Higher Education Strategic Planning Steering Committee Accessibility Subcommittee

Working Framework April, 2010

The Accessibility subcommittee is charged with developing recommendations to address the accessibility of the state's system of higher education. It is tasked with developing a clear standard for accessibility and goals to meet and maintain that standard. In addition, it will recommend goals to close achievement gaps and clearer pathways to success for students of all interests and backgrounds.

How should Colorado define accessibility?

From a student perspective, Colorado provides an integrated higher education system which delivers viable post-secondary educational opportunities for all Coloradoans regardless of income level, geographic location, historic underrepresentation, and non-traditional background.

Accessibility must address the following components:

- Awareness of the promise and possibility of higher education
- Academic preparation
- Financial affordability
- Remediation capacity
- Geographic considerations

What should be the accessibility standard for the following state categorizations of higher education institutions? Distinctions are focused on selectivity, mission, and research volume.

- Research institutions
 - Four year undergraduate degrees as well as graduate level programs
- State colleges
 - Four year undergraduate degrees with few if any graduate level programs
 - \circ $\;$ Exceptions are targeted masters degrees at Metro, Mesa, Adams $\;$
- Community colleges
 - Comprehensive two year associate degrees with transfer capability
 - Career and Technical Education degrees and certificates
- Technical schools
 - School district affiliations, work with high schools and community colleges

How can the system and individual institutions be held accountable for maintaining accessibility?

Colorado has the nation's largest gap between the college attainment of its largest ethnic group and other ethnicities and the nation's second largest gap between low and high income groups. What should be Colorado's 5 and 10 year goals to address this gap? Accessibility components under review

- February 23: Historically underrepresented populations
 - o Frank Sanchez (CU Denver), Paul Thayer (CSU)
 - Underrepresented populations lack support structures, including mentoring and advising; they also face inconsistent transfer requirements and lack of collaboration across institutions. Academic issues include lack of preparedness, remediation requirements, Higher Education Admission Requirements and associated visible and transparent costs.
- March 9: Career and Technical Education
 - o Geri Anderson (Provost, Community College System)
 - Need more and better support structures, alternative financial aid for certificates, part-time and adult learners. Should review awareness campaign for nontraditional students, career cluster model which allows students mobility within industries, and "earn and learn" pathways starting in 9th grade. Training needed for teachers on different learning models.
- March 23: Accessibility how do we define it? Draft in italics on page one.
- April 13: Accessibility in "financial aid"
 - Celina Duran (CDHE) and Jerry Mason (Arapahoe Community College)
 - Need to address timing and process to apply for aid and complications related to forms (FASFA); are we spending our financial aid dollars wisely or in best way to address accessibility (e.g. should we shift "need based" into work study, with institutional match?)?
- April 27: Accessibility in "admissions"
 - Matt McKeever (CDHE) and Joe Cruz (ACT)
 - Need to examine admission windows by institutions, and focus on "window" admitted students, including what support structures and remedial help do they need; consider assessing students in 11th re: college readiness; address college entrance and retention after years 1 and 2. Focus on policy impacts.
- Other topics to be scheduled:
 - o Accessibility to underrepresented populations/non-traditional students
 - o Accessibility in Geography/Delivery
 - o Remediation capacity: Needs and costs.
 - Accountability current standards and enforcement mechanisms, performance contracts, key performance indicators.