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POSTED: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015, 7:02 PM



A Stockton College project that studied the state's public higher education system for more than a year concluded that colleges should add more practical skills.

Recommendations from the Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance project include expanding dual enrollment programs for high school students to earn college credit, offering more internship and on-the-job study programs for current students, and granting credit for nonacademic work experience to potential students.

"The single biggest thing the citizens tell us is give me more:

Along with the academic skills and abilities, more in-mimi Tdq(h)2.4((mi Td0(b)-1.xcP9Ea1mi)7.5D(morm)6.44(ca)-2(k)m)6.4(a

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LISTED BY **TRAVELZOO**
*Some taxes, fees additional

- employers (e.g. teamwork, punctuality, problem solving, business writing, public speaking, and interpersonal communication).
3. Make transfer of credits from two-year to four-year colleges easier. In addition, facilitate transfer of credits from four-year programs back to associate degree programs to support A.A. degree completion.
 4. Promote partnerships with those institutions that conduct prior-learning assessment and provide credit-by-examination.
 5. Offer more students a wider array of internship and on-the-job study programs supporting the connection between classroom learning, real-world expectations, and problem solving.
 6. Update the curriculum to reflect technological advances in specific fields and significant effects on job and career opportunities.
 7. Counsel students to take courses rich with discipline-based content and conceptual frameworks that are directly applicable to a major field of study, and limit, or at least caution students about, the number of elective and general education courses they take.
 8. Require intensive academic and career counseling, and provide financial incentives so that students are not taking excess credits beyond those needed for degree completion.
 9. Restructure student financial aid by type of institution to reduce gaps in funding that force students with financial need to delay or halt their educational progress. Prioritize access and success programs for financially needy students.
 10. Build into the funding of higher education, by type of institution, rewards for students to complete their degree on time, with special emphasis on the academic progress of low income, first-generation and under-represented groups.

Many of the recommendations are being tested or adopted by colleges or the state. That's not surprising, Greer said — the problems of higher education are well-known, and many of the solutions have been debated at length.

"There's not a whole lot new, but I think the newer part is a confirmation," Greer said.

In Gloucester County, the community college has partnered with the technical school next door [to give high school students college credit](#), while nearby Rowan University is part of a state pilot program to offer college credit to adults for [nonacademic work experience](#). And colleges across the board are seeking to expand the number of businesses with which they partner to offer internships and work experience.

"What they need to do, they're going to have to do much more if they're going to retain the public trust. The colleges don't exist just for their own purposes, they're there to serve," Greer said.

The focus on real-world experience and applications does not come at the expense of liberal arts and traditional conceptions of college, Greer said, but reflect an existing need that will only get worse as trends continue.

"That practice orientation, and also one that's connected to civic engagement and stronger communities, is central to the mission of higher education going back to 200 years," he said. "I think we just need to get back in touch with that in the 21st Century."

The project's work from 2013 to 2014 was funded by a grant from the ETS Center for Advocacy and Philanthropy. Greer said the grant did not influence the findings of the project, which is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.



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