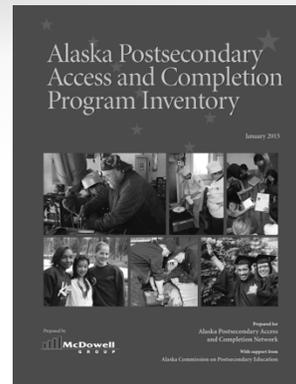


Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Inventory

Prepared for:
**Alaska Postsecondary Access
and Completion Network**

Prepared by:
McDowell Group, Inc.
February 3, 2015



McDowell Group

- ◆ **More than 40 years in Alaska**
 - ◆ Public policy
 - ◆ Social impact organizations
 - ◆ Business and industry
- ◆ **Multidisciplinary**
 - ◆ Primary and secondary research
 - ◆ Planning and evaluation
 - ◆ Socioeconomics



Purpose of the Study

- ◆ Profile Alaska access and completion
- ◆ Identify key issues and policies
- ◆ Recommend ways to strengthen access and completion efforts
- ◆ Develop initial data for a “directory” of programs



Study Methodology

- ◆ Key education and employment statistics
- ◆ Survey of program providers
 - ◆ Descriptive information
 - ◆ Strategic issues
- ◆ Executive Interviews with Network members and other stakeholders
- ◆ Analysis of policies that affect access and completion



What We Learned

- ◆ Secondary Statistics
- ◆ Alaska Programs
- ◆ Key Issues and Policies
- ◆ Recommendations



Secondary Statistics



Postsecondary Education in Alaska

Compared to most other states, Alaskans are...

- ◆ Less likely to have a postsecondary degree
- ◆ Less likely to be enrolled fulltime in public higher education
- ◆ Less likely to earn a degree once enrolled
- ◆ Less likely to complete a degree within the expected time

Alaska is one of 9 states for which the percentage of adults with a college degree declined between 2000 and 2011.



Alaska Employment Trends

- ◆ Statewide employment **↑ 11 percent** by 2022 (*DOLWD*)
- ◆ Aging workforce **→** job openings and demand for elder services
- ◆ **Fastest growing sectors:**
 - ◆ Healthcare and social assistance
 - ◆ Oil and gas (includes mining)
 - ◆ Professional and business services
 - ◆ Leisure and hospitality



Alaska Postsecondary Needs

- ◆ **By 2018***
 - ◆ 16,000 fewer jobs for those with only a high school degree
 - ◆ 8,000 more jobs will require a Bachelor's
- ◆ **Demand for technical certifications will continue to increase**

**National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)*



Access and Completion Programs

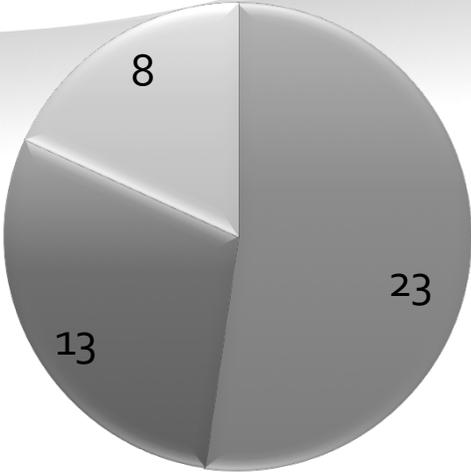


Programs Surveyed

- ◆ 54 access and completion programs identified
- ◆ 40 responded to the survey
- ◆ Data on 8 more from secondary research



Types of Programs



- ☒ University of Alaska
- ☒ State of Alaska
- ☒ Other (nonprofit, national, school district)

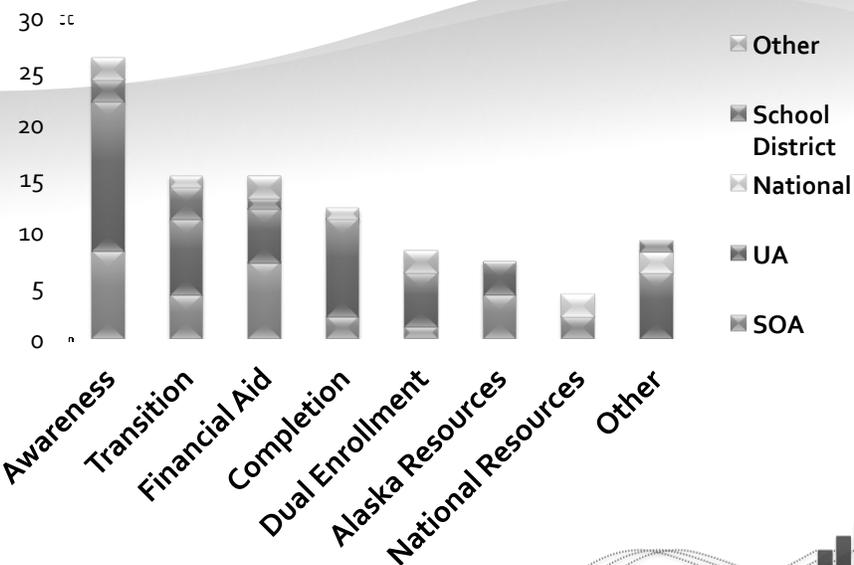


Types of Programs

- ◆ Most offer a mix of services
 - ◆ information, financial aid, workshops, counseling, career exploration, advocacy, academic support, and more
- ◆ Three-quarters partner with school districts.
- ◆ Three quarters partner with UA



Types of Programs



Types of Programs

- ◆ Nearly 30% less than 10 years old
- ◆ 20% urban, 10% rural, 70% both
- ◆ 7 programs serve specific school districts
- ◆ 4 serve only Anchorage



Populations Served

| Age Group | # | % |
|---------------|----|----|
| Grades K-5 | 3 | 6% |
| Grades 6-8 | 12 | 25 |
| High school | 34 | 71 |
| 18 – 24 years | 31 | 65 |
| 25 – 35 years | 21 | 44 |
| Over 35 years | 16 | 33 |

Most programs:

- ◆ Target high school or college-age
- ◆ Focus on students moving directly from high school to postsecondary



Missions and Definitions of Success

How programs define their focus:

- ♦ 60% by educational level (high school, college, etc.)
- ♦ 20% by type of career preparation (business, construction, healthcare, etc.)
- ♦ 20% by skill set (financial, career-readiness, leadership, etc)



Missions and Definitions of Success

How programs define success:

- ♦ Attainment of a certificate or degree (15)
- ♦ Enrollment in a postsecondary program (9)
- ♦ Postsecondary application or intention to apply (6)
- ♦ 17 other measures from academic performance to course-load to specific tests



Other Program Information

Initial database for a directory of access and completion programs

- ♦ Name and contact info
- ♦ Types of strategies and services
- ♦ Missions and populations/locations served
- ♦ Budget, year started, etc.



Key Issues and Policies



Greatest Program Strengths

Programs differ on perceived strengths

- ◆ Strategic point of intervention
- ◆ Access to scholarship \$\$
- ◆ Flexibility, broad outreach
- ◆ Partnerships and relationships



Needs of the Field

- ◆ Funding and other resources
- ◆ Technical skills and support
- ◆ Communications and collaboration
- ◆ Data
- ◆ Coordinated messaging



Needs

Funding and Other Resources

- ♦ State budget cuts and federal sequestration
- ♦ Uncertain grants/long-term funding
- ♦ Lack of time and staff
- ♦ Funding for low-income students



Needs

Technical Skills and Support

- ♦ Marketing and social media expertise (13)
- ♦ Databases, grant-writing, advocacy, fundraising and volunteer coordination
- ♦ Cultural and management training



Needs

Communications and Collaboration

- ♦ Clearinghouse for events, resources and best practices
- ♦ Coordination among postsecondary institutions, access and completion programs, and school districts
- ♦ Networking and conferences



Needs

Data

- ♦ Comprehensive data on issues and population
- ♦ Updates on new laws and regulation
- ♦ Information about other programs
- ♦ Assessment data



Needs

Coordinated Messaging

- ◆ Trusted messengers are knowledgeable, neutral, and culturally proficient
- ◆ Match media to the audience
- ◆ Clear, consistent talking points and terminology



Challenges in Alaska

- ◆ Lack of a postsecondary culture
- ◆ Building and maintaining partnerships
- ◆ Need for continuum of services
- ◆ Measuring program impacts



Challenges

Lack of a Postsecondary Culture

- ♦ Parental mistrust of educational institutions
- ♦ Lack of local role models and knowledge of opportunities
- ♦ Relatively high-paying low-skill jobs
- ♦ Misperception that postsecondary only means college



Challenges

Building and maintaining partnerships

- ♦ Building awareness of programs
- ♦ Turnover in high school staff
- ♦ Getting full buy-in from administrators and communities



Challenges

Need for comprehensive services

- ♦ Infrastructure gaps
 - ♦ Distance
 - ♦ Internet
 - ♦ Information systems
- ♦ Cultural complexity and variety of educational needs
- ♦ Lack of a comprehensive strategy for student support



Challenges

Measuring Program Impacts

- ♦ Multiple definitions of success
- ♦ Lack of longitudinal data linking secondary, postsecondary and workforce participation
- ♦ Subtle or deferred program impacts hard to track



Access and Completion Policies

Policies that support the field

- ♦ Provision of financial aid, especially APS and UA Scholars
- ♦ Easier transfers of academic credit
- ♦ Availability of dual enrollment
- ♦ Requirement for ACT/SAT
- ♦ Expansion of online learning



Policies

Policies that may impede the field

- ♦ Mismatch between high-school preparation and demands on postsecondary students
- ♦ Credit transfers and financial aid still need to be less restricted
- ♦ Size and complexity of UA system



Policies

Policies that may impede the field

- ♦ Lack of funding for early childhood education
- ♦ Inconsistent approaches to placement testing across the university



Recommendations to Strengthen Action and Completion Efforts



Recommendations

1. Engage with stakeholders to build a culture of postsecondary achievement

- ♦ Promote a culture that values postsecondary achievement
- ♦ Develop a common vision of student preparation
- ♦ Use coordinated strategies and messaging



Recommendations

2. Expand partnering and networking

- ♦ Among programs
 - ♦ Align visions, strategies and terminology
- ♦ Between programs and other partners
 - ♦ Improve communications and share goals



Recommendations

3. Explore and clarify program priorities to create a continuum of services with common goals.

- ♦ Full-time vs. part-time
- ♦ Scholarship requirements
- ♦ Rural students



Recommendations

4. Assess how well the access and completion system meets the needs of older students

- ♦ Finances
- ♦ Time
- ♦ Refresher courses



Recommendations

5. Support development of better longitudinal data

- ♦ ANSWERS – Alaska Navigator: Statewide Workforce and Education-Related Statistics
- ♦ P-20W SLDS – Integrated data on Alaska students from pre-school through grade 20 and beyond, including workforce data



Recommendations

6. Support statewide broadband for equal access to:

- ♦ Information about postsecondary options and requirements
- ♦ Access to support programs
- ♦ Courses and course materials
- ♦ Inspiration and an expanded world-view



Questions?



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