

Council on Postsecondary Education

2019 Board-Identified Priorities

At the 2019 board retreat the board identified five possible strategies to help close the gap between the state's current educational attainment trajectory and the needed trajectory to achieve the state's 60x30 goal. The board asked that staff review each of the proposals and bring back information and data to the board responding to the following questions:

- Will this strategy help Kentucky accelerate progress on the 60x30 attainment goal?
- Is it feasible to implement the strategy given budget and other resource constraints?
- How should the various strategies be prioritized in terms of their return-on-investment and impact?

The information was pulled together by CPE staff and is intended to serve as background information to help stimulate conversation and ideas.

The 5 priorities identified by the board were:

1. Free tuition program for one or two years of college
2. Developing incentives for out-of-state students
3. Retaining students and understanding why students are dropping out
4. Developing tools and programs to facilitate the pathways between K-12 and postsecondary education.
5. Developing strategies to improve access and success of adult students

The following is research related to No. 4:

Developing tools and programs to facilitate the pathways between K-12 and postsecondary education.

College Information and Advising

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Discussion Document

April 25, 2019

The Issue

To meet educational, economic and workforce goals, Kentucky needs to increase the education and training levels of its citizens. Strong advising is key to making strong postsecondary decisions. Too many Kentuckians do not have access to informed advising and existing postsecondary access advising is often under-informed or limited in scope. The process of identifying a career pathway and selecting the best postsecondary option is inconsistent, convoluted and opaque. Kentucky needs to do better.

At the Council on Postsecondary Education retreat in February 2019, the board determined that one their top priorities was to develop better tools and programs to facilitate pathways between K-12 and postsecondary education and a greater understanding about college-going. This discussion document provides an overview of the issue and proposed deliverables to help meet this goal.

Background

College-going rates of Kentucky's high school graduates remained nearly flat at a 55% for more than five years, and a declined to 53.5% in academic year 2018-19. For low- income students the numbers are worse. Only 43% of low-income high school graduates transition on to a postsecondary program the fall after their high school graduation. Researchers have outlined a number of factors that negatively affect the college-going rates of students (Goodwin, Li, Broda, Johnson & Schneider, 2016):

1. lower levels of academic preparation,
2. **lower educational aspirations,**
3. **less encouragement and support to attend college (particularly from family),**
4. **less knowledge about the college application process**
5. fewer financial resources to pay for college, and
6. **less knowledge about the ways to pay for college.**

In combination, these factors reduce the chance that these students will choose to go to college at all, limit the types of colleges they consider attending, and lessen their chances of completing a degree. **NOTE:** Four of

*these six factors are specific **outcomes of advising** and not related to traditional K-12 academics, assessments, or curricula.*

Enhancing Advising Services

The American School Counselor Association reported in 2015 that Kentucky's P-12 counselor-to-student ratio as 1:453. This is nearly double the 1:250 recommended as a minimum ratio for student success (American School Counselor Association, 2016). In a survey of Kentucky K-12 schools, the majority of respondents reported employing at least one counselor (full- or part-time) on staff, although 20% indicated that para-professionals (e.g., GEAR UP, FRYSC, and Upward Bound) are the sole providers of college-readiness advising.

Schools indicated counseling staff spend large portions of their time dealing with issues such as students with special needs and accommodation plans (92%), Individual Education Plans (85%), disciplinary referrals (76%) and academic remediation (62%). In contrast, these same schools report lower percentages of time dedicated to proactive college counseling (46%) and understanding assessment scores (46%).

As detailed in this proposal, CPE staff emphatically endorse the development of two interconnected strategies (curriculum and information portal) to address systemic shortcomings critical to access and student.

The Need for Common Standards and Definitions

While Kentucky has made significant strides in adopting system-wide definitions and standards related to academic readiness, those standards do not identify a set of knowledge and behavior competencies. To support the success of all students, Kentucky must engage educators and community partners at all levels and regions in collectively defining what it means for students to be holistically prepared for college and career success.

A common definition that encompasses this broader continuum of readiness does not currently exist among those directly providing advising and counseling in Kentucky's systems, programs and communities. This lack of shared understanding and alignment results in fragmented efforts that limit progress toward the common goal of increasing college & career readiness and success for all students.

Without broadening the definition of what it means to be *ready* for college and career, Kentucky will continue to see sustained opportunity gaps in postsecondary completion and successful entry into the workforce.

Standards for Educating and Hiring School Counselors

School counselors play a central role in leading college and career success and coordinating college advising efforts. Economists have noted that having a school counselor is twice as impactful on student achievement as reducing class sizes, and has a similar impact as increasing the quality of every teacher in the school to a status of "highly qualified." School counselor preparation in Kentucky must focus on college and career readiness

strategies, as well as other evidence-based interventions, to reduce equity gaps and increase college and career completion rates.

Expanding capacity to advise and inform

The most impactful model for student-centered advising and the delivery of college-and-career readiness strategies requires multi-tiered interventions involving varied stakeholders. Student success requires high-touch college-and-career advising in which students connect regularly with individuals who have the knowledge and skills to support successful transitions to college-and-career opportunities.

Resources for school counselors to support all students at this level do not exist and expanded future funding is not likely. Professional school counselors can serve as leaders and coordinators in this work but need near-peers, para-professionals and/or volunteers to provide comprehensive access to this guidance for *all* students. National models such as College Advising Corps, state models such as Kentucky College Coaches, and intervention models such as GEAR UP Kentucky all provide evidence of positive impacts on student success.

However, a shared statewide definition of the body of knowledge and range of skills and knowledge these high-touch advising professionals need to have to be effective does not currently exist. A common training model that focuses on college and career competencies for student success must be established across Kentucky.

The Proposal

Primary Deliverables

1. **Portal** - A dynamic and engaging information portal that provides the information, resources, and tools necessary to prepare, select, and succeed in a Kentucky postsecondary education option that matches students' life/career goals and fits individual student capacity.
2. **College Knowledge Course** (online and/or classroom) – Adaptable, competency-based curricula designed to provide students essential college-knowledge, financial literacy, self- and system-awareness necessary to navigate and succeed in educational pursuits after high school.
3. **Public Awareness/Engagement Campaign** – A sustained, multi-tiered effort to improve the perceived value of postsecondary education, raise awareness of available resources, address myths and misconceptions, and support broader community engagement in increasing the educational attainment of Kentuckians.

Secondary Deliverables

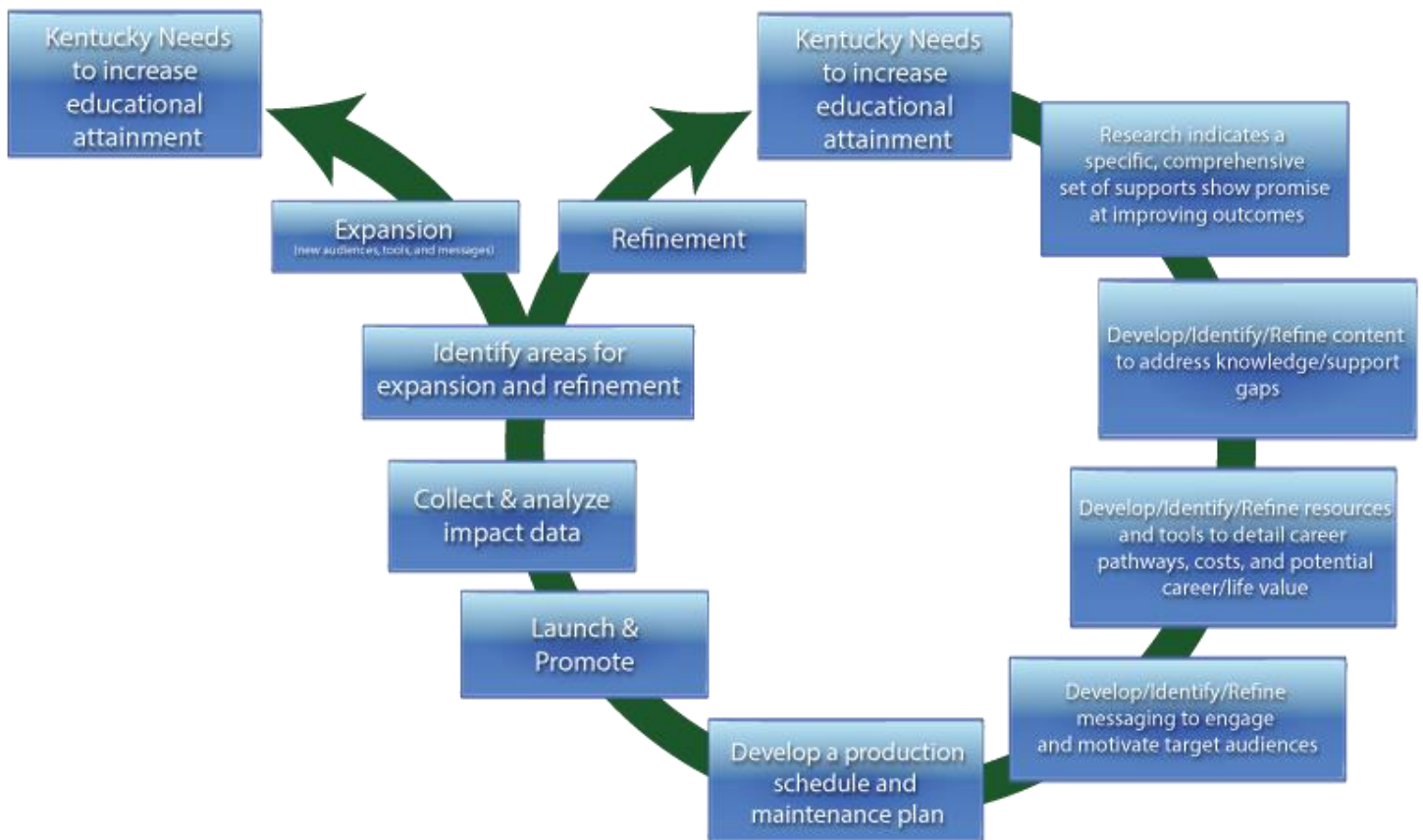
1. Standard Definitions for college readiness efforts (college coach, student-learning outcomes, teacher preparation coursework.)

2. Common College-Access Course Competencies and Evaluation Metrics
3. Web-based application(s) to compare cost, value, transferability, degree pathways across Kentucky public postsecondary education system.
4. Common educational standards for teacher and counselor preparation programs.
5. Common training and employment standards for para-professionals
6. A growth and sustainability plan to maintain resource relevance, access, and functionality.

Assumptions:

- Resources and messaging to be developed will be relevant and supportive of the needs of *all* students/potential student populations as well as supportive, engaged family members, institutional staff, and community members.
- A significant effort should be made to adapt and integrate existing resources and expertise in order to maximize the impact while reducing redundancy and waste.
- Unless significant funding is identified the development plan should look at an initial 3-5 year develop, assess, refine, and expand development cycle (see figure 1A on the next page).
- No effort detailed here can be successful without a significant and sustained effort to make the intended audiences informed and motivated. A comprehensive communication effort must be aligned to support the proposal, its purpose, and the broader messages of value and opportunity.
- The CPE will direct the evaluation and sustained impact of each deliverable and the overall value proposition.

FIGURE 1A



Deliverable #1

Functional Definition: Make the college-going process (preparation, selection, financing, and support) more accessible for all.

Project: Build a comprehensive student/advisor information portal with a focus on relevant functionality.

Estimated Outcomes:

Tier 1: Outcome: Update the existing content and refresh the images and design.

Explanation: GEAR UP Kentucky will dedicate resources and staff to the review and update of all audience information on the existing KnowHow2GOKy.org Website. *This will not include any additional functionality.*

Tier 2: Outcome: All of Tier 1 Outcomes + the introduction of a new online application to detail and compare by institution the anticipated cost and value of a postsecondary education (disaggregated by income tiers). Static Degree and Career pathway information by institution. Final resources will also be made available and promoted to public institutions for local integration.

Explanation: CPE will work with institutions to standardize and collect all relevant cost and value data. Staff will coordinate the development of standardized degree maps. The supporting data infrastructure will utilize existing CPE resources (staff and platform.) Annual maintenance will focus on data updates.

Tier 3: Outcome: All of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Outcomes + the introduction of a new online application to articulate pathways to connect student interest and aptitude to the careers sectors that best match and then promote the Kentucky programs that feed those careers. Final resources will also be made available and promoted to all relevant agencies and public institutions for local integration.

Explanation: CPE will lead the effort to identify and engage a vendor(s) to develop a data system to meet this goal and provide Kentucky-specific information and support. Annual maintenance costs will focus on data updates and third-party application access.

Estimated Costs:

- **Tier 1: No new funds allocated**
- **Tier 2: \$125,000 Development - \$15,000 annual content maintenance**
- **Tier 3: \$475,000 Development - \$200,000 annual content/application maintenance**

Anticipated Timeline(s):

- **Tier 1:** Initial Portal Launch – January 2020
- **Tier 2:** Initial Portal Launch – January 2020 / Functionality Spring 2020
- **Tier 3:** Initial Portal Launch – January 2020 / Functionality Spring 2020 / Expanded Functionality

Initial Action Steps

- Establish a development team that includes key stakeholders, audience members, and content experts
- Engage and secure content partners, providers, and experts.
- Create a development timeline, staff leads, budget and key milestones
- Review, update and expand existing KnowHow2GOKy information site wide
- Align content and messaging the Ky Advising Taskforce Standards & Competencies
- Establish a new design standards
- Identify or Develop new functionality resources (career pathways, value and cost comparisons)
- Test Content and functionality
- Launch – Assess – Refine – Expand (see figure 1A)

Key engaged CPE Units: GEAR UP; Communications; Academic Affairs; Data & Information; Executive Unit

Key External Partnerships: KHEAA; KDE; Education & Workforce Development Cabinet; Public Postsecondary Education Institutions; Ky Chamber of Commerce; The Commonwealth of Kentucky's Office of Employment and Training; AIKCU

Environmental Scan: There are many college-going portals. Most focus on one aspect of the challenge (i.e. paying for college, or selecting a college). The majority do not cover the wide range of audiences and depth of information required to meet the CPE goal. Below are a few of the leading sites and resources.

- KHEAA.com, Kentuckygoestocollege.com - Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority
- Focus Career/Explorer – Kentucky Career Centers/Burning Glass tool for job seekers
- Careercruising.com – paid interest\campus\career exploration tool (formally Ky ILP)
- CollegeGO App – College Board
- Learnhowtobecome.org – a resource for adults returning to college
- collegeaffordabilityguide.org – Degree Prospects, LLC
- Collegewise.com – paid online college advising
- Gotocollege.com – Petersons college selection tool

Deliverable #2

Functional Definition: Make the college-going process (preparation, selection, financing, and support) more accessible for all.

Project: Establish a competency-based, college-knowledge course (student learning outcomes, learning modules, lesson activities and resources, student/educator assessments.) This deliverable should address students' knowledge gaps and goals. All student-learning outcomes will align to the Kentucky College and Career Advising Standards and Competencies.

Assumptions: Digital course will be developed in a portable and platform-agnostic format.

Initial Action Steps:

- Build classroom/digital learning platform curricula/resources for:
 - Late/limited delivery – 11th-12th grade
 - Early and sustained delivery – Middle School through HS
 - Adult Ed/Returning Adult/Military
- Build teacher/coach/advisor training model(s)
 - Direct delivery resources
 - Online resources (videos, digital learning platform classes)
- Pilot the training model(s)
 - Assess and refine
- Pilot the course(s) then assess and refine
- Announce and Promote* online resources for direct delivery as well as self-guided (digital learning - online and mobile apps) then assess and refine

Potential Additional Action Items: Endorse and certify state standards for education, training, student competencies

Estimated Costs: \$150,000-\$200,000 annually: GEAR UP Kentucky is developing and field-testing a college-knowledge course that would serve as the foundation for all variants. Additional expertise in applications development, gamification, and audience-specific content will be necessary to round-out development, as proposed.

Estimated costs are limited to development and testing, and refinement expenses. Direct Delivery **does not** include educator expenses or the production of physical materials. Online learning modules development **does not** include a statewide platform.

Anticipated Timeline(s):

- **Cycle 1:** Direct-delivery curricula, for 7th and 12th grade traditional students and adult (military, first-time and returning) – Summer 2020. 8th – 11th grade Summer 2021.
- **Cycle 2:** Digital learning variant – Pilots on a one-year delivery cycle after the direct-deliver counterpart.

Deliverable #3

Functional Definition: Make the college-going process (preparation, selection, financing, and support) more accessible for all.

Project: A sustained, multi-tiered effort to improve the perceived value of postsecondary education, raise awareness of available resources, address myths and misconceptions, and support broader community engagement in increasing the educational attainment of Kentuckians.

Initial Action Steps:

- Establish a development team that includes key stakeholders, audience members, and content experts
- Engage and secure partners.
- Create a development timeline, budget and key milestones
- Establish, refine and prioritize channels, messages, and resources
- Establish a new creative brief for each targeted audience/message
- Develop new messaging resources (radio, tv, print, social media)
- Launch communication and engagement campaign
- Test audience response
- Launch – Assess – Refine – Expand (see figure 1A)

Estimated Costs: \$150,000-\$200,000 annually: CPE will coordinate the development of an editorial calendar along with series of outreach resources (ads, print materials, messaging guidelines, and local engagement toolkit) for all identified audiences. Capitalizing on the federal funding for the GEAR UP Kentucky program will collaborate with the CPE effort to provide access to radio/television/print placements that value nearly \$3,000,000 annually. Additional expertise will be provided in audience research, message development, and advertising production. Evaluation will include traditional marketing metrics (reach) as well as the success of the other deliverables details in this proposal (impact.)

Anticipated Timeline(s):

- Launch - Roll out of first round of messaging to coincide with the launch of Deliverable #1 - January 2020.
- Annually – One new value statement along with new, revised and expanded audience-specific messages each year to coincide with new resource development.