

# *The Future of higher Education In Colorado*

Facilitated by Alison Griffin, White Board Advisors

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**COLORADO**  
Colorado Commission on  
Higher Education  
Department of Higher Education

# Subject Matter Experts

## Apprenticeships and Industry Connections

- Brandon McReynolds, Director of Workforce Development
- Beverly Jones, Director of Industry Partnerships

## New models and challenges in Higher Education (including work/competency based credit, pathways, transfer, credentialing, open education resources and online learning)

- Kim Poast, Chief Student Success & Academic Affairs Officer
- Chris Rasmussen, Director of Academic Affairs
- Carl Einhaus, Senior Director of Student Success & Academic Affairs
- Spencer Ellis, Director of Educational Innovation

## Innovations in higher education finance and cost containment

- Jason Schrock, Chief Finance Officer
- Emily Burns, Lead Finance Analyst
- Lauren Gilliland, Lead Finance Analyst

## Scaling data to make decisions

- Lauren Ramsay, Chief Research Officer
- Michael Vente, Senior Director of Research and Data Governance

# Topics to Explore

[Work/Competency Based Education](#)

[Stackable Credentials](#)

[Apprenticeships](#)

[Non-Degree Credentials](#)

[Pathways and Transfer](#)

[Online Learning and Open Education](#)

[New models in financial aid](#)

[Scaling the use of data](#)

# Work/Competency Based Education (Kim and Chris)

## Opportunities

- Recognizing learning that occurs in a variety of settings outside of higher ed, including the workplace
- Restructuring credentials (including degrees) as a collection of demonstrated competencies, rather than a collection of courses
- Saving students money, giving them a head start on a credential, improving completion rates
- Empowering faculty to serve as mentors and assessment experts (not just instructors)

## Risks

- Resistance to the immense structural and cultural change this would bring
- Funding, quality assurance, human resources, etc., are all built around courses, the credit-hour, and measures of seat-time
- Concern over notion/perception of "traditional educational pathways"

**Next Steps:** Passage of HB20-1002, securing funds for implementation, helping institutions move from course-based to competency-based structures for academic programs, helping institutions develop capacity to offer "test out" options for all courses in the undergraduate curriculum

# Stackable Credentials (Chris and Kim)

## Opportunities

- Provide professional pathways from entry-level technical and skilled labor positions up through administrative and management roles in a particular industry
- Short-term credentials enable rapid reskilling and re-entry into the workforce
- Certificates within degree programs signal momentum and provide students with flexibility to enter the workforce and return to school at a later time that is convenient to them

## Risks

- Multiple players developing credentials that lack alignment and won't "stack" into others' pathways
- Tracking of students into short-term vocational programs when they have the interest and ability to succeed in other programs
- Inclusion of non-traditional pathways (CTE, industry credentials, etc.), which may not be seen by some as sufficiently "academic")

**Next Steps:** Conduct landscape analysis of institutional capacity and interest; identify and address policy and funding structures that get in the way of innovation; explore opportunities for "modularization" of degree programs

# Apprenticeships (Brandon and Beverly)

## Opportunities

- Develop new public and private partnerships
- Increase student affordability
- Increased job placement



## Risks

- Costs to business/student
- Transportability
- Market volatility

**Next Steps:** Launch of the Colorado Collegiate Apprenticeship Program.

# Non-Degree Credentials (Brandon and Chris)

## Opportunities

- Provides multiple options for learning and skills to be assessed and validated
- Expands access to individuals beyond traditional higher education locations and settings
- Enables more nimble, "just-in-time" providers to meet short-term workforce needs

## Risks

- Lack of industry recognition/acceptance
- Complex transferability; lack of articulation with credit-bearing college courses and academic degree programs
- Highly demand driven -- can require significant start-up investments with uncertain return for providers

**Next Steps:** Adopt a "common currency" for credentials and standards of quality with the National Skills Coalition; validate and promote the legitimacy of non-degree credentials in a marketplace of credentials

# Pathways and Transfer (Chris)

## Opportunities

- Clarity and transparency of degree pathways saves students time and money by ensuring that courses taken will apply to the chosen program
- Two-year to four-year pathways provide access to lower-cost community college programs closer to home for students
- CCHE statutory authority on statewide transfer can be further leveraged to create additional opportunities in evolving and high-demand fields

## Risks

- Need to balance desire for multiple pathways with interest in simplicity and clarity
- Built on existing course-based models rather than competency-based models

**Next Steps:** Identify common courses to group transfer pathways into a small number of "meta majors" or "career clusters"; integrate pathways into My Colorado Journey; train academic advisors for "purpose oriented" advising and the benefits of transfer pathways





# Online Learning and Open Education (Spencer)

## Opportunities

### Online

- Expanding access
- Global audience
- Personalized education through adaptive learning
- Funding incentives (grants)

### Open Ed

- Containing Costs
- Expanding access

### Both

- Collaborations (K12+higher ed); augmenting with other exciting ed tech

## Risks

### Online

- Costs to institutions
- Global competition
- Digital literacy, digital divide
- Privacy, security,

### Open Ed

- Sustainability
- Investment in time, effort

### Both

- Threat to legacies; lack of learner-centered approaches

**Next Steps:** 1) Partner with the communities and learners we aim to serve in building/designing 'solutions' 3) Continued edification of individuals to inform champions for change within the existing systems 3) Do these things as practices in every aspect/function of the system (no pigeonholing). 4) Secure Federal grant to support future collaborative approach leveraging these strategies to enhance the future of higher ed

# New models in financial aid (Jason and Emily)

## Opportunities

- [Pell Grant Reform](#)
  - [Better serve needs of two very different groups](#)
    - Specific, concrete, objective advising especially for adult students (integrating workforce and education)
  - Simplify application (FAFSA)
    - [FAST Act](#) (Sen. Bennet primary sponsor)
      - [One Grant/One Loan](#)
  - Reward Institutions that successfully graduate Pell recipients
    - Incentive and resources to provide services that students need for success: Financial aid, advising services, emergency funds
  - [Second Chance Pell- Obama-Era Pilot continues and shows promise](#)
- [Income Sharing Agreements](#) and other Alternative "Performance-Based" Financing
  - Ties Financing Education more Closely with Outcomes of Students; Better "Feedback Loops"
  - Reduces Downside Risks to Students
- [Emergency Aid Expansion](#)
- [Connecting more students to existing public benefit programs](#)

## Risks

- Meaningful Pell Reform requires Congressional action; some action can be taken by ED.
- Limited Institutional Resources
- Limited State Resources
- Challenges in Scaling New Alternative Education Financing Models; Questions on Whether Sufficient Protection for Students

**Next Steps:** FAFSA completion rates in Colorado and nationally; build a coalition for Pell reform. Meet with existing income-share programs and other performance-based financing programs regarding results in practice and implementation steps.

# Scaling the use of data (Michael, Lauren)

## Opportunities

- Democratize data for the public and various partners
  - High quality data leading to smart research and bold policy
- Build on data sharing between state agencies through innovative models, like the data trust powering My Colorado Journey
  - Provide all Coloradans with information that best fits their needs, interests, and journeys.
- Move towards a model where secure, well-governed data sharing is the rule, not the exception

## Risks

- Concerns around sharing of information, which can stifle innovation
- Disparate and divergent goals between partners agencies

**Next Steps:** Showcase innovative work already accomplished and currently underway, and make the case for similar data sharing practices within the entire state system

# Thank You!



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