The 21st-Century Community College

A STRATEGIC GUIDE TO
Maximizing Labor Market Responsiveness

VOLUME 2
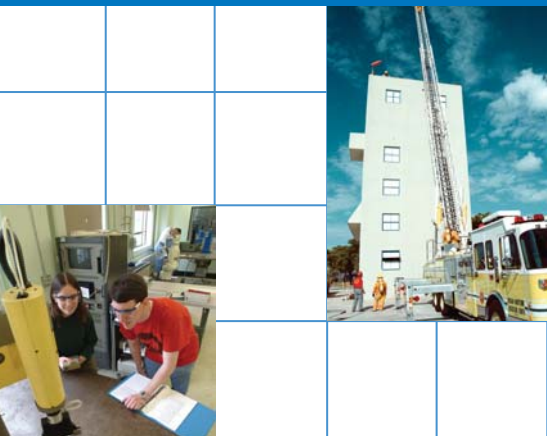**Promising Practices and Lessons From the Field**

The 21st-Century Community College: A Strategic Guide to Maximizing Labor Market Responsiveness

Volume 2

Promising Practices and Lessons from the Field

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Volume 2

Promising Practices and Lessons from the Field

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Preface

The Community College Labor Market Responsiveness Initiative

The Community College Labor Market Responsiveness (CCLMR) Initiative was created to develop and disseminate information and tools enabling community colleges, as a unique and critical component of America's education and training system, to keep pace with the needs of a diverse student body and a dynamic labor market. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) undertook this initiative in the fall of 2002.

The main goals of the initiative are: 1) determine the characteristics of a "market responsive" community college and identify the indicators and measures by which market responsiveness can be judged; 2) identify the policies and practices community colleges have put in place to facilitate and support labor market responsiveness; 3) pinpoint the steps colleges can take to improve labor market responsiveness and the quality of customized programs they offer to students; and 4) disseminate that knowledge to the field.

The conclusions presented by Westat and AED in this guidebook rely heavily upon case study analysis of more than 30 colleges in 10 diverse labor markets, especially hundreds of interviews and discussions conducted with college leaders, employers, and economic development professionals. To augment the case studies, we collected standardized data across all colleges using surveys and document review, conducted statistical analyses, reviewed the relevant literature, and consulted with experts.

In addition to this guidebook, other useful products listed below have emerged from the research component of this initiative. These are available at http://www.nccte.org/ and at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/.

- *Documented Characteristics of Labor-Market-Responsive Community Colleges and a Review of Supporting Literature* (Westat and AED, 2003)

- *Research Appendices to The 21st Century Community College* (Westat, forthcoming)

How to Use This Guide

Volume 1 of this guidebook provides an overview of labor market responsiveness and establishes common ground from which you, the community college leadership, can address this important issue. We encourage you and those at your college engaged in promoting labor market responsiveness to read it through to better inform yourselves and motivate others.

Volume 2 is the heart of the guidebook. Drawing from in-depth case studies of more than 30 colleges, it presents a roadmap for action. Each of Volume 2's seven modules explores a different facet of the community college that contributes to labor market responsiveness. These facets, which range from leadership and structure to resources and partnerships, represent various aspects of an organic whole. As such they are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually reinforcing, and the user will find considerable cross-referencing among the modules as the connections and interrelationships are discussed.

While it is possible to read this volume in its entirety, the seven modules are in fact designed to be used independently of one another and referenced time and again as each college president and his or her team progresses through processes of self-reflection and strategic planning. Like a travel guide, this volume points out numerous paths leading to the goal of labor market responsiveness. The starting point will depend upon local conditions, immediate needs, and existing opportunities.

Although some community colleges may benefit from the lessons learned in each module, most will likely discover that there are two or three dimensions that need special attention. By using the self-assessment tools in Volume 3, the college leaders and their teams will be able to better determine which of the critical dimensions presented here need to be prioritized for action.

In each module, broad findings and cross-cutting themes are explained in great detail and specific examples from colleges are presented. Each module closes with a brief summary of lessons learned. Questions are embedded throughout the modules to provoke thoughtful reflection and focus attention on practical action regarding current structures, policies, procedures, and programs at each college. The outcomes of discussions among the college president and his or her colleagues will inform the college's strategic planning process.

The information and strategies appearing in the seven modules emerged from our extensive study of over 30 community colleges. To promote additional thinking, we have interspersed between these modules detailed information on especially relevant resources and practical advice culled from other sources. These supplementary materials point to opportunities and strategies that have general applicability to labor market responsiveness rather than applicability to any specific dimension of it. **However, these are just examples, not an exhaustive list; there are other materials that may be useful, including materials that are still in the production stage, and we encourage each reader to seek them out as they become available.**

Practical Examples And Resources

During the course of our study of community colleges across the nation, we endeavored to identify practices that highlight the range and creativity of their efforts. This guidebook showcases some of the most innovative and promising of these practices. Many represent common strategies that most colleges employ; others are unique. Some would require major investments, while others could easily be emulated with only minor reallocation of resources.

Because these illustrations are drawn from a wide cross-section of community colleges, regardless of your college's location, student

demographics, or local economic conditions, you will find examples applicable to its circumstances. In many cases, a community college could adopt these strategies with only modest modifications to match its circumstances.

A brief profile of each college participating in this project is presented in the appendix to this volume. There you will be able to quickly determine how your college compares to those sharing promising practices here. We have also provided the main telephone number should you wish to contact the college directly for additional information. For additional information on colleges of particular interest, see *Research Appendices* to The *21st-Century Community College* forthcoming at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/

Seven Key Modules Of This Guide

It is no coincidence that our in-depth exploration of the dimensions associated with market responsiveness begins with leadership. Leadership is critical to all aspects of a college's success, but to none more than to shaping the very essence of the college's underlying mission and creating a shared understanding of what it means to be labor-market-responsive. Following this module and stemming directly from leadership are discussions of the responsive college's internal structure and culture.

Acquiring resources and gathering data in order to develop effective programs follow. The final two modules focus on the interface between the college and its community: building relationships and implementing partnerships.

Although these discussions are overlapping and mutually reinforcing, we examine each dimension in turn. Each module presents information, guides self-reflection, and offers practical examples for action. Taken together, we hope these modules provide the key ingredients necessary for community colleges to maximize their potential as labor-market-responsive colleges.

Throughout this guide we refer to "labor-market-responsive colleges" or "responsive community colleges." All of the colleges mentioned in this guide employ noteworthy and promising practices and strategies, and these are highlighted throughout. Many of these approaches are employed at multiple colleges. Others are unique, created from local circumstances and inspiration. However, none of the colleges visited incorporated all of these approaches simultaneously and not all colleges portrayed uniform depth and complexity of implementation. When we refer to "the labor-market-responsive college" in this guide, we are describing an ideal toward which colleges can aspire rather than any actual institution. The colleges cited in this guide point the way.

Leadership and Governance

The right leadership is essential to a labor-market-responsive community college. Both research and common knowledge suggest this to be the case. The case studies conducted for the development of this guide elevated the importance of leadership. It is perhaps the key feature internal to a college that improves its potential to meet and anticipate local labor-market needs. The most responsive and effective colleges have become so through their leadership. A senior administrator at Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland noted that the leading "colleges that come to mind in workforce development are who they are because of the commitment of their CEO." The influence of leadership permeates every aspect of the responsive community college and its efforts.

Entire books have been written about the complex and multifaceted subject of leadership. This module limits its discussion to general findings and guidance concerning effective leadership of the market-responsive college. We highlight six particularly relevant aspects of leadership: the locus of leadership; the priority placed on the mission; a vision that extends beyond the traditional service area; knowledge of economic and market trends; effectiveness in

public relations and resource acquisition; and such personal qualities as entrepreneurship.

Leadership Cannot Reside in One Person

Although the president is the college's primary leader, he or she cannot lead in isolation. Leadership that nurtures labor market responsiveness also resides with the board of trustees. We observed that responsive colleges had boards that were active in setting priorities and an overarching mission that focuses the college on its local labor market, and kept the college committed to the policy and program directions that stem from that mission. Boards may even play a role in allocating resources to workforce development. At Valencia Community College in Florida, the board earmarks $300,000 a year as start-up capital for training for businesses that are relocating to Orlando, as part of an initiative with the local economic development commission.

An important governing role of a college board includes the selection of a new president. An abiding interest by the board in workforce

development will influence their search for a new CEO, since they will choose a candidate who shares that commitment and passion. Additionally, the president must have the full support of the college governing body in leading the institution towards market responsiveness. Achieving agreement on values and priorities related to labor market responsiveness is an essential first step.

Although leadership starts at the top, it must also be diffused throughout the organization. Senior administrators who participate in decision-making and program management play important roles as part of the leadership team at the effective colleges we visited. At some colleges, faculty members as well as administrators were expected to assume leadership roles and empowered to take initiative. Vernon Crawley, the president of Moraine Valley Community College in the Chicago area, expects staff to be risk-takers, self-starters, and able to set a vision. Faculty and staff at that college have spoken up upon seeing an opportunity or the solution to a challenge, or otherwise seized the moment for action. Moraine Valley's training partnership with Cisco Systems, in which the college functions nationally as a Cisco Academy Training Center, is cited as an example of faculty leadership, both in its initiation and its subsequent expansion. To sustain institutional engagement in labor market responsiveness over the long haul, colleges must place a consistent emphasis on leadership development for administrators, board members, and faculty.

Making Labor Market Responsiveness a Priority

Exceptional leadership begins with recognizing the value of labor market responsiveness. Before leaders can develop a strategic plan to achieve labor market responsiveness, they must understand the role that the community college can play in the local economy. Knowledge of the national labor market enables leadership to envision how the

What priority do you place on the mission of meeting local workforce and economic development needs?

college could address those needs as well. This awareness translates into commitment from the top of the organization to making labor market responsiveness a college priority and to embracing that commitment publicly. As personnel at Moraine Valley Community College observed, success in responding to the labor market "starts with a leadership commitment to making it happen." And they praise their board for its "social conscience at the leadership level."

The Importance of Mission and Vision

All community college leaders have a vision for the future of their institutions. For a growing number, this includes envisioning a more significant role for their colleges in meeting labor market needs in their communities and beyond. A vision encompassing labor market responsiveness that has been internalized by college leadership and staff will lead to numerous workforce and economic development initiatives.

Leaders at labor-market-responsive colleges convey their commitment to and vision of meeting local labor market needs publicly and widely through the college's mission and strategic plan. Written goals encourage action. Labor-market-responsive colleges have adopted a mission statement that establishes workforce or economic development as an institutional commitment. College personnel consistently refer to these statements and plans when speaking of institutional activities and direction on their campuses. Though most community colleges have long been involved in market-responsive activities, the

To what extent is your college's commitment to labor market responsiveness reflected in the mission statement and strategic plan?

need to formalize these commitments in official ways became clear from the colleges studied. It was evident that the most effective colleges had honed their written goals for some time, while others were infusing new impetus or a more holistic approach to their activities by redrafting mission statements or adding a new focus to strategic plans. In addition to overarching goals, the strategic plans of responsive colleges specifically target local labor market needs and spell out the college's plan for fulfilling its local economic development role. As the boxed examples demonstrate, written statements showcase a college's willingness, and that of its leadership, to commit resources to developing the workforce. These documents directly influence the culture on campus, dictate its structure, and determine actions to be taken.

The processes of establishing these statements, college representatives confirm, are themselves key to securing the commitment of leadership and staff to labor market responsiveness. When labor market

responsiveness is on the table during the information-gathering, self-evaluation, and goal-setting processes that underlie mission-building and strategic planning, it is more likely to take root in an organization as an idea and a purpose. Not only is there opportunity to define the concept and explore its implications for the campus, but staff members also have the opportunity to air their concerns and even fears. Widespread campus commitment to the new purpose is more likely to result from a process that allows staff members to voice their apprehension about the ramifications of what is a profound cultural shift from the academic purposes of a traditional community college.

Market Responsiveness Reflected in Mission Statements

Indian River Community College (Florida):
"In partnerships with business, industry, educational institutions and the community, the college is a leader in economic and workforce development and a center for professional, personal, and cultural enrichment." Indian River Community College Web site: www.ircc.cc.fl.us/atircc/welcome/missionstmt.html

Mountain Empire Community College (Virginia):
"MECC functions within the educational community to assure that all individuals in its service area are given a continuing opportunity for the development and extension of their skills and knowledge through quality programs and services that are financially and geographically accessible. MECC provides leadership in determining and addressing both the needs of individuals and the economic needs of the College's service area." Mountain Empire Community College Web site: www.me.vccs.edu/mission.htm

Springfield Technical Community College (Massachusetts):
"STCC has a strong and recognized commitment to the economic development of the Pioneer Valley, Massachusetts, and the nation." Springfield Technical Community College Handbook, available online at: www.stcc.edu/services/handbook/stateanddisc.html

In addition, the leadership of community colleges that meet local labor market needs maintains a broad outlook on economic and workforce trends. It is a truism that we operate today in a global economy. Colleges fail to prepare workers adequately if they attempt to define local employment needs in isolation from other labor markets. Regional, national, and global economies profoundly influence local labor markets. Understanding these broader trends enables one to anticipate local shifts. Although most college mission statements do not set forth a regional or national agenda, it is evident from conversations on campus that the leadership of many community colleges looks far beyond the local horizon of the college district or traditional community.

Does your outlook extend beyond your college's traditional service area?

As Dennis Merrell, the president of York Technical College in South Carolina noted, with regard to economic and workforce trends, "If a community college is only looking at their service area, they've got to get their heads out of the sand. We're looking at the thing right in front of us, but we miss the tsunami." Numerous college personnel emphasized the importance of not limiting the vision to regional concerns, but going national. Responsive colleges told us that national visibility and connections help them in many ways - from the political to the strategic and financial. Colleges depend upon their leaders to articulate this broad perspective and communicate its importance to faculty and staff.

The Public Relations Role of Leaders

Presidents are regularly viewed as the face of the community college. Through observing and listening to the president, community members learn about the

Strategic Planning for Economic Development

One initiative in the **Gaston College** (North Carolina) five-year strategic plan is providing proactive leadership in economic development. The five goals under this initiative clearly articulate the mission and vision of its leadership:

■ Strengthen regional partnerships with business/industry, community agencies, and other educational institutions to enhance economic development;

■ Increase involvement of business/industry employers and economic development organizations in educational programs and course development;

■ Develop programs and services that fit the needs and requirements of external funding groups to better serve special populations such as displaced workers;

■ Provide opportunities for a renewed sense of entrepreneurship in the business community; and

■ Continually implement new curricula that respond to the emerging needs of the community.

Vision for the Future: Gaston College Strategic Plan 2003-2008

Regional and National Vision

Tony Zeiss, the president of **Central Piedmont Community College** (CPCC) in North Carolina led the formation of the Charlotte Region Workforce Development Partnership, which involves 10 community colleges operating in 16 counties, the local school district and university, chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and business. He notes that recruiting new industry benefits the region, not just the county where a particular business relocates. Reflecting on the nationwide retirement of baby boomers, the president is thinking about sources for replacement workers. If the labor pool increases through immigration, the college could offer more ESL. The college could also train seniors and functionally illiterate individuals, especially if national security concerns restrict immigration. CPCC has rallied Rotary clubs and volunteers to run literacy courses and works with a local senior center to reach older workers.

Do you capitalize on opportunities to lead by example in community involvement? Are you outspoken in your public commitment to market responsive goals?

interests and activities of the institution. Enhancing public respect for the college and recognition of its contributions helps ensure that it is regarded as a key partner in local economic development. Presidents share this public relations role with their board members. These leaders educate opinion leaders and power brokers about the institution, both to familiarize them with the college and to secure new partnerships and resources. College leaders network with leaders from other arenas - corporate, political, government, even sports and media - to make connections that will further the college's mission. They find ways, on campus and off, to showcase the college's mission and accomplishments and reward friends of the institution. In addition, effective presidents forge connections with the leaders of other community colleges and create networks of education and training providers.

"Cheerleader" is a term often used to describe the presidential role. The community relations role of dynamic senior administrators and program managers of continuing education and training divisions was clearly important at the colleges we visited. However, in the most responsive colleges, presidents and board members take on the majority of high-level networking roles. The involvement of these leaders appears particularly significant in securing large grants or the substantial resources needed to begin a new program. Presidents occasionally act as the key contact with important partners, in order to demonstrate

President as Public Relations Vehicle

"I am the cheerleader," said Zerrie D. Campbell, the president of **Malcolm X College** in Chicago, "the major public relations vehicle." She is not only visible in the local community and energetic in encouraging its residents, but is also energetic and effective in bringing powerful players to the campus. The president holds a gala in the atrium of the main campus building each February, primarily for corporate leaders. Her breakfast for legislators brings city and state politicians to campus, "to see what we've accomplished and what we need." The Jazz Café, also held in the atrium, is free to the community but strategically draws people from business and industry. She ensures that graduations are opportunities for awards to powerful friends of the campus "to showcase those who've been responsive to us." All of these campus events become opportunities to showcase the mission and accomplishments of Malcolm X College.

to both sides of the partnership the commitment that the college is making to labor market responsiveness. Because one person can develop and maintain only so many strong partnerships, the community college leader needs to select strategically among relationships and events in which to take part and delegate this responsibility to other college officials.

Well-Informed Leaders Are Anticipatory

Good leaders are well informed on the issues. Labor-market-responsive presidents actively seek out information and data on the overall economic picture. The leaders of responsive colleges understand the evolving needs of local employers and familiarize themselves with local, regional, and national labor market trends. This investment of time is well spent, for such information forms the building blocks of plans to anticipate and meet coming needs. Given the importance of this information, the president and senior

Anticipating the Economic Future

In the 1980s, **York Technical College** (South Carolina) became involved in the maintenance of electric vehicles. College leaders, familiar with national research, knew that many of these cars were being built but that no one was anticipating the need for maintenance. As a result, York Tech became a charter member of the National Alternative Fuel Training Program Consortium and developed a training program adopted nationwide for electrical vehicle maintenance. The first program led to a focus on natural gas vehicles in the early 1990s, then fuel cell vehicles, and now hybrids. Alternative energy is important to the local community because auto pollution has caused air- and water-quality problems that could hinder local economic growth. York Tech is now moving into the field of energy efficiency and alternative energy for the home. The college plans to educate the public and begin to train plumbers and electricians in the new systems, rather than wait to be asked to do so. "Part of our role is proactive, staring out towards where the end of the headlights reach," says president Dennis Merrill. "This is going to have an impact on our community. Are there things we could start doing now to prepare for that?"

Do you seek out reports or data to familiarize yourself with local, regional and national economic trends?

officers must drive the institution's research agenda to ensure effective decision-making. Information-gathering positions the college as anticipatory, looking ahead and planning for the future.

Presidents and administrators at responsive colleges referred to articles, reports, and data as a matter of course when discussing national employment trends or the local industry shifts. Their sources were many and varied. Examples of national information-gathering include the high-growth industry profiles distributed by the Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor and an article on the coming job boom in *Business 2.0.* Constance Carroll, the president of San Diego District's Mesa College, foresaw a training need in chemtech, and

subsequently developed a program to meet it, having read in the newspaper about the large number of pharmaceutical companies moving into San Diego.

Economic information can be gathered from experts as well. To anticipate how national economic trends might impact local workforce development needs, and to prepare the community college to train that workforce, Anthony Zeiss, the president of Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina, invited representatives from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the American Association of Community Colleges to a workforce summit in Charlotte with local economic development officials, businesses, and community colleges. As convener of the summit, the community college enhanced its reputation as an institution capable of anticipating the opportunities in and challenges facing its community.

In addition, leaders must keep current with the practices of other community colleges that succeed in responding to their local markets, analyze their applicability to the local environment, and implement appropriate programs and strategies. Senior personnel at Gaston College near Charlotte, N.C., reported that the president frequently asks them what other colleges in the state are doing and intentionally uses those colleges as benchmarks for measuring progress and assessing possibilities.

Leaders gather important information and share it with the campus. College personnel frequently report how much they gain from and appreciate their leaders'

participation in economic development meetings and in relationships with powerful figures and key partners. Thanks to the college leadership, faculty and staff become aware of new industry prospects for recruitment and employer needs. At Valencia Community College in Florida, President Sanford Shugart is credited with pinpointing the fields that would need trained labor over the next three to 10 years - nursing and information technology.

In addition to sharing information, top leaders at responsive colleges effectively communicate to staff and faculty the mandate that they respect and embrace the workforce-centered mission wholeheartedly. These messages must be accompanied by changes in college culture and structure that emphasize the institutional vision. Leaders do not micromanage, but leave staff with no doubt as to their responsibilities and the high expectations placed on them.

The Personal Qualities Of a Proactive Leader

It is often said that leaders are born, not made. Indeed, some innate personality traits appear typical of the leaders of labor-market-responsive colleges. Such characteristics include anticipatory thinking

and planning, innovation, and entrepreneurship. At Dallas County Community College District's Richland College, an administrator described the president as a risk-taker with "a bungee cord attached," meaning that he makes difficult decisions with sufficient information to know that an action will not harm either the institution or its students. These leaders are also passionate about workforce development and meeting community needs. Hiring faculty and staff with similar qualities and attitudes further encourages a campus culture that supports such "out-of-the-box" approaches. Staff and faculty at effective colleges noted that they take calculated risks without fear of failure, because the leaders encourage innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the institution, and support them with resources, information, professional development opportunities, and administrative flexibility.

To what extent are your leaders characterized by passion, entrepreneurship, anticipatory thinking and innovation?

7

Lessons Learned

■ Leadership is visionary and instills that vision in others, both within and beyond the college.

■ Leaders of responsive colleges communicate and take seriously the institution's mission and strategic plan.

■ The college president and board of trustees are the most important figures in setting the direction for improving labor market responsiveness.

■ Leaders of labor-market-responsive institutions make themselves very visible in the larger community, where they are recognized as community leaders and partners in economic development, as well as educational leaders.

■ In most cases, the president and the college's board are the primary forces in obtaining the large-scale resources needed to develop exemplary programs. Rarely does anyone else at the college have the personal prestige and expertise to raise funds and establish consortia.

■ Effective leaders are well informed, driving the institution's research agenda to inform strategic thinking and planning. Leaders function as key conduits for information, enabling their staff to anticipate coming changes.

■ The personal characteristics of market responsive college leaders mirror those of successful businesspeople-entrepreneurial, anticipatory, innovative, and proactive. Leaders seek to develop these same characteristics in their boards, administrators, and staff.

The Workforce Development Institute

Community colleges face the daunting challenge of educating more students with fewer resources. A demand-driven economy is changing the world of our students as well as our communities. The annual Workforce Development Institute (WDI), sponsored by The American Association of Community Colleges, is intended to better equip professionals from community colleges and other organizations to advance workforce training. The Institute offers outstanding learning and networking opportunities, bringing together experts from business, education, and government to discuss innovative workforce training techniques and applications.

The 2004 conference was arranged around four themes: customer service, partnerships, national initiatives, and professional development. The program focused on practical applications for improving community college workforce services. Sessions allowed participants to interact with presenters and each other.

WDI is the focal point of a grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Designed as a comprehensive program for community college-based workforce service providers, including faculty and administrators, WDI provides participants with the resources and training to meet the workforce development needs of both employers and employees. WDI educates, invigorates, and motivates those who are new to workforce development as well as seasoned practitioners.

For additional information concerning past or upcoming WDI conferences, please contact Carolyn Teich at 202-728-0200 x 228 or e-mail wdi2004@aacc.nche.edu

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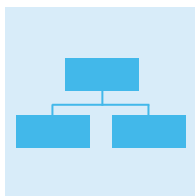
Organizational Structure And Staffing

As any CEO will tell you, dynamic leadership and vision can take an institution only as far as its internal structures will allow. College leaders must identify the ways that the institution's organizational structure limits its capacity for economic and workforce development and then remove these organizational barriers to labor market initiatives. Senior administrators at Moraine Valley Community College in Illinois view this as a key responsibility: "to keep the streams clear so the salmon can swim upstream;" that is, to ensure that the institution places no barriers in the way of staff who take the initiative to make things happen.

The leaders of labor-market-responsive colleges frequently reconfigure organizational structures and charts. Because organizational structure reflects college priorities, it is an important mechanism for conveying the importance of the mission. Thus organizational structure and organizational culture, addressed in the module that follows, are without a doubt closely linked. However, as they can operate independently and may need to be addressed separately, we have presented them as two cross-referencing modules.

Although there is no "ideal" structure or organizational chart for the labor-market-responsive college, leaders who have adopted this mission re-think the organization of their workforce and economic development services and, in particular, often-address the stature of noncredit or continuing education programs and the traditional credit-noncredit divide. Careful assessment may indicate whether the institution can allocate resources more efficiently to meet student, community, and business needs by increasing collaboration and reducing program duplication.

The Organizational Chart As Equalizer

Community colleges traditionally pursue multiple missions that compete for priority and resources. Historically, the academic and transfer functions receive the most attention. Workforce development and continuing education divisions have often had second-class status compared to the academic and credit divisions. Several college personnel in career-oriented divisions stated that their units were no longer the "red-headed stepchild" on campus. As their

Reconfiguring Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the **Moraine Valley Community College** (Illinois) administration unites all programs directly related to instruction and learning under the senior vice president for academic affairs. Seven deans report to the senior vice president, with responsibility for: career programs; enrichment programs and services; liberal arts; workforce development and community services; science, business and computer technologies; academic services; and academic development and learning resources center. Senior staff members are unanimous that "in the early stages, workforce development and training was confined to a unit. As the college matured, it became everyone's job-part of every administrator's job." The organizational move of continuing education and workforce development from the division of student services to the division of academic affairs was crucial to this evolution. The move demonstrated the evolution of continuing education from an activity marginal to the college's purpose to "the heart of things." With all the deans reporting to one administrator, their discussions tended to converge on a united purpose.

Centralizing Economic Development Activities

Seminole Community College (Florida) took an important step by reorganizing and consolidating economic development activities occurring across campus under the newly created Office of Economic Development and Employer Services. This new division allows the college to handle much bigger projects competently, to present a unified face to economic development activities, and to make it easier for clients to access programs and services, thereby significantly improving interaction with clients.

institutions focused increasingly on the business community's needs, their status improved. One way to bring the status of these divisions into parity with the academic divisions is through the reporting structure or organizational chart. Some colleges create

Does the college's organizational chart reflect the equal importance of for-credit and noncredit programs?

administrative positions dedicated entirely to workforce and economic development. Seminole Community College in Florida added several new deans-for business and technology, career programs, and economic development-to increase flexibility and institutional responsiveness to employers.

Responsive colleges ensure that administrators for workforce development or continuing education have the same standing as those who head academic divisions, giving them equal access to staff and resources. Many different structures can accomplish this purpose. Walla Walla Community College in Washington employs two vice presidents of instruction, one for the academic side and one for the workforce side. At Oakton Community College near Chicago, one vice president is responsible for academic affairs and another for continuing education, training, and workforce development: both report directly to the president. At other colleges, a vice president for academic affairs or instruction oversees the deans of the credit divisions as well as the continuing education and workforce divisions. Various approaches succeed; the challenge is to make the divisions equal partners.

Some community colleges elevated the status of their workforce division and showcased their commitment to business by promoting its head to vice president. The state of Virginia supported the establishment of deans of workforce development at all community colleges to coordinate WIA activities, in part to raise the stature of noncredit programs. The leadership of Northern Virginia Community College promoted its dean of workforce development to vice president in

order to reflect the institution's commitment to this goal and to coordinate cross-campus integration of services. Some campus observers have since noted "a growing 'oneness' between the credit and noncredit sides. We're all beginning to see the importance of workforce development."

The Value of Centralizing Market Responsive Services

Labor-market-responsive activities take place all over the campus, serving different clients. There is often a center that supports small business, other offices that provide customized corporate training, and many continuing education courses scattered across programs. Although the program divisions house the technical expertise, the skills of packaging curriculum for business audiences and cultivating relationships with employer partners may reside elsewhere. A college may offer similar content in a variety of formats-credit classes, continuing education courses, and contract training, for example-in order to meet the needs of different clients, setting the stage for competition over students and resources.

Several colleges found that consolidating their workforce development services enabled them to serve needs more efficiently and raise the visibility of college offerings. Black Hawk Community College in Illinois merged continuing education and the Business and Industry Center to eliminate the confusion caused by their similar programming. The college is using fewer resources to accomplish the same purposes and meeting the needs of students and customers more easily. Indian River Community College in Florida had traditionally offered continuing education courses through the college's applied sciences divisions, the locus of technical expertise on campus. With the growth of these courses, however, administrators found that centralizing them in the Business and Development Center improved

coordination and management. Taking a different approach, Springfield Technical Community College in Massachusetts separated its Division of Economic and Business Development (DEBD) from its Division of Continuing Education. With the separation, the DEBD gained its own vice president and a focus within the college's upper administration on workforce development and entrepreneurship. Thus, this reorganization also strengthened the college's focus on market responsiveness.

College leaders should consider whether or not to consolidate workforce and economic development activities on campus. A specialized division can also bring business attitudes and practices into the campus workforce development activity, an approach to which industry partners can relate.

Bridging the Credit-Noncredit Divide

Traditionally, community colleges have sharply divided the credit and noncredit sides of the house, with the noncredit programs typically marginalized. In part, this was a function of state funding formulas, which, in most states, either do not fund noncredit programs at all or do not fund them equally with credit programs. Outside of the few states that fund credit and noncredit full-time equivalent students (FTEs) at the same rate, complete integration of credit and noncredit divisions is rare. Nevertheless, many labor-market-responsive community colleges appear to invest great effort in blurring or at least

To what extent do credit and noncredit programs collaborate to develop and deliver career-oriented training?

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Roles for Academic Faculty in Workforce Development

Job descriptions for academic faculty have been rewritten at **Anne Arundel Community College** (Maryland) to include workforce development responsibilities in their teaching load. A teaching load could include noncredit courses, for example. Although administrators at many colleges noted the importance of using experienced professionals as instructors in noncredit programs, others reported that businesses appreciate academic faculty. They know that academic faculty are experienced teachers and see the commitment of the college's human resources to a project as an indication of the partnership's importance to the college. As a result, there are many examples of academic faculty collaborating on projects responsive to labor market needs. Faculty in the School of Business, Computing and Technical Studies run the Cisco Training Academy. Education faculty members train teachers in technology for the school district. Faculty have taught at the National Security Administration and developed distance education models for training retail employees. Architecture faculty members advise the county on environmentally friendly structures.

Connecting Credit and Noncredit Programming

Holyoke Community College (Massachusetts) has formalized a noncredit-to-credit career-ladder program in nursing. The college is also working to incorporate the Division of Continuing Education's (DCE) Microsoft Office® Specialist exams into credit word processing and spreadsheet courses. Furthermore, faculty and administrators of noncredit programming rely on their credit counterparts as resources for developing curriculum. When DCE administrators applied for funding to offer a preparatory course for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN®), they relied on Nursing Department faculty to understand the exam and its components.

collaborating across these lines, regardless of state policy. Collaboration is especially important in responding to labor market needs, because the credit and noncredit

sides offer complementary strengths and resources. Responsive colleges remove bureaucratic hindrances to collaboration and try to make the credit-noncredit distinction almost invisible to students and employers.

Such collaboration often meets initial resistance from faculty, some of whom view continuing education staff as competitors or worse. At these schools, effective administrators demonstrated the advantages of working together, sharing teaching or training responsibilities and facilities. Over time, it became evident to all that the noncredit side can serve as an entryway for additional credit students. Recasting traditional faculty roles was the solution at Northern Virginia Community College. Contracts with faculty now stipulate both credit and noncredit responsibilities, which formalizes the philosophical stance emanating from the president's office. The contracts officer stated that this change "helps narrow the divide between credit and noncredit." A cultural shift is required to ensure that all forms of learning, whether in credit classes or not, are viewed as equally important.

At many colleges that effectively meet labor market needs, faculty and administrators engage in partnerships across credit-noncredit lines. Academic faculty members teach noncredit courses or act as corporate trainers for employers, in some cases receiving extra pay or stipends for noncredit program management. Faculty teaching credit courses use equipment purchased through partnerships on the noncredit side. Noncredit courses transfer to credit programs. Administrators at Kirkwood Community College in Iowa have learned to engage academic faculty early on in noncredit program development, in order to develop future avenues for integrating the new courses into credit programs.

At these colleges, both credit and noncredit sides actively develop and maintain off-campus partnerships with employers and

Would a closer working relationship between the credit and noncredit sides improve your college's ability to provide market responsive programs?

other agencies. Community outreach seems to be a barometer of credit-noncredit integration. Colleges striving to maximize their responsiveness report that it is everyone's responsibility to reach out to the community and employers. On these campuses, academic faculty, deans, and administrators view community involvement and marketing as part of their jobs. At Northern Virginia Community College, administrators recognize that committing to workforce development means giving up a certain presence on campus, remarking, "You have to be out with business more, and not as involved in campus life and politics."

One structural way to "blur the lines" between credit and noncredit is the institute model. An institute is an organizational tool that brings together faculty, staff, resources, equipment, and facilities to focus on the same field or subject matter. For example, many colleges have established institutes for information technology, healthcare, technical careers, manufacturing, business management, or construction. The institute houses credit as well as noncredit coursework and short-term corporate and customized training services. It requires collaboration and cross-training among these faculty members and instructors, protecting credit faculty's authority over course development while encouraging more sustained relationships with employers. Administrators of colleges that adapted this model spoke of providing seamless delivery based on a college-wide approach to meeting industry needs, and the ability to better serve students and clients

The Institute as an Integration Model

The Homer S. Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education at **Montgomery College** (Maryland) offers credit and noncredit courses, programs, and certifications, in addition to customized training. Prior to developing the institute, college staff had difficulty responding effectively to client requests, redirecting them to multiple programs managed by different units of the college. Moreover, there were variations in quality and curriculum across programs that affected the reputation of the institution as a whole. Housed in its own building, the 10-year-old institute operates on a single-point-of-contact model in which a prospective student or client can be connected to the right offering through one conversation. Once enrolled, credit and noncredit students sit in some of the same classes. Positive outcomes include a 15-fold increase in contract training over the last 10 years and a 55 percent growth in total enrollments. With the success of the model established, the IT Institute was established in 1998. A new facility is under construction to accommodate the Health Sciences Institute, due to open in 2004.

through a single point of contact. The institute is a "one-stop shop" notion that appeals to business and students alike. An individual or company seeking computer training can approach an intake person at the information technology institute and get assistance in determining whether a degree or certificate, noncredit coursework, or customized training will best meet the need.

Integrated Versus Distinct Divisions

On the other hand, leaders at a few colleges believed that the independence of the division responsible for workforce development ensured that administrators would give more attention to this mission. In their opinion, merging the two divisions would cause the workforce development mission to suffer due to the difficulty and time-consuming nature of modifying credit

programs and the need for separate staffing mechanisms for academic and noncredit faculty. While the compartmentalization of workforce programs at these institutions allows them to remain customer-oriented, flexible, and free of bureaucratic rules, it prevents the colleges from maximizing their labor market responsiveness across all divisions and departments.

State funding differentials for credit and noncredit programs are evidently a significant factor in choosing such a model, as are policies that require structural differentiation between credit and noncredit divisions. However, colleges without parity in funding have made significant strides toward integrating the two sides of the house and collaborating across credit-noncredit divisions.

Many assume that colleges that appear to have integrated for-credit and workforce divisions are not unionized. Indeed, some colleges report that restrictive union contracts can create difficulties in assigning academic faculty to teach noncredit courses. The faculty is unionized at Montgomery College in Maryland. Initially, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) agreement specified that only credit courses counted toward the 30-hour teaching load they carried, posing a barrier to the integration of credit and noncredit programs through the institute model and a hindrance to noncredit staffing. The college changed the AAUP agreement so that 16 credit hours, the majority of the faculty's teaching load, could be taught in noncredit courses, thus also incidentally raising the standing of noncredit classes. Unions and union agreements differ, but are not inherently an insurmountable obstacle to institutional integration.

Despite fiscal and policy constraints that prevent the complete integration of the two sides of the house, it is important to recognize that the benefits of close collaboration between credit and noncredit programs go beyond workforce development

Would a closer working relationship between the credit and noncredit sides improve your college's ability to provide market responsive programs?

programming. Indeed, collaboration can have positive results for credit course offerings. College personnel spoke of noncredit courses acting as harbingers of credit programs. The flexibility of the noncredit division allows the quick creation of new courses that respond to immediate needs; enrollments can grow while credit programs and credentials are seeking approval from individual academic departments of the college. In addition, new subject matter first introduced for a specific training course or customized program can influence the content of credit courses in similar areas.

Using the Right Staff to Play the Right Roles

Responsive colleges are well staffed to fulfill their workforce development missions. Noncredit instructors in career-oriented programs at most community colleges are part-time with extensive professional experience. Some colleges, such as Oakton in the Chicago area, employ sales

Are human resources at your college deployed in the most efficient manner to meet labor-market-responsive goals?

representatives experienced in consulting and training to network and make cold calls to increase contract and customized training opportunities. Regardless, the most effective institutions hire key staff and administrators who bring experience in business as well as education. Their attitudes toward the community are conducive to partnering. They network off-campus and form relationships with industry. They seek out entrepreneurial and innovative people in hiring new staff and academic faculty and support them through open communication and professional development.

With appropriate staffing, workforce development roles, including program development and outreach to employers, are shared across the administration and faculty. All vice presidents at Seminole Community College in Florida are required to engage in economic development. Although the vice president for workforce and economic development at Shoreline Community College in Washington coordinates market-responsive activities, senior administrators clearly convey the message that involvement in workforce and economic development is everyone's responsibility. As one way of expanding their roles, the vice president encourages faculty from the academic divisions to accompany her to meetings and conferences involving business and industry. Faculty at Kirkwood Community College in Iowa are responsible for developing the required resource and business plans for new noncredit programming, determining the partners to be involved, and accurately demonstrating the need to be addressed. The college expects staff to engage in outreach and to always look for new opportunities.

Institutionalizing Professional Development

Kirkwood Community College (Iowa) made professional development a high priority, devoting a great deal of time and resources to it. One staff member reporting to the executive vice president is in charge of staff development campus-wide. The college provides resources for further education for faculty and a large travel budget for staff to examine best practices and bring new ideas back to the college. There are even professional development performance expectations for employees.

In order to ensure that faculty members succeed in these roles, responsive colleges sponsor professional development programs that place academic faculty in contact with industry. Noncredit instructors and administrators who are already well connected to industry meet with business representatives regularly, but faculty are often more comfortable remaining in an academic milieu and may not understand the outcomes for which they are preparing students. At York Technical College in South Carolina, the head of computer and electrical engineering spent 10 weeks at Duke Power on a summer externship. English department faculty and department managers spent time at the local hospital and paper mill in order to understand the communications taking place. All went back and revised credit curricula to make them more relevant. New faculty joining Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland participate in a one-year orientation called "The Learning College," which instills the value that credit and noncredit programs are equally important in responding to community needs.

Lessons Learned

- Labor-market-responsive colleges create a reporting structure that places workforce development on an equal footing with academic programs, conveying the message internally and externally that workforce development is a priority.

- Effective institutions often increase efficiency and customer service by consolidating or centralizing campus workforce and economic development efforts.

- Collaboration across credit-noncredit divisions helps meet labor market needs. Divisions share resources and complement each other's strengths, making the college's offerings appear seamless to students and employers. Integration across divisions is easiest when supported by state funding policy, and unionization does not necessarily inhibit credit-noncredit collaboration.

- Each college needs a structure that will accommodate both the development of new, large-scale, market responsive initiatives and the everyday activities of monitoring existing programs, implementing continuous improvements, and responding effectively to external demands.

- Program development, outreach, and interaction with employers can be everyone's job. Institutions need to invest in professional development and support to help faculty succeed in these new roles.

Steps to Becoming an Entrepreneurial College

Research shows that colleges follow various paths on the journey toward maximizing labor market responsiveness. The steps suggested by Richard Drury offer one such path.

The entrepreneurial college does not simply respond to needs, but creates conditions that demand its services. It is nontraditional in its offerings, and for the most part, these offerings are noncredit. It relies on community-based programming. A coalition of interested stakeholders is formed to undertake a cooperative process coordinated by the community college that involves a series of steps to identify community needs.

- The college's vision, mission, philosophy, and goals need to be critically examined or revisited, to assure their compatibility with community-based programming.

- Environmental "scanning" needs to be undertaken, carefully noting opportunities and threats in the economic, social, political, technological, and ecological environments.

- All stakeholders in the collaboration process need to set priorities among the opportunities and threats.

- Stakeholders affected by the results of the scanning process need to be identified, both those affected by the factors and those with a vested interest in their resolution.

- The community college assumes the leadership role as the catalyst for the coalition of stakeholders.

- Coalition members follow up with their respective constituents to keep communications flowing.

It is through collaboration among the citizens of a community, its leaders, community-based organizations, business and industry representatives, and community college that the workforce and economic development objectives of the community are achieved. In short, the entrepreneurial college is a partner in bettering the local community.

From: Richard Drury, "The Entrepreneurial Community College," Inquiry 6 (Spring 2001).

Organizational Culture

The multiple missions of community colleges often create tensions on campus that play themselves out culturally as well as organizationally. For example, community colleges have historically played a significant role in preparing students to attend four-year postsecondary institutions. As higher education professionals, many community college faculty and administrators embrace traditional academic values, attitudes, and beliefs. As a result, community colleges often focus narrowly on their transfer mission, placing greater priority on academics and for-credit courses than on workforce development.   Although the transfer mission remains important in an economy that will continue to demand graduates with four-year degrees, the realities of the work world are changing and require changing preparation of the workforce as well. More than half of the fastest-growing occupations in the United States require some postsecondary education but less than a bachelor's degree.[1] At a bare minimum, a high school diploma or its equivalent is essential in today's labor market, and community colleges are responding to this educational need. Uniquely positioned at the forefront of workforce development, community colleges must maintain an appropriate balance across their multiple missions. Fulfilling basic education, transfer, and career-oriented missions requires academic rigor and a focus on the quality of instruction.

Colleges that attempt to respond to local economic and labor market conditions are at times hindered by a campus culture that devalues career-oriented programming in favor of traditional academic priorities. An official at one college said, "The credit faculty think that's what they are here for, and that they don't have a role to play in workforce development. They joined the faculty to teach English, history, science, not to help develop workforce skills. But that's a narrow view. In [our state], English, history, and science *are* workforce skills." Thus, creating a truly labor-market-responsive college usually requires cultural evolution on campus.

Cultural change is at best gradual and complex, encouraged by leadership, informed by solid data, and supported by organizational restructuring. Here we focus on the key mechanisms that campus leaders may employ to bring about cultural change–language and organizational structure.

Cultural Evolution

Traditional academic views of workforce development activity must change if a community college is to embrace the mission of labor market responsiveness. Many continuing education personnel, reflecting upon the changes that had occurred on their campus, lauded the fact that the workforce-development division was no longer relegated to second-class status. Organizational structure can play a role in elevating the stature of continuing education, but a corresponding shift in values, expectations, incentives, and attitudes must occur as well. Leaders are responsible for introducing and instilling new values and attitudes and for ensuring that responsive practices and engagement in workforce-development activities are recognized and rewarded among faculty and staff. A college leader's visible commitment to the culture of market responsiveness is essential for such evolution to occur.

What does a labor-market-responsive culture look like? On campuses striving to maximize responsiveness, workforce development and lifelong learning are key institutional values. Conversations on campus reflect these values daily. Staff members bring academic excellence and credentials, as well as characteristics like risk-taking, entrepreneurship, innovation, flexibility, and empowerment. As one individual at Scott Community College in Iowa explained, "New ideas are valued. We have an atmosphere of not just being talkers but doers." Collaboration is a hallmark—across internal divisions and with external organizations. College personnel exercise their networking skills and spend time building relationships on and off-campus. They engage business and industry partners in program, course, and curriculum development. They constantly seek ways to improve.

Language as a Tool For Cultural Change

One key mechanism that campus leaders use to promote cultural change is language, in its simplest form a motto or mantra that is repeated across campus. College leaders introduce the motto to signal concisely what the leadership values and expects of staff. At Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina, President Zeiss, when he took the helm 11 years ago, asked staff to consider two questions in decision-making. He still advises his staff to guide program development with those questions: "Is this good for our students? Is this good for our community?" As the questions imply, what is good for students and the community is good for the college. The Anne Arundel Community College (Maryland) mantra is codified in numerous institutional documents and frequently heard on campus, "Learning is learning is learning." This mantra emphasizes the structural and cultural shift towards a one-college model in which academics, career-oriented courses, and corporate training are all considered learning and given equal priority.

Shared values and attitudes are summed up in other formats, both written and oral. Virtually all the staff, faculty, and administrators at York Technical College in South Carolina with whom we spoke, including those not directly associated with technical career preparation, spoke of the importance of having manufacturing in their community and its capacity for creating wealth through associated service jobs. This common belief clearly originated in the president's office to focus the staff on the college's niche in improving manufacturing productivity. President Crawley of Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC) near Chicago summarized in an open letter the

What adjectives would you use to describe the climate and culture of your campus?

Is there a college motto or frequently repeated theme that ensures a focus on workforce development?

attitudes and behaviors expected of staff. These expectations also inform the hiring process, as staff search for people whose portfolios include the attitudes and values that harmonize with the MVCC mission of community and economic development.

Organizational Structure Communicates Institutional Values

Organizational structures that allow colleges to be more responsive to labor market conditions are discussed in the preceding module. Structural change can minimize bureaucratic hindrances to responsiveness-streamlining processes and increasing access to resources. Structural change can also advance key messages on campus, such as the importance of collaboration across traditional credit-noncredit lines and the equality in status of academics and workforce development. The leadership of Shoreline Community College in Washington State wanted to move the campus beyond the notion that professional/technical programs do not have the stature of academic coursework. The dean of academic affairs now oversees all 52 professional-technical programs. This organizational structure prevents institutional separation of professional-technical from transfer programs and promotes an atmosphere conducive to blending workforce development goals with academic objectives. Green River Community College in Washington State found that creating a new position of vice president for economic development raised the stature of workforce development at the college by giving it a key place in senior college leadership. Hiring the former executive dean

Fostering Cultural Change

Moraine Valley Community College (Illinois) spent academic year 2000-03 creating or expanding programs to serve a new learner-centered focus and to address objectives covering five areas: (1) underprepared students, (2) learning outcomes, (3) selecting and developing staff, (4) learning technology, and (5) organizational culture. What MVCC participants discovered through the process was that as they worked on the first four areas, the fifth-organizational culture-"put itself together." As a senior administrator observed, "You can't just impose 'organizational culture' by talking about it." One result today is that conversations with MVCC staff members are peppered with language-"seamlessness," "web of inclusiveness" --that both describes and signals the existence of an organizational culture characterized by collaboration and learner-centeredness. One administrator noted: "The people here talk like that. We live it. You're either on board or you go away."

Structural Change Brings Cultural Change

President Martha Smith of **Anne Arundel Community College** (Maryland) determined that the college would respond to community needs, including those of business. One dean noted, "With the culture before President Smith, it was a different college. [Credit and noncredit] were distinct with no integration. Now there is a 'one college' concept-they all develop human resources in a collaborative fashion." It became clear to administrators that to meet an increasing demand for lifelong learning opportunities not tied to traditional, credit-driven modalities, they needed to value all instructional programs and services equally. One step in this direction was to reorganize the senior administration. The positions of vice president for academic affairs and vice president for continuing education and workforce development were merged into that of vice president for learning. It is important to note that the new vice president for learning was recruited from the Workforce Development Division, sending a clear signal throughout the campus about the integration of academic and vocational education.

Do your workforce development strategies reflect the cultures in the surrounding community?

Campus Culture Reflects Community Culture

Margaret Lee, the president of **Oakton Community College** (Illinois) has communicated the message that the changing demographics of the college district, including burgeoning Asian and Eastern European populations, should be celebrated, not merely tolerated. The leadership has sought to educate its faculty. A recent professional development activity was a bus tour of the district, which included stops at a social services center, a church that serves African Americans, and a very diverse high school. Many of the new immigrants are well-educated people in need of employment, whose difficulties with English were misinterpreted by some faculty as ignorance. The college offers an afternoon class for faculty, taught in different languages, to make them more sensitive to the difficulties non-English speakers face in communicating.

Competency-Based Curricula

York Technical College (South Carolina) considers itself competency-based and uses the DACUM (Develop A Curriculum) process for curriculum development. This involves bringing employees of industry to campus for a day, picking their brains about the jobs for which students are being educated, noting the competencies identified, and looking at coursework to ensure that it covers those competencies. The college focuses on lifelong learning and responds to employer needs for soft skill development by incorporating competency modules into all its classes. Doing so required the development of a portfolio system to document these soft skills, as well as changes in the way college faculty teach and assess learning.

of instruction to fill the new position also sent messages about the integration of traditional academics and career-oriented training and the importance of collaboration between the two. Structural change can also communicate institutional values like flexibility and partnership and instill in all staff an awareness of their role in outreach.

A Campus That Embraces Community Cultures

One way in which the culture of a community college can reflect responsiveness to the local labor market is in its willingness to adapt to changes in its demographic or community context. Dallas County Community College District's Richland College is a member of the Asian, Hispanic, and African American Chambers. While senior administrators at Malcolm X College, one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago, remain attuned to the African American community that the college has historically served, they are keenly aware of the shift in student demographics in West Chicago, where the campus is located. They seek to engage students of other ethnic backgrounds, Hispanic students in particular. The college made great efforts to be classified as a Title V school and belongs to HACU (the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities). On campus, these changes are reflected through artwork and banners that represent a variety of cultures, and in cultural events throughout the year to recognize and encourage student and community pride.

Staff at many colleges we interviewed spoke of growing populations of new immigrants in describing the changing demographics of their service areas. In most parts of the country, the need for English as a second language courses is increasing, and community colleges are at the forefront of offering workplace Spanish courses for supervisors. English has become the most fundamental job skill for many populations. Responsive colleges creatively refine their own cultures to remain in tune with the changing needs of the community.

Community college leaders should consider whether the culture and climate of their college encourages immigrant and other nontraditional populations to enroll and feel comfortable and whether staff are flexible and open-minded enough to adapt institutional culture to meet the needs of new segments of the community.

A New Culture for Curriculum Development

Another opportunity to observe cultural evolution on campus is in the process of curriculum and course development. Although all occupational programs have advisory committees that oversee curriculum development to some degree, the extent to which they are actually involved in the development, delivery, and alignment of coursework across the campus says much about the cultural context. Traditionally, the culture of higher education has asserted that faculty members are the most knowledgeable about course design and development. At the labor-market-responsive colleges, faculty still play a key role, but business and industry representatives are brought in at the beginning and the courses that result reflect their contributions as well.

The changing needs of business and industry have led some colleges to develop modularized programs. Rather than a semester- or yearlong curriculum that covers a topic thoroughly, modules allow employers to pick and chose exactly the components they want to see in a customized course of study, a concept new to the teaching world. Scott Community College in eastern Iowa is developing a logistics program based on employer needs and plans to survey local companies and invite them to help develop the curriculum. Administrators expect that much of what the firms will identify already exists at the college. Thus, to create a customized program would require simply assembling modules.

In addition, employers are increasingly looking for soft skills, such as problem-solving and teamwork, in those they hire and often expect the community college to train in these areas as well as in technical skills. Designing courses to teach soft skills, in addition to academic or technical knowledge, and finding ways to assess and document their development, usually requires a cultural shift among faculty members previously focused on academic knowledge transfer.

Lessons Learned

- Community colleges must balance multiple and sometimes competing missions. Cultural beliefs, values, and expectations on campus will determine the relative priority assigned to those missions and which ones are successfully accomplished.

- Responsive colleges have established cultures that support workforce development and value the personal traits of entrepreneurship, innovation, flexibility, and risk-taking.

- Structural changes alone will not successfully engage faculty in the process of market responsiveness. A corresponding cultural shift is also required.

- Those charged with fulfilling workforce development goals at the community college must operate with appropriate incentives in a culture that maximizes their flexibility.

- Responsive colleges empower staff with the freedom to explore partnerships and take risks. Leaders recognize and reward their staff for work related to labor market responsiveness.

- Language is critical in creating and changing cultural orientations. Mottos and widely disseminated documents help create strongly held common values and beliefs.

- Colleges need to forge connections with the surrounding cultural communities in order to meet their workforce needs.

- Responding to employers' needs and engaging them in curriculum development requires new ways of thinking.

The Workforce Initiative

The League for Innovation in the Community College's (the "League") interest in the corporate relationships of community colleges stems from a seminal meeting in 1990, when the Business and Industry Services Network (BISNET) was formed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information among member institutions. It soon became clear that more formal mechanisms were needed to coordinate information, facilitate communication, disseminate information, and assist in organizing collaborative projects. The idea of an alliance of community colleges with business and industry arose, and with encouragement from several corporate leaders, the League sponsored a Community College Business and Industry Forum in Dallas, Texas, in early 1992. At this meeting, attended by representatives of 23 corporations, the League was urged to develop a national effort to coordinate information, activities, and collaborative projects that would assist community colleges in serving the training needs of business, industry, government, and labor.

Further, it became clear that much more information was needed about the activities of community colleges in the corporate arena. In 1992, the League embarked on a comprehensive national investigation of the scope of community college involvement in workforce training. More than 725 colleges responded to the league survey, which revealed that 96 percent of community colleges provided workforce training for employees of business, industry, government, and labor. As a result of these findings, and with the public support of corporate and educational partners, the League advanced an ambitious 10-point agenda to promote the expansion and improvement of community college workforce development programs. This agenda, expressed in a white paper titled *The Workforce Training Imperative: Meeting the Training Needs of the Nation* formed the core of what has become a major strategic focus of the League, the Workforce Initiative.

The Workforce Initiative serves as an umbrella for a wide-ranging set of projects and activities. It serves as a topic stream in "Innovations," the League's annual international conference on innovation in the community college. The "innovations" stream on workforce development is designed to help community colleges understand and address the tremendous issues involved in ensuring that the nation's workforce is competitive in the global marketplace.

Working continuously with key corporate partners, the League is involved in a variety of efforts to assist community colleges, including: sponsoring conferences, workshops, seminars, training, and showcases for innovative workforce development activities; disseminating information about model programs and practices in community colleges through publications such as newsletters, monographs, and special reports; and conducting focused special projects that develop, demonstrate, or evaluate innovative workforce development activities in community colleges.

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$ Resources and Funding

Adequate resources are, of course, necessary for a community college to become more responsive to its labor market. Most community colleges have historically acquired the largest proportion of their funding from the state, through formulas based on student enrollments or apportionments. Some state systems have also provided workforce development monies to individual colleges to meet particular industry needs.

State funding environments differ substantially across the nation. Fewer than half provide any funds for noncredit students at community colleges, and only three fund credit and noncredit students equally.[2] College administrators frequently observe how different their institutions would look with parity in state funding, because they would move so many programs from credit to noncredit status in order to provide greater flexibility and quicker response times in customizing them for clients. Community colleges in the three states that allocate equal funding for credit and noncredit programs lobbied very hard for parity.

Regardless of state policies, resources for education are notoriously limited and shrinking. Some argue that community colleges are facing a fiscal crisis. A recent survey by the Education Commission of the States found that 33 out of 40 state oversight agencies cited funding as one of their main challenges.[3] Many colleges have had to lay off employees, cut programs and courses, and reduce operating expenses. At the same time, because many colleges face growing enrollments, they have fewer resources per student. In times of fiscal austerity, administrators at Montgomery College in Maryland note, "Business is a good advocate when you need to go to the state for more money. They are extremely valuable politically in telling the governor that community colleges are important." For employers to advocate effectively for community colleges in the political arena, institutions must first demonstrate their value to such partners.

Although individual community colleges have little control over state funding policies or annual apportionments, through partnership with employers, economic development agencies, and other colleges, they may be better positioned to seek increased state support. In addition, responsive colleges have found ways to innovate and expand programs despite fiscal constraints. They look beyond the state to new

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Diverse Funding for Small Business Assistance

In 1996, administrators and faculty at **Green River Community College** (Washington State) determined a need for assisting emerging local entrepreneurs. The college received a $30,000 grant from the Herb B. Jones Foundation and started a Small Business Assistance Center (SBAC) staffed with a part-time counselor. After its first year, the SBAC received state funding and was able to hire an additional full-time counselor. The SBAC is currently receiving funding from the cities of Auburn and Enumclaw in the form of federal block grants.

What sources of income beyond the state does your college pursue to fund your workforce development programs? Have you explored the widest range of possible options?

sources of funding. The local economy may also limit its immediate resources, but responsive institutions are not hindered by this constraint either. Effective colleges find new ways to raise money, whether through legislative initiatives or marketing expertise on a fee-for-service basis. They maximize local funding from county and bond initiatives. College leadership, particularly the president and board of trustees, play a crucial role in securing new funds. Internal allocation of resources, for professional development for example, reflects labor market priorities. Specialized facilities may become important assets in labor market responsiveness.

Looking Beyond the State

Colleges tend to be resource-savvy, but differ in the ways they go about obtaining resources. Community colleges that effectively meet labor market demands access a wide variety of funding sources beyond the state. Common sources of revenue include federal funds to states (such as Perkins Act funds authorized under the 1998 statute), other grants, partnerships, contracts, training, state initiatives, in-kind donations, and self-supporting programs. Not surprisingly, community colleges with higher revenue dollars tend to have more formal programs in

place to address specific employer needs, while those with fewer revenue dollars have more programs linked to state initiatives. Tapping into a wide variety of funding requires an investment of human resources on the part of the college. College personnel actively scan the horizon for funding sources, write grants and proposals, and build relationships with potential funders and partners.

Grants: Workforce investment boards, corporate foundations, unions and professional associations, community-based organizations, states, and federal government agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF) all provide grants to colleges. Several community colleges participating in this study received NSF Advanced Technological Education grants. Springfield Technical Community College in Massachusetts has received numerous NSF grants, one of which established the National Center for Telecommunications Technologies, tasked with developing a national model curriculum. Regional collaboration with other community colleges is a strategic way to compete for larger grants and acquire more political leverage for a proposal to a federal agency. A collaborative approach answered Coca-Cola's need for employee training throughout the state of Texas. The Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development and El Centro Community College of the Dallas County District are collaborating with 10 community colleges in northern Texas to determine how to offer the training, with the state providing part of the funding.

Partnerships: Partnerships with employers and industry can bring in donations, contracts, and equipment. Start-up funds, donations of equipment or machinery, investment in new facilities, and space for clinical experiences are common benefits. College administrators advise that alignment with business is key to securing corporate funding for programs. In several instances, business partners have entirely transferred their internal training functions to the local community college.

In-kind donations: Responsive colleges tap their industry and employer partners to obtain costly equipment and update technology. Manufacturers have donated or loaned such heavy equipment as tractors, automobiles and trucks, forklifts, manufacturing equipment, motorcycles, printing and flexography equipment, and heating and air conditioning equipment. Although some colleges noted the drawback of receiving outdated equipment, more supportive partnerships provide the up-to-date technology essential to train a skilled workforce. York Technical College in South Carolina holds two warehouse spaces in downtown Rock Hill, a few miles from campus, to store supplies and equipment donated by companies closing down or going through buy-outs.

Employers invest nearly $30 billion annually in employee training. Community colleges can provide training more cost effectively than many other public- and private- sector organizations because most have the capacity to provide technical training already or can develop it at a lower cost.

–Richard Drury[5]

Colleges as Corporate Training Departments

Okuma America, a leading machine tool manufacturer with its Western hemisphere headquarters in Charlotte, N.C., outsourced its training division to **York Technical College's** Institute for Manufacturing Productivity (South Carolina). The company provides new equipment for the facility on the college's campus and its trainers are now college employees.

Federal-Mogul Sealing Systems, a manufacturing company with 1,600 employees, outsourced all employee training to **Oakton Community College** near Chicago, most of which is conducted on company property, and provides office space at the company for a training manager and an assistant.

Federal and state initiatives: Federal initiatives that provide funds directly to community colleges include Developing Hispanic Institutions grants, Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology, and Tech-Prep Demonstration Grants.[4] State funds include training initiatives for specific industries or companies, grants, and other allocations. Responsive colleges aggressively ferret out these opportunities. Walla Walla Community College in Washington State - which, according to one college official, "never lets a state-level initiative go by without pursuing it," - has secured two Washington State "Title II" grants. The Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development in the Dallas County Community College District received a $1 million grant from the state to train people to work in call centers being established in Texas. When Texas Instruments (TI) needed literacy training, the institute obtained $1 million from the state to train its workers. According to one institute administrator, most employers contribute at least 25 percent more than the grant provides.

Using College Services As a Fundraising Mechanism

Central Piedmont Community College's (North Carolina) institutional effectiveness office conducted a study on economic and workforce trends and business needs in the region in partnership with the local chamber of commerce. This office, now marketing its ability to conduct such studies to all the chambers in the United States, generated more money than any other unit of the college in a recent quarter.

Self-supporting programs: Some occupational or workforce development programs operate on a self-supporting basis through tuition and fees. This support is common among business and technology courses. Some colleges, seeking to depend less on limited state funding, have offered credit occupational classes on a self-supporting basis. For example, North Carolina funds summer semester credit students at just 10 percent of what they provide for the spring and fall semesters. Therefore, Central Piedmont Community College, which is located in Charlotte, N.C., offers summer credit courses on a self-supporting basis rather than remit tuition to the state.

Contract training: Contract training is a special example of a self-supporting program. Because contract training operates in an entrepreneurial environment, these programs can become an actual source of profits if enough businesses employ the college on a fee-for-service basis. Colleges operating in states that have historically subsidized corporate training through economic development funds or noncredit enrollment reimbursements find it more difficult to convince employers to pay the actual and reasonable costs of customized training. Although some colleges did not cite contract training as a significant source of revenue, more responsive institutions typically pursue

Have you developed innovative methods to raise funds for high-demand programs?

new training relationships aggressively. Community college presidents in a recent study noted that, in addition to new income, equipment, and services, contract training generates important political benefits, strengthening the college's support from local and state constituencies and its public visibility.[6]

Creativity in Generating New Resources

Responsive colleges go beyond ensuring that they access a variety of time-tested sources for revenue. Colleges focused on this mission regularly develop creative ways to generate funds. College leaders encourage their staff members to think outside of the box in seeking new ways to raise resources, including entrepreneurial enterprises and legislative efforts.

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial efforts-typically marketing college services and expertise on a fee-for-service or consulting basis-are a source of new funds for some campuses. The programs themselves generate revenue, but other colleges also contract out their institutional research services, marketing and learner services departments, or curriculum development and educational technology expertise. Some colleges and districts, such as Central Piedmont and San Diego, have created stand-alone not-for-profit organizations to house entrepreneurial enterprises. One advantage of this method is to gain more control in allocating revenue from these services.   At Walla Walla Community College in Washington State, many programs have an enterprise component and substantial income-generating capacity. The college owns and operates a vineyard in order to

Could college funding from local sources increase?

teach viticulture (wine making) and sells the wine that students produce. The automotive program generates revenue by refurbishing and selling classic cars. Students handle all aspects of production, marketing, distribution, and sales.

Legislation: Colleges have also secured funds through legislative avenues. These can support one employer's training needs or provide new funding for all community colleges statewide. The president of Central Piedmont Community College has been active in efforts to benefit North Carolina's community colleges. He assembled a state coalition that successfully pushed the legislature to allocate unused unemployment insurance funds to community colleges to purchase equipment, expected to generate $2 million. The president also advocated for the state to underwrite the tuition and fees for students who enroll in high-demand occupations facing a shortage of skilled workers.

Other examples of creative funding include: actively pursuing large donations through naming opportunities for buildings; selecting business leaders to become "President's Associates" who donate $5,000 per year and act as an advisory board member; and creating a venture-capital model in which program start-up funds are a loan, based on a solid business plan, and expected to generate long-term revenue.

Local Funding Is Key

Many community colleges receive local or county funding but effective colleges seem to place a special premium on this source of funds. Local revenues came in two forms: county support and bond initiatives. Strong community relationships are essential to securing or increasing funds from both.

Legislative Funding for Employer Partnerships

The Chicagoland Regional College Program (CRCP) is a partnership among **Moraine Valley Community College,** Chicago State University, and United Parcel Service (UPS) designed to meet workforce needs and provide financial and other support to individuals who might not otherwise enter college. The program is costly, providing full tuition, fees, books, a $2,000 transportation allowance, a $4,000 housing subsidy, health benefits, and support services, including mentors, to UPS employees working at least 16 hours a week on difficult-to-staff shifts. To obtain the funding needed, the partnership and UPS worked closely with the state legislature, securing a $2.2 million line item to support the first year of operation. They attribute their success to the leverage of the partners and the economically depressed status of southwest Cook County.

Venture Capital as a Funding Mechanism

Most workforce-development efforts require substantial investments of start-up money. At **Northern Virginia Community College,** programs are treated like businesses. The Workforce Development Office requests a loan from the college, and must present a solid plan for creating income in the long-term and a return on investment. "Resources are always a concern, but this program generates its own revenue," stated one director of continuing education. "Our president makes venture capital available. You give him a business plan, and if he likes it, he'll give you the seed money to develop the program."

In communities where citizens value the college, bond measures are very effective in raising funds to construct new facilities. Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, N.C., added five campuses in seven years, because each time they were on the ballot for bond funds, they received overwhelming support.

Increasing county financial support appeared to be a hallmark of responsive colleges.

Staff Dedicated to Fundraising

At **Walla Walla Community College** (Washington State), the Workforce Division contains the Workforce Effectiveness Center that is solely responsible for bringing in alternative (nonstate) revenue. The center has a full-time staff of four and serves as a clearinghouse for grants and other contracts. Center staff are also responsible for seeking out every state and federal training grant that the college could potentially secure.

Are there sufficient staff dedicated to obtaining resources that support responsive programs?

College personnel consistently noted that the percentage of local or county funds in the total college budget was positively associated with their responsiveness. The county is one avenue through which colleges have made up for state shortfalls. Despite a general economic slowdown, many colleges spoke of increasing county support, often 5 to 6 percent a year. Among community colleges studied, the highest levels of local funding reached 30 to 40 percent of general fund revenue or even more. Many reported receiving levels of local support above the average of other community colleges in their state. Administrators at York Technical College reported that York County, South Carolina, stands out in the state for its high level of support to the technical college. They noted that this support is based on the college's productivity and the fact that 93 percent of its graduates remain in the county. The college has clearly communicated to local officials that funding York Tech is the equivalent of investing in the county's economic development. College leaders should consider whether they have sufficiently demonstrated their institution's worth and contributions to their counties and citizens.

Have you invested enough time in developing large-scale partnerships that fund new college programs?

Responsibility for Fundraising

There were many answers to the question as to who on the community college campus is responsible for pursuing grants and other funding opportunities. Many responsive colleges spoke of the success of their foundations in fundraising to help develop and run programs. These colleges capitalize on partnerships the foundation forms, and the board of the foundation acts as a link with business and industry in the community. College personnel whose specific role is fundraising or grant management appear to be important to accessing the variety of resources necessary in the current climate. As state resources in most states flow to credit programs, the continuing education division often needs to be focused on resource development. Building a large new partnership or finding resources for program creation requires presidential or board leadership. Charlene Nunley, president of Montgomery College in Maryland, secured $1 million from the Marriott Foundation (the Marriott Corporation is headquartered in Montgomery County, Md.) for a hospitality management program at the college. She candidly noted that her personal contact with the CEO of Marriott Corporation was instrumental in securing the funds.

Resource Allocation Mirrors College Priorities

Allocation of college resources, whatever their total, provides an accurate portrayal of a college leadership's priorities. Labor-market-

How are discretionary resources allocated between academic and occupationally oriented programs? Are you investing sufficient resources in professional development?

responsive colleges put funds behind workforce and economic development. Leadership, of course, plays a key role in this resource allocation. At stake are issues of funding equity between credit and noncredit programs. In addition, colleges we visited emphasized the importance of human resources. Sufficient personnel must be devoted to new resource acquisition for workforce development and sufficient resources are required for faculty professional development. Even in hard economic times, colleges advised, professional development monies should not be cut. To maintain a responsive college, faculty must have the time and resources to remain up-to-date in their professional fields, travel to conferences to learn more and make connections, and retrain themselves or spend time in industry when necessary. Part of an institution's commitment to labor market responsiveness is thus a commitment to ensuring that everyone remains informed on workforce needs.

New Facilities Can Enhance Labor Market Responsiveness

We found numerous examples of colleges undertaking large-scale construction projects to become more labor-market-responsive. Appropriate and unique physical facilities can be an important asset in meeting community and workforce needs. Responsive colleges

A New Facility Meets Growing Training Needs

In partnership with the Mills Corporation and the college foundation, **Anne Arundel Community College** in Maryland is building a 65,000 square foot, four-story educational facility at Arundel Mills, a retail zone. The new facility is expected to foster the burgeoning growth in this region by continuing to develop programs serving businesses and county residents. It builds on the college's successful Retail Skills Center already located in the mall. "The location offers easy access, uses the existing infrastructure, and draws on the Mills' amenities," said Anne Arundel College President Smith. The estimated cost of the project is $10 million. Through an agreement with the college, the foundation will serve as the facility's developer and provide construction financing, allowing the college to avoid assuming capital debt for the facility. The foundation intends to finance the project with tax-exempt industrial revenue bonds.

allocate resources and raise funds to construct the facilities they need to house programs geared toward the labor market, training partnerships, or continuing education. Many of these facilities serve multiple uses and off-campus constituencies. Colleges have constructed continuing education facilities that function as conference centers

Would the addition or enhancement of physical facilities significantly improve the campus' ability to respond to local labor market needs? Have you explored all the possible avenues for new construction funds?

as a way to meet business needs while bringing corporate leaders to campus, thus marketing college services. For other schools, the most important facilities were those that made the college more accessible to the community and local business, such as satellite campuses or special off-site centers.

Colleges differed in how they raised funds for these facilities, from using private partnerships and corporate or foundation

donations to local bond initiatives and state funds.   The Homer S. Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education at Montgomery College in Maryland was the first community college building in the United States to be built with private funding. Over 10 years ago, administrators believed they could maximize college-business collaboration by constructing a high-profile facility. The college raised $3.8 million from private sources and the county matched the other half.

Lessons Learned

■ It is difficult to be a truly labor-market-responsive institution while relying on traditional sources of community college funding. Labor-market-responsive programs tend to be expensive because of specialized equipment requirements. Institutions must access a wide range of funding sources and be creative in their fundraising strategies.

■ Many colleges will need to figure out creative ways to reach beyond their communities to tap regional, state, and federal income sources.

■ The college president and board play key roles in developing resources for new large-scale workforce initiatives and partnerships.

■ Maximizing local funding through the county or bond initiatives is important.

■ Public-private partnerships are a leverage point for significant new college resources.

■ A commitment to labor market responsiveness requires more resources, but can also lead to more resources.

■ Leaders of effective community colleges invest financial and human resources in labor market responsiveness. Sufficient personnel are needed to locate and access new resources, and faculty professional development enhances the institution's ability to meet community needs.

Economic Development Strategies

Community colleges can connect to economic development efforts by engaging in dialogue with key stakeholders, such as the following:

- Local, regional, and state economic development agencies
- County and municipal planning agencies
- State and regional economic development organizations
- Employers
- Employer groups, chambers of commerce, small business development associations, and industry associations
- Labor unions
- Other community or technical colleges in the region
- University economic and political science departments
- Community development corporations
- Community-based organizations, such as neighborhood associations, nonprofit service organizations, and faith-based charities

Assets that community colleges bring to economic development partnerships include the range of programs and services that support business development, from the growing number of community college business and industry centers to employee training for new or relocating companies, to certificates of entrepreneurship for individuals who want to launch their own businesses. Here are some examples of economic development activities at community colleges today:

- Helping entrepreneurs start businesses
- Providing import-export training
- Providing public-private procurement services
- Assisting small businesses with needs identification and service referrals
- Providing general business, sales, and marketing training
- Providing business-related research support
- Establishing a user-friendly Web page for entrepreneurs
- Developing a business incubator program and facility

From: "Community, Economic and Workforce Development," in *Leadership Strategies for Community College Executives,* eds. Gunder Myram, George A. Baker III, Beverly Simone, and Tony Zeiss (Washington, D.C.: Community College Press, American Association of Community Colleges, 2003).

Information and Data

Leaders of community colleges that engage in economic and workforce development need a great deal of information in order to be responsive; they first need to understand the local, regional, and national economies, including occupational, employment, and other economic trends. Specifically, they need to know about local workforce needs that are unmet. In addition, they want to know how well the education and training provided by the college prepares graduates for their occupations. They would like to know the wage and career progression that their graduates achieve. They would like to assess the match between their occupational training programs and labor market trends, and to evaluate the cost effectiveness of their offerings. Finally, they would like to evaluate the college's services to businesses and other organizations, according to outcomes achieved as well as the satisfaction of partners.

Various kinds of information gathering and data analyses can provide some answers. First, all responsive colleges stressed that the most useful information about local conditions is best gathered through face-to-face personal contact with employers and community leaders. Community college administrators also use published data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other sources to inform decision-making. And colleges use their institutional research offices to collect their own data on their graduates and information on local needs by fielding surveys, running focus groups, hiring consultants to perform evaluations, and drawing upon studies conducted by state education boards and others.

Responsive community colleges use this information and data from partners, published sources, and their own studies-to inform and guide their efforts to respond to labor market concerns. Such information is the basis of strategic planning to better anticipate local labor market needs and helps to nurture a culture of continuous improvement. Colleges draw upon data to establish new programs and to improve or eliminate current programs. Lastly, data are important for a truly objective evaluation of labor market responsiveness on campus. Community college leaders should consider whether they have gathered sufficient information on local and regional business needs and effectively measured the impact of their programs.

Presidential Information Gathering

Jean Floten, president of **Bellevue Community College** (Washington State) is intensely involved in finding out what the college can do to respond to the business community. As often as she can, the president conducts what she calls a "CEO tour," during which she visits CEOs and business leaders in the region to find out what their needs are. She then brings her findings back to the college, where a rapid response team quickly assembles to address the needs. The president notes that the CEO tour produces candid, one-on-one conversations with employers, which yield information that might not be shared at an open meeting, and enables her to truly understand needs that the college can respond to.

Information Gathering Through Personal Contacts

Valuable as economic analyses and labor reports may be, up-to-the-minute and localized information about workforce, economic, and community trends comes from the individuals and organizations engaged in the work. Access to networks of well-positioned people supplies the information that enables a college to anticipate labor market conditions and trends. Established relationships with key organizations and individuals in the community are critical sources of information for market-responsive colleges. By virtue of their ability to open doors, senior administrators are key gatherers of this local information, and program advisory committees add value through their substantive knowledge of specific industries.

The president and senior administrators of the labor-market-responsive community college play a cornerstone role in the institution's information-gathering activity. Senior college management can enter and move in influential circles that offer insider information, which other administrators and faculty from

What data collection methods does your college employ to gather knowledge on local and regional labor market needs?

the college usually could not enter, at least as peers. Independently, or in concert with the board of trustees or a college foundation, college leaders connect with players at upper levels in business, government, community life, education, and even the media. A president committed to the mission of workforce and community development is accustomed to listening for information, resources, or new developments that would further that mission, whether by informing current activity or suggesting new directions or partnerships. Because senior leaders know the institution's strategic priorities, and are thoroughly briefed on its workforce and community activities, they are alert to what is most promising or most significant about the intelligence gathered in these circles.

Opportunities for direct and personal contact occur at many levels within a complex institution like the community college. Members of advisory committees, described by administrators as the "front line people," are viewed as one of the best sources for information about labor market trends and developments in specific occupations. The businesses and clinical sites with which a college already partners are an immediate source of information about occupations, industries, and training trends. So too are college students, many of whom also work at local firms and observe needs firsthand. Students working in clinical placements may learn much that could be useful to their faculty advisers and program administrators. Faculty members, by attending conferences and simply keeping current in their fields, identify emerging growth areas in knowledge and training.

Do you have the information or data that you need to understand local labor market needs?

Insider information is one of the fruits of direct personal contact. Insider information is likely to be available in advance, before published sources, and even more up-to-date than industry reports. It is likely to be richer, more specific, and more localized–more informative with respect to a particular company or industry or location. Having such information enables a college to sharpen its responsiveness, to step up quickly to address new trends and developments.

Understanding the Local And Regional Economy

While community colleges rely on extensive networks of contacts to learn about local, regional, and national labor market needs, market responsive ones also make strategic use of formal data collection to improve their knowledge. This includes analysis and review of data from external sources. Valencia Community College uses labor statistics from the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, which include the number of individuals employed by occupation and industry, projected occupational and industry needs, the top 100 fastest-growing and -changing occupations, and occupational earnings, at state, regional, and county levels. In order to stay abreast of changing market needs, Holyoke Community College relies on MassStats data from the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training. In addition, the college utilizes data from the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) and takes full advantage of regional economic reports

produced by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to determine which employers to approach when seeking new opportunities.

A few campuses also work with economic development agencies to share and standardize data categories. The San Diego Workforce Partnership and other area economic-development entities have established industry "clusters," which they use not only to collect and analyze data but also to develop programs and initiatives. The community college district has adopted this framework, relying heavily on information issued by the partnership to align their programs and course offerings with what the community needs.

Other colleges conduct surveys and focus groups to collect data on local employment needs and trends, often in partnership with economic development organizations or chambers of commerce. Seminole Community College has used surveys to collect labor market information from employers in conjunction with the Florida High Tech Corridor Council. In 2001, the college gathered information through a Web site from 100 companies in Seminole County concerning the number of employees they anticipated hiring and the skills they would require.

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Strategic Program Redevelopment

Four years ago, the water-wastewater program at **Mountain Empire Community College** (Virginia) was on the verge of extinction. On conducting some research, the college discovered that it has the only associate-level program of this kind in the state, and that there are a large number of job openings at water plants. The college revived the program, offering it via the Internet, and created an innovative "lab in a box" kit to allow students to complete their lab work on the job. With grant support from the Virginia Department of Health and the Slemp Foundation, the program serves incumbent workers interested in promotion to lab supervision and trains new operators to staff local plants.

Efficiency Review Improves Scheduling

Palomar College (California), historically a "morning" college, has conducted efficiency reviews of its classes, attempting to measure whether classes were utilizing their space effectively. The study found most classes operating at 72 percent capacity. Staff looked at alternative scheduling, and the college began offering afternoon, evening, and even weekend classes. Efficiency rose to 93 percent.

Responsive colleges collect sufficient local economic and employment information to understand business needs and develop effective programs to address them. Hard data on these needs is an important first step in attracting the resources required to meet them. Kirkwood Community College in Iowa conducted a face-to-face survey with employers in 1998 and spent two to three months analyzing the data to understand employers' training needs. From the data, they developed customer contact training and two supervisor management programs, and began or expanded about 10 credit programs. They received money from the state for the new programs because they effectively demonstrated the need through their data collection and analysis.

How does your college assess the range and value of its programming and services?

Program and Internal Review

Most community colleges assess their labor market responsiveness primarily through periodic program reviews. Review committees generally include administrators and staff, but at responsive colleges these results also reach the senior administrators who see the overall picture and hold departments accountable for proposed changes. Advisory committees are key players in program review. Every program is usually reviewed at least once every five years. More frequent attention is given to programs where student (or employer) demand is unusually high or low. Such reviews usually investigate graduate employment and student satisfaction at the program level, in addition to analyzing standard enrollment and completion data, often collected for state reporting or accreditation bodies.

The primary "market signals" that many colleges use to alter resource allocations appear to be shifts in student course selection and in the types of training that employers are willing to purchase. Many community colleges hold that their students are savvy and well-informed on local employment needs, and thus enrollments signal the relevance of programs and coursework. However, some colleges noted that having independent information about local demand for a given occupation or set of skills was important, because such data at times indicate a mismatch between courses popular with students and courses that teach the skills needed by local employers. A hallmark of market-responsive colleges is their refusal to cut course offerings automatically when faced with low student interest. Instead, they

In what ways does your college evaluate the impact of its efforts to meet labor market needs?

proactively cultivate student interest in programs that have low enrollments but high demand from local employers for graduates. Responsive colleges also pay attention to programs in which student interest exceeds the institution's capacity to meet it. Information on the level of demand for a program and the employment opportunities available can prepare a college to obtain the resources to expand it.

Colleges have also used data collection to evaluate the operations of their occupational and other labor-market-responsive programs in terms of efficiency, productivity, and cost effectiveness, from an institutional point of view. There may be some resistance from faculty and board members when the results lead to recommendations to eliminate programs, courses, and even faculty positions. However, improvements in efficiency are clearly beneficial to sustaining programs in the long term.

Evaluating and Measuring The College's Labor Market Services

Few community colleges routinely produce quantitative impact assessments of college programs on local economies and employer groups, but some do hire consultants to perform one-time assessments. Colleges that wish to strengthen their labor market responsiveness find various ways to evaluate the impact of their efforts and the satisfaction of their clients and partners. Many ask the businesses they partner with to evaluate their training or other services. Others assess employer satisfaction with former students of the college.

Measuring Employer Satisfaction

Indian River Community College (Florida) conducts an annual employer satisfaction survey on the prior year's graduates, which they distribute to employers in person, obtaining a 40 - 50 percent response rate. The survey asks a series of questions related to the "SCANS competencies." The college tabulates responses and reports them to the college board. The results indicate areas of strength and areas for improvement. A few years ago the survey reported a decrease in satisfaction with the math skills of graduates. The college responded by offering more remediation in math, and employer satisfaction improved.

Evaluation of labor-market-responsiveness outcomes among students may be possible using internal data. Standard data on enrollment, completion, and awarding of degrees and certificates is the backbone of most college information systems. These data, if broken down by field of study, change over time and age of students, can provide useful information about labor-market-responsiveness outcomes and the allocation of resources across a college's various missions—academic, vocational, basic education, and adult education.

Tracking Community College Students and Their Employment

Perhaps the best indicators of labor market responsiveness come from determining the

Do you gather data on the post-enrollment outcomes of your students?

Institutional Review Process

Green River Community College (Washington State) engages in a three-year cycle of major institutional review, which includes an environmental scan, a review of mission and goals, and a refinement of the college's vision. When conducting an environmental scan, the college analyzes both its internal and external environments, including an assessment of college strengths and weaknesses, a review of demographics, economic and political trends, and state legislative mandates.

extent to which coursework helps students get hired at jobs and perform well after being hired. Many colleges have found this information helpful for their internal planning purposes as well as for promoting the success of their programs among state and local government officials, business and industry leaders, and potential students.

The primary sources of this information are matching of enrollment data with state wage-record and data surveys of former students and employers. There are strengths and shortcomings in both approaches - data-matching and surveys - as indicated by the experiences of the colleges we visited.

About half of the colleges we studied have comprehensive survey-based information about the activities of former students. However, many found the usefulness of these surveys to be limited by low response rates and lack of coverage of all relevant groups. Surveys of graduates (students obtaining degrees or certificates) were most common at these institutions. Less common were surveys of other former students. Even less common were surveys of employers that hire former students. Thus, while colleges may be able to obtain detailed information about student and employer satisfaction and program strengths and shortcomings from surveys,

they are generally expensive and, with low response rates, not representative of all students and employers.

In contrast, many colleges obtain employment and earnings information from linkages of wage records to school attendance data. In almost all cases, these data are obtained from state-level education organizations in states with centralized accountability systems. Employment results are available to the public at the institutional level. In addition, information that is linked from student wage records is available to colleges for their own internal analyses. College leaders in states where state-level accountability systems are not currently in place can seek the help of state employment agencies, perhaps in conjunction with researchers at universities, to establish an ongoing process of matching school enrollment data with employment and wage data.

The advantage of using administrative rather than survey data is that it is relatively less expensive to collect and more accurate at the individual student level. The primary disadvantages of administrative data relative to survey data are the lack of detail on the match between training and employment, the lack of information on the satisfaction of former students with programs offered at the school, and the inability to track former students who leave the state. To overcome these disadvantages, some colleges find it useful to perform limited satisfaction surveys of former students to supplement what they learn from the employment and wage data.

Several other data sources permit analysis of outcomes for former students. One is licensure and certification records available at the state level. Another is the use of state and federal information about transfers to other postsecondary institutions. The latter is of particular use to colleges in states that also provide information to match wage records with college course-taking.

Information- and Data-Driven Strategic Planning

Labor-market-responsive colleges not only gather information about the local economy, student outcomes, employers, and so forth; they also rely upon it for strategic planning to improve their workforce and economic development efforts and to meet local needs more effectively. It drives decision-making, as colleges initiate, improve, or terminate programs. At Scott Community College in eastern Iowa, staff members assess the cost, the job demand, and entry-level wages, among other factors, before deciding whether or not to implement a new program. The college surveys employers in the industry in order to obtain a clearer idea of the proposed program's value.

Responsive colleges also use data to measure their own effectiveness at responding to the labor market and to determine how they can improve. A broader institutional review can examine more than local economic data and program outcomes. It can collect information on and analyze internal structures and resource allocation as well as the external political and policy contexts. Through the process of strategic thinking, data and information are brought to bear for a variety of purposes-planning, problem-solving, vision development, and continuous improvement. Such a process can act as a lever for cultural change on campus, leading to a rethinking of a college's mission and goals to enhance alignment with community needs.

DATA

Lessons Learned

- Labor-market-responsive colleges use information and data to understand their environment and evaluate their effectiveness in meeting local employment needs.

- Personal contacts, particularly through the president and program advisory committees, are an irreplaceable source of up-to-the-minute data on local employer needs and economic shifts.

- Responsive colleges regularly use published data to learn more about labor market trends. They capitalize on opportunities to partner with others and survey local employers.

- Responsive colleges improve by evaluating their services to employers.

- Responsive colleges do not rely solely on student enrollment as a measure of employer demand. They independently assess this demand and find ways to boost enrollment in courses for which there are high wages and employer demand but low student interest.

- The best indicators of labor market responsiveness come from determining the extent to which coursework helps students get hired at jobs and perform well after being hired. The primary sources of this information are surveys of former students and employers and matching of enrollment data with state wage data.

- Strategic planning at responsive colleges is driven by data and information, and resources are invested to collect and analyze the necessary information.

Responding to Changing Labor Market Conditions Through Technology

In 2000, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) commissioned the creation of an economic impact model to accurately measure the returns to the public from local community colleges. With studies completed at more than 400 colleges in more than a dozen states, the data show that community colleges provide high rates of return on public dollars invested in most cases, returning more dollars to the public than the colleges receive. Based on this model, a tool was developed to assist colleges in determining the future industries and occupations in their service regions, the future demand for courses, and the accommodations necessary for specific courses as industries move into or out of the area.

The Community College Strategic Planner (CCSP), available for a fee through CCBenefits, Inc., is designed to help colleges measure and respond to labor market forces. The CCSP provides the following three components:

1. **Occupation and Program Forecaster.** This module projects jobs by industry, occupation, and course demand by CIP code (Classification of Instructional Programs) at the county level. To show industry forecasts in the college service area, the CCSP projects county-level industry data to the forecast year using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and U.S. Census. All told, the projections draw upon 24 major data sources. To forecast occupational demand at the county level, BLS data are regionalized and adjusted for emerging technological changes, the age of workers by occupation, and other factors affecting occupational demand. Simply by clicking on the forecast year and counties, subscribing colleges obtain the projections for new and replacement jobs by occupation. The CCSP then merges current course offerings with occupation projections to develop a picture of the specific demands for coursework in the future, reported in detail to the four-digit CIP code categories. The CCSP projects the future demand for courses currently offered and the opportunities for new course offerings for any year 15 years into the future.

2. **Curricula Impact Analyst.** Embedded in every CCSP is a regional economic impact input-output (IO) model covering the counties of the college service area. IO models are used to estimate the direct and indirect effects of user-specified changes in the direct economic activity in the region (for example, the startup of a new or the closing of an old industry in the region). To model an industry relocating into the region, a user simply selects the industry from a drop-down menu and enters the estimated number of direct new jobs in the box provided. The CCSP then projects the change in: a) industry outputs, b) occupations, and most importantly, c) the courses (by CIP code) to offer to accommodate the changes.

3. **Student Profile Projector Forecaster.** The CCSP forecasts the future size, age, gender, and ethnicity of the population in the region for any year 15 years into the future.

More information on CCSP can be found at www.ccbenefits.com or through www.acct.org.

Relationship-Building

The community college committed to labor market responsiveness is equally committed to relationship-building. Without ongoing relationships with relevant constituencies, colleges are limited in their knowledge of the community's current needs and the opportunities that exist to meet them. Without the requisite intelligence gained through active and ongoing relationships in the public and private sectors, colleges cannot form the types of strategic alliances and partnerships discussed in the following module. Responsive colleges recognize that relationships with other organizations also allow them to market their ability to meet local needs. More importantly, they position themselves also as leaders and partners in economic development.

Responsive colleges understand that success in meeting workforce needs often requires the additional resources of a consortium of education and training providers, and that such a consortium can assist colleges in their search for new resources. Labor-market-responsive colleges put into practice new strategies for outreach, networking, and relationship-building. They invest sufficient financial and human resources into the relationship-building process and understand that it is an ongoing task.

All community colleges have relationships with chambers of commerce, workforce development, social service, civic, or educational groups. The hallmark of the most labor-market-responsive colleges is the expanded constituencies with which they build relationships, reflected in a greater number and diversity of partner organizations. Correspondingly, such colleges are more involved in regional and statewide collaborations that position the institution to gather information and leverage resources more effectively. For these reasons and more, building networks with other community colleges is important.

Although the president, board of trustees, senior administrators, and the workforce development or continuing education division normally lead these efforts, relationship-building is everyone's job at a responsive college. New relationships are formed through strategic outreach. Colleges develop new avenues for marketing their career-oriented services and refine the messages that they deliver, portraying the institution as a responsive and flexible partner in economic development. Mission and vision statements, strategic plans, and top college personnel are important vehicles for these messages.

New Relationships Enhance College's Reach

Green River Community College (Washington State) has built upon its relationship with the Auburn Chamber of Commerce to enhance the college's access to city resources. The two collaborated to open the Regional Enterprise Center in downtown Auburn, a one-stop provider for economic development, community resources, and educational services. Housed in the center are the chamber of commerce and the college's Small Business Assistance Center, as well as a visitors center, economic development and business leadership programs, and meeting space for community events. The college also recently collaborated with the city of Kent on the Kent Station. Set for a 2005 opening, Kent Station is a $100 million, 470,000 square-foot retail, education, entertainment and residential project. Green River plans to move its SkillStream continuing education and business training services into the center.

Expanded Relationships Based on Location

The location of a community college will determine in part the most promising places to network, and colleges need to aggressively research these possibilities. For a community college to become a vibrant actor in economic and workforce development requires that its leaders and staff become engaged with others in those circles. Business organizations, such as chambers of commerce, Rotary clubs, and tech councils, are obvious places to build relationships with employers and business leaders. Other entities include community and regional economic development councils as well as other planning, economic, or workforce development organizations. Major corporate headquarters and small business networks are also important places to begin to establish a presence.   College leaders should examine whether they have fully explored larger regional development efforts as well.

With which additional groups or organizations could your college build strategic relationships?

Every locale has a unique set of organizations and networks oriented toward broader community concerns. These resources are useful to the college as entrees to new populations and as routes to building new collaborations. In the neighborhoods served by Malcolm X College on the west side of Chicago, for example, the ministers and their churches are powerful forces in the community and deeply connected to the needs of its residents. The dean of continuing education serves on the board and the education committee of the Westside Ministers Coalition. The personal relationships that she and others have developed with church leaders provide the college with a way to reach people in the community and to market educational opportunities at the college's West Side Learning Center. The college has brought programs into the community as a result of these connections and become part of collaborations like that which led to the West Side Consortium Training Institute for Family Child Care Home Providers.

In other communities, college representatives reach out to ethnic organizations, labor unions, and nonprofit organizations representing various interests. If the college has identified underserved populations in its district as part of its labor-market-responsiveness mission, staff should explore whether there are formal groups or even informal gatherings that would provide access to these populations.

Building strong networks requires that the college do its homework. "You have to know your community," stated the dean of the IT Institute at Northern Virginia Community College. "We needed the names of interested companies and specific people in those

Does the college take a leadership role in building strategic relationships?

companies to be successful. Knowing the environment is critical. You can't wait for people to come to you. You must go to them and build relationships."

Other educational institutions should not be overlooked. Many community colleges have existing relationships with high schools, a traditional source of college students. Responsive colleges market their career-oriented offerings to the K-12 system in creative ways. Relationships with local schools are important recruitment avenues for career-oriented programs at community colleges.

Building relationships or forming consortia with other community colleges, training providers, and four-year institutions is a way to leverage increased resources. From the platform of a strong working relationship, Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts jointly applied for and were awarded the Nurse Career Ladder Initiative (NUCLI) grant by the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, in response to the desperate need for nurses in the region. Plans are to increase enrollments in both colleges' nursing education programs.

Community colleges can also address employer training needs throughout a state or region through a collaborative and coordinated response. Consortia provide a framework for these responses. Scott Community College is part of One Source, a collaboration among all 15 Iowa community colleges that allows companies with a statewide presence to go to one source to negotiate training. Responsive colleges recognize the resource that other community colleges provide in meeting regional industry needs in a seamless fashion. Advocacy at the

Regional Community College Cooperation

Both **Palomar College** and the **San Diego Community College** District are part of the San Diego and Imperial County Community College Association (SDICCCA), made up of nine community colleges and ex-officio representatives of local universities and the county Office of Education. Presidents and vocational deans meet in separate groups monthly, allowing the colleges to collaborate and share programs, and the association has workforce development committees focused on specific areas such as biotech. SDICCCA received a regional grant for a customer service training academy, and the colleges still engage in this cooperative venture even though the grant is over.

state level on community college funding and policy, and marketing at the local level are also important benefits of partnering with other colleges. Holyoke Community College's president joined the presidents of three other community colleges in the region for a presentation to the Holyoke Economic and Industrial Corporation on the value of community colleges to the local economy.

Relationship-Building Is Everyone's Job

Most community colleges have each established an office of college relations or community and public relations to promote the college's image and provide information about its programs and services to the public. The president and trustees play crucial roles as advocates for the college in circles of power and influence in business and government. However, at responsive colleges, it is not only the top leaders or those in a particular office who hold responsibility for relationship-building and communicating the college's messages about its labor market responsiveness. This task is shared and embraced not only by those directly involved in a workforce development division but by all college staff.

Presidential Networking

President Carroll of **Mesa College** in the San Diego district sits on the opera board, serves on the board of San Diego Youth and Community Services, and sat on the Super Bowl host committee to connect with those who could help advance the college's mission.

President Nunley of **Montgomery College** is a board member of the Tech Council of Maryland and co-chair of the Montgomery County Network, High Technology Council of Maryland, and other networks that connect her with business leaders.

The president and other senior administrators set the example for the creative pursuit of relationship-building. They welcome and seek out appointments to boards and councils, pursuing avenues that will introduce them into networks that strategically position the college. From among many organizations, they choose to participate in those that hold the most promise for achieving the college's priorities and goals. Organizations devoted to economic, business, or workforce development-chambers of commerce, rotary clubs, government-industry tech councils, economic development corporations, banks-are especially promising as sources of information, contacts, and possible partnerships for labor-market-responsive colleges. Every region will have a different mix of professional, trade, business, nonprofit, and civic organizations with which the college might judiciously seek involvement at the leadership level. College leaders who succeed in proactive relationship-building literally integrate themselves into the economic aspects of the community in ways that were not typical of a previous generation of college leaders.

Usually, a labor-market-responsive college will have a specialized division, typically named "workforce development and community services," "corporate training and continuing education," or "business and industry services." While this division manages programs and services, it also plays a key role in building relationships and in marketing the college to potential partners and clients. The division staff may engage in direct marketing, offering PowerPoint presentations or informal talks to chamber of commerce meetings, rotary clubs, corporate gatherings, community groups, and major businesses. Some colleges retain sales or marketing employees in the workforce or training divisions whose sole job is to bring in new business and retain existing training relationships. In either case, by working directly on a day-to-day basis with businesses and other community partners, staff develop personal relationships with people in these organizations. Through these relationships, they gather information about industry trends and needs, while monitoring and assessing the satisfaction of their clients. The staff members who work on a daily basis with clients, as the most visible representatives of the college's labor market responsiveness, function as "advertisements" of the quality of its services in the way that they carry out their work.

Many community colleges sustain an economic or workforce development mission based almost entirely on the work of the president and the division dedicated to that mission. The rest of the college - administrators and faculty - go about their jobs as these are typically defined at a traditional college. At a few community colleges, however, the mission of labor market responsiveness has so permeated the organization that everyone on staff feels responsible for making it happen. And it seems that the more labor-market-responsive a community college is, the more likely this is to be the case.

New expectations of staff, indeed new organizational cultures, are in place or evolving at these institutions. Such a fundamental shift can occur only if upper

Do the trustees and president communicate the college's mission of labor market responsiveness in the public eye and in circles of influence?

management directly and unequivocally communicates these new expectations. As President Nunley of Montgomery College in Maryland observed, "I tell all of our administrators and try to extend it to the whole workforce. They must be active in the community. They're involved to be known, to be visible, to be leaders, and to bring ideas." Beyond the setting of expectations from the top, it is important that the network of senior administrators and department heads buy into these expectations and model the fact that relationship-building and marketing labor market responsiveness are part of everyone's job. Administrators and faculty members in relationships with external organizations-whether advisory committees or clinical or internship sites or others-understand that what they say and do conveys messages about the community college and its interest in cooperating with other organizations.

Vehicles to Carry the College's Message

In order to build relationships, a college must communicate its core mission to the public. The college's formal statements of purpose-mission statement, vision, and strategic plan-begin setting forth this message. When labor market responsiveness is truly integrated into the core mission rather than being simply an auxiliary service, these formal statements reflect that stance. Beyond serving as the college's internal guiding principles, these statements become the bedrock of the college's presentation of itself to the world,

both on campus and off. The college's labor-market-responsive mission should be broadly and intentionally communicated. It should be prominently placed in college publications and on the Web site.

Communicating the college's goals and its ability to meet workforce development needs cannot be confined to paper, however, but must enter into the common vernacular of college personnel. The board, president, and key administrators are all important messengers. President Lee of Oakton Community College near Chicago identified the Oakton Community College Educational Foundation, a 23-member volunteer board consisting of business and industry CEOs, as a key resource for "spreading the good word" about Oakton to other employers.

The college president's presence in circles of influence is itself a form of communication. The president's public appearances-where he or she appears and with whom-communicate as powerfully as words the mission of the college and its interest in being engaged in partnerships that further economic, workforce, and community development. The president is the college's "logo," Margaret Lee, president of Oakton Community College, observed, attributing the insight to David Riesman, the author of *Lonely Crowd* and an acknowledged expert on social behavior in the United States. The president's choices about where to be active and where to be seen will be interpreted as messages, not only about the president's priorities, but those of the college as well.

Like the president, the dean or vice president heading the workforce or continuing education division circulates in the community. This senior administrator usually secures appointments to boards and committees that spotlight the college's expertise in economic or workforce development. The vice president of continuing education at Oakton Community College in Illinois is president-elect of the Skokie Chamber of Commerce, for example,

Marketing to K-12 Students

The **Springfield Technical Community College** (STCC) Entrepreneurial Institute offers credit courses in all aspects of entrepreneurship education, ranging from a two-year associate degree to K-8 elementary entrepreneur programs. In addition to offering programs to K-12 educators interested in teaching entrepreneurship, the Institute runs the YES! (Young Entrepreneurial Scholars) program for high schools in the region and the college's Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts Student Business Incubator. According to administrators, the institute has been very instrumental in marketing STCC's noncredit program offerings to prospective students at a young age.

Has the college sought out new ways to market itself, regionally and even nationally?

while the continuing education dean at Gaston College in North Carolina chairs the chamber's Education-Workforce Development Committee. College leadership in these roles communicates labor-market-responsive priorities. The dean of continuing education for Malcolm X College in Chicago is constantly out in the neighborhoods, serving on boards and attending meetings. "My goal," she observed humorously, "is never to be in my office."

New Avenues for Marketing Labor Market Responsiveness

As the labor-market-responsive college looks to develop new relationships, marketing is one important mode of communication. The larger networks within which community college representatives circulate may offer important new opportunities for marketing to a wider audience. Colleges within urban or district systems may find the central office an important resource, not only of direct referrals, but also of networking and communication-through meetings, studies, committee work, publications, and Web sites. The seven City Colleges of Chicago, of which Malcolm X is one, present themselves as a collective solution to

Chicagoland's economic development needs. The central office of City Colleges plays a significant role in marshalling the response to employer requests and coordinating with workforce development boards.

By connecting with economic development agencies, local planning districts, regional, city or county agencies, and business organizations, colleges and their services become part of the promotional efforts of these entities. Mountain Empire Community College's services are marketed through the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority's initiative, the Southwest Virginia Promise, which promotes the region-including the college-to businesses seeking a new home or expansion site. The Eastside Cities' Training Consortium, composed of 31 municipalities in Washington State, collaborates with Bellevue Community College in Seattle to promote the college's professional development programs to area businesses. And the Internet creates new opportunities limited only by the imagination of its users. York Technical College in South Carolina has created a training exchange on its Web site, where it posts a list of employers engaged in contract training with the college or other private firms. The site plays both a brokering role, as companies can see the range and type of training options offered, and a marketing one, as companies that observe the training offered by the college are enticed to become clients.

The Messages That Marketing Communicates

In addition to finding new avenues for marketing, responsive colleges are careful to craft the messages that they want to communicate. Convincing prospective

Does your marketing activity encourage others to approach the college as a potential partner?

clients of the value and integrity of what the community college has to offer is the fundamental message. Is the community college's essential product, education and training, of the highest quality? Is the college leadership on top of current industry trends? Do college graduates find gainful employment? Whether the field is information technology or nursing or integrated systems technology, does the college offer training that is up-to-date, and rigorous, and meets requirements for certification? Are those managing and teaching in the occupational programs experts who are current in their professional fields?

Many kinds of evidence discussed earlier can be useful in answering these questions: graduate and customer satisfaction surveys, evidence of program recognition and faculty achievement, and recommendations from businesses and other partners of the college who are pleased with the services they received. What matters is that the message of excellence be conveyed. Thus an additional benefit of collecting outcome and impact data on career-oriented programs is its usefulness for marketing the college's strengths and successes in meeting local workforce needs.

Another fundamental message to convey to potential partners and clients is that the college's approach is proactive and focused on solving problems. The responsive college does not provide canned knowledge, but solutions to real-world problems. During the relationship-building phase, college staff members communicate to potential partners their intention to help identify challenges, devise responses, and sustain and refine this process over time.

Closely related to problem-solving is flexibility. The stereotype of the traditional college is the opposite of flexible: classes taught with the same curriculum in the same room by the same instructors, year after year. Many people outside of higher education still view colleges through this lens. The labor-market-responsive college conveys its willingness and ability to adjust traditional structures-course and program scheduling, admission and prerequisites, staffing, credit, curriculum, and location-to address the concerns and needs of partners. It is no longer news that a traditional on-campus, semester-long, three days a week, mid-morning class is unlikely to appeal to employees or the industries that employ them. But how far will a community college go to serve its customers, without compromising the quality of its programs? The community college that wants to become more labor-market-responsive has assessed itself on these issues, and lets the public and partners know where it stands.

Communication Is a Two-Way Street

Communication is fundamental to all relationships. In addition to information-sharing and consensus-building, it builds rapport. Active listening is an important skill in gathering crucial information on local needs. At colleges that are responsive to the labor market, all these functions are important. Responsive colleges undertake a new and expanded communication and marketing function: communicating with a larger audience, emphasizing two-way

Do college leaders and staff recognize that listening is a key component of communications and marketing?

communication, and establishing-as the ultimate goal of communications-new relationships and partnerships.

Every act of communication is understood as (at least) a two-way exchange. In the rush to get the right message out to the right audience, the importance of listening may sometimes be overlooked. Listening is fundamental to the communications process of a labor-market-responsive college. The very term "responsive" implies that the college has "heard" and is determined to act upon information communicated to its representatives.

Not only do conversations between college administrators and business leaders at the chamber of commerce offer significant information. More importantly, they begin the process of building relationships. What is most valued within these relationships is the personal and direct contact that they afford. Through such relationships, employers and community and corporate leaders begin to think of the college as a player in workforce and economic affairs and to share with its representatives the kind of information, issues, and problems that may ultimately lead to partnerships.

Lessons Learned

- Responsive colleges develop a wide variety of nontraditional relationships and deepen existing relationships with economic and workforce development groups, business and industry, community leaders, community-based organizations, other education and training providers, powerful figures, and diverse constituencies.

- Relationship-building is everyone's job. While the board, president, and workforce development division have important roles to play, staff and faculty members across the organization accept responsibility for building relationships through which to communicate the college's interest in partnerships and community service.

- The college's formal statements of purpose (vision, mission, strategic plan) are core vehicles for broadly communicating the college's market responsiveness on campus and off. The president and board are key players in communicating the college's interests and building relationships, particularly within leadership circles. Personal and direct contact is the most effective form of communication.

- The messages that are communicated emphasize not only the quality of the college's work, but its flexibility and commitment to bringing to the table what the partners need.

Approaches to Labor Market Responsiveness

Community colleges vary in their approach to labor market responsiveness. In no particular order, here's a short list of strategies and approaches, gathered through our case studies, that responsive colleges take:

- Remain current on the skills most in demand by local employers.
- Offer courses that address the training needs of employers.
- Develop increased ability to rapidly respond to these needs.
- Thoughtfully recruit and increase "non-credit" enrollment.
- Offer more targeted and contract training courses, beyond those listed in the catalog, to benefit employers and others seeking to upgrade their skills.
- Focus on becoming increasingly adept at curriculum development and modification to meet the changing needs of students and employers.
- Integrate non-credit training into for-credit programs, and visa versa.
- Continuously expand and refine for-credit offerings to address many of the workforce needs of the local economy.
- Develop close collaborative partnerships with local businesses, trade associations, labor organizations, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, community-based organizations, and municipal governments.

- Provide entrepreneurial assistance to small businesses, including start-ups.
- Launch aggressive outreach programs targeted to local and regional businesses, both to offer training services and to solicit feedback about course content.
- Use technology and distance learning to expand capacity to deliver credit and noncredit training.
- Recruit adjunct faculty from among local experts in targeted fields to provide training.
- Demonstrate the ability to use resources efficiently and deliver effective training at a lower cost than for-profit or internal training providers.
- Enlist progressive and responsive leaders who promote market responsiveness.
- Collect relevant data, maintain good information management systems, and ensure that decisions are data driven.
- Establish and maintain strong links to the local secondary school system (Tech Prep, Dual Enrollment, School-to-Work).
- Engage local business and community leaders to help the college develop market-responsive strategies.
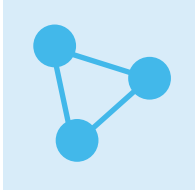
Partnerships

In their efforts to be labor-market-responsive, colleges inevitably need to partner with local business and industry. Indeed, the programs and services that result in labor market responsiveness are most often implemented as a partnership. Partnerships with employers, trade associations, economic development agencies, and other educational institutions enable a college to reach beyond the student populations they have traditionally served and build its capacity in emerging occupational and training areas. Through outreach, marketing, and relationship-building, described in the previous module, the community college opens doors to new contacts and opportunities to demonstrate its leadership, knowledge, and interests to strategic partners. Relationships build upon each other, bringing together groups and individuals with overlapping goals and different mixes of resources and need. Out of these rich networks, colleges form partnerships with one, two, or many employers and associations.

Without question, the community college brings to the table many resources. Depending on the campus, these are likely to include substantive and instructional expertise, classroom and lab space, technical equipment, an infrastructure for program delivery, and the capacity to leverage financing. Importantly, they supply brainpower to organize, develop, and execute educational and training programs. But the community college is also likely to be lacking in some areas: access to new populations of students, cutting-edge technical knowledge and equipment, in-depth and current knowledge of occupations and industries, and adequate financing for new programs, to name a few. As senior officials told us time and time again, labor market responsiveness can be achieved only through thoughtful and intentional partnership.

Partnering is strategic, based on solid relationships and information gathered about local employers, community needs, and economic trends. Successful colleges partner with business and industry leaders-large and growing firms and innovative industries. Presidents and boards of trustees play key roles in connecting with these leaders and initiating partnerships. Entrepreneurial staff members follow up, developing and sustaining smaller partnerships. Common features of successful partnerships discussed in this module include: win-win-win situations; leveraging for the future rather than for short-term gain; flexibility in meeting needs; lasting for the long term; and visibility that leads to new partnerships.

Does the college engage in sustained, successful partnerships that are responsive to the labor market?

Identifying Economic Opportunity

Valencia Community College seeks to be a major player in its region's economic development. Central Florida is a high-employment but relatively low-wage economy. By far the largest employment sector is the hospitality industry, which offers low wages. The college and the community developed a "conscience economy strategy," deciding no longer to pursue low-wage jobs, but rather to focus on identifying clusters of opportunity for economic development, building on their strengths in health-care, financial software, and dynamic media fields.

Setting Strategic Priorities

Once the network of relationships described in the previous module has been established, the college is poised to develop strategic partnerships that will achieve the workforce and economic development goals of the community. In focusing on partnerships to enhance labor market responsiveness, each community college needs to set tactical priorities. Considered thinking about where to focus time and energy is part of the standard "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats" (SWOT) analysis that goes into sound strategic planning. Where are the college's strengths and where are the opportunities in the community? Which industries and companies are most important economically? Which are expanding? Are there other employers, such as government agencies or school systems, for which the college would be an appropriate partner? As presented in earlier modules, identifying opportunities for strategic alliances requires information-gathering and research: looking at data concerning labor market and economic development trends, networking with representatives from the chamber, businesses and other community organizations, fielding surveys, and perhaps conducting a systematic needs analysis.

The mutual processes of institutional self-evaluation and community assessment–the matching of strengths and opportunities - lead

to reasoned decisions by the college leaders about where to focus their efforts. They can then identify and pursue the specific companies and people with whom to partner. They may target particular industries, occupations, or specific corporations. Through extensive networking and needs analysis, the leaders of Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland, for example, identified information technology as a priority area for the college in the business environment and the National Security Agency as a key employer.

Identifying opportunities and setting priorities also means seriously reflecting on the meaning of "community." Many community college administrators mentioned that as they explored how to be more responsive, they found their service area expanding. "This region is very interdependent," observed Robert Templin, the president of Northern Virginia Community College. "Economies know no boundaries, but politics do. We have to think beyond political boundaries."

Modern community colleges must weigh economic and labor market concerns that go beyond the traditional interests of the college or the immediate needs of local employers. When partnering with economic development organizations, community colleges can contribute to the demand side of the labor market by developing local industry and attracting new business. Through such partnerships, they can address the loss of manufacturing jobs, economic downturns, and the dislocation of workers. These concerns almost always play themselves out on a regional level.

Moreover, the global economy may have implications for even the most geographically isolated college. Information technology is

Do the partnerships in which your college takes part anticipate local economic development and growth?

only one example of a growth industry not tied to geographic location. This suggests that the search for strategic partners should not be limited to the usual suspects within the bounds of the local community or county. Many responsive colleges have sought to establish partnerships with companies and other employers on a regional basis, sometimes crossing state lines.

Partner With Leaders

Leaders of community colleges with successful partnerships advise that in setting strategic priorities colleges establish partnerships with large employers and innovative industries on the one hand, and those undergoing dramatic change, growth, or retrenchment on the other. The reasons for this approach are many. In the first scenario, the more substantial the business or industry, the greater the need for large numbers of well-trained workers. The more successful the enterprise, the more likely leaders are to be interested in growth and expansion. The more visionary the leaders, the more likely the firm is to be enthusiastic and willing to take risks in the interest of creating new enterprises and partnerships. As a representative of Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina recommends: "Be partners with leaders."

Partnering with national or international corporations is likely to provide a higher level of resources and greater recognition for the college. In addition, regional or national connections are a good leverage point for future partnerships. While not all community colleges are adjacent to national or international corporations, national professional associations and unions can also be leaders in their fields. South Piedmont

Determining the Needs For Strategic Partnering

Scott Community College (Iowa) conducted a survey to determine the training and employment needs of area employers and discovered that manufacturers were worried about the skills of their current employees and foresaw a need for nearly 60,000 new and replacement hires by the year 2000. In response, the college partnered with five manufacturers to build the Manufacturing Technology Center to address these skill needs. Ten local manufacturing employers helped develop the curriculum and marketing plan, went to high schools to recruit students, and provided the college with 20 percent of the center's operating costs. The state provided $1.5 million to build the center. The college is now building another manufacturing center in a nearby county with nine employers and state funds.

Partnering With Regional Employers

Developed in 1996, the **Springfield Technical Community College** (STCC) Technology Park, located in a renovated mill on a 15.3-acre site, provides lease space for technology-based and light manufacturing companies. Adjacent to Springfield's downtown central business district, the park houses 15 companies with approximately 950 employees. The Verizon New England Next Step program, a partnership between Verizon and one of its unions, is located in the park. This $8 million, 11-college program trains Verizon employees throughout New England in telecommunications technologies. STCC is the lead college in the program.

Community College in rural North Carolina developed its metallurgical engineering technology program by partnering with the ASM Materials Information Society, an association for materials engineers and scientists.

In the second scenario, firms undergoing dramatic change are likely to be in the most need of retooling and retraining. Employees

Partnering With National Leaders

In 1995, the National Science Foundation designated and funded the National Workforce Center for Emerging Technologies (NWCET) at **Bellevue Community College** (Washington State) as a National Center of Excellence in Advanced Technological Education. The center was created to advance IT education and improve the quality of the IT workforce in the state of Washington and nationally. With the support of major donors such as the Boeing Company and Microsoft Corporation, as well as 13 partners in business, education, and industry, the NWCET develops IT skills standards and identifies the needs of IT employers and prospective IT students. The Educator-to-Educator IT Institute (E2E) located at the center provides IT training for teachers and links the NWCET with industry leaders in IT instruction. Through E2E, the NWCET is a national Microsoft IT Academy Program provider, and McGraw-Hill sponsored the 2003 Working Connections IT Faculty Development Institutes.

are more likely to seek additional training to stay contemporary and competitive. Dislocated employees will need to be retrained for new positions. Small firms that can't afford individual training programs will need special assistance. Indian River Community College in Florida went out of its way to organize small businesses, creating avenues for training that none of them could individually afford.

Direct brokering by community college presidents has resulted in numerous partnerships of great benefit to institutions and their partners. The personal involvement of Montgomery College's president in establishing relationships with Marriott's CEO resulted in a $1 million gift from that company that even senior administrators would have found next to impossible to secure. The president of Malcolm X College in Chicago negotiated an arrangement with the United Center, a sports arena situated next door to the campus, which will bring $1.6 million to the college for scholarships and athletic programs in 2004. The president's strategic leadership sets the

stage for other administrators and staff to pursue promising relationships with the purpose of developing partnerships.

A college's board of trustees and its foundation board should be composed of business and community leaders. As influential people with broad networks of their own, they often play key roles in developing partnerships for the college. Kirkwood Community College in Iowa partners with Aegon USA, one of the largest insurance companies in the world, with operations in Cedar Rapids. Aegon's CEO is the president of the college's foundation board. In 1998, Aegon built its corporate data center on the college's campus and in exchange built the college an information technology center.

Partnerships Extend the Education and Workforce Development Pipeline

Community colleges sit at the nexus of educational institutions supporting workforce development. Secondary schools serve as primary feeders to many community colleges, while four-year institutions receive many transfers from community college. Together, they form the educational pipeline preparing individuals for productive employment. Only through partnerships can the various levels of education work as a system.

Most community colleges have articulation agreements or other relationships with K-12 institutions. Responsive colleges have transformed these relationships into innovative partnerships. San Diego City College hosts a "middle college high school" (a co-located high school) on campus, of which 300 out of 700 students are dually enrolled in high school and the college. Gaston College in North Carolina views dual enrollment programs as a way of recruiting more high school students into the college's technical programs.

Other K-12 partnerships focus on increasing career awareness and interest in important technical fields. Montgomery College in Maryland sponsors summer camps to introduce middle school students and their teachers to careers in biotech, a countywide workforce training need that the college is addressing. The science department within Bellevue Community College (BCC) in Washington State has an ongoing partnership with a local elementary school in which BCC science instructors share their knowledge of science with the students. Each year BCC and the elementary school host a "Young Science Celebration" which features group projects and hands-on demonstrations. College officials believe such partnerships build an early and abiding interest in science careers. Developing interest and enrollment in high-demand career areas is a critical step toward meeting local labor-force needs.

Partnerships with other community colleges can also result in important outcomes. Scott Community College in Iowa maintains a reciprocity agreement with Black Hawk College, enabling students from each college to enroll in career-oriented programs the other does not offer. Through distance education inter-collegiate partnerships provide another innovative approach to labor market responsiveness. Northern Virginia Community College brought together other colleges from across the country-Dallas, Miami, New York, and Washington-to design a degree program combining distance education with in-person classes to train workers in conference planning and facilitation. An administrator explained that while the design and development of the online curricula came out of the consortium of colleges, the push came from employers.

In many technical fields, bachelor's degrees are a necessity for entering the labor market. Articulation agreements developed through partnering with four-year institutions ensure that community college students pursuing technical careers lose no time through imperfect alignment with local university requirements in those fields. City College in the San Diego District offers a degree in

Career-Focused K-12 Partnerships

In 1999, **Kirkwood Community College** (Iowa) launched career academies in engineering technology, local area networks, IT fields, health sciences, and graphic design. Each represents a joint venture between local school districts and the college. High school teachers teach college-level courses the last two years of high school, which transfer for college credit and allow high school students to more effectively pursue viable career options. Nearly 1,000 students participate each year and enrollments are growing.

industrial technology, but San Diego State had terminated the corresponding bachelor's degree program. Not wanting a dead-end degree, the college partnered with Fresno State University, hundreds of miles to the north, to provide the additional units in the field needed for a bachelor's degree, with some courses taught at the community college and some online. Local employers had a strong interest in keeping students in San Diego County for their education, in the hopes that they would enter the San Diego workforce upon graduation. At Montgomery College in Maryland, students can complete a bachelor's degree at the University of Maryland University College in 10 majors without leaving the community college's campus. Thus partnerships with other higher education providers enable community colleges to be at the forefront of local workforce development.

Entrepreneurial Staff Maintain and Enhance Partnerships

College staff interface daily with partners and play a key role in the success and growth of those partnerships. Staff members who are effective in playing this role tend to be entrepreneurial and customer oriented. They often have private-sector experience-in business or in health for example, to name

To what extent does the college encourage and reward its staff for entrepreneurial activities?

College Staff Ensure The Success of Partnerships

Oakton Community College (Illinois) has partnered with the City of Park Ridge to provide training to its managerial and supervisory staff for about five years. Asked to describe the partnership's advantages, the city's human resources director noted that a previous provider had served up "canned" training and offered consultants unable to relate well to the city's staff. In contrast, "Oakton deals with the real issues, and they work hard to make the training fit. They've also worked hard with our budget issues, and the loss of grant funds. One facilitator really clicked-I have employees who e-mail her for advice on how to coach a staff member."

successfully operate partnerships and new programs. These include scheduling, compensation, competition, and "good old-fashioned bureaucracy," to name a few. Leaders ensure, from the initial hiring of employees through their orientation, training, and subsequent performance evaluations, that they consistently seek and reward initiative for the activities that lead to productive partnerships. They seek to hire people with the right attitudes as well as the right experience and skills.

Colleges that seek to become labor-market-responsive have devised a number of ways to encourage staff to play their parts and reward those who do. Staff members may receive stipends beyond their regular salaries to manage or teach in new programs. The college may underwrite training for staff members to enable them to lead the college's advancement into new or rapidly changing fields, most obviously in information technology. Colleges may sponsor staff recognition programs that showcase and reward faculty members and administrators-at all levels-who assume leadership roles in partnering activities.

two high-growth sectors-which gives them credibility with their business partners and a leg up in understanding the needs, customs, and challenges facing an organization. As the primary point of contact on a daily basis, they monitor client satisfaction with the services the college is providing, seek to address the real issues the client faces, and look for ways to improve upon and, ultimately, expand the partnership. To the degree that college staff members succeed, their clients are likely to spread the word to others in their networks, further enhancing and communicating the college's reputation.

Another characteristic of college staff attuned to partnerships is their commitment to the principle of continual improvement. "We can always get better," is a common sentiment among staff at responsive colleges. They thrive in an organizational culture that rewards staff for pursuing change and taking risks in the service of improvement. By communicating this ideology to their partners and potential partners, these colleges demonstrate their willingness and ability to be responsive.

Leadership removes the obstacles so common in a large organization, which can easily interfere with creative efforts to

Common Features of Successful Partnerships

At colleges with a history of successful partnerships, experienced staff members have identified the features of this success. At the top of their list is that all partners must view the arrangement as mutually beneficial. This ensures effective and harmonious working relationships. It is perhaps obvious that a successful partnership represents a win-win-win situation. Successful labor-market-responsive programs benefit students or workers enrolled in the program, the business or industry that the program targets, and the

Are partnerships assessed on their ability to leverage long-term opportunities?

community itself, thanks to the economic development and workforce enhancement that result. Senior administrators at responsive community colleges focus foremost on what the college brings to the partnership, examining the "value-added" of their contribution. For example, the question President Nunley of Montgomery College, Maryland, asks of her partners is, "What can Montgomery College do for you that we're not doing?" The speed with which the college is able to respond to requests is important in demonstrating its value to business and industry partners.

Leverage rather than simple profit is the long-term measure of a partnership's value. Colleges in partnerships do indeed realize new funds, students, and donations of valuable equipment. Yet senior administrators advise that neither the college nor its partners will benefit as much if either is simply trying to sell a product or service for a flat fee. In fact, "given the political nature of college financing, it is misleading to focus on the direct costs and revenues associated with specific programs," according to a study completed by the Community College Research Center.[7] The authors report that "an activity-even one that loses money-can have political benefits that generate revenue and resources, and result in a stronger financial position for the college as a whole."

Moraine Valley Community College (Illinois) staff explain that in their partnership with Cisco, the corporation is building a customer base through training rather than by trying to profit from the price set for the training, as other companies do. The college, on the other hand, continues to enhance its collective expertise and reputation in an important subfield of information technology, a capability that has continually expanded the partnership with Cisco and led to other IT

Successful Partnerships Lead to New Ones

As a result of **Kirkwood Community College's** (Iowa) creative partnership with Aegon, Diamond Mills, another local company, approached the college about its need for a nutrition research center. Since the college needed a new veterinary technology facility, the two partnered to build a facility that would address both their needs. Diamond Mills paid about 75 percent of the cost in exchange for the college maintaining the grounds and parking lots. The college has a similar partnership with Ruffalo Cody and Associates, a fundraising enterprise. Ruffalo Cody is building its facility on the college campus and hires students. In addition, Ruffalo Cody will do market research for the college.

Building Partnerships Over the Long Term

Palomar College's relationship with the San Diego Water Authority reaches back almost 30 years. It began when the authority was looking for a partner to facilitate professional development for its employees. As the program has matured, it has become not only a mechanism for current water authority employees to upgrade their skills and certifications, but a primary source of new employees. The partnership includes 23 water districts and cities and averages about 200 students a semester.

partnerships as well. Other colleges noted the need for business partners to put something on the table (scholarships, equipment, technology, start-up funds) and invest in a program in order to start the partnership out on the right foot.

Successful partnerships provide fertile soil for further partnerships. Other companies hear about the college's training and services by word of mouth. Visible collaborations attract attention from others in the area. Thus partnerships themselves are a powerful way to market the college's partnering abilities. The Wiremold Company, a Hartford-based

manufacturer of plastics, asked Asnuntuck Community College in Connecticut to develop a skills upgrade program for its workforce. Asnuntuck agreed to train their employees and has increased its partnerships with other local employers due to publicity about the college's relationship with Wiremold.

Another feature of successful partnerships is a college's willingness to be flexible and responsive to its partners, rather than simply doing things as it always has. A community college may locate its programs off-site, away from the campus, within an employment setting or a community location. Enrollees of the Malcolm X Family Care training program study in their own neighborhood at the West Side Learning Center. Students enrolled in the Moraine Valley-University of Chicago Hospitals Academy nursing program never set foot on campus. They complete all their studies, even the application process, at the hospital. Such arrangements are more convenient for employees and employers, and provide access to the clinical sites essential for allied health training. They require college faculty and administrators to move far beyond traditional thinking about the location of education. Similarly, colleges offer creative scheduling of classes and training to meet the preferences of students and employers.

Successful partnerships are for the long term. Effort is put into sustaining and expanding partnerships so long as there are needs to meet. Colleges are proactive in helping their corporate or employer partners determine additional needs that the institution could help them address.

Finally, building successful partnerships is often a prerequisite for receiving other sources of funding. Green River Community College in Washington State noted that receipt of state and federal workforce development funds and federal grants requires the college to demonstrate a responsive training plan. This is impossible without strong partnerships with the business community. Thus, leveraging resources leads to additional resources. Community colleges, regardless of their quality or expertise, cannot fulfill the mission of workforce or economic development in isolation. Only through partnership can the college become truly labor-market-responsive.

Lessons Learned

- Partnerships are essential to ensure that colleges address the needs most important to the economic vitality of their communities.

- Forming strategic partnerships is essential to the development of market-responsive programs because such programs tend to be expensive. Traditional sources of college funding are not sufficient to fund such programs, and business and civic groups often lack the resources to build them without assistance.

- The labor-market-responsive college selects strategic priorities for its partnerships after thoughtful assessment and research.

- College staff members take an entrepreneurial, proactive, and creative stance toward operating partnerships.

- College leaders recognize and reward employees for their partnering activities.

- Partnerships are assessed, not simply by their bottom line, but rather by their potential for providing immediate benefits to the community and long-term opportunities for leveraging.

- Labor-market-responsive colleges embrace a continuous improvement philosophy and convey that commitment to partners and to the community.

- Enlightened self-interest is at the heart of successful partnerships-with the ideal being to identify win-win-win arrangements that benefit students, businesses, and the community at large.

Concluding Remarks and Next Steps

The value of being a labor-market-responsive college extends beyond the college itself to the community and region it serves. For the past decade, forward-thinking leaders in education, business, and economic development have become increasingly aware of the untapped potential of community colleges to improve the economic vitality of their communities. Although America's network of community colleges has made enormous contributions to workforce and economic development in response to dramatic shifts in the economy, the well-being of every community is more than ever tied to the quality of its community college's programs.

This guidebook was designed to help your college maximize its potential to be effective and responsive so it may contribute to the economic growth and vitality of its community. From the preceding modules and findings, you should now see more clearly that in order for a college to be labor-market-responsive it must first understand the area it services and how that area is evolving. It must also have an internal structure and culture that promote the pursuit of opportunities that lead to partnerships, long-term agreements, and a deeper integration into the local economic area. This requires both strong and visionary leaders and organizational structures that promote entrepreneurial thinking and action. Community colleges that embrace workforce development as an equal part of their educational mission allocate resources to promote the development and delivery of workforce-related instruction, engage employers in the development and delivery process, aggressively pursue training opportunities, and ensure that the programs meet the demands of the industries they target. They also establish themselves as willing and able partners with local employers and community leaders to help improve and support the economic vitality of the region.

To be fully effective, a community college has to know what its own strengths are with respect to addressing changing demands on the part of students and employers and where it needs to improve to be fully able to serve the community. If you have not done so already, we encourage you and your colleagues to use the self-assessment tools in Volume 3 of this guidebook. They will help your team discover the conditions and policies that exist on and around your campus that promote or inhibit your college's responsiveness. Your team will also benefit from accessing the numerous resources and organizations presented in Volume 3 that can further guide and support your efforts. Using these tools and resources, in conjunction with engaging in a college-wide strategic planning process, will provide you with a clearer understanding of your college's market-responsive potential and what steps you need to take to realize that potential.

Notes

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment Projections (2000).

2. Laurence Warford, "Funding Lifelong Learning: A National Priority," *Community College Journal 72 (3),* December 2001/January 2002, pp. 15-18, 23.

3. Davis Jenkins and Katherine Boswell, *State Policies on Community College Workforce Development: Findings from a National Survey* (Denver, Colo.: Education Commission of the States, 2002).

4. For more information on federal resources for community colleges, see *Community Colleges: Federal Resources Supporting Local Opportunities* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) available at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CCLO/brochure.doc.

5. "The Entrepreneurial Community College: Bringing Workforce, Economic and Community Development to Virginia Communities," Virginia Community College System, *Inquiry 6* (Spring 2001).

6. Thomas Bailey and Vanessa Smith Morest, *The Organizational Efficiency of Multiple Missions for Community Colleges,* Community College Research Center Brief Number 19 (New York: Columbia University, September 2003).

7. Thomas Bailey and Vanessa Smith Morest, *The Organizational Efficiency of Multiple Missions for Community Colleges,* Community College Research Center Brief Number 19, (New York: Columbia University, September 2003).

8. Dallas County Community College District figures include the seven community colleges, the Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development, and the R. Jan LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications.

9. San Diego District figures include three colleges.

APPENDIX - PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

Name	Location	Contact Information	Date Established	Urbanicity (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System classification)	Enrollment (credit and noncredit headcounts)	Total Revenue (2000-01 in millions)
Anne Arundel	Arnold, Md.	http://www.aacc.cc.md.us (410) 647-7100	1961	Urban fringe of large city	52,067	$ 65.5
Asnuntuck	Enfield, Conn.	http://www.acc.commnet.edu (860) 253-3000	1972	Urban fringe of midsize city	2,714 (credit only)	$ 9.5
Bellevue	Bellevue, Wash.	http://www.bcc.ctc.edu (425) 564-1000	1966	Midsize city	36,320	$ 61.8
Black Hawk	Moline, Ill.	http://www.bhc.edu (309) 796-5000	1961	Midsize city	17,786	$ 31.8
Central Piedmont	Charlotte, N.C.	http://www.cpcc.edu (704) 330-2722	1963	Large city	32,809 (credit only)	$ 74.8
Dallas County District[8]	Dallas, Texas	http://www.dcccd.edu (972) 669-6600	1965	Large city	60,646	$ 92.9
Gaston	Dallas, N.C.	http://www.gaston.cc.nc.us (704) 922-6200	1964	Urban fringe of large city	21,052	$ 22.4
Green River	Auburn, Wash.	http://www.greenriver.edu (253) 924-0180	1964	Urban fringe of large city	10,608 (credit only)	$ 41.2
Holyoke	Holyoke, Mass.	http://www.hcc.mass.edu (413) 538-7000	1946	Midsize city	3,105	$ 37.4
Indian River	Fort Pierce, Fla.	http://www.ircc.cc.fl.us (561) 462-4700	1963	Urban fringe of midsize city	53,489	$ 60.8
Kirkwood	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	http://www.kirkwood.cc.ia.us (319) 398-5588	1966	Midsize city	62,573	$ 52.0
Malcolm X	Chicago, Ill.	http://malcolmx.ccc.edu (312) 850-7000	1911	Large city	28,361	$ 28.1
Montgomery	Montgomery County, Md.	http://www.montgomerycollege.edu (301) 279-5000	1946	Urban fringe of large city	46,418	$ 157.8

Name	Location	Contact Information	Date Established	Urbanicity (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System classification)	Enrollment (credit and noncredit headcounts)	Total Revenue (2000-01 in millions)
Moraine Valley	Palos Hills, Ill.	http://www.morainevalley.edu (708) 974-4300	1967	Urban fringe of large city	16,297	$ 64.6
Mountain Empire	Big Stone Gap, Va.	http://www.me.cc.va.us (272) 523-2400	1970	Small town	7,986	$ 16.9
Northern Virginia	4 counties in Northern Virginia	http://www.nv.cc.va.us (703) 323-3000	1964	Urban fringe of large city	58,557	$ 125.1
Oakton	Des Plaines, Ill.	http://www.oakton.edu (847) 635-1400	1969	Urban fringe of large city	47,500	$ 58.2
Palomar	San Marcos, Calif.	http://www.palomar.edu (760) 744-1150	1946	Urban fringe of large city	28,915	$ 82.6
San Diego District[9]	San Diego, Calif.	http://www.sdccd.net (619) 388-6500	1914	Large city	116,206 (credit only)	$ 212.8
Scott	Bettendorf, Iowa	http://www.eicc.edu/scc (563) 441-4001	1966	Urban fringe of midsize city	36,300	$ 30
Seminole	Sanford, Fla.	http://www.scc-fl.edu (407) 328-4722	1965	Urban fringe of midsize city	40,666	$ 44.5
Shoreline	Shoreline, Wash.	http://www.shore.ctc.edu/shoreline (206) 546-4101	1964	Large city	11,170 (credit only)	$ 42.2
South Piedmont	Polkton, N.C.	http://www.southpiedmont.org (704) 289-8588	1962	Rural	2,596 (credit only)	$ 11.0
Springfield	Springfield, Mass.	http://www.stcc.edu (413) 781-7822	1967	Midsize city	9,573	$ 51
Valencia	Orlando, Fla.	http://valencia.cc.fl.us (407) 299-5000	1967	Urban fringe of large city	55,230	$ 97.2
Walla Walla	Walla Walla, Wash.	http://www.wallawalla.cc (509) 522-2500	1967	Large town	9,233	$ 27.1
York Tech	Rock Hill, S.C.	http://www.yorktech.com (803) 981-7114	1964	Midsize city	18,181	$ 24.2