

- Leadership
- Innovation
- Advocacy
- Development



## Editorial Corner



**Dr. Katherine Wesley**  
Executive Director, NCIA  
Asst. Professor of Practice  
University of Nebraska—Lincoln

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Editorial Corner** 1
- Capsules** 2
- Crystal Ball** 3
- Research & Books** 3
- NCIA is on Facebook** 4

I recently attended the Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) conference and was impressed by the number of excellent presentations. Topics ranged from responding to a performance-based funding policy, sharing services in institutional research and effectiveness to transforming your help desk into a service center. As evidenced by the few topics mentioned above, the presentations were relevant and responsive to the issues of today.

All of the presentations were terrific; however, one in particular was highlighted that added a twist to current thinking regarding the skills

gap. Dr. Jason Scales of The Lincoln Electric Company delivered a lunchtime presentation that many attendees were discussing well into the afternoon. Dr. Scales suggested that today's vocational training curricula, related to welding, does not fully address the complexity and diversity of today's welding industry. Scales stated: No two companies' welding needs are the same, and thus, neither are their staffing requirements. There is a difference between training people to weld and educating someone in welding – they are two distinct ideas. And, the industry today demands an educated person in welding, not so much a classically trained welder. With this in mind, we need to consider the fact that we're not facing a skills gap, but instead, a "knowledge gap."

The "knowledge gap" according to Dr. Scales must be addressed, and the first step is to think of welding programs as more than just a feeder for basic, entry-level welders. It is the responsibility of industry and vocational programs to

refocus the curriculum to reach beyond basic skills and to provide opportunity for those who are able to move to the next level, before they ever leave school with degrees and certifications in hand.



### Modern Pipeline Welding

Dr. Scales and his associates at Lincoln Electric are in the business of building curricula that addresses the "knowledge gap" through virtual reality technology that brings welding to life in a 3D environment – something today's younger workers are familiar with and are comfortable using. The computer-based technology easily helps welders become familiar with new techniques while assessing their competency on techniques they already know, without using the resources required for hands-on screening in an actual booth.

### Contact Info for Dr. Scales:

216-383-2524, Ext. 32524  
Jason\_Scales@LincolnElectric.com



## Capsules: What Happens After ESL?



**Dr. Ted G. Snow**  
Regional Rep, NCIA  
Dean of Academic Affairs  
Community College of  
Aurora, Colorado

Each fall in Colorado, faculty members from across the disciplines meet at the Colorado Community College System's annual 2:2 Faculty Conference to discuss new ideas in community colleges and how they apply to our diverse programs and disciplines. Conversations range from the details of course names and numbers to issues of transferability and student success. It's the one time each year that a large number of us from around the state have the time and a place to talk and compare notes before heading back to our home campuses to continue with the business of teaching and learning.

At our most recent 2:2 Conference, the conversation among English as a Second Language faculty members turned to a perennial topic: our understanding (or misunderstanding) of the academic capabilities of English language learners. Are we expecting too much? Too little? Have we created unnecessary barriers to students' progress through our course sequences? Should ESL be viewed as a gateway to college for the unprepared, or as a resource for enhancing student performance?

The conversation reminded us of our own ESL journey at Community College of Aurora, an institution that serves one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse student populations in the Metro Denver region. In 2009, we hired a new, talented Department Chair who immediately saw that we had a dedicated and strong faculty, but that our assumptions about English language learners may not have been accurate. We required ESL students to retake our English placement tests after completing our ESL courses to be sure they were ready for "college-level work," and instead of allowing ESL completers to matriculate directly to college courses, we required them to begin developmental English studies first. Our intentions were good but the instructional pipeline was long—often too long for students to complete. It was difficult to tell what happened to students "after ESL."

We realized it was time to change the narrative about Non-Native English Speakers, and our ESL program, from a conversation about deficits to an assertion of assets. To start, in consultation with our faculty, we established a new departmental vision: "Students who complete their ESL coursework will be prepared for the rigors and expectations of college-level coursework linguistically, academically, and culturally." We removed the requirement to take another English placement test after ESL completion, and removed the requirement to matriculate to developmental English. We talked to faculty members across disciplines to help them see ESL less as a prerequisite to be completed and more as a resource for success. We offered our expertise on how to promote the success of Non-Native English Speakers in classes across the disciplines. We shifted the conversation from "They're not qualified" to "How do we help them succeed?" and we began collecting data about our ESL completers.

### *And those data told the real story.*

By changing our perceptions, shortening the pipeline, and tracking the academic performance of our ESL students, we discovered that between the summer of 2011 and the spring of 2015:

- ESL completers received grades of A, B or C in College Composition at a rate of 81%--11% higher than the overall College Composition success rate.
- ESL completers received grades of A, B or C in College Algebra at a rate of 89%--12% higher than the overall College Algebra success rate.
- ESL completers similarly outpaced the overall success in courses across the disciplines, from Human Nutrition, Anatomy and Physiology and Medical Terminology to Public Speaking, Psychology and Sociology.

What happens after ESL? In our experience at Community College of Aurora, it depends on your beliefs about what English as a Second Language instruction is, and isn't. It depends on a vision that presumes Non-Native English speakers bring more strengths than weaknesses, and on honest conversations about students' capabilities. And it depends on the evidence.

**Vision, communication and reliable data are a powerful combination for student success.**



# Crystal Ball

## Rural Community College Takes Alternative Approach to Course Delivery and Degree Completion

**By Heather Johnson, Area Communications Specialist, Mid-Plains Community College (North Platte, NE)**

Mid-Plains Community College is offering a new option for people who want to obtain an associate degree, but have little time to do so. Classes for Sunday College started in August. The idea is for students to be in a classroom on Sunday afternoons and evenings, then complete coursework online the rest of the week.

“It’s basically a mix of every type of class we offer,” said Jody Tomanek, area vice-president of academic affairs and North Platte Community College. “It’s accelerated, is a hybrid—meaning it’s offered both in a physical setting and online, and is available through distance learning at our extended campus locations.”

According to Tomanek, word about Sunday College has already created a lot of buzz, and several people have inquired about it. She believes the program could be a viable choice for anybody.

“It would be especially good for the person who works 8-5 Monday through Friday,” said Tomanek. “Stay-at-home parents could benefit, as could high school students. It would also appeal to our current students who want to free up their schedules a little bit during the week.”

Those who enroll will take two classes the first half of a semester then two more classes during the last half. They will also take a class during the winterim, the short period between terms.

Thirty-three students are registered in the four courses and two of the courses have enrollment from all six campus locations: McCook, North Platte, Broken Bow, Imperial, Ogallala and Valentine. One student at the Broken Bow location will be able to complete his AA degree with the Fall course offerings.

More information on the MPCC Sunday College program can be found at [www.mpcc.edu/sunday-college](http://www.mpcc.edu/sunday-college)

## R&B Corner

## (Research&Books)

**In Redesigning America’s Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success**  
**By Ted G. Snow, PhD, Dean of Academic Affairs, Community College of Aurora**

In *Redesigning America’s Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success* (Harvard University Press, 2015), Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars and Davis Jenkins of Columbia University’s Community College Research Center present the bright hope and sobering truth about community colleges nationally: “A well-functioning community college system is instrumental in improving educational equity and in efficiently developing skills and talents essential for a thriving economy and society. And yet, while these colleges have helped educate millions, it is also true that many, probably a majority, of students who enter higher education through a community college do not achieve their long-term educational objectives” (p. vii).

Few community college practitioners would contradict either of the authors’ assertions. We believe in our mission and we’ve seen it work. We can tell the stories of our students’ success and we’ve championed the open access mission of community colleges throughout our careers. But faced with the scrutiny of regional accrediting agencies, state legislatures demanding a return on investment and an increasingly cost-conscious student marketplace, we also feel the pressure to change the way we do business.

In this national context, Bailey, Jaggars and Jenkins present their research findings and the practices of community colleges which have “moved the needle” on success and completion, contrasting the “cafeteria college,” designed for access and low cost, and the guided pathways college, focused on student goals and the programs and support systems to achieve those goals. In the guided pathways model, faculty members focus on skills, concepts and habits of mind and facilitate learning rather than transferring information; student intake processes focus long-term objectives, and advising is integrated into students’ everyday experience.

Continued on Page 4

## NCIA is active on Social Media

A presence on social media has become a must for higher education institutions. While many traditional aged college students are utilizing Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, Facebook is still the commonly preferred social media outlet for adults. At the NCIA Summer Board retreat, we spend a significant amount of time discussing how to reach our member institutions and how to attract potential new members. We recognized at that time that NCIA did not have a presence on Facebook. Within a matter of moments, we set-up a Facebook page and are pleased to share that exciting news with you today. We encourage you to visit our Facebook page and “like” us.

Our goal is to routinely update you with national news from the American Association of Community Colleges, regional news from our member colleges, and news from the NCIA board to help connect Instructional Administrators with a network of colleagues. **You can find us on Facebook by searching for National Council of Instructional Administrators.** Please feel free to leave us comments or suggestions on the page and we will keep you updated on NCIA news and activities.



**Dr. Jody Tomanek**  
Regional Rep, NCIA  
Area VP of Academic Affairs  
Mid-Plains Community College



## R&B Continued...

Recently, Dr. Byron McClenney, a nationally-recognized community college leader and reform expert, visited our campus. He met with a core leadership team in academic and student affairs, answered our questions, and shared his ideas. After we talked at length about the success strategies in Redesigning America’s Community Colleges, I asked, “Dr. McClenney, what keeps colleges from making the kind of reforms that can make a real difference?” Without hesitation, he answered simply, “The will. The will to do something differently.”

So what are we doing differently at Community College of Aurora? To start, our president called upon 20 or so college leaders—from the executive level through deans and directors—to read what we now fondly call “The Book” and to discuss our reactions. We discovered we had already started using some of the authors’ strategies, but we also found that a good place to start would be to revise our advisement system. An Advising Task Force report showed us our strengths and a gap between pre program advising in student affairs and program advising in academic affairs. The task force has proposed an alignment and integration of the two following the lead of Bailey, Jaggars and Jenkins who state, “Close cooperation between professional advisors and academic departments ensures a smooth transition from initial general advising to advising within the student’s program or major” (p. 17).

At my college, we’ve begun the redesign journey. We’ve discovered what we do well and not so well. But more importantly, we’ve learned that what matters just as much as strategies and tactics is the will—the courage, the persistence—to set a new course and pursue it. In community colleges, our students have shown us over and again what it takes to accomplish seemingly unattainable goals. As Bailey, Jaggars, Jenkins and McClenney and our own students have shown us, it’s time for us to change the way we do business. And it starts with the will to succeed.

Bailey, T., Jaggars, S. & Jenkins, D. (2015). Redesigning America’s community colleges: A clearer path to student success. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



Katherine Wesley, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, NCIA  
University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
Department of Educational Administration  
[kwesley4@unl.edu](mailto:kwesley4@unl.edu)

An affiliated council of

