

Did you know...?

Today, nearly 700,000 students attend a high school without a school counselor.

(Source: US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, 3/21/14)

<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/new-spotlight-americas-opportunity-gaps>)

Scaling "stackable credentials": Implications for implementation and policy

A report released by the Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP) features Oregon's Career Pathways along with similar efforts in the states of the Kentucky, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Lane Community College & Rogue Community College certificate programs are highlighted as well.

The full report is posted here: <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/2014-03-21-Stackable-Credentials-Paper-FINAL.pdf>

Oregon increases community college access

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber [signed](#) two bills aimed at helping students from low-income families earn a postsecondary degree by targeting first-generation college students. [HB 4116](#) creates a pilot program modeled on an existing initiative at Portland Community College and is funded with \$75,000 in state money. The program will offer scholarships, enhanced advising, and other support for students. [SB 1524](#) tasks the state college commission with examining the prospect of allowing high school graduates in Oregon to take classes at community college for free. Both laws support the state's goal that by 2025, 80 percent of Oregonians will have earned some form of postsecondary credential. (Excerpted from NGA Center's "Front and Center")

Plans for free community college meet resistance in several states

In its interim session this year, the Oregon legislature approved SB 1524 which allows the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to examine the viability of a program allowing students who graduate from high school in state, or who completed grade 12, to attend community college for a specified period without paying tuition and fees. Mississippi and Tennessee are grappling with proposals before their law makers. Read the complete *Chronicle of Higher Education*, attached.

The Mission of the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development is to contribute leadership and resources to increase the skills, knowledge and career opportunities of Oregonians.

<http://www.oregon.gov/CCWD/> 503-947-2401

Past editions of the CCWD Brief are located on the website: <http://www.oregon.gov/CCWD/>

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

March 24, 2014

Plans for Free Community College Meet Resistance in Several States



Eric Clark, director of the Mississippi Board of Community Colleges, said some colleges worried that plans to make them tuition-free would deprive them of other funds.

By Eric Kelderman

The first two months of this year's state legislative sessions were a heady time for advocates of community colleges across the country.

Among this year's batch of higher-education bills were proposals for free community college in Mississippi and Tennessee, and a legislative study of that idea in Oregon. Legislators in California have proposed offering baccalaureate degrees at community colleges, and Colorado has passed such a law this year.

Bills meant to improve working conditions for adjunct faculty members at community colleges, or give them collective-bargaining rights, have been filed in at least three states, including Colorado, Maryland, and Washington.

But several of those measures have run into difficulty as lawmakers grapple with competing demands in a still-tenuous economy. That competition includes other sectors

and groups within higher education, which are seeking to protect their own enrollment and state appropriations.

The proposal for free community college in Mississippi, which easily passed the state House of Representatives, died in a Senate committee. The Tennessee measure, a key part of the governor's legislative agenda, has been delayed as public and private four-year colleges call for changes to protect grants for their students.

Legislation meant to improve working conditions for adjunct faculty members has met even stronger resistance from college administrators, and even other faculty unions, which say the measures are costly and divisive.

In addition, a bill in the Florida Legislature would strip the state Board of Education's authority to approve new baccalaureate programs at community colleges. That power would instead go to the State House.

Bills dealing with baccalaureate degrees at community colleges set up "classic turf wars," said David S. Baime, senior vice president for government relations and research at the American Association of Community Colleges.

When it comes to enhancing enrollment at community colleges, the four-year colleges see a possible infringement on their students or appropriations, he said: "They're understandably concerned about that."

In the Spotlight

The focus on community colleges has grown in recent years, thanks in part to President Obama, who in 2009 challenged two-year colleges to create five million more graduates by 2020. While the \$12-billion the president sought for community colleges never fully materialized, the expectations for more degrees remained.

In the wake of the recent economic downturn, state lawmakers have focused on the job-creating potential of community colleges, a concept bolstered by data from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce showing that a majority of future employment opportunities will require the kind of degrees and training most commonly offered by community colleges.

And because they are generally more affordable and perceived as less liberal than four-year colleges, community colleges have a bipartisan appeal, said Stephen G. Katsinas, director of the Educational Policy Center at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa.

Several cities and counties in Mississippi and Tennessee have already taken up the idea of making community college free for high-school graduates. In Mississippi six of the

state's 15 community colleges use money from the county government or philanthropy to cover the gap between a student's state and federal financial aid and the cost of tuition.

In Tennessee the governor was inspired by the nonprofit *tnAchieves*, founded in 2009, which has raised enough money to send more than 3,000 high-school graduates to community colleges across the state.

Those local successes have not, so far, translated into easy support in the legislatures.

The bill to provide statewide free community college in Mississippi cleared the House of Representatives on a vote of 116 to 3, but state senators killed the measure in a committee.

Eric Clark, director of the Mississippi Board of Community Colleges, said some of his own institutions were concerned that the money to pay for the measure—estimated at \$3-million the first year—would be taken out of their regular appropriation.

Another concern, Mr. Clark said, is that the local dollars now being used to pay for tuition would dry up instead of helping to pay for other college costs, such as books.

In Tennessee, calls to alter the bill for free community college have come from the state's university system and the association of private colleges and universities.

The Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association is asking legislators to eliminate a different grant program for low-income students at community colleges in order to preserve state aid for students at private colleges.

The University of Tennessee system supports the concept, said President Joseph A. DiPietro. The measure could eventually increase university enrollments with students who transfer to finish a baccalaureate degree.

But the system would also like some "safety nets" to protect the appropriations of institutions that might lose enrollment to community colleges, he said.

"If there are really negative consequences . . . we should be able to make adjustments," he said.

The Tennessee Promise bill, as it's called, is still alive and has been passed by a key legislative committee. But fights over scarce resources are likely to continue until state budget conditions improve considerably.

While the idea of free community college has made a splash in the headlines, states need to consider broader solutions to the problems confronting higher education, Mr. Katsinas said, and involve all levels of institutions in the discussion.

That approach also requires lawmakers to set steady sources of revenue for college, he said. "If the tub is leaky, all the boats will eventually be grounded."