



Student Participation & Completion Subcommittee Charter

Charge of the Subcommittee

The Student Participation and Completion Subcommittee is charged to develop analysis and options leading to a statewide effort to improve participation, retention and success of underserved populations in postsecondary education throughout Oregon, through initiatives which directly address declining levels of freshman participation and completion to graduation. Target populations include those students with lower than average participation rates, such as the growing Hispanic/Latino population, low-income students, rural students, and other under-represented populations. This charge includes efforts to address Oregonians' aspirations for and understanding of the critical role of higher education in their lives and for the future of Oregon.

Scope of Subcommittee Work

Reduced freshman participation rates, the gaps between attainment levels in urban and rural areas, and the demographic changes in the state suggest the need to identify and remove barriers in order to provide all Oregonians the opportunity to achieve the educational levels needed to compete successfully in the 21st century economy and society. The scope of the Student Participation and Completion Subcommittee's work would be to identify and analyze potential initiatives, programs, and policies that would increase the number of Oregon high school graduates who are entering college (currently a number in decline), and ultimately graduating with a degree or certificate.

While the subcommittee members will advise the subcommittee chair about the best ways to achieve these goals, strategies will likely include:

- increasing the support for existing and new pre-college academic enrichment programs across the state;
- supporting expansion of school-to-college bridge and in-college retention programs;
- sharing best practices;
- identifying barriers to postsecondary attendance for different population segments in order to improve program effectiveness;
- engaging other partners who can support funding and programmatic efforts; and
- building a strong statewide coalition of support and a movement behind the goal of increasing student participation and success in postsecondary education.

In terms of addressing advocacy and support for postsecondary education, most people who have gone to college and left with job-ready skill sets understand the need for strong postsecondary educational options. As a higher percentage of Oregonians attend and graduate from college, a larger, natural group of advocates are created who see the link between college, career, and life options because they have personally experienced it. The subcommittee will identify and develop efforts that work with students, families and communities to help them understand the value of postsecondary education for both individuals and for communities across Oregon, and to identify ways in which barriers to participation and completion – such as costs, academic preparation, and cultural/social issues – can be removed. The focus will be specifically on underserved populations in Oregon.

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Deliverables from the Subcommittee

The analysis and options provided by the Subcommittee will address the explicit connections between current pre-college programs (to identify best practices, research, barriers, evaluation, etc.), and efforts to seek federal, state, and private grants to increase GEAR UP, federal TRIO, ASPIRE, and proven campus-based and nonprofit-based academic enrichment and aspiration-building programs, in order to replicate and/or adapt these programs to cover existing needs statewide. Developing the potential options may involve some type of public engagement effort, to be defined by the subcommittee.

In order to provide the background work that would help inform the deliberations of the Strategic Initiatives Committee by the end of October 2007, the Subcommittee would:

1. Meet on a monthly basis to further develop the scope of work and priorities, and identify options regarding the infrastructure and operating needs of such an effort including: staffing; ability of state and external funders to provide program and operational funding; ability to develop a statewide approach with coordination between current programs, K-12, campus and community-based programs, and campus student services; and determination of appropriate collateral support for programmatic efforts, such as website, hardcopy materials, outreach materials for all audiences (e.g., students, parents, teachers/counselors, administrators, etc.).
2. Convene a statewide symposium on student participation in fall 2007, bringing together the best leaders, programs, best practices, funders, practitioners, students, faculty, researchers, legislators, and state agencies to mark the beginning of a broadened effort in Oregon to increase educational attainment.
3. Complete a scan of current pre-college enrichment programs in Oregon offered through public, private and nonprofit organizations in terms of each program's focus, scope, target population, number of students served, etc.
4. Begin to determine a measurable system of evaluating initiative's success, working with OUS performance staff, practitioners, funders, faculty, and others.
5. Discuss the ongoing organizational structure and support needed to manage the effort and ensure accountability and oversight.
6. Determine the need for and location of focus groups to help determine current perceptions, better understand the interests and needs of Oregonians, and assess which types of approaches and messages might be most effective to increase the participation and success of underserved Oregonians.
7. Discuss the possibility of implementing a comprehensive messaging campaign to kick off participation and outreach initiative, to generate immediate, widespread understanding of the messages.

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Key Questions for the Student Participation and Completion Subcommittee

1. What is the best way to determine who the neediest student target populations are? The subcommittee cannot serve all needs statewide simultaneously, so how should this prioritization be completed?
2. What are the barriers to student participation and completion, especially for underserved and at-risk students? What strategies might work best to remove those barriers? Which strategies are systemic in nature and which are more discrete, focused initiatives or programs?
3. What are some short-term efforts that would have a significant impact and which the subcommittee could complete in 12-18 months which would show a track record of success that could attract additional funding and other types of partnership support?
4. What will the programmatic focus of the subcommittee be? For example, will it be on replicating current programs; forming a funding coalition in order to expand current programs; playing a convening role in the state to disseminate best practices and match funders with programs; providing evaluation support in order to determine the most effective programs for various target populations; some combination of these, etc.
5. How much will the core, start-up funding be for this type of effort, and what are the best methods of building a long-term public-private funding partnership in the state to ensure the longevity of this effort?
6. What are the explicit ways that each OUS institution, each community college, and other entities (foundations, nonprofit/community-based organizations, other government agencies) will be involved/engaged in the effort to increase student participation? How can we help to build on the effective programs they are already operating?
7. How can the subcommittee assess other partners' roles and responsibilities?
8. How much, if any, of the subcommittee's focus should be on the message outreach component, e.g., helping Oregonians understand the value of postsecondary education?
9. What are the most effective ways to bring this effort up to full working capacity quickly and statewide? What are the staffing and infrastructure needs to accomplish this?
10. Should the subcommittee identify levels of strategic approaches to use, depending on the level of funding and participation each would receive, such as the "Gold" strategy, "Silver" strategy, and "Budget" strategy?