

OVAE CONNECTION

Community Colleges Contribute More to Democratizing Higher Education Than to Diverting Students From Bachelor's Degrees

A study published in the [Teachers College Record](#) by Alicia Dowd and Tatiana Melguizo in 2009 addresses an issue that has concerned higher education: What is the effect of community colleges on economically disadvantaged students' pursuits of bachelor's degrees?

The quasi-experimental study, "[Baccalaureate success of transfers and rising four year college juniors](#)," was designed to determine whether community colleges "...[expand] enrollment or divert students from attaining a bachelor's degree..." by examining... the effect of socioeconomic status (SES) and institutional selectivity on the bachelor's degree completion of transfer students and rising 4-year college juniors." The results, using data from 1992 to 2000, indicate that the argument that community colleges serve to "divert" students from seeking and receiving bachelor's degrees is not as substantiated by evidence as previously estimated. Students of traditional college age who go on to 4-year colleges via community colleges do not suffer a drop in their rate of completion of bachelor's degrees. Once differences in SES have been taken into consideration, there are "...insignificant differences between the completion rates of low-SES transfer and low-SES rising junior students." However, not every aspect of democratizing education is shown to be served. For example, while the study finds that bachelor's-degree completion is not largely affected by attending a community college, its scope is limited to low-SES students, ignoring the degree completion rate across SES lines.

One implication is that states may combine articulation and transfer policies resulting in systems in which 2- and 4-year colleges work together to provide institutional support, counseling, and other programs that promote successful transfers for students who enter college aspiring to earn a bachelor's degree. Another implication of the study is that one way to ensure that community colleges remain a path to obtaining a bachelor's degree is to provide incentives for some academically prepared students to choose to begin postsecondary education in a community college.

Philip Less Appointed Rhode Island's Adult Education Director

The [Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) has announced that Philip Less will serve as its state director of adult education beginning on Dec. 5. Less previously served as Arkansas' statewide ESOL coordinator and as program advisor to 21 local providers in the northwest quadrant of the state. He also was Arkansas' point person for accountability and for the National Reporting System for Adult Education. Less also served as director of a local ESOL program and taught in three states as well as in Croatia and the Netherlands. He chaired the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium state staff workgroup and is the chair-elect of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages' adult education interest section.

Green Standards to Be Integrated Into Career Clusters

In September, OVAE funded a project designed to help states and local programs integrate green concepts into the career cluster standards and to identify new green occupations. A team led by [MPR Associates, Inc.](#), including [the National Career Technical Education Foundation](#), [Vivayic](#), and the [Academy for Educational Development](#) was awarded the contract. The standards will follow the format currently used by the states' 16 career clusters identified by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium and recognized by OVAE. The [career clusters are an organizing tool for CTE that group occupations into 16 cluster areas aligned with industry-validated knowledge and skills statements](#). They define what students need to know and be able to do in order to transition successfully into postsecondary education and/or careers. The new green standards will become part of *programs of study* or *career pathways*, which may begin as early as the ninth grade and outline a sequence of academic and CTE courses connecting secondary and postsecondary education. Six career clusters will be first in line for green standards integration: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Information Technology; Manufacturing; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

Maine Adult Education Office Harnesses Broadband for Students and Teachers

Maine's Office of Community and Adult Education is leading an effort that will harness broadband technology to benefit adult students statewide. The office recently received nearly \$750,000 in funds under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*, to be paired with \$254,682 in state adult education funds, over four years. The grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration will expand the [Maine Adult Regional Technology Initiative \(MARTI\)](#) by providing intensive, ongoing training and mentoring in educational uses of technology to 112 adult educators across the state. Ten trainer-mentors will review existing state curricula and develop blended models of face-to-face and online adult education instruction. Teachers will use techniques such as creating and sharing documents through Google.docs, exploring research studies with WebQuest, and using other online tools. Funds also will be available to MARTI classrooms to improve access to broadband and technology tools. The new grant supports Maine's existing effort to expand statewide broadband access by building out from local adult education programs that agree to become community centers for local access to broadband training and online connections offered in every corner of the state.

Please note that there will not be an issue of OVAE Connection next week (Nov. 15-22).