Assessment of Opportunities and Models for Adults to Complete the Baccalaureate Degree at Virginia Four-Year Institutions

Presentation to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Prepared by:
Whitney Bonham, Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development
Patrick O’Brien, Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development

March 20, 2012
Virginia Education Data and Programs

Important Factors for Encouraging Adult Degree Completion

Recommendations
Virginia Education Data and Programs

- Virginians age 25-64 with at least a Bachelor’s degree --- 1.5 million
- Virginians age 25-64 with no post-secondary degree --- 2.4 million

**Educational Attainment of At Least a Bachelor’s Degree for Population Age 25-64, Neighboring States**

- USA: 29.5%
- VA: 35.8%
- WV: 18.8%
- TN: 24.2%
- NC: 27.6%
- MD: 37.4%
- KY: 21.8%

Educational Attainment of At Least a Bachelor’s Degree for Virginia’s Population Age 25-64, by Age and Gender

**Educational Attainment for Virginia, Population Age 25+, by Race/Ethnicity**

- **White (3,572,411)**: 36.7%
- **Black/African American (930,725)**: 18.0%
- **Hispanic/Latino (276,562)**: 22.1%
- **Asian (251,745)**: 56.2%
- **Other (179,071)**: 23.0%

(%) Educational Attainment to at Least a Bachelor’s Degree, by WIA


Dark Green = Bottom Quartile
Light Green = Top Quartile
Virginia’s “Some College” Population

- Estimated 841,444 Virginians Age 25-64 with “some college”
- 70% of the “some college” population is estimated to have one or more years of college credit
- 61,182 individuals age 25-64 enrolled as undergraduates at Virginia’s 4-year institutions

- 57% of adult enrollment are individuals age 25-34 represent

- Liberty University enrolls more adults than any other 4-year institution in Virginia (14,883)

- Old Dominion University leads public 4-year institutions for adult enrollment (4,800)

- Business is the most popular subject of study

Source: IPEDS, Fall 2009.
Findings from interviews with 15 degree completion programs:

- Programs serve regional needs
- Supportive services are key
- Students typically are highly motivated and have clear career goals
- “Life happens to adult students…”

Adult Degree Programs in Virginia
Important Factors for Encouraging Adult Degree Completion

- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Outreach and Marketing
The majority of working-age adult enrollees at Virginia’s 4-year public (57%) and private non-profit (55%) institutions attend as part-time students.

Part-time status may limit accessibility to financial assistance.

West Virginia’s Higher Educational Adult Part-Time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program.

Source: IPEDS
- Incentives to Institutions
- Prior Learning Assessments
- Accelerated Learning/Transferability
- Supportive Services
- Course Flexibility/Delivery
- Alignment to Industry/Workforce Needs

Accessibility
Attention Virginians With Some College Credit!!!
Recommendations

- Designate a state-level position to serve as a central point of contact for institutions that provide adult degree programs.

- Test strategies to tailor degree completion programs to the needs of regional residents and employers:
  - Identify characteristics of residents with ‘some college’ and the implications for supportive/outreach services.
  - Identify regionally significant industry sectors and the employment/training needs of firms in these industries.
  - Determine the adequacy of existing regional programs providing adult degree completion and career development services.
- Standardize procedures for providing credits for ‘prior work experience.’
- Modify financial aid programs to allow eligibility for part-time and non-traditional students.
- Modify coursework requirements to shorten completion time for working-age adults.

Strategies to Promote Affordability
- Ensure that counseling and remedial education programs prepare students for university admissions and academic standards.

- Improve the flexibility and “user-friendliness” of articulation agreements.

- Increase awareness of existing regional facilities that support distance learning.

Strategies to Increase Accessibility
“One-stop” service array in higher education centers and community centers in underserved communities.

Promote the use of the VA Education Wizard by adult workers and non-traditional students.

Identify and engage employers in targeted sectors.

Identify and engage students who have earned college credits, certificates and Associate degrees.

Strategies to Conduct Outreach and Marketing
Questions?