

Engaging the Community through Community Colleges: Structuring Beneficial Engagement



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Abstract

North Carolina State University is leading the outreach of the Raleigh Colleges and Community Collaborative (RCCC) benefitting over 2,000 community college students at Wake Technical Community College. The intended outcomes of the RCCC work are to create a sustainable community partnership to support students to credential completion. The RCCC includes six higher education institutions, the K-12 public education system, multiple nonprofit social service organizations, municipal and county governments, and the business community. The partners are engaged in a collective impact initiative to double the number of Raleigh low income youth achieving a postsecondary credential by 2025. Early evidence highlights the potential for significant policy and institutional change through data sharing among all six higher education partners.

Building Commitment – data driven messaging

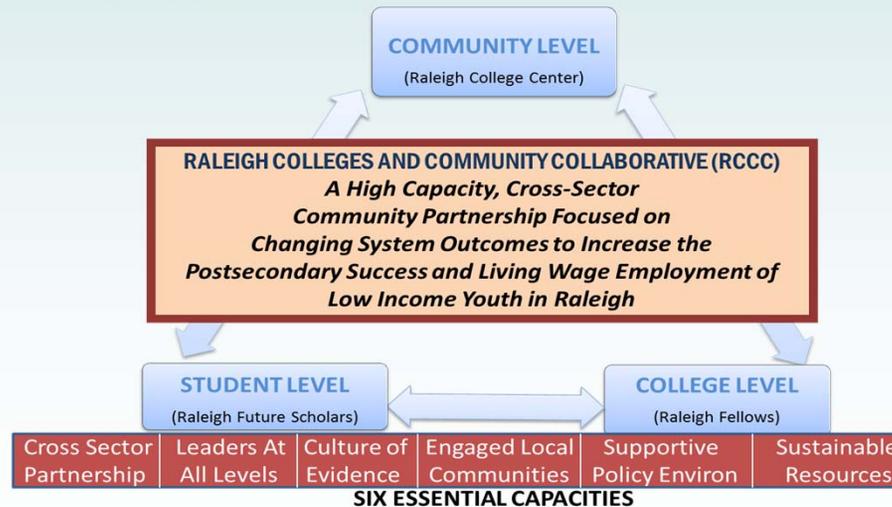
The Leaking Low Income Student Pipeline



Source: Raleigh Colleges and Community Collaborative, Data Management, 2011

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Raleigh Colleges and Community Collaborative Structure



RCCC System Outcomes for Collective Impact

RCCC Implementation Strategy	Collective Impact Outcome
Leadership at all levels – cross sector	Partnership structure
Communication and community engagement	Building commitment
Culture of evidence	Using data from all partners
Multi-level programmatic strategy	Aligning policy and practice

Community college access to the community

- Partnering with community colleges affords the engaged university a rich qualitative and quantitative research environment for multiple disciplines.
- Community colleges serve multiple missions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008) to meet the workforce and educational needs of the community (Dougherty & Bakia, 1999; Kisker, 2006).
- States vary in the mission and scope of community college offerings (Weick, 1976), but the majority of state supported community colleges include the services outlined in the chart below.
- Community colleges are most often under local control and therefore linked to municipal and county human services as a means to increase the human capital of the target area (Berntson, Sverke, & Marklund, 2006; Brennan, Rajani, 2008;).
- The open access mission of community colleges creates opportunity and access to higher education and a pathway to social mobility (Cohen, 2008; Grubb & Lazerson, 2005).
- Positive community college outcomes benefit the common good of society at low cost through both workforce and general education credentialing (Grubb, 2005; Levin, 2001).
- Engaged universities can increase this effect through collective impact initiatives, outreach, engagement, and partnership.
- Understanding the community college comprehensive mission of open access, in conjunction with community college students and their challenges, will assist in broadening the current linkages between engaged universities and the communities served.
- Engaged university and community college partnerships can contribute to increased postsecondary student completion.

American community college scope of offerings

Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Education Diploma Basic Skills (adult literacy, workforce readiness) Immured (prison) populations
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remedial education Two year transfer degrees – general education Two year vocational degrees Stackable credentials – certificates and diplomas
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customized training Industry credentialing

Collective Impact Research Agenda

- Collective impact of shared vision – a qualitative study
- Community college student outcomes upon transfer – mixed methods
- Community transformation through improved educational outcomes – mixed methods longitudinal study
- Constructing a data sharing agreement for collective impact – qualitative study
- Structuring a two year and four year institution of higher education partnership for collective impact – qualitative study
- Community colleges and the engaged university – policy implications for the common good – mixed methods

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