

**Delaware College Access Network
(DECAN)
Meeting Notes for January 21, 2010
Cabinet Room, Townsend Building**

- **Next Meeting: The next meeting of the DECAN Subcommittee was set for Wednesday, March 3, 2010 from 9:30 am – 11:30 am.**

Welcome/Introductions

Dr. Joseph Pika, Chair of DECAN, welcomed committee members and asked for a round of introductions. He then spoke of the P-20 Council's reaffirmation of DECAN's dual goals of increasing the number of Delaware students attending college and post-secondary training programs and of increasing the number of students successfully completing those programs.

Project Updates

Higher Education Subcommittee Report- Dr. Terry Whittaker, Chair of the higher education subcommittee of DECAN, provided a summary of the subcommittee's report and recommendations. The subcommittee's charge was to recommend practices, programs and policies that have the highest potential to increase Delaware students' access to Delaware's two- and four-year institutions of higher education, their rates of enrollment, retention and persistence to degree/certificate completion. The report includes guiding beliefs and definitions for commonly used terms in the field. Dr. Whittaker presented the following recommendations:

Access

- A1. The IHEs will post their admissions and financial aid information on their institutional websites, through links on the DHEC website, and through links on community organization websites.
- A2. The IHEs will expand outreach on college attendance through presentations and other activities involving middle schools and community organizations.
- A3. The IHEs will participate in events such as those sponsored by DASFAA intended to increase student and family understanding of admissions and financial aid processes.
- A4. The IHEs will actively seek to reenroll individuals who have stopped out or dropped out for non-academic reasons and support them in completion of their degrees.

Transition

- T1. *In collaboration with the school districts*, the IHEs will seek ways to strengthen the transition from high school to college through improved communication of expectations and alignment of curricula.
- T2. *In collaboration with the Department of Education and school districts*, the IHEs will explore the feasibility of constructing a system to support career exploration and portfolio development for Delaware students from middle school through college.
- T3. The IHEs will enhance and expand their orientation and freshmen year experience programs.

Retention

- R1. The IHEs will create or enhance early warning systems and intervention processes.

R2. The IHEs will promote partnerships between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to support students' academic success.

R3. The IHEs will use nationally normed survey instrument(s) such as the NSSE, CCSSE, and/or CIRP to identify and address retention-related issues.

R4. The IHEs will identify and implement strategies to increase faculty engagement in student success initiatives.

Information Sharing

I1. The Provosts at the state's IHEs will share annually with each other their best practices in access, transition, and retention. Campus representatives with responsibility for access, transition, and/or retention may be invited to participate. The Provosts may identify and share specific initiatives with other audiences such as high school counselors.

College Access Challenge Grant Update-

Conference: Joe Fitzpatrick and Dr. Rebecca Fox-Lykens provided an update on the status of the CACG Conference. The planning subcommittee members are Dr. Judi Coffield, Dr. Susan Haberstroh, Dennis Rozumalski, Dr. Rebecca Fox-Lykens, Frank Livoy and Joe Fitzpatrick. The goal of the conference is to bring together guidance counselor-led high school teams that include a middle school teacher and financial aid and admissions staff at the institutions of higher education to aid in better preparation and transition from high school to postsecondary. The conference will be held on June 24 at Delaware State University from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The morning will feature Dr. Thomas Bailey, Teachers College at Columbia University, presenting the IES Practice Guide: *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do*. Dr. Bailey is one of the authors of the guide. Breakout sessions specifically designed to address areas of need as identified by both higher education staff and school guidance counselors will be offered in the afternoon. MAEC/MACC will provide a breakout session for Community Based Organizations regarding the toolkit that they are developing. Lunch will be provided.

Toolkit- Dr. Barbara Hicks presented an outline of the toolkit that is being developed by her colleague Elsie Kirton for use in a train-the-trainer model. MAEC will assemble the training package for use by CBOs and districts with parents. The package will have four modules organized around the four key transition points identified by ACT in this publication: Wimberly, G. L. & Noeth, R. J. (2004). Schools involving parents in early postsecondary planning: ACT policy report.

For each of the four transition points, there will be information on how schools, CBOs, and parents can provide support to students aspiring to college. The four transition points are:

- Academic preparation including program and course selection
- Understanding and using assessment information
- Formulating postsecondary plans
- Learning about and obtaining financial aid for college

Research based practices from the IES Practice Guide, "Helping Students Navigate the Path to College," will be included in the training package.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/higher_ed_pg_091509.pdf

Materials should be accessible and useful for a broad audience including low-income communities with little history of college attendance. Many target students will be the first generation to attend college in their families.

Pilot Proposal- Dr. Pika then reviewed the pilot proposal and asked for volunteers to work on drafting a RFP/Application process for parties to express interest in participation and to submit a plan regarding how they would utilize the funds. There was discussion about how to select pilot participants. The subcommittee was charged to propose the details of the process. Subcommittee members who volunteered to do this work are Dr. Pika, Eddie Corbin, Dr. Susan Haberstroh, Debbie Stevens, Dr. Judi Coffield, Joe Fitzpatrick and Barbara Hicks.

Pilot Proposal

The partners represented on the P-20 Council are uniquely positioned to improve the college access and college completion rates of Delaware students. A grant from the National Governors Association's Redesigning High Schools program and the work of the Vision 2015 Network established essential conditions to making Delaware's schools the best in the world. Five steps are key to achieving the college access and completion goals:

- coordinating communications and outreach efforts to audiences,
- designing early awareness activities and support for students and families,
- building actionable networks among community groups to support grassroots outreach to students and parents,
- working with public schools through the Vision 2015 Network and the Department of Education, and
- analyzing and publicizing relevant data elements and findings.

The pilot's focus will be college access. Efforts to improve college completion are also under way through coordinated efforts of the higher education institutions.

After a year of assessment, our group concluded that Delaware needs a unique approach to guide our communication and outreach efforts. In particular, we can only reach all Delaware residents by employing differentiated as well as common messages. Subpopulations need special (high touch) care. The proposed pilots in three districts will design and implement such a differentiated strategy.

We envision a tiered approach (see Figure 1). A broad campaign will reach all audiences. A slightly more intense and focused effort will employ specific strategies and interventions for targeted subpopulations based upon need. Finally, there will be a very customized and hands-on effort with an even smaller subpopulation within the last group. These tiers of intervention will be data based and aimed at students and their families who face barriers to a postsecondary education by virtue of their income, educational preparation or family circumstances. We are committed to increasing the college-going rate of all students, but have a strong commitment to allocating resources where the data indicate the need to be greatest. Delaware has already

designed the mass media campaign Yes YOU Can! (YYC) - designed to motivate students to take charge of their future by preparing now.

The first phase of YYC focused on the students. Delaware created a website that serves as a one-stop shop for students to find the resources necessary for exploring a college and/or career path, and reached out to students through in-school promotions and social networking (MySpace). We currently have over 1,500 MySpace “friends” who are DE students. The Delaware Department of Education is also conducting the 1st Annual “Path to Success” video promotion to re-engage students and help re-launch the upgraded website. The promotion runs until the end of January when the videos will be featured on the YYC website, YouTube and MySpace.

The next phase of the Communication Plan focuses on building and strengthening partnerships with parents, educators and the business community through social networking, local weekly news publications, school newsletters/e-newsletters and email. The first step in communicating with the business community is to gain insight. We created an online survey for business leaders in Delaware. We have collaborated with various organizations to create a database of leaders statewide and will be enlisting them to participate in the survey and to engage them in becoming partners with YYC to help us prepare our students for today’s workforce.

Many states have invested in a mass media blitz about the importance of going to college. While this is one essential element, we plan to supplement this media campaign with actionable networks designed to empower community members to relay the message at the grass roots level. Community based organizations have a long and typically successful record of embedding communications with targeted populations. We propose that approximately \$30,000 from the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) be committed to fund a pilot that will design and deliver training opportunities for Delaware educators, parents and partners so they can effectively communicate the DECAN message to students at a grassroots level. We propose to make subgrants of \$10,000 to each of the three regions that would commit to working on college access at feeder middle school(s) and their corresponding high school. Professional development based upon research based best practices for both the district staff and the community-based organizations will be provided through DECAN partners such as the Regional Education Lab Mid-Atlantic, the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center and others. Funds will be awarded to the participating districts and the community based organizations as outlined in a joint plan they would submit for approval.

Implementing Communication by Tiers

We envision a statewide program that addresses the “college need” of populations throughout the state. This work was based on a report, “Conditions for Children’s Wellbeing,” a project using Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and U.S. Census data. Staff at the DEDOE created a map of Delaware identifying geographic “coldspots” where college-going and college-completion rates are low for Delaware public school students.

Each of Delaware’s 196 census tracts received a composite score that ranged from 43.8 (low) to 114.2 (high). Scores were based on:

- 1) Percent of households with related children – female headed (no husband present)
- 2) Percent of population below 100% of poverty
- 3) Percent of persons 25 and over that are high school dropouts
- 4) Percent of men 16 to 64 that are unemployed or not in the labor force

School district and county boundary information were then layered on the map. Composite scores and cut points determined the communication effort (Tier I, Tier II or Tier III) to be applied to various communities throughout the state. .

Tier I All communities throughout the state will receive this level of communication, a program already well under way. The overall mechanism will be through existing “Yes, you can!” communication channels.

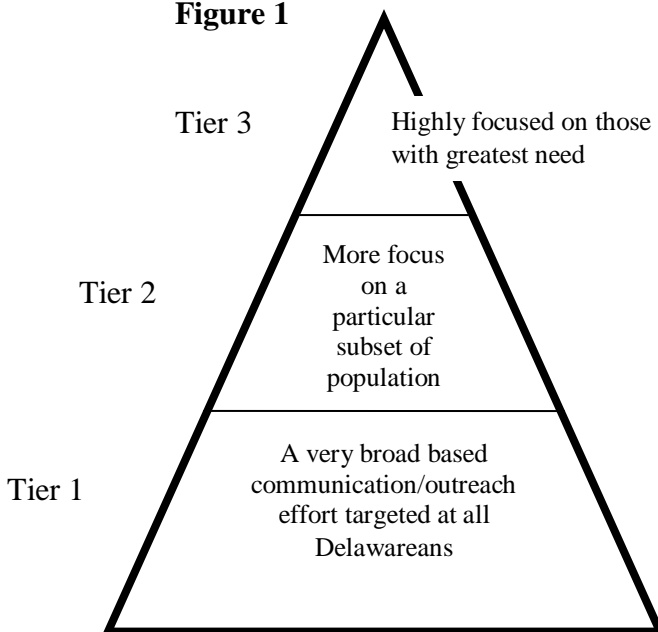
Tier II 25% of the census tracks will additionally receive this enhanced level of communication.

Tier III Finally, 25% of the census tracks will receive, in addition to Tiers I and II, intensive communications and outreach through Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that are specifically designed for those communities.

Percent of Census Tracks Receiving Communication Tiers.



Figure 1



The proposed pilot will involve three pairs of middle/high schools based on the GIS mapping results. These initial partners, whom we have not yet approached, would work on Tier II and III communication and support strategies. The proposed schools and their corresponding high schools are:

- Laurel Middle and High School,
- Central Middle and Dover High School and
- McCollough Middle and Wm. Penn High School.

Students enrolled at these three sites will receive the full range of communication outlined above. To be successful we must identify community-based partners and develop the materials we will be asking schools to share with students and families.

DECAN's focus is fully aligned with the goals of the Governor's Education Plan and the DOE Strategic Plan. Unless Delaware graduates leave high school ready for college or work and are prepared to become productive and successful citizens, Delaware will not prosper. This pilot places a particular priority on closing the college gap with traditionally underserved populations including minorities, low socioeconomic and first generation college-goers.

Communications- Dr. Susan Haberstroh provided an update on the Communications efforts in the CACG plan. The first phase of YYC focused on the students. A website was created that acts as a one-stop shop for students to find all the resources necessary for exploring the college and/or career path, and reached them through in-school promotions and social networking (MySpace). There are currently over 1,500 "friends" who are DE students! Also underway is the 1st Annual "Path to Success" video promotion to re-engage students and help re-launch the upgraded website. The promotion runs until the end of January when the videos will be featured on the YYC website, YouTube and MySpace.

This next phase focuses on building and strengthening partnerships – parents, educators and the business community. Outreach will target parents, community leaders and educators through social networking, local weekly news publications, school newsletters/e-newsletters and email. The new FaceBook page has nearly 80 "friends" and there over 100 followers on Twitter (the friend acceptance process is very selective for safety reasons).

The first step in communicating with the business community is to gain insight. An online survey was developed for Delaware business leaders. Through partnerships with various organizations a database was created of leaders statewide. The database will be used to identify leaders to participate in the survey. There is a need engage these leaders in becoming partners with YYC and to help us prepare our students for today's workforce.

Other:

- Dr. Coffield shared that the Regional Education Lab (REL) Mid-Atlantic will be hosting an event focused on Dropout Prevention at DSU on February 24th. She shared an overview of the Delaware Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) and the REL research that was used to develop the DEWS. Information regarding the event will be sent to all subcommittee members.
- An Issue Brief recently published by the National Governor's Association (NGA) was shared with the subcommittee. The document *Measuring Student Achievement at Postsecondary Institutions* can be found on NGA's website at: http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440ddcbeeb501010a0/?vg_nextoid=77006be804ec4210VgnVCM1000005e00100aRCRD The NGA website states that this issue brief proposes existing measures of student achievement exclude far too many students and track too few student milestones. These exclusions can penalize institutions for serving disadvantaged students by understating these students'

performance. The Issue Brief offers state leaders a formula for measuring system wide student achievement at postsecondary institutions. Although many areas of postsecondary performance must be measured, student learning is core to the mission of the postsecondary system and instructional costs are the single largest expense for public postsecondary institutions. For these reasons, this Issue Brief focuses on measuring student achievement as a crucial indicator of postsecondary performance.

- **Future Meeting Date: The next meeting of the DECAN Subcommittee was set for Wednesday, March 3, 2010 from 9:30 am – 11:30 am.**