Structure and New Models

Restructure delivery for today’s students by developing new, shorter, and faster pathways to degrees and credentials of value.

New models are needed to significantly increase the number of students completing and completing on time. This is systemic reform. While colleges can implement these approaches differently, focusing on different programs and/or segments of the student population, colleges should be encouraged to be responsive to all of these principals, not pick and choose among them.

Strong policies and strategies to advance new models should include the following key principles:

✅ Operate programs on block schedules - fixed classroom meeting schedules.
  - Offer classes during specified time blocks and be consistent from term-to-term.
  - Inform students of their full schedules not only for the duration of the term but for the duration of the full program, thereby increasing predictability in course offerings and student support services, and allowing students to better plan around work and family schedules.

✅ Increase the ability for students to progress at a faster pace toward their certificate or degree.
  - Establish shorter academic terms (four weeks or eight weeks) with fewer courses per term and fewer weeks away from school between the terms.
  - Utilize year-round attendance; no summers off.
  - Ensure the ability of students to progress immediately to the next course without waiting for the next academic semester.
✔ **Implement an integrated program design that reduces the complexity of registration, course selection, and the need for course advising.**

- Prescribe the full set of competencies for each program up-front.
- Enroll students once in a single, coherent program rather than signing up every term for individual, unconnected courses.

✔ **Compress classroom instruction to reduce seat-time requirements and allow students to proceed at an accelerated pace.**

- Supplement traditional classroom instruction with non-classroom based methods such as on-line technology.
- Use competency-based instruction to allow students to proceed at an accelerated pace.

✔ **Establish student cohort enrollment to increase peer support and learning networks.**

- Group students in cohorts in the same prescribed sequence of classroom and non-classroom instruction.
- Promote the emergence of in-person and online learning communities, which are widely acknowledged as effective strategies for improving retention and completion.

✔ **Embed remediation in the program.**

- Include remedial education directly within the college program curriculum so students develop stronger math and English skills as they build program competencies (using the program as context).
- Supplement, as necessary, this embedded remedial instruction with additional support that is parallel to and simultaneous to the program rather than preceding it.
- Define basic skill outcome expectations with rigorous assessment.

✔ **Increase transparency and accountability in advertising and counseling students to increase a student’s ability to make an informed decision**

- Provide students with clear and consistent information about tuition, program duration, success rates, and job placement outcomes.
- Enable students to assess costs and benefits, see reasons for continued attendance, and make sacrifices necessary to achieve program goals.
- Hold programs accountable to rigorous and consistent external validation and national accreditation standards.