In October 2011, Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC), through the release of a new wave of higher education grant funding, posed the question: “Have learning science, technology, policy, and organizational processes advanced far enough to enable Associate’s and Bachelor’s degree programs to be delivered at a cost of $5,000 per student per year, without sacrificing quality and while supporting more students towards degree completion?”

The fact that degrees could be offered for less was not in question. We did wonder, however, if lower cost programs could be delivered without sacrificing quality, accessibility, and scalability. Could these alternate models enable substantially higher percentages of students to successfully earn a degree? Could they enhance the actual learning experience such that students graduate with degrees, skill sets, and experiences that are meaningful in the workplace?

To find out, we challenged institutions to design, plan, and launch new “breakthrough” degree programs that lead to high-quality associate’s or bachelor’s degrees at affordable costs, particularly for underserved populations.

Our Hypotheses

The following premises guided NGLC’s grant challenge:

- The future of the nation demands attention to the quality, accessibility, and affordability of higher education. The United States is becoming less competitive internationally in terms of the postsecondary educational attainment of its citizens, particularly for those from traditionally marginalized groups. In 2010, in recognition of the importance of increasing college graduation rates, President Obama set a goal of raising the nation’s college graduation rate to 60 percent over the next decade. It is clear that without fundamental changes in higher education’s learning and cost models, that goal will not be attained. Incremental adjustments will not be sufficient.

- Existing institutions feel “locked” into their current ways of doing things, with little flexibility to make fundamental changes. In “The Iron Triangle,” a 2008 report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education based on interviews with college presidents, the authors identify cost, access, and quality as the three main tensions in higher education and describe the strong linkages that senior leaders see among these factors: any change in one factor inevitably impacts the other two. That is, institutions can lower costs, can deliver education to more students, and can deliver high-quality education, but have not, to date, been able to do all three at the same time. The new models NGLC wanted to catalyze, consequently, were required to
address all three dimensions in a comprehensive, coherent rethinking of postsecondary education’s basic approach.

- **Dramatic learning gains are possible if we can consistently scale the best of what we know about student learning and success.** Institutions have known for decades that personalized, mastery-based learning can improve outcomes; we just have not been able to provide it affordably to every student. Technology-based delivery of instruction, offered either entirely online or blended with in-class delivery, offers the promise of implementing this strategy at scale.

As we launched the Request for Proposals, a few institutions were already beginning to disrupt the higher education model. For instance, Western Governors University had pioneered online competency-based models, and Rio Salado College, dedicated since its inception to accessible education solutions, has offered the majority of its classes online for almost a decade.

Our goal, then, was to find and support the next generation of college programs that could build on the success of these early pioneers. One year later, in October 2012, we announced a full portfolio of grant recipients. The profiles that follow provide a quick overview of the grantees’ plans for breakthrough change in higher education.

**Breakthrough Approaches**

This cohort of NGLC grantees represents a mix of public and private institutions, and for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Some are developing a single degree to meet the needs of their local populations. Others are launching entire divisions focused on personalized learning approaches.

Despite their differences, their similarities suggest a series of attributes that might come to define “breakthrough approaches” to foster personalized learning:

- **Competency-based learning:** Instead of seat time, NGc programs focus on student mastery of key competencies. Individual courses often employ a complex competency map defined, in part, by employers. Once students demonstrate mastery, they move forward to tackle other competencies. Through credit for prior learning and pre-testing, students can demonstrate that mastery on a much faster timetable. Students enrolled in some breakthrough programs pay a low subscription rate and can then proceed as quickly—and cost-efficiently—through as many courses as they can, each year: this rate is $2,500 for six months at Northern Arizona University, for example.

- **Disaggregated faculty roles:** To maximize efficiency, these models rethink the traditional staffing and student support models, tapping subject matter experts to design and evaluate course content but leveraging other instructors to provide ongoing support. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, for example, uses full-time faculty to develop core competencies and tutors to provide course-level support for lower-division coursework. Each student is also assigned a coach who provides ongoing support.

- **Tuition models that reward persistence:** Several of the NGc programs offer flat-rate tuition that keeps costs low for students who advance quickly. By charging a single fee for an unlimited amount of courses—and sometimes including textbooks and fees—students can exhibit greater control over their costs to completion. Some
go even farther. At New Charter University, monthly tuition covers as many courses as a student can complete per 16-week term, plus all required e-books and materials. Anyone can create an account to try classes and experience New Charter’s full open learning platform before they enroll. Learners only pay tuition when they are ready to enroll as students and take classes for course credit.

- **Data to target supports:** At the heart of most NGLC programs are robust online learning environments that provide students with access to faculty, courses, and other tools. Program designers are also using these systems to harvest data about student performance, which, in turn, can be used to predict their eventual success. At Rio Salado College, the RioPACE system gives instructors real-time data about how often students log in to the online platform, how well they engage with the course content based on their navigation through the system, and how quickly they progress. In addition to faculty, everyone else in the system – advisors, instructional help desk staff, and the students themselves – has access to that data. For struggling students, a Guided Evaluation Assessment and Response (GEAR) system provides targeted feedback.

- **Self-paced instruction:** Each of the models puts students’ learning in their own hands. Using online, self-paced modules, students in several of the programs can work through course content at their own pace. For instance, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System’s Direct-2Degree program offers modules year-round without a gap between terms, allowing students to reclaim their time and maximize tuition dollars.

No matter the approach, NGLC has specified ambitious outcomes for each of these new models:

- 50 percent associate’s degree completion rate (or 75 percent bachelor’s degree completion rate) for Pell Grant-eligible students and those from minority groups in 150 percent of standard time
- $5,000-$7500 in average education and related spending per year (with a clear, plausible plan to get to the $5,000 target threshold), and $5,000 or less per year in sticker prices per full-time student (or full-time equivalent)
- 5,000 students (FTE) served by year five after launch

**The Profiles**

The following profiles provide a snapshot of the grantees’ models. Each includes an overview of the key features of their programs, their students support models, and the populations they intend to serve. We – and the grantees – know that the initial designs will change. As their first cohorts of students begin their programs, the practicality of these models is being put to the test. We look forward to sharing what they learn with the wider community.
We’re extending higher education beyond the university. By bringing in employers, we’re trying to close the skills gap and involve the business community in ways they aren’t traditionally engaged.

Kate Kazin, Southern New Hampshire University Innovation Lab

When Southern New Hampshire University’s Innovation Lab sought to redesign the college model, students were at the core.

And not just any students—in particular, they wanted to find a way to reach, support, and empower “un-confident learners”—those who are familiar with educational failures, unsure of their abilities, or balancing the demands of work and family. These students often seek a degree but lack the resources, motivation, or confidence to enroll in a traditional program.

For them, SNHU has created College for America (CfA), a self-paced online program that helps students earn an associate’s degree at a cost of roughly $2,500 per year. The program is designed to support students in their pursuit of a degree by encouraging them to seek mentors in the workplace or the local community and by using and measuring a set of key competencies defined, in part, by employers. The program is defined both by what it offers and what it doesn’t offer. There are no courses, no credit hours, no traditional faculty, and no grades. Instead, students develop an Academic Plan that outlines the key competencies they will master throughout the course of the program. (The program includes 120 key competencies arrayed across a Mastery Triad of Content Knowledge, Foundational Skills, and Personal and Social Skills, aligned with the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile.)

Students show mastery of each competency primarily by completing projects that are scored by expert graders using rubrics.
At the center of CFA’s approach are the Competency Clusters, a set of 120 competencies influenced by both the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile and employer feedback. Competencies are distributed across three domains: Content Knowledge, Foundational Skills, and Personal and Social Skills. With the help of curated e-learning resources, students complete projects designed to demonstrate his or her mastery.

With the help of a coach, each student charts a path through the 120 competencies, accessing curated learning resources that accompany each project. Once a student has satisfactorily completed a project, his or her progress is immediately reflected in a dynamic, online clickable transcript. Evidence is key. The clickable transcript contains all student artifacts along with the rubrics used to score them. The result is a clear picture of a student’s capabilities in terms defined not by course numbers but by skills employers understand. After graduation, those competencies can be mapped to traditional course credits for students who wish to transfer to a four-year institution.

The model hinges on the assumption that students can and will take control of their own learning. To ensure their success, CfA has designed a multilayered student support model. Students can interact with peers using social media tools and virtual networks; a CfA coach helps hold them accountable to their academic plan; and each learner identifies a learning partner from home, the local community, employer cohort, or College for America community.

The university worked with the Business Innovation Factory and ZURB to design a user interface that makes sense from the student’s point of view. The program combines high-touch support with self-determination to build participants’ self-confidence to ensure they stay on track to degree completion.

Intended Outcomes:

- Reduce the cost of tuition to $2,500 per year
- Reduce the cost of delivery below $5,000 per year
- Graduate 5,000 low-income, minority students by 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Institution: http://www.collegeforamerica.org | Contact: Yvonne Simon, y.simon@snhu.edu

PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS: 30%

PRICE TO STUDENTS PER YEAR: $2,500
COST PER FTE PER YEAR: $2,000–$3,500
DELIVERY: 100% ONLINE

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KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

USING LINEAR, COMPETENCY-BASED MODULES TO INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS AND DEGREE AFFORDABILITY

“Through some trial and error we’ve developed something we think is not only important for Kentucky but for the nation, and we are delighted with the prospect of taking it to the next level.”

JAY BOX, KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

Kentucky Community and Technical College System will develop a new online model within the framework of its current online program, Learn on Demand, to create an even more time-efficient and cost-effective model, Direct2Degree. The transformation will have two aspects: streamlining the academic model to speed the rate at which students can progress and reworking the tuition model to ensure the most efficient use of student tuition dollars and financial aid to reward ongoing progress.

The model responds to genuine needs in Kentucky, where high numbers of people live in poverty, for a more educated work force. Only 29% of Kentuckians presently have college degrees, compared to a national average of 38%. Yet 54% of the jobs likely to be created in Kentucky between 2008 and 2018 will require college degrees. Those who successfully complete an associate’s degree in the Direct2Degree program can do so with the assurance that their degree will be accepted for transfer by any public institution in the state of Kentucky.

In transforming Learn on Demand to meet these goals, Kentucky will move from a model in which full-time students in online programs take three or four courses over each 15-week academic term to one in which students take one module at a time, with a goal of mastering the material it includes.

In the new program, each general education course is broken into two to three modules, each of which has defined competencies and pre- and post-module assessments to en-

AT A GLANCE:

Targeted Degree Program:
Associate’s Degree in Arts/Science: General Studies, transferable to all Kentucky public institutions
Organizations: Six Kentucky public two-year institutions
Opening Date: Spring 2014
First-Year Enrollment: 300
Anticipated Students Served in First Five Years: 10,583
Tuition Model: New model to be designed with NCHEMS; a subscription model is under consideration.
Geographies Served: Kentucky, emphasizing rural areas
Targeted Students: Lower-income rural students
Project Partners: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)

HALLMARKS:
Competency-based model
Sequential courses
Modularized courses
Restructured academic calendar removing term breaks
Tuition that rewards progress and early completion
More flexible financial aid
Alternative financial model removing traditional schedule barriers
Student success coaches available 24/7

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Learn on Demand Course Design

Each course is led by a faculty member who directs, challenges, and provides feedback to students.

Individual Modules

Each learn on Demand “course” includes three to five modules. Students can use the pre-assessment to “test out” of material they have already mastered.

Each campus also includes a professional student support staff member who monitors student progress, meets with students via video conference, and intervenes with intensive support.
sure that students understand the content of the module before they go forward. Students work through the models sequentially, completing each in a dramatically shorter period of time and progressing at their own pace, without stopping for term breaks. Faculty assess the progress of individual students using pre-designed instruments and rubrics. At the same time, dedicated success coaches based at the six campuses offering this program provide intensive support for students via videoconferencing and other online communication tools. Since Direct2Degree is offered entirely online, students may participate from anywhere that they are located.

Direct2Degree’s business practices innovations will come in the form of new tuition models that provide motivation for students to progress as quickly as possible by rewarding those who complete early with reductions in tuition and by offering new models for the awarding of financial aid. The specific new model or models to be used will be determined in the course of the project.

Project leaders will work with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to test several different structures by which this reduction in tuition might be achieved, such as a subscription model or flat-rate scenario, constructing a cost analysis model to test different tuition, student aid and college savings scenarios. Programs in other states will also be able to use the analytics model to develop their own new approaches to tuition and financial aid.

In the end, the system hopes the development and study of these scenarios will lead to an increased understanding of the effect of reducing student time to completion on the prices of degrees for students and on the costs for colleges of providing instruction.

**THE DIRECT2DEGREE DIFFERENCE**

### Traditional Academic Schedules

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<th>FALL</th>
<th>SPRING</th>
<th>SUMMER 1</th>
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In a traditional model, students can lose time between terms, up to 76 days lost per “academic” year.

### Direct2Degree

- **CIS 100**
- **ENG 101**
- **ENG 102**
- **MAT 110**
- **MAT 116**
- **BIO 102**

In Direct2Degree, students progress through continuous back-to-back modules to reclaim their time and maximize tuition dollars.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Institution: [http://www.kctcs.edu](http://www.kctcs.edu)  |  Contact: Christina Whitfield, christina.whitfield@kctcs.edu

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Our underlying belief is that a college degree should be affordable and accessible to all who seek it. We should do all that we can to innovate and make college more widely accessible and personalized to meet the needs of today’s students.

EMILY CHIU, NEW CHARTER UNIVERSITY

The belief driving New Charter University is simple: people shouldn’t have to take on debt to afford college.

With that mantra, the online university is hoping to deliver relevant, outcomes-driven learning and college degrees that any learner can afford out of pocket.

To do so, they offer all classes online, eliminating the need for brick-and-mortar classrooms, and hire faculty who focus exclusively on supporting and teaching students based on their individual learning needs. Degrees are centered on outcomes, not credit hours, so students move on as soon as they demonstrate mastery. Tuition is based on a monthly subscription model that includes textbooks.

Although the goal is to increase access, quality and support are also important considerations. Students access all course modules through an online learning environment that includes interactive dashboards driven by performance data. At any moment they—and their faculty advisors—can get a quick snapshot of their standing in a particular course and any areas of concern. The interface includes specific, actionable advice that can be delivered to advisors or students.

The interface also encourages peer-to-peer collaboration and learning through discussion forums and social media tools. The goal is to help students move quickly and through a path personalized to their individual needs, without sacrificing engagement or peer interaction.

Uniquely, the university’s courses and content are freely available on the Internet to any learner, whether or not they are enrolled.

By eliminating the pay wall, New Charter allows prospective students to experience the system while encouraging current students to invite in their peers as mentors, guides, or potential classmates.

With funding from Next Generation Learning Challenges, New Charter will partner with a traditional community college (Santa Rosa Junior College) to study the effectiveness of the New Charter model in both a fully online and a blended learning environment. The partnership will also let New Charter investigate the model’s
impact on a traditional community college’s large adult learner population.

The partnership is, in part, focused on providing free developmental courses (in math, reading, writing, and online learning) to support student readiness for college level work. Also, students who complete an Associate’s degree from Santa Rosa Junior College will be provided scholarships to attend schools operated by University Now, providing a pathway for Santa Rosa students to complete the last two years of their Bachelor’s degree program online.

The research study will compare how resources, strategies, and interventions are used by both the online and blended students and the extent to which they promote student success.

Research Study Outcomes:

- Demonstrate innovative educational technologies that can lead to effective student and faculty engagement
- Demonstrate an educational model that can improve student success among underrepresented populations
- Determine whether a self-paced, competency-based model can improve outcomes for nontraditional learners
- Assess the effectiveness of online and place-based coaching models and their impact on student success in college
- Understand which resources and interventions most effectively move nontraditional learners from a blended learning experience to an online-only model

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Institution URL: http://new.edu/info/ | Contact: Emily Chiu, emily@unow.com

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At Northern Arizona University (NAU), two-thirds of students are traditional undergraduates. They are recent high school graduates. They live on or near the main campus. They attend lectures and engage in small-group discussions with their peers. Another one-third of NAU students earn their degrees in traditional online classes, enrolling in a set number of units each semester.

For an increasing number of Arizonans, however, that traditional model is simply too costly and ineffective. To reach them, the university launched a Personalized Learning program in spring 2013 that uses more than 90 online courses and a flat-rate “subscription” model of tuition to offer bachelor’s degrees that are more accessible, flexible, and efficient for adult and nontraditional learners.

The program started with degrees in small business administration, computer information technology, and liberal arts. Each program provides NAU liberal studies requirements and a language or science option. Each degree program has a clear set of modules and learning outcomes defined by NAU faculty, but the route from start to finish is completely flexible, letting students choose which modules to tackle first. Students can also choose the best approach for their unique learning styles; one student might choose to download and watch a lecture, while another might work through an interactive simulation.

Along the way, mentor faculty work with students to provide feedback, suggest specific resources, or simply provide support if a student is struggling with an academic concept or with balancing their studies with their work.

The program’s emphasis on personalization doesn’t end with the learning plan. Central to NAU’s Personalized Learning model is the belief that students—particularly students with prior workplace experience—
experience—shouldn’t be forced to progress through a program in lockstep with their peers. Because many of the target students bring in previous course credit, it is evaluated and applied when possible and when it contributes to the student’s progress and learning. Faculty mentors also review students’ résumés and other documentation to help students predict where they might progress more quickly and use their experience and prior knowledge to test out of lessons.

The entire program is based on a pre- and post-test model where students have the opportunity to “test out” of a lesson at the outset of the learning module. Pre-tests also ensure that students dive immediately into the areas where they need work rather than reviewing areas where they already show mastery. For advanced students, this translates into cost savings as they move more quickly through courses throughout the years. (NAU’s subscription model means that students can access unlimited courses during their enrollment.)

Ultimately, the goal is to develop a program that’s not merely efficient but also empowering, helping learners take control of how, what, and when they learn best.

**Intended Outcomes:**

- By the fifth year, 75 percent of students will graduate within six years
- Enrollment of 7,500 subscriptions or more by year five
- Financial sustainability within five years

**STUDENT SUPPORT MODEL**

**FACULTY MENTOR:**
Ensures student success by working directly with students on a one-to-one basis; will have content and/or advising experience

**SUBJECT MATTER FACULTY:**
Subject matter experts who tutor students in specific subjects

**LEAD FACULTY:**
Publish and curate course content and lead assessment efforts

**EVALUATORS:**
Provide feedback on student work and help support assessment efforts

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**
Institution: http://www.nau.edu | Contact: Fred Hurst, fred.hurst@nau.edu

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If we are to increase the number of college graduates and supply our communities with an educated workforce, we need new models of education. We must be innovative—we must accelerate completion through our public and private partnerships, we must be cost-efficient and effective in leveraging technology in order to expand access and increase our ability to serve students.

Chris Bustamante, Rio Salado College

Rio Salado College's commitment to student success has been recognized on many occasions. For example, the college was named one of three winners of the 2012 Council for Higher Education Accreditation Award for Outstanding Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes. The college has expanded on that demonstrated commitment, designing and implementing approaches to make the completion of its most transferable degrees, the associate of arts and the associate in general studies, dramatically more attainable by three distinct populations:

- Students in early college programs in area high schools
- Workers whose employers use Rio Salado's educational service partnerships for employee training
- Individuals possessing skills and knowledge obtained outside higher education who are seeking to receive credit for prior learning

As a student from one of these target groups enrolls in a degree program he or she will access a customized online portal called RioCompass. In the portal, she can submit previously earned credits for evaluation, apply credit for prior learning, and select her intended degree to obtain a customized map of the courses needed to complete it.

The portal also provides her with contact information for a personal advisor, a professional who will help her find her way and serve as a degree-completion companion. Once the student begins to take courses online, both she and her advisors are able to use real-time analytics reports and a customized intervention and assessment feedback system to ensure that any problems in learning or in completing course work can receive timely attention.

Further support is also available via a network of peer mentors drawn from the student body.

These peer mentors support the student's transition to college, college life, college resources, and college success.

The new services available for students from the target populations represent steps forward with a re-
Recently implemented early-alert system at Rio Salado, RioPACE (Progress and Course Engagement). RioPACE provides instructors with information about student performance in three critical areas that correlate with student success: login frequency, site engagement, and pace. The system displays alert levels for each student within the instructor’s online course roster (green if all areas appear on track, yellow if there are some warning signs, red if there is a serious issue).

In the new program, Rio Salado is improving the reporting system to allow more key individuals to access the performance data in RioPACE: the student herself, the student’s advisor, and key support staff who work in the instructional help desk. At the same time, faculty and support staff are gaining new capacities to provide enhanced feedback, consistent grading, and an improved learning experience to the student through a Guided Evaluation Assessment and Response (GEAR) system.

The design of GEAR enables instructors to focus efforts on providing this kind of targeted and personalized feedback by integrating additional content and examples that make conceptual linkages and illustrate real-world applications. In this program, GEAR capability is available to the instructors of general education courses included in the degree pathways for students in the target groups.

In addition, students are tracked and monitored through a Guided Intervention and Response (GIvR) system. This system operates similar to GEAR in that targeted and personalized interventions are provided for those students who are “triggered” in the system. These triggers include, for example, frequent calls to the helpdesk, low performance data from RioPACE, and recommendations from advisors and counselors.

Through these new and enhanced learning systems and student support services, students experience a significant shift in the way they engage with content, experts, and each other.

The systems and services, once tested in the degree programs for the targeted populations, may be applied college-wide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Institution: http://www.riosalado.edu | Contact: Shannon McCarty, shannon.mccarty@riosalado.edu

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The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) will launch the “Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program” in spring 2014. This new Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree uses a competency-based model and year-round flat-rate tuition to shorten the path to college completion. The project is a joint venture by THECB, South Texas College, Texas A&M University–Commerce, and the College for All Texans Foundation.

The program was designed with two critical challenges in mind: (1) the rising cost of tuition for students and (2) a growing adult population, particularly Hispanic, that often lacks the right credentials and academic training to thrive in today’s economy.

In the program, students pay a flat, seven-week rate to enroll and can work through as many courses within that time period as their schedules allow. Advancement is based on showing competency in the subject area rather than spending hours in class.

The model is centered on three main principles:

- Students learn better when content is personalized and delivered at their level.
- Students need targeted supports most in the first years and direct faculty instruction in their final years.
- Students need a degree and an experience that will have value in the workforce.

To deliver a model that is both efficient and grounded in 21st-century skills, THECB has revamped the faculty role, engaging full-time faculty and industry experts in the develop-
# STUDENT SUPPORT MODEL

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<tr>
<th>CONTENT EXPERTS</th>
<th>COACHES</th>
<th>TUTORS</th>
<th>FACULTY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time faculty help develop core competencies, assessments, and curriculum materials that students will access on-demand in self-paced modules.</td>
<td>Full-time, master’s-level staff work with individual students throughout the student’s career to provide feedback and support. A single coach works with the same student from enrollment to graduation.</td>
<td>Full-time, master’s-level staff with content expertise provide real-time feedback and support whenever needed. Tutors are assigned to specific content domains or courses.</td>
<td>Full-time faculty deliver both face-to-face and online courses.</td>
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## TEXAS TUNING OVERSIGHT TEAM

Full-time faculty and business leaders will work together to develop competencies for both the degree program and upper-division courses, assessments, and curriculum materials. A second team of full-time faculty will work together to develop competencies, assessments, and curriculum materials for the lower-division general education curriculum and lower-division prescribed electives that students will access on-demand in self-paced modules.

The development of course competencies, assessments, and curriculum materials that students can access anytime, anywhere in an on-demand online system. Students are supported in lower-division courses by individual coaches who provide feedback and support across disciplines and tutors who provide on-demand, discipline-specific support. Faculty offer upper-division courses both online and face-to-face: these include a series of real-world management problems to solve and culminate with a digital capstone experience evaluated by faculty and business leaders. Student work is captured in an e-portfolio that is portable beyond the institution, providing graduates with a way to document those skills that often fail to appear on a transcript.

From the outset, ensuring that graduates have a meaningful degree and not just a credential has been central to curriculum development. THECB has used the Texas Tuning process, aided by both faculty and industry experts, to outline course outcomes that include 21st-century skills such as leadership, team building, conflict resolution, communication, and applied learning alongside clear competencies with relevance to the workplace. The goal is to graduate students with both the right credentials and the right skills for the workplace.

### Intended Outcomes:

- Reducing the time to degree below the average of 5.3 years for full-time students
- Realizing an 80 percent degree completion rate for the program
- Maintaining an annual retention rate of at least 80 percent
- Achieving sustainability by year five

## PELL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

- 40%

## PRICE TO STUDENTS:

- $4,500/year

## COST PER FTE:

- $4,000

## DELIVERY:

- 25% face to face
- 75% online

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Institution: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ | Contact: Ginger Gossman, ginger.gossman@thecb.state.tx.us

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Problems and opportunities stem from a mind-set that the institution is the most important part of higher education. University System of Georgia’s model starts with a student-thinking approach so that students can earn a ‘learn whenever, learn wherever’ degree.

Jon Sizemore, University System of Georgia

The University System of Georgia (USG) and an institution in the system, Columbus State University, will develop and implement a new model for an accessible bachelor’s degree with a high completion rate. The program, which is delivered 90 percent online and punctuated at key risk points with in-person credit-bearing service learning experiences, seeks to cultivate leaders in community development, regional economic development, and public-private partnerships.

The program is structured to provide intermediary markers of achievement, awarding the student a certificate credential within the first year, an associate’s degree before the end of year two, and the bachelor’s degree upon completion. This staged method reinforces motivation to progress, increases marketability should a student leave, and eases return and completion should a stop-out occur.

The learning experiences are similarly scaffolded, encouraging students to build knowledge, integrate knowledge from various fields, apply that knowledge through real-world experiences, and ultimately teach and lead others.

Four learning modalities are employed to balance cost and to support and retain the target student population:

1. asynchronous short-session online courses;
2. face-to-face service-learning experiences in the senior year;
3. self-paced online modules of competency-based learning; and
4. portfolio opportunities to provide individualized student learning.

Through a partnership between USG and Desire2Learn, a learning management system provider, instructors will be able to use advanced learning analytics to support students in real time beginning in late 2014. Student support team members (instructors, advisors, and support staff) will be responsible for monitoring and assisting 400 students using learning analytics. This high ratio is afforded by the automated capabilities of Design2Learn and builds on the existing success of USG’s electronic core curriculum (eCore), which allows students to

“...”

AT A GLANCE:

Targeted Degree Program: Bachelor of Arts in Communication with a Civic Leadership focus
Organizations: The University System of Georgia and Columbus State University
Opening Date: Fall 2013
First-Year Enrollment Goal: 500
Anticipated Students Served in First Five Years: 5,000
Geographies Served: Georgia
Targeted Students: Low-income students, the young adult military population, and those whom higher education has not traditionally served well in terms of race and ethnicity

HALLMARKS

Use of a cross-institution administrative unit to provide targeted, efficient, competency-based, self-paced module services to several institutions at once
Tandem instructor-paced and self-paced online modules tailored to serve students’ needs and reduce costs
Community-based in-person learning experiences to develop leadership and foster academic achievement
Year-round faculty responsibilities and assignments to advise and support students over their entire enrollment
Scalable student support team to provide monitoring and intervention services
Program model to be scaled over time, allowing for a reduction in costs and greater sustainability

“...”
complete their first two years in an online environment.

In order to ensure a streamlined transition between high school and college, students may earn credit through dual enrollment. Up to 30 hours of credit will be available for award through competency-based formats including outcomes-based modules, in-house prior learning assessment, and portfolio options tied to service learning, as well as nationally recognized assessments from external organizations. Students can transfer the core curriculum across Georgia’s network of institutions.

The University System of Georgia will implement a cross-institution sustainable open resource development model intended to allow up to half of the courses in the core curriculum to use primarily open educational resources. This cost-saving model engages faculty and reflects students’ current methods of learning. Another cost-saving feature is the use of e-books and low-cost access codes to publisher sites. For further support of this predominantly online program focused on low-income young adults, Columbus State University will loan technology including notebooks to students so that they can access courses and supplementary materials at no cost.

**ACADEMIC MODEL:**

Students enroll in five seven-week sessions per year and focus on two courses at a time. Self-paced, outcomes-focused modules are delivered in tandem with the instructor-paced courses each session. This tandem delivery model gives students the chance to progress at their own pace on a portion of their coursework.

**120 Credit Hour BA in Communications with Civic Leadership Specialization**

- 90 credit hours of asynchronous online courses (paired and redesigned for cross-disciplinary delivery)
- Embedded credit-bearing face-to-face service learning experiences
- On average 30 credit hours of outcomes-based modules
- Staged credential awarding to encourage progression

**PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRICE TO STUDENTS PER YEAR:</th>
<th>$6,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COST PER FTE:</td>
<td>$3,500-$5,000</td>
</tr>
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ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

CREATING A LOW-COST EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY STUDIES DEGREE WHILE EXPANDING ACCESS

This program will target working adults who want to complete a four-year degree but have work, family, location and other issues that make face-to-face education difficult. We will create a high-quality program that builds upon the expertise of our faculty and will feature such special services as advisors/coaches who will proactively interact with the students.

David Szatmary, University of Washington Educational Outreach

Like other traditional research universities, the University of Washington has historically served first-time full-time undergraduates and graduate students as core constituencies. In this Next Generation Learning Challenges program, they are breaking out of that mold to offer an opportunity to working adults with some college credit who need an undergraduate degree to advance their careers. Their numbers are substantial: nearly six million people in the western states have at least one year of college but lack a degree, and many of them also lack the resources to pay tuition at the usual rates, the time to travel to campus to attend classes, or both.

UW’s program is designed expressively to serve the needs of this target population. The selection of the specific degree offered was based on its likelihood to have the greatest economic impact, increased relevance, heightened effectiveness, and broader access to serve the needs of the community of practice in the field of early childhood and family studies. The degrees are offered at a reduced cost - approximately half the per-credit-hour cost of most competitive programs - with free versions of the courses offered on Coursera, a commercial platform on which universities offer massive open online courses (MOOCs) that are available to anyone worldwide. The courses expand access to resources and learning and also give students the opportunity to sample a course before enrolling. The credit-bearing courses developed and taught by full-time University of Washington faculty for an expanded population of students.

HALLMARKS:

Courses developed and taught by full-time University of Washington faculty for an expanded population of students
Versions of the courses offered at no cost via Coursera
Courses in multimedia format addressing the needs of diverse audiences
Advancing quality of teaching and school readiness outcomes for young children
Advisors/coaches who interact with students to ensure their motivation, engagement, retention
Analytics experts tracking multiple assessment measures at course, program, and institutional levels
Ongoing course, program assessment and evaluation for continuous improvement

PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

30%

PRICE TO STUDENTS PER YEAR:

$6,975 (FY 2014)

COST PER FTE PER YEAR:

$6,493 (FY 2015)

DELIVERY:

Online
versions of the courses, offered in Moodle, are instructor-led and have additional assignments, projects, papers and readings which augment the materials on Coursera. Similar to the onsite format, the curriculum engages students in several core courses. Specific content area/general development courses, an integrative capstone course, and a selection of elective courses are also included in the program. Additionally, service-learning along with cultural and linguistic diversity are addressed throughout the curriculum. Full-time faculty design and teach these courses, ensuring their depth and quality. The courses are designed around learning outcomes, and these outcomes are described at the beginning of each lesson to inform students explicitly of the required concepts to master and skills to develop. Faculty who teach in the program receive comprehensive training in online instruction to ensure their thorough familiarity with those practices which encourage retention and course completion.

In addition, specialized online advisors/coaches work with students, checking in with them at least every other week about their progress in current courses and suggesting strategies for completion. Struggling students receive particular attention.

“The degrees are offered at a reduced cost - approximately half the per-credit-hour cost of most competitive programs - with free versions of the courses offered on Coursera, a commercial platform that offers massive open online courses (MOOCs).”