana Arn	University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton
Robert Gunnels	Southern Arkansas University Tech
Zulma Toro	Universlty of Arkansas at Little Rock
Susan Harriman	Arkansas Department of Education
Sonja Wright-McMurray	Arkansas Department of Career Education
Ann Clemmer	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Remediation

Paul Beran, Chair	University of Arkansas Fort Smith
Amy Baldwin	University of Central Arkansas
Sherri Bennett	Arkansas Northeastern College
Marla Strecker	Arkansas Department of Higher Education
Mark Spencer	University of Arkansas at Monticello
Pat Simms	College of the Ouachitas
Ted Kalthoff	Arkansas State University - Beebe
David Underwood	Arkansas Tech University
Ricky Tompkins	Northwest Arkansas Community College
Ann Clemmer	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Student Success Innovations

Jackie Elliott, Chair	North Arkansas College
Todd Kitchen	Northwest Arkansas Community College
Donna Allen	Southern Arkansas University
Steve Runge	University of Central Arkansas
Lynita Cooksey	Arkansas State University Jonesboro
Chris Coble	National Park College
Beth Bruce	University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville
Deborah Parker	Arkansas Northeastern College
Linus Yu	University of Arkansas Fort Smith
Ann Clemmer	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Affordability

Julie Bates, Chair	Arkansas State University System Administration
Russ Hannah	Arkansas State University Jonesboro
Bobby Jones	Henderson State University
Tom Courtway	University of Central Arkansas
Suzanne McCray	University of Arkansas Fayetteville
Callie Dunavin	Arkansas State University Mid-South
Richard Dawe	Ozarka College
Lisa Willenberg	University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton
David See	College of the Ouachitas
Tara Smith	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Institutional Funding

Glen Jones, Chair	Henderson State University
Rita Fleming	University of Arkansas System Administration
Gary Gunderman	University of Arkansas Fayetteville
Diane Newton	University of Central Arkansas
Robin Bowen	Arkansas Tech University
Margaret Ellibee	Pulaski Technical College
John Hogan	National Park College
Debi Buckley	Northwest Arkansas Community College
Julie Bates	Arkansas State University System
Tara Smith	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Non-Formula Funding

Sandra Robertson, Chair	University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Tony Windham	UA Division of Agriculture
Cheryl May	UA Criminal Justice Institute
Stephanie Gardner	University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Julie Bates	Arkansas State University System Administration
Callie Dunavin	ADTEC
Tara Smith	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Communication Strategies

Sandra Massey, Chair	Arkansas State University Newport
Jeff Hankins	Arkansas State University System Administration
Laurence Alexander	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Judy Williams	University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Aaron Street	Southern Arkansas University
Tiffany Billingsley	East Arkansas Community College
Heath Waldrop	South Arkansas Community College
Phillip Wilson	Rich Mountain Community College
Regan Moffitt	Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
Lisa Smith	Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Appendix B. Adult Learners Work Group Report

ADHE Master Plan

Adult Learners Subcommittee Report

Committee Members: Rhonda Carroll (PTC), Ann Clemmer (ADHE), Jacqueline Faulkner (ASUN), Tracy Finch (ASUJ), Karen Liebhaber (BRTC), Hazel Linton (UAPB), Marie Markham (CCCUA), Jeremy Reece (ASUMS), Javier Reyes (UAF), Michael Moore, Chair, (UA System), Brett Powell, ex-officio, (ADHE).

The Importance of the Challenge

For the past several years the nation's governors and President Obama have called for dramatic increases in the number of individuals earning a college credential. Public rhetoric has boldly called for a doubling of the number of college graduates and lamented the decline of the US as the world's leader in college education. Action plans for 2020, 2025 and other target years have been proffered and occasionally supported by additional resources and specific programs at the state, system, and institutional level.

Despite the recognition of the importance of the challenge before us, there has been remarkably scant specific discussion of the nature of the student body and where the growth in graduates must occur. It is undeniable that there is ample room to increase retention and graduation rates and there is room to increase the number of individuals attending college. However, even if very generous increases take place in all our institutions, there are simply not enough "traditional" students to meet our state and national targets.

Most demographers agree that the number of traditional-aged college students is declining and will continue to do so for the next several years. The solution to our nation's workforce needs rests not with 18- to 24–year-olds, but with adults - with those who never attended college, with those who started college and did not complete a degree, and with those who earned an initial credential but did not complete a bachelor's degrees. Despite this demographic reality, the focus of policy recommendations, public rhetoric, and foundation support is typically on the trials and tribulations of recent high school graduates making the transition to college and the need for these young people to persist through to graduation. While traditional-aged college students certainly merit our attention, make no mistake about it, the solution to our educational and workforce challenges rests with the adult learner. What follows is an examination of the challenges facing the adult leaner and policy recommendations that would ease their return to and graduation from institutions of higher education (IHs).

Defining the Adult Learner

Who is the adult learner? To arrive at a definition of the adult learner for the purpose of this report, it is perhaps best to begin by excluding certain populations. First, we exclude those 18-24 years of age since these individuals are typically considered traditional-aged college students. Second, we exclude those over the age of 65 who are not in degree-seeking programs. Sometimes called "silver scholars" these individuals may be taking college courses but are typically doing so for personal enrichment. Finally, we exclude individuals 25 years of age and older that are enrolled in graduate courses. We acknowledge that this exclusion may be disputed by some. Our rationale is as follows: While many graduate students begin their education immediately upon completion of their undergraduate degree, it is also quite common for individuals to return to graduate school after several years of work experience. While graduate students are undoubtedly older learners, they do not typically face the same issues as the adult

learner seeking an initial undergraduate credential. For our purpose, the adult learner is an individual over the age of 25 enrolled in an undergraduate credential seeking program.

What the Data Tells Us About Adult Learners

While the definition of "adult learner" adopted here is not uncommon, the data collected by Arkansas institutions of higher education and reported to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) is not nearly as precise. ADHE produces reports on the "Total Adult Enrollment," defined as age 25 and older, but this number includes graduate students and "silver scholars." For example, ADHE reports that in 2016 28.3% of all learners in Arkansas were 25 years of age or older. While large numbers of adult learners, as we understand them in this report, are clearly present at many of our two- and four-year institutions, data provide by ADHE reports suggests that 1 in 5 students (20%) at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville is an adult learner. This figure clearly includes large numbers of graduate students and is not to what we refer here as adult learners. The result is that ADHE, and perhaps our institutions, do not have a good grasp on the number and nature of adult learners enrolled in Arkansas institutions of higher education. The best numbers are provided by foundations such as the Lumina Foundation which reports that roughly 356,000 Arkansas adults started college, earned some credit, but did not earn a credential. The most recent Lumina Foundation report places Arkansas at 48th in the nation in terms of adults with a college credential.

Elsewhere in this report are a number of policy recommendations to address the specific population of adult learners. If the recommendations are adopted, it will be important to have solid baseline data against which to measure policy effectiveness and progress. This baseline data simply does not exist, but should be collected as soon as possible.

Recommendation: ADHE should gather and report data specific to adult learners defined as credential seeking undergraduates 25 years of age and older. Data should distinguish between undergraduate, graduate, and "silver scholar" students. Specific data to include should be credential level being sought (e.g., CP, TC, AA, BA), student demographic information, workforce or academic path, veteran status, and student enrollment status (e.g., new student, returning student, full or part-time, or continuing student).

Challenges and Barriers Facing the Adult Learner

Succeeding in college is incredibly difficult for any student. Roughly 1/4 of all college students complete a bachelor's degree in 4 years and just over 1/3 cross that finish line in 6 years. While significant challenges exist for large swaths of the college-going population, the challenges facing adult learners are particularly acute and merit special consideration, especially since adult learners constitute the bulk of today's college-going students. Consider the following national data:

- Of the roughly 15 million undergraduate students enrolled in college, 85% are adult learners.
- The average age of the Pell Grant recipient is 26, 38% of college students are over the age of 25, 25% are over the age of 30.
- 60% of the students at community colleges are adult learners.
- One in 4 adult learners is attending college while raising a child and of this group 50% are doing so as single parents.

Given the significant number of adult learners and the importance they must play in meeting the education and workforce needs of our state and country, special attention should be given to the challenges facing this population. While some of the challenges facing adult learners also present

challenges to traditional-aged college students, the challenges are frequently magnified for adult learners due to the complexity of their lives. It is important to note that some of the challenges listed below are simply inherent in the population and cannot be resolved by institutions of higher education, although they can, perhaps, be mitigated.

- **Child Care**. As noted above, significant numbers of adult learners are parents and many are single parents. While children can be in school or day-care during normal business hours, many adults rely on evening courses to complete their education necessitating a need for evening child care options. Child care provided by institutions of higher education, while somewhat common, has been scaled back in recent years due to budget and liability concerns. Public-private partnerships may be an option that has merit in some communities with significant adult learners with child care needs.

- **Transportation**. As a student without a college degree and most likely not living in a campus residence hall, adult learners must commute to campus-based courses, sometimes relying on unreliable transportation. While unreliable transportation is not unique to adult learners, it does appear to be particularly acute since virtually all adult learners are commuters, whereas traditional-aged college student without cars can live on or near campus. While IHEs are unable to solve transportation issues, especially in rural areas, offering courses in fully online or blended formats may provide some relief for adult learners facing transportation challenges.

- **Veterans**. One of the largest groups of adult learners is are veterans. These students are both new students to higher education and often returning students. Veterans are an attractive population of potential students for IHEs, especially given the financial support provided to veterans by the Department of Defense. However, it should be recognized that some veterans may present unique challenges for IHEs in terms of fully integrating into campus environments, coping with the loss of camaraderie of their military unit, and perhaps dealing with medical and psychological issues. IHEs should be aware of these issues and explore options such as veterans-only orientations, offices focused on veterans services including social and academic support activities, and special recognition at commencement.

- **Lack of Confidence**. Many adult learners lack confidence in their ability to succeed in college. New adult learners arrive on campus only to find the majority of the students in their classes are substantially younger. Conversations can be difficult, shared interests are challenging to establish, and technology that is second-nature to younger students is a foreign concept to the adult learner. Returning adult students are frequently carrying a perceived stigma of failure from their first attempt at college and a recognition that they may be just as ill-prepared as before and now carrying more daily burdens. IHEs should take steps to make adult learners feel comfortable in an environment largely designed for younger students and provide appropriate academic support.

Policy Considerations

This section of the report outlines a number of policy considerations in the broad areas of admissions and on-boarding, academic policies, finances, curriculum offerings and development, and other areas. In each case, the format is to provide a brief description of the policy issue and then offer a recommendation. We recognize that these recommendations range from the free to the expensive, from the easy to implement to the difficult to accomplish, and from the small impact to those resulting in transformative change. We also recognize that these policy recommendations would need to apply to

the entire student population and that while these recommendations would benefit a wide swath of students, they would disproportionately benefit the adult learner.

Admissions and On-boarding Considerations

- **Remediation**
    - **Issue Brief**: Remediation is a vexing problem that challenges educators in both K12 and higher education. Most remedial programs are designed to tackle the issue of new learners and are designed with the assumption that the learner has recently exited high school. Under most programs, an assessment of some sort is administered to determine if the learner is adequately prepared for college-level mathematics, reading and writing. Learners deemed to be deficient are placed in remedial/developmental courses or, more recently, courses that combine college credit-bearing material and remedial material (sometimes co-req or co-remediation models).

The adult leaner presents special challenges to this model. First, for the adult learner that is new to college, the current remedial assessment model works but may be based on a false assumption: The current remedial model assumes that someone who tests into remedial course work is lacking the necessary college skills and, more importantly, is fresh off of years of attempts to prepare the student for college work. The first time college adult learner who tests into remedial course work may have reached a level of college readiness at the time of his high school graduation but since graduation his skills have deteriorated. It is quite possible that the adult learner has a strong academic foundation, but the years have added layers of "rust" to college-level mathematics, reading and writing skills. For this student, a full semester (or multiple semesters) of remediation may not be necessary and may, in fact, be insulting and degrading. A refresh is what is needed, not remediation.

Another class of adult learners – the stop-out--presents a different challenge. This adult learner started college and completed college-level mathematics and/or English but stopped-out of college for a number of years. The stop-out period has resulted in a degradation of previously solid college-level skills. However, unlike the previous class of adult learners, this learner cannot be placed into remedial courses or into credit-bearing mathematics or English courses because he has already received credit for these courses. The challenge for both the student and the institution is that the learner is not prepared to succeed in subsequent coursework. Like the previous class of students, a refresh is in order.

- ***Recommendation: All students over the age of 25 should be tested at part of the admission process in the areas of math, reading comprehension and writing. Efforts should be made to use free evaluation instruments. Where possible, high school and prior college transcripts and standardized test scores (e.g., ACT, SAT) should also be examined. First-time adult learners showing a need for remediation and with prior evidence of academic difficulty in math, reading and/or writing should be placed into co-remediation courses. Returning adult learners who have completed a college-level math and/or English course, and who indicate a need for remediation, should be provided a "refresh course" option. The refresh course option could take the form of a workshop, online learning modules, or a concurrent lab option to an existing course. It is recognized that this recommendation bleeds into the work of the remedial education subcommittee and we suggest that the unique needs of the adult learner be taken into account in their recommendations.***

- **Prior Learning Assessment**
    - **Issue Brief**: Adult learners who have spent significant time in the workforce or the military have likely acquired skills and knowledge that may map to learning objectives of some courses. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in prior learning assessment (PLA). PLA, once popular in the 1970s, fell out of vogue as some IHEs simply began awarding college credit for having been employed. PLA, done properly, is a rigorous evaluation of knowledge already possessed by the student and the assignment of college credit. In principle, PLA is not unlike CLEP tests except credit is not awarded via a challenge exam. Instead, the student typically prepares a portfolio which demonstrates his knowledge, the portfolio is evaluated by a faculty member, and the credit is awarded. CAEL is the nation's leading authority on PLA.

      It is worth noting a few concerns related to PLA. First, not all IHEs will accept credit awarded via PLA in transfer. Second, to maximize the earned credit, students most likely need assistance in preparing the portfolio. CAEL, for example, offers a portfolio preparation course. Finally, PLA presents a challenge in onboarding a student since ideally the advisor would be aware of all possible earned credits before advising a student. PLA portfolio preparation and evaluation, done properly, takes time, meaning the advisor's initial conversations most likely do not benefit from knowledge of the results of the PLA evaluation.
    - ***Recommendation: ADHE should develop a PLA policy that facilitates the transfer of credit awarded via PLA. ADHE should also give consideration to the development of a PLA evaluation program, perhaps coordinating resources at Arkansas public IHEs. In the absence of a state-based program, Arkansas IHEs should consider PLA programs at the campus level. The ideal program will include a portfolio-preparation course and a fee to be charged for the evaluation of the portfolio. Students would not pay for the credits awarded, only for the evaluation of the portfolio.***

<u>Academic Policy Considerations</u>

- **Fresh Starts/Academic Clemency**
    - **Issue Brief**: It is no secret that a great many adult learners left school due to poor academic performance. The poor performance could have multiple causes such as lack of preparation, inadequate academic support, or life issues. Regardless of the cause, the adult learner may be a completely different student upon his return to college yet prevented from doing so due to a poor academic record.
    - ***Recommendation: It is recommended that the state of Arkansas adopt an academic "fresh start" policy that provides for academic clemency after a 5 year period from the date of last attendance at an Arkansas IHE. Under such a policy, the student would have the right to reapply for admission to an Arkansas IHE and all prior academic history would be ignored in the admission decision and in the calculation of future grade point averages. The prior transcript remains a part of the academic record, but is not considered in the calculation of g.p.a., graduation requirements, and so forth. The student is not permitted to save courses that may have been passed while excluding those with failing grades. This is an all or nothing option. Some institutions have adopted a similar policy, but it is not a state requirement. A student should only be permitted use the fresh start option one time.***

Some institutions have adopted a similar policy, but it is not a state requirement. A student should only be permitted use the "fresh start" option one time.

- **Repeat Policy**
  - **Issue Brief**: Virtually every student will stub his toe in at least 1 course during his academic career. Depending on the student's academic standing, a failing grade can have severe consequences. Many IHEs have adopted a grade repeat or replacement policy whereby the student may retake a class in which a "D" or "F" was earned. After completing the course a second time, the new grade included in the g.p.a., the previous grade is excluded from the g.p.a, but both grades remain on the transcript.
  - ***Recommendation: It is recommended that ADHE develop model grade repeat policy language and encourage its adoption. A model policy would permit grade replacement for an earned "D" or "F," would require both grades to remain on the transcript, and limit a student to 15 hours of grade replacement throughout his undergraduate academic career. In calculating the g.p.a., the second earned grade would be included and the first grade would be excluded.***

- **Last Minute Returners**
  - **Issue Brief**: While not unique to adult learners, consensus was that adult learners are far more likely to make the decision to return to college just days before classes begin or literally after classes have already started. This is especially true of stop-outs who perhaps feel uncomfortable with the registration process. IHEs, perhaps out of a misplaced belief that they are helping students and also a desire for additional headcount and tuition dollars, admit these students. By a large percentage, these students are far more likely to fail and drop out.
  - ***Recommendation: IHEs should consider a policy that closes all course registration prior to the first day of classes.***

- **Ombudsman**
  - **Issue Brief**: IHEs are complex organizations that are difficult to navigate, even for the well-informed. Administrative offices are scattered across a large campus, university officials frequently do not communicate with others outside their silo despite the fact issues often involve multiple silos, and rules and regulations change from catalog to catalog and can be difficult to interpret. For the adult learner who is simply trying to return to school to finish what he started, this can sometimes seem overwhelming. While it is true that sometimes life gets in the way and results in a student stopping-out of school, is also the case that some we (IHEs) get in the way. Some organizations, including some IHEs, have found an Ombudsman Office an effective solution to assist students with problem-solving. These individuals are not advocates for the student or the institution but rather attempt to resolve problems and are more akin to mediators.
  - ***Recommendation: IHEs should be encouraged to create and Ombudsman Office, or similar position, that serves as a resource for students to resolve problems. This office is not envisioned as replacing established campus processes related to things such as grade appeals and grievances. ADHE may wish to give consideration to a similar office.***

Financial Considerations

- **Scholarships for Adults**
  - **Issue Brief**: Financial barriers are one of the most significant barriers for any student but particularly acute for the adult learner. The adult learner, in addition to needing tuition dollars, is also more likely than a traditional student to need financial resources for child care, mortgage, car payment, and so forth. Unfortunately, many scholarship funds are targeted at traditional-aged college students. It is not uncommon to see scholarship priority given to those just out of high school, to require the submission of ACT or SAT scores, or require full-time enrollment – all of which are likely impossible conditions for the adult learner.
  - ***Recommendation: ADHE should set aside significant funds to support adult learners. These funds should be need-based. The scholarship requirements should be tailored to adult learners and not require full-time enrollment or the submission of standardized test scores. IHEs should consider creating similar scholarship sources for their institution.***

- **Affordability & Payment of First Course**
  - **Issue Brief**: Tuition affordability is an issue impacting all students, not just adult learners. As noted elsewhere, adult learners do not always have access to the same scholarship opportunities which perhaps forecloses some options. Efforts to keep tuition in check will benefit all students, including adults. For adults with access to employer-supported programs, sometimes the challenge is simply paying for the first course. For these adults, once a course has been completed and an appropriate grade earned, the employer will reimburse the student for some or all of the tuition. However, securing payment for that first course to simply start the program is still required and not typically provided by the employer.
  - ***Recommendation: Any efforts to check the increase in tuition should be pursued as it will benefit all students, including adult learners. Specifically for students with access to employer benefit programs that cover educational expenses, IHEs should consider adopting a policy that would allow students to forego payment of the first course upon proof that the employer will pay for the course upon evidence of successful completion of the program. Allowing the student to pay at the end of the course would allow students in employer-sponsored programs to begin without the need to front the costs of tuition.***

- **Financial & Transcript Holds**
  - **Issue Brief**: When many students step away from college, they do not always do so in a manner that resolves all their financial obligations to the IHE. Parking tickets, library fines, and unpaid residence hall bills may be lingering on the student's record resulting in an enrollment hold. In some cases, these delinquent bills have multiplied several times due to late fees. The result is that a student who wishes to return to college is unable to do so without first paying the bill and he cannot pay the bill because he does not have a job with a sufficient wage to secure the funds. Without a transcript the student's new institution will not admit his or, if they do, the student is forced to walk away from credits he may have earned. This is a real barrier to many students.
  - ***Recommendation: ADHE should work with Arkansas IHEs to determine whether options are available for students to eliminate financial holds from prior college work that prevent***

the return to school. Some options may include a grant or loan to cover the outstanding amount that would permit the removal of the hold.

- **Employer Benefits**
  - **Issue Brief**: Many adult learners are currently employed. Research has shown that employers who support the educational advancement of their employees are rewarded with a more loyal and skilled employee. While some employers have active employee benefit plans that support the educational goals of their employees, many employers do not have these programs, many programs are overly restrictive, and some employers do not actively promote the programs. Finally, virtually all employers are unfamiliar with PLA and do not cover PLA in their plans, even though credits earned via PLA are far less expensive for both the employer and the student.
  - ***Recommendation: ADHE should work with the Arkansas State Chamber and other entities to promote the value of employer-supported education benefit programs, encourage employers to adopt and expand their programs, and to remove restrictions on the types of education supported by the program. A special effort should be made to educate employers about features of PLA and encourage the financial support of credits earned via PLA.***

Curriculum Considerations

- **Learning Modalities for Adult Learners**
  - **Issue Brief**: Adult learners have complex lives - they work, they care for family members, they are raising children, they are in relationships. These obligations render traditional full-time MWF and TTH course schedules nearly an impossibility. Adult learners require flexible course offerings that cater to the unique nature of the adult learner such as flipped classrooms, blended schedules, online course offerings, and short courses. These options are not without expense and have significant implications for traditional data reporting metrics.
  - ***Recommendation: IHEs should, where consistent with their mission and resources, consider learning modalities that support adult learners. These modalities might include fully online courses and degree programs, flipped classrooms that reduce the need for face-to-face instruction, short courses that allow the student to focus intensely and earn credits rapidly, and blended course schedules that utilize online courses to reduce on-campus time. Weekend courses might be an option appropriate for some IHEs.***

- **Competency-Based Education**
  - **Issue Brief**: In recent months, there has been increased discussion of competency based education (CBE). CBE is a method of instruction that shifts the focus from seat-time (the 3-credit hour course) to the demonstration that a competency has been mastered. In a CBE program students move as quickly – or slowly – as they need to in order to master the content. Faculty mentors are available to assist students with the content, but traditional lecture courses are typically not part of these programs. Some CBE programs bill students by the month or other time period with students having access to finish as many competencies as possible during that time period. Some believe that CBE programs are

better suited for adult learners who can work at their own and perhaps leverage skills they may have acquired from the workplace.

However, there are several cautions related to CBE. For example, a student that wishes to discontinue a CBE program and transfer to a traditional program will likely find the transfer difficult since competencies do not always align with credit-bearing courses. Additionally, the US Department of Education and accreditors are still struggling with how best to approach the accreditation of these programs and access to Title IV funds.

- ***Recommendation: ADHE should continue to monitor developments in area of CBE and provide Arkansas IHEs with appropriate information. It is our belief that there is currently too much uncertainty surrounding CBE programs to merit aggressive implementation of these programs; however, as this programs are in the early stages of their evolution, further investigation is warranted.***

- **Curriculum Selection and Design**
  - **Issue Brief**: While an overgeneralization, adult learners typically have different learning objectives and needs than traditional students. Generally speaking, adult learners are interested in degree programs that translate to improved positions in the workforce. While some adults undoubtedly pursue education for the sake of education, most are interested in changing careers, securing a promotion, increasing their earning power, or obtaining an initial job. This career focus has implications for the degree programs that are likely to appeal to adult learners.
  - ***Recommendation: ADHE should actively promote the workforce needs of the state and how those workforce needs align with degree programs offered by Arkansas IHEs, including earning potential for certain careers. IHEs should offer degree programs that support the workforce needs of the state. In designing curriculum offerings, IHEs should stress the real world relevance of the curriculum.***

- **Academic Support for Adult Learners**
  - **Issue Brief**: Returning to school after a number of years can be a daunting task as one resumes the rhythms of school. For those adults who are making their initial transition to college, the obstacles seem even steeper since faculty members and IHEs make assumptions about the baseline knowledge of students. What is forgotten is that adult learners may not have the same baseline knowledge and may simply be too embarrassed to ask for help. Minor matters such as how to properly format a paper may have changed over the years or may have never been part of the adult learner's baseline. Some educational experts refer to this as the "hidden curriculum" and efforts should be made to make the hidden curriculum explicit.
  - ***Recommendation: IHEs should consider efforts to make the hidden curriculum explicit in programs that cater to adult learners. Academic support services should be provided, specifically targeted at adult learners, which ease the transition to college and support the adult learner's success.***

<u>Other Considerations</u>

- **Public Relations – Communicating the Value of the Degree**

- **Issue Brief**: The US Department of Labor estimates that over the course of a lifetime a college graduate earns $1 million more than a high school graduate. There is also extensive research that demonstrates that college graduates lead healthier lives, are more likely to be engaged in various forms of civic participation, and make their communities more livable. All of these benefits should be communicated to adult learners who are likely candidates to start or return to college to earn a credential. At present, Arkansas lacks an aggressive marketing campaign on the value of a college credential. Moreover, what marketing efforts do exist tend to disproportionally include images of traditional age college-going students (18-24 years of age).
- ***Recommendation: Communication plans should educate the public on the value of obtaining a college credential. Special attention should be paid to crafting a message that is directed at the adult learner, both in terms of words and images. We recognize that a more detailed examination of communication issues has been undertaken elsewhere in the Master Plan.***

- **High Risk Students and Performance-Based Funding**
  - **Issue Brief**: Many adult learners have checkered prior academic records and, due to pressures in their lives, remain high-risk students. The risk is, of course, dropping out of school once again. Having dropped out of school once before, doing so a second time doesn't seem problematic. Factors such as low SES, work responsibilities, required remediation, lack of appropriate institutional support, and the need to take care of ailing family members are just some of the many reasons adult learners leave school. As a result, IHEs working with these students are, almost by definition, engaging with a high-risk student population. Performance formulas that do not account for this risk will discourage out-reach efforts to the adult learner population.
  - ***Recommendation: While not the prevue of this committee, we recommend the performance formula not discourage IHEs from working with high-risk populations. This could manifest itself in a shift away from full-time student and year-to-year retention biases and to credential completion, regardless of the credential level.***

- **Silver Scholars**
  - **Issue Brief**: While not the direct focus of the committee's work, the issue of the silver scholar tuition waiver was discussed during the context of the committee's deliberations. Current statutes provide for a tuition (but not fee) waiver for those over the age of 60. While broad support for this policy remains, there is a general consensus that this policy needs revision to prevent limited instances of abuse. For example, it was mentioned that a group of silver scholars repeatedly enroll in a golf exercise course at a university as a way of avoiding paying green fees. Clearly, this is not the intent of the statue.
  - ***Recommendation: The tuition waiver policy for seniors be revised to provide the tuition waiver only for seniors that are seeking a credential and that tuition waivers may only apply to the first time the student enrolls in the course.***

Resources

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Appendix C. College Readiness Work Group Report

ADHE Master Plan – Closing the Gap 2020
Working Group on COLLEGE READINESS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) announced and the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) approved Arkansas' Closing the Gap 2020 Master Plan at the AHECB meeting on October 30, 2015. To implement the Master Plan the ADHE Director, Dr. Brett Powell, developed and charged seven working groups with identifying best practices already in place in Arkansas and across the nation that could be adopted, revised and brought to scale to benefit Arkansans in pursuit of the goals articulated through the master plan. These seven working groups include:

- Adult Learners
- College Readiness
- Remediation
- Student Success Innovations
- Communication Strategies Affordability
- Institutional Funding

The College Readiness Working Group with representatives from community colleges, universities, Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Department of Education, and Arkansas Department of Higher Education first met in November, 2015. The members met monthly to review best practices, learn of college readiness programs offered in Arkansas, and discuss strategies to increase college going rates, improve success in higher education, and prepare students for successful completion of the post-secondary education so vital to Arkansas' economic well-being in the 21st century. It is well documented that a post-secondary credential will make a significant difference in lifetime earnings, lead to better health, and improve the quality of life for all individuals, their families, and their communities. As noted in Closing the Gap 2020, only 28% of Arkansans hold an associate's degree or higher, an accomplishment that places Arkansas 49th in the nation in terms of postsecondary attainment. Furthermore, no more than 15.4% of the population are estimated to hold postsecondary certificates. Data suggest that, to meet Arkansas' projected 2020 workforce needs, it is imperative for Arkansas to increase the number of high school graduates and adult learners in the state who pursue and successfully complete a post-secondary credential. The College Readiness Working Group review of best practices recognized that successful college readiness programs shared many similar attributes including the following:

1) Rigorous academic curriculums with opportunities for high school students to earn early college credits through AP courses, concurrent or dual enrollment, summer bridge courses, or career technical courses; 2) Early and continuing opportunities for secondary students to learn about colleges, careers, financial aid, financial literacy, and campus life, prior to their high school graduation; 3) Non-cognitive and character skills development, student success skills training, mentoring, advising, goal setting, and parental training; and often 4) Training and career exploration for middle school students and even for students at the elementary school level.

While most college readiness programs address the recent high school graduate, the working group also identified unique needs of the adult learner. Adult learners require solid and consistent support services

as they are usually balancing family, jobs, and education. In addition, they are frequently several years removed from their previous educational endeavors, be it high school or some college, thus requiring additional “bridge” or “brush-up” opportunities. While the best practice programs for this population, as reviewed by the working group, are less frequent than those geared toward more traditional students, there are nonetheless numerous examples that provide foundational insights for how Arkansas should address the needs connected to returning these students to effective postsecondary educational programs. As is the case with the traditional college readiness programs, effective college return programs share similar attributes. In addition to emphasizing some of the same aspects listed above, the best programs also provide opportunities for adult learners to engage or re-engage at a pace and in manners aimed at building confidence in their often-considerable skills and experiences.

Fortunately for Arkansas, many best practice programs incorporating these attributes exist across the state and are functioning at high levels. The challenge for Arkansas then, as the working group understands it, centers on how best to integrate all of the needed attributes into the programs and then scale them up and provide the support that ensures their continuing effectiveness for statewide populations, rather than simply adding more local or regional programs.

The report that follows is a culmination of the findings and recommendations of the College Readiness Working Group.

ADHE MASTER PLAN – COLLEGE READINESS WORKING GROUP REPORT

1. ADHE Master Plan Goals to be addressed:

- **Goal 1: Raise completion and graduation rates of colleges and universities by 10%**
  - Reduce the percentage of students requiring remediation to prepare them for college-level course work
  - Reduce the time needed for students to complete remedial requirements
  - Raise first year retention rates of students to SREB regional averages
- **Goal 2: By Fall 2018, increase the enrollment of adult students, age 25 to 54, by 50%.**
  - Reduce the remedial course enrollments for adults by 5% through alternative means of preparing adults for college-level work
  - Improve communication of the value of higher education to non-traditional students
- **Goal 3: Raise the attainment rates of underserved student groups by 10%.**
  - Raise the overall college-going rate for all student groups by 5% - from 50.1% to 55.1%
  - Raise the underserved student college-going rate to equal to that of other students
- **Goal 4: Improve College Affordability through effective resource allocation.**
  - Reduce time to degree for students
  - Allocate 25% of state scholarship funds to need-based programs
  - Re-allocate institutional spending to maximize efficiency and effectiveness

2. What changes are necessary to achieve progress toward the goals?

- Create college-going culture for high school students and for adult learners
- Increase number of students taking ACT, completing FAFSA applications, applying for admission to college (recommend that all high school students to complete the FAFSA and fill out a college application)
- Develop a universal state-wide college/university application
- Offer summer bridge programs to assure students are ready for college-level courses – for both high school and adult learners
- Assure students are aware of what it takes to be successful in college – advising, college visits, student success courses
- Amend ACT 879 (2011) – *An act to increase public school student access to postsecondary preparatory programs in Arkansas; to provide public access to information concerning postsecondary preparatory programs*
- Fund ACE's current college and career coach program and expand program to every district in Arkansas (Act 1285 – College and Career Coaches and Act 1279 – CTE).
- Recommend that every middle school and high school student to be involved in college and career readiness programs and plans
- Provide resources/funding for concurrent (Early College) and dual enrollment courses
- Provide resources/funding for summer bridge programs
- Encourage changes in remediation programs – co-requisites, other college level math courses (Statistics or Quantitative Analysis for College Algebra), and remediation in high school or summer bridge
- Build a robust website to include information to support college and career readiness
- Develop marketing campaigns for all levels of post-secondary education and for diverse students (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, veterans, etc.)

- Develop strong partnerships with area Adult Education centers
- Facilitate discussions between high school and college faculty related to college readiness, academic rigor, and alignment of high school and college level courses
- Create an institution student-ready culture on college and university campuses
- Offer professional development opportunities for middle school and high school faculty and counselors to better equip them with tools and knowledge of all types of programs, professions, and colleges/universities to assist in creating a college going culture in the state
- Offer informational meetings and training workshops to support parents of high school students, especially of first generation college students
- Support Career Pathways Initiatives – addresses the non-traditional students with children
- Provide Teacher, Counselor, and Education Leadership preparation programs for future and existing staff with training and professional development related to college and career readiness
- Redesign and implement Educational Leadership programs to connect real world college readiness opportunities to student success
- Inform and educate the public on what it means to be "college ready" – marketing

3. What strategies have been adopted by institutions in Arkansas or other states?

Legislation related to College and Career Readiness:

- **Act 743** – College and Career Readiness Standards for Career and Technical Education.
- **Act 960** – College and Career Coaches Program.
- **Act 1279** – Amending College and Career Readiness Standards for Career and Technical Education Programs.
- **Act 1285** – Establishing the College and Career Coaches Program.
- **A.C.A. 6-18-223** – Credit for College Courses in Secondary Education
- **AHECB Policy 5.16** – Concurrent Enrollment
- **ADE Rule** – Concurrent College and High School Credit for Students Who Have Completed The Eighth Grade – December 2012
- **A.C.A. 6-15-2012** – Transitional Courses
- **A.C.A. 6-15-441** – Arkansas College and Career Readiness Planning Program

College Readiness Programs in Arkansas (These are examples of best practices in Arkansas but it is not intended to be an all-inclusive comprehensive list):

- **Academy for College Excellence (ACE)** – Ozarka, PCCUA, COTO, ASUN: Participating colleges are developing a non-cognitive intervention to support student success based on the ACE model. The intervention focuses on building student's sense of academic self-efficacy and college identity, improving student's individual and team communication skills, and developing student's self-control and perseverance. ACE has developed a non-cognitive assessment tool that assesses and measures student improvement in these affective dimensions.

- **Accelerating Opportunity** – ASUMS, CCCUA, ASUB, COTO: Participating colleges are building specific career and technical education program pathways that integrate basic skills instruction into career and technical education program classes. The colleges are partnering with their adult education programs and using adult education instructors to teach the integrated basic skills, using the I-BEST model pioneered in Washington State. GED students are being targeted so that these students can more quickly enter a college credit program and earn their GED as part of the basic skills instruction they receive, thus eliminating the need to earn a GED first before entering college. Participating colleges are targeting welding, HVAC, mechatronics, machining, diesel technology, medical terminology and cosmetology. Arkansas Department of Education is expanding to more colleges and is making AO a part of the new WIOA state plan.
- **Arkansas Career Coach Program** – (45 coaches based in 49 high schools through 18 two-year colleges in 31 counties)
- The College and Career program (formerly known as Arkansas Works) is designed to motivate and support Arkansas students to achieve their goals as it relates to college and career planning. Students may begin working with a Career Coach in the 8th grade (7th, if enrolled in Career Orientation) with continued services through high school graduation. Career Coaches work in partnership with the Career Orientation Instructors and School Counselors to assist with the development and revision of student's college and career plans. The College and Career Coach program provides assistance and information for resources in the areas of: academic tutoring, career counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary for postsecondary education/training access, retention, and success.

The program is administered through the Arkansas Department of Career Education and has established partnerships with the Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Higher Education and Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. During the pilot phase, the program was designed to provide college and career planning services and activities to middle/high school students within the 21 most economically challenged counties across the state of Arkansas. After the completion of the pilot phase, the program was able to demonstrate a positive impact through record-keeping and data collection in the areas of college-going rate, ACT Scores, Remediation rates, and financial aid applications. The successful implementation allowed the College and Career Coach Program to be expanded beyond the initial 21 counties.

- **Arkansas College and University concurrent/dual enrollment programs**
- **ADE AP/IB programs/concurrent courses**
- **Arkansas Guided Pathways** – NWACC, NorthArk, COTO, PCCUA, ASUN, ASUB: Participating colleges are developing better "pathways" for students to enter and complete programs of study to include college and high school students. Three primary strategies are involved in building better pathways. First, better "on ramps" for students to select and enter a program of study, including improved career exploration and advising for new undecided students, accelerated and even contextualized developmental education, and "meta majors" that allows students to explore a broad range of majors before selecting

a final program of study. Second, more structured programs of study, including default degree plans with default sequencing of courses and predictable course schedules (even block schedules, if possible). Third, proactive monitoring of student progress and provision of support services.

- **A-State K-20 Educational Enrichment Initiative**: Arkansas State University's K-20 Educational Enrichment Initiative seeks to facilitate collaboration between A-State and Arkansas K-12 public schools to encourage educational partnerships, enhance student intellectual growth, and enrich college and/or career opportunities for Arkansas students. Activities include: Concurrent Program, Enhancement for area home schooled students, Arkansas Teacher Cadet Program at Jonesboro High School, development of a Certificate in Business Information Systems (BIS) – a 24-hour certificate with college courses in accounting, database management, and general business.
- **Donaldson Academy (UALR)**
- **Dr. Charles W. Donaldson Summer Bridge Academy** (SBA) is a three-week intensive residential program aimed at improving the retention and graduation rates of first generation, multi-ethnic students. A collaborative effort across the university, the program aims to eliminate the need for developmental coursework. The curriculum focused on national literacy learning outcomes for first-year writing students and habits of mind from the Framework for Success in Post-secondary Writing.
- **Dr. Charles W. Donaldson Scholars Academy** (CWDSA) is a collaborative effort between UALR, Philander Smith College, and the Pulaski County Special School District which seeks to break the cycle of under preparedness and low graduation rates for minorities. The goals of the program include improvement in academic achievement and in test scores used in college admission; an increase in high school graduation rates; entry in post-secondary programs without need for remedial courses, and completion of a baccalaureate degree in four years. The program encourages creativity, critical thinking, civility, and success beyond high school.
- **CWDSA – Tri-district Saturday Academy** is a weekend component of CWDSA. One Saturday of each month, students go to UALR or PSC to work to improve competencies in reading, writing, and math. Students from LRSD and LNRSD receive specialized instruction based on their COMPASS scores, including ACT prep, college prep and other activities.
- **Gateway to College:** ACC organized a discussion with representatives from 14 of the state's community colleges and staff from Gateway to College, which is a national organization that supports local programs that serve high school drop outs or soon to be drop outs to earn their diploma and get on a path to college. With the state's new law that allows k-12 funding to be used for such programs, the policy setting is ripe to build these kinds of programs across the state.
- **Gear-Up (Phillips)** – *See programs outside Arkansas for general description.*
- **KIPP Academy (Helena/West Helena**) – *See programs outside Arkansas for general description.*
- **LIONS' Summer Bridge Program at UAPB**

- The Learning Institute and Opportunities for New Students (LIONS) summer program is design to promote academic success for at-risk first time entering students and students who are interested in a jump start to freshman year. These students will become a part of a cohort of students who will reside in the dormitory and enroll in courses with minimal costs to students. The LIONS is supported by the Walton Foundation and UAPB matching funds.
- UAPB LIONS program allows students to complete 6 hours of developmental coursework during the second summer semester. Students in the LIONS program are provided support services to include academic, personal and social development. The LIONS students have a pass rate at 70% greater than the UAPB Freshmen. Additionally, LIONS pass freshman-level courses at a 25% greater rate than UAPB Freshmen. Summer II 2015 Cohort had 281 students in the cohort. The program is under the auspices of Enrollment Management. The program has grown from 30 students to just under 300 students with 400 students anticipated for second summer session 2016.
- **Math Pathways to Completion:** Arkansas was just selected as one of five states to be part of the Math Pathways to Completion initiative being managed by The Dana Center at the University of Texas. This initiative will be coordinated in Arkansas by ADHE with ACC.
- **Razor C.O.A.C.H. (Creating Opportunities of Arkansans' Career Hopes)** at the University of Arkansas. **Razor C.O.A.C.H.** places college/career coaches in northwest Arkansas high schools to work with "at-risk" students. The coaches provide one on one guidance in setting academic goals, exploring career options and pursuing post-secondary education. The mission of the program is to motivate and support NWA students in grades 10-12, in order to increase their knowledge of and access to opportunities beyond high school.
- **Southwest Prep Academy** (Arkadelphia) www.swacollegeprep.com/: The Southwest Arkansas College Preparatory Academy was created to strengthen college preparedness through the use of the ACT's Explore, PLAN, and ACT test data. The EXPLORE test identifies students who express an interest in college but whose test scores indicate remedial courses may be required at the college level. The Academy serves as an intervention to eliminate the students' need for remediation. Each student's progress is monitored annually to create a seamless transition between middle and high school and high school to college. Project Goals and Activities:
- Increase each student's ACT score for unconditional college admission, with no remediation needed.
- Increase the number of students who complete the requirements for associate and/or bachelor's degrees.
- Increase the number of students who demonstrate workplace readiness skills for Southwest A-ERZ communities.
- Remediate students in the shortest amount of time (a priority recommended by the 2008 Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention and Graduation Rates).
- Use existing test data in innovative ways to benefit students' future success.

- Capture academically challenged students at a time when fundamental educational strategies can be reinforced without the stigma of "remediation."
- The **Philander Smith College S.T.A.R.T. Summer Bridge Program** is a five-week academic enrichment and leadership development program. It provides a seamless transitional opportunity for first-time freshmen to get an early and strong start on their college career by staying on campus, and completing up to eight (8) credits during five (5) weeks in the summer. This intense and exciting summer experience offers students the opportunity to prepare for the academic, personal, and social challenges that they may encounter while in college. Students are provided with a structured environment conducive to building the fundamental skills and relationships necessary for successful completion of a bachelor's degree. In addition to tutoring, study skills training, and academic and leadership development workshops, the Program provides extensive academic and personal counseling to equip and support participants. Students selected as Philander Smith College S.T.A.R.T. Summer Bridge Program Scholars are awarded a summer-only scholarship that covers tuition, housing, and a meal plan.
- **Upward Bound in Arkansas** – located at 17 colleges and universities in AR – 19 cohorts – 1,469 students – *See programs outside Arkansas for general description.*
- **Working Families Success Network (WFSN) Community College Expansion** – EACC, COTO, PCCUA, NorthArk: Participating colleges are expanding non-academic support services for students, including financial education and financial coaching aimed at helping students better understand and manage their household budget and expenses which includes but is not limited to paying for college. College are creating access to innovative financial services developed for college students by the Center for Financial Service Innovation, and access to income supports such as emergency grants and public benefits to better help students manage their financial lives. The project is being managed by Achieving the Dream. Arkansas is one of four participating states.

College Readiness Programs Outside Arkansas (These are examples of best practices in the nation, but it is not intended to be an all-inclusive comprehensive list)**:**

- **Alliance College-Ready Public Schools** (http://www.laalliance.org/): Alliance College-Ready Public Schools is the largest nonprofit charter organization in Los Angeles, comprised of 27 free, public charter high schools and middle schools serving 12,000 students. Alliance employs the highest achievement standards and latest innovations in technology to prepare students for success in college and future careers. Since 2004, more than 95% of Alliance graduates have gone on to college. Alliance's brand of high performing schools delivers a consistent educational environment and experience for students-preparing every student with the skills, experience, and knowledge to enter college. The measures for success are that all students continuously enrolled for at least four years will graduate from high school prepared for success in college as indicated by:
    - Students passing University of California and California State University A-G course requirements with a grade of C or better

        - Students taking and passing Advanced Placement Courses with a grade of C or better and passing AP Exams with a score of 3 or higher
        - Students meeting college readiness criteria on exams including SAT, ACT and Early Assessment Program (EAP)
        - 100 percent of the graduates accepted into college
        - Fewer than 15% of students required to take remedial English or Math upon college entrance
        - Middle school students enrolled for at least three years will culminate ready for success in high school indicated by taking and passing Algebra 1 by grade 8
- **ASPIRE Public Schools** (http://aspirepublicschools.org/): ASPIRE is a not for profit organization that builds and operates high quality public charter schools to prepare urban students for college.Currently Aspire operates 38 schools in California and Tennessee serving over 14,600 students in grades K-12.
- **AVID** (http://www.avid.org/): AVID is a systematic instructional system for students in K-16. The AVID College Readiness System is a school-wide transformational effort focused on leadership, systems, instruction, and culture, and is designed to prepare students for college readiness and success. AVID's kindergarten through higher education system brings research-based curriculum and strategies to students each day that develop critical thinking, literacy, and math skills across all content areas.
- **Bottom Line** (https://www.bottomline.org/): Since 1997, Bottom Line has addressed the low college graduation rates of at-risk urban youth. The organization was founded on the belief that students need a mentor and a guide during the college application process *and* throughout college to succeed. By providing consistent one-on-one support, Bottom Line has helped thousands of low-income and first-generation students stay in college and complete their degrees. Bottom Line is a privately funded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, serving almost 4,000 students through two primary programs – College Access and College Success – from offices in Boston and Worcester, MA, New York, NY and Chicago, IL.
- **Breakthrough Austin** (http://www.breakthroughaustin.org/): Breakthrough's program combines individualized case management with extended learning time over twelve years of direct service. Key programs and services include:
    - **Case Management:** Each Breakthrough student is assigned a case manager who shepherds the critical relationship between students, parents, schools, and community from middle school through high school and college completion. Breakthrough staff members fill gaps and find resources to make college possible, working over the long term to meet the needs of the whole child – academic, social, physical, and emotional – to ensure that he or she remains on the path to college.
    - **Middle School Summer Programs:** The programs are held on the University of Texas at Austin campus, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, and a campus in Manor ISD. The Middle School Summer Program helps combat summer learning loss, a leading contributor to the achievement

gap. Teachers are exceptional and diverse high school and college students who serve as AmeriCorps members. With a 1:6 teacher-student ratio, our model helps younger students experience breakthroughs in academics and confidence while the older students discover potential as educators and leaders.

- **Saturday and After-School Programming:** Breakthrough offers Saturday and after-school programming. Students participate in project-based academic activities and community service while learning valuable skills.
- **High School Transition:** To inform 8th grade students and families of important high school programs, services, and requirements, so they transition successfully into the 9th grade.
- **High School Institutes:** As students enter high school, Breakthrough helps them gain experience and life skills that will be beneficial in college and beyond. In 9th grade, students participate in a four-week STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Academy where hands-on projects teach a passion for STEM. 10th graders attend a summer institute focusing on leadership skills, school success habits, and college and career exploration. Breakthrough facilitates productive summer activities – from volunteer work to internships to college courses – for students entering 11th grade, helping them build their college resumes. And the summer program for rising high school seniors focuses on college preparation and guidance, with an early start on completing college applications.
- **College Exploration, Preparation, and Guidance:** Students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade visit colleges, attend college fairs, receive SAT/ACT preparation and registration support, and begin guided scholarship searches. Twelfth graders receive individualized support as they apply to college and complete financial aid paperwork. Students and families are guided through the entire process, every step of the way.
- **College Completion Program:** The College Completion Program is a year-round program to help college students and high school graduates be successful in college, persist, and ultimately graduate from college. The program addresses two key components that studies have shown increase college completion outcomes of low-income, first-generation college students: comprehensive and ongoing mentoring and support, and mastery of important non-academic skills needed for college success, such as academic perseverance, learning strategies, and social skills.
- **California Student Opportunity and Access Program** (http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=77): The California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) was established by the state legislature in 1978. Today, Cal-SOAP is designed to improve the flow of information about postsecondary education and financial aid while raising the achievement levels of low-income, elementary and secondary school students or geographic regions with documented low-

eligibility or college participation rates, and who are first in their families to attend college. Some common services provided by the consortia includes advising, tutoring, parent outreach, and college awareness workshops while improving the flow of information about postsecondary education and financial aid.

- **College Forward** (http://collegeforward.org/): College Forward is a non-profit college coaching program which provides college access and college persistence services to motivated, economically disadvantaged students, in order to facilitate their transition to college. College Forward students get one-on-one support from eleventh grade through college graduation from recent college graduates who are close in age to their students who help each student get into and complete college.
- **College Reach out Program (http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/3/urlt/ff72.pdf):** CROP was established in 1983 by the Florida Legislature to motivate and prepare educationally disadvantaged, low-income students in grades 6 through 12 to pursue and successfully complete a postsecondary education. Participants are students who otherwise would be unlikely to seek admission to a community college, state university, or independent postsecondary institution without special support and recruitment efforts.
- **Cristo Rey Network** (http://www.cristoreynetwork.org/): The Cristo Rey Network comprises 30 Catholic, college preparatory high schools for underrepresented urban youth. Through rigorous academics, coupled with real world work experience, Cristo Rey students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and in life.
- **Fulfillment Fund** (http://www.fulfillment.org/): The Fulfillment Fund helps high school students overcome social and economic barriers to college. High school students receive college counseling, college site visits, SAT prep, experiential learning activities, financial aid counseling, and classroom instruction, and are assisted through scholarships.
- **GEAR UP** (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/): This discretionary grant program is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides six-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. GEAR UP funds are also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.
- **Genesys Works** (http://www.genesysworks.org/): Genesys Works is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that enables inner-city high school students to break through barriers and discover through meaningful work experience that they can succeed as professionals in the corporate world. Genesys Works enables students to work in meaningful

internships at major corporations during their senior year in high school, completing an 8-week intensive training program. The training is designed to arm students with the knowledge they need to provide value to corporations in specific technical fields. Furthermore, students are trained on the professional skills needed (such as communications and corporate behavior) to enter and succeed in corporate environments.

- **Green Dot Public Schools** (http://greendot.org/): Green Dot Public Schools is the largest network of public charter schools serving Los Angeles families and has recently expanded to serve students in Memphis, Tennessee and Washington State. The mission is to help transform public education so that all young adults receive the education they deserve to be prepared for college, leadership, and life. Currently are than 12,000 students across 23 schools in the greater Los Angeles, Memphis, and Tacoma communities are being served.
- **IDEA Academy** (http://www.ideapublicschools.org/): The IDEA Academy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that is committed to "College For All Children." It is a network of tuition-free PreK-12 public charter schools serving over 24,000 students in 44 Texas schools in Austin, San Antonio, and Rio Grande Valley.
- **KIPP Academy/ KIPP Through College(KTC)** (http://www.kipp.org/): KIPP is a national network of free, open enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and life. There are 183 KIPP schools in 20 states and in the District of Columbia. KIPP through College (KTC) is a part of the broader KIPP approach that helps to eliminate the opportunity gap between students from high- and low-income communities. KTC counselors and advisors in KIPP schools across the country do whatever it takes to support students as they navigate high school, prepare for college entry, and work hard on their journey through college. Local KTC programs are augmented by national initiatives and services that help provide access to high school, college, and career preparation resources across the KIPP network.
- **Mastery Charter Schools** (http://www.masterycharter.org/): Mastery Charter Schools and Mastery Schools of Camden form a non-profit school network of 21 schools in Philadelphia, PA and Camden, NJ serving approximately 12,000 students in grades K-12. Their mission is to ensure that all students learn the academic and personal skills they need to succeed in higher education, compete in the global economy and pursue their dreams.
- **Noble Charter** (http://www.noblenetwork.org/): Noble Charter was established to prepare access to safe, rigorous, college prep education for students in the Chicago, IL area who want to build a foundation for college success. Noble's College Program exposes students to higher education options and guides them through the collegiate application

process. Through college trips, college fairs, summer college immersion programs and a required year-long college writing course, Noble exposes students to the college experience and builds their confidence about higher education. Alumni Coordinators assist students adjust to college life.

- **OneGoal** (**http://www.onegoalgraduation.org/**): OneGoal's mission is to close the college divide by enlisting and training our nation's best educators to teach historically underserved high school student**s** how to enroll in and complete college. OneGoal recruits, selects, and trains high-performing teachers working in schools to become Program Directors and implement a 3-year college success model.
  OneGoal Program Directors work with a cohort of 25-30 Fellows to enroll in a college that they are most likely to graduate from by increasing college options, breaking down application and enrollment processes, and establishing academic, financial and social foundations.
- **Philadelphia Futures** (http://www.philadelphiafutures.org/):
  Philadelphia Futures is a non-profit organization that provides Philadelphia's low-income, first-generation-to-college students with the tools, resources and opportunities necessary for admission to and success in college. PF transform lives by breaking down the barriers that have historically excluded low-income, first-generation-to-college students from achieving college success. The students Philadelphia Futures serves are provided with a comprehensive array of programs designed to reduce the institutional, academic, social and financial barriers to college success. Through direct service programs, Sponsor-A-Scholar (SAS) and College Connection, PF annually serves nearly 600 high school and college students with academic enrichment services, personalized college guidance, placement and retention services and financial resources.
- **Student Support Services Program (USDE-Federal TRIO program)** (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html): Through a grant competition, funds are awarded to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. Student Support Services (SSS) projects also may provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants (# 84.063). The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.
- **Talent Search (USDE-Federal TRIO program):** Services provided include:
  - Academic, financial, career, or personal counseling including advice on entry or re-entry to secondary or postsecondary programs
  - Career exploration and aptitude assessment
  - Tutorial services

        - Information on postsecondary education
        - Exposure to college campuses
        - Information on student financial assistance
        - Assistance in completing college admissions and financial aid applications
        - Assistance in preparing for college entrance exams
        - Mentoring programs
        - Special activities for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders
        - Workshops for the families of participants
    - **Upward Bound** (USDE-Federal TRIO program) (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html): Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves: high school students from low-income families; and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.
    - **Upward Bound - Math Science (USDE-Federal TRIO program)** (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triomathsci/index.html): The Upward Bound Math and Science program is designed to strengthen the math and science skills of participating students. The goal of the program is to help students recognize and develop their potential to excel in math and science and to encourage them to pursue postsecondary degrees in math and science, and ultimately careers in the math and science profession.
    - **YES Prep Public Schools** (http://www.yesprep.org/): YES Prep is an open-enrollment public charter school system serving students grades six through twelve in Houston's most disadvantaged communities. Their goal is to increase the number of low income Houstonians who graduate from a four-year college prepared to compete in the global marketplace. Through various college initiatives and college counseling, students receive individualized support in test preparation, applications, college selection, and applying for grants and financial aid.

4. **What barriers, if any, exist that make adoption of the identified strategies difficult?**
    - Alignment of programs offered through various institutions and agencies (ACE, ADE, ADHE)
    - Sufficient funding for College and Career Coaches program/limited districts involved
    - Inconsistencies in concurrent/dual enrollment programs
    - Lack of a reward/incentive system for high schools and institutions of higher education

- Translation of state-level goals to local needs
- Maintenance of focus on state-level goals over time
- Lack of an integrated clearinghouse listing the identified strategies with hypertext links to facilitate additional information
- Lack of trained professionals to lead innovations needed

5. What partners, external to higher education, will be important to implementation of the identified strategies?

- State Agencies
  - Arkansas Career Education
  - Arkansas Department of Education
  - Department of Workforce Services
- State Legislature
- Federal Government
- Philanthropic organizations
- Business and industry partners
- Community-based partners
- Teacher Education programs

6. What resources (technological, human, physical, financial, and legislative) are necessary to implement identified strategies?

- **Technological Resources: Robust Website** – "What one needs to know to go to college" – directed toward parents/advocate, high school teachers/counselors, and students (different for high school graduates, veterans or non-traditional students)
  - Universal Application for applying to all Arkansas public colleges and universities – with "how to" videos and links to resources for essay writing
  - Site for completing FAFSA with helpful "how to" tutorial videos
  - Scholarship information
  - Career program information
    - short videos about programs
    - links to employment/salary information
    - links to colleges/universities with programs
  - Online training modules for parents/advocates
- **Human Resources**
  - College and Career Coaches in every county serving every school district
  - Webmaster to maintain the website
  - Project related staff to include support staff and data analyst
- **Physical Resources** – no physical facilities required except as needed for staff. Additional IT infrastructure may be required.
- **Financial Resources** – identify and secure funding to support:
  - Career coaches in each county
  - Secondary career center access for all high school districts
  - Summer bridge programs

- College and career readiness programs
- Training and professional development for faculty and counselors
- Website development and maintenance
- College and career readiness conference
- statistical data collection and analysis for evaluation and monitoring of activities
- Dissemination of information through marking/communication
- Business/employer tax incentives
- Loan forgiveness to attract students to high need professions
- Arkansas Challenge Scholarship changes to enable recruitment of students into high demand/high wage areas.

- **Legislative or Agency policies**
  - Increase funding for Act 960 – to allow expansion of the College and Career Coach program to all 75 counties and school districts.
  - Amend ADHE (5.15) and ADE policies related to concurrent enrollment to clearly define concurrent courses to be offered, assure consistent course articulation for both general education and career and technical education courses, approve method of delivery, and determine how funded.
  - Amend Act 743 to support and fund College and Career Readiness programs throughout the state.
  - Strengthen A.C.A. 6-15-441 which requires that each public school administer a college and career readiness assessment and use the assessment to strengthen deficiencies, improve achievement, and prepare for college or a career.

Common Components of College and Career Readiness programs:

- **College and career advising and planning** – early and often - Begin college and career exploration in elementary and middle school – continue through high school - create a college-going culture – inspire college "dreams" – ADVISING and STUDENT SUCCESS CURRICULUM
- **Financial education**, financial literacy, FAFSA completion, understanding of the costs of college attendance, awareness of the financial resources to enable college attendance, assistance applying for scholarships – FINANCIAL LITERACY CURRICULUM and FAFSA/Financial Aid WORKSHOPS
- **Academic Preparation**: Early college course opportunities in high school – AP courses, concurrent/dual enrollment, IB courses, – CONCURRENT/DUAL ENROLLMENT
- **Academic readiness** – Academic rigor, ACT preparatory courses; bridge courses to address remediation needs – SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAMS
- **Mentoring/coaching** – personal preparation – COLLEGE AND CAREER COACHES for EACH DISTRICT
- **College visits and career shadowing programs**
- **College application process**: Assistance with college application preparation, essay writing, FAFSA application, course/program selection
- **Non-cognitive skill development** – SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- **Parental Involvement**: Involve parents, mentors, guardians - Parental meetings to assist with understanding of expectations and rigors of college, expenses for HE, financial aid resources, career opportunities, types of colleges/universities – PARENTAL/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
- **Professional Development** for middle and high school faculty/counselors: Training for high school and middle school faculty and counselors on college programs, application process, expectations, etc.
- **Measurable outcomes:** ability to collect data to determine success of programs

Appendix D. Remediation Work Group Report

Report from the ADHE Remediation Task Force
Short-Term Implementation Strategies

What goal(s) of the plan will be addressed?

Goal 1: Raise the completion and graduation rates of colleges and universities by 10%.
This goal will be addressed by suggesting a myriad of approaches that will help students to get through remediation faster, that will provide avenues for transcending semester frameworks so that progression from remediation to college-level work is not hampered by arbitrary semester start and end dates, and that will help students complete a baccalaureate in four years and an associate degree in two.
It is important to address one of the sub-points under Goal 1 in the original source document: *reduce the percentage of students needing remediation to prepare them for college level work*. The Remediation Task Force is in agreement that this goal is not possible since higher education institutions, particularly ones that have no minimum entry requirements, simply accept students where they are educationally when they arrive. We believe the intention here is not to reduce the percentage of remediation necessary, but rather to maximize the speed at which students master the necessary numeracy and literacy skills to proceed and be successful in mainstream college work. Shortening time to skill development reduces the students being held back by restrictions that time and lack of money impose on completing academic programs.
Goal 2: By fall 2018, increase the enrollment of adult students, age 25 to 54, by 50%.
Specifically, one of the subset goals the Remediation Task Force believes it can address is to reduce *the remedial course enrollments for adults by 50% through alternative means of preparing adults for college-level work*. Addressing this goal will overlap and complement the goals of raising completion and graduation rates
Goal 3: Raise the attainment rates of underserved student groups in the state by 10%.
Under this goal is the sub-goal to *raise completion rates of underserved student groups equal to other students*. The Remediation Task Force believes that the pedagogical processes used to speed up remediation and blend it with credit course instruction is completely consistent with helping underserved populations. Often it is a given that these populations lack financial resources. By minimizing cost to these groups with accelerated literacy and numeracy remediation, these often underserved at-risk students will experience success at a rate equivalent to that of other students.

Goal 4: Improve College affordability through effective resource allocation
The Remediation Task Force will address specifically the issue of lessening time to degree for students. By streamlining remediation, eliminating using whole semesters for remediation courses only, and coupling remediation with mainstream courses, students will lessen their time to degree and save money on additional semesters.

What changes are necessary to achieve progress toward the goals?

The following commentary does not present specific imperative changes. Rather, it addresses areas that will need to be reviewed and amended to work outside the boundaries with which most institutions are "comfortable." All of these topics arose in the discussions in the Remediation Task Force; these summaries are the imperfect reproductions of those discussions.

Measurement/metrics—The ability to use data to really measure student progress means tracking students and following students in ways that might make some in the academy feel uncomfortable. Data must be produced that can show a student's time on task, specific work processes on computer or digital based instruction, and the longitudinal follow through that students will or will not have to reach the competencies demonstrating their mastery of the subject. This kind of tracking will allow immediate intervention when a student is off track, off task, or simply not logging in to do the work. Many institutions are investing in these kinds of tools, and other institutions are finding that the data gathering opportunities they have are sufficient but need coordination and centralization. Even steps like students logging in with IDs to study labs for one-on-one or group tutoring can be monitored and become part of an individual student's profile that can be accessed by appropriate instructors and support staff to personally reach out if a student fails to stay on task.

Culture shift of people and institutions—Many institutions, staff, and faculty are lingering in the 20th century and have not moved into the 21st century. In the 20th century, input was the most important driving factor. Students were classed solely according to test scores and if the required score was reached, students were allowed to register, enter classes, and then fail or pass of their own accord. The counting of students only happened at the beginning of the semester, but no real counting happened at the end of the semester. Completion was not rewarded; starting was rewarded. This approach fit well with the various accrediting agencies who valued the number of books in a library, the number of tenured faculty, and the relative elite value of the student body as a sign of a healthy and productive institution, but paid little or no attention to actual production or success of graduates. Then the 21st century arrived. Suddenly the shift from input to outcome occurred. The question about success became "semesterly longitudinal" in that certainly the headcount at the beginning of the semester was important for budget issues of tuition, but the long term of how many completed a semester and with what level of success is now a question driving the analysis of institutions of higher education by legislators both state and national as well as accrediting bodies, who have adjusted their standards to 21st century criteria.

Thus, the changes necessary for progress include educating and shifting faculty, staff, and administration from seeing higher education as an input model to an output model. That will involve changing the way that faculty and staff are incentivized in both pay and professional status, how institutions are incentivized by the state to perform, and how students are managed for success rather than supporting their "free will" to perform or not perform. The point here is that change can happen and must happen, but that to speed that change, individuals and institutions must be incentivized to change, not punished into change.

Rethinking structure of time/semesters and access—In order to accelerate completion of remediation, institutions must have the institutional freedom to restructure semesters, cross semester boundaries, and generally ignore traditional semesters to maximize the learning a student needs to do to move forward and integrate quickly into a college mainstream collegiate program. This issue is connected to and part of the previous discussion about adopting a 21st century model of higher education. Current higher education semesters mimic not a 20th century model, but actually a 19th century agrarian model. It has nothing to do with the timing of how people learn or how quickly they can learn or how much time is actually needed for learning. Remedial students are most often just as "smart" as any mainstream student, but their learning styles and/or lifestyles do not match what has become a model of semester-based performance. Institutions need the flexibility to serve students with the time frames that suit them the best. That does not necessarily mean traditional semesters.

Budget and tuition—Budget and tuition are inextricably tied to traditional semesters and the traditional cycles of education. Budget is based on tuition dollars which by tradition and practice are collected at the beginnings of semesters. Thus, when an institution tries to transcend the boundaries of traditional semesters, the issue is complicated by the fiduciary boundaries that guide fee/tuition collection. ADHE has a number of restrictive rules that complicate how students are counted or if students are counted if semester boundaries are violated. Thus, speeding the process of remediation by transcending the 19th century-based semester system is stymied by numerous rules and regulations that preclude the intake of tuition except when it falls within the purview of a traditional semester.

Technology—Technology is expensive, ever changing, and essential. It is necessary to run the business function of an institution, to track and monitor students, and to be a pedagogical tool in a whole variety of ways for students. It can be the tutor for the student that never gets tired of repeating itself or replaying a learning video or reissuing a test. Today's students are comfortable with technology although many in lower socioeconomic stratas know phone technology and not computer technology. So smart phones, tablets, and laptop computers all need access to institutional backbones along with institutional software that supports all those platforms and can keep them from shutting down by hunting out and euthanizing harmful malware that is constantly trying to enter the central data system. The essential aspect of technology as a teaching and advising and monitoring tool cannot be overstated. The cost of educating the educators—getting the training and support for teachers using new technologies—is another ongoing cost. The complexity of it also cannot be overstated.

Support personnel and facilities—Pedagogical and advisory "oversight" of student activity leading to success is something that happens, for the most part, outside the classroom. The Remediation Task Force spent a lot of time talking about the importance of these outside-the-classroom ancillary support activities. Remediation, if it is to be effective, is not a wholesale activity. It requires dedicated staff and faculty outside the classroom to tutor, advise, consult, and mentor students who are often trying to overcome the effects of an unstable home life and earn enough money to survive in addition to trying to achieve their academic goals. The bottom line here is that people and facilities to support their work cost money that is not generated via tuition and fees, so resources will be a huge issue as the state makes its way toward its goal of more educated Arkansans.

Rethinking failure and competency—Part of the cultural change that must happen in the professorate is the preoccupation with passing and failing being a "one shot" activity, meaning that testing is high stakes in that each can be taken only once and all preparation to take the test must happen prior to the first and initial test. In the traditional academic culture, tests were not created to measure knowledge or be used as a learning tool to find out who needs bolstering with extra help. Tests are used to actively discriminate between and among those who know and those who don't know. With non-traditional learners, this traditional test-and-fail approach is counter-productive because that is not how they learn as adults. Most remedial students can reach competency as measured by testing if given the time and opportunity to fail and then retake tests. But this approach violates the cultural norm found in most institutions of higher education. It must change or the opportunity for non-traditional learners to succeed will be severely hampered.

The analysis of student skills—Both academic and psychological testing will yield greater analysis and more data on each individual, but in many institutions this type of walk into a student's life is considered inappropriate. Safeguards must be built in each institution to insure the privacy and security of the information, but more importantly the challenge will be to have the faculty embrace psychological and attitudinal testing as a normal part of doing business and not as a technology enhanced way to extract personal information from students.

***What strategies have been adopted by institutions in Arkansas or Other States*?**

Since several of the committees—specifically College Readiness, Student Success Innovation, and Adult Learners—will overlap with the work of the Remediation Task Force, the Remediation Task Force created specific assumptions about remedial or developmental students: *the Committee assumed that for the purpose of gathering this information, a "remedial college student is one who has been admitted into either a community college or a university whose test scores on a standardized test such as the ACT or on an institutional evaluation or some combination of the two place that student into the category of needing to upgrade their numeracy or literacy skills in order to be successful in mainstream college or university coursework."*

With the new standards for placement recently established by ADHE, the discussion of the committee changed somewhat in that now each institution can establish evidence- based reasons for specific remediation placement guidelines. Thus, institutions can place students based on the specific populations that any individual institution serves. This new approach will hasten institutions' abilities to be creative and evaluate students using more than just one variable of a standardized test score. The Remediation Task Force is not making the placement variables a topic of our conversation at this point, but rather we are looking at strategies that can be used once a student is actually identified and his or her needs are identified.

Specific strategies adopted

- Traditional courses at a variety of levels in reading, writing, math that are semester long. This approach varied between community colleges and universities in that community colleges usually had more levels based on the more pronounced needs of their students. Universities tended to have one course level that met students at different levels.
- Many institutions, both community colleges and universities, used a co-requisite approach that combined the remediation course with a mainstream course. For example, a reading class might be combined with a discipline-specific course so that the reading skills can be developed for a college-level class.

- This model is often modified to meld the two together into one elongated course that encompasses more credit hours, therefore eliminating the distinction between the remedial skill-building part of the course and the subject matter part of the course.
- Some institutions have instituted individualized instruction within the context of a class or lab, testing specific competencies along the way in a self-paced class that is individualized instruction via technology. The faculty member is responsible for monitoring student performance, tutoring where necessary, cajoling where appropriate, and pushing students to completion. Some institutions have created the opportunity for students to immediately matriculate into the college course once they have completed the requisite numbers of modules successfully. This approach is particularly common in math remediation.
- Some institutions are using abbreviated semesters—most choosing to divide the semester into 8-week segments allowing students to complete two remediation courses or a remediation course and then the following requisite course in math or writing.
- Some institutions re-evaluate at the beginning of the semester whether a student has higher skills than prior testing and evaluation indicated and allow late entry into the appropriate class.
- Related to the above is the practice at some institutions of giving a refresher short course to students prior to placement evaluation, thereby maximizing their ability to place as high as possible and helping them to avoid unnecessary lower- level instruction.
- Some institutions are using face-to-face instruction accompanied by online exercises that students can do at home or in a study skills lab at the institution.
- Some institutions have instituted policies that preclude a student withdrawing from a **"**high stakes" remediation class.
- Some institutions have instituted evaluations of student motivation, often nicknamed "grit," in order to identify students who might need tutoring and advisement to be successful.

The strategies discussed above are just examples of some of the strategies used and do not constitute an exhaustive list. Many of them are consistent with *Complete College America* recommendations. In coordination with these specific pedagogical approaches, most institutions are moving to a much more integrated model of monitoring student performance in real time. Some institutions are doing that with the tools they already have and some are investing in companies that specialize in creating student performance "dashboards". While these activities are not specifically remediation pedagogy, they do have an impact on knowing where, when, and who to focus pedagogical approaches and what pedagogies are most successful with each individual student.

One member of the Remediation Task Force supplied a matrix of pedagogical practices at the universities in the state that was compiled and shared at the Arkansas Developmental Education Conference. It is an addendum at the end of this report. A more exhaustive search of each institution in the state for their remediation practices will follow in the long report.

What Barriers, if any, exist that make adoption of the identified strategies difficult?

Some of the barriers were tangentially discussed in the second question in regard to "what changes are necessary to achieve progress toward the goals." Changes and barriers are really inseparable in a

complex amalgam like state public higher education. Key barriers are in some cases restated below, but some of them bear mentioning more than once.

- Culture of teaching and learning—From faculty willingness to be trained and use different modalities to support learning to the limitations of the 19th century- based semester boundaries, academic culture, which has its historical roots firmly planted in the 12th century, has generally not caught up to the 21st century. "First adopter" faculty who are engaged with technology and the impact it can have on students and on monitoring student progress are leading the way in many institutions with more or less success. Particularly at the university level, creativity in teaching tends to be classroom and individual faculty focused which does not support scalability of great ideas across the board—the great ideas tend to stay trapped in the classroom with the individual teacher.
- Culture of administration—If the faculty and on-ground staff involved in the teaching/learning process are often stuck, so are administrators, who often are buried in bottom-line details of schedules and budgets and making everything fit within the 19th century semester. In order to maintain a financially viable institution, that is what is required because of the funding model that currently exists. But unfortunately, continuing to do the same thing is not going to net significantly different results nor will it spur "intraprenuerialism"—the creativity of new approaches and new ideas within an organization.
- Practice of state funding and expectations—constant institutional growth and unmitigated institutional success without failure is the basis of the current funding formula. For that reason, change will be difficult because, for change to happen, so does some failure, and constant growth is not realistic in a flat demography. In a tight state budget, the alleged motivation of performance funding is really just a matter of institutions struggling from being punished for failing. Currently, because of the preoccupation with reducing higher education budgets under the guise of efficiency, the model does not include support for success or the leeway to try something and fail.
- Cost of technology—Innovation is largely contingent on how digital an institution can be. Technology and its support costs, such as training, are becoming a strain on most state institutions' budgets. The state makes no differential in capital costs between buildings and infrastructure—and tracking students to maximize their individual success takes infrastructure, hardware, and software, all of which continues to rise in cost and have an increasingly short life as updates and major technology changes increase in volume and speed.
- A barrier is making education accessible and available and affordable. Within the constraints of budget and culture, meeting individual students where their individual needs are is made more difficult by the confluence of all the above issues.
-

What partners, external to higher education, will be important to implementation of the identified strategies?

Partnerships in achieving strategies are really the most inspiring part of how we can address the remediation needs in the state. The following partners serve as the basis for collaboration in helping students emerge from high school or adult situations with the requisite entry-level college skills.

- Public schools will need to be higher education's partner. Higher education institutions and public schools can work together to identify remediation needs in high school and address them before the student graduates from high school.
- Adult learning centers and higher education can be partners in the same way for adults as higher education is with public schools for school-age students. Adult education centers across the state could be partners with the local higher education institution.
- Business and industry partners can help by volunteering to tutor or to run seminars about job fields that are available if they can mainstream and get a certificate or two-year degree.
- Organizations like Complete College America can be partners in research and pedagogical support and training.

What resources (technological, human, physical, and financial) are necessary to implement identified strategies?

The summary below is not meant to diminish the broadness or significance of the question, but to simply put forward the "big picture" responses knowing there are many details, caveats, and interpretations behind the list.

- State support for technology infrastructure and greater connectivity with broad band across the state, especially in rural areas.
- Human resources will involve the teachers, support personnel, and administration necessary to teach, manage, and support populations in higher education that have not had access before.
- Physical plant support in the form of supporting the long-term debt structure the state must take on to support building 21st century buildings that can maximize learning for students.
- Financial resources—all the above takes money to accomplish.

Appendix E. Student Success Strategies Work Group Report

Master Plan Focus Areas
Short-Term Implementation Strategies
Student Success Innovations
April 2016

Which goal(s) of the plan will be addressed by the identified strategies?
GOAL 1: Raise completion and graduation rates of colleges and universities by 10%.
• Raise first year retention rates of students to SREB regional averages

What changes are necessary to achieve progress toward the goal(s)?
Short-Term

1. Develop and publish a suite of research-based student success initiatives that propel students through to completion.
2. Create financial incentives to encourage both institutional and student behaviors that increase student persistence and completion.
3. Invest professional development dollars in statewide structures that create intensive, authentic faculty engagement and move efforts to increase college complication toward a deeper focus on teaching and learning.
4. Support dual admission agreements between community colleges and universities allowing students to concurrently enroll.
5. Set policy for common course numbering for lower division general education courses for community colleges and universities.
6. Support changes to the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship to include a need based component with credit hour completion requirements.
7. Policy requiring institutions publish term-by-term degree maps for undergraduate programs.
8. Enforce policy guaranteeing admission with junior status for students who have met the designated lower- division transfer requirements and earned a designated transfer associate's degrees.
9. Recommend cohort (learning community) models for high risk students.

Long Term

1. Develop a statewide data system that track students through postsecondary educational experiences and into the labor market.
2. Create a statewide student success center.
3. College awareness programming for elementary and secondary students.

What strategies have been adopted by institutions in Arkansas or other states?

1. Student Success Initiatives:
    a. Guided Pathways: Arizona State University, Florida State University, Georgia State University, Accelerate TEXAS, and The City Universities of New York (CUNY).
    b. Financial Literacy: Syracuse University, Colorado Mountain College, Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas, University of Texas-Pan America, California State University, and San Jacinto College.

    c. Wrap-Around Services: Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas, Los Angeles Harbor College, and Big Bend Community College.
2. Financial Incentives:
    a. Incentivized Performance Funding: Nevada, Texas, Florida, Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington.
    b. Student Incentives for Completion: Ball State University, Texas, Louisiana, Nevada System of Higher Education, and the State of Indiana.
3. Professional Development for Deeper Learning: Abilene Christian University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Wake Forest University, and University of Massachusetts.
4. Dual Admissions: Tennessee Act of 2010, Temple University, Iowa State University, and Texas A & M.
5. Common Course Numbering: Tennessee Act of 2010, Texas, Colorado, Florida, and Nevada.
6. Need Based State-Aid: Indiana, Arizona, Washington, North Carolina, and Minnesota.
7. Published Academic Road Maps: Arizona State University, University of Florida, Illinois Valley Community College, and the State of Indiana.
8. Statewide Transfer: Florida, North Carolina, and Texas.
    a. Transfer with Junior Status: Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Florida, and Tennessee
9. Cohort (learning community) models: Bunker Hill Community College, Indiana Tech, and Franklin and Marshall College

What barriers, if any, exist that make adoption of the identified strategies difficult?

- Institutional cultures
- Funding limitations
- Legislative action required
- Technology factors, i.e., varying institutional platforms

What partners, external to higher education, will be important to implementation of the identified strategies?

Funding partners such as Kresge Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Next Gen Learning, and Anne Casey Foundation.

Research partners such as Complete College America, Community College Research Center, Jobs for the Future, and Institute for Higher Education Policy.

What resources (technological, human, physical, & financial) are necessary to implement identified strategies?

- ADHE staff
- Financial support
- Performance incentives for colleges and universities for improvements
- Student success metrics need to be developed
- Predictive analytic modeling system
- Professional Development funding

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Appendix F. Affordability Work Group Report

The Priority of Affordability

In order for Arkansas to meet the demand for attaining additional graduation credentials and degrees, it is imperative that our public institutions of higher education remain competitive and affordable. In recent years, we have confronted the growing challenge of containing tuition costs and fee increases that result from the lack of new state investment. Over the last five years, Arkansas's policymakers have struggled to balance the state budget while also maintaining educational adequacy and working to fund Medicaid and prison expansion. This has severely strained the availability of state funding for institutions of higher education. Expectations of accountability have risen significantly for the institutions, but no resources have been allocated to address these increased demands.

As state funding has remained flat for higher education, boards of trustees have felt compelled to increase tuition and fees disproportionately if they are to maintain the quality of education and cover rising costs. This, in turn, has placed a greater financial burden on the students of our state and their parents. However, 88 percent of families are willing to stretch financially to afford college for their children. [Sallie Mae Info – How America pays for college 2015] This burden causes students to delay degree attainment, either by not enrolling immediately after graduation from high school or by taking a smaller, more affordable class load.

Colleges and universities have attempted to combat rising tuition costs through reallocation of funds and other efficiencies. However, most solutions result only in one-time savings that are not sustainable over time. A long-term, integrated plan, with the goal of keeping college affordable for students, will help Arkansas create greater economic prospects and workforce-development opportunities.

Affordability Plan Goals

1. Reducing the time required for students to receive a degree or credential. Successful degree attainment is directly affected by reducing the time-to-completion process. Succeeding in making college affordable will help students complete degree and credential programs faster and allow them to enter the workforce more quickly.

2. Allocating 25 percent of state scholarship funds to needs-based programs. Targeting limited state scholarship funding to those students with the greatest financial need will help mitigate affordability issues.

3. Maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness in spending currently available resources to ensure that institutional and state goals are being met.
    a. **Increase core expense ratio**. WE must find ways to ensure that resources are allocated in ways that are most effective to helping prepare and educate students. This should include increasing faculty salaries to the SREB average.
    b. **Examine Administrative Staffing and Salaries**. It is critical to attract and retain talented higher education administrators, but this must be balanced with the needs of the students and the state.

Barriers to College Affordability

Rising tuition costs are the most significant barrier to college affordability. Tuition increases occur for many reasons. Public institutions are funded from two main sources: state general revenue and tuition; and fee revenue from students. As state funding has remained flat for higher education in Arkansas over the last five years, institutions have been forced to raise tuition rates to keep up with rising costs. These

costs are greater than just the price of inflation. The Department of Higher Education surveyed Arkansas's institutions to determine the main causes of increasing tuition.
Institutions submitted a wide array of reasons the tuitions continue to escalate. The most common reason given was the higher cost of technology. As time passes, it is extremely important for colleges and universities to keep up with trends in new technology. This is paramount if we are to maintain a well-educated student body ready for the workforce. Along with upgrading technology, many institutions are working to become more involved with economic and workforce activities in their region and in the state, and this also contributes to rising costs.
Numerous institutions also mentioned the accelerating costs of employee benefits, including health care, which are a source for increases in tuition. In addition, many institutions operate with faculty salaries below the SREB minimum, and desire to increase tuition in order to pay competitive salaries to faculty.

Institutions also noted that security costs have multiplied as they work to keep students safer on their campuses. Other increases were attributed to rising costs of utilities, scholarship costs, and more emphasis on student services. Student Services is an especially important category – the quality of student services provided is directly related to student retention.

Many of these costs are unavoidable if colleges and universities want to remain competitive in the industry. The two main revenue sources for institutions of higher ed. continue to be state funding and tuition and fees. In order to balance their budgets, these institutions must consider tuition and fee increases if their state's funding remains flat.
Of course, raising tuition is not always a guarantee of more revenue. Institutions must determine the limit to place on tuition charges that will not deter students from attending. Without an increase in state funding, the only way to increase enrollment and reduce tuition costs is to find more efficient and creative ways of funding the state's institutions of higher education.
Financial aid should exist to help students afford their education However, many factors, such as lack of funding, lack of understanding the process, and financial-aid practices and policies can discourage students from using this resource to help them afford their education.

- **Financial Literacy** - The financial literacy of students attending college can directly affect the affordability of their college experience. Often, students (and in many cases their parents) do not understand the consequences of paying for college with students loans, and are unaware of other options, including scholarships and grants, that may be available to them to help support their education. This is especially true for first-generation college students, who generally have no experience in this arena. Students who are unaware of the option of scholarships may miss deadlines and then turn to student loans as a last resort. Student loans can be dangerous for a financially illiterate student, especially one living in poverty. For these students, the promise of money *right now* could outweigh the consequences of having to pay a loan back after graduation. This may cause a student to take out the maximum student loan, which makes college seem affordable in the short-term, but is actually very detrimental to affordability in the long-term. **RECOMMENDATION:** Institutions could work with K-12 educators to teach financial literacy to students early on. Institutions could also implement policies to help students understand the true cost of taking on debt through student loans, and to better comprehend ways to maximize efficiency in borrowing, either through advising or a first-year experience

course.

- **Student Loan Debt -** When students begin to pay back their student loans, they often see that loan money as "the cost of college," regardless of how any excess loan funds may have been spent. The media has also been adamant in the last few years that student-loan debt is generally a serious burden, increasing the perception that college is unaffordable. In reality, student loans can be an ideal method of financing a college education when used responsibly. **RECOMMENDATION:** Institutions can do more to emphasize and encourage the responsible use of student loans for paying for college.

- **Financial Aid Practices and Policies –** As colleges and universities expand their enrollment, administrators begin to rely more heavily on online applications and email to communicate with students. In some cases, due to the large amount of information necessary to complete an application as well as the difficulty of using unfamiliar web systems, this has become a highly complicated process for students to complete. This, coupled with a lack of interaction with staff, may cause students to avoid the process. As students may be generally uninterested in or unaware of financial aid, a lack of communication with parents also creates difficulty in meeting deadlines and completing applications for financial aid. **RECOMMENDATION:** Institutions would be wise to audit their financial-aid application processes to see if they are maximally efficient and easy for students to understand.

- **Need-based Financial Aid Programs –** The state's current need-based financial aid programs, the GO! Opportunities Grant and the Workforce Improvement Grant, are generally considered to be less effective than hoped for. In 40 years of Pell Grants, over a half trillion dollars has realized only a three percent increase in degree completion. This demonstrates that providing more financial aid is not always enough to make college more affordable – it must also be designed to work for the students it seeks to serve.

Strategies to Address Affordability

Reducing the time it takes students to receive a degree or credential. In order to reduce time to degree and increase completion rates, the following best practices are recommended:

- Clearly defined degree plans for first-time entering students to help them better understand the path and direction that they should be taking in order to efficiently earn their degree. A clearly defined plan would ideally include the suggested program course schedule by semester for any given academic degree or credential program.
- A summer student-developmental program would help to prepare the most at-risk students to successfully begin their academic program. The state should coordinate a strategy that institutions of higher education can use to maximize effectiveness and reduce costs. For example, the state of Mississippi requires students, who have not met minimum standards of admission, to complete a summer-developmental program. (Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning – Board of Trustees Policies and Bylaws.)
- Effective advising for both class schedules and financial aid is critical to student success in completing degree or credential programs in a timely and affordable manner. Institutions could assess their advising practices to determine the current success of their advising programs. A best practice could be to proactively survey and monitor students' understanding of their financial-aid and academic-progression status to determine the effectiveness of advising.
- Institutions could review their enrollment and financial-aid online processes to determine if the application is straightforward enough for students to easily understand and navigate. If the process is too difficult, students could miss opportunities for earning or renewing scholarships. A difficult application process could also deter a student from applying to an institution at all.

Allocating 25 percent of state scholarship funds to needs-based programs. The state of Arkansas is currently at six percent of state scholarship funding being spent on needs-based scholarships. Arkansas is fourth lowest in the nation in spending on needs-based scholarship programs. The following proposal for state financial aid would bring the state closer to a goal of 25 percent of needs-based program funding.

Maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the spending of currently available resources to ensure that the institutional and state goals are being met. When it comes to institutional spending, the focus should be on the students, and how institutions can best prepare them to enter the state's workforce. Institutions could be more aware of the degree needs of the state, and work harder to draw students toward those degrees. In order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness with regard to increasing the core expense ratio, the following best practices are recommended:

- **Shared Services** – Institutions are encouraged to explore and consider shared services with other higher education entities. Although shared services may not always be fiscally feasible, in many cases sharing services can give institutions various financial benefits. Such sharing could produce efficiencies and promote better contract negotiation, since combined institutions would have greater bargaining power. Further, unnecessary duplication of effort could be minimized and personnel time could be streamlined. For example, the University of Arkansas System campuses recently procured a common learning management system (LMS), which reduced the proportionate cost for all of the entities, while at the same time giving them an expanded product.

- **Capital Improvement Funds –** Institutions receive no dedicated funds for capital projects and critical maintenance. This lack of funding for institutions often leads to postponing needed repairs and a deterioration of the institutions' assets. With Educational & General (E&G) assets of $5,576,542,756 (replacement value from the Facilities Audit Program [FAP]), the current deferred maintenance need for institutions is $2,790,511,607 (from FAP), with $194,982,151 in critical needs. Due to the lack of financial support for capital projects and critical maintenance from the state, the cost of these repairs and improvements are passed on to the students. Students should not have to bear the entire cost of maintaining an institution's campus, as it should be at least partially the state's responsibility to maintain its assets. **RECOMMENDATION:** A dedicated fund should be established to match the institutions' investment for capital. This way, institutions would have more flexibility in funding these projects.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) –** Utilization of Public-Private Partnerships, such as privatized student housing, could be encouraged as a method of creating efficiencies. These partnerships can be mutually beneficial to both the institution and the private partner. However, the greatest beneficiary of these partnerships is the students, who realize a cost savings and enhance their college experience through better facilities with no related debt service. **RECOMMENDATION:** The Arkansas Department of Higher Education should hold forums to help institutions understand the benefits of these partnerships and to learn how to make them work to their advantage.
- **Reduce Administrative Costs –** Currently, there are no metrics for benchmarking core expense ratios for public institutions of higher education in Arkansas. Without this critical information, it is nearly impossible for institutions and policymakers to understand the ways that administrative costs compare across institutions. These reports would provide only a benchmark for institutions to understand their current expense ratio; however, this would prompt institutions to develop a plan for reducing administrative costs. **RECOMMENDATION:** The Arkansas Department of Higher Education should change and improve current financial reports to better collect information necessary for calculating the core expense ratio for an institution. Institutions could use this information in determining ways to reduce administrative costs that are unnecessarily elevated.
- **Creating a Thriving Academic Community –** While discussing affordability, it is very important to keep in mind that affordability must not come at the cost of not providing quality education and services to students. Faculty salaries at public institutions of higher education in Arkansas currently fall below the national average. In order to retain and attract quality faculty members to our institutions, this must be corrected. **RECOMMENDATION:** Institutions could formulate realistic plans to increase faculty salaries to the national average over time by dedicating a portion of each institution's income to this goal. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) should work with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) to create a personnel policy that allows institutions more flexibility in increasing these salaries.

Key Partners for College Affordability

The Arkansas Department of Education will be a necessary partner in helping Arkansas high schools collaborate with institutions of higher education to develop financial literacy courses that will educate high school seniors about fiscal responsibility. Courses would include information about using student loans responsibly, the availability of scholarships and grants, and should even include more in-depth personal finance training, such as managing checking accounts and credit cards. Students who are more

financially literate are less likely to find themselves in a financial hardship that could lead accumulating an overwhelming amount of student-loan debt based upon their chosen career path.

State policymakers, the gatekeepers to institutional funding and regulations, should work as partners with institutions of higher education to achieve college affordability. By working with the governor and state legislators, institutions of higher education could find more economical ways to bring the possibility of attending college to the citizens of Arkansas. This partnership could be achieved through more transparency and with an increased focus on outcomes.

Business and industry in the state of Arkansas are critical partners to collaborative efforts to educate and train students, and could alleviate reliance on other sources of funds. When local businesses invest in higher education, the benefits are not only realized by the institutions and their students, but also by the participating businesses and the local and state economy, as well. This allows the educational institution to more efficiently and affordably produce graduates who will expand the workforce.

Helpful Resources for Achieving Affordability

In order to better understand how institutions allocate current resources, we must be able to better understand each institution's core expense ratio. This ratio measures the amount of funding that is expended for categories that are proven to increase graduation rates, namely instruction; academic support; research; public service; and student services, as compared to an institution's expenditures that are for institutional support.

One much-needed resource for institutions is funding for capital and deferred maintenance projects. Establishing a dedicated system for assisting institutions in completing such projects would allow colleges and universities to direct financial resources back to academic endeavors. When institutions are forced to use previously allocated funding to other areas, instead of resolving emergency deferred maintenance issues, the academic programs suffer from that loss. By helping institutions stay current on maintenance needs, they are less likely to find it necessary to divert money from academics to address a dire situation.

The final resource necessary to achieving affordability is simply more data. In many cases, institutions are unable to understand how they rank among their peers due to a lack of available information. By collecting more vital information from colleges and universities, these institutions and our state's policymakers would be better able to make well-informed decisions with regard to college affordability.

Appendix G. Non-Formula Funding Work Group Report

ASSESSMENT OF THE FUNDING NEEDS FOR THE NON-FORMULA INSTITUTIONS AND OBJECTIVE MEASURES TO DETERMINE EACH INSTITUTION IS MEETING ITS MISSION

Introduction and Purpose

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), as a part of implementation of the Master Plan, has established several committees to propose strategies and measures to assist it in implementing the Master Plan. One group - Institutional Funding - includes a sub-group whose charge is to assess the funding needs of non-formula institutions. (Appendix A - Members of the Non-Formula Work Group.)

The purpose of the Institutional Funding committee, as stated on the ADHE website, is the following:

State funding for higher education, through both financial aid programs and institutional funding, must align with the statewide objective of improving educational attainment. To that end, institutional funding formulas should be based on metrics which align with state goals and should provide rewards to institutions which work to achieve these goals. In addition to a funding formula for traditional institutions, a goal of the master plan is to determine the best way to assess [the] funding needs of non-formula institutions.

The Institutional Funding committee is working to establish one set of performance-based measures for all formula institutions. The Non-formula work group is likewise developing a means to assess the funding needs of each unique entity, as well as and objective measure that will determine whether each institution's mission is being met.
In addition to the charge detailed above, the work group has been tasked with addressing two questions the Director of ADHE asked of this group.
1. The appropriate means by which to evaluate whether an institution is meeting its mission on an annual basis and an appropriate funding level; and
2. The development of a process to assist ADHE in recommending when a new entity should be added to the non-formula category of institutions.
Due to the diversity of missions of the non-formula institutions, the work group asked each to submit a brief history, its goals and suggested measurable objectives appropriate for their missions. The non-formula institutions submitted written reports in January, and meetings and presentations were held for each institution during February/March. Afterwards, the work group requested a narrowing of the reports to reflect no more than five measurable objectives for each institution.

Defining Non-Formula Institutions

Currently, there is not a formal definition for a non-formula institution. The informal definition used by ADHE is "non-formula entities either do not generate FTE students or generate a level that is minimal compared to the scope of the entity's mission."
Who are Non-Formula institutions and why do they exist?

There are a variety of reasons non- formula institutions have been established:
Assist State Economic Development Efforts - UALR's Research and Public Service Units APS unit (Research and Public Service) originally called lREC which was formed legislatively to support the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. The University of Arkansas's Research and Technology Park assists in the start-up and development of new and existing businesses. The University of Arkansas's World Trade Center is central and a vital component of the economic development efforts throughout the state and abroad. Henderson State University's Community Development Corporation also serves the region's business and industry needs.

1890's Land Grant - UAPB's non-formula unit was established to foster scientific research as a requirement of the federal government, and in this capacity receives federal funds that must be matched by state funds.
Assist Important State Training Needs - several units were established by the legislature to serve training needs throughout the state - Southern Arkansas University Tech's Environmental Training Academy and Fire Training Academy, and The University of Arkansas's Criminal Justice Institute to provide continuing education training to the state's law enforcement community.

Educational Units - the University of Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts and the Clinton School of Public Service are two institutions that meet specialized niches within the state. The two state university system offices are also included - the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas State University system offices.
Statewide Needs in Healthcare. Agriculture. and Information Technology - The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, in addition to overseeing an academic medical center and hospital, UAMS provides academic programs in medicine and allied health for future physicians, nurses, pharmacists and others throughout the state. The University Of Arkansas Division Of Agriculture includes both the agricultural experiment stations where cutting-edge research is conducted, but also operates county offices in all areas of the state through the cooperative extension service component of the Division. The Arkansas Research Education and Optical Network (ARE-ON) provides vital connections for campuses across the state to share large files of data, to communicate seamlessly and to leverage its resources for the award of extramural funding.

Regional Needs for Workforce Training - the ADTEC/ADWIRED consortium of five academic institutions in the delta region of the state operated by Arkansas State University – Mid South provides critical workforce training programs for business and industry vital to their livelihoods.

Preservation of Cultural Treasures and Promotion of Tourism - Arkansas State University Heritage Museums, university of Arkansas Garvan Woodland Gardens, University of Arkansas's Archaeological Survey and the University of Arkansas's Pryor Center serve our collective need to preserve our way of life, culture, and history.
Protection of our most vulnerable - higher education institutions must tap into ways that are responsive to state needs by harnessing our collective expertise to solve a problem or be a part of a solution. Two great examples are Northwest Arkansas Community College's Child Protection and Training Center and the University of Arkansas's Rural Education in Autism and Related Disabilities. Both serve to protect children and assist in addressing maters where outside assistance is often needed.

Funding the Non-Formulas

There are 23 non-formula institutions. Some have been in existence for a number of years, others for a shorter period. Some have received funding from the state while others have not. Most, if not all, of the more recent non-formula institutions have received recommendations for funding from the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB), but have not received funding as virtually no new funding has been provided to any non-formula institutions with small limited exceptions.

Addressing Consideration of Newly Proposed Non-Formula Institutions in Future Years

All serve vital missions, however, since funding has been relatively flat for the last few years for higher education as a whole, it causes us to ask whether any new non-formula institutions should be added to those currently receiving a recommendation in future years and for future funding cycles. We do not believe it is fiscally responsible to do so. Recently, the AHECB adopted a policy that halted the addition of any new 2-year or 4-year institution. Perhaps a similar approach would be useful for consideration of any new non-formula institutions.

As an alternative, if a proposed non-formula institution is submitted to the AHECB for funding, perhaps the following characteristics may be useful:

- Does it contribute positively to a state-wide or regional need?
- Does it have an economic impact?
- Does it have social impact?
- What would happen if it didn't exist?
- ls its function part of an institutional mission?
- ls it legislatively mandated - federal and/or state?
- ls there another possible method of funding?

Assessment of Funding Needs

Base funding levels exist for a number of institutions, though not all. All institutions need a base funding level with an inflationary increase when possible.

Evaluation of Meeting the Mission

Though the work group requested measurable objectives, it was difficult to determine how some institutions would necessarily increase its current activities. Each non-formula institution, however, should file an annual report outlining how it has operated, at a minimum, by maintaining the measures it has identified.

The following represents what each non-formula institution submitted as its measurable objectives with a brief description of its mission and goals.

Non-Formula Entities

Summary of Missions, Goals, and Objectives

The following provides a summary of the information that each non-formula entity presented to the Non-Formula subcommittee working on the ADHE Master Plan.

Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC)

Mission/Description

The Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC) was created in 2005 and is a collaborative of the five community colleges in eastern Arkansas to use their collective resources to address current and future workforce training needs of business and industry.

Purposes

- Provide a comprehensive regional approach to education and training
- Share faculty, curriculum, equipment, and best practices
- Provide a broader range of services at a lower overall cost
- Promote regional economic development

Goals/Objectives*

1. **Enhance work readiness of ADTEC region (purpose l; priority 2)**
   - Sustain or increase the number of industry credentials attained

, Sustain or increase the number of academic credentials

2. **Increase education and training capacity of ADTEC member colleges (purposes 2 and 3; priority 1)**
   - Sustain or increase strategic pursuit of external resources
   - Sustain or increase sharing of existing resources, where appropriate

3. **Promote economic development within the ADTEC region through collaboration with regional stakeholders (purpose 4; priority 3)**
   - Sustain or increase partnerships with new and existing business and industry
   - Sustain or increase collaboration with regional stakeholders to promote and support the ADTEC region

*The specific objectives are stated in measurable format and quantitative elements will be included upon completion of baseline development. Objectives map to the ADTEC purposes and were prioritized upon request

Arkansas Research and Educational Optical Network (ARE-ON)

Mission/Description

The mission of the Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network is to promote, develop, and apply advanced application and communication technologies to support and enhance education, research, public service, and economic development.

Goals:
Goal 1: Research - Advance the research mission and agenda of our member institutions.

Goal 2: Information Technology - Enable the use of next generation technology by providing a platform for innovation.

Goal 3: Sustainability - Position the organization to meet ongoing financial needs for operations and capital refresh.

Goal 4: Shared Services - Facilitate the use of shared services and resources among our members.

Goal 5: Cybersecurity - Create a network environment for our members that follows cybersecurity best practices.

Objectives:
Objective 1: Establish over the next two years a research cloud environment that seamlessly connects 35% of university owned research equipment into one interoperable domain.

Objective 2: Implement a cyber-security umbrella that will shield our members from most low, medium, and high level threats within twelve months.

Objective 3: Leverage partnerships with various vendors and professional organizations to facilitate consortium price contracts for best of breed information technology solutions.

Objective 4: Establish a disaster recovery solution and mutual aid agreement for our members with 80% participation within the next twelve months.

Objective 5: Directly connect the remaining three community colleges and research stations with dark fiber.

Arkansas State University System

Mission/Description

The ASU System includes Arkansas State University, a four-year research institution in Jonesboro with an instructional site in Paragould and degree centers in Beebe, Mountain Home, Blytheville, Forrest City, and West Memphis. Its two-year college institutions include ASU-Beebe, with additional campuses in Heber Springs and Searcy and an instructional site at Little Rock Air Force Base; ASU-Newport, with additional campuses in Jonesboro and Marked Tree; ASU-Mountain Home; and ASU Mid-South.

Arkansas State University in Jonesboro was established in 1909 as Arkansas State College. ASU-Beebe was established in 1927 as Junior Agricultural School of Central Arkansas and became part of ASU in 1955. ASU-Newport was founded as White River Vocational-Technical School in 1976 and became part of ASU-Beebe in 1992, but in 2002 the campus combined with Delta Technical Institute at Marked Tree to become a standalone institution. ASU-Mountain Home campus was established in 1995. Mid-South Community College in West Memphis became a member of the system in 2015 and changed its name to ASU Mid-South.

Goals:

The Arkansas State University System will ensure access to academic excellence and educational opportunities for Arkansans and all students who enroll in its component institutions by:

- Expanding participation through increasing access, enhancing diversity, improving service to non-traditional students, expanding use of distance education, and describing the advantages of continuing education.

- Increasing academic productivity through improved recruitment, increased retention, accelerated graduation, expanded continuing education opportunities, and advanced technologies.

- Producing graduates who are intellectually and ethically informed individuals with skills and knowledge to be capable of leadership, creative thinking, and being contributing citizens.

- Creating and disseminating new knowledge through research and investigation.

- Emphasizing the recruitment, hiring, and retention of the best possible faculty, staff, and administration.

- Expanding Arkansas's economic development by providing needed graduates, offering appropriate academic programs, marketing the system and its components as economic assets of the state, supporting research, and commercializing ideas and discoveries. Increasing, diversifying,and strategically allocating resources.

Objectives:

1) Ensure the long-term financial viability of the System by maintaining a proper debt capacity.

Actions: Evaluate capital project funding requests; provide competitive financing options, and monitor financial and market conditions related to maintaining current Moody's rating.
Measure: Maintain or improve current Moody's A1 rating.

2) Maintain the financial viability of a competitive System benefit package.

Actions: Engage the assistance of a benefits and retirement consultant to provide options for additional efficiencies. Coordinate with System Benefits Committee to ensure that benefits package is competitive to recruit and retain employees.
Measure: Maintain the needed fund balance reserve as projected by actuary

- Propose legislation that would positively impact higher education.

Actions: Identify key issues and opportunities in cooperation with other Arkansas institutions. Draft legislation. Educate and build support among members of the General Assembly.
Measure: Draft and introduce at least three bills in the 2017 session of the Arkansas General Assembly.

Arkansas State University Heritage Sites

Mission/Description

The Arkansas State University Heritage Sites Program researches, preserves and promotes heritage sites of national and regional significance in Arkansas to avoid losing structures, locations, and stories that are important to our state's history and heritage.

These sites serve as educational laboratories for students at all levels. A-State Heritage Studies Ph.D. students work with these sites through graduate assistantships, independent studies, practicums, case studies, field experiences, and dissertation research. Classes from A-State and other universities throughout Arkansas utilize the sites to enhance and apply classroom learning. Elementary and secondary school field trips, after-school enrichment programs, special educational events, and professional development workshops for teachers are directly tied to Arkansas curriculum frameworks.

These sites also serve as economic catalysts in communities where they are located by attracting heritage tourists from around the country, by stimulating other community investment, and by providing technical assistance to communities related to preservation- and heritage-based economic development strategies.

Goal 1: Serve as an educational laboratory for the A-State Heritage Studies Ph.D. program, as well as other university programs.

Goal Z: Provide experiential learning opportunities at all levels, from elementary and secondary students to adult learners.

Goal 3: Serve as an economic catalyst in rural communities by focusing on heritage tourism and preservation-based development strategies.

Goal 4: Bring visibility and recognition to the university and to the state through outreach to national and international audiences.

Objectives

A. Every student in the A-State Heritage Studies Ph.D. program will graduate with applied experience at heritage sites through case studies, graduate assistantships, independent study, practicums, or dissertation research. *Measures:* Annual review of Heritage Studies student projects and programming.

B. Heritage Sites will work with other A-State classes, classes at other universities, and elementary and secondary schools to provide classroom enrichment and applied learning. *Measures:* Number of class visits and projects, student field trips, in-school program delivery, professional development, after school and summer programs.

C. Heritage Sites will offer educational programs, retreats, special events, and site-related travel opportunities for adult learners. *Measures:* Number and diversity of events/activities and participation at such events/activities, including audience evaluations.

D. Visitors to heritage sites and their economic impacts on local communities will be increased annually. *Measures:* Number of visitors, travel-related expenditures, travel-related jobs, and travel-related local and state tax revenues.

E. Heritage Sites staff members will participate in civic club speaking engagements and presentations to learned societies, as well as submitting articles for both professional and general audience publications. *Measures:* Staff productivity reports.

F. F. The marketing efforts for Heritage Sites will include focus on regional and national media coverage (newspaper, radio, television, videos, and documentaries) and national and international groups. Measures: Evaluation of media coverage, as well as other national and international contacts.

Henderson State University Community Education Center

Mission/Description

The mission of the Henderson State University Community Education Center (CEC) is to provide training opportunities to businesses, industries, and individuals in Clark County and the surrounding area. These programs are created to enhance skills that will improve quality of life for area citizens, and assure a well-trained workforce that will enhance regional economic growth.

Goals/Objectives

- Meet the training needs of local industries.
- Open the facility to Business & Industry for in-house professional development and training.

a) Meet the training needs of local industries.
   i. Mail a needs survey annually to all Clark County industries to assess training needs and skill gaps. The results will be used to create training opportunities to address these needs. Training courses will be held for 100% of the needs identified when a class of at least 10 students can be formed. See attached Workforce Needs Assessment survey.
   ii. Administer Tests for the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate.

Goal is to test 50 individuals per academic year. A spreadsheet is kept that lists each test given and the certificate level achieved. See attached CRC spreadsheet.

iii. Monitor the Industrial Equipment Maintenance Technology (IEMT) partnership program to assure the outcomes meet industry needs. A question on the survey will include classes offered to the high school students through the IEMT program to determine if the courses continue to address the needs of industry.

b) Open the facility to Business & Industry for in-house professional development and training.
   i. A spreadsheet documenting the Center's use is kept and updated on a regular basis. See attached spreadsheet.
   ii. Surveys will be given to all groups using the facility. A goal of 90% satisfied responses will be strived for. See attached HSU Community Education Center Facility Survey.
   iii. Improvements will be made, when possible from the suggestions on the surveys.

Northwest Arkansas Community College Child Protection Training Center Mission/Description

Northwest Arkansas Community College -Child Protection Training Center (CPTC) serves as one of only three unique training centers in the United States. The Melba Shewmaker CPTC, partnered with Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center (Gundersen NCPTC), provides community education, professional training, technical assistance, publications, and curriculum support for Arkansans. The Melba Shewmaker CPTC includes hearing rooms, a court room, a fully functioning home used for simulations, interactive video capabilities and other flexible use space. The staff consists of nationally renowned experts in forensic interviewing, abuse prosecution, prevention education, mental health, crisis prevention, and advocacy. In the last five years, Melba Shewmaker CPTC has trained law enforcement officers, prosecutors, forensic interviewers, sexual assault nurse examiners, social workers, counselors, and other child protection workers from all seventy-five Arkansas counties. In 2015, 4,603 Arkansans received education from the training center.

Goals:

Melba Shewmaker CPTC works to significantly reduce all forms of child maltreatment through education, training, and prevention, while advocating for and serving children, adult survivors and communities. The training center aims to prepare all current and future child protection professionals to recognize, react and report the abuse of children. To that end, Melba Shewmaker CPTC plans to introduce *FIRST'M* Mandated Reporter Training to every higher education institution Arkansas within the next two years. *FIRST'M* is a comprehensive training that teaches mandated reporters the signs and symptoms of abuse. Mandated reporters will learn what steps to take when they suspect child maltreatment: Find a safe location, Identify your concerns, build Rapport with the child, Seek details, and Tell the hotline. Through *FIRST,* educators will learn to respond in manner that protects the child while also preserving the integrity of the investigation and prosecution.

Additionally Melba Shewmaker CPTC endeavors to provide *Empower Me'"* and *FIRST'"* to every student and teacher in the Arkansas public school system within the next five years. These trainings deliver age appropriate body safety programming to grades K-12, provide mandated reporters with best practices for addressing a disclosure of abuse, and call for a parent night to inform parents of the program content and encourage their involvement outside of the classroom. *Empower Me'"* is a train-the-trainer program that will allow each school district to offer the course in future years without depending on the training center. Communities are best served when the *Empower Me'"* training is coupled with *FIRST '"*to ensure mandated reporters know what to do if a child discloses abuse after participating in the *Empower Me'"* curriculum.

Melba Shewmaker CPTC plans to increase enrollment in Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) programs across the state. To increase CAST offerings, Melba Shewmaker CPTC anticipates hosting a state wide conference in the next five years that will provide professors and faculty at all Arkansas Universities and Colleges with the necessary curricula to effectively implement CAST on their campuses.

Objectives:

a. In two years, identify core faculty within Arkansas higher education institutions to implement the CAST program. Create a database of core faculty for implementation of statewide CAST conference within 5 years

b. Implement FIRST mandated reporter training to Arkansas high education institutions within two years.

c. Expand statewide training for child protection professionals currently in the fields of law enforcement, social work, judiciary, and other relevant fields. Provide training statewide to frontline professionals within two years, including *FIRST'"* mandated reporter training.

South Arkansas Community College Arboretum

Mission/Description

The South Arkansas Arboretum is a 12 acre wooded area within the city of El Dorado, adjacent to the former El Dorado High School. The site features species associated with the West Gulf Coastal Plain region of the United States and offers paved walking trails, a pavilion, gazebo, restrooms and parking. This Arboretum is dedication to preserving the native, rare and economically important flora for future generations of people to view, study, photograph, and enjoy.

Goals: The goals of the South Arkansas Arboretum are:

- To provide an educational site by serving as a living laboratory for elementary, secondary and college age groups, as well as the general public - measured by the number of students served
- To provide a recreational site for walkers and joggers where nature's beauty may be enjoyed - currently measured by those that sign in at the entry, researching automatic means of measuring entry
- To provide a preservation site for the unique West Gulf Coastal Plain flora and fauna - measured by the number and variety of plant life

- To provide the community with a natural location for scheduled events - measured by the number of events scheduled

Objectives:
Maintenance and operation of the 12-acre park is the primary objective. The Arboretum Committee provides park enhancements and hosts 2-3 events each year. The college prepares an annual report for the Arkansas State Parks each year. Representatives of the Arkansas State Parks visit the park each year to meet with South Ark staff and Arboretum committee officers to review goals and objectives, improvements, and future plans. The caretaker records the number of visitors and events

SAU Tech Environmental Training Environment

Mission/Description
The Arkansas Environmental Training Academy (AETA) is a training division of Southern Arkansas University Tech and is the designated Environmental Training Center for the State of Arkansas. The AETA is mandated to provide training that enables management and operating staff of regulated facilities (municipal and industrial) to meet state and federal certification and licensing requirements. AETA students receive the necessary training to protect the state's natural resources, environment, and ensure the public health and welfare of the citizens of State of Arkansas.
The AETA's mission is to provide quality training that leads to sustainable employment in the fields of Water Treatment and Distribution, Wastewater Treatment, Solid Waste Management, Backflow Prevention, Public Health, and Worker Safety. Within its resources, the Academy accomplishes its mission through comprehensive certification and continuing education programs, statewide technical assistance programs, administrative and student services, and professional development for faculty and staff. The Academy provides training on the SAU Tech Campus, at training locations statewide, and by Internet delivery.
The AETA is made up of Five Divisions:

- **Water** - AETA Water training is tied directly to the Arkansas Department of Health Division of Engineering Water Operator Licensing Program. The AETA teaches three levels of Water Treatment (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced), three levels of Water Distribution (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced), and two levels of Water Math (Basic and Applied).
- **Wastewater** - AETA Wastewater training is tied directly to the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Wastewater Operator Licensing Program. The AETA teaches four levels of Municipal Wastewater Treatment (Class I, II, Ill and IV) and two levels of Industrial Wastewater Treatment (Basic and Advanced).
- **Solid Waste** -AETA Solid Waste training is tied directly to the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Solid Waste Operator Licensing Program. The AETA teaches four levels of Solid Waste Management (Apprentice, Journeyman, Master, and Annual 6-hour Update).
- **Backflow** - AETA Backflow training is tied to the Arkansas Department of Health Protective Health Codes (Plumbing) and Engineering Divisions. The AETA teaches four backflow certification courses (Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester, Backflow Prevention Assembly Repair, Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Recertification, and Cross-Connection Control Program Specialists).
- **Environmental Health & Safety - The** AETA provides environmental health & safety training for municipalities and industries statewide. AETA staff is authorized to provide training by OSHA, US

DOT, the Hazardous Materials and Training Research Institute, and is a member of the national Partnership for Environmental Technology Education and the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training.

AETA Goals and Ob jectives

The Arkansas Environmental Training Academy is mandated to provide training and certification services that lead to the protection and sustainability of the state's natural resources and the public health and welfare of the citizens of the State of Arkansas.

Goal # 1: The AETA will provide training on-campus, off-campus, and by Internet delivery, with a goal of increasing the number of students served by two-percent annually.

Measurable Objectives for Goal # 1:

- AETA FY 2D15 Statewide Training Statistics: Number of Classes: **331**

Number of Students: **3,533**
Number of Training Hours: **5,636.5**
Training Locations: **38**
Communities Served: **442**

- Student enrollment in AETA programs increased by 2.3% in FY 2015, thus exceeding the goal.

Student enrollment has *increased 85.4% in the last 10-years {FY 06-15}.*

Goal # 2: Work closely with regulatory agencies and licensing committees to ensure training provided by the AETA is current and meets state and federal requirements for certification and licensure programs.

Measurable Objectives for Goal # 2:

- The AETA works closely with the Arkansas Department of Health (Water, Backflow divisions) and Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (Wastewater, Solid Waste divisions) to develop and/or revise curriculums for state certification and licensure exams.

AETA curriculums are current and meet or exceed state and federal requirements.

- The AETA works closely with the Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste, and Backflow Prevention licensing committees/boards to ensure training meets the needs of students statewide.

AETA Director, Assistant Director and/or Program Coordinators attend and report to licensing committees/boards on a quarterly basis.

Goal # 3: Evaluate student learning to ensure training is preparing students for state and national licensing exams.

Measurable Objectives for Goal # 3:

- AETA administers pre-test, practice quizzes, and post-test to measure student learning. Provides feedback to the Instructor and Student that the information is being retained.
- AETA monitors student pass/fail rates for certification/licensure exams where applicable with a targeted passing rate 80% as a goal.

In FY 2015 pass rates for exams for which the AETA received reports from state licensing agencies indicate students are exceeding the target goal of 80% pass rate.

Goal #4: Provide a pathway for AETA non-credit students to earn a college degree.
Measurable Objectives for Goal # 4:

- Work closely with SAU Tech to develop and/or revise core curriculums in the APS Degree, emphasis in Environmental Management to meet industry standards.

All core courses are up to date.

- The AETA Director works with SAU Tech to convert non-credit AETA training courses into college credit. Through Portfolio Development, students can earn college credit for AETA non-credit training courses, leading to an Associates of Professional Studies Degree with an emphasis in Environmental Management.

The AETA Director conducted 7 Portfolio Development evaluations for AETA non-credit students in FY 2015, exceeding the goal.

SAU - Arkansas Fire Training Academy
Brief description of non-formula entity and mission

The Arkansas Fire Training Academy (AFTA) mission is to provide quality training and certification for fire and related emergency service programs to the Arkansas Fire Service in an effective and efficient manner. The AFTA has three campuses; the main campus in Camden, remotes sites in Lincoln and Jonesboro. The AFTA is also responsible for maintaining the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for the State of Arkansas. Each fire department is required to provide fire reports to the AFTA monthly. The Arkansas Fire Service is approximately 1,000 departments and 15,000 firefighters strong. The AFTA is tasked as the fire training body for the State of Arkansas. From July 2014 to June 2015 the AFTA issued 21,788 certificates and taught or sponsored 2,146 classes.

Brief history of entity

Fire training has been a key component in the Arkansas Fire Service since the early 1940's. In 1967, fire training found a home with Southwest Technical Institute in Camden. In 1973, Southwest Technical Institute became a part of the SAU Magnolia system and AFTA became a division of the SAU Tech campus. The AFTA originally had 2 classrooms, a small engine bay for storing apparatus, and training buildings. Because of two, F2 tornadoes in 2011, the campus was able to receive a facelift and more classrooms were added as well as a larger engine bay.

Goals of the entity
The goals of the AFTA are to make quality fire training accessible to as many firefighters as possible. This means students can come to the Camden campus as well as attending classes at two of our remote sites in Jonesboro and Lincoln. The AFTA often sends an instructor to teach classes at a fire department if certain criterion is met. The AFTA will also train firefighters in instructional methodology so firefighters teaching the AFTA curriculum will receive training credit. The AFTA is currently developing programs that can be completed in part or in whole online.

Prioritized, measurable objectives

Measurable objectives listed by priority include:

1. Maintain and develop classes that meet or exceed standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). NFPA standards are updated every five years. AFTA will update each program within one year of the release of the new standard

2. Continue to evaluate programs and test processes to meet criteria set forth by our accrediting bodies. Our two accrediting bodies evaluate our entity every five years

AFTA will bring 1 to 2 programs through the accreditation process every five years until all programs relevant to Arkansas firefighters are available. Continue to update policies and procedures to meet criteria of accrediting bodies for successful reaccreditation every five years

- Maintain a data base to provide firefighters with up-to-date training records

Fire departments rely on training records for legal purposes, grant opportunities, and promotion within the department. From July 2004 to June 2005 AFTA taught or sponsored 1,184 classes and issued 12,841 certificates. From July 2014 to June 2015 AFTA taught or sponsored 2,146 classes and issued 21,788 certificates. With rate of growth in cities, the same percentage of growth is expected in number of classes and certificates generated.

Maintain a program that allows fire departments to report monthly fire department incidents.

10 years ago the reporting system had 15% of the fire departments in the state reporting. To date 85% of the fire departments are reporting. Continue to provide support to fire departments to enable them to complete data in a timely manner. Continue to increase the number of fire departments reporting to enable them eligibility for federal grant monies. Increase number of reporting departments to offer more valid data at the state and federal level

University of Arkansas System

Mission/Description

The University of Arkansas System is a comprehensive, publicly-supported higher education institution composed of 18 unique campuses, divisions and administrative units that shares the singular goal of serving Arkansas residents and others by developing and sharing knowledge to impact an ever-changing world. The UA System provides access to academic and professional education, and develops intellectual growth and cultural awareness in its students, staff and faculty.

The system further promotes an atmosphere of excellence that honors the heritage and diversity of our state and nation. It provides students, researchers and professionals with tools to promote responsible stewardship of human, natural and financial resources in Arkansas and around the globe, and with workforce-relevant knowledge to enhance economic development efforts that improve the overall quality of life and societal well-being.

Goals:

Goal 1: Expand access to higher education to all Arkansans including those traditionally Under-represented students. 10-year goal - graduates of the University of Arkansas System should mirror the demographics of the state.

Goal 2: Improve student retention and graduation rates. 10-year goal - student retention and graduation rates should exceed averages of peer institutions.

Goal 3: Enhance regional and national reputation of UA System Institutions. 10-year goal -improvement in institutional quality as measured against peers including regional and national rankings.

Goal 4: Financial Efficiency. 10-year goal - as stewards of state resources, institutional resource allocation will be efficiently focused on education, research and service to the state.

Goal 5: Technology. 10-year goal - University of Arkansas System institutions will utilize state-of-the-art technology in classrooms and laboratories to assist faculty and staff in teaching, research and service to the State of Arkansas.

Goal 6: eVersity. 10-year goal - The University of Arkansas System eVersity, a 100 percent online university will enroll over 10,000 students annually, and offer a robust portfolio of high-quality, affordable, accessible, workplace-relevant degrees and credentials in a format that meets the needs of the learners who are unable to attend a traditional face-to-face campus.

Goal 7: Economic Impact. 10-year goal -The UA System will continue and expand its role as an economic engine for the state through cutting-edge research, workforce development programs, and support of private industry, including the work of the Division of Agriculture to support and grow the state's $21 billion agriculture community.

Measureable Objectives

1. *Budget Management:* The UA System office operates under a lean budget considering the number institutions, students and employees across the system. A 10-year history of the RSA and EETF funding for the system shows that funding for the System office rose only 6 percent during that time and that current funding remains below pre-recession (2007-08) levels. During that same time period, the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) has increased 30 percent while the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased 23 percent.

2. *Bond Rating:* A key component of the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Trustees, and thus a major responsibility of the system, is maintaining a healthy bond rating to ensure responsible financial management across the system. Unlike some states, university bonds in Arkansas are obligations of the Board of Trustees rather than the entirety of state government. Moody's Investor Service currently rates UA System bonds as Aa2.

3. *Patents Generated:* As part of its fiduciary responsibility, the Board of Trustees is responsible for holding all university generated patents. While campus faculty members create research that leads to patents, the Board and system bear the responsibility to ensure the university generates and receives its share of funds from patented university research.

4. *Shared Services:* The UA System continually seeks ways to reduce contract costs by leveraging the collective purchasing power of institutions that utilize common vendors. The system either currently utilizes or plans to utilize shared services in areas such as learning management software, data analytics, enterprise resource planning and employee benefits management.

UA System Arkansas Archeological Survey

Mission Statement Description

The Arkansas Archeological Survey (ARAS) is a research, preservation, and educational unit of the University of Arkansas System. It was created in 1967 by the Arkansas Legislature and joined the UA System in 1977. Our mission is to study archeological sites in Arkansas (Research), to preserve and manage information and collections from those sites (Preservation), and to communicate what we learn to the people of our state (Education). The Survey's Coordinating Office is located on the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture complex on the Fayetteville campus. Cooperative agreements establishing research stations at seven state university campuses, two state parks, and the UA System's Winthrop Rockefeller Institute enable scholars to implement this mission statewide. The Survey has been a model for state archeological programs throughout the United States and around the world.

Goals and Measurable Objectives

Goal 1: Conduct archeological research designed to increase and disseminate knowledge of 13,000 years of human occupation and environmental change in Arkansas.
Measurable Objective: Number of staff publications and conference presentations.

Goal 2: Work with archeological stakeholders to rescue and preserve archeological sites, collections, and other information in the face of imminent loss or destruction and provide technical assistance and information concerning preservation issues.
Measureable Objective: Number of staff rescue/protection/preservation consultations and projects.

Goal 3: Preserve and curate archeological records and collections following guidelines developed by the National Park Service (36 CFR 79).
Measurable Objective: Number of new site, project, and collection records and updates added annually to AMASDA database system.

Goal 4: Increase public awareness of and knowledge about the rich archeological heritage of Arkansas.
Measureable Objective: Number of people reached via staff presentations to K-12 and general public audiences, Arkansas Archeological Society training program enrollments, and educational websites.

Goal 5: Contribute to Arkansas Department of Higher Education and University of Arkansas System objectives and initiatives at host campuses and other venues.
Measureable Objective: Number of students enrolled in classes and advised or mentored by ARAS personnel at host campuses and research stations.

UA System Division of Agriculture

Mission/Description
The Division's mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices.

Our values are integrity, collaboration, accountability, relevance and excellence. Our promise is to serve with zeal to help others.

Goals:
We strive, in the spirit of service, to use research and extension to help all Arkansans improve their well-being. Our federally targeted work areas are:

- Improving efficiencies agricultural production and processing;
- Environment, energy and climate;
- Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food;
- Increasing opportunities for families and youth;
- Fostering economic and community development.

Objectives:
The broad range of our work is reflected in the proposed performance measures:

- Contacts with stakeholders/citizens
- Behavioral changes resulting from Division programs
- 4-H/Youth development participants
- Constituent services
- Research output

Arkansas School for Mathematics. Sciences. and the Arts

Mission/Description
The mission of the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts (ASMSA) is to create, encourage and sustain, throughout the State of Arkansas, an educational community of academically talented students, faculty and staff that pursues knowledge of mathematics, sciences and the arts. As one of only 16 public residential high schools of mathematics, science and technology in the nation, ASMSA specializes in the education of students with an interest in advanced careers in math and science as well as passion for and creativity within studio and digital arts. All classes are taught at the college level, and more than one-third of the faculty holds doctoral degrees.

Goals:
1. Refine, Cultivate and Expand Exceptional Academic Opportunities that are the Hallmarks of the ASMSA Experience

2. Expand Student Research and Global Learning Opportunities that are Unique to ASMSA's Community of Learning

3. Construct Modern Learning Spaces that Address Longstanding Institutional Needs

Objectives:

1. Student Enrollment

Based on available residential space, ASMSA maintains a fixed enrollment of 230 students. Applications exceed the available spots for incoming juniors, ensuring that the student population is at the maximum at the beginning of each fall semester. An increase in residential enrollment is not possible without specific state support.

2. Credentials Awarded

ASMSA offers a single credential (high school diploma). The key difference between ASMSA and other postsecondary institutions who grant credentials is that students who do not complete ASMSA's program of study do go on to earn a high school diploma from their local/sending high school.

3. ACT Scores

The ACT exam remains the sole benchmark exam by which the school can compare itself to both Arkansas high schools and peer institutions. The school participates in the Universal ACT for all Arkansas high school juniors. The majority of students test again in their senior year in order to improve their overall scores. As such, ASMSA maintains an entry, mid-point, and exit ACT average for all students. Historically, class ACT average composite scores have increased by 4 points from admission to graduation.

4. Geographic Reach

ASMSA is implicitly tasked with reaching a population of students from across the state of Arkansas. In a typical year, students hail from 55-60 counties, approximately 80 of 100 Arkansas House districts, and all 35 Arkansas Senate districts.

5. Percent of Students Gaining Admission to College

100% of ASMSA students are admitted to accredited colleges and universities. During their program of study at ASMSA, students average 47 hours of concurrent college credit, or roughly three full semesters of credit.

Clinton School of Public Service

Mission/Description

The mission is to educate and prepare professionals in public service who understand, engage and transform complex social, cultural, economic and political systems to ensure equity, challenge oppression and effect positive social change.

Goals:

(1) Produce graduates who are proficient in the body of knowledge related to public service;
(2) Produce graduates who are proficient in facilitating preparatory social change that advance social and economic justice;
(3) Produce graduates who are proficient in applying research methods in field research, program planning, and program development and program evaluation;
(4) Produce graduates who are proficient in field project work and
(5) Produce graduates who are professional and ethical public servants. Graduation rates percentage -- 75%

Career placement percentages (within 6 months of graduation) --75%

Field service projects during a calendar year --70

Speakers/Public Programs which are free & open to the public during a calendar year--50

Objectives:

Learning outcomes for goal #1: Students will be familiar with and make connections among the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends relevant to public service. Students will understand the complexities of public service work in local, regional, national and international contexts.

Learning outcomes for goal #2: Students will identify, develop and/or mobilize resources (e.g. human, social, economic, political, physical, civic, etc.) to facilitate social change. Students will understand social change models and how to apply them appropriately.

Learning outcomes for goal #3: Students will conceptualize issues to be studied and formulate appropriate research questions. Students will apply field research to public service work. Students will use appropriate information gathering techniques and methods in field research.
Students will conduct appropriate data analysis. Students will critically analyze methods, results and implications.

Learning outcomes for goal #4: Students will design projects using appropriate methods. Students will implement an action plan appropriate to the context. Students will evaluate the implementation, outcome and impact of a project.

Learning outcomes for goal #5: Students will be aware of their own personal values and how they affect their public service work. Students will use critical thinking skills to address ethical and professional dilemmas. Students will understand public service values, principles and behaviors. Students will be able to work with diverse populations.

UA System Criminal Justice Institute

Mission/Description

The mission of the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI), a division of the University of Arkansas System since 1997, is to enhance the performance and professionalism of certified law enforcement professionals through advanced training,education, resources and collaborative partnerships. Well trained and professional public safety personnel are critical in ensuring not only the safety and quality of life of the citizens they serve, but also the economic viability of their communities. CJI was established in 1993 and funded by the Arkansas legislature in 1994 to provide resources to overcome severe public information and service deficiency needs within the Arkansas law enforcement and criminal justice communities. In 2001, for reasons not related to the performance of CJI, the state appropriation for the Institute was cut by 50% ($1.5 million). To date, the funding lost has not been restored.

The vision of CJI is to make communities safer one officer at a time. In FYlS, CJI provided free training to more than 13,500 representatives of more than 300 rural and urban law enforcement agencies statewide. Without the resources of CJI, most (especially the smaller/rural agencies) would not be able to afford access to these services vital to the safety and economic viability of their community.

Goals:
To achieve its mission, CJI must design, enhance, and make accessible curricula in leadership and management, crime scene and death investigations, computer applications, drug investigations, and other specialized areas of law enforcement that meet the unique and critical advanced training needs of Arkansas law enforcement personnel. CJI is committed to also meeting the technical support and educational needs of this group. Since 2003, CJI has worked with 22 institutions of higher education (16 two-year and 6 four-year) to provide unique practitioner-focused academic certificates and AAS degree opportunities in law enforcement administration and crime scene investigation for active public safety professionals. By providing these needed services, CJI positively impacts not only the safety, but also the economic viability of communities across the State.

CJI will continue to offer and expand the accessibility and availability of innovative and timely courses, programs, services and educational opportunities specific to the unique needs of law enforcement professionals that will assist in enhancing the quality of life of Arkansas's citizens and, through federal funding,also assist rural law enforcement agencies nationally.

Objectives:

1J Attendance: CJI will strive to continue to increase or sustain the number of law enforcement professionals who have access to and benefit from needed advanced training. Since 2010, the number of attendees of CJI programs and events has increased almost 300%. This increase was achieved, without any additional state funding, through the initiation of cost efficiency measures.

Contact Hours: CJI will strive to increase or sustain the number of contact hours delivered each year. This will be achieved by not only expanding or sustaining attendance, but also increasing the number of both traditional and online courses offered. Since 2011, CJI has developed a total of 20 online specialty

courses for the Arkansas law enforcement community. The number of online courses available will continue to expand and provide greater accessibility of programs to all public safety professionals, but particularly those serving small and rural communities.

Law Enforcement Agencies Served: CJI will strive to continue to expand or sustain the number of law enforcement agencies statewide that benefit from participation in CJI courses or events. Of the approximately 400 law enforcement agencies in the state, CJI has served representatives of more than 80% of the public safety agencies identified.

Academic Certificates and AAS Partnership Enrollment: CJI will strive to increase the number of law enforcement professionals enrolling through the Institute in the Certificates of Proficiency, Technical Certificates and Associate of Applied Science Degrees in the ADHE collaborative programs in Law Enforcement Administration and Crime Scene Investigation. CJI will strive to continue to support the officers/deputies currently enrolled through the Institute in one of these programs and provide assistance to the 22 higher education partners in enhancing completion rates. CJI will also strive to expand marketing of these programs to active law enforcement professionals and expand the number of higher education institutions participating. These programs provide unique opportunities to public safety professionals, many of whom may have never viewed higher education as attainable.

University of Arkansas Fayetteville- Arkansas Research and Technology Park Mission/Description

The mission of the ARTP is to stimulate the formation of a knowledge-based economy in the state of Arkansas through partnerships that lead to new opportunities for learning and discovery, build and retain a knowledge-based workforce and spawn the development of new technologies that enrich the economic base of the state. The ARTP is managed by the University of Arkansas Technology Development Foundation (UATDF), a supporting organization of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Goals:

The overarching goal of ARTP is to foster, grow and retain promising new firms that augment the economic ecosystem of the state and region. By concentrating cutting-edge facilities together with a rich pool of talent and innovative technology, the ARTP is providing its corporate partners a competitive advantage that will provide tangible benefits to the state and region such as the creation of high-quality, high-wage jobs in the technology industry. In that regard the primary goals of the ARTP are:

- To serve as a hub for innovation and product development, stimulating the formation of a collaborative community of companies whose commercial pursuits are strategically aligned with the core research strengths of the University of Arkansas;
- To promote the commercialization of inventions, discoveries, and processes devised by members of the University community;
- To promote and sustain a thriving entrepreneurial culture in Northwest Arkansas;
- To build a technologically-skilled workforce by providing opportunities for Arkansas' "best and brightest" college graduates and entrepreneurs to remain and thrive in the state; and
- To improve the economy of Arkansas by creating high quality jobs and generating tax revenues.

Objectives:

ARTP is making a positive impact on the economy of Arkansas and is contributing significantly to the development of an ecosystem essential to growing and sustaining a knowledge-based economy. Sustaining this momentum is essential to enable the UATDF to nurture areas of collaborative activity into clusters of companies working in a common area of interest. Doing so will result in the ARTP providing tangible benefits to the state by attracting high paying jobs, providing professional opportunities for high technology workers, and forming clusters of expertise that are important for attracting additional high technology firms. The measureable objectives of the ARTP are therefore as follows:

- **At build-out, the ARTP will create approximately 2,000 permanent jobs:** the UATDF will monitor the employment impact of the ARTP on an annual basis to track progress toward reaching the projected employment target. Direct employment data will be further defined by job category and average annual wage.

- **At build-out, the total impact of operating the ARTP on regional economic output is projected to be approximately $1,569,000,000:** the UATDF will monitor the expenditures of ARTP affiliate companies on an annual basis in order to calculate the cumulative regional economic output.

- **At build-out, the operation and construction of the ARTP is expected to generate $54,102,600 in state and local tax revenue:** the UATDF will update the economic impact analysis of ARTP operation and construction activities every 5 years in order to comprehensively assess the economic impacts and the generation of tax revenues at the state and local level.

Arkansas Center for Rural Education in Autism and Related Disabilities

Mission/Description

The purpose of Arkansas Centers for Rural Education in Autism and Related Disabilities is to create 5 rural autism centers that will utilize existing Arkansas state of the art technology to educate and train high quality autism professionals across the state. The centers will merge best practices in autism clinical treatment, the training of families, teachers and service providers in evidenced based practices, and technology for training and supervision in rural America. The level of technology allows for state of the art autism-traini ng center for rural America that does not exist anywhere in the nation.

Goals:

The center will merge best practices in autism clinical treatment, the training of families, teachers and service providers in evidenced based practices, and technology for training and supervision in rural America. The level of technology allows for state of the art autism-training center for rural America that does not exist anywhere in the nation.

The identified goals are:

- Development of a state center to provide autism training and support across Arkansas
- Development of four satellite centers across the state (AHECs, Universities, Etc.)
- Provide training to professionals and families across the lifespan.
- Provide consultation to service providers and families
- Investment in a center that serves all agencies and families

Objectives:

1. Decrease the average age in which children are diagnosed with autism in the state of Arkansas.
2. Decrease the time between diagnosis and access to autism specific services in the state of Arkansas.
3. Decrease the number of due process complaints due to behavior and access to services for children with autism in public schools.

Garvan Woodland Gardens

Mission/Description

Garvan Woodland Gardens is a viable and sustainable entity within the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. We further the University's mission of teaching, research, and public service through our own mission:

- Preserving and enhancing a unique part of the Ouachita Mountains environment.
- Providing people with a place of learning, research, cultural enrichment and serenity.
- Developing and sustaining gardens, landscapes and structures of exceptional aesthetics, design and construction; and
- Partnering and serving with the communities of which the Gardens is a part.

Goals/Objectives:

Develop a Sensory Garden that provides active and direct contact with the natural environment and usable spaces for relaxation and rejuvenation for people of all abilities and needs.

- Complete Phase One by Summer 2018

Annually present notable local, national, and international artists and art collections in the Gardens.

- Annually, beginning Summer 2016

Develop education program to provide a variety of Continuing Education (CEU) level courses to regional professionals such as Landscape Architects and Civil Engineers

- CEU Level Courses to be provided by Spring 2017

Continue annual University of Arkansas, School of Architecture Summer Design Camp for area high school students.

- Annual Summer Program

Develop student internship program with University of Arkansas departments such as Landscape Architecture, GIS, and Horticulture to provide collaborative professional work experience for students.

- Summer 2016

Utilize the exceptional outdoor venue of the outdoor amphitheater develop an outdoor concert series open to the public.

- Summer 2017

Update E. Fay Jones' Garvan Pavilion and Restrooms through roof replacement, structural improvements and exterior staining.

- Summer 2016

Update Maurice Jennings' Anthony Chapel, Bride's and Groom's Hall and Carillon through roof replacement, structural improvements and exterior staining.

- Summer 2017

Annual maintenance program for E Fay Jones' Garvan Pavilion and Restrooms; Maurice Jennings' Anthony Chapel, Bride's and Groom's Halls and Carillon

- Annual

Complete Wildflower Meadow project and provide interpretive signage detailing native and naturalize plant options for visitor's home gardens.

- Summer 2017

Complete Phases 2-5 of the Flowering Border English Gardens project. Provide additional learning opportunities for visitors and important wedding venue.

- Fall 2016

Improve the Garden of the Pine Winds (Japanese Garden) by paving paths, improving overlooks and developing a boardwalk for the Koi Pond

- Fall 2016

Partner with Other Non-Profit Groups to provide facilities and programs for Garden members and the public.

- On-going

Develop multiple educational programs that serve the local schools through the use of Garden facilities and on-staff experts.

- On-going

Partner with the Arkansas Department of Corrections Work Release Program to provide jobs to non-violent offenders.

- On-going

Partner with Garland County Job Corps to provide jobs and training for students.

- On-going

UA Pryor Center

Mission/Description

The mission of the Pryor Center is to document the history of Arkansas through the collection of spoken memories and visual records, preserve the material, and connect Arkansans and the world to the archive. Interview transcripts, audio and video recordings, and photographs are available to students,

researchers, documentarians, educators, or anyone interested in Arkansas history on our website at pryorcenter.uark.edu

Goals/Objectives:

Provide research and educational material to the public Accept nominations for Arkansans to be interviewed

Provide digital audio kits to the public to conduct personal interviews in the field Digitize, preserve, and maintain KATV news footage archive

Provide on-site, on-camera interview facilities to the public via the Arkansas Story Vault

1. Make the Pryor Center interview studio available to the public - Located on the Fayetteville square, the Pryor Center is equipped with a video production studio to conduct our interviews. Using the NPR Story Corps template, we will allow the public to conduct their own interviews that we would record. Upon completion, we supply a copy to the participants and we archive a copy for the Pryor Center. This will not only be an opportunity to provide a public service but increase traffic on the square.
2. Digitize and catalogue the KATY video collection - KATY, the ABC affiliate in Little Rock has donated more than 26,DOO hours of historic news footage to the Pryor Center. Unfortunately, all of the material is on video tape and needs to be converted to digital files. Many are more than three decades old are in danger of becoming unusable. This costly process will save a priceless collection of Arkansas history.
3. Provide the Pryor Center video archive in a searchable format - Once the KATY video is digitized, the task of cataloging the material will begin. The eventual goal is to have all of the footage on the Pryor Center website in a searchable form. This will serve teachers, students, researchers, documentary filmmakers or anyone interested in Arkansas history.

World Trade Center Arkansas

As Arkansas' global business resource, the World Trade Center Arkansas (WTC AR) is a non-governmental organization helping Arkansas' business community compete more effectively in a global market. Since our inception in 2007, our mission has been to partner with numerous firms across the state to establish and strengthen their global presence through comprehensive international business services, global connections and professional development and networking events. The WTC AR was founded in 2007 through the vision of former Congressman and current Senator John Boozman, and the collective efforts of University of Arkansas, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Hunt Ventures, Governor's Office, and the City of Rogers. In 2007, the University of Arkansas became the World Trade Center Association licensee solidifying the WTC AR as the operator within the World Trade Centers' Association. Similar entities include the Montana World Trade Center (an affiliate of the University of Montana), the World Trade Center Denver, and the World Trade Center Mississippi.

Arkansas's export shipments of merchandise and agriculture in 2013 and 2014 totaled $16 billion, but the export potential for Arkansas small businesses remains largely untapped. Currently, there are a number of small and medium sized businesses that are not reaching their full export potential. Significant progress has been made, but there is more work to be done. The WTC AR has hosted over 45

foreign ambassadors, consul generals, trade ministers, and country presidents. There is simply not another entity within the state that is providing a similar scope of global trade development activities.

The University of Arkansas requests appropriation funding of $250,000 to help fulfill its economic development mission, specifically for the WTC AR. The WTC AR is continuously searching for opportunities to assist the state's small business concerns, agricultural producers, and service providers in identifying new global markets for expansion, in addition to educating business owners about the potential for growth through exports. The support will aid in facilitating companies' transitions from export-ready to exporting, as well as monitoring the efficacy of their efforts. The WTC AR has sought available funding, been approved, and successfully awarded over $2 million in federal support from the U.S. Department of Commerce, including their Economic Development Administration program and the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) sponsored by the Small Business Administration for operational and global trade promotion. The WTC AR is the only entity designated by the Governor to apply for the STEP funds. The WTC AR has also received funding for three years as part of the National Export Initiative. With this funding, the WTC AR assisted over 38 companies that were either new to market or new to export by giving them the opportunity to attend and/or participate in trade missions and trade shows. This resulted in new export sales in excess of $22 million with continuing orders anticipated and a $6 million contract pending for one Arkansas client company.

The WTC AR has worked with the Republic of Panama to assist in the following higher education initiatives that has had an estimated trade impact of $2.5 million:

Sam M. Walton College of Business: Certification Program- Certificate of Excellence for Entrepreneurship and Global Supply Chain in conjunction with the University of Panama- training 50 students

Sam M. Walton College of Business: MBA Program-Panama
University of Arkansas: 120 Panamanian students recruited and attending fall/spring semester
Facilitated the establishment of the first International Alumni Chapter in Panama

WTC AR's primary goal is increasing Arkansas's exports to Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), Latin American countries, Africa, Canada, and the United Kingdom; thus, positively impacting the present trade deficit. The increased export activity will bolster the state's revenues, directly benefit women-owned and rural small businesses in Arkansas, and increase job growth. In addition, tourism from foreign visitors, along with export services and emerging technologies, increases export revenues. The WTC AR recently facilitated the establishment of the Malaysia International Alumni Chapter in Kuala Lumpur.

The WTC AR organized a Governor-led trade mission to Cuba comprising of 48 delegates, representing 17 business sectors. This trip was significant for Arkansas in that the Governor was the first from any state to visit Cuba since the newly constituted U.S. Embassy was established. The high level meetings with our Arkansas companies resulted in the Cuban Government placing an order for 4,500 tons of poultry to be supplied by Simmons Foods and Tyson Foods. It is also anticipated that Arkansas will begin exporting rice to Cuba, along with lumber, steel, pulp wood, and services.

Since 2008, the WTC AR has been the designated trade arm of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and it has been recognized as a valuable global trade connection for Arkansas businesses. Before the establishment of the WTC AR, there was no organization strategically positioned to assist Arkansas companies with all aspects of global trade development. The WTC AR is a partner with the Department of Commerce and the Export Assistance Office in Little Rock to provide Gold Key services for companies, as well as arranging country briefings and foreign embassy visits. The WTC AR is a city-state partner with the Ex-Im Bank to identify and assist companies with securing global trade financing for exporting their products.

The WTC AR has significant organizational experience and capacity in participation in foreign trade missions and trips to increase exporting, providing translation services for small-business websites, designing international marketing media for small businesses, facilitating Arkansas businesses in international trade shows, and in providing education, professional development and, certification assistance to small businesses.

GOALS

1. Provide export services to 30 Arkansas small business concerns through participation in international trade shows and provide expense reimbursement through the STEP grant program; State Trade Export Expansion Program. Over $200,000 will be distributed to small business concerns.

2. Increase total Arkansas exports to over $9 Billion dollars from the present $7.5 Billion dollars through export trade development, identifying and assisting 25 companies who are new to exporting or have limited export sales.

3. Increase the number of jobs related to exporting companies to 45,000 and increase of 10,000 presently employed by Arkansas exporting companies.

4. Recruit 15 Arkansas companies to attend foreign trade shows including the Farnborough England show and Hanover Germany show.

OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce Arkansas manufacturing and Agricultural products to the world to increase and sustain Arkansas jobs.

2. To focus on the Aerospace, Nanoscience and Agriculture clusters in Arkansas and assist with expanding access in the international market.

UALR Research and Public Service

Mission/Description
The University of Arkansas at Little Rock contributes to the expanding body of knowledge through research, both basic and applied appropriate to its programs and its faculty; many research activities

address the problems of Arkansas as it interacts with an increasingly complex and interdependent world. It increases the ability of the university to conduct research that can lead to increased economic viability of the state, giving particular attention to the needs of existing industry and new industries the region and state may wish to attract.

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock shares its resources with the larger community through public service, by responding to the special needs and interests of individuals, organizations, businesses, and governmental units. It engages in professional public service that will address the challenges faced by the region and the state, giving particular attention to communities which may have the greatest needs.

ASBTDC

The Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC) applies creative approaches that stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation and small business growth through the higher education system resulting in measurable economic outcomes.

Goals

Goal 1: Provide high quality services that generate economic impact Goal 2: Increase resources for sustainability and growth
Goal 3: Enhance internal communication and processes

Measureable Objectives

1. Total dollar amount of all capital obtained by a client as a result of ASBTDC assistance.

2. Number of new businesses started as a result of ASBTDC assistance.

3. Long-Term Consulting Clients (Five hours or more of consulting contact + prep time.).

Center for Integrative Nanotechnology Sciences {CINS)

The mission of the Center for Integrative Nanotechnology Sciences is to conduct world-class research to develop nanotechnology-based advanced materials. Our advanced materials address cross-cutting fields of science and have the potential to benefit a wide range of needs. Current research efforts include use of our advanced materials for tissue/bone engineering, cancer detection and therapy, nanotoxicity, thin films and coatings, solar energy, and synthesis of nanomaterials.

Goals

Conduct world-class research focused on collaboration and scientific achievement,
Support education through outreach programs that shape the scientists and workforce of tomorrow.

Foster economic development by creating new commercially viable technologies that can be transferred to the marketplace and by working with existing industry to optimize current products and technologies.

Measureable Objectives

1. Two (2) invention disclosures and six (6) peer-reviewed scientific publications annually in journals recognized by Thomson Reuters.

2. Eight (8) UALR students - graduate and undergraduate - will be educated and trained in research roles.

3. Three (3) research proposals totaling at least $750,000 will be submitted for extramural research funding.

4. One hundred (100) hours of instrumentation service will be provided to CINS customers.

5. Eight (8) STEM or similar community outreach activities will expose students and community members to the importance of science to Arkansas education and economic development.

Public Service Units* in *the College of Social Sciences and Communication

Goals

Provide applied and evaluation research, technical assistance, training, facilitation, and outreach services for local and state governments, public service organizations, nonprofit agencies, and neighborhood organizations.

Promote best practices in governance, community development, public sector and non-profit management, research-based and data driven decisions, enfranchisement and consensus building, and conflict management.

Integrate the educational mission of the proposed School of Public Affairs with the public service goals through student involvement with unit staff, faculty, and community partners in promoting improvement of social indicators across Arkansas.

Measurable Objectives

1. Annual number (10) and type (civic, governmental and nonprofit) of community partners/partnerships (breadth of contribution).

2. Annual number (15) and type of deliverables produced for community partners (including surveys, reports, trainings, and facilitated community discussions).

3. Annual number (10) of contracts, grants, or memoranda of agreement and where, discernable, economic results of such arrangements.

Institute for Economic Advancement

Goal

Provide the very best relevant technical assistance, research, and training possible to support and enhance economic development throughout the State of Arkansas.

Measureable Objectives

1. Impact or analysis reports to the Arkansas House, Senate, or Governor's Office upon request (3 per year).

2. Regionalize efforts throughout the state (2 per year).

3. Labor market or workforce analysis studies used in economic development planning {3 per year).

UALR Tech Launch
The mission of the Tech Launch is to serve the university by helping faculty, students and staff protect and realize the full commercial potential of their inventions.

Goals
Protect JP of faculty, staff, and students through patents, copyrights, trademarks and other available protection tools.
Market technologies and license to spin off or existing companies.
Assist in start-up creation.
Foster and promote entrepreneurship on campus and connect to the local and regional ecosystems.
Assist in IP policy implementation campus wide.

Measureable Objectives
1. Number of Invention Disclosures (7 to 10 per year).

2. Number of Patents Applied (4 to 6 per year).

3. Number of Patents Issued (2 to 4 per year).

UAPB Non-Formula

Mission/Description:
The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff is an 1890 Land-Grant, Historically Black College/University (HBCU) which was established in 1873 with State legislative action sponsored by Senator John M. Clayton. The university's land grant program first received Federal funding authorization in 1965 within the scope of P.L. 89-106 (An ACT to facilitate the work of the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes). The first fund disbursement, which was $17,000, was made in 1967. The Evans-Allen Act of 1977 currently provides research funding for 1890 Land Grant Universities (including UAPB) to conduct food and agricultural research in a manner similar to that provided to the 1862 universities under the Hatch Act of 1887. Extension at UAPB started in 1971 with two Extension agents. Public Law 114-38 enacted in 1980 authorized Extension funding for 1890 Universities in a similar manner as Smith-Lever Extension funding for 1862 Land Grant Universities.

Today, the University has a diverse student population of more than 2,600 students, more than 30 undergraduate and graduate degree offerings, including a Ph.D. Program in Aquaculture/Fisheri es. Graduates of SAFHS are primarily employed by State and Federal agencies and private companies such as Monsanto and Tyson Foods. Our talented faculty members are among the most diverse of any university within the State. As the second oldest higher education institution in Arkansas, our aim has

remained the same over the years--to provide a high quality, affordable education with a personal touch. Out-of-class experiences and student involvement includes more than 120 student organizations, international student exchange, an internationally renowned Vesper Choir, Marching Band, Concert Bands, Wind Symphony, nationally recognized spirit and debate teams, award-winning theater department and accomplished athletics program.

Objectives:

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Land Grant Program works along with the University of Arkansas

- Division of Agriculture to address many measureable objectives that are of the utmost importance to the State's Agricultural sector. The program areas (categories) include: 1) Agricultural Production & Processing, 2) Environment, Energy & Climate, 3) Increasing Opportunities for Youth & Families, 4) Economic & Community Development and 5) Access to Safe & Nutritious Food.

Federal statute requires that both of Arkansas' Land Grant Universities (University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff report jointly under the above agreed upon Program Areas. Examples of the objectives under the Efficient Production and Processing Program Area include:

- Develop and deliver efficient, sustainable best management practices.
- Discover and promote adoption of breakthrough science-based technologies.
- Analyze and explain issues affecting agricultural production and processing.
- Competitive Marketing
- Analyze global and local market opportunities and constraints.
- Identify and address the needs of diverse producers related to marketing supply chains.
- Analyze and explain issues affecting plant and animal product markets.
- Help all producers and processors take advantage of market opportunities.
- Public Appreciation and Understanding of Agriculture
- Increase public awareness of Arkansas agriculture
- Explain agricultural science to the public.
- Recruit and retain agricultural professionals and leaders.

Other objectives are contained under each of the five NIFA Plan of Work Program Areas. Both the State Joint Plan of Work and the Annual Accomplishments report may be found at: *http://portal.nifa.usda.gov/web/areera/plans/2015-2019/2015-Universitv -of-Arkansas-and-Universitv-of-Arkansas-at-Pine-Bluff-Combined-Research-and-Extension-Plan-of-Work.pdf*

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Mission/Description

UAMS is the state's only comprehensive academic health center, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions, and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a northwest Arkansas regional campus; a statewide network of regional centers; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, the Jackson T. Stephens Spine and Neurosciences Institute, the Myeloma Institute, the Harvey and Bernice Jones Eye Institute, the Psychiatric Research Institute, the Donald W .

Reynolds Institute on Aging and the Translational Research Institute. It is the only adult Level 1trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,021 students, 789 medical residents and two dental residents. It is the state's largest employer with more than 10,000 employees, including about 1,000 physicians and other professionals who provide care to patients at UAMS, Arkansas Children's Hospital, the VA Medical Center and UAMS regional centers throughout the state.

Goals

1. Clinical Programs: Create an integrated, patient- and family-centered health care environment that effectively and efficiently produces better health outcomes, an enhanced patient and family experience, and clinical program growth at UAMS.

2. Academics: Educate culturally competent health professionals equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to practice collaborative care and adapt to changes in the health care field.
3. Research: Develop and expand nationally recognized, multidisciplinary research programs aligned with health needs in the state and nation.
4. Population Health: Develop research, educational and technical assistance expertise in population health strategies that extend the concepts of patient- and family-centered care to the population in promoting prevention efforts for high-priority health issues for Arkansans and to improve the health of Arkansans.
5. Workforce: Develop a talented and highly effective workforce at UAMS focused on retaining and developing employee professional and interpersonal skills, creating a work environment characterized by effective communication, high morale and support for employees' health and well-being, and adopting a workforce management approach that is tied to UAMS' strategic goals.
6. Financial Efficiency: Implement strategies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in core processes to reduce cost and enhance revenue generation.

Measurable Objectives:

1. On-time Graduation/Board Pass Rate: On-time graduation and board pass rates for first-time examinees will exceed the national average for students in the respective programs.

2. lnterprofessional Education - All UAMS students will participate in interprofessional education as a component of their curriculum prior to graduation.
3. Faculty Development - During the first year of appointment as an Assistant Professor, faculty members across the university will be able to identify a mentor and they will meet formally with their mentor at least twice annually during their first five years from the time of appointment. The Faculty Development Center will collect baseline data and coordinate with department chairs to gain support during year 1. By year 3, all faculty in the first five years of appointment will have had the opportunity to participate in a formal mentoring program.
4. Patents/Copyright Protection Generated - To improve the commercialization of university research, we will have thirty to forty invention disclosures annually and will seek protection of intellectual property for at least fifteen annually.

Appendix H: Communication Strategies Work Group Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The communications and marketing plan will support the task force's goals through a coordinated effort involving every approved public institution of higher education. The plan includes research of targeted audiences, strategies and tactics that include an interactive statewide website, toolkits for best communications practices, messaging designed for specific target groups and a comprehensive media plan.

The marketing initiative will be an awareness campaign focused on college value and affordability with specific calls to action. The campaign will be designed to develop a statewide college-going culture and create excitement about the ways higher education can transform Arkansas for generations to come.

The Communications Working Group reviewed marketing initiatives, including websites and other communications tactics, from several states, including Georgia's "Go Back. Move Ahead." campaign and Tennessee's "Reconnect," that have launched similar initiatives to formulate best practices. The group envisions a website as a communications hub similar to these that enables prospective students to find the resources, information and motivation they need to make a decision for advancing their education. Social and digital media will be critical components of the plan because of these platforms' lower cost and ability to target audiences and deliver video content. In addition, prospective students will be able to submit contact information and link to statewide college websites and applications, producing data analysis valuable to assessing campaign effectiveness.

The Working Group believes key messages, based on research, to communicate to specific target audiences, ranging from adults who attended college but did not complete a degree to single parents who have special needs. The audiences also include guidance counselors, career coaches, employers and policy makers.

This group met monthly and collaborated with other task force groups to ensure alignment with messages and goals. Group representation included four-year and two-year institutions, plus a nonprofit organization. The Working Group campaign will be continually measured for effectiveness within each target audience, and strategies will be adjusted as needed based on response success.

Ultimately, the goal of the marketing and communication campaign is to help "close the gap" in Arkansas by producing more college graduates to drive economic development.

Which goal(s) of the Master Plan will be addressed by the identified strategies?

The following long-term strategies will support goals 1-3.

- *Use* a *research-based approach to reach key audiences and influence their desire to pursue or support higher education.*
- *Create an effective marketing plan* based *on the other work groups' identified strategies and research findings.*
- *Develop* a *robust and highly interactive website.*

•*Develop* a *call center (centralized and/ or decentralized)* as a *primary point for inquiries.*
•*Measure the effectiveness of the marketing campaign.*

Short-term strategies will support goals 1-3 during the academic year 201 6-17.

• *Work with the other work groups to identify their content* messages.
•*Conduct focus groups with key audiences to guide targeted approach.*
•*Seek out and analyze existing data to inform targeted approach.*
•*Develop marketing plan with strategic timeline.*
•*Select* a *website developer and complete wire frame design.*
•*Develop* a *call center development and training plan.*
•*Finalize the campaign branding.*

What changes are necessary to achieve progress toward the goal(s)?

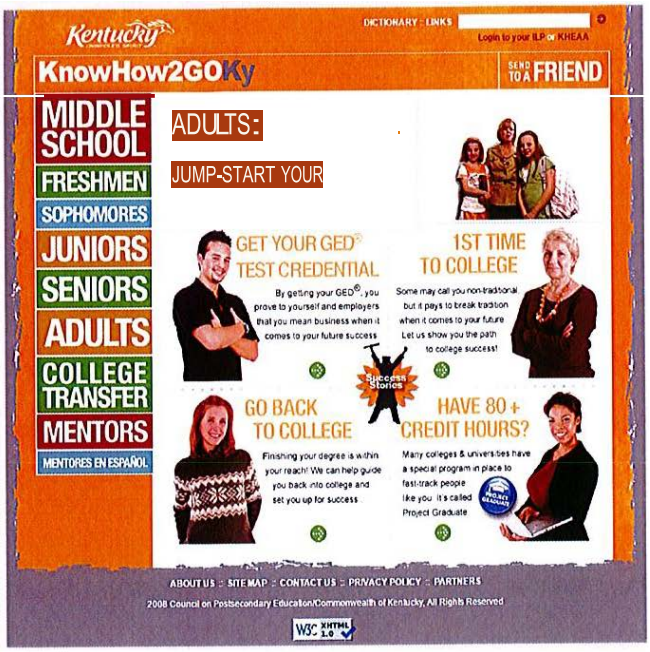
•Collaboration - Colleges and universities need to embrace the goals and work for the better of the state in addition to individual campus marketing efforts.
• Business and Industry Support - Support from the business sector, through employee incentives for college completion and identifying high-need degree programs.
•Web and landing pages - Colleges and universities will need to create ate consistent landing pages that support the initiative and its goals and the end-user.

What strategies have been adopted by institutions in Arkansas and other states?

While these are not necessarily best practices, following are links and screenshots of some other state initiatives.

Georgia: *Go Back. Move Ahead.*

Kentucky "KnowHow2GOKy": knowhow2goky.org



Kentucky "15 to Finish"

Tennessee Reconnect: tnreconnect.gov

What barriers, if any, exist that make adoption of the identified strategies difficult?

- Financial resources - Lack of financial resources to implement campaign.
- Human resources - Lack of available personnel, cooperation and support from colleges & universities.
- Personal barriers - Past experiences in higher education by adult student population (academic and financial holds) that prevent easy re-entry.

What partners, external to higher education, will be important to implementation of the identified strategies?

- **Legislative liaisons** - The education and engagement of this group will result in ambassadors who can help communicate the goals and strategies of Closing the Gap to influence law and policy makers who can influence these strategies for long-term success.
- **Business leaders** - A group of key business stakeholders across Arkansas, representative of large and small businesses and industry, is critical to the success of this initiative. These thought leaders will help other businesses and the workforce understand and support the positive effects of increasing the number of Arkansans with college degrees.
- **Nonprofits with educational focus** - Many nonprofit organizations across Arkansas already have a vested interest in improving and increasing the state's higher educated population. Communication and collaboration with these groups will enable a unified front and shared human and financial resources.

- **News media** - Traditional and nontraditional news media in Arkansas who understand and support the goals of Closing the Gap will provide a voice throughout the state to increase awareness among the general public of this initiative and its positive effect on individuals and the state.

What resources (technological, human, physical, or financial) are necessary to implement the identified strategies?

- **Technological** - A website with the resources and tools for potential students will need to be created and hosted. In additional, telephone systems and/or VOiP will be needed to maintain a call center that connects student questions with the correct institution and/or resource.
- **Human** - Campus representatives will need to be identified and trained to field questions and requests from potential students. One or more state-level "college coach" positions will need to be created to serve as a hands-on resource, particularly for nontraditional students. There will be ongoing IT, design, and content creation requirements to maintain an effective website and communication/outreach materials.
- **Physical** - A centralized call center could require a room equipped with telephones and computers. A decentralized model could require space on the campuses.
- **Financial** - There will be costs for developing and maintaining the website, communications/outreach materials, and staffing. For staffing, there will be some campus costs to freeing time of existing staff to be campus representatives and there will be a statewide cost for a college coach.

ARKANSAS OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING MODEL FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL TO THE ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Outcomes-based funding can be used to properly align institutional funding with statewide priorities for higher education by encouraging programs and services focused on student success and incentivizing progress toward statewide goals. At the same time, such models encourage accountability to students and policymakers by focusing on the success of students through the achievement of their educational goals. Any new funding model must be built around a set of shared principles embraced by institutions, employing appropriate outcomes metrics, and aligned with goals and objectives for post-secondary attainment in our state.

A set of guiding principles, which are described below, are important to orient the design of a new funding model for public higher education institutions. These guiding principles will allow the development of an outcomes-based funding model which is student-centered and responsive to post-secondary attainment goals, while creating a funding context which enables innovation, increased efficiency and enhanced affordability.

Guiding Principles

Student-centered:

- The model should place at its center students and student's needs including both access to and completion of meaningful and quality post-secondary learning.

Outcomes:

- The model should focus on completion, and particularly on completions of under-served and at-risk students and completions in areas of need by the state and industry. This structure should recognize differences in investment associated with meeting the evolving needs of students, the workforce, and the state.

Collaboration:

- The model should provide incentives for cross-institutional collaboration and reward the successful transition of students across institutions.

Supporting institutional mission:

- The model should respect and be responsive to the diverse set of missions represented by each public institution of higher education.

Formula structure:

- The model should maintain clarity and simplicity.

Flexibility:

- The model should be adaptable in the face of a dynamic institutional and external environment.

Stability and transition:

- The model should support short-, mid- and long-term financial stability of the public institutions of higher education, while focusing attention on outcomes and the goals of the state. The transition from the current funding formula to a future outcomes-based funding formula should allow for a managed and intentional transition process which mitigates negative impact at any one or group of institutions.

Measures

In addition to incorporating the guiding principles above, measures adopted in the outcomes-based funding model should acknowledge the following priorities:

- Differences in institutional missions are recognized and encouraged
- Completion of students' educational goals should be the most important priority of every institution
- Progression toward completion recognizes that funding must follow the student
- Affordability is encouraged through on-time completion, limiting excess credits, and efficient resource allocation.
- Collaboration is rewarded by encouraging successful transfer of students and reducing barriers to student success
- Potential unintended consequence of raising academic requirements or lowering academic quality to increase completions must be discouraged

Measures should be adopted which relate to three criteria: Effectiveness, Affordability and Efficiency. In addition, some adjustments to the model are necessary to respond to the unique missions of some institutions which cannot be captured in the outcomes metrics.

Measures should be reviewed every five years to ensure that the model continues to respond to the needs and priorities of the state. A review more frequently than five years is impractical as institutions would not have opportunity to respond in a timely fashion. However, if it is determined that the measures adopted have created unintended consequences, those measures should be reviewed immediately.

Effectiveness measures that may be considered:

Completions: The primary measure of effectiveness is whether students' complete credentials which meet their educational goals and meet workforce needs of the state. The importance of credentials at each educational level, from short-term training through graduate programs should be recognized. In addition, the unique characteristics of students should be measured to recognize the additional resource needs of institutions which serve these students. Such characteristics include race and ethnicity, family income, age, and academic preparedness.

Progression: For programs requiring more than one year to complete, progression toward a credential must be measured. As with completions, similar unique characteristics of students should be measured.

Gateway Courses: Gateway courses in math, English and reading-intensive courses in the humanities and social sciences are a first indicator of likely student success. This is particularly important for students who are underprepared for college-level course work.

Transfer Success: Many students begin their post-secondary work at a community college before transferring to a university to complete a bachelor's degree. The efficient and effective transfer of these students should be measured to encourage collaboration among institutions.

Post-Completion Success: Success of students is ultimately measured by their success after completing a credential. This can be measured by their transfer from an associate's degree program to a bachelor's degree program (included in transfer success), enrollment in a graduate program or transition into the workforce.

Other: Other measures should be considered based on changing needs, priorities and missions.

Affordability measures that may be considered:

Time to Degree: Affordability of a credential is impacted by the length of time it takes a student to earn a credential. Measures should encourage students to complete credentials on time; generally, two years for an associate's degree and four years for a bachelor's degree; or close to on time.

Credits at Completion: Similar to time to degree, measuring the affordability of a credential also includes measuring the number of credit hours a student completes toward that credential. Students whose credit hour accumulation is at or near the minimum number required for a credential pay less in tuition and fees, thus making the credential more affordable.

Other: Other measures should be considered based on changing needs, priorities and missions.

Efficiency measures that may be considered:

Core Expense Alignment: Measures should encourage resource allocations which maximize spending in areas which directly impact student success and achievement of institutional mission.

Faculty-to-Administrator Salary Ratio: Measures should encourage efficient use of administrative positions to support institutional mission.

Cost per Credential: Measures should encourage institutions to minimize the cost to deliver each credential awarded.

Other: Other measures should be considered based on changing needs, priorities and missions.

Adjustments that may be considered to account for unique institutional missions:

Research: One unique mission of some public universities that is not adequately captured in outcomes measures is research and should be included as an adjustment to appropriate institutions. Research is essential to the discovery of new knowledge,

innovation, entrepreneurism, and societal, health, and economic development advancements.

Diseconomies of Scale: Some institutions in the state serve rural areas with insufficient populations to support large enrollments. Adjustments should be included to acknowledge this unique aspect of mission.

Other: Other measures should be considered based on changing needs, priorities and missions.

Funding Recommendations

The outcomes-based funding model will become the mechanism for recommending institutional funding to the executive and legislative budget process. There will be two components to the annual recommendation; one to recommend funding for formula funded institutions as a whole and a second recommendation for the allocation of funding among those institutions. To ensure stability in funding in the short run, stop loss and stop gain provisions should be included to limit fluctuations.

Funding recommendations for all formula funded institutions should include an increase or decrease over the previous year based on the following factors:

Inflation Index – The measure of changes in operating costs for institutions. This index is used to recommend funding changes for all institutions in total. Inflation should result in a recommendation of additional funding while deflation should result in a recommendation of reduced funding. Distribution of inflationary adjustments should be made based on each institution's pro rata share of total funding for the previous year.

Productivity Index – The measure of total change in outcomes for all institutions. This index is used to recommend funding changes for all institutions in total. Rising productivity should result in a recommendation of additional funding while declining productivity should result in a recommendation of reduced funding. Distribution of productivity adjustments should be made based on each institution's contribution to productivity changes in the current year. Stop loss and stop gain provisions should be considered to limit fluctuations. In the event of significant economic declines resulting in reduced funding to higher education as a whole, application of the productivity index will be temporarily suspended.

Distribution of funding recommendations should be made in consultation with the presidents and chancellors of public institutions.

Adoption of Implementing Policies

Specific policies necessary to implement this outcomes-based funding model framework shall be adopted by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board based on recommendations from Arkansas Department of Higher Education staff. Recommended policies shall be formulated in collaboration with the public college and university presidents and chancellors.