

Maximizing Partnerships & Resources that Support Learning

Finding: **College Role in “Green Job“ Growth**

- Across the country, many people are looking to the renewable energy sector hoping that “green-collar jobs” will offer stability in the current economy. Some students are enrolling in community college or apprenticeship programs that offer training in wind turbine mechanics, solar panel installation, fuel-cell engineering or energy efficiency. Government support has rallied excitement for the prospect of a green jobs corps, as President Obama’s stimulus package places nearly \$20 billion into greening the economy. The pronounced goal to double the supply of renewable energy in three years calls for a new class of trained workers in environmental fields. Green jobs training programs will receive \$500 million from the stimulus.

Implications: Numerous new programs could be explored by the MCCCDC colleges to possibly include wind turbine mechanics, solar panel installers, fuel-cell engineers or energy efficiency experts. The federal monies targeted for such initiatives, and Arizona’s strategic location in the sun belt, suggest obvious incentives for exploring options.

Finding: **Colleges Woo Adults Who Have Some Credits but No Degree**

- The Lumina Foundation for Education reports that nationally, about 54 million people in the labor force have no college degree, and of those, 34 million have no college experience at all. Many states are now taking efforts to persuade thousands of adults with some college credits to re-enroll at one of the state’s public four-year institutions.

Implications: The MCCCDC colleges may consider the benefits of reaching out to former students who have not completed a certificate or degree. Challenges with this recruitment approach include: (1) persuading busy adults to return to college (2) convincing them of the value and importance of pursuing a degree, and (3) maximizing accommodations to match their lifestyles.

Finding: **New Nurses Face Hiring Challenges**

- Recent nursing graduates are finding it difficult to obtain employment as hospitals are scaling back on hiring because of the recession. Also influencing this trend is the fact veteran nurses are less likely to retire, while part time nurses are working more hours to add to their income.

Implications: The relevance of this to MCCCDC nursing programs may suggest a need for increased partnerships and placement assistance.

Finding: **Arizona Unemployment Rate Hits 5.9 Percent**

- Arizona’s unemployment rate has reached its highest level since July 2003 and is increasing faster than the national unemployment rate. Losses continue to be felt in construction and retail, while jobs continue to increase in education and healthcare.

Implications: Historically, MCCCDC college enrollments increase with increasing unemployment. Declining areas can be sources for students looking to retool

and resources need to be allocated to training programs in areas with job growth.

Finding: Surprise School Will Blend Community College and University

- Not quite a community college and not quite a university, a “communiversity” intends to offer the best of both. The “communiversity” is a partnership of three Maricopa Community Colleges and as many as five universities, Rio Salado, Glendale and Phoenix community colleges will join with four-year universities to bring education to students instead of having students travel to their campuses. When students earn an associate degree, they will not have to transfer to a four-year campus hoping that most of their credits will be accepted. Instead, the student will continue on a path that could lead to a master’s degree, even if more than one college is involved.

Implications: The project partnership mentioned involves MCCCDC and university systems. Agreements among multiple education systems may benefit students and communities by offering viable alternatives to earning a baccalaureate degree without extensive travel.

Finding: Colleges Charging Tuition Based on Majors

The new thinking among university officials in Arizona and elsewhere is that students who enroll in programs that are more expensive to offer should be responsible for the additional costs. The extra charges, which are often called “differential tuition” or “program fees,” can add several hundred dollars to tuition bills. The higher fees are most common at the graduate level, but they have filtered to the undergraduate level in the past two years. At ASU for example, nursing students working toward bachelor’s degrees will likely pay \$750 more a semester, while engineering students may pay \$300 more per semester. College of Design students will likely pay \$300 more per semester. The charges are in addition to the proposed 5% increase in base tuition for all ASU students.

Implications: MCCCDC transfer students may experience higher “differential tuition” increases because most increases are recognized within a student’s junior and senior years. Maintaining a lower overall tuition schedule than four-year institutions, MCCCDC colleges have often witnessed beneficial enrollment changes when universities raise tuition and fees. Such notable enrollment changes may be less influenced by the suggested university tuition and fee increases.

Finding: Community College Enrollments Up, but Institutions Struggle With Costs

- Recent National data indicates the downturn in the economy has coincided with enrollment increases at many community colleges. The hardest-hit institutions appear to be those in states with a diminished manufacturing economy or a burst housing bubble, according to the American Association of Community Colleges. History holds that when the economy declines, college enrollments rise. However, the same downturn in the economy also applies to the funding available for postsecondary institutions.

Implications: The current legislative budgetary concerns are having a powerful influence on MCCCDC funding. Higher education throughout the state are being forced to curtail costs, cut or reduce program offerings, raise tuition, and explore alternative cost cutting measures. Projected fiscal year 2009-10 budget concerns indicate financial tough times, while service demand increases.

Finding: State Fiscal Stabilization Fund

- The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) program is a new one-time appropriation of \$53.6 billion under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)*. Of the amount appropriated, the U.S. Department of Education will award governors approximately \$48.6 billion by formula under the SFSF program in exchange for a commitment to advance

essential education reforms to benefit students from early learning through post-secondary education, including: college- and career- ready standards and high-quality, valid and reliable assessments for all students; development and use of pre-K through post-secondary and career data systems; increasing teacher effectiveness and ensuring an equitable distribution of qualified teachers; and turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Implications: Arizona's share of this fund, dedicated to shoring up each state's education budgets, is estimated at \$860 million over the next two years. The criteria will require the state to "maintain" a budget at the 2006 level in order to obtain the funds. The funding should provide some assistance as the state works through this recession. The fund also includes other funding dedicated to Arizona which could benefit Maricopa.

Finding: Greater Phoenix May be Losing People

- "For the first time in modern history, Phoenix's population could be shrinking. It's an idea that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago, when Phoenix was surging up the list of the nation's most populous cities. Now, a variety of indicators suggest that fewer people are living here than a year ago." Several indicators suggest the tax base will be reduced, thus impacting the state budgets.
 - * Foreclosures have increased and water hook-ups are down which means fewer homes are occupied.
 - * Trash collection sites have decreased meaning less people are buying products and producing waste.
 - * People are spending less money which means sales-tax revenues are decreasing.

Implications: The issue for Maricopa is that whenever the tax revenue is at risk and state budgets are impacted, the Maricopa Community College's budgets are directly impacted. Monetary changes can impact all services to students, including programs, facilities, number of classes offered, etc.

Finding: Campus Computing Goes Green to Save Money

- A conference held at the University of California at San Diego, offered a new generation of technologies that promise to help colleges make their IT departments both more efficient and more sustainable. Colleges affected by the rising costs of powering and cooling their data centers have been targeted, in part, because some costs are difficult to measure and/or poorly understood. Considered approaches included a data center that could direct cool air only when the facility is generating the most heat; and supplying computers directly with local DC power which might save up to 30 percent in electricity costs.

Implications: Options for reducing operational costs, as well as promoting "green" technology, are currently being entertained by a number of MCCC institutions. Sustainability dialogues should occur, not only during these pressing economic times, but persist in continuous efforts impacting wise and effective decision-making.

Finding: Maximum Tuition and Fees Paid Under New GI Bill Program Increase

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently revealed a list of state-by-state tuition and fee caps that help determine the amount of benefits veterans can receive under the new GI Bill. The maximum fees that the new aid could cover improved considerably in several states from initial estimates posted in February. The new GI Bill was designed to allow veterans attendance at any in-state public college at no cost. The state-by-state caps represent the maximum amount a veteran's in-state education could cost, but the caps are also used to determine how much the federal government will help pay for a veteran to attend an out-of-state or private college. The average fees per term reported nationwide almost doubled, to \$6,883 from \$3,645.

Implications: GI Bill recipients should be able to meet the tuition and fee requirements set by the district. Lower tuition costs at MCCCCD colleges may also encourage veterans to consider enrolling and applying the GI Bill.

Finding: Stepping Up to Help Students

- An increasing number of community colleges are stepping up to help financially struggling students weather the recent economic storm. Prominent institutional offerings include reduced tuition to laid-off workers and college leaders forgoing salary increases and bonuses.

Implications: Application of these two cost cutting measures should be considered by MCCCCD college leaders. Results of such actions could hold beneficial implications for many Maricopa district students and administrators.
