Today is International Translation Day! Celebrated each year on September 30, it coincides with the Feast Day of St. Jerome, patron saint of translators. Two tiny tator tots of translator trivia:

- Who are the most translated authors of fiction? According to Unesco’s Index Translationum, they are Agatha Christie, Jules Verne and William Shakespeare.
- What is the most translated book? The Bible, followed by Pinocchio!

Translating, whether it is between gestures, languages or cultures, is an art and a science. As is the theme of the quickly approaching 2014 Strengthening Student Success Conference, "Crossing Boundaries." In its honor, this month's issue features articles that cross boundaries to reach new forms of collaboration and innovation.

t minus 8 days! We hope to see you at the SSS Conference next week. In the meantime, happy reading!

Sincerely,
The RP Group
Three California Community Colleges' (CCC) projects funded through competitive grants approved in Fall 2013 are moving toward a collective goal of providing sophisticated technology-oriented course access, support and services for student success and completion. The Online Education Initiative (OEI), Education Planning Initiative (EPI) and Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) have established their respective management and stakeholder steering committees and work groups, and are moving forward on work plans outlined in their five-year awards.

**Online Education Initiative (OEI) Milestones**

The OEI is a $57 million grant to build a comprehensive infrastructure to support online instruction and student services across a five-year time span. The focus is on creating access for high quality online education across the state. The initial focus is on high-demand Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) courses. Major milestones, among many reached to date, include:

- Transitioned from an initial launch team to hiring of a permanent executive director and several other executive and program-management positions.
- Selected 24 pilot colleges, from a list of 58 applicants, that have agreed to participate in the first phase, divided into three groups of eight: common course management system launch, student readiness solutions and tutoring solutions.
- Created a professional development roadmap, and approved high-quality course design standards and a process for reviewing courses for the pilot.
- Launched an IdeaScale campaign that provides CCC faculty and staff the opportunity to participate in the development of a Common Course Management System (CCMS) Request for Proposal (RFP).

**Education Planning Initiative (EPI) Milestones**

The EPI is a $32 million grant to deliver a systemwide portal for student services and education planning that customizes information and activities for individual student needs. Also among numerous achievements, the EPI has thus far reached the following major milestones:

- Selected 11 pilot colleges from a list of 13 applicants.
- Created a Student Services Portal Steering Committee and an Educational Planning Tool and Degree Audit System (EPT/DAS) Steering Committee.
- Published the first of several anticipated RFPs, with the current RFP allocated for purchasing up to $3 million of analysis and software development services to support the development of a student services portal and portlets.
Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) Milestones

The CAI is a $32 million grant to create a unique system for test preparation, test delivery, test administration, data collection and course placement guidance. CAI major milestones, among many to date, include:

- Selected 12 pilot colleges from a list of 37 applicants.
- Published a Request for Information (RFI); currently analyzing results for the publication of an RFP.
- Created three subject-matter work groups in English, math and ESL to develop recommendations for the assessment competencies that will inform the RFP.
- Created a fourth work group for Multiple Measures. The RP Group recently presented a white paper, Non-Cognitive Measures in the Assessment of Students' College Readiness and Course Placement, to the Multiple Measures work group. Cal-PASS Plus is able to leverage the CAI Multiple Measures work group with its existing Multiple Measures Assessment Project. The existing Multiple Measures Assessment Project is a joint effort with the RP Group and Cal-PASS Plus, and is an expansion of the STEPs Project.
- Created a new work group for the Test Development Process. This group will provide guidance on alignment to current practice and future requirements as statewide assessment standards are revised.

Resources:

- Initiative news: CCC TechEDge
- Information and regular updates for each initiative:
  - Online Education Initiative (OEI) - http://ccconlineed.org/
  - Education Planning Initiative (EPI) - http://cccedplan.org/
  - Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) - http://cccassess.org/
- Monthly E-newsletter: CCC Technology for Student Success News features monthly updates on all three initiatives. To subscribe, click here.

Research | The Ones That Got Away: Why Completing a College Degree is Not the Only Way to Succeed

Author: Kathy Booth, Senior Research Associate, WestEd

Recent research on the California community college system has revealed that workforce training programs yield some of the highest earnings for community college students, regardless of whether those students complete a degree or college certificate. Still, most conversations about community college success are limited to whether students graduate. An exclusive focus on degree completion misses the diversity of workforce training pathways that colleges have built in career and technical education (CTE), many of which do not lead to a Chancellor’s Office approved credential. By expanding definitions of student success to include employment, earnings gains and third-party credentials, colleges will be able to more accurately measure the outcomes of all their CTE programs.
A new report by WestEd and LearningWorks, The Ones That Got Away: Why Completing a College Degree Is Not the Only Way to Succeed, draws on numerous resources and studies to explore alternative approaches to measuring the success of CTE students and provides examples of conversation and actions that various stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, college leaders, CTE directors and faculty) can take to further explore this subject.

Key issues raised by the report include:

- Many adults are enrolling in community colleges to fill in skills gaps, transition to new careers or keep up-to-date on evolving technologies. As a result, one in ten higher education awards are certificates that can be earned in a year or less. Many adults also elect to take one or two courses to fulfill their training needs and do not earn a credential.
- While these skills-builder students are becoming more common on college campuses, conversations about success still assume that college entails enrolling in a multi-year program of study that culminates in a credential.
- Currently, many colleges and states are making policy decisions that will shape which kinds of programs are offered, whether students will get into courses and how success will be measured. There is a risk that the focus on long-term certificates, degrees and transfer to four-year institutions will de-prioritize short-term training options and skills-builder students, thus exacerbating the skills gap reported by many employers.
- Colleges will be better able to prioritize offerings that are of high value to both students and employers if colleges have access to data on more comprehensive workforce training outcomes—such as whether students secure an industry-recognized credential, improve their employment status or increase their earnings—in addition to conventional completion metrics.

**Resources:**

- Report: The Ones That Got Away: Why Completing a College Degree Is Not the Only Way to Succeed
- Videos:
  - Building More Comprehensive Measures of Workforce Training Success (4-minute video)
  - How Workforce Pathways Shape College Outcomes and Earnings Gains (8-minute video)

- Comprehensive skills-builder resources
Planning | Beyond the Mechanics of Planning: Interview Your College Leadership for the Big Picture

Authors: Julie Slark and Linda Umbdenstock, Founding Board Members, The RP Group

This article is part of an ongoing series on strengthening college planning and features an interview with Dr. Bill Scroggins, President of Mt. San Antonio College.

In the last issue, we authored an article called, "Ten Proven and Provocative Tips for Making Planning Practical," which included some pragmatic suggestions for college planners. In contrast, this article shifts the focus from the specific planning mechanics to the "big picture" questions related to effective planning. To gain guiding insights on the "big picture" from a senior leadership perspective, we interviewed Bill Scroggins, President of Mt. San Antonio College. Years ago, Dr. Scroggins was instrumental in the RP Group's early development and continues to be a strong supporter of the value of research and planning.

As a result of our interview experience and Dr. Scroggins' inspiration, we encourage you to interview leadership and colleagues at your college about their planning expectations. Doing so can help you and your colleagues maintain a focus on the long-term goal(s) when engaging in planning activities.

Some highlights from the interview:

- **The value and the "why" of planning.** Dr. Scroggins values both the efficiencies and value-added effectiveness in operations, as well as the opportunities for transformational change that planning provides. He shares that Mt. SAC's planning processes result in (1) the setting of short-term and long-term college activities, (2) integrating the work of units and committees and (3) allocating resources based on strategic priorities. Ultimately, without a fine-tuned planning process, much of the dedication and effort is un-channeled and ineffective.

- **Transformative Change.** Dr. Scroggins shares that while education views itself as a mechanism that produces knowledge and is proud of its resilience in resisting change, education has not realized its full potential as a change agent. He states that above all, faculty wants students to learn. To that end, the use of research data and the strategic planning process can be a 'discovery' opportunity that serves as a catalyst for transformative change.

- **Connecting planning, research and resource allocation.** Dr. Scroggins advocates that plans are not plans without performance measures. Research should inform expected outcomes and objectives as well as implementation plans, and be used to measure the ability of those plans to achieve strategic outcomes. He supports using research that has been well-analyzed, combining qualitative with quantitative approaches, and for first anticipating the potential meaning of the findings to determine college "readiness" to develop necessary change. Dr. Scroggins reminds us to value and prioritize our precious and rich time, as well as limited discretionary dollars, in advancing the priorities of plans.

If you would like to share your thoughts about this article as well as planning needs that the
Resource:
Here are the interview questions used in our conversation with Dr. Scroggins. Feel free to use them as a starting place to conduct your own interviews:

1. What are your desired outcomes of planning for the college?
2. What do you see as the relationship between the activities and functions of research and planning?
3. What are the differences between colleges that can successfully engage in transformative planning and those that cannot?
4. What are the biggest educational challenges that planning should address and what are the obstacles to dealing with them?
5. Why do colleges so often start over with their planning?
6. Why do you think that data about equity, retention and progress through basic skills sequences never seem to change?

Assessment | Still Drifting After College

Author: Robert Pacheco, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, MiraCosta College and Assessment Chair, The RP Group

In Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses (2011), Arum and Roksa posed two fundamental questions: Do students really learn while in college? And, if so, how much?

Using the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) in a pre-test, post-test design, the team found only modest improvement in important learning areas such as critical thinking, reasoning and writing for over half of a cohort group of students both during the first two years, as well as over the entire period of completing a baccalaureate degree.

The reason? Pretty simple. The authors concluded a general lack of rigor in study and inadequate time spent on academic endeavors reported by students. The study brought both head-nodding affirmation on the state of college learning today as well as critiques on the unreasonable expectation placed on the contribution of a college degree.

Arum and Roksa continue to track the cohort of students--this time on after-graduation economic and civic outcomes. While the authors are quick to point out that it still makes sense for many to attend college, the findings are equally gloomy. In Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates, Arum and Roksa share that students in the cohort are failing to make key transitions after college in:

- citizenship (newspaper readership online or print and political involvement)
- critical thinking needed for job skills (quantitative reasoning and problem solving)

Critiques on the high cost and limited added value of a college education have also been made on other fronts, including from Robert Reich, the former United States Labor Secretary and current UC Berkeley professor, who states that too much emphasis is placed
on college as the principal gateway to the middle class. For many, Secretary Reich argues, college is an ill-formed choice and a tremendous financial drain.

Arum and Roksa still lay the blame at the feet of the academy, arguing that we simply need to ask more of students while they are with us, and more of ourselves. In a Chronicle of Higher Educational article this month, the authors assert that we need to place more institutional responsibility for our own performance in helping students learn what is relevant for their success after graduation. They state that, "As educators, our only chance of avoiding being accountable to external parties is to take greater institutional responsibility for our own performance. Taking seriously the task of improving learning in higher education is not only a responsibility to our students and communities, but is in our own self-interest as professionals."

**Resources:**

- Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses
- Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates