



OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE®

Contract Education Workforce Development
&
Combined Regional Emergency Services Training

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College Brain Trust

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Executive Summary

The OCC Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) programs and its Combined Regional Emergency Services Training (CREST) activities and services are an integral part of the college mission. This work is a highly visible and well-regarded role of OCC among its communities and constituencies, particularly the organizations and individuals served by workforce and economic development. Business and industry, labor unions, economic development organizations, the city and county first responder units, and Homeland Security look to the college as a “first source” of education and training for its leaders and employees and as a “trusted partner” in helping them meet their goals, especially their ongoing workforce development needs.

OCC’s EWD and CREST efforts reflect the critical role that community colleges play in meeting America’s needs both for new entrants to the workforce as well as for incumbent worker training and in providing opportunities for individual “up skilling” and career advancement. A key factor in federal, state, and local support for community colleges is the belief that community colleges are committed and effective in their external role, providing flexibility and responsiveness to community workforce needs.

At the same time, community college leaders across the country recognize that the historical promise of community college is imperiled. Our nation’s community colleges face growing challenges across a variety of issues that are impacting how the colleges can respond to rapid changes in the economic, political, social, and technology environments; continue to fulfill the mission of providing affordable access to postsecondary education; provide increased numbers of “market relevant” credentials to students; and thereby contribute to the broad goal of strengthening America’s prosperity and global competitiveness. In April 2012, the American Association of Community Colleges issued the report of its 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges “Reclaiming the American Dream: Community College and the Nation’s Future.” The report called for a radical transformation of community colleges in which students’ educational experiences are “redesigned”; institutional roles are “reinvented”; and the system itself has been “reset” to meet the needs of students, their communities, and the nation. The leadership of OCC and other college stakeholders interviewed during this study expressed a deep concern for the need for the college to commit to immediate changes that can contribute to large-scale transformation. The range and comprehensiveness of the College Brain Trust (CBT) Tasks identified by the college and the timetable established reflect the scale and immediacy involved and mirror the findings and recommendations of the AACC’s Commission.

Based upon the urgency of these national discussions and reports and the consultant's observations and interviews at OCC, the specific recommendations in this report deal with organizational structure, workforce and economic development mission, course repeatability, strategic and business planning, marketing and revenue enhancement, staffing, community services, program approval, budget consistency, and grants and contracts.

Overarching Observations

The following overarching observations and recommendations reflect the broad, major categories under which the more specific findings and recommendations listed in the sections below can be grouped. Detailed and specific recommendations follow the rationale in this report.

OCC should integrate economic and workforce development activities (including CREST) more fully with its academic programs.

There is a growing trend nationally among community colleges to integrate, if not consolidate, the economic and workforce functions with the "academic" structure of the institution. Interviews with leadership of the institutional level, as well as academic and workforce development staff indicate a strong desire to move in this direction. Recent research and CBT team experiences demonstrate strong results from institutional integration with significant improvements in current offerings and new program development to better serve students and industry at all levels. Economic and workforce development is a broad, integrative area of work. Beyond services provided by the current EWD structure, it can be thought of as including the college's occupational/technical and professional credit programs offered under the aegis of the academic administration. A common definition of a comprehensive community college describes a "3-legged stool" consisting of workforce education and training (both non-credit and credit); transfer education; and developmental or remedial education. The workforce leg must be strong and woven together well with the work in the other two legs of the stool.

The role of workforce and economic development activities does not appear to be clearly understood across the college or within the Board of Trustees, either in terms of their scope and mission or their integral role in the multi-mission nature of the college. Rather, it appears this work has been largely "siloes off" by the Board and faculty/staff. The potentially close connection between the workforce and economic development activities of the college and the "traditional" credit programmatic offerings of the institution has typically not been sufficiently addressed to maximize how the workforce training functions and activities can benefit all programs of the college, in particular the occupational/technical/professional programs, as well as general education courses.

Questions about workforce program “profitability” reflect a lack of shared agreement across the college community about the centrality of this work to OCC’s mission.

It is apparent that the full college community is not aligned about the role and financial assumptions associated with EWD and CREST. Comments made to the consultant indicated that there are widely accepted negative perceptions as to the costs both of the EWD workforce non-credit programs as well as of CREST. For example, this perception was apparent during the Board of Trustees meeting on October 16, 2012. At the meeting, the EWD financial report—prepared by the Vice Chancellor for External Affairs, the previous chief administrative officer for the EWD division—was a point of focus for two Board members who appeared more concerned with an apparent financial deficit than they were with the overall operations of the unit. They did not ask for any clarification as to the report itself, which did seem to anticipate the focus on the financial impact of EWD (i.e., the large percentage of time spent on non-income-producing activities). It appeared that their questions reflected a lack of interest or understanding for the larger role of the mission and scope of EWD. One Board member did defend the college’s work and service to the business community as it related to the financial funding provided to the institution to support the college’s service to business and industry. This argument had also been a part of the report’s rationale, pointing out the business and industry property taxes paid to OCC.

In addition to the lack of any detailed breakdown of what functions and costs were supported by EWD, the exchange indicated a major communications problem about the role of EWD and its role in the college. Typically, it is faculty, not Boards, who raise issues with what they perceive as “money losing” functions that take away resources and money from the academic departments.

Another aspect of this incident was that, according to the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, he had not received a copy of the report in advance of the Board meeting. As a result, when asked what the financial deficit for this year was, he responded that he could only cite last year’s numbers that showed an approximately \$1 million deficit. (After the meeting, his office provided budget reports from 2010-2011 indicating EWD had lost \$1,235,952.96, which was labeled “College Subsidy”). This budget, however, did not provide the details of the cost of all operations, including those that that were not considered “income-producing.”

As a result of recommendations to be made by CBT and subsequent decisions by the college, the role of EWD is a mission-critical issue that the college must address with its leadership team and faculty and staff. The college community must have a clear and unambiguous understanding of the centrality of this work to OCC’s performance results, credibility with

county employers, and sustained financial and policy support within the region, at the state level, and even nationally.

Clearly, given new organizational structures, the college will require detailed financial reports, strong ROI evaluations, and strong performance metrics that provide a comprehensive picture of costs, revenue (where applicable), function, and mission.

Comprehensive strategic planning for workforce functions hasn't occurred in recent years and is needed, within the larger context of institutional planning.

In all areas reviewed for this report, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive planning over the last year, in particular regarding the levels of operations, staff and resource requirements, and professional staffing necessary to grow the operations, both in terms of revenue and the use of performance metrics to guide decision-making. A comprehensive planning process for EWD and CREST will enable the college to develop the necessary performance measures that ultimately should lead to increasing revenue as well as strengthening the support and public advocacy for the college's contribution to its service area employers. Planning will also assist in identifying efficiencies in all aspects of operation that can enhance revenues (e.g., incorporating "Lean" Service audits through many of the current processes such as electronic purchasing procedures and policies).

EWD appears to have last updated its strategic plan in 2009, but a new plan has not been developed since, in anticipation of structural change within OCC. Detailed performance measures and targets (including programmatic and personnel performance metrics) were not included in the 2009 document. The CBT team reviewed a number of CREST planning documents that generally provided more detail and input of staff and partners, including a 2012 "Peer Emergency Service Training Programs Survey Results" prepared for the CREST Review Committee that provided a benchmarking study of peer emergency service training programs to identify areas where the CREST Review Committee could improve their programs and services. This kind of analysis can be very useful in developing a comprehensive plan and strategy. Similar approaches could be done for EWD and other areas of CREST. A 2005 report of the CREST Strategic Objectives Task Force indicated how a number of recommendations and findings had been addressed. It appears that changes in reporting relationships and where the CREST planning process fits into the larger institutional planning need to be addressed in a more intentional and coherent approach.

I. Task Overview

CBT was asked to examine CREST operations and to evaluate its facilities, staff and organizational structure, scheduling, resources, marketing and sales functions, and strategic planning and goals including performance measures and indicators. CREST finances/budget and capacity for increased revenues were a special focus.

CBT was also asked to review the “contract education workforce development program and make recommendations for economic restructuring.” As in the case of CREST, the following areas were evaluated: facilities; staff and organizational structure; scheduling; resources; marketing and sales functions; and strategic planning and goals including performance measures and indicators. EWD finances/budget and capacity for increased revenues were a special focus.

In conversations with CBT, OCC also asked the consultant to review the possibilities of restructuring the EWD and CREST functions and services with the credit administration and programs.

II. Methodology

Interviews were held with more than 15 administrators, staff, and faculty. Several key administrators were interviewed several times as well with numerous phone calls. The consultant spent four days at the College with calls and research off site, including a review of materials provided by OCC administrators. The CREST facilities and the related classrooms on the Auburn Hill Campus were visited to meet faculty and staff and see resources. In addition to continuing discussions with the senior administrators, one day was spent at OCC’s Michigan Technical Education Center (M-TEC) meeting with contract training staff and career services staff (including Continuing Education, learning disabilities, and career placement services). The consultant also met with several faculty and staff from campuses who were interested in discussing community education.

III. Findings and Observations

General Observations

It is apparent from reviewing both CREST and EWD that significant issues with terminology and definitions exist in the organizational structure, programs, and budgets. The Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, for example, discussed two ways of looking at CREST’s budget: one reflects both the non-credit and credit operations and the second focuses only on the non-credit programming of CREST and the physical site and external services. His view, mirrored by

others interviewed, was that there has never been a clear understanding or direction on CREST's role at OCC: in other words, the degree to which it is regarded as primarily a non-credit program division (the Emergency Services Training Division and the CREST facility); or its role as a broader programmatic "center of excellence" ("Division of Public Services") which provides both non-credit training and the academic credit certificate and degree programs, regionally and statewide. It is apparent from discussions with CREST leadership and others that the professional community now regards all first responder programs as "CREST," which the public views as including the Oakland Police Academy (basic credit academy), Oakland Fire Training Institute (basic and advanced fire and all non-credit EMS), Advanced Police Training, and the Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic programs (which are currently under the "credit side" of the house).

The "branding" of CREST and its role and direction must be resolved by OCC to accomplish specific fiscal objectives and the appropriate organizational model.

The consultant reviewed two budgets for EWD, one presented to the Board by the Vice Chancellor of External Affairs, Sharon Miller and the second by the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, Clarence Brantley. His budget, the operating budget for the Workforce Unit for 2010-2011, showed an approximately 1 million dollar "college subsidy," for EWD. In addition to the operating costs of contract training and continuing education, the EWD budget includes the expenses of other EWD offices and functions in the Career Services unit. One office provides services, largely grants-funded, to support adult students in the Education and Training (JET) welfare program, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs (dislocated worker and other specialized employment and training service for the regional Michigan Works! agency), and adult education. It also offers the Learning Enhancement Assessment Program (LEAP) and the PowerPath model to address learning disabilities and provide intervention strategies to help struggling adult students learn. The office of "Placement Services and Cooperative Education" (and internships) is also in the EWD administrative structure. In addition, the EWD budget includes a testing center (which in Fiscal Year 2011 generated \$28,708.79).

The services of these offices can be enhanced to benefit the campus as a whole and perhaps expanded to serve more students if stronger linkages to the academic program can be developed. The existing services to WIA, welfare, and adult education students can be scaled to help the college deal with the increasing needs of adult students and support the new college and workforce readiness and learning resources initiatives.

The direct linkage of EWD to the current community education courses has been described as "ambiguous." Continuing Education offers personal enrichment courses and can provide support to the campus based courses tied to the academic programs, particularly pottery, culinary, and photography. In addition, from conversations with those college representatives

concerned with Community Education (the Deans for Academic and Student Services, Orchard Ridge Campus and Royal Oak/Southfield Campus), there seemed to be a general consensus regarding the need for college-wide leadership for community education and for the District Office to provide policy and programmatic direction for these programs which impacted on finances and enrollment (see below for more specific details on Community Education).

Overall, there appears to be a vacuum in the oversight of planning and operational goals and metrics, perhaps a result of the turnover in key personnel areas such as the workforce unit and the ongoing re-organizational changes. As stated above, the limited planning documents received were dated.

CREST

General Findings and Observations

The facilities and resources of the CREST program are excellent, likely among the best found at comparable programs in the nation. They support a wide number of realistic scenarios and hands-on training necessary to operate first-rate First Responder and Emergency/Homeland Security programs. The donations of equipment and the overall enrollment data indicate a high degree of support from local fire, police, and emergency organizations (in spite of municipal cutbacks in budgets and personnel resulting from challenging economic conditions both nationally and in Southeast Michigan).

Although there has been some level of work in terms of business and industry use of the facilities (e.g., a bank utilizing the model bank facility for training), this seems to be an area for possible growth. Increasing private sector business usage will require personnel and resource commitments to develop that market to its potential. Several external clients have contracted with CREST, demonstrating the potential for expanding both off-campus and on-campus programs for the private sector. The Director of Emergency Services Training Programs/CREST, Deborah Bayer, has been largely responsible for this area, but any recruitment and marketing expansion must be balanced with her other management responsibilities. Deborah has the unique experience and expertise to provide leadership in this area but does not have the staff required to focus more on marketing/sales.

A number of bridges have been established from non-credit to credit that can be expanded given the appropriate support from the academic representatives of programs directly related to CREST programs. Since much of the non-credit training results in credentials in the form of certificates or licensure awarded by a third party, these metrics should be reflected in CREST's performance indicators and embedded in credit programs if they are currently not. This is part of a growing national trend to recognize non-credit work and to award credit for collegiate level

work, to develop “stackable” credentials, and to increase credential attainment (encouraging colleges to increase work in these areas can be seen in a number of major Foundation grant projects and in U.S. Department of Labor Job Training Grants).

At least two scheduling barriers to expanded programs and services need to be addressed. First, the college should find a way to expand use of classrooms that are considered to be “owned” by credit-side faculty—even when not in use. Second, the college should greatly expand weekend offerings and get past the barrier of extra costs of security for non-traditional hours. For example, many institutions have flexible security staff scheduling requiring weekend rotations. Maximizing the facilities available should be a major focus, and utilization data should be part of the performance metrics.

Recommendations

- **Undertake a thorough market study** of the potential for increasing CREST programs and services, particularly addressing the business and industry market for both on- and off-campus. If this area could be staffed with specific marketing and sales objectives (number of qualified leads, conversions, sales goals, etc.) and measurable goals (revenue and enrollment), the bottom line could be significantly impacted.
- **Based on the results of the market study, add staffing focused directly on the marketing of CREST services and facilities to private sector business and industry.** EWD staff can also play a supplementary or primary role in this area.
- **Develop a 3-5 year strategic plan** for CREST, with ongoing reporting to the administration tied to specific performance metrics and annual targets.
- **Reevaluate existing assets for possible “open enrollment courses” or community education.** For example, the firing range could be made available to the general public for certification for the Michigan Concealed Pistol License or general use. Liability and security costs that were cited as “barriers” in this case can be addressed.
- **Explore development of consortia with other community colleges** in the area that offer similar programs that could expand operations and create efficiencies. Working with the State Police Academy would also create savings that might be marketable if the political environment allows, but continuing collaboration may enhance what progress has been achieved to date.
- **Ensure articulation of non-credit to credit** whenever collegiate level learning can be documented (either through an increased enhancement of prior learning assessment or prior credit agreement upon articulation). Wherever there are industry-recognized certificates, they could be embedded into academic pathways and credentials. The Director of CREST provided

examples of five Emergency Services Certification/Licensure Transfer Equalities that the various state licensing and certifying bodies and one national certifying body recognized for non-credit programs provided by CREST. In August 2012, she submitted to the Registrar a chart showing the crosswalk between these credentials and their OCC course equivalents but there has been no formal recognition action by OCC yet. She did not believe that OCC was doing anything to grant credit based upon assessment of prior learning. If this is so, it represents a lost opportunity for students and the colleges and should be available in all occupational/technical and professional programs that have certifications and licenses which align to academic programs (as well as EWD programming). There is significant literature highlighting “best practices” in this area that could help guide OCC, notably *Forging New Pathways: The Impact of the Breaking through Initiative in Michigan* (Jobs for the Future, November 2012), which highlights the results of six Michigan Community Colleges. See [http://www.mcca.org/uploads/fckeditor//file/BT_ForgingNewPathways_110912\(2\).pdf](http://www.mcca.org/uploads/fckeditor//file/BT_ForgingNewPathways_110912(2).pdf).

- **Review current program approval procedures and provide expedited approval.** The college should consider fast tracking certificate programs and/or allowing courses and programs to be offered for a limited period of time before requiring formal review and approval.
- **Evaluate what programs can be accelerated and what programs lend themselves to modularization and provide more access and flexibility to working adults.** The college can improve usage with all those methods that center on optimizing the learner’s needs through strategies such as compressed programs, moving outside of academic semesters for program duration, and by utilizing facilities more fully, including on weekends and during scheduled college breaks.
- **Increase access to additional facilities or other off campus sites** to expand existing and new programs.
- **Review existing facility rental rates and pricing strategies for all courses and services** and adjust accordingly.

Economic and Workforce Development

General Findings and Observations

At OCC, EWD defines its organizational structure in terms of two broad functions: training and services to **companies** and training and services to **individuals**. The former, organized as the “Business Services” unit, includes contract or corporate/customized training; and the latter, “Career Services,” refers to “open enrollment courses” or “continuing education.” There are also varying levels of non-credit programming provided to individuals for “personal

enrichment” or “community education” as part of the college’s lifelong learning mission. The term “short-term training” is used for both companies and individuals. The number of program categories reflects a national issue as well as a college issue with the taxonomy of non-credit courses and programs (see recommendation below for creating a standardization of definitions and taxonomy for non-credit programming).

In addition to workforce training supported within OCC’s general and programmatic budgeting process, EWD serves companies or individuals in both Business Services and Career Services with funding from the Oakland County Michigan Works! agency (WIA and JET funds), state economic development and job training agencies, and from federal grants such as those from the U.S. Department of Labor. Community colleges also have access to the Michigan New Jobs Training Program (MNJT) which funds community colleges to provide free training for employers that are creating new jobs and/or expanding operations in Michigan (the training for the newly hired workers is paid by capturing the state income tax associated with the new employees' wages). According to staff, OCC’s current use of the MNJT should provide \$1-2 million per year (the staff anticipates approximately \$8 million in total over 5 years). The goal of the college’s contract training for companies is to produce \$1 million dollars per year.

EWD program budgets are expected to cover all direct expenses related to instruction and delivery, and any “gross profit” will be applied to offset other college costs (cost of EWD management, college “charge backs”). EWD’s target profit margin for contract training is 30-40%. The MNJT Program, however, allows only a 15% indirect fee. Last year, there were 20 project budgets supported by EWD in corporate training, continuing education offerings, and the test center. EWD managed 12 grant projects funded by Michigan Works! for support of welfare to work (JET), dislocated workers, apprenticeship, the No Worker Left Behind program, and Economic Development Job Training grants for 8 companies.

The consultant was provided with two reports about EWD’s finances:

- The Fiscal 2011 report indicates \$3.56 million in EWD revenue, with expenses of \$4.80 million—a deficit or “college subsidy” of \$ 1.24 million. Within those expenses, \$468,437 was listed as “Other Chargebacks.”
- The EWD program report used at the October 16, 2012, Board meeting showed total revenue of EWD “revenue generating activities” (including total grant revenue) of \$4.42 million, with the total expense to the college, including “Administrative Overhead Chargeback,” of \$1.24 million.

Although both reports arrive at the same “college subsidy” of \$1.24 million, it appears that the program side and the college fiscal office aren’t using consistent financial reporting and definition of terms.

Most importantly, expectations for revenue from the EWD unit need to be understood at all levels. Several points: all projects have their own project budget and do not run at a deficit. This is also the case with individual training or “open enrollment” courses offered by Continuing Education and Community Education, which are structured not to just “break even” but to contribute to offsetting the costs of operating the EWD function. The “college subsidy” raises two strategic questions:

- Can program budgets achieve the margins required to fully contribute their “fair share” to central college overhead?
- Would EWD’s need for a “college subsidy” be reduced if it increases revenue, and, if so, how much larger would EWD’s volume of contracts and grants need to become?

In the consultant’s experience, the answer to these two questions involves a clear understanding of the role of the college’s “general fund” to support (subsidize) the EWD organizational structure as part of the college’s mission. Having the necessary administrative staff to provide leadership and support to the individual “profit centers” is critical to maximizing revenue from training sales and services programs. The recommendations to the college reflect the need for a thorough market study to determine the market potential for growth.

Staffing in both Business and Career Services has declined because of the loss of a significant number of staff, affecting both continuing education and contract training. Further, the former head of EWD has been promoted to Vice Chancellor of External Affairs (which will provide a continuity of the college’s relationships in the region and close coordination between the outreach and marketing of the EWD to both potential clients and collaborators). A good example of lost capacity is the fact that currently there is no one on staff who can conduct job task analysis, which is essential for contract education short-term courses and training as well as customized training; this has led, according to staff, to the lack of new program development. Another major weakness affecting the number of projects is that currently the only source of leads comes from referral. Although plans have been made for new “client tracking” software, the need for developing performance and success metrics is critical to increasing revenue.

Based on benchmarking other institutions (e.g., Lone Star College System [Houston, Texas]) and systems (e.g., the Kentucky Community & Technical College System for “system” and campus integration of workforce strategic planning and marketing), OCC has the potential to greatly increase its programming and revenue in both EWD and CREST, depending on implementing an organizational structure that will facilitate such development. At the same time, OCC needs to undertake a comprehensive analysis of its internal readiness and the external markets, which will determine how it can best proceed (see recommendations below).

As noted above, EWD also includes several offices and functions, primarily the welfare and WIA programs and placement and career centers. These offices and the Testing Center support the economic and workforce development activities of EWD but, apart from grants primarily from Michigan Works! and WIA funds, are not significant revenue generators and must be staffed and expensed to the general EWD budget (in Fiscal Year 2011, the Testing Center generated \$28,708).

During the site interviews, there seemed to be a strong consensus for more communication and integration of the campuses and programs as a system led by the Chancellor's office (and a number noted major improvement in this area). Many commented that the two EWD functions (career services and business services) are sometimes on "different islands" or "siloes." It was also noted by CREST staff that EWD staffs don't interface and "sell" CREST programs and services and collaborate as much as they could. The internal need to "connect the dots"—which is equally important externally—and the importance of strategies and systems that transcend campuses and individual units are critical if OCC is going to be successful in its transformational efforts.

While there has been increasing attention being paid to the issue of creating linkages (and "stackable" credentials) from non-credit to credit, particularly in CREST, the EWD could expand this work to its programming. There are a number of Michigan community colleges (as well as colleges in other states) that have done significant work in the various foundation-funded initiatives such as "Achieving the Dream" (see the November 2012 report, *Autonomy and Innovation: Systemic Change in a Decentralized State*, which highlights the experiences of seven Michigan Community Colleges in the Achieving the Dream Initiative); "Breaking Through" (cited above); "Shifting Gears" (note, in particular, Lake Michigan College) and "Accelerating Opportunity." The Michigan Community College Association appears to have a strong agenda for assisting colleges, especially through their Michigan Center for Student Success initiative. Given strong foundation interest in Michigan considering its economic challenges and need for increasing post-secondary attainment, OCC has the opportunity to pursue grants to support workforce transformation activities—either on its own or in collaboration with others. In particular, the Workforce Intelligence Network (WIN) for Southeast Michigan, of which OCC is one of eight participating community colleges along with seven workforce investment boards, seems to offer a great vehicle through which to develop strategies and leverage assets to meet workforce needs.

One of the frequently cited barriers to expansion of non-credit programming at OCC is the significant faculty antipathy towards non-credit. Non-credit is not highly regarded by some faculty as being of value to the college and its community and perhaps is "taking away" from the traditional programs. (Contractual issues were cited as well, as in some cases the faculty wanted preference in hiring for courses they were interested in.) These are atypical reactions

but also reflective of the lack of understanding of the college's EWD (and CREST) mission and the need for EWD to be more integrated into the college. The bias against career and technical education and "vocational" programming is at play here, reflecting the national debate about "college vs. training" (see the Tom Friedman article http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/18/opinion/sunday/Friedman-You-Got-the-Skills.html?ref=thomasfriedman&_r=0).

EWD Recommendations

- **Integrate OCC's EWD functions with the academic side of the college.** Organizational issues are a major part of the national discussions as to the role of economic and workforce development in the community college. Two factors driving this focus are: 1) the importance of the role that economic and workforce development represents in the college mission; and 2) the need for major transformation of college EWD organizational units in order to meet student success and employer performance expectations. A clear emerging trend nationally is the centralization (and integration) of the functions of these units within the institution into the academic administration. The importance of "mission integration" was one of the "lessons learned" from the Ford Foundation's initiative, "Bridges to Opportunity," (2002-2008) which advocated a "de-siloing" of academic student services from workforce and economic development. The hiring of an Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic and Workforce Development under the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs is a key to the integration of economic and workforce development with the academic programs. The Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs' development of the job description of the Academic Deans to include responsibilities for department advisory board represents an important part of the transition.
- **Develop a comprehensive business development plan.** EWD needs to focus on the key functions of managing marketing, sales, and product and services development, all of which have largely not been integrated into a comprehensive business development plan. For OCC, this includes a fundamental professional development program for EWD (and CREST staff) and developing a sound business plan that systematically targets key industries and sectors and involves them in a close engagement process. "Business engagement" includes: eliciting broad information as to workforce trends, skills gaps, and personnel needs from CEOs, HR Directors, the "end users" of the recruited employees, and incumbent workers; and the optimal use of subject matter experts from business and industry to develop competency level requirements of knowledge, skills, and abilities (including both "soft skills" and specific job tasks) and to develop industry-recognized programs, assessment, and credentials that meet employers' needs. The programs and credentials will provide employees with portability and adaptable/transferrable skills that will allow them to advance in their career pathways and be highly adaptive in the changing technological nature of the workplace.

- **Benchmark best-in-class colleges for EWD services.** As part of developing the business plan, conduct an internal benchmarking and then a benchmarking of several colleges that have made major investments in comprehensive business development initiatives. (In addition to the Lone Star College and the Kentucky CTC Systems, which developed a Sector Workforce Competiveness Strategy, there are a number of others comparable to OCC to choose from, such as Macomb Community College, which integrated workforce and academic administration). These efforts will not only strengthen the EWD unit but also ensure that the credit occupational/ technical programs benefit from the data resulting from this ongoing work and will supplement the work of occupational deans and chairs in their interactions with business and advisory groups. (Please see appendices for resources and best practices in business engagement. We also have materials on internal benchmarking.)
- **Improve OCC's ability to stay current with labor market demand.** In a fast-changing economy, it is challenging but essential to stay on top of emerging trends and needs. One way to do that is by more strategically engaging employers in ensuring curricula and credentials are market-relevant. Traditional business advisory councils are typically not effective vehicles. An integrated joint development model (such as sector/industry partnerships) provides on-going primary data/feedback around skill needs and competencies necessary for curriculum development. The other critical input is to improve OCC's secondary data sources. Although the EWD has access to the standard data and new software to track employers, there are major developments in the area of real time labor market information that will provide more detailed ("granular") information about jobs available and specific skills requirements that can help colleges look at skill gaps and what programs need to be modified or developed. One example among several tools that are now available is Burning Glass, which a number of community colleges are utilizing (an annual subscription is currently available to participating colleges for \$10,000). Burning Glass and many others have on-line service for students as to career navigation support that can help traditional students navigate through the current credential chaos and the available jobs and salary expectations (this is also important for the college placement and career services). It is also becoming increasingly more evident that all colleges will need to report on employment gains as part of their formal reporting. See <http://www.burning-glass.com/>.
- **Determine and use key performance metrics.** The college needs to collect information about key metrics (beyond enrollment, business served and profit/loss) for tracking its performance and ensuring continuous improvement of programs, services, and staff. Best practices exist in Contract Training (see the "best practices" identified by the Learning Resources Network(LERN)). Examples of such benchmarks include: operating margin goal of 60%; cancellation rate of no more than 5%; evaluation surveys of customers of 4.2+ on a scale of 5; source of contracts: repeat-50%, referral 25%, and cold 20%; 20% of programs should be new (one college studied had a 3-year average of 35% of new businesses served); leads should convert to contracts at a ratio of 4:1; and staff should generate 6 to 20 times its salary depending upon the service

region, employer market, and economic conditions. Information about these and other indicators that can be identified should be available to EWD administrators on an ongoing basis and reported to administration to identify needs for timely adjustments.

- **The services available to the EWD Career Services WIA/JET Program and other WIA services to Dislocated Workers and Adult Education and Learning Disabilities should be integrated with academic function where they might be able to “go to scale.”** Given the interest expressed regarding an “incubator” approach to Developmental Education reflecting the national concern for the re-design of Developmental Education in our institutions, this function could be associated with (and possibly combined) into a unit consisting of OCC’s Academic Support Centers and ACCESS (the Accessibility Compliance Center & Education Support Services—disability services) as well as Learning Resources where the services of the LEAP/PowerPath could provide screening and intervention service and become integrated into an overall college and work readiness, working closely with Adult Education, WIA, Michigan Works!, and other community organizations to create a systemic transformation and referral service linked with existing students, low-level learners, and those with disability issues. This could create efficiencies and “go to scale” with concierge services that could provide a new model to benefit all students with “Just-in-Time” intervention and holistic customized learning. A fully developed model tied into faculty development and training could reach all students as well as incorporate best practices from “Breaking Through” and “Achieving the Dream.”
- **Consider re-organizing Placement Services and Cooperative Education (including Internships) as an all-college function.** This office plays a significant role in providing services that should be available to all campuses and students and, given the emerging suite of virtual services available for career navigation (US Dept. of Labor, Kuder Journey, Burning Glass, etc.) could help all students with career exploration. The growing work-based learning programs, from cooperative education and internship to other organized work experiences, provide support to students and employers, and this area needs to work closely with both the EWD unit and the academic divisions. It is also recognized by AACC as a major area that needs addressing. In fact, the AACC 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges identified a “Career Planning Gap” in community colleges, where students have little knowledge of employment need and opportunities and require increased counseling and advising as well as assurance that community college programs are closely aligned with the labor market.
- **Develop consistent terminology for all EWD program and definitions for both tracking and program evaluation.** As pointed out above, the many terms for workforce and continuing education programs at OCC result in both communication and tracking confusion. This is a national issue as well, but Macomb Community College and LaGuardia Community College have done studies of the terminology used in their non-credit programs to propose a taxonomy that may provide some guidance to OCC. There is a strong consensus that we need to track this information at the college, state, and federal level to get a better understanding of its scope

and to promote quality and accountability. In its 2011 study, *Counting the Hidden Assets: First Steps in Assessing the Impact of Community College Noncredit Education Programs*, Macomb, for example, used department codes to differentiate training for individuals and training sponsored by companies and State of Michigan codes to differentiate basic skills training from other types of training. Macomb used hours to measure specific areas: basic skills courses for individuals (8,738 hours); workforce development training sponsored by companies (174,396); workforce development training for individuals (241,853 hours); and personal interest activities (57,273). Community Education or Personnel Enrichment programs should be self-supporting and build strong advocacy for OCC and its campuses in the community. See <http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/gaimellow/pdf/hiddenassest.pdf>.

- **Partner with K-12 Districts and Adult Education to create a community-focused lifelong learning program.** Given cutbacks in other traditional community education providers such as high schools and adult education, OCC can benefit from offering an expanded community-focused lifelong learning program. Partnerships with local school boards and other community organizations to schedule programs in their facilities could be a win-win. Among those interviewed, there seemed to be a strong consensus that this area needs a structure and could be developed throughout the service area and directed from the District Office. Currently, those interviewed see community education as “fuzzy” and more personality driven by the different campuses rather than by any consistent direction or policies. OCC already has a reputation for its ceramics, culinary, photography, and physical education (access to facilities) programs, but there were conflicts with adults enrolling into credit programs multiple times in order to utilize college equipment and facilities. There are general-appeal programs that are related to other programs of the college. A number of college-based community education models exist that could provide benchmarks for the college to develop courses that the community would support. The barriers to be addressed include access to facilities and flexibility to use faculty or other qualified adjunct as determined by the community education director (as opposed to faculty being given the first option to teach in these programs).
- **Establish a clear structure for “Community Education” programming.** There needs to be a centralized focus as opposed to the current decentralization, more flexible hiring policies and procedures, and access to facilities, including weekends (the issue of scheduling, custodian, and security personnel, as in the case of CREST, need to be addressed).
- **Establish consistent policies on course repetition throughout the campuses.** Popular courses such as ceramics, culinary, and photography ought to be separate from credential-seeking students with consistent policies throughout the campuses (to deal with audit and repeat issues). Course repetitions should be appropriately and consistently limited by College policy. Students interested in repeating courses beyond established limits should be enrolled through the Community Education division and be charged appropriately for the cost of direct

instruction. Administration of Community Education should be centralized through the College Academic and Student Services.

- **Conduct a market study and environmental scan.** Determine what scale of community education could be achieved, what staff support and leadership are required, and what specific enrollment and revenue goals need to be established. The operation should be treated as a profit center with its own budget within the overall EWD.

V. Other Observations: Create a Grants and Contract Office

OCC does not have a staffed Grants and Contract Office. Such an office can serve an R & D function for the institution closely linked with the academic, student services, workforce, and college/work readiness functions of OCC. The integration of this office and its role as a coordinator with the other units of the college in the identification and decision to apply for grants is critical to ensuring that new resources become available to supporting the colleges' strategic objectives. This office could be a part of the Vice Chancellor for External Affairs' office given the initiatives in the Southeast Michigan area and the need for building key relationships with foundations and both regional and state workforce and economic development agencies. As noted above, there are major foundation-supported and state initiatives that address the economic issues of Southeast Michigan. In addition, there are a number of federal agencies, including the Departments of Education and Labor, which have funds that are available to support innovation in community colleges. The re-election of President Obama and the focus on the economic recovery both promise to bring renewed focus on education and training as part of job-creation strategies. Given the scale of OCC's "footprint" on the region, a concerted strategy and coordination of current efforts across the colleges (especially directed at critical areas of need) could result in significant returns (the Kentucky Community and Technical College System's organization of these efforts could provide a useful benchmark for OCC to explore this area in detail).

VI. Appendices

(selected research notes for “Employer Engagement”)

<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Giving-Credit.pdf>

Expanding Business Engagement in Credentialing Processes (October, 2012) Working Paper funded by the Surdna Foundation

Preliminary Findings: Key Issues and Observations

The Current State of Play

Credential quality is inconsistent. The current state of inconsistent quality leads to confusion among workers and employers about the value of the credential, providing little assurance that the credential truly represents the attainment of the competencies (and the ability to demonstrate these competencies) that are needed by business and industry. Too many credentials are self-declared as valuable by the organization issuing them, lacking 3rd party or industry validation to ensure their quality and relevance to workers and employers. Right now, there is a wide range of processes for educational curriculum development. Especially troublesome is a lack of common understanding of the components of a quality credentialing process and the lack of standardization for defining key terms, such as what constitutes a “competency” and what level of skills “granularity” is required to develop effective curriculum and learning outcomes. *We strongly believe that there needs to be a national consensus on these essential components of a credentialing process.* To ensure quality assurance and portability, it is clear from this study that a formal structured job task analysis (JTA)¹ is one key component. As one international expert suggests, the real threshold for identifying competencies and developing related credentials must be to be “empirically based” and industry driven, which could include alternate methods for identifying competencies such as workplace observations. Several interviewees and other related research indicates that a national registry of quality credentials should be established. This registry could provide a “carrot” for colleges to invest in the development process to build these quality credentials; serve students as a career navigation guide; and provide industry, students, and educational institutions with information about the quality and market relevancy of credentials.

Tiered/stackable credentialing systems represent a key component of developing strong career pathways. Our research shows that several credentialing efforts – including USDOL, PNCECE, NAM, and CEWD – include tiered systems that assess and credential several tiers of employee skills. These tiers can include academic skills, workplace readiness skills, and foundational industry requirements, in addition to occupational specific competencies. In this tiered model, credentials can be independently attained in any one of these tiered skill areas (i.e., ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) documents foundational skills in applied math, reading for

information, and locating information); and then “stacked” or combined to provide evidence of competency attainment across the various skill areas. This tiered/stackable model allows students/workers to flexibly navigate career pathways as they move in and out of education and training and attain various credentials that document competence in various skill areas.

Competencies, curriculum and credentials must be developed to closely align and integrate with efforts to prepare students/workers in employability skills.

Credentialing systems should include more than the occupational/technical skills needed in key occupations for various industry sectors. In our ever faster changing economic and skills environment where technical skills requirements can change regularly, employers continue to stress the need for workers who can innovate, think critically, identify and solve complex problems, learn and relearn, work effectively on teams, etc. This reflects a global converging demand for a workforce with multiple-skills and cross-functional competencies as appropriate problem solvers in work processes. Workers must be lifelong learners who have learned how to learn and apply knowledge and innovation to new ideas and methods (beyond the expert to adaptive expertise).

More focus is needed to optimize the transparency and portability of credentials.

Workers need to know that the credential they obtain will be valued by employers across their region and the nation, not just in their local area. Likewise, employers need to be confident that a credential from an institution with which they are not familiar signifies the same level of competency in a worker that they expect from credentials and institutions known to them, and that the competencies attained are aligned to their workforce needs. In a policy and political environment in which “national standards” work only in limited circumstances, credentials should be transparent across the country, regardless of the level at which they’re initially created.

- This portability is particularly critical for industry, sector based credentials. U.S. national industry associations (NAM, CEWD) provide an effective mechanism and the industry credibility to make credentials portable across state lines. Additionally, models such as AMTEC and PNCECE provide evidence that voluntary, business driven, multi-state job task analyses and credentialing initiatives can be effectively developed to make credentials market relevant across state and regional lines.
- On the international front, global competitiveness and employability are increasingly promoted by assessment of competencies, up to date industry skill standards, and appropriate learning content and training methods. There is also a growing demand for transparency of sector specific competencies and occupational qualifications to promote national and international mobility. Germany, for example has aligned its National Qualifications Framework as well as its sector-based Qualifications Frameworks with the European Qualification Framework and used the European “Tuning” process to ensure that competencies define detailed learning outcomes. This process includes building curriculum that reflects industry standards and

credentials and maximizes transparency, portability and market value. The European reform has informed Lumina Foundation’s development of its Degree Qualifications Framework and “USA Tuning.”

More recognition by credentialing leaders that deep industry engagement is critical throughout the credential development process. Our research indicates a strong consensus that deep industry engagement is essential throughout the entire life cycle of the credentialing process. We believe that credentials will not (and should not) gain traction and wide use without the meaningful engagement of business and industry. In order for credentials to be meaningful and provide value to both workers and employers – they must be market-relevant-- the competencies and learning outcomes imbedded in the curriculum must be identified by and directly aligned to business needs. *This alignment can only happen with deep business engagement in the credentialing process.*

- Industry associations (German efforts, IREC, NAM, CEWD) and business/education partnerships initially focused on skills standards (AMTEC, PNCECE) have undertaken the majority of the existing industry driven credentialing efforts to date.
- The role of industry sector partnerships in credential development and use is in its infancy and not widespread.

Credentialing efforts in developing competency based industry recognized curriculum have not yet reached the tipping point of being brought to scale. Early adopters like AMTEC and PNCECE (including their strong industry partners) are “true believers” in the effectiveness of well-developed industry standards and their related curricula, assessments and credentials. Although our research indicates that national business associations (i.e., NAM, CEWD) and multi-state partnerships (i.e., AMTEC, IREC, PNCECE) show significant promise in efficiently bringing credentialing efforts to scale, broadly accepted credentialing efforts are not yet a reality. Several significant barriers that impact the ability to take these efforts to scale include: 1) insufficient ROI data to fully engage and inform industry partners; 2) time and resource commitment that is needed to build an effective credential and its related components; 3) lack of reliable and leveraged funding streams to support national, state, and regional credentialing initiatives; and 4) lack of rigorous methodologies utilizing common definitions of industry skill standards and competencies.

There is no comprehensive or widely accepted policy and advocacy framework established at the national, state, regional or institutional level for the expansion and replication of promising credentialing policies and practices. Human capital policy in recent years has honed in on the urgent need to increase substantially the proportion of U.S. workers who attain a post-secondary credential. Research compellingly makes the case that achieving that goal is essential for U.S. economic competitiveness, for businesses to build a skilled and agile workforce, and for individual workers to obtain and keep good jobs. There is increasing recognition that competency-based credentials represent a crucial dimension of the post-secondary attainment picture. When done

well, these degrees, diplomas, certificates, certifications and licenses provide employers and workers alike with more precise information about job needs and worker skills. They better inform hiring and promotion decisions, and provide learners/workers with credible evidence of their skills and knowledge, helping them navigate career pathways and transitions, and providing transparency and portability across industry sectors.

Today, the use of competency-based workforce credentials is episodic, not systemic. But the shift to outcomes based performance measurements from input performance measures (i.e. the seat time-based credit hour) has resulted in a growing interest by key stakeholders in developing an expanded competency-based credentialing framework that would measure learning more precisely and effectively. The current rapid expansion of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) represents the potential for the de-institutionalizing of learning and an unbundling of instruction and content that adds further momentum to the promise of providing alternative learning models and micro-credentialing “systems” (e.g. Digital Badges, QR codes, etc.) for the validation of credentials.

Louis Soares from the Center for American Progressⁱⁱ and Salman Khan, founder of Khan Academy,ⁱⁱⁱ have both recently discussed the tremendous opportunities that the use of innovative technology could provide in making competency based education “the way to a future where education can be high-quality and personalized, yet so affordable that it’s accessible to millions of additional learners.”^{iv} We advocate a far broader adoption of competency-based credentialing in the United States, building upon the foundation of the policies and practices described in this paper, as well as other initiatives including:

- Education-led efforts, such as the American Association of Community Colleges’ 21st Century Commission calling for expansion of the use of competency based credentials; and efforts already underway, including the Kentucky Community and Technical College System’s Learn on Demand online competency-based learning option and similar approaches at other systems, including Western Governors University and the University of Wisconsin;
- Initiatives led by standards-setting organizations, including multiple efforts led by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and their interest in credential validation;
- Research and policy work, including research on the earnings return on certificates done by Georgetown University’s Center on Education & the Workforce and by the Community College Research Center, policy framings and convenings done by CLASP and CSW, the Center for American Progress, the New America Foundation, CAEL, ACT, Jobs for the Future, the Center on Wisconsin Strategies, the National Skills Coalition and others;
- Federal encouragement from several agencies, including the Departments of Education, Energy and Labor, for expanding use of direct assessment in developing competency-based credentials; and the focus on exploring innovative ways and policies to transform

learning and innovation while increasing quality, equity, and productivity as represented by the convening sponsored by the US Department of Education and The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on October 1, 2012.

- State policy experimentation in several states seeking ways to increase credential attainment and incorporating competency-based certificates into their educational attainment strategies, including incorporating certificates into their financial aid and performance systems.

Although many efforts are underway, they occur within the reality that the market for competency-based credentials is not fully formed and functioning. These diverse efforts add up to a big opportunity and the organizations cited above represent the nucleus for a broad based support of a comprehensive effort to develop a new credentialing policy and practice framework. A concerted, sustained effort to align, encourage and support them can result in creation of substantial working markets about skills and jobs that use competency-based credentials as the essential market-making currency and dramatically increase student success and attainment.

ⁱ A Job/Task Analysis (JTA) identifies the core knowledge areas, critical work functions, and/or skills that are common across the representative sampling of current practitioners or job incumbents, often known as subject matter experts (SMEs). The empirical results from the job analysis provide the basis of a valid, reliable, fair and a realistic assessment that reflects the skills, knowledge, and abilities (SKAs) required for competent job performance. [From :Certified Technology Specialist (CTS®) Job Task Analysis Final Report, InfoComm International®, by Professional Testing Inc., 2006]

ⁱⁱ *A Disruptive Look at Competency Based Education: How the Innovative Use of Technology Will Transform the College Experience*; Center for American Progress; Louis Soares, June 2012
www.americanprogress.org/issues/higher-education/report/2012/06/07/11680/a-disruptive-look-at-competency-based-education/

ⁱⁱⁱ *My View: The Future of Credentials*; CNN blog, 10/4/12; Salman Khan, founder of [Khan Academy](http://KhanAcademy.com),
schoolsofthought.blogs.cnn.com/2012/10/04/my-view-the-future-of-credentials

^{iv} *A Disruptive Look at Competency Based Education*, Soares.