Completion - 2010

The College Completion Agenda: 2010
College Board Advocacy & Policy Center
This 228-page report recommends a 10-part action agenda that will raise the percentage of students completing college degrees or postsecondary education credentials. The report notes that progress is being made, particularly in simplifying the college application and admission process, strengthening the alignment of K–12 expectations to college admission standards and improving teacher quality. Other indicators, such as those showing progress in universal preschool and middle and high school counseling, are lagging. A part of the challenge in reaching the goal of 55 percent of young Americans with an associate degree or higher lies in erasing disparities in educational attainment for low-income and underrepresented minority students. By eliminating the severity of disparities between underrepresented minorities and white Americans, it is estimated that more than half the degrees needed to meet the 55 percent goal would be produced.

Easy Come, EZ-GO: A Federal Role in Removing Jurisdictional Impediments to College Education
Center for American Progress
In this thought-provoking report, three researchers at the Institute for Higher Education Policy propose that the federal government seed an "educational zone" experiment aimed at deregulating higher education in 20 large metropolitan areas that sit at the crossroads of multiple states, knocking down barriers that prevent a "regional" approach to higher education.

Degree Completion Beyond Institutional Borders, Responding to the New Reality of Mobile and Nontraditional Learners
Center for American Progress
Researchers from the Center for American Progress and from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning say that the institution-centered emphasis on the traditional credit hour as the basis for acknowledging academic achievement is increasingly misguided, given student mobility. The paper advocates for more acceptance of several alternative methods that some colleges and organizations are using to award credit, from competency-based models to rigorous evaluation and formal recognition of prior learning.

Certificates Count: An Analysis of Sub-Baccalaureate Certificates
Complete College America
Released in December 2010, this report calls for more emphasis and investment to be placed on sub-baccalaureate certificate programs, as a means to help the United States improve its postsecondary education performance and stimulate economic and job growth. The report, Certificates Count: An Analysis of Sub-baccalaureate Certificates, calls for a bold national effort to double the number of long-term certificates produced within the next five years, and then double that number again over the subsequent five years. Academic culture and state policy are more significant determinants of certificate production than workforce demand, says the report. This is alarming considering the massive
differences in certificate programs available across the country. For example, Georgia, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Kansas produce 10 to 15 times as many certificates on a per population basis as do Hawaii, Nevada, Montana, and every state in the Northeast. State-by-state analysis of certificate programs is available.

**Bringing Adults Back to College: Designing and Implementing a Statewide Concierge Model**

**Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education**

A new report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education highlights how states and institutions can help adults returning to higher education navigate the process through the use of "ready adult" or "re-entry" concierges on college campuses. Part of the of the Non-Traditional No More project funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, Bringing Adults Back to College: Designing and Implementing a Statewide Concierge Model, describes the barriers facing ready adults, including financial concerns, the complexity of the enrollment process, and transcript issues. The brief goes on to describe how a Concierge Model developed and implemented by the Nevada System of Higher Education addresses these barriers and serves as a blueprint. Recommendations include conducting "secret shopper" activities at institutions to determine what kind of support is available for returning adults, developing internal communication efforts to ensure everyone at an institution knows about the concierge, tracking and analyzing data that monitors the progress of ready adults, and convening meetings for both concierges and key decision makers at each institution in the state.

**Five Strategies to Help Low-Income Adults and Youth Attain Community College Credentials**

**Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success**

This 2010 strategy brief outlines five strategies to improve credential attainment by adults and youth at community colleges. Streamlined education and training paths, bridge programs, flexible scheduling, program modularization, improved data collection, financial aid, and increased student support services are discussed.