Texas's Higher Education Productivity Work

(inferred from revised implementation grant proposal)

(03/25/2010)

CONTEXT

STRENGTHS

1. *Closing the Gaps by 2015* strategic plan has Governor and legislative support
2. College and career readiness standards recently adopted
3. Funding formula advisory committees
4. Recent history of THECB/IHEs collaborating in defining/refining learning objectives
5. Governor supports learning outcomes work and HE efficiency
6. Student learning outcomes task force with UT, TXA&M, TXState systems
7. HE Policy Institute examining learning outcomes
8. All public IHEs participate in TX HE Accountability System
9. Collegiate learning assessment at UT system given to Freshmen and Seniors
10. Gates strategic planning grants, IES longitudinal data system grant, and excellent data system
11. TX HE data system excellent
12. HE incentive funding program enacted in 2007

CHALLENGE/OPPORTUNITY

1. Large # of critical audiences (HE, business/industry, general public, media/editorial boards)
2. Almost 2/3s of undergraduates in TX are freshmen
3. 70% of students start HE at 2-yr college
4. HS students are not prepared for college-level work
5. Rapidly growing, young, poor pop.
6. Patchwork of statutes that may have competing priorities
7. Recent opposition of IHEs to funding based on outcomes
8. Poor transfer rates from CCs
9. Decentralized governance of IHEs in TX

ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

1. Expand Lumina productivity team to include business, legislators, HE
2. Focus groups and interviews regionally to test possible messaging
3. FF advisory committee mtgs leading to Board review/recommendations
4. Conferences, mtgs, seminars including experts and data (Governing Board, THECB coordinating board, legislative aids, key legislators, Gov. office staff)
5. Online newsletter on FF developments
6. 7 regional mtgs for all constituencies with regional data analysis and suggestions of alternative approaches to reducing cost/degree

TUNING

1. Planning:
   - Learn from Lumina Foundation experience in other states
   - Identify program focus
   - Gather existing learning outcomes
   - Create common outcomes database
   - Identify top 5 employers of program graduates
2. Institutional engagement:
   - Tuning seminar with state team leads
   - Invitations to engage in Tuning to employers, deans, faculty
   - Share analysis of existing learning outcomes and begin consensus building on degree-level outcomes
   - Continue tuning: define course-level learning outcomes, include learning objectives in lower division Academic Course Guide Manual, evaluate (fine-tune)

OUTCOMES

Clear message:

- State government must work together to ensure quality education is affordable
- Student centered approach will improve student success/IHE funding

IHEs create ways to retain students

Closing the Gap targets for 2015:

- 210,000 post-secondary degrees awarded
- Semester credit hours to degree reduced in 16 Tuning disciplines

Constituency developed for post-secondary funding base on outcomes

Change funding formula to be outcomes based

Students are better prepared for transfer

Specific recommendations for outcome-based funding

Academic standards across IHEs are consistent

Engagement and retention is improved because students have clear pathways to degrees

Tuning applied to 16 academic disciplines by 2014

Fewer uncompleted courses and lost credits