

Challenges Facing Our Economy

- U.S. needs to raise degree attainment for 25-to-34-year-olds from 39 percent to 60 percent – currently stand at just under 48 percent. We may not reach 60 percent goal until 2041. (ETS)
- America remains stuck in 13th place globally for degree attainment. (OECD)
- Many of the 6.8 million Americans looking for work do not possess the skills required to do the 6.0 million unfilled jobs. (BLS)
- Over the next decade, we will need 3.4 million workers as Baby Boomers retire — 20% are likely to remain unfilled due to a shortage of workers with the required skills. (BLS)

Challenges Facing Our Economy – cont'd

- The equity gap in higher education persists and is not narrowing.
- On average, white and Asian students earn a college-level credential at a rate about 20 percentage points higher than do Hispanic and African American students. (National Student Clearinghouse)
- 35 million Americans have some college but no credential. (Mark Milliron, Civitas Learning)
- College enrollment will rise by 14 percent through 2022 — about one-third the pace of the past decade. (NCES)
- Number of high school graduates to decline by 2022. (NCES)

Employment and Earnings Matter

- If the recent elections taught us anything, it is that we must redouble aligning what we do to real jobs and prospects for increased earnings and economic mobility.
- Millions of working people feel disconnected from our economy and social and political institutions – they no longer believe that that they and their children will be better off than previous generations.
- Median weekly earnings for associate degree-holders is \$836; bachelor's degree-holders \$1,173. (BLS)
- Unemployment rate for bachelor's degree-holders is 2.5 percent; associate's degree-holder 3.4 percent – no degree is 4 percent.

CC's are Mission Focused When . . .

- We promote educational access and address the equity gap.
- Boosting completion and degree attainment are “job one.”
- Strong connections to workforce needs and reducing skills shortages result.
- Increased global competitiveness and economic sufficiency are paramount design considerations.
- Affordable and demonstrable ROI for students and taxpayers is realized.

Mission Creep when . . .

- Degrees are not workforce/career relevant.
- No demonstrable shortage in local labor market or with employers.
- Duplication of effort, programs or services with neighboring institutions.
- Lack of quality or applicability to professional advancement or occupational mobility.
- Credentials are viewed as simply as a cash cow or strategy for supplanting lost revenue streams.

Degree Relevance is Important

- New focus on access to an affordable degrees, and increasingly, to a technical and/or applied baccalaureate degree being demanded by industry aligns with the new political focus to empower the middle class.
- Strongest predictor of student perceptions of quality and value. (Strada Education Network)
- Caution needed — scale degree programs to real labor market needs and not flood the market or increase duplicity and increased cost that diminishes perceived value and quality.
- Tie to the institution's curricular strength, labor market and community reputation.
- Relevance and completion are completely intertwined and inseparable. (Strada Education Network)