NWCCU Academy for Retention, Completion, and Student Success

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) fosters through its accreditation standards, policies, and eligibility standards a process of continuous quality improvement centered around student success and the fulfillment of each member institution's unique mission. The process of revising the NWCCU Standards of Accreditation and Eligibility Requirements has highlighted and expanded a renewed focus on student learning and student achievement – the driving measure of institutional success.

The NWCCU Academy for Retention, Completion, and Student Success (ARCSS) is a mentored experiential learning platform to support institutions and faculty in their efforts to promote student success.

Initially, ARCSS will bring together 20 institutions and their representatives in a two-year program designed to support efforts around retention, completion, and the use of data to create and deploy interventions that can drive positive institutional results, particularly with reducing equity gaps and improving attainment within underrepresented groups.

ARCSS will comprise four phases: *Information Gathering, Planning, Action,* and *Assessment*

In the *Information Gathering Phase,* Academy faculty will create resources from around the United States and other countries on best practices to promote transformative support at the institution by providing expertise and model practices in retention, completion, and student achievement, and ask institutional representatives to provide current and actionable data on ongoing, planned, and diverted activities occurring on their campuses.

In the *Planning Phase,* institutional representatives will be paired with peer institutions that are excelling in student success and work with Academy faculty to establish a plan for creating and executing one or more interventions appropriate to institutional mission and context.

In the *Action Phase,* institutional representatives, with continued mentorship of Academy faculty and NWCCU staff, will help lead activities at their institutions supported and funded by institutional leadership.

In the *Assessment Phase,* Academy faculty will support evaluative analysis and sharing of data to guide institutional decision-making around future efforts.

Onsite and Online Collaboration

Participants in the Retention, Completion, and Student Success Academy will meet for one day preceding the 2019 NWCCU Annual Conference, participate in monthly webinars and facilitated mentored activities, and present their results at the 2020 NWCCU Annual Conference.

Costs and Fees

Because NWCCU believes that the majority of funds for student success should be spent directly on campus activities, the two-year Retention, Completion, and Student Success Academy is offered at a price of $5000 per institution. This amount covers the cost of two onsite hosted meetings, webinars, online classroom instruction, mentor salaries, and faculty salaries.

Institutions may identify up to 10 participants to participate in the onsite and online collaboration, but all representatives are expected to attend all onsite and online events.

Outcomes and Deliverables

Institutions are expected to identify, fund, implement, and assess a program designed to impact retention, completion, or another element of student achievement aligned with the institutional mission and strategic priorities.

A final written report on the results of the practices employed is required and interested institutions will be given the opportunity to present the results at the 2020 NWCCU Annual Conference; in future years, institutions will be availed the opportunity to mentor other institutions.

Director

Mac Powell is Senior Vice President at the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities and directs the NWCCU Retention, Persistence, and Student Success Academy. With over a decade of higher education management experience, Dr. Powell actively contributes to the strategic direction of higher education. He has served as chair of the American Council of Education's Commission on Educational Attainment and Innovation and the Council of Applied Master's Programs in Psychology. He is a former commissioner on the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior Commission, a graduate of the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy, and former editor-in-chief of the Journal of Performance Psychology. Dr. Powell has authored over 50 articles, three books and two book chapters on the subjects of education, clinical psychology, and performance psychology. His article, *Regional and National Accreditation: How History Will Continue to Shape Compliance and Assessment In Higher Education*, was published in the *Journal of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness* and remains an often cited work on the history and future of accreditation. Prior to joining NWCCU, Dr. Powell served as president of three institutions, including John F. Kennedy University, where he led the institution's successful efforts to become a service-learning focused and federally recognized and funded Hispanic Serving Institution.

Faculty and Presenters

Elizabeth Cox Brand is the Executive Director of the Oregon Student Success Center. Originally from Iowa, Elizabeth received her doctorate in Educational Policy and Leadership from Iowa State University in 2007. After graduation, she accepted the position of Assistant Director of the California Community College Collaborative, a community college research and

policy center at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Brand came to Oregon in 2011 as Director of Communications and Research for the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development and moved to the Oregon Community College Association in 2014 to assume the position of Director of Student Success and Assessment. Elizabeth has professional experience in K-12, community colleges, and universities, with a particular emphasis on student services and enrollment management.

Michael Anthony Baston is the 7th president of Rockland Community College. He joined Rockland from LaGuardia Community College, where he served as the Vice President for Student Affairs and Associate Provost. Noted for better integrating and aligning the academic and student affairs functions, Dr. Baston also helped grow LaGuardia's grant funding to support new and creative interventions for student retention and success, with a special focus on diverse and underserved student populations. Dr. Baston's work has been featured in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Atlantic*, *Diverse Education*, *Community College Times*, Education Advisory Board, MSNBC, and *Handbook for Student Affairs in Community Colleges*. An American Association of Community Colleges Pathways coach, Dr. Baston supports college leadership teams in integrating student success initiatives to advance college completion through guided pathways. Dr. Baston was selected as a member of the inaugural class of Aspen Institute Presidential Fellows for Community College Excellence where he explored systemic issues impacting the educational access pipeline and student success. Dr. Baston began his career as a public interest lawyer representing various educational institutions and social justice organizations. His work with academic clients led him to pursue a second career in academia as both a professor of legal studies and business and a student affairs administrator. Dr. Baston holds a BA from Iona College, a JD from Brooklyn Law School, and an EdD from St. John Fisher College. Dr. Baston and his wife, Tasha, live in Rockland County, NY.

Shauna Davis is a Holistic Student Supports Coach at Achieving the Dream, Inc. In this role, Shauna assists colleges in improving the student experience through the intentional development of scalable comprehensive support services. Prior to joining ATD, Shauna was the Executive Director of the Virginia Community College System Student Success Center and Office of Professional Development, providing technical assistance and strategic support for Virginia's Community Colleges, a system of 23 colleges with 40 campus locations. While at the VCCS, Shauna worked collaboratively with colleges to scale guided pathways reforms, understand loss and momentum points, implement technology, support change leadership, and evaluate advising and business processes to improve operations and remove systemic barriers to student success. Shauna's experience in the Virginia Community College System includes serving as the Director of Student Services for the Extended Learning Institute at Northern Virginia Community College, and as Assistant Vice President of Workforce Development for the Community College Workforce Alliance, a partnership of John Tyler and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community Colleges. In addition to her work with Virginia's Community Colleges, Shauna's career also includes professional experience within four-year education, healthcare, and financial services. Her experiences in roles encompassing educational administration, student services, marketing, business development, workforce development, program management, training, and community relations, provide her with a breadth of knowledge, an appreciation for practical and creative solutions, and an ability to translate big picture thinking into actionable strategies. Shauna holds a BA in Broadcasting, Telecommunications, and Mass Media from Temple University, an MS in

Career and Technical Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and an MS in Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Kristi Wellington-Baker currently serves as the Director of the Student Success Center at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. She was previously Dean of Student Success at Walla Walla Community College and the co-winner of the 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. She believes deeply in the community college mission, and has demonstrated success fostering collaboration and innovative student access and success initiatives at WWCC and at multiple community colleges throughout the nation. She began her career fifteen years ago at WWCC as a Retention Specialist supporting first generation, low income students, and has continued to advocate for engagement of the student voice in unpacking the complex issues resulting in systemic barriers to student success. She has led pioneering data driven retention and completion initiatives, co-chaired a unique collaborative in house software application development team and engaged in equity disparity studies to address achievement gaps amongst marginalized populations. In the last ten years, she has been engaged in training and equity consultations related to scaling of data driven practices, successful implementation of software applications, and private foundation resource allocation initiatives in colleges across the nation, most recently through a Project Finish Line project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She leads a creative and talented student services team in their ongoing work to develop innovative solutions to student barriers to success, as well as overseeing more than a million dollars in grant & scholarship resources.

Guest Speaker

Timothy M. Renick is the Senior Vice President for Student Success at Georgia State University. Since 2008, he has directed the student success and enrollment efforts of the university, overseeing among the fastest improving graduation rates in the nation and the elimination of all achievement gaps based on students' race, ethnicity or income level. Dr. Renick has testified on strategies for helping university students succeed before the United States Senate and has twice been invited to speak at the White House. His work has been covered by the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Time, and CNN and cited by President Obama. He was named one of 2016's Most Innovative People in Higher Education by Washington Monthly, was the recipient of the 2015-16 Award for National Leadership in Student Success Innovation, and was awarded the 2018 McGraw Prize in Higher Education. He currently is principal investigator for a $9 million U.S. Department of Education grant to study the impact of predictive-analytics-based advisement on ten-thousand low-income and first-generation students nationally. A summa cum laude graduate of Dartmouth College, Dr. Renick holds his M.A. and Ph.D. in Religion from Princeton University.

Resources

High Impact Practices (Gates and Lumina)
http://www.ccsse.org/center/initiatives/highimpact/index.cfm

Community College Research Center

Library on Persistence, Completion, and Transfer
https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Student-Persistence-Completion-and-Transfer.html

Achieving the Dream
Resource Center and Case Studies
https://www.achievingthedream.org/resources/knowledge-center

US Department of Education
Promising and Practical Strategies to Increase Retention and Success Library
https://www.ed.gov/college-completion/promising-strategies/tags/Retention

Hanover Research Best Practices in Retention Paper
https://www.hanoverresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Best-Practices-in-Retention-at-Community-Colleges.pdf

https://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Strategies-for-Improving-Student-Retention.pdf

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) Best Practices in Student Success Whitepaper
http://www.ihep.org/research/publications

Salesforce and Deltak Webinar on Best Practices in Student Success and Retention
https://www.salesforce.org/events/hesummit-breakout-2-birds-feather-roundtables/improve-success-retention/

Mansfield University - Example of Best Practices and a Retention Action Plan
https://www.mansfield.edu/academic-affairs/upload/Twelve-Best-Practices-for-Student-Engagement-and-Retention-2012.pdf

https://www.mansfield.edu/academic-affairs/upload/Retention-Action-Plan-Rev-3-12-2012.pdf