Enhancing Capacity for Increased Demand

Big Ideas: Group 1

New Jersey Council of County Colleges
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Executive Summary of Recommendations

Re-charging the Mission and Strategic Direction of the New Jersey Virtual Community College Consortium (NJVCCC)

1. The community college Presidents and New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) should charge the NJVCCC with the task of re-energizing its mission and should financially sponsor a facilitated process to develop a strategic plan to expand the coordination, scope, breadth, and delivery of online distance and hybrid learning systems offered by New Jersey's community colleges. The plan should be formulated with an intended implementation no later than the 2011 summer semester.

The strategic plan should build on the existing strengths and assets of the NJVCCC, as well as the existing complement of online and hybrid course offerings in New Jersey as a starting point for expansion and growth. The strategic plan should consider the appropriate provision of full associate degree programs and the opportunity for transfer to available online baccalaureate programs.

The strategic plan at a minimum should address:

A. The centralized and/or regionalized coordination of online/hybrid model instruction and administration.

B. Coordinated, possibly centralized, marketing of credit and continuing education courses and Web-based registration.

C. Innovative cost/revenue sharing arrangements.

D. Converting the top 25 high enrollment courses to online and/or hybrid format.

E. Part-time and full-time faculty training and development for effective online/hybrid course instruction delivery with a centralized certification program for basic online course platform skills.

F. The use of in-state and out-of state partnerships for the delivery of online distance learning to institutions and private industry (e.g. Connecticut or Virginia).

G. Best practices in the provision of online student services.

H. Appropriate assessment practices for online instruction and student services.

2. The NJVCCC should be charged with the task of exploring the feasibility of Project DELTA as a resource for expanding online distance and hybrid learning in New Jersey's community colleges.
**College Readiness**

1. It is recommended that the Presidents and NJCCC develop a framework for use by all community colleges to improve the college readiness of students entering community colleges with the goal of mitigating the need for developmental education from the traditional classroom to the virtual learning environment.

This framework should incorporate (but not be limited to):

A. Early diagnostic assessment of high school students (as early as 10th grade) to identify those students who need developmental intervention prior to entering community college. Such interventions might include but not be limited to: dual enrollment and summer bridge programs.

B. Examine the viability of using the 8th grade (ASK 8) as a tool for early identification of students needing early pre-college intervention. Explore a research project to establish whether the ASK 8 has predictive value.

C. Examine early, pre-college engagement of families as an element of the pre-college intervention.

D. Development of statewide policy recommendations to prevent colleges from having to negotiate individually with the hundreds of school districts in New Jersey.

**Review of Open Access**

1. The Presidents and NJCCC should explore the viability and wisdom of limiting the open access policy. An open access policy committee should gather all relevant data from New Jersey's community colleges to determine whether there are certain students who would be better suited for other alternative pathways to employment success. It is recommended that New Jersey conduct a substantially similar longitudinal study as was conducted by Valencia Community College in reviewing the open access policy. The goal would be not to restrict access to education but to reinforce openness by creating appropriate and effective pathways to success for students whose basic skills assessments indicate that they will likely not succeed or benefit from traditional developmental education programs.

**Promoting Shared Service Consortia Arrangements**

1. NJ's Presidents and the NJCCC should explore the viability of re-configuring the existing complement of college degree and certification programs for possible re-organization as "consortia" (shared service) programs. This review should be preceded by the development of a comprehensive matrix of program degree and certification programs offered at each of NJ's colleges.
2. NJ's Presidents and the NJCCC should engage in a comprehensive dialogue about instituting a policy that all new programs and offerings be explored for possible consortia arrangements.

3. NJ Presidents should review the full program inventory for the state, matched against employment need predictions, and explore: new program needs that could be delivered on a regional basis, as well as areas in which we are "over programmed" for possible reduction or elimination.

**Course Re-design**

1. A task group should be formed to evaluate the feasibility of introducing course re-design elements for the top 25 high enrollment courses offered by New Jersey's community colleges. This group should review the work of NCAT and Carol Twigg for possible applicability in New Jersey.

**Credit “Creep” Review**

1. Each community college should review its academic degree programs for “credit creep” with the goal of determining whether the same programming (if appropriate) can be achieved by students with fewer credits.

**Alternative Scheduling**

1. A comprehensive analysis should be undertaken to explore the feasibility of expanding capacity through the use of alternative scheduling arrangements.
Group 1: Enhancing Capacity for Increased Demand

Introduction

Today, community colleges are experiencing unprecedented challenges. Community college enrollments are at an all time high and state budget cuts have been tremendous. Faced with this dire situation, colleges across the country are resorting to drastic solutions, such as renting nearby real estate and converting rooms into makeshift classrooms, squeezing more students than there are seats into a classroom, and even closing the door to open admission. Hundreds of thousands of students throughout the country (particularly in California and New York) have had to put their college dreams on hold because there was simply no room left. This is a difficult position for all community colleges.

The situation is also serious in New Jersey. The average total enrollment growth for the 19 New Jersey community colleges from 2004 to 2009 was 17.3 percent. State operating aid cuts to New Jersey’s community colleges were around 16 percent during this same time period, further making it difficult to serve the growing number of students. Given these difficult times, enhancing and building capacity is a crucial component to building the future of New Jersey’s 19 community colleges.

Within this report, there are seven areas of recommendations aimed at enhancing capacity for increased demand.

Group 1 Representation

Group 1 convened deliberations through a Google Groups forum and face-to-face dialogue to develop the recommendations set forth in this paper. The group, chaired by Dr. Casey Crabill of Raritan Valley Community College, included the following representatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community College</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raritan Valley</td>
<td>Dr. Casey Crabill (Chair)</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>Evan Kobokakis</td>
<td>Director, Technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brookdale</td>
<td>Dr. Linda Millstein</td>
<td>VP, Outreach Business and Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brookdale</td>
<td>Nancy Kegelman</td>
<td>Dean, Academic Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>Dr. Ben Vasta</td>
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<td>Cumberland</td>
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<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Dr. Ladylease White</td>
<td>Dean of Faculty</td>
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<td>Essex</td>
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<td>Essex</td>
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<td>Gloucester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td>Dr. Paula Pandro</td>
<td>VP, Student Services</td>
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Rationale and Recommendations

Re-charging the Mission and Strategic Direction of the New Jersey Virtual Community College Consortium

Rationale:

To obtain information about the current use of online and hybrid courses in New Jersey community colleges, a survey by Group 1 was conducted. Of the 19 New Jersey community colleges, 16 colleges responded to the survey.

Information was gathered on the number and percentage of online and hybrid courses as well as the total number and percentage of online and hybrid course sections. Considering the wide variety in college size, only percentages will be reported here.

For fall 2009, the percentage of online courses (online courses as a percentage of total courses) ranged from 8.9 percent to 28 percent. The percentage of online course sections (online course sections as a percentage of total course sections) was far lower, ranging from 2.3 percent to 14 percent. There was a slight increase the following semester. For spring 2010, the percentage of online courses ranged from 9 percent to 29 percent, while the percentage of online course sections was 2.7 percent to 14 percent.

Nine colleges indicated that they offer no degrees that can be earned fully online. Seven colleges indicated that they offer some degrees of certificates online, ranging from one degree/certificate to nine. A large majority of fully online degrees were in the areas of business and business management. Another common discipline was liberal arts.

This survey also asked what disciplines are most active for online courses. They included: psychology, English, business, sociology, computer science, allied health, legal studies, mathematics, fitness and wellness, education, science, and justice studies. Some of the most common answers were psychology (10 responses), English (9), business (6) and history (6).

Hybrid courses seem to be less commonly utilized when compared to online courses. The percentage of hybrid courses (hybrid courses as a percentage of total courses) for both fall 2009 and spring 2010 ranged from zero to ten percent. The percentage of hybrid course sections

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<tr>
<th>Hudson</th>
<th>Corey Vigdor</th>
<th>ED, Distance Learning</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>Dr. Debbie Kell</td>
<td>Dean, Virtual Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
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<td>VP, AA and Student Affairs</td>
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<td>Ocean</td>
<td>Dr. Jon Larson</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>Greg Fallon</td>
<td>Associate Dean, Learning Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>Dr. Kate Douglas</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJCCC</td>
<td>Linda Lam</td>
<td>VP, NJCCC</td>
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<td>Intern</td>
<td>Anthony Jones</td>
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(hybrid course sections as a percentage of total course sections) for fall 2009 and spring 2010 ranged from zero to four percent. Respondents listed a wide variety of hybrid courses offered, including nursing, mathematics, science (biology and chemistry), education, history, English, computer science, and psychology.

Colleges were asked to identify three to five areas that could be further developed online or in a hybrid format to best meet the needs of their students. Popular answers for online development included: business (5 responses), computer science (5), criminal justice (4), mathematics (4), and English (3). Common responses for hybrid development were science (11) and math (4).

Colleges were also asked to report any companies used for the development of online courses. Four colleges responded that they use Education2go.com. Most colleges responded that they did not use any company. Online student services included: tutoring (7 responses), registration/enrollment (7), technology help (6), library services (5), online bookstore (4), advising (3), and orientation (3).

Through its deliberations Group 1 believes that there is great potential to expand the breadth, scope, and magnitude of online distance learning and hybrid delivery models.

Online education affords opportunities to learn to an expanded demographic of people with busy work schedules, family responsibilities, travel requirements, active military obligations, or disabilities. Consideration must be given to assure the necessary support systems – including financial aid – are in place for this demographic.

Group 1 recognizes the significant and important work of the New Jersey Virtual College Community College Consortium (NJVCCC) and believes that its mission and work agenda should be re-charged with a renewed and updated mission. Specifically, Group 1 recommends that:

Recommendations:

1. The community college Presidents and NJCCC should charge the NJVCCC with the task of re-energizing its mission and should financially sponsor a facilitated process to develop a strategic plan to expand the coordination, scope, breadth and delivery of online distance and hybrid learning systems offered by New Jersey's community colleges. The plan should be formulated with an intended implementation of no later than the 2011 summer semester.

The strategic plan should build on the existing strengths and assets of the NJVCCC, as well as the existing complement of online and hybrid course offerings in New Jersey as a starting point for expansion and growth. The strategic plan should consider the appropriate provision of full associate degree programs and the opportunity for transfer to available online baccalaureate programs.
The strategic plan should at a minimum address:

A. The centralized and/or regionalized coordination of online/hybrid model instruction and administration.

B. Coordinated, possibly centralized, marketing of credit and continuing education courses and Web-based registration.

C. Innovative cost/revenue sharing arrangements.

D. Converting the top 25 high enrollment courses to online and/or hybrid format.

E. Part-time and full-time faculty training and development for effective online/hybrid course instruction delivery with a centralized certification program for basic online course platform skills.

F. The use of in-state and out-of state partnerships for the delivery of online distance learning to institutions and private industry (e.g. Connecticut or Virginia).

G. Best practices in the provision of online student services.

H. Appropriate assessment practices for online instruction and student services.

2. The NJVCCC should be charged with the task of exploring the feasibility of Project DELTA as a resource for expanding online distance and hybrid learning in New Jersey's community colleges.

**College Readiness**

**Rationale:**

There is little doubt that college readiness is a problem in New Jersey as well as throughout the country. While New Jersey has one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country, college readiness is a different matter. Data indicate that 60 percent of students entering community college must take developmental education courses, classes that prepare students for college-level work, but do not count as credit toward a college degree.

This results in a variety of negative consequences. First of all, retention rates are quite low for developmental education students. One study using the National Education Longitudinal Study data showed that only 25 percent of developmental education students complete a college credential within eight years. Some view developmental education as a barrier to college completion, since many developmental education students are required to take at least one semester or even up to several semesters of developmental courses before they are allowed to take college-level credit courses. Improving students’ preparedness for college would likely
increase retention and college completion rates. Second, developmental education is quite costly. National estimates place the cost of developmental education at $1.88 to $2.35 billion. Reducing the need for remediation will save money for students, colleges, and state government.

The best way to work to alleviate some of these issues is to improve college readiness. To address this important topic, the following recommendations are made.

**Recommendation:**

1. It is recommended that the Presidents and NJCCC develop a framework for use by all community colleges to improve the college readiness of students entering community colleges with the goal of mitigating the need for developmental education from the traditional classroom to the virtual learning environment.

This framework should incorporate (but not be limited to):

   A. Early diagnostic assessment of high school students (as early as 10th grade) to identify those students who need developmental intervention prior to entering community college. Such interventions might include but not be limited to: dual enrollment and summer bridge programs.

   B. Examine the viability of using the 8th grade (ASK 8) as a tool for early identification of students needing early pre-college intervention. Explore a research project to establish whether the ASK 8 has predictive value.

   C. Examine early, pre-college engagement of families as an element of the pre-college intervention.

   D. Development of statewide policy recommendations to prevent colleges from having to negotiate individually with the hundreds of school districts in New Jersey.

**Review of Open Access**

**Rationale:**

Some community colleges across the country are exploring the idea of restricting the “open access” policy as a way to increase classroom capacity for students who are more likely to succeed. WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING THIS IDEA, but we are recommending that the New Jersey community college Presidents and other stakeholders convene a dialogue about a “modified” open access policy that recognizes the fact that there are certain prospective students who can be indentified through K-12 tests and Accuplacer as highly unlikely to succeed in community college.

The reality is that there are students who enter community colleges and never transition to a credit-level course. These students typically take one or more developmental education
classes and eventually leave the college altogether. Sadly, these outcomes could have been easily predicted based on a combined review of ASK 8, HSPA, and Accuplacer test results. Given the capacity constraints faced by community colleges and the objectionable practice of accepting tuition from students who we know are unlikely to succeed, community colleges need to find creative alternative pathways to success for these students.

It is suggested that a “modified open access” policy be explored and defined that provides such students a different pathway to success in the workforce.

**Recommendation:**

1. The Presidents and NJCCC should explore the viability and wisdom of limiting the open access policy. An open access policy committee should gather all relevant data from New Jersey's community colleges to determine whether there are certain students who would be better suited for other alternative pathways to employment success. It is recommended that New Jersey conduct a substantially similar longitudinal study as was conducted by Valencia Community College in reviewing the open access policy. The goal would be not to restrict access to education but to reinforce openness by creating appropriate and effective pathways to success for students whose basic skills assessments indicate that they will likely not succeed or benefit from traditional developmental education programs.

**Promoting Shared Service Consortia Arrangements**

**Rationale:**

A Consortia Program is a program designed to be shared among community colleges. Such arrangements recognize that a joint approach to delivering educational programs can sometimes be more cost effective. In some cases a single institution simply does not have the capability or capacity to deliver certain programs.

A consortia arrangement provides cost savings in the sharing of resources and educational, administrative, and instructional expertise. It also provides greater access and opportunity for students to enroll in programs not typically offered in their county or region. There are examples of such shared service or consortia arrangements nationally and in New Jersey. For example, the New Jersey Community College Workforce Development Consortium is a creative cost and revenue sharing arrangement that benefits all of the community colleges by eliminating the need for each of the 19 community colleges to employ a workforce development coordinator and staff. Another example of a consortia or shared service arrangement is the joint nursing program between Passaic County Community College and Sussex County Community College. This arrangement not only saves money for both institutions but affords access and opportunity to the students from Sussex County that they would not otherwise enjoy.
A recent White Paper of the Virginia Community College Re-engineering Task Force states:

“*In light of increasing enrollments and diminishing financial support, consortia arrangements allow a college to offer programs they could not otherwise offer because of 1) a lack of job opportunities in an area to justify a stand-alone program, 2) not enough student interest to justify a standalone program, and/or 3) startup and operating costs. There will be FTE gains for receiving colleges in general education and prerequisite enrollments that add to headcount and tuition revenue with minimal increase of teaching costs since most of the courses are already in place for other programs on the receiving campus.”*

**Recommendations:**

1. NJ's Presidents and the NJCCC should explore the viability of re-configuring the existing complement of college degree and certification programs for possible re-organization as "consortia" (shared service) programs. This review should be preceded by the development of a comprehensive matrix of program degree and certification programs offered at each of NJ's colleges.

2. NJ's Presidents and the NJCCC should engage in a comprehensive dialogue about instituting a policy that all new programs and offerings be explored for possible consortia arrangements.

3. NJ’s Presidents should review the full program inventory for the state, matched against employment need predictions, and explore: new program needs that could be delivered on a regional basis, as well as areas in which we are "over programmed" for possible reduction or elimination.

**Course Re-design**

**Rationale:**

Community colleges and other institutions of higher education across the country are exploring, implementing and evaluating the efficacy of “course re-design.” The impetus for restructuring the delivery model for education is being driven by confluence of expanding enrollments, diminishing public resources, growth in the diversity of students, and the concomitant need to meet their needs in new and different ways. The community college is and must continue to be the preeminent platform for students to succeed in the workforce and in four-year degree programs. In the face of these pressures and responsibilities, community colleges must respond to calls for greater accountability and remain current with emerging trends and opportunities. Course re-design represents such a trend and opportunity and should be carefully considered and evaluated as a possible model for restructuring student learning.
Currently, there is a group of 16 states that is studying, evaluating, and sharing information resources about such topics as course re-design within the context of developmental education. The Virginia Community College Re-engineering Task Force (VCCRTF) and a separate Developmental Education Working Group are actively exploring the implementation of course re-design elements in its developmental programs and its general education courses with the highest enrollments. A Virginia Re-engineering Task Force White Paper states that Northern Virginia Community College has implemented “common course content and learning outcomes” for some of its online courses.

Group 1 believes that course re-design is an idea worthy of further consideration and evaluation as a tool for greater accountability and instructional effectiveness at possibly reduced cost. As the VCCRTF White Paper states:

“Course redesign could increase the consistency of competency-based learning outcomes, improve student success, enhance content and credit portability, reduce student and institutional costs, integrate adjunct faculty into the instructional culture of our community colleges, and enable data-driven decision making for program improvement.”

Some of the key parameters for the review process it set forth are particularly relevant if New Jersey’s community colleges decide to undertake a similar in-depth evaluation. They are:

1. That all key stakeholders, including faculty, be included in all deliberations about course redesign. Academic Officers and faculty must be integrally involved and in fact take the lead in all aspects of any course re-design discussion and evaluation.

2. That the full discretion and authority of individual community colleges not be pre-empted in favor of course re-design. Individual colleges must and should have full authority and autonomy in deciding whether to implement course re-design.

3. That any evaluation of course re-design be based on proven best practices and evidence-based data and metrics.

4. That technology be leveraged to improve instruction and student support and to reduce costs.

**Recommendation:**

1. A working group should be formed to evaluate the feasibility of introducing course re-design elements for the top 25 high enrollment courses offered by New Jersey's community colleges. This group should review the work of NCAT and Carol Twigg for possible applicability in New Jersey and conduct an in-depth best practices review of those community colleges nationally that have implemented elements of course re-design.
Credit “Creep” Review

Rationale:

A credit review of academic programs will enable each community college to review its curricula to determine whether the same program and general education (if appropriate) outcomes could be achieved by students with fewer credits. Such a review has the potential to result in two tangible student benefits: (1) reducing time-to-degree; and (2) eliminating some tuition expense for students.

The goals of a credit review process should be to:

- Reduce total credits for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Arts and Sciences degrees to 60 credits where possible.
- Reduce total credits for Associate of Applied Arts and Associate of Applied Science degrees to 65 credits where possible.
- Review special programs (such as engineering).

Recommendation:

1. Each community college should review its academic degree programs for “credit creep” with the goal of determining whether the same programming (if appropriate) can be achieved by students with fewer credits.

Alternative Scheduling

Rationale:

One way to increase capacity is to utilize facility and classroom space more efficiently and creatively. Some community colleges have begun scheduling classes outside of normal and traditional time blocks, e.g. late evening and weekend classes. Among New Jersey’s 19 community colleges, there is unused capacity during non-traditional hours. In addition to ameliorating capacity issues, alternative scheduling arrangements could afford greater access to students with work schedules and other responsibilities that conflict with normal class schedules.

Recommendation:

1. A comprehensive analysis should be undertaken to explore the feasibility of expanding capacity through the use of alternative scheduling arrangements.