



What is First in the World?

First in the World (FITW) is a Department of Education program managed through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). FITW aims to support, develop, test and replicate innovative solutions to address persistence and other challenges affecting student outcomes.

Overview

The Carolina Works Validation Study, led by Central Carolina Community College (CCCC), is one of only two validation grants awarded in 2015 by the Department of Education's First in the World (FITW) Program.

The North Carolina Community College System is on a mission to improve student outcomes statewide. With initiatives such as Completion by Design, the Data Initiative, the launch of the statewide Student Success Center in partnership with Jobs for the Future, and the recent implementation of developmental education redesign, the methods by which we support our students' success are changing to help us become more effective in our practice.

The primary goal of the Carolina Works Study is to increase student persistence across 10 North Carolina community colleges. Specifically, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of proactive success coaching as an intervention via a random controlled trial of individualized support services through success coaching caseloads informed by an early alert/advising system using predictive analytics. The results of the study may provide NCCCS with more significant evidence for possible scalability and replication.

Importance of the Project

LOCAL – At the local level, the project provides the opportunity for partner colleges to improve student persistence by employing or enhancing their use of proactive success coaching, and implementing an early alert/advising system using predictive analytics.

STATE – By bringing together diverse colleges from across the state, the project is building a unique partnership that allows schools to more easily share ideas and best practices. Moving outside of their local focus, the partners are able to work as network, using their collective knowledge to use resources most effectively.

NATIONAL – Successful results discovered in this study can be scaled and replicated to schools outside of North Carolina. Improved persistence and completion lead to more qualified individuals entering the workforce. By addressing the challenges faced by students who are typically at-risk for not persisting (adult learners, working students, part-time students, students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, students with disabilities, and first-generation students), the project can help contribute to President's Obama's goal that by 2020, America would once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.



Main Project Activities

- Implementation of success coaches at each partner college to provide proactive intervention.
- Bi-annual partnership trainings and professional development opportunities.
- Bi-annual site visits will also take place by an expert from national advisor, Jobs for the Future.
- Implementation of an early alert/advising system using predictive analytics.

Project Leadership

The Carolina Works Study is led by Project Activity Director Sarah Hoffarth. Sarah earned her Bachelor's in Communication from the State University of New York at Buffalo before earning her Master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs at The Ohio State University. She worked at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 2009 – 2014 before coming to CCCC in 2014 to lead CCCC's Success Coaching operations under the Title III grant. Sarah reports to the Principal Investigator for the Carolina Works project, Dr. Brian S. Merritt, Vice President of Student Learning & Chief Academic Officer at Central Carolina Community College. Contact Sarah at (919) 718-7486 or shoffarth@cccc.edu.



Sarah Hoffarth, Project Activity Director

The project's partner colleges are:

- Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute
- Carteret Community College
- Central Carolina Community College
- Cleveland Community College
- College of the Albemarle
- Isothermal Community College
- Pamlico Community College
- Randolph Community College
- Roanoke-Chowan Community College
- Southwestern Community College

By the Numbers

- 3 National partner organizations
- 10 Partner colleges in the study
- 20 Success coaches funded by the grant
- 36 Number of months in the study period
- 15,000 Students in the study sample
- 9,200,000 Dollars in grant funding

Anticipated Results

Anticipated results include improvements in persistence and completion, along with project deliverables to maximize project implementation in a variety of settings by tracking cost per student and cost per outcome to disseminate replication and sustainability strategies.

