Accelerating Educational Opportunities for Non-Traditional College Students
Mr. John Duffy, MS Ed  
Secretary  
Board of Trustees  
Community College District 509

David Sam, PhD, JD, LLM  
President  
Elgin Community College

Peggy Heinrich  
Dean, Adult Education  
Elgin Community College

Joel Perez  
Student  
Elgin Community College
ECC Overview

Mission: To improve people’s lives through learning

- Founded in 1949 in Elgin, Illinois, northwest of Chicago
- Governed by the seven-member Board of Trustees of Community College District 509
- Hired David A. Sam, PhD, JD, LLM, as the eighth CEO of the college in February 2007
- Fully accredited through 2015-2016
- $54.9 million in unrestricted net assets; $27.5 million in restricted
- Passed a $178 million capital referendum in April 2009
ECC OVERVIEW

> ECC serves 33 municipalities in five counties

- Area: 360 square miles
- Residential population: 480,000
- Businesses in district: 10,500
- The U.S. Department of Education designated ECC an Hispanic-Serving Institution.
- G.I. Jobs magazine named ECC a Military-Friendly Institution three years in a row (2012-2014)
- ECC was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College in 2012, the first in Illinois.
- ECC received the 2012 Bellwether Award for its Alliance for College Readiness.
INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE
“Students’ transitions from basic skills programs to enrollment in credit-bearing college courses has been described as an “interlocking web of obstacles” (Royce & Gacka, 2001).

Why Accelerating Opportunity?

> Remediation on its own is ineffective
  
  • *Less than 10% of students who enter college in developmental education graduate within three years*
  
  • *The lower the level of the student, the less likely they are to succeed*
  
  • *64.7% of low-income community college students require remediation*

> Very few adult education students ever even attempt a college-level course, and even fewer ever complete a certificate or degree

> Complete College America recommends offering students with significant academic challenges skill certificate programs with embedded remediation


In Illinois, more than half of all jobs are middle skill, but only 43 percent of Illinois workers are trained to the middle skill level.

Accelerating Opportunity is a community college initiative of Jobs for the Future, with funding from:

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Open Society Foundations

Joyce Foundation
Kresge Foundation

In partnership with:
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the National Council for Workforce Education, and The National College Transition Network.
Target Population Demographics at ECC

Student Demographics

- Unknown
- Asian
- African-American
- Latino
- White
- Male
- Female
- 17-22
- 23-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51+
- Part-Time
- Full-Time

All ECC Students
ABEC Students
Adult Students

- High Intermediate Basic through Adult Secondary Education (grade level 6 to 12.9)
- English as a Second Language (High Intermediate to Advanced)
- Any adult student lacking basic skills in reading, math, or English language (may have high school credential or not)
Offers students career pathways and educational support leading to industry recognized certificates.

- **One year career technical education programs**
- **Credit-bearing**
- **All over twelve credit hours**
- **Must yield one or more industry-recognized credentials in areas of high labor market demand**
- **Students enroll in same CTE courses (no watered-down curriculum)**
ECC Career Pathways

Welding
CNC Operator
Dental Office Assistant
HVAC
CREDENTIALS/CERTIFICATES

- Basic Vocational Specialist in CNC Operator
- Basic Vocational Specialist in Welding
  - Welding Certified for “vertical up”
  - Welding Certified for “overhead”
- Basic Vocational Specialist in Dental Office Aide
- Basic Vocational Specialist in HVAC Level I & II technician
  - R410A Air Conditioning Equipment Technical Training Certificate
  - EPA 608 Certification (for purpose of refrigerant)
How is Accelerating Opportunity different?

Basic Skills Support Course

• Contextualized math, reading, writing, and English language instruction in a separate, paired (and free) adult education course.

• Cohort Model
  – Students remain together for one year.
  – Support class faculty remains with the cohort for one year.
  – CTE programs offer flexibility with admissions standards.
  – Basic skills instructor attends CTE classes with cohort minimally 50% of the time.
CAREER NAVIGATOR

- Conducts recruitment and student pre-screening
- Provides personal student case management; registration, barriers to attendance, etc.
- Conducts job-readiness workshops
- Assists with financial aid application, WIA eligibility, and/or scholarship application
- Coordinates with CTE/Adult Education faculty
OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

- Loaner textbooks
- Three credit hour tuition waiver
- Job preparation assistance
- Clear expectations agreed to in writing, paired with an intrusive counseling approach that helps students stay on course
COLLABORATION: Adult Education & CTE
Technical Training Skills

Foundational Academic Support

Personal, Life, & Transitional Skills
BRAIDED FUNDING

- Accelerating Opportunity Grant
- ICCB Adult Education and Family Literacy Performance Grant
- Perkins Grant
- TAACCCT (iNAM) DOL Grant
- WIA Adult and Dislocated Funding
Avg. GPA in Program Courses for AO and Non-AO Students
124 students have been served to date (39 are still in progress)
A total of 122 credentials have been earned
61 students have graduated with Basic Vocational Certificates
44% have obtained employment
25% have continued on for additional education
Joel Perez
CNC Program
LESSONS LEARNED

- Top-down institutional support is needed
- Accelerating Opportunity is a workforce education initiative, not an adult education initiative
- In-depth pre-screening of students is critical
- Logistics of compensation, class scheduling, and blending of two college divisions requires time, discussion, and planning
- Start small and build on successes
- Strive to achieve stability in faculty pairings
- Developed “feeder” bridge courses for lower-level students
• Sustainability efforts
• Scaling to include additional pathways and a broader student audience
• Institutionalizing Accelerating Opportunity