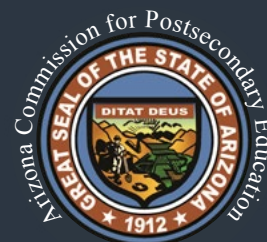# Developmental Education in Arizona:

Past Results, Present Initiatives, and Future Progress

Executive Summary

Jeff Thies, Nicola Richmond, Maria Vasilieva and Ozlem Kacira

AMEPAC
ARIZONA MINORITY EDUCATION
POLICY ANALYSIS CENTER

Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Arizona Minority Student Progress Report 2018: When the Minority Becomes the Majority (7th edition) it was noted that Arizona's community colleges are a major access point for students entering higher education; over fifty percent of incoming college freshmen are enrolled in a community college[1]. Disproportionately, community colleges are the higher education pathway for at-risk, first generation, and minority students. Achieve60AZ's goal[2], 60% of the Arizona working-age population will hold a postsecondary credential by 2030, can only be reached if both secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, along with workforce, work together as the integral components of a symbiotic system[3], to support college and career readiness, transition and success. Developmental education plays a significant role in this work, and must be viewed, not as a list of courses, but as holistic support to students.

▶ Findings from the Center for American Progress[4] report that in 2017, approximately 1 in 6 Arizonans overall live in poverty, by race/ethnicity, 33.3% of American Indian or Alaska Natives, 23.5% of Hispanic/Latinos and 22.1% of Black or African Americans.

▶ From the same study, Arizona is ranked 44th among the states in high school graduation, 42nd for disconnected youth (youths aged 18-24 without high school degrees who were not working or in school in 2015) and 42nd for higher education attainment.

▶ A Georgetown Public Policy Institute report on job growth and educational requirements suggests that 65% of jobs in 2020 will require postsecondary credentials. In Arizona, the report[5] predicts 68% of jobs requiring higher education credentials for 2020.

> 🔍 Developmental education is a comprehensive process that focuses on the intellectual, social, and emotional growth and development of all students. Developmental education includes, but is not limited to, tutoring, personal/career counseling, academic advisement, and coursework.

The state's economic prosperity is limited by an education system that lacks timely support, early in the system and during critical transition points. Supporting efforts to align K-12, community colleges, universities and industry with a focus on eliminating the achievement gaps is critical to maximizing economic growth for the state and economic security for marginalized members of our communities. Developmental education is a key step in the educational pipeline that links K-12, the community colleges and the universities. Across all genders and race/ethnicities, developmental education student outcomes are lower than for non-developmental students, as discussed in this report.

The challenge is twofold:

▶ **Recent High School Graduates**: What efforts are being made to lower the likelihood of requiring developmental coursework after graduation?

1   https://highered.az.gov/sites/default/files/AMEPAC%202018%20Report.pdf Arizona Minority Student Progress Report 2018: When the Minority Becomes the Majority, 7th edition
2   http://achieve60az.com/about
3   https://www.pima.edu/about-pima/reports/benchmarking-studies/docs/azcc-strategic-vision-for-2030.pdf
4   https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/arizona-2017-report/
5   https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/StateProjections_6.1.15_agc_v2.pdf

► **Adult Population**: How are postsecondary institutions meeting the needs of these students with wrap around support services and alignment of curriculum and employment?

Colleges across the state have been offering and scaling effective alternatives to the outdated remedial education approach. Current best practices that support student success in Arizona include:

-Multiple Measures Placement   -Proactive Advising   -New Student Orientations   - IBEST
-Affinity Group Support (Veterans, LGBTQ)   -Community Partnerships (Cradle to Career)
-Dual Enrollment   -Co-requisite Courses   -Math Pathways   - Prior Learning Assessment
-Embedded Support (tutors, coaches, mentors)   - Apprenticeships/Internships/Externships

Often these best practices are initiated and analyzed in silos as statewide oversight of the attainment and achievement gap challenges is non-existent. Recommendations to support increasing student completion of a higher education credential are discussed below.

TO SUPPORT ACHIEVE60AZ THE STATE SHOULD:

► Prioritize eliminating the achievement gap.

► Fund the scaling of **IBEST**[6] programs to career and technical programs and ensure sufficient funding is provided for all aspects of developmental education.

► Increase funding to K-12 to boost the number of counselors and staff with a goal of reducing the adult to student ratio and counselor to student ratio, in and out of the classroom. Currently, Arizona's counselor to student ratio is a United States worst of 903 to 1.[7]

► Revise dual enrollment statutes to support early college high schools[8] and ensure sufficient funding is provided for dual enrollment.

TO SUPPORT COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS, K-12 SHOULD:

► Increase the presence of programs[9] that promote college going culture early in children's educational experience.

► Partner with state community colleges and universities to share data.

► Create, in conjunction with community colleges and universities, transition[10] or college prep courses for seniors with limited college knowledge and preparation.

TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT COLLEGE READY, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SHOULD:

► Invest in initiatives to contextualize developmental learning outcomes.

► Align certificate and degree programs: K-12 - Community College - University - Industry.

► Support dual enrollment efforts with teacher preparation and course offerings.

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6   https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/how-i-best-works-findings.pdf
7   http://www.azsca.org/files/1516ratios.pdf
8   https://tea.texas.gov/ECHS/
9   https://www.strivetogether.org/our-approach/
10   https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/high-school-college-transition-typology.pdf

Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center Recommendations

The national recommendations focus on initiatives largely driven through state systems (California, Florida, North Carolina, Texas) that provide the necessary research, resources, and organizational support, or national organization membership (Achieving the Dream, NADE, Complete College America) that supports specific reform. For Arizona to move the needle on attainment, the state must rally behind initiatives that work to support at-risk students, which includes holistic support for current college students, preparation and education for high school students, systemic changes for students in K-8, and strong partnerships in a comprehensive P-20 system that shares data to effectively support our state's investment in the future. Below are the Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center's recommendations for addressing developmental education in Arizona.

▶ Continuously assess the effectiveness of multiple measure placement processes, just in time academic support (e.g. co-requisite support), and non-cognitive support in a continuous improvement cycle.

▶ Increase the presence and fund programs that promote college-going culture early in students' educational experience, such as dual enrollment and early college programs.

▶ Invest and fund career and technical initiatives that contextualize and integrate developmental learning outcomes, such as the Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (IBEST)[11] instructional model.

▶ Create partnerships among Arizona K-12 institutions, community colleges, and universities to better utilize and seamlessly exchange data, such as Cradle to Career Partnership[12] in Tucson. This partnership follows four elements to the collective impact framework: shared community vision, evidence-based decision making, collaborative action, and investment and sustainability.

▶ Continue developing a state-wide longitudinal data system linking K-12 to higher education and that includes developmental education data.

▶ Increase funding to boost the number of counselors (K-12 and higher education) with a goal of reducing the counselor to student ratio.

▶ Create, in conjunction with community colleges and universities, transition or college prep courses for at-risk/underserved student populations.

▶ Share student information such as the Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP) and transcript information with colleges and universities to support holistic assessment and multiple measures.

▶ Provide holistic support to students, including non-cognitive and basic needs, to remove barriers to their academic success. This could include basic need assistance

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11   https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/how-i-best-works-findings.pdf

12   https://www.c2cpima.org/

with food, housing, transportation, and childcare. Examples of non-cognitive assistance could include topics such as mindset, time-management, self-efficacy, and mindfulness.

► Strategically connect and collaborate with the Arizona Association for Developmental Education and the National Organization for Student Success.

► Establish a method of state-wide collaboration among higher education leaders engaged in developmental education efforts.

► Expand assigning college liaisons to increase communication and collaboration with K-12 districts.

Concluding Remarks

To eliminate the achievement gap and meet the goals of Achieve60AZ, Arizona needs to; reconsider how funds are allocated to focus resources on supporting best practices based on statewide evidence, support cross-functional community teams working to provide equity in education, and coordinate efforts aimed at college and career readiness. If the state is to move the needle on postsecondary credentials by 2030, college and career readiness needs to be at the forefront of the effort. High schools play a significant role in preparing students, and efforts are being made to increase the number of graduates that enter college prepared for success. Developmental education plays a role for those that aren't ready to succeed. Recent high school graduates or new traditional students may not be prepared for the rigors of a college program and require support to succeed. The role of developmental education has and continues to change, but the challenge remains the same, students will enter unprepared and will require holistic support. Knowing this, it is imperative that colleges are funded to meet the challenges the unprepared student will face, faculty and staff are supported in the creation and scaling of successful programs, and efforts exist across educational systems focused on student success with an equity-mindedness lens.

For full report, visit
www.highered.az.gov

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About AMEPAC

The Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (AMEPAC) is a sub-committee of the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education. Its mission is to stimulate through studies, statewide discussion and debate, constructive improvement of academic outcomes for minority students throughout all sectors of education by monitoring and reporting on student academic progress and commissioning research to improve it.

AMEPAC is funded by support from institutes of higher education and philanthropy and staffed by the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education and is guided by a council of members that represent the state's universities, community colleges, K-12 system, research and community organizations, as well as business and the private sector.

To see more information and the publications commissioned by AMEPAC, including the developmental education report executive summary and full narrative, go to **www.highered.az.gov** and click on AMEPAC.

About the Authors

Jeff Thies, Ph.D., has 20 years of classroom and administrative experience in community colleges, including his current position as Dean of Developmental Education at Pima Community College. As a mathematics faculty and administrator, he has supported or led student success initiatives with evidence-based decision making and collaborative, cross-functional teamwork. The priorities throughout his career have focused on initiatives designed to support and enhance the college experience for at-risk student populations.

Nicola Richmond, Ph.D., has an extensive research and data analysis background that includes analyzing data on lunar and Mars crustal magnetic fields, modeling water flow in nuclear reactors, and the application of quantum mechanics and solid state physics to deep Earth studies. Since 2008, she has worked full time in higher education research leading the Strategy, Analytics and Research team at Pima Community College where she serves as Chief Strategist.

Maria Vasilieva, Ph.D. holds a Master's Degree in Physical Engineering and a Ph.D. in Psycho-Sociology. This combination has prepared her in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Maria's expertise in research has been enhanced through eight years experience within higher education. In addition, three years of experience in secondary education administration complement her research capabilities and strengthen her skills in the identification of both problems and solutions in the field of developmental education.

Ozlem Kacira, Ph.D. works as Assistant Director of Reporting and Analytics in the Strategy, Analytics and Research department at Pima Community College. She has an extensive research and data analytics background with 20 years of experience in higher education. She is passionate about connecting data to decision making and helping students achieve their goal.

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