Preface

Community colleges are no doubt the “melting pot” of higher education. With a large portion of students utilizing community colleges for varying personal, academic, and careers goals; these institutions serve diverse populations of students from differing backgrounds and educational levels, as well as they are instrumental to the economic development of the communities they serve. Community colleges face many challenges including how to be all things to all people due to their open access mission. Some of the challenges these institutions face are a rapidly changing and evolving student demographic, a shortage of qualified community college leaders due to current and upcoming retirements of the baby boomer generation, decreased local and state funding, deficit economies, as well as the pressures on community colleges to prepare competent individuals for our nation’s workforce, among others. These challenges are forcing community colleges to be more nimble and strategic in how they serve their students and their communities. These institutions are in the forefront of higher education. They are innovative and can be quick to change. They are constantly seeking ways to solve problems in the practice of higher education and many of their strategic and entrepreneurial practices are evidence that they are the higher education institutions that will remain the constant contributor to developing a qualified workforce for the U.S.

Community colleges consistently seek ways to address the multiple challenges they face in serving their stakeholders, and they do this by developing and utilizing innovative and strategic practices to ensure that they are able to keep pace with the changing needs of our society. For the purposes of this book, innovative practices are those that have been proven to best address the issues that these institutions face in the realm of both internal and external influences. As noted previously, these influences include insufficient state funding and decreasing local tax bases – both major revenue streams for community colleges to operate, a majority of the student population needing developmental education, as well as open access missions that serve students where they at -- which brings with it numerous social and academic challenges.

AUDIENCE

The audience for this book is broad and encompasses multiple people and types of organizations. Higher education practitioners (all types of institutions) will benefit from the practices shared in this book as they strive to address the changing needs of their institutions while faced with decreased funding, and the most diverse student population with both social and academic needs they have ever had to educate. In addition, local, state, and national policymakers can learn firsthand what current innovative practices are being used in community colleges to serve the needs of their many stakeholders. Advancing the
knowledge of community colleges among policy makers will be instrumental in positive policy support of these institutions and could result in increased local, state, and national funding. Higher education graduate programs that focus on the practice of higher education are also an intended audience for this book as they are in the forefront of educating future community college leaders.

The purpose of this book is to showcase the innovative practices utilized by community colleges to educate large, diverse student populations with multiple needs. Diversity in community colleges is not tied solely to the ethnicity or race of students, though these institutions educate the most first time in college and the most students of color than any other type of higher education institutions in the U.S. The diversity of the student population includes the students’ purposes for attending community colleges. The functions of the community college -- with its open access mission -- include adult basic education, developmental education, career and technical education, dual credit, workforce development, transfer, plus 50 programs, as well as many other academic programs and supports to meet the needs of all of their students. In addition to the above, we distinguish students further by being traditional or nontraditional, as well as first generation, ESL, veterans, those with disabilities, among other things. Faculty in community colleges can have a student taking dual credit courses to those returning after successful careers as professionals to retrain for an encore career in the same classroom. Taking into consideration the diversity of the student population based solely on their reasons for attending the community college does not take into account the needs that such a diverse student population brings into the classroom or to the institution overall.

To be able to serve the most diverse student population in higher education, community colleges must be strategic and innovative. They rely on their communities to help them do this. This book highlights how community colleges utilize collaborative partnerships to help them serve and educate the workforce, and how they utilize innovative practices to help strategically place themselves as the educational institutions that will assist in supporting the U.S. as a global leader through their abilities to quickly change directions to meet the needs for an educated workforce.

Examining the Impact of Community Colleges on the Global Workforce focuses on how community colleges serve their local communities and the impact they have in educating the nation’s workforce, which is seen through initiatives and charges such as President Barack Obama’s American Graduation Initiative to produce more graduates by 2020 and his identification of community colleges as the most capable higher education institutions of doing this. The overall objectives and mission of the book is to provide in depth looks into how community colleges utilize innovative practices and strategies to meet the needs of society and the nation - in providing an educated workforce. Challenged with under-resourced students, downed economies, and deficits in state and local funding, these institutions continue to be resilient and are quick to change, as demonstrated in the chapters that follow, in order to meet the needs of their constituents. The contents of this book will contribute to the understanding of the place of the comprehensive community college in the development and support of an educated workforce in the U.S. and globally, as well as provide innovative strategies for all of those in higher education (across all types of institutions) to address the critical issues they are faced with.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This book is comprised of 13 chapters. Each chapter of the book has a standard format that includes: Title, author(s), abstract, key words, and chapter contents. A brief overview of each chapter is discussed below:
Chapter 1: A Tangled Knot of Career & Credential: The Associate in Applied Science Degree as Career Preparation and Transfer Catalyst
Andrew J. Ryder, Bethany D. Meighen, Jaime L. Russell, Crystal E. Hollenbaugh, John E. Lothes II, Ezekiel W. Kimball

This chapter explores the potential of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree as both a terminal and transfer degree. The chapter provides a discussion of the impact of attaining an AAS degree versus a bachelor’s degree, and the economic effects of this to individuals based on U.S. employment and wage data. Utilizing the process of “untangling the knot,” the chapter authors examine economic outcomes associated with AAS degrees and takes a more focused approach to exploring the way that community colleges and state universities in North Carolina have repurposed the AAS degree in order to suggest ways that it can serve both those who will go on to four-year degrees (and perhaps beyond) and those who will not. Those who can benefit from the information presented in this chapter include professionals who are interested in understanding the role of career and credential preparedness in careers in the Applied Science area. Additionally, those who are involved in Applied Science and have a clear understanding of the degree and career pathway will also benefit from this chapter as it will help shed light on the different ways the degree has been repurposed for the students with multiple academic and career goals.

Chapter 2: The Role of Rural Community Colleges in Preparing a Twenty-First Century Workforce
Andrew Koricich

This chapter focuses specifically on rural community colleges and the role they play in ensuring competent workers for the increasing number of rural industries that are expected in the twenty-first century. More specifically, the nature and needs of rural communities and the specific skills sets needed among individuals within these communities are highlighted. This chapter is beneficial to those professionals who focus on the experiences of rural community college students and community colleges in rural settings. With a large population of students enrolled in rural serving community colleges, understanding the needs and skill development of this population of students is also beneficial to students and parents of students in rural community colleges.

Chapter 3: Advisory Committees: Workforce Education Programs
Julie D. Neal

This chapter focuses on the role of advisory committees in workforce education programs. Given the fact that community colleges serve vital roles in the communities they serve, the relevance of the skills learned and experiences provided is paramount in the success of workforce education programs. This chapter highlights the role of advisory committees as the heart of essential partnerships among local workforce, economic development, business and industry and the role of these partnerships in providing and fund training opportunities to upgrade worker’s skills, provide more efficient services, increase employment opportunities in local communities, reduce educational program cost, and become business oriented as a community. Those who can benefit from the information presented in this chapter include
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academic advisors, committee development officers, business and industry professionals and workforce education program professionals. The collaborative nature of the partnerships within workforce education programs provides opportunities for professionals in a variety of areas of specialization to benefit from the contents of this chapter.

Chapter 4: Assisting Traditional Students in Community College: An Examination of Practices that Affect Transfers
Anita L Vorreyer and Regina V Miller

This chapter focuses on innovative practices that community colleges can utilize, in collaboration with leadership in business and industry, to assist students in developing their leadership skills and soft skills needed for the workplace. Give the rapid pace at which community college students must develop workforce readiness skills and competencies, this chapter suggests innovative practices and strategies. Those who can benefit from the information presented in this chapter include leadership within business and industry, individuals within both the community college and university environments who are interested in the student transfer experiences, as well as community college and university leadership whose mission is to increase student recruitment and retention.

Chapter 5: Focusing on the Forgotten: An Examination of the Influences and Innovative Practices that Affect Community College Transfer Student Success
Stephanie M. Foote, Jeannine Kranzow, and Sara E. Hinkle

This chapter focuses on transfer students, an often “forgotten” population and provides an examination of factors that affect that the successful transition of this population. Additionally, the authors highlight innovative practices that can be used to develop campus programs and services to assist with the transfer student transition to four-year colleges and universities. Professionals involved in the development and implementation of student and campus programs would most benefit from this chapter. Additionally, individuals associated in transfer and transition services would also benefit from the contents of this chapter, which highlight innovative practices for ensuring the success of campus programming in preparing students during the transition process.

Chapter 6: Meeting Them Where They Are: Student Learning Behind Bars
Thomas C. Priester and Tisha M. Smith

Through a specialized program sponsored by a community college, the authors, who also served as instructors for credit-bearing courses at a state-operated, maximum-security correctional facility, share first-hand experiences of the role of education in an incarcerated student population’s ability to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. Additionally, the authors provide innovative practices in educating and preparing students behind bars for the workforce. Individuals interested in working with a special population, such as students behind bars will find this chapter most beneficial. Additionally, community colleges looking to develop specialized programs for students behind bars and professionals currently working with students behind bars can benefit from learning more about innovative practices for educating the aforementioned population.
Chapter 7: A Developmental and Holistic Approach to Learning and Meeting the Needs of the Workforce: AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) for Higher Education and Community College Partnerships
Fernando Valle, Stacy A. Jacob, Rachel Juarez-Torres, and Evelyn Hiatt

Through the partnerships and holistic and developmental process of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) for Higher Education in two community colleges, the authors highlight innovative leadership practices and partnerships by administrators, faculty and staff to improve faculty pedagogy and engagement and the support of historically underrepresented students to continue the improvement of college completion, transition and be workforce ready. Those who can benefit from the information presented in this chapter include community college administrators, faculty and staff who are involved in pedagogy and curriculum development. Additionally, community college professionals concerned with the experiences of underrepresented students and the impact of college completion and workforce readiness on their success can learn more about innovative leadership practices and partnerships via this chapter.

Chapter 8: Beyond 1-1 Advising: An institution-wide approach to preparing students for the global workforce
Dawna Wilson and Kimberly M. Lowry

This chapter encourages community colleges to rethink advising approaches designed to support students through the workforce development process in the twenty-first century. By moving beyond a traditional one-on-one advising model and incorporating an institution-wide, customer-service approach at Eastfield College, the authors describe how Eastfield takes services to students by hosting Lunch and Learns, providing onsite advising, and establishing liaisons with local business partners. Academic advisors and workforce development professionals can benefit from this chapter by learning about innovative ways to rethink academic advisors. This chapter highlights different approaches and strategies for “taking services to students.”

Chapter 9: Experience as Textbook: Service-Learning in the Community College
Katie Treadwell and Brian Mitra

This chapter utilizes career development, faculty partnerships, and leadership development at urban community colleges to explores how experiential learning opportunities, specifically service-learning, foster career exploration, development of transferable skills, and readiness for employment and/or higher education among community college students. This chapter is beneficial for professionals within community colleges and leadership in business and industry sectors who are concerned with designing learning environments to preparing the next-generation workforce.

Chapter 10: Addressing the Shortage of Teachers of Color: Community Colleges’ Role in the Pre-service Teacher Pipeline: Addressing the Shortage of Teachers of Color
David A. Byrd and Dave A. Louis

This chapter highlights the inherent role of community colleges in responding to the shortage of K-12 teachers of color. Given the education access gap, the authors, highlight workable strategies and
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practices to help administrators both understand the current shortage and ways to medicate the lack of diversity, as it relates to race and ethnicity, in the K-12 teaching force. Those who can benefit from the information presented in this chapter include pre-service teacher programs, recruitment and diversity offices and programs as well as K-12 preparation programs. The strategies and practices discussed in this chapter will assist in the development and implementation of programs designed to increase the representation of K-12 teachers of color.

Chapter 11: Community Colleges and the Global Workforce: The Role and Impact of Community Colleges on the Pursuit of STEM Education and the Workforce
Carlos Lopez

This chapter addresses the role of community colleges in preparing a competent science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce. The author highlights potential factors that contribute to successfully implementing new initiatives, programs, partnerships, and funding sources. Additionally, the author sheds light on the essential alignment needed between community colleges and workforce development programs in this effort. Leadership in STEM education and STEM program development will find this chapter most beneficial as this chapter includes information on innovative partnerships and initiatives designed for student success in STEM career pathways.

Chapter 12: Interdisciplinary Health Science Simulation Center: Benefits and Challenges
Tammy Frankland and K. David Bodily

This chapter draws attention to the benefits and challenges associated with creating an interdisciplinary simulation center for eight allied health programs at a two-year college. Discussed in this chapter are innovative strategies related to planning, securing resources, developing and implementing curricula, training faculty, orienting students, preliminary survey data, and plans for sustainability. Narratives of those involved in the development and implementation of the innovative strategies presented in this chapter are included, as well as other empirical evidence that provides further perspectives from students and faculty about the benefits and challenges of participating in the simulation activities. Those who can benefit from the information presented in this chapter include community college leaders who are seeking practical strategies to engage faculty and students in a collaborative process that responds to employer and patient needs. In addition, those involved in the allied health profession who understand the broader implications of their role and the interdependence of the health care team will benefit from the information presented in this chapter as it will help better prepare them to provide and improve patient care and outcomes.

Chapter 13: Flying SOLO for Student Success
Regina L. Garza Mitchell and Gina L. Cano-Monreal

This chapter highlights the need for preparing students for online education. Through an innovative practice called Student Online Learning Orientation (SOLO) at Texas State Technical College Harlingen, the authors discuss the college’s efforts to increase student preparedness and success in online courses so that they will be employable and competitive in the global workforce. The course was developed as the result of faculty research and recommendations regarding online learning at the college. The goal of
this class is to provide students with the necessary tools and skills to be successful. This chapter is most beneficial for online instructors and professionals in online learning programs. Individuals interested in ways to improve student success in online courses are also encouraged to review this chapter. This chapter discusses an innovative practice designed to prepare students for online courses.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, community colleges are and will continue to be the avenue by which students with diverse needs and experiences pursue postsecondary education opportunities. These enrollment patterns, however, do not come without challenges. Community colleges must continue to explore and examine innovative ways to remain at the forefront of postsecondary education even with the financial struggles. Through partnerships and collaborative practices community college professionals are in positions to positively affect the preparedness of the 21st century workforce. Examining the Impact of Community Colleges on the Global Workforce encourages growth and expansion of community college professionals by providing opportunities to examine and explore a variety of topics and populations that will continue to comprise the community college environment, including workforce education programs, students behind bars, service learning opportunities in the community college, pre-service opportunities for teachers of color, to name a few.