



NASPA

*Community College
Advisory Board Newsletter*

Summer is Sizzling Hot ! And so is your Community College Advisory Board!

The NASPA Board of Directors has been busy reviewing member input on ways to improve the Association and to strengthen the ways we meet member needs. The Board recognizes the important role of supporting the profession and our members as they support students and their institutions. The Board has been discussing a strategic plan. When complete, members will have an opportunity to provide input and direction on how to implement the plan and further the mission of the Association.

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Volume 2

Issue 1

Inside

Learn about the
Development of
Centers for Working
Families at Community
Colleges

Forty and a First Year
Student....

Check it out!

New Institutional Member Rate

On July 1st the National Board newly approved and adjusted community college institutional member rates went into effect. The new fee structure is easier to understand to compute. In most cases, membership will be less expensive for institutions. The change, requested by member and non-member institutions, demonstrates another example of the responsiveness of the national board to the needs of our members, including community colleges. {NEED LINK}

NASPA Community Colleges Online

The new "NASPA Community Colleges Online" series provides members with practical, professional development opportunities on a quarterly basis. These online experiences, lasting less than one hour in length, cover a variety of timely subjects. Experts from around the country provide information, research, and solutions to issues on the minds of today's professionals. Time is always allocated to address questions and invite input from the participants.



Advisory Board Director's Update

By John Laws

Vice Chancellor for Student
Affairs

Ivy Tech Community College

**NASPA
Changes
Support
Community
Colleges**

Regional Conferences Are for You!

Regional conferences will be happening soon and I encourage all student affairs professionals to consider participating in these unique experiences. Invite staff and folks that may not be familiar with NASPA or this professionally enriching regional activity. As Tomas Snyder, President of Ivy Tech Community College said recently, "difficult financial times are NOT the times to cut professional development opportunities. These are the times individuals must get more creative, seek new ways of doing business, and find the best approaches." One should invest in the present and future during difficult financial times. I hope you will take these words to heart and invest in the upcoming regional conference in your area.

Nominate Community College Colleagues for NASPA Awards

We have many fine professionals working in the field who deserve recognition. You may know who they are, but others may not. Please nominate these folks for one or more of the many regional and national awards that recognize folks in our profession. There is even a special award exclusively for community college members.

See the complete nomination process (it's easy) and the regional and national deadlines on the NASPA [website \(http://www.naspa.org/programs/awards/default.cfm\)](http://www.naspa.org/programs/awards/default.cfm). Most regional deadlines are coming up soon. Nominate someone today!

Sincerely,

John Laws, Director
Community college Division



Center for Working Families

For the low-income students served by community colleges, financial pressures are often as big an obstacle to obtaining a degree or credential as academics.

By Kristina Testa-Buzzee

Director Family Economic Security Program, Norwalk Community College

NASPA Region I
Community College Division
Representative

P 203 857-7220

F 203 857-7297

ktestabuzzee@ncc.commnet.edu,

<http://www.ncc.commnet.edu/fesp/>

Co-author of article:

Dan Broun
Program Director
MDC Expanding
Opportunity, Advancing
Equity
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 968-4531 ext. 323
fax: (919) 929-8557
dbroun@mdcinc.org

More than 50 percent of students at two-year institutions never receive a credential. Many simply cannot afford to stay in school—whether it is because continuing would mean giving up employment or because a financial crisis left to make a choice of paying the bills or pursuing an education. And too often, the financial assistance that is available often is difficult to access—it is located in multiple places at the college, or in many cases may not be offered at all.

Through the Center for Working Families (CWF) approach, a group of community colleges are helping students with skills such as financial planning and providing them with access to available public benefits to allow them to continue their educational pursuits. And the early returns are positive—the students enrolled in CWF are maintaining the course and staying in school, encouraging more institutions to adopt the approach.

CWFs reach students where they are by responding to multiple economic challenges. The approach combines what community colleges do so well—provide individuals with training that connects them to dynamic careers—with the financial support necessary to complete education and connect with a career path.

The CWF was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which provided funding to a group of community colleges around the country, each implementing their strategies in slightly different ways, and in some cases adopting different names for the programs.

But whether the program operates as SuccessNet at Des Moines Area Community College, SparkPoint at Skyline Community College or as a the Family Economic Security Program (FESP) at Norwalk Community College, the approach emphasizes integrated service delivery, with students receiving services from one central location in three broad categories:

- **Employment Training:** Students are offered counseling on forging an educational path that can lead to living wage jobs and career opportunities. For instance, Guilford Technical Community College in North Carolina works with basic skills students to move them towards a career readiness certificate, a basic credential that provides individuals a leg up when they enter the workforce.
- **Financial Training:** Achievement “coaches” work closely with students providing one-on-one financial training, helping them plan their household budgets, set goals and understand how to cope with the immense financial pressures they face including paying for such non-school expenses as transportation and child care. Students also have access to financial literacy classes offered through the college helping them understand critical financial basics. For instance, Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas offers students a Student Success Curriculum that provides information in areas such as money management, banking basics, and managing debt.
- **Financial Supports:** Students that participate in CWF at community colleges, can access public benefits such as food and nutrition programs, financial aid, and earned income tax credits that they might not have known how to receive. In many cases, students use on-line systems to allow them to apply for multiple types of benefits with one application. Some college CWFs also provides financial assistance to students who require separate assistance such as childcare services or public transportation. In some institutions, students also receive access to traditional financial services such as savings and checking accounts. Central New Mexico Community College provides students with information and links to financial institutions to start checking, savings, and Individual Development Accounts, a matched savings program.

The impact of the Centers has been profound both on student’s financial positions and on their ability to stay in school, meaning a marked uptick in retention rates at community colleges. At Central New Mexico Community College, CWF Participants had a 61 percent chance of achieving a short-term economic indicator such as receiving a scholarship or staying in school, compared to 16 percent for clients who did not participate in the program. At Des Moines Area Community College, participants in the CWF boast an 80 percent retention rate, far surpassing the college’s overall rate. At Norwalk Community College, where the emphasis is on degree attainment at the Associates and Baccalaureate level, there is early indication that the student parents receiving coaching services are persisting at a higher rate prior to receiving services.

The involvement of the Annie E. Casey Foundation has been critical, with many of the participating institutions receiving start up funds from the Foundation as well as access to a learning network of similar institutions operating CWFs. The network is managed by MDC, a North Carolina-based nonprofit. Members in the network receive technical assistance from both MDC and college leaders on how to implement the CWF approach and how to expand specialized services. Member colleges participate in an active learning network of institutions that visit fellow CWF colleges, gather ideas at an annual convening,

The network encourages information sharing among center staff and administrators, allowing sites that are just implementing the program to learn from the experiences of centers that have been operational longer.

Being a member of this wonderful organization has transformed my life, not only mine, but also the future of my children.

To date, ten colleges are part of the network, with several other institutions slated to join the network in the next twelve months.

Many of the institutions also receive financial support to operate the centers from local funders. It should be pointed out that the investment needed to start and operate a center is not overly substantial. GTCC, for instance, used an initial investment of \$35,000 from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to purchase equipment such as computers and pay portions of staff time. The operating expense is now borne by the college with the increased student retention and resulting increase in tuition intake going a long way to covering the programmatic costs. At Norwalk Community College in Connecticut, The Family Economic Security program (FESP) is an innovative 5 year partnership of the College, the Fairfield County Community Foundation's Fund for Women and Girls and the Norwalk Community College Foundation and in collaboration with The Women's Business Development Center.

Staff and students alike see the CWF model as one that is particularly effective because it treats the students and their issues in a holistic way—rather than just directing them to different departments or agencies outside campus.

“You have to meet the person where they are,” said Sybil Newman, who directs the Center on the campus of Guilford Technical Community College. Kristina Testa-Buzzee, Director of the FESP program at NCC reported that “Our services provide change at the individual, institutional and community level. Students lives are being transformed – a single mom who has been working as a waitress graduated with a Nursing degree and as a result of some connections built while in the FESP program is now employed at an area hospital and is applying for her BSN.”

And just as importantly, the CWF treats the students with respect as well as entrusting them with responsibility for assisting in their own success.

“The Center is a judgment free zone,” Newman said. “Students can self-advocate and learn how to articulate their own needs. We all struggle sometimes, but when you’re armed with information you can struggle with more dignity.” D.T. a student at Norwalk Community College said recently ...“I felt very proud of myself to be a member of Family Economic Security Program. The magnitude of this program is amazing. I have to take a moment to express my gratitude, to staff and the sponsors.

From the editor

As you read this, what is your weather like? Most of us are experiencing record-breaking heat and sometimes too cool weather for the time of year. It is challenging this time of year to get it just right! In community colleges we are facing the challenges of getting it just right for our students and we face many of the same, yet different challenges, with assessing student learning, budget reductions, and increased public interest in our work. The good news is that your NASPA colleagues know what you are experiencing! This newsletter is intended to give you updates on your association and specifically information on community college issues. This is a new format we are trying. Let me know what you think. Let me know what is on your mind and what you want to hear from your colleagues. This is a quarterly publication. Get your word processor warmed up, or iPad, or iPhone and send in your photos, and write to the editor at lwaits55@msn.com.

Thank you to Kaaryn Keller

Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at NASPA, for pointing us towards this important and interesting resource, Community Colleges and Learning Outcomes...a new paper from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment <http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/OccasionalPapers.htm> that examines the role of measuring student-learning outcomes at community colleges. Findings from surveys of community colleges show that they make extensive use of measures of student learning, but tend to do so at the program level rather than the institutional level (a finding that is probably not surprising, given the range of programs offered). For instance, 80% of community colleges reported using performance assessments other than grades (simulations, portfolios, capstone projects, etc.) to evaluate learning in individual units, but only 19% used those approaches across their institutions. And 83% reported using specialized tests (such as licensure exams and other standardized tests) for programs, but only 8% reported their use across institutions. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/07/13/qt#264827>



NASPA by the Numbers

1 2010 NASPA National Conference in Philadelphia

Over **5200** people registered for the national conference

The Placement Exchange (TPE) had **1200** registrations

1,000 people attended a pre-conference workshop

Approximately **10%** of all pre-conference attendees (100) attended the Community College Institute on Assessment

Will you be part of the 10% next March?

2 There are only 7 months till the NASPA pre-conference Community College Institute in Phoenix, AZ – Are registered yet?

3 15 of your colleagues serve on the Community College Advisory Board – See who you know! Names listed on last page of newsletter.

Freshmen-At-Forty - The Community College Perspective

By S.D.M. Norwalk Community College, Norwalk Connecticut

The fall semester is quickly approaching and with it will come the usual anxiety of what classes to take and how to fit into college life. For most students just coming out of High School the transition to community college is a wonderful introduction to higher education. But for students like me, who are double the age of most freshmen, the anxiety of starting or continuing their education can be nearly paralyzing.

Community College is the perfect re-introduction to academia for us "non-traditional" types. But the key was taking advantage of the programs that would hold my hand through the process. I spoke with the counselors, mapped out a plan and checked in with my advisor at every opportunity to make sure I was on the right path. I found the professors were more than willing to help spend time to give me advice and work with me on areas that needed to prepare me for the next institution.

Classes were easy to schedule around my work and family needs and, important to me, the student body, of varying ages and nationalities, was supportive to each other and made my education successful.

Clubs such as Phi Theta Kappa and student services were instrumental too. I was involved in on-campus activities as my schedule would allow and got to know other students and exchange tips and information. The Learning Center offered help with writing (my biggest problem) and the computer lab and library introduced new programs and websites that would make projects and papers easier.

Innovative programs such as the Family Economic Security Program take it a step further with advisors and coaches that help you keep track of your academic progress, credit and financial management and general life handholding.

It is the services offered by these student affairs administrators that help students like me find my way to and through the community college experience. As I prepare to now attend a four-year private school, I am grateful for their assistance in helping me lay the foundation for my future success.

More insights from S.D.M can be found at <http://freshmanatfourty.wordpress.com>.

Advisory Board Members

*Community College Division
Director*

John Laws

Vice Chancellor for Student
Affairs
Ivy Tech Community College-
Lafayette

Senior Student Affairs Officer
Eugene Henderson

Vice President of Student
Development
Rockland Community College

Senior Student Affairs Officer
Denise Swett

Associate Vice President,
Middlefield Campus &
Community Programs
Foothill College

Senior Student Affairs Officer
Paulette Dalpes

Dean of Student Affairs
CUNY-Kingsborough
Community College

Senior Student Affairs Officer
Charlene Nunley

University of Maryland
University College

2011-12

Senior Student Affairs Officer

Greg Thomas

Associate Provost
Des Moines Area Community

Faculty-in-Residence

Dawn Lewis-Wadud

Prince George's Community
College

Region I Representative

Kristina Testa-Buzzee

Director of the Family Economic
Security Program
Norwalk Community College

Region II Representative

Debra Bright Harris

Director of Articulation, Transfer,
and Academic Services
Montgomery College

Region III Representative

Barry Hubbard

Computer Science Instructor
Hillsborough Community
College

Region IV-E Representative

Joianne L. Smith

Vice President, Student Affairs
Oakton Community College

Region IV-W Representative

Keegan Nichols

Vice-President of Student Affairs
& Marketing

Colby Community College

Region V Representative

Sheldon Nord

North Idaho College

Region VI Representative

Kathryn Mueller

Dean of Student Services
Orange Coast College

Newsletter Editor

Lisa J. Waits

lwaits55@msn.com

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**NASPA – as the leading
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administration, policy, and
practice – affirms the
commitment of student
affairs to educating the
whole student and
integrating student life and
learning.**