Pennsylvania’s Master Plan for Higher Education: Increasing Postsecondary Attainment Requires Increasing Learners’ Sense of Belonging

Western Pennsylvania College Success Roundtable
9th Annual College Success Forum

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Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education

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Pennsylvania’s Challenges

A declining high school population with greater racial, ethnic, income, and geographic diversity

Postsecondary institutions built for enrolling a high school population that is in decline

A changing economy increasingly dependent on individuals with postsecondary credentials
Goal:

60 percent of the population ages 25-64 will hold a postsecondary degree or industry recognized credential by 2025, with a particular focus on closing attainment gaps for historically underrepresented populations.

Reaching Pennsylvania’s Postsecondary Attainment Goal

Pennsylvania cannot:

Increase Credential Completion (Strategic Priority 1)

unless it both:

Increases College Affordability (SP3) and Increases Transparency on the Value of Postsecondary Credentials (SP5)

in order to:

Erase Equity Gaps by Race, Ethnicity, Income, Age, Gender, and Geography (SP2)

while:

Innovating and Redesigning Postsecondary Institutions for Today’s Learners (SP4)

Note: The Master Plan for Higher Education Table of Contents, which includes these five strategic priorities, was approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education Council of Higher Education on January 13, 2021.

60% by 2025
## Pennsylvania’s Equity Gaps

### Enrollment

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18-24 year-olds enrolled in postsecondary (2019)

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25–64-year-olds with a postsecondary credential of value (2019)

### Not all Pennsylvanians are on a path to economic self-sufficiency and intergenerational wealth creation


https://luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/2021/#/progress/state/PA
Pennsylvania by the Numbers

1,068,137 Pennsylvanians ages 25-64 with some college, no credential

22% Pennsylvanians ages 25-64 enrolled in postsecondary

Belonging

Experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment

Status Quo: Sacrificing Belonging for Access

Physiological

Safety

Achievement

Belonging

Self-Actualization

1 2 3 4 5

Source: Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple. 2019. Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation
Disrupting the Status Quo: Putting Belonging Where It Belongs

Source: Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple. 2019. Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation
Which of these aspects of your social identity would you be willing to give up?

Source: Adapted from The College of Literature, Science and the Arts. Inclusive Teaching at U-M. Retrieved August 2021, from https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/the-spectrum-activity-questions-of-identity/.
When students with marginalized identities perceive schools and classrooms as unwelcoming, they tend to conclude that “people like me do not belong here.”

Creating a Sense of Belonging for Today’s Learners

- no high school diploma
- comebacker
- recent high school grad
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Native American
- Black/African-American
- immigrant
- LGBTQIA+
- veteran
- rural
- suburban
- urban
- homeless
- hungry
- poor
- parent
- working learner
- first generation
Belonging is Critical to Postsecondary Attainment

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Questions?