

ADD.com

## Guest Columnists

### college affordability

Written by  
Darryl G. Greer

Citizens deeply want access to college, and correctly view college as key to future success and prosperity for individuals and the state and nation, yet they are upset about the rising cost of college and their ability to afford it.

On June 27, Stockton College took a major step in helping to find some solutions to the college access/affordability dilemma. Top national, state and local analysts and officials joined Stockton leaders to advise the new Center for Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance (HESIG) on a solid agenda to bring about positive policy change on the issues of college access, affordability, productivity and accountability.

HESIG envisions an outcomes-driven agenda, not just studies, to bring workable solutions to educators and policy makers, backed by citizens' support to achieve desired change. The vision is to provide a base for information, collaboration and testing, to inform change not only in New Jersey, but on the national scene, working closely with many important partners. Stockton has the intellectual and policy resources, including the Hughes Center for Public Policy, to help achieve this goal.

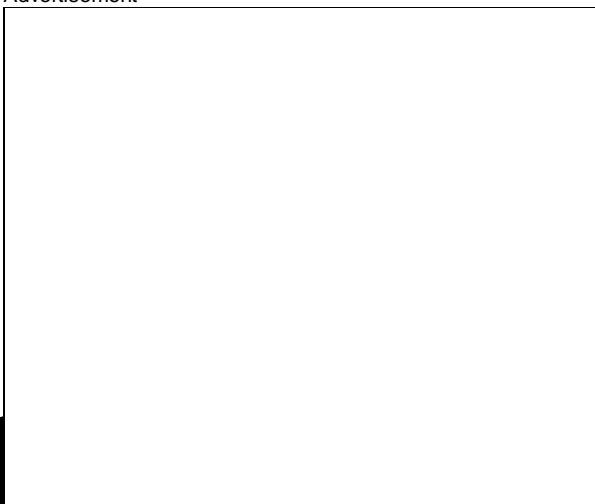
The council focused for a full day on these big issues and offered the following advice to HESIG:

- Recommend and evaluate strategic policy options and priorities for higher education that complement larger regional and state needs;
- Promote public engagement strategies to build public trust (such as scientific polling) to help define the means by which policy makers and citizens can agree on outcomes and means for achieving and measuring success;
- Serve as an "honest broker" that is an objective voice for policy options related to higher education, and recommend strategies free of political or institutional interests.

Furthermore, HESIG was encouraged to:

- Work closely with the New Jersey secretary of Higher Education and the Legislature, as well as all segments of the

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

---

higher education community, schools, business and labor to create a collaborative model for access to college and policy for completion of degrees;

- Identify, disseminate and encourage “best practices” using empirical data leading to effective policy solutions on college affordability and productivity;
- Seek advice from the business and labor communities regarding workforce needs and useful college outcomes for graduates related to civility, participation in the democratic process, and global awareness;
- Create a technical working group to assist in evaluating innovative business models to help finance college, and help families pay for it.

As we work toward finding new means of financing and delivering quality higher education, lots of new ideas abound. How we pay for college, and who pays is the most pressing problem to be resolved, given that public colleges are only partially financed by state taxes, with the majority of funding coming from students and parents.

Some ideas are innovative and make good sense, such as shortening time to earn a degree for students who can; extending the academic year and critical course offerings; reducing total credits needed for graduation; blending more online credits and partnerships with other colleges; and reducing administrative costs, all to increase productivity and to reduce the

steady increase in price.

But the question of helping citizens pay for an affordable college remains, given steady state disinvestment, and not enough state

