

REORIENTING FOR DEMAND-DRIVEN PATHWAYS

APPROACH:

Design new aligned pathways for current and emerging industry demand. Some structural silos may remain. Pathways from non-credit programs are built into new programs and credential offerings.

TOOLS:

External drivers, rather than internal organization, determine pathways.

TIPS:

Be adaptive, data-infused, and partnership-based.

CASE STUDY: RE-ENVISIONING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AT MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Location/ Type:

Rochester, New York; large, suburban

Student Enrollment by Program:

Non-credit*: 6,000

Credit: 12,000

Student Age by Program:

Non-credit: 80% 25 and older

Credit: 67% 24 or younger

Student Ethnicity by Program:

Non-credit: 28% African American, 6% Asian, 1% Native American, 52% White
Credit: 21% African American, 11% Latino, 5% Asian, 1% Native American, 57% White

Accreditation:

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

From College Navigator & EWDC 2017-19 Impact Report
 (<https://user-tybgwup.cld.bz/EDIWS-Impact-Report-2017-19-ForPrinter/2/>)

* non-credit numbers include all non-credit offerings, not just industry-focused workforce programs

Background

In 2011, Monroe Community College (MCC) created the Economic and Workforce Development Center (EWDC) to reach more students across the region, better prepare students for employment, and create pathways toward degrees. The new division brought together corporate training, academic CTE, and non-credit and credit offerings. ***“The traditional model is not the most efficient way to train workers,”*** noted Todd Oldham, vice president of the division, so the EWDC began building other models.

Structural Alignment

Oldham reoriented the division around strategic grants development, labor market analysis, employer engagement, and flexible non-credit to credit offerings. By building up the capability for grant writing and grants management, they were able to pursue more funding opportunities, which led to greater adaptability. The EWDC took a highly proactive approach to employer engagement. They focused on account management and strong employer

relationships. They developed their own data department through which they track 108 occupations, convene large swaths of industry stakeholders to inform competency and program development, and provide targeted data for student and employer use.

Within the EWDC, non-credit and credit programs are managed separately, though students from both types of programs share courses and faculty may teach both types of courses. Faculty in credit programs help create new non-credit offerings to ensure learning outcomes are the same. The School of Applied Sciences and Technology provides credit-based certificates and applied associate's degrees, into which the certificates stack.

Pathway Development

In considering pathway development, “the challenge is to be highly responsive to industry and still develop a continuum to a degree,” shared Oldham. In one example of this approach, EWDC worked with local precision machining companies to create a three-tiered educational pathway that leads to employment at each level. Level 1 is an agreement with other local training providers to transfer their non-credit machining certificates into credit, which can be applied toward MCC’s precision machining and tooling certificate and degree programs. Level 2 is an MCC accelerated credit-based certificate in precision tooling. This program condenses the traditional one-year, 32-credit certificate program into 22 weeks. It aims to meet market demand quickly and get graduates into the workforce. Level 3 is the MCC degree in precision machining and tooling. This design was based on a high demand for machinists in the Finger Lakes region and recognizing the need for multiple educational institutions’ cooperation to address the local skills gap.

Student Equity

Re-envisioning the division was important from an equity perspective. The EWDC provides a high-touch, case management approach to supporting students. Students indicated the importance of this support, from having the cost of programs covered or having employers pay them while they pursue their education, to knowing that there is a pathway for them to continue their education beyond the initial credential. The EWDC helps students with employment and structures course schedules around students’ busy lives. The EWDC has recently been given authority to oversee career services for the full institution. This means students in credit programs, as well as non-credit programs will see the full array of options to access their career goal that includes both certificates and degrees. The EWDC will bring in its workforce staff, share its career-spanning pathway maps with all students, and infuse career services with its labor market data to better inform all students.

Results and Next Steps

Students in EWDC programs see pathways available and some have indicated plans to follow these pathways. One student in an entry-level certificate program shared that her goal was the higher-level certificate program but that she may aspire to the associate’s degree. Another student in the same program noted that while it was not part of his original plan to continue his education beyond this initial industry-focused certificate, he may consider going further on the pathway.

The EWDC is also in the process of creating an Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS), consisting of all technical courses with general education included. “AOS degrees better align to industry’s desire for a greater level of technical competency,” noted Gary Graziano, Chair of Engineering Technologies. They are also creating a Future of Work Center that will provide flexible space that can be rapidly retooled for new forms of training and industry partners.

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE AT CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Location/Type:

4 campuses in Cleveland, Parma, Highland Hills, and Westlake, Ohio, plus 2 corporate college locations.

Student Enrollment:

Non-credit and credit: 50,000 (workforce programs, both non-credit and credit, consist of 30,000 students)

Accreditation:

Higher Learning Commission

From College Navigator. NCES. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=Cuyahoga+Community+College&all&id=202356#accred>
From About Tri-C. Cuyahoga Community College. <https://www.tri-c.edu/about/index.html>

Tri-C, as this college in Ohio is known, was charged by their president to redesign their workforce offerings to align with key industry sectors. ***“We are trying to change the paradigm around workforce education,”*** shared William Gary, Executive Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development. Tri-C restructured their programs to be clustered into Centers of Excellence. Each center has mapped its non-credit offerings to pathways leading to applied associate’s degrees. Students are advised into a pathway through their “one door” approach. Wrap-around services are embedded in everything they do. Their attunement to credentials of value has resulted in exponential growth of awarding 20,000 certificates in 2019, up from just 4,000 certificates five years earlier. Their six centers include nursing, manufacturing, hospitality management, information technology, public safety, and creative arts. Each center reports jointly to the Executive Vice President of Workforce and the campus president.

LABOR MARKET INTELLIGENCE OFFICE AND PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY AT DALLAS COLLEGE

Location/Type:

7 campuses in Dallas, Texas

Student Enrollment:

Non-credit*: 19,000

Credit: 85,000

Accreditation:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

From Fast Facts, Dallas College. <https://www.dcccd.edu/about/pages/fast-facts.aspx>

* non-credit numbers include all non-credit offerings, not just industry-focused workforce programs

In 2015, Dallas College (formerly known as Dallas County Community College District) aspired to have the best real-time data available in the region to anticipate emerging trends and respond to employer needs. They created the Labor Market Intelligence Office and hired a director. Grant funding allowed them to bring on more staff and begin to acquire data tools that allowed for much more in-depth analysis. This is part of their effort to re-envision their workforce offerings.

With nearly a quarter million people living below the poverty line in the region, Dallas College is focused on workforce and pathways as a way to bring more local residents out of poverty. Using data from the Labor Market Intelligence Office, Dallas College developed a living wage calculator to help individuals see how much they need to earn and what jobs and pathways will provide a living wage. They partner with employers to develop pathways and are creating options to move from credit to non-credit, as “it’s all about acceleration,” shared Roy Bond, Executive Director, Workforce Operations.

They are creating a new center, the Ascend Institute, to serve as a one-stop for employers wanting to work with the district. The plan is to centralize efforts in order to provide better solutions. ***“If we don’t start doing it this way, higher education will become outdated and industry will develop their own solutions,”*** noted Bond.