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New Mexico Skill Up Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH)

LEAD INSTITUTION: SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND PERCEPTIONS EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

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INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND PERCEPTIONS EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

The New Mexico Skill Up Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH)

Prepared for

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SUN PATH Progress in 2015

Background

The University of New Mexico Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) is the third-party evaluator of the New Mexico Skill Up Network Pathway Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH) funded by Round 4 of the United States Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant. SUN PATH is implementing a health career pathways system through a consortium of eleven New Mexico Colleges shown in Figure 1. SUN PATH is designed to introduce cross-system collaboration and to establish new capacity that improves access to health careers through enhanced education and training designed to assist adults with gaining industry-recognized credentials. Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) is the lead agency of the grant with staff and faculty dedicated to administering and coordinating grant activities and facilitating the growth of new partnerships among community colleges/branch campuses, workforce agencies, employer partners and other stakeholders over the 4-year grant period.

SUN PATH is a consortium of 11 independent community colleges and branch campuses in New Mexico:

- *Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)*
- *Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)-Roswell*
- *ENMU-Ruidoso*
- *Mesalands Community College*
- *New Mexico State University (NMSU)-Alamogordo*
- *San Juan Community College*
- *Santa Fe Community College (SFCC)*
- *University of New Mexico (UNM)- Gallup*
- *UNM-Los Alamos*
- *UNM-Taos*
- *UNM-Valencia*

Figure 1: New Mexico Colleges in the Health Career Pathways Consortium

SUN PATH's Programs of Study

The certificate and degree programs reported by colleges to SFCC data team for Spring, Summer and Fall terms in 2015 are shown in Figure 2 below.

Allied Health: Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide, Personal Care Attendant, Patient Care Assistant, Community Health Worker, Patient Care Tech, Allied Health Fundamentals, Phlebotomy, Physical Therapy Tech, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Pre-Nursing Certificate, and Associates in Applied Science Degree in Nursing (ADN).

Health Information Technology (HIT): Electronic Health Records, Electronic Health Informatics Associates in Applied Science (AAS), HIT AAS, HIT Tech, and Medical Coding.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS): EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate, EMT-Advanced (Certificate and AS), EMS Paramedic, Community EMT, and Community Paramedic.

Evaluation of SUN PATH Progress

Data Sources:

1. Certificate and Degree programs were reported by colleges to SFCC and verified by UNM-CEPR with Site Coordinators for Spring, Summer and Fall 2015.

2. I-BEST enhancement was indicated by Site Coordinators in their quarterly report or phone interviews.

Figure 2: SUN PATH Certificate and Degree Programs Offered Through the Fall 2015 Semester

Enrollment Progress Toward Goals

As illustrated below in Figure 3 there is a wide variation in progress toward participation goals, ranging from 15% to 103% of Year 1+2 targets. Based on aggregate participation counts provided by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NM DWS) Workforce Connection Online System (WCOS), 1,120 participants have been enrolled in SUN PATH between January 6, 2015 and February 24, 2016. At the halfway point of the Spring 2016 Semester and with Summer 2016 Semester remaining to complete Year 2, SUN PATH has achieved an estimated 60% of its cumulative Year 1+2 participant target goal of 1,854. Participants and progress rates are illustrated in Figure 3 below.
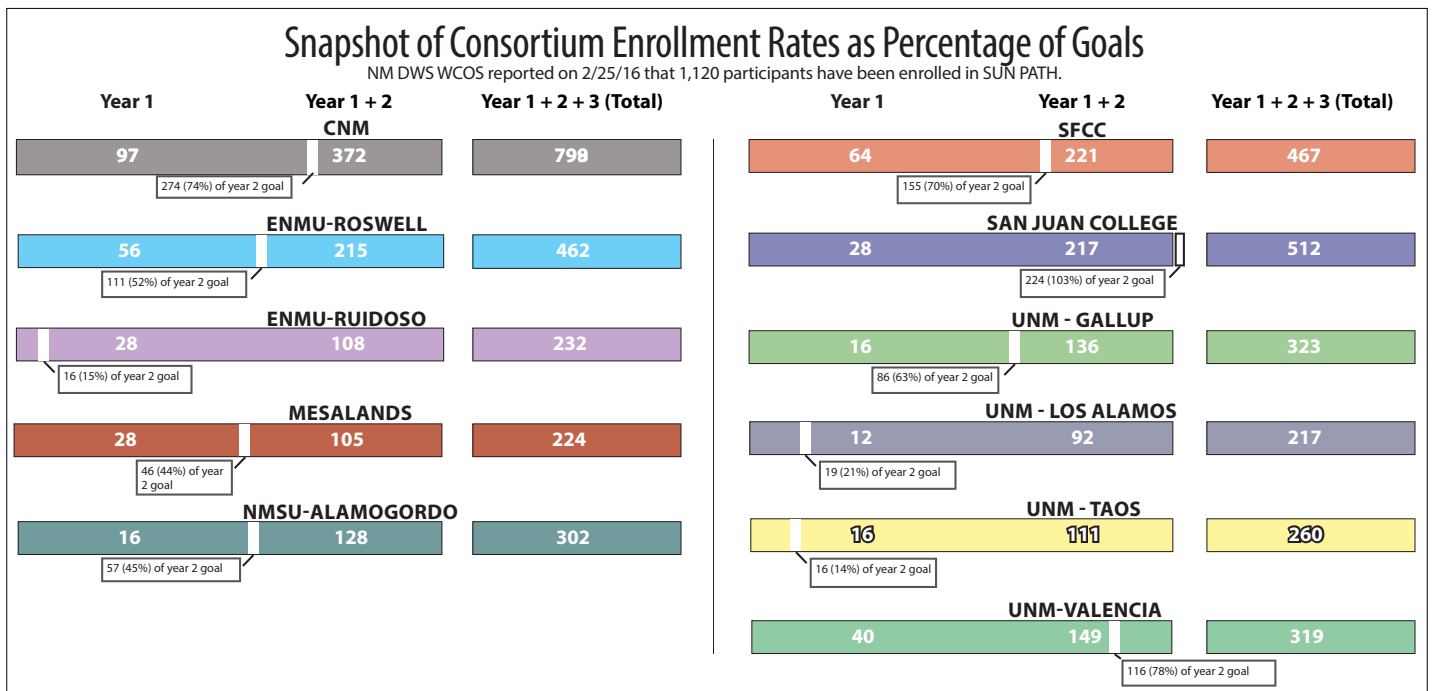
Figure 3: Snapshot of Consortium Enrollment Rates

Lessons Learned in Implementing SUN PATH's Innovative Strategies

This section focuses on lessons learned from the first year of implementation of key strategies. Each college in the consortium was tasked with implementing systemic and instructional strategies designed to achieve SUN PATH goals of expanding capacity and making improvements that assist adult workers in building a career in high demand healthcare jobs. Successes, challenges and lessons learned are summarized for the following areas to stimulate discussion and progress forward.

- Design Challenges
- Stacked and Latticed Credentials
- Simulation Labs
- I-BEST
- JDCC Services
- Additional Recommendations

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Lessons Learned: Design Challenges

Background

Target numbers were established during the grant development process with the understanding that the assumptions and numbers could be revisited and altered in order to be realistic. SUN PATH, like many grant development processes, built program targets based on samples, extrapolation and assumptions to build a feasible site project.

Progress

Halfway through year two, preliminary data shows that some colleges are not on a trajectory to reach their targets. As seen in Table 1, enrollment progress varies from 14% to 103% of target.[1]

Table 1: Colleges with Low, Middle and High Rates of Meeting Enrollment Goals

Low Enrollment Rates

SUN PATH College	Enrolled Participants	Percentage of Year 1+Year 2 Enrollment Goal
UNM-Taos	16	14%
ENMU-Ruidoso	16	15%
UNM-Los Alamos	19	21%

Middling Enrollment Rates

SUN PATH College	Enrolled Participants	Percentage of Year 1+Year 2 Enrollment Goal
ENMU-Roswell*	111	52%
Mesalands*	46	44%
NMSU-Alamogordo	57	45%

Highest Enrollment Rates

SUN PATH College	Enrolled Participants	Percentage of Year 1+Year 2 Enrollment Goal
San Juan College	224	103%
UNM-Valencia*	116	78%
CNM*	274	74%
SFCC*	155	70%
UNM-Gallup	86	63%

* Part of TAACCCT Round One

To gain a sense of scope and assess feasibility, Table 2 below examines the relationship between the SUN PATH target and the overall school enrollment population. The target enrollment ranges from approximately 2% from a large school such as CNM to 20% from a small school such as Mesalands.

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[1] This rate does not represent the final Year 2 total as this snapshot only covers participants enrolled through 2/25/16 and the interim estimate has not been verified with HED data (not available to UNM-CEPR as of 3/4/16).

Table 2: Estimated portion of target participant counts in relation to unduplicated student enrollment in the 2013-2014 academic year

	CNM	ENMU-Ro	ENMU-Ru	MCC	NMSU-A	SFCC	SJC	UNM-G	UNM-LA	UNM-T	UNM-V	Total
Target of Participants Served	798	462	232	224	302	467	512	323	217	260	319	4,116
Annual Enrollment (2014)	41,205	5,319	1,559	1,108	4,061	9,299	12,500	3,497	1,575	2,505	3,490	86,118
SUN PATH target as estimated portion of Annual Enrollment	2%	9%	15%	20%	7%	5%	4%	9%	14%	10%	9%	

Source: New Mexico Higher Education Dashboard, 12 month unduplicated headcount for 2013-2014 academic year

For the most part, target numbers are not being met at colleges that generaly experience low enrollment levels and are located in rural/remote areas, compete for students with nearby colleges, and are also set to meet high proportional enrollment targets. It may not be fair to assume that over ten percent of a student population would enroll in SUN PATH.

The Consortium Director has stated at numerous meetings that in order to efficiently use TAACCCT funds, there may be a need to reallocate target participant counts and funds from colleges who are not able to reach their target numbers to those colleges who can exceed their targets.

Successes

- Interviews measured a perception of success and an interesting trend emerged. Colleges that feel successful usually have strong "vertical" buy-in from leadership and that leadership fosters support of faculty and colleagues.

- High achieving schools overcame numerous challenges. During interviews, staff described individual initiative to promote SUN PATH goals such as incorporating intrusive advising in the registration process and assertive JDCC outreach.

Challenges

- Interviews showed that staff who perceive more barriers than successes expressed a sense of isolation, lack of buy-in from leadership and colleagues.

- The staff capacity and retention of SUN PATH staff and JDCC's may play a role in enrollment rates.

- Small communities have a low pool of students from which to recruit and also experience competition from nearby colleges with overlapping territory.

- The capacity of some SUN PATH healthcare support fields may be impacted by the number of primary care providers in the area.

- Data shows that some areas host a small number of healthcare jobs associated with Programs of Study in which JDCCs can successfully place SUN PATH completers. Students may need to relocate to find a job. For instance, the number of annual jobs posted in SUN PATH programs of study are in some locations, much lower than target enrollees.[2] This divergence means that some sites may never meet their targets with current programs of study and job market. This structural challenge requires dialogue and adaptation. Sites experiencing this situation include ENMU-Ruidoso, Meslands, NMSU-A, UNM-LA, and UNM-T.[3]

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[2]A more detailed analysis is found in the infographic on p.4 of the Statewide Advisory Council Handout

[3]For further info on job counts, see https://www.jobs.state.nm.us/vosnet/lmi/default.aspx and other DWS resources

Recommendations

- Refer to the the full implementation evaluation report and appendices for more information to support continued dialogue with SUN PATH colleges to plan next steps and possibly to revisit and adjust participant enrollment targets and programs of study. Data and links are provided to inform feasibility issues.

- Maintain a focus on responsiveness to employers in terms of job demand (for programs of study that have a number of job openings) as well as in terms of curriculum that prepares students for credentials and skills highly valued by employers.

- The engagement and buy-in of college leadership is critical to the success of the system changes brought by SUN PATH. When present, leadership's enthusiasm becomes contagious to faculty and staff. This midpoint in the grant provides an opportunity for leadership to inject new energy and excitement for being part of a project of this magnitude.

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Lessons Learned: Stacked and Latticed Credentials

Background

Stacked credentials allow people to build their career with certificates that add marketable skills and enable promotion into higher wage jobs. Latticed courses and credentials enable students to transfer between academic programs and colleges to build their career.

Progress

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) involves clearly stackable credentials to comply with national and state registry requirements. The EMS Task Force is making progress to establish common core and articulation agreements. 9 of 11 campuses offered EMS-Basic and 4 offered a stack. CNM has developed an innovative community health certificate for practicing EMTs and EMT-Paramedics.

Health Information Technology (HIT) is an option better suited to veterans and TAA-workers than to low-skilled adults because of the required competencies. Certificates were offered at 4 campuses with 2 offering a stack to an Associate's degree. CNM, SJC and UNM-Gallup are accredited by CAHIM while ENMU-Ruidoso is accredited by CompTIA. The HIT Task Force is mapping Core, Snap-on, and Medical Billing & Coding Certificates and agreements to accept HIT certificate and CAHIM Associates courses.

Allied Health (AH): 10 of 11 campuses offered 29 programs of 14 different AH certificates and 3 Associates degrees. AH offers many I-BEST options.

Successes

- I-BEST Nursing Assisting provides many benefits for low-skilled adults to identify as a college student and qualify to sit for the NM DOH approved credential exam.

- The New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC) worked for five years to develop a standardized curriculum and degree process so that Associate's degrees in nursing can lattice between community colleges and articulate to Bachelor's degrees in nursing. Students who are accepted into BSN programs can articulate their credits from their Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN).

- CNM recently introduced a mid-level stacked credential with the Patient Care Technician program. This 16-22 credit certificate requires Nursing Assisting or EMS-Basic as a prerequisite and prepares students with technical skills related to caring for patients in an acute care setting. Presbyterian Hospital employs many levels of Patient Care Techs.

- SFCC is working with specialists to develop a WorkKeys job profile to help integrate the new credential of Community Health Worker into standard practice.

- UNM-Valencia is exploring the concept of a Medical Assistant "Plus" and CNM has introduced a Patient Care Tech certificate. Content experts could explore national dialogues about the potential role for advanced medical assisting on a physician-directed team.[20]

- SUN PATH subject matter experts continue to work on course and certificate articulation. Interview respondents described parallel efforts to articulate Associate's Degrees in Nursing with BSN programs (i.e., CNM and UNM-Main).

- The Community Health Worker certificate is emerging as a new credential at two or more SUN PATH colleges. Currently, there is not a standardized curriculum for this credential, but progress has been made

at the state level as the New Mexico Department of Health announced a new certification process in August 2015.[21] Community Health workers fill a niche to support preventative healthcare measures to chronically ill patients by helping them manage their care. Community health advocates are hopeful that the insurance reimbursement will expand as evidence grows that preventative healthcare management avoids costly visits to emergency rooms and untreated illness.
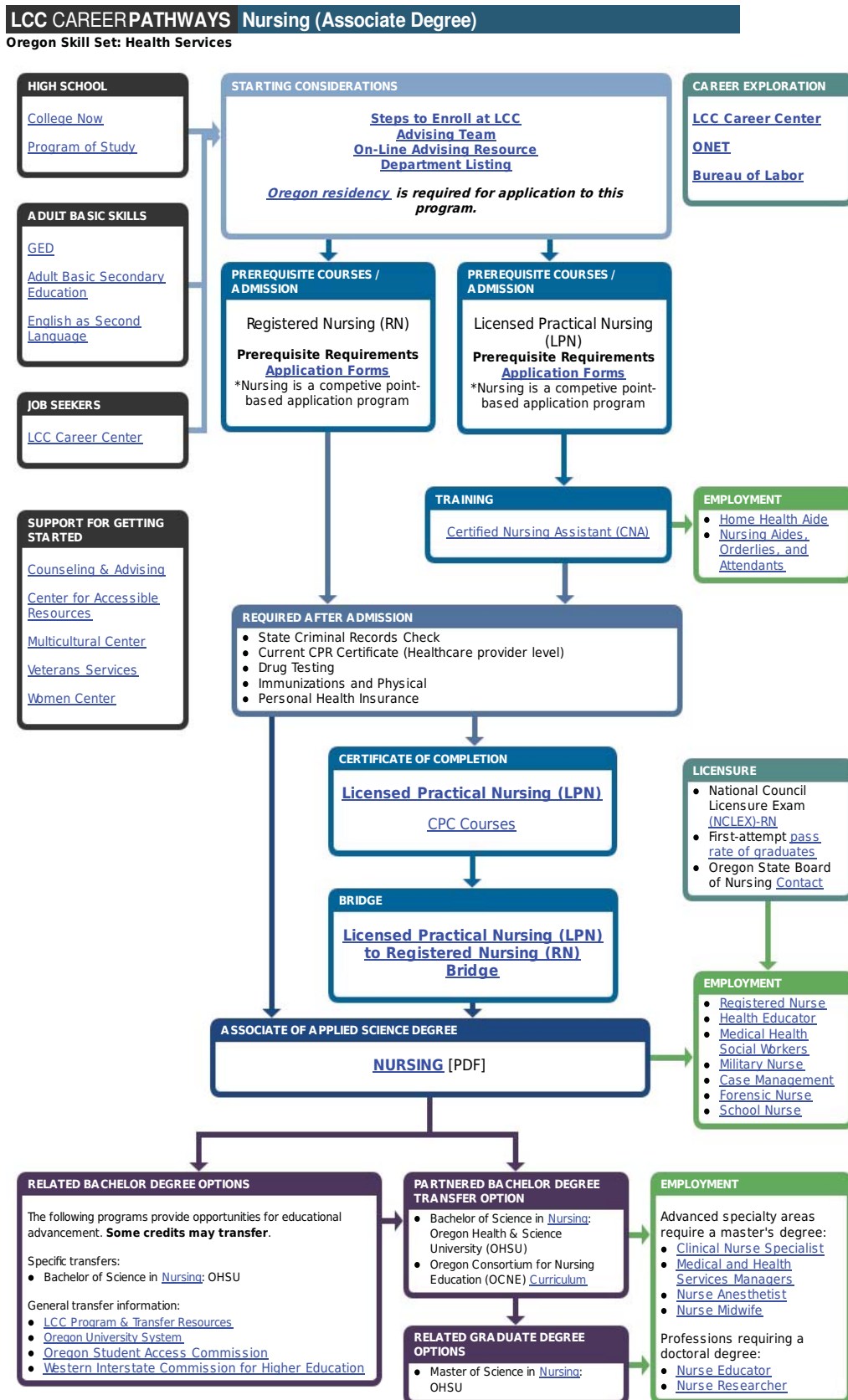
Challenges

- Many college career pathway diagrams do not show a clear path for I-BEST completers to stack credentials toward higher paying jobs.

- The trend toward professionalization of nursing means that LPN is not a mid-level option for SUN PATH (though job demand is still high). Consortium colleges have degrees and certificates to prepare a student to apply for a BSN (e.g., pre-Nursing, ADN, AH-AAS), but they do not stand alone as an industry-recognized credentials for immediate employment.

- SUN PATH college websites do not provide options for students to understand or access stacked credentials.
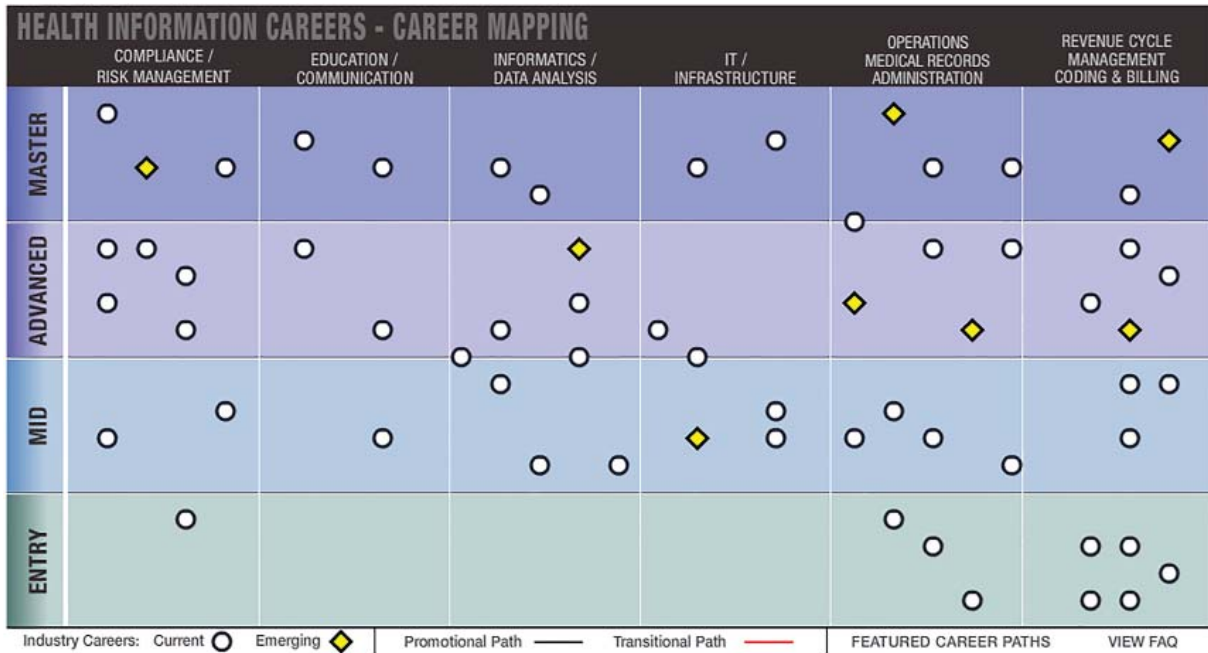
Recommendations

- Responsiveness: Replicate the structured employer meetings (convened by CNM and UNM-V) that focus on specific job curriculum and employer niches (e.g., Home Health Aide).

  - Community Health Worker (CHW) is an emerging credential with an effective role to play in maintaining public health. SUN PATH institutions would benefit by working together to establish common programs and curricula.

  - As Community EMTs incorporate CHW as a prevention-practice, perhaps SUN PATH could explore intersecting CHW with early childhood home visiting to add stack/lattice options.

- Accessibility: Explore building interactive websites that link to various entry points for stackable credentials (See Figure 1 from Lake County Community College - a TAACCCT project in Oregon). AHIMA also provides robust HIT diagrams that link to job descriptions (See Figure 2).

- Alignment: Continue analyzing how programs and courses align, when divergence is sensible, and how to better provide latticed opportunities (examine programs with different course and credit requirements). At this phase of implementation, parallel programs should be adopted rather than reinvented.

- Stack Toward Higher Wages: Increased wages from training is a key TAACCCT outcome measure. Many entry-level healthcare jobs (CNA, Home Health, and Phlebotomy) pay less than $9.00/hour.

  - Re-examine health career pathway diagrams to represent stepping-stones that are achievable by both low skilled adults and college-ready students. Figure 3 and Table 1 provide tools to cross-check credential stacks to wage data.

  - Assess the academic and time requirements to move from one rung on a career ladder to another. (e.g., pre-requisites to move from Nursing Assistant to the next option)

  - Assess where I-BEST fits in the career path. What practicalities come into play for students to move forward (e.g., time, competencies, funds)?

- Assess wage growth (average entry level wage data from DWS LASER system shown in Table 1)

- Expand pathway options by incorporating both SUN PATH and non-SUN PATH certificate/degree options offered at the college or adopted through SUN Online.

- Identify potential gaps that could be filled by adopting more SUN Online courses.

- Collaborate with local employers to understand their career ladders and assess how your academic ladder matches up. Make adjustments as necessary.

- Continue to involve key players at the college to maintain buy-in, approvals, and collaboration.

- <u>Intermediate Stacks:</u> Adopt mid-level AH certificates across the consortium that respomd to employer demands, such as CNM's Patient Care Technician (i.e., qualifies completers for available jobs at acute care facilities) or UNM-Valencia's Medical Assistant "Plus."

  - Explore nursing credential requirements of local employers for levels of care and determine if the consortium can develop a program of study that fills in the gap between Nursing Assistant and Associate's Degree or Bachelor's in Nursing.

- <u>Industry-recognized credentials</u>

  - Incorporate stackable credentials within SUN PATH Allied Health Associates and Pre-Nursing or ADNs so students can concurrently gain technical certificates within the degree program to build in marketable skills as a contingency.

  - Revisit SUN PATH eligibility for certificate and degree programs that do not result in an industry-recognized credential or job.

Source: https://www.lanecc.edu/custom/pathways/nursingassociatedegree

Figure 1: Interactive Academic Credential Pathway

Source: 1 AHIMA http://hicareers.com/CareerMap/

Figure 2: Interactive HIT Career Map

Average entry-level wages are listed for occupations in common pathway diagrams.[4]

Table 1: Statewide Average Entry-Level Wages

Allied Health Occupations	Annual Entry Level Wage	Hourly Entry Level Wage
Home Health Aide	$16,978	$8.14
Personal Care Aide	$17,149	$8.22
Nursing Assistant	$17,943	$8.60
Community Health Worker	$21,080	$10.10
Health Educator	$31,510	$15.10
Phlebotomist	$20,144	$9.65
Med & Clinical Lab Tech	$26,671	$12.78
Medical Assistant	$22,490	$10.81
Medical Records	$20,350	$9.75
Billing, Cost, and Rate Clerk	$34,960	$16.75
Pharmacy Aide	$20,170	$9.70
Pharmacy Tech	$24,847	$11.91
Physical Therapy Aide	$21,090	$10.14
Physical Therapy Assistant	$28,470	$13.69
Occupational Therapy Aide	$18,130	$8.72
Occupat'lTherapy Assistant	$39,830	$19.15
Radiographic Tech	$22,710	$10.92
Radiologic tech AAS	$27,490	$13.17
Surgical Tech	$27,813	$13.33
Respiratory Tech	$27,580	$13.26
Respiratory Therapist AAS	$44,194	$21.18
Licensed Practical Nurse	$31,779	$15.23
Registered Nurse	$47,404	$22.71

Source: statewide average entry-level wages. Hourly is estimated by dividing annual by 2,087 hours/year for full-time work.
http://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/2015_NM_Wages_Report.pdf
Additional information also can be found in DWS's "Occupational Wages for Job Seekers"
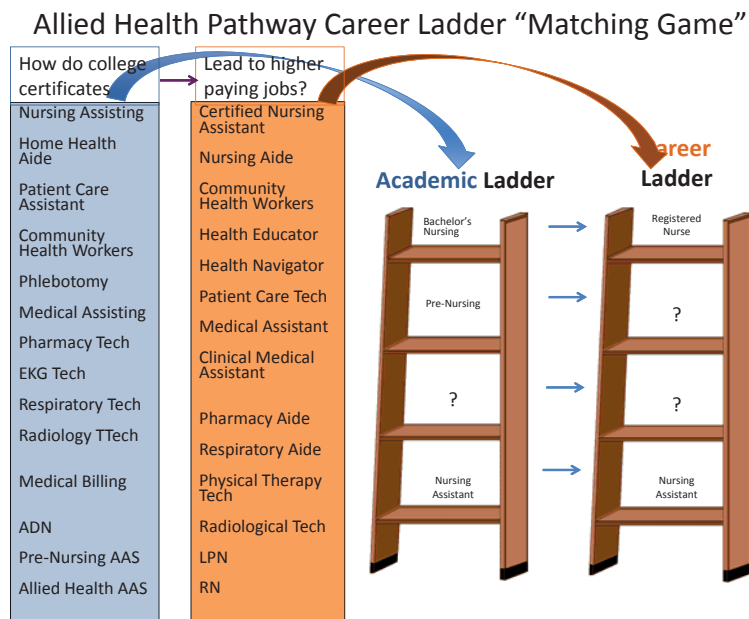
Allied Health Pathway Career Ladder "Matching Game"

Figure 3: How Can Credential Stacks Lead to Advanced Careers?

[4]Actual job wage scales will vary and this chart is provided for illustration purposes to inform stacks and pathways. Further detail can be found at https://www.jobs.state.nm.us/vosnet/analyzer/results.aspx?session=oeswage

Lessons Learned: Simulation Labs

Background

SUN PATH is funding an expansion of simulation capabilities at each college. In addition, four regional medical simulation centers (RMSC) are being developed with scheduled rollout of mid-2016.

Progress

High- and mid-fidelity and mid-fidelity mannequins have been purchased at all sites and web-based teleconference and face-to-face trainings are being developed. Simulation curricula and a repository of simulation cases and resources will be shared on BaseCamp.

Successes

- CNM is developing faculty/staff training sessions and videos and a simulation network to share ideas.
- RMSC curricula is being developed in alignment with established state and national credential models and board exams(e.g., Nursing, EMS and Respiratory Therapy).
- Schools with robust Sim Labs and dedicated personnel (instead of ad hoc stipends) find exuberant reception by instructors and local medical centers for the life-like scenarios.
- Students have the opportunity to practice and get feedback in a safe, structured environment.
- Sim Labs help students discover whether the healthcare environment suits them.
- Using Go-Pro™ cameras during EMT simulations has allowed students to learn about what went well and needs improvement.

Challenges

- Progress is slow to start at UNM-LA, NMSU-A, and ENMU-Ruidoso as students did not have access to Sim Labs during 2015.
- Maintaining and updating Sim Lab equipment represents a significant cost for colleges.

Recommendations

- Share techniques for incorporating the review of recorded simulation sessions in faculty-student learning, for instance, consider replicating practices developed at CNM to incorporate Go-Pro™ cameras in simulations and dedicate time to debrief with faculty and student about what went well/needs improvement.
- Explore additional certificate options that can be offered to students who bank a set number of hours in the Sim Lab (replicate CNM's approach).
- Reach out to local employers to explore opportunities to train their existing staff with professional development or safety verification modules. This fee-based curricula could also promote sustainability.
- Maintaining and updating Sim Lab equipment requires continuous investment. Consider filing Sim equipment into each college's equipment replacement cycle process.
- Explore the usefulness of various sophistication levels of sim-mannequins to suit different programs of study. For instance, I-BEST students may find a low-fidelity mannequin easier to use than a high-fidelity mannequin.

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Lessons Learned: I-BEST

Background

SUN PATH adopted I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) as an evidence-based strategy to accelerate acquisition of industry-recognized credentials for low-skilled adults.

Progress

10 of 11 colleges report offering a certificate-bearing program or course using the I-BEST instructional model. Certificates enhanced through I-BEST include Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomy, Home Health Aide, Patient Care Assistant, Personal Care Attendant, Community Health Worker, and EMT-Basic.

Successes

- I-BEST is well regarded in the colleges that have embraced the team-teaching approach.
- New collaboration is emerging between Adult Ed and Healthcare instruction departments.
- Interviews reported that students are responding enthusiastically to the I-BEST model.

Challenges

- Standardization is not an objective for leadership as they value the ability of colleges to implement what suits their needs. However, variability in implementation of an evidence-based model means that the evaluation will be challenged to measure what works, and overall results may not meet expectations if key practices are not followed.
- Qualitative data collection indicates the need for attention to courses that are experimenting with the I-BEST model to determine if SUN PATH objectives are being met.
- Coordination between Adult Ed and Health Ed departments as well as buy-in from leadership and faculty is not consistently embraced across the consortium.
- I-BEST instructors report that *BaseCamp* has not served well as a collaboration tool.

Recommendations

- Increase consistent implementation of key evidence-based practices of I-BEST (Wachen, 2010) that are demonstrated to improve outcomes. These practices include:
    - Assess student eligibility using cut scores for basic skills (minimum and maximum);
    - Share at least 50% of classroom with **both** the basic skills and content instructors;
    - Be mindful of pairing instructors who can work well together;
    - Facilitate non-academic support services to improve student retention; and
    - Offer short, modularized courses (consider offering gen-ed modules for completers).
- Determine implementation practices that should be standardized across the consortium.
- Consider intervention on courses with instructional practices inspired by I-BEST but either don't result in an industry-recognized certificate or don't fulfill SUN PATH strategies.[5]

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[5]Strategy 2.1: Accelerated and contextualized developmental education

- Increase awareness and understanding of college leadership and staff about I-BEST to improve collaboration within colleges.

- Explore the possibility of holding I-BEST courses off-campus at adult education centers, tribal centers, community centers or other locations convenient to target populations.

- Consider institutionalizing I-BEST by issuing a faculty request process before the grant ends.

- Capitalize on peer learning opportunities so campuses/instructors with established I-BEST practices can mentor and coach those who are building their practice.

- Post I-BEST opportunities on college websites.

Lessons Learned: Job Development Career Coaching

Background

Job Development Career Coaches (JDCCs) are employed by the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) and placed at a SUN PATH colleges to provide individualized job assistance to participants.

Progress

JDCCs provide a wide range of career guidance activities including coaching on résumés, interviews, job resources, soft skills and credentialing. JDCCs officially enroll students in the SUN PATH reporting and evaluation process by tracking progress in the DWS system.

Successes

- Hosting JDCCs on campus created a new partnership between previously separate systems;
- Creating access to job supports otherwise not available (e.g., build résumé, mock interviews);
- Being persistent with outreach to employers e.g., piggy-backing on existing employer committees, inviting employers to meetings at their location and on campus; and
- Taking initiative to reach out, be accessible, and provide support to students in ways such as, reaching out to faculty to collaborate in the classroom, logging onto DWS Online system together during class to engage students, posting job openings in highly visible locations, pro-actively calling employers to build relationships and identify job opportunities, etc.

Challenges

- JDCCs notice poor attendance to workshops and office hours outside of class time. They need to find innovative methods to interact with students, especially when not invited into the classroom;
- Though trained to track industry-recognized credential results, interviews show scant progress;
- College staff seek better clarity on collaboration processes with JDCCs, DWS, Workforce Offices and Boards, WIOA, etc. (unpredictability of WIOA funds is frustrating); and
- Committee/group employer meetings are poorly attended.

Recommendations

- PIs and Site Coordinators would like to be invited to participate in the hiring process to select JDCCs because they work closely together.
- College staff would like clarification of a communication process with DWS about the working relationship and their purview for supervising or suggesting activities with the JDCC. A number of colleges voiced the need for increased involvement and supervision by DWS and well-defined goals to ensure that JDCCs are consistently providing high quality support to students, faculty, and staff.
- JDCC's may need standard procedures to follow up on credential exam results. Perhaps JDCCs could be involved in lining up credential exams with participants to ensure follow-through.
- Some regional workforce offices and boards may need a reminder about the important TAACCCT partnership with colleges and JDCCs. Increased WIOA information, transparency and predictability would be greatly appreciated, especially about fund priorities and looming fund exhaustion.

- Train JDDCs to be proactive and innovate ways to interact with students if they don't come to them.

- Timely support is needed for colleges who lack a JDCC, and those with part-time assignments may need added support during crunch times.

- Encourage one-on-one outreach/meetings with employers in lieu of committee meetings.

- Increase peer learning among JDCCs about how to successfully reach students.

- Increase collaboration between JDCCs & Site Coordinators for an intrusive advising routine.

- Provide soft skills training to JDCCs and clarify expectations for their role in coaching soft skills.

- The Extra Mile: Employer interviews revealed that a key time for retention is during the transition into the new job. Perhaps JDCCs can make coaching available through this transition.

- Individual initiative is important to meet singular needs. Invoke Kristen's effectiveness tips!

Lessons Learned: Additional Implementation Successes and Recommendations

Background

UNM-CEPR examined numerous strategies to provide data and information to inform continued implementation. Numerous successes deserve recognition and many recommendations did not fit into the other Executive Summary sections. A sampler of additional successes and recommendations are summarized here.

Successes

Collaboration

Collaboration has been a huge factor in program success that has helped forge teams and partnerships throughout the consortium and throughout the state. Collaboration is not an easy task with the numerous colleges, individuals and systems. SUN PATH staff at colleges around the state expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn from peers.

SUN PATH implementation has involved numerous activities and there is more tireless work that this list conveys!

- Hiring and training new personnel,
- Incorporating SUN PATH's goals and systems changes into each campus' culture,
- Designing career pathways with stacked and latticed credentials,
- Developing and adopting new certificate and degree programs,
- Calibrating curricula and articulation between colleges,
- Participating in professional development,
- Incorporating enhanced instructional practices,
- Participating in taskforces to collect data and develop systems and procedures,
- Conducting outreach and marketing,
- Enrolling and retaining students,
- Collaborating intrusive advising between college and workforce staff,
- Collecting participant data and sharing it with SFCC,
- Celebrating the newfound success of participants.

SUN PATH has made significant progress in developing a sophisticated network of teams. The commitment to continuous quality improvement is evident. **The dedication and creativity of staff and faculty shine through in this challenging initiative.** Naturally there are challenges inherent in a program of this size and complexity, and the many successes shine through. Every SUN PATH PI, Site Coordinator, JDCC, faculty and staff deserve congratulations on their energetic efforts to display patience, perseverance, and kindness[6].

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[6] Kristin's Tips for Happiness and Effectiveness as Change Agents in a Complex Environment

Leadership

As with any major undertaking, **leadership is instrumental set the tone for adaptation and collaboration at all levels of staff and faculty.** The greater the buy-in from leadership, the more positive the experience and the more powerful the implementation.

Building Capacity

The grant has enabled new capacity by providing funding for staff and expertise as well as equipment. The new certificates, degrees, Sim Labs, I-BEST instruction and collaboration have created momentum.

Additional Recommendations

General Implementation

Leadership and buy-in

- Continue to **build buy-in** with college leadership and other key players in the college and employment community.

People make a difference

- The job description of a Site Coordinator and JDCC entail a **broad range of skillsets**. It is important to hire people who can **build bridges** with college leadership, faculty and staff and employers and, be committed to one-on-one 'intrusive' advising/coaching with participants. It's a tall order and the right people in the job can make a big difference.

Guidance, consistency and clarity

- Sites have expressed a need for **additional guidance and mentoring** regarding roles, responsibilities, procedures, best practice examples, timelines and expectations to improve the quality of implementation.
- Explore ways to improve communication within the consortium.
  - **The statewide trainings are very effective and appreciated.** During the interim, consortium managers could perhaps facilitate additional mentorship across the consortium by sharing strategies and tactics found successful at different sites.
  - Though people don't always love bi-monthly meetings, the **online meetings have been an efficient way to share information. Advance notice is appreciated.**
  - People don't always comprehend information in the same way. **Tracking decisions in writing for reference after online meetings** would be appreciated.
  - Track statewide policy that impacts SUN PATH programs (e.g., future of LPN credentials, CPL, etc.)

Forward Momentum

- With Phase One ramped up (new academic programs and equipment in place), **the next heavy lift is to build out SUN Online and CPL.** Staff have indicated the need for additional guidance to build momentum (e.g., specific procedures and best practices to replicate).
- Grant funds enabled the capacity building and this stage is a sensible time to pursue **sustainability strategies.**
- I-BEST is good at accelerating the attainment of credentials, yet employers still prefer a high school credential. The consortium could develop strategies to **build general education competencies for I-BEST graduates** to help them qualify for higher-level credentials.

- **Industry-recognized credentials are important to employers.** Colleges are encouraged to ensure that curricula prepares students to pass certification exams and for JDCCs to facilitate the process for students to take exams and report results.

WorkKeys

- Coordinate with the NM Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) and Regional Workforce Offices to determine if:

  - WorkKeys will remain a recognized assessment by federal agencies,
  - A relationship exists between WorkKeys and WIOA financial aid,
  - **Ground-work has been established with employers to recognize WorkKeys,** and
  - WorkKeys is a priority for employers.

- Inform colleges whether WorkKeys is a mandatory assessment or whether they can forego it if local employers do not recognize or require it.

- **Assess effectiveness** of UNM-V's approach to using WorkKeys as pre and post assessment and determine if it should be replicated in other SUN PATH colleges.

- Discuss the potential of measuring any correlation between the WorkKeys National Career Readiness Credential and job attainment.

Soft Skills (Professionalism)

- Interviews revealed that the **persistent deficit in soft skills is detrimental** for employers because of patient safety, morale, and business reputation. Colleges still struggle with addressing this deep-seated issue that cannot always be addressed in a one-off course. **Continued dialogue and creativity is encouraged to develop a deliberate process to incorporate soft skills into instruction, coaching, and modeling of professional behaviors.** Guidance on roles and responsibilities of JDCCs, Site Coordinators and faculty would be helpful.

- **Helpful resources** are available from the U.S. Department of Labor and other TAACCCT grantees. Ready resources including definitions, rubrics and curricula are provided at http://www.careeronestop. org/CompetencyModel/pyramid_download.aspx?AH=Y, (soft skills shown at the base of the pyramid in Figure 4).

Source: http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/competency-models/pyramid-download.aspx?industry=allied-health
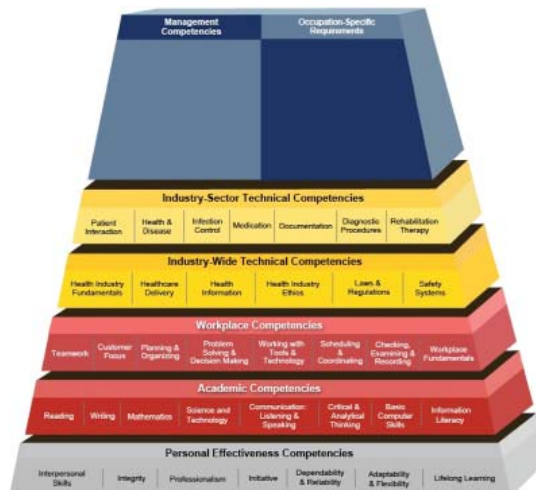
Figure 4: Allied Health Competency Model

- Some interview respondents suggested that JDCCs themselves would benefit from additional training to effectively model and coach soft skills.

- **Group learning resources can be shared on Basecamp.**

SUN Online

- **Continue building understanding and buy-in within the consortium.**

- The remaining grant term provides the opportunity to increase momentum for posting, adopting and publicizing courses. Interviews showed that SUN PATH staff would **appreciate more guidance.**

- A **focused effort is needed to market and promote SUN Online** within colleges to advisors as well as to students and to the public through course catalogs and college websites.

- To sustain SUN Online, the **continued negotiation with HED to provide backbone support** is important (i.e., establish policies, procedures and staff functions).

- Continue discussions about how to share Sim Lab scenarios through SUN Online.

- Capture opportunities to expand professional development and peer learning through SUN Online.

Credit for Prior Learning

- **Colleges are hesitant to develop a bottom-up approach** to a system that seems to them to be more efficiently designed from the top-down. Continued collaboration with HED is encouraged.

Continue Peer Learning

- Find ways to share outstanding practices. Highlights include:

  - Intrusive advising: UNM-Valencia sees every student before they register. Student Services sends students to sign up for WorkKeys and meet with a SUN PATH advisor. The student must have a background check and understand the fees and deadlines before registering for classes. A hold is put on the student's account until the intrusive advisor has provided approval to Student Services for them to register for classes. (UNM-V)

  - Photograph completers to celebrate their achievement and track certifying exams after they exit. (NMSU-A)

  - Recruit students from BOTH the local workforce office and the Adult Basic Education Department for a more diverse workforce (not just one or the other). (Mesalands)

  - Students meet with the Site Coordinator to do an exit interview after they have completed their program of study– Site Coordinator. (UNM-V)

  - Seek mentors within the Consortium on implementing I-BEST. Use local NM college faculty expertise (in lieu of national trainers). (Multiple)

  - Track Pro-Metric student credential exams online. All schools have access. (UNM-V)

  - An employer panel helps students by allowing them to ask unstructured questions, e.g., what they look for in ideal candidates, how successful medical professionals deal with stress and balance work and home-life. (ENMU-Ruidoso)

  Continue the good work of collaboration!

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