

***TAACCCT Sustainability
Survey Report***

PA TAACCCT Consortium

*TAACCCT Round 1
Community College of Philadelphia*

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In May 2015 the Grant Administration office created and issued a sustainability survey to all 14 TAACCCT Round 1 Project Directors. The intent of the survey was to understand and document how and if the TAACCCT Round 1 project would be sustained after the grant ended on September 30, 2015.

The TAACCCT Round 1 Consortium grant encompassed 14 community colleges in the State of Pennsylvania and focused on three industry areas: Advanced Manufacturing, Regional Energy Conservation, Production & Distribution and, Healthcare Information Technology. There are three key priorities of TAACCCT -1) Accelerating progress for low-skilled and other workers; 2) Improving retention & achievement rates and/or reducing time to completion and; 3) Building programs that meet industry needs, including developing career pathways. Additionally, the grant was to increase capacity at the colleges in order to allow them to continue building and providing industry supported workforce training and education to their students. This was accomplished through the purchasing of equipment, development of curricula and online or hybrid learning opportunities and, by developing new employer relationships. A key design element of the project was the hiring of Career Coaches at all 14 colleges who provided academic advising, support and job placement preparation and to students.

The Survey

The first three questions of the survey sought to understand how colleges planned to evaluate the TAACCCT project. Questions 4-6 gathered information about how well Project Directors believe their program achieved the three grant priorities. Questions 7 through 43 delved deeper to gather information about best practices and sustainability of key activities and strategies of the grant. The areas explored include:

- remediation
- programs of study
- fiscal, compliance and procurement procedures
- equipment
- employer partnerships
- career coaching
- job readiness and job placement strategies
- career pathways

The final questions ask about innovations and what could have been done differently.

The survey was developed with the objective of documenting how key elements of the grant may be sustained by the colleges and to provide the consortium with valuable information regarding the implementation of this grant funded workforce project.

The survey was disseminated via Survey Monkey to all 14 TAACCCT Project Directors. Survey results, in their entirety, are accessible via the links at the end of this summary.

Summary of Survey Results

Questions 1-3 Evaluation Framework

The majority of respondents (8) indicated that a framework was not developed at their college to compare TAACCCT data with non-TAACCCT data but, all respondents (14) indicated that TAACCCT data would be evaluated to some degree. The 3 colleges that developed a framework were looking at enrollment and completion rates and in one case at enrollment, retention, completion and job placement rates. Three respondents did not know if their college developed a comparison framework.

Data collected during TAACCCT will be evaluated to some degree in the following areas:

- Grant success
- Demand for programs
- TAACCCT 4 implementation
- Future program development
- Career coach effectiveness
- Students skill attainment

Questions 4-6 Grant Priorities

All 14 respondents either strongly agreed (6) or agreed (8) that their program achieved what it set out to accomplish. The majority also indicated that they were very effective or effective in achieving our three grant priorities.

Please rate how effective your TAACCCT program was at achieving the following grant priorities.						
Answer Options	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective	Rating Average	Response Count
Accelerating progress for low-skilled and other workers	1	0	7	6	3.29	14
Improving retention & achievement rates and/or reducing time to completion	1	0	10	3	3.07	14
Building programs that meet industry needs, including developing career pathways.	1	0	6	7	3.36	14
Comments:						0
					<i>answered question</i>	14
					<i>skipped question</i>	0

One college indicated that they were very ineffective at achieving all three grant priorities. We believe this was recorded in error as the particular college excelled at achieving their metrics and reported positive results in the remainder of the survey and throughout the grant period of performance. The project director who completed the survey has since left the college and therefore our assumption cannot be confirmed.

Nonetheless, the remaining 13 colleges reported positive ratings for all three grant priorities. Grant priorities 1 and 3 were rated almost identical with a split between Effective and Very Effective. However, the majority rated themselves as Effective (10) in achieving Priority 2, Improving retention and achievement rates and/or reducing time to completion, as opposed to Very Effective (3).

Comment: It is unclear if the rating difference is based on retention and achievement, completion time or both. Throughout the grant, the consortium has reported positive completion rates (number enrolled/number completing) and we exceeded our overall goal in March 2015.

All 14 colleges indicated that career coaching had a positive impact on achieving the grant priorities with the highest impact on priority two.

Please rate how effective your TAACCCT program was at achieving the following grant priorities.						
Answer Options	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective	Rating Average	Response Count
Accelerating progress for low-skilled and other workers	1	0	7	6	3.29	14
Improving retention & achievement rates and/or reducing time to completion	1	0	10	3	3.07	14
Building programs that meet industry needs, including developing career pathways.	1	0	6	7	3.36	14
Comments:						0
<i>answered question</i>						14
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Questions 7-12 Remediation

11 of the 14 responding colleges offered remediation to TAACCCT participants but the majority of those (7) did not identify any remediation best practices. Of the four that did identify best practices, one provided detail to support their response which was that “individuals who completed remediation through Plato were able to achieve the necessary test scores to be enrolled in the program.”

Our survey found that most colleges (5) indicated remediation made no difference in students’ educational success but no comments to support this were provided.

Four colleges indicated remediation did make a positive difference. When remediation did make a difference it impacted eligibility and completion rates. One college indicated that students who did not

complete TAACCCT remediation had lower completion rates than those who did. Three others indicated that remediation helped potential students meet eligibility requirements and provided a refresher for students before entering class.

Questions 13-18 Programs and Curricula

According to our records, some 140 programs of study were offered through TAACCCT by the 14 community colleges. A number of these programs and curricula were developed using TAACCCT funds. This group of questions sought to document if programs and curricula would be utilized after the grant ends.

Twelve respondents indicated that ***new programs*** (this includes new and/or existing courses organized to create a new program of study) launched during TAACCCT will continue to be offered at the college. According to respondents, this includes 7 credit and 26 non-credit programs of study. The majority of which are Advanced Manufacturing programs.

One college indicated that two programs originally offered as non-credit will be offered as credit programs. Another indicated that two non-credit manufacturing programs have been integrated into the Mechatronics Degree and Certificate programs.

Eight colleges indicated that ***curricula*** (individual courses) developed with TAACCCT funds will continue to be used at the college. Four indicated this question was not applicable - meaning that curricula were not developed with TAACCCT funds and two colleges did not know at the time of the survey.

Survey results show that over 29 curricula were developed under TAACCCT. The majority of these curricula were developed to be taught in person (21). Three were listed as being hybrid. Details of other curricula were not provided.

Lastly, no colleges will continue to use the HealthCenter 21 curriculum after the grant ends. HealthCenter 21 was purchased via a statewide contract and made available to all colleges for use in the Healthcare Information Technology program. During the grant, only a small number of colleges used the online curriculum.

Questions 19-24 Procedures

Community College of Philadelphia and the Grant Administration Team implemented a number of fiscal, compliance and procurement procedures throughout the grant to ensure agreement with the federal grant guidelines. This group of questions sought to determine if any of these procedures would be replicated by the colleges.

The majority indicated that fiscal, compliance and procurement procedures would not be replicated at their college. The exception was with regard to TAACCCT 4, where Northampton County College is the lead with Lehigh Carbon Community College and Luzerne County Community College as part of the

consortium. NCC indicated that there were procedures in all three areas that would be replicated for TAACCCT 4. Additionally, one college reported that the equipment inventory was a helpful procurement tool.

Questions 25-26 Equipment

Thirteen of the 14 responding colleges purchased equipment with TAACCCT funds and all 13 indicate that it will continue to be used after the grant ends. The equipment will be used for credit and non-credit programs, for current programs which the equipment is supporting and with related programs.

Questions 27-28 Employer Relationships

In order to support priority 3 of the grant, *building programs that meet industry needs, including developing career pathways*, the consortium developed new employer partnership during the grant period and created employer advisory groups. These employers supported curricula development, provided internships and hired program completers.

All of the respondents provided comments on how employer partnerships will be sustained when TAACCCT 1 ends. In two instances the respondent did not know how the relationships would be sustained. Five indicated that employer engagement was a regular practice at the college and would be continued by college staff. Eleven colleges indicated that they would maintain some level of regular interaction with employers.

To further support this, 13 indicated that employer advisory meetings would continue after the TAACCCT grant.

Questions 29-34 Career Coaching

Questions 29-34 focus on Career Coaching, an integral part of the TAACCCT grant which supported participants from inquiry through job placement. TAACCCT Career Coaches work closely with TAACCCT-eligible students to assess skills, and provide coaching and career planning assistance to develop pathway entries to credit or non-credit enrollment. They serve as a primary point of contact for students from initial inquiry to and through job placement.

Three of the 14 respondents indicated that Career Coaching will be sustained after TAACCCT 1 ends. Two of these indicated that career coaches will be used for TAACCCT 4. Reading Area Community College (RACC) is currently the only college that plans to sustain Career Coaching beyond TAACCCT. The model will be implemented for non-credit, workforce development programs. This decision was based on “improved enrollment, retention, completion and job placement numbers.” RACC career coaches will collect student data, assess student skill levels, provide career coaching and career planning assistance, track student progress, coordinate delivery of life skills and to support student success.

One college will not sustain career coaching and indicated that related duties will be assumed by staff in the career services department.

Ten colleges responded that they did not know at the time of the survey if career coaching would be sustained.

In spite of definitive details about sustaining career coaches at consortium colleges, 13 respondents identified promising practices regarding career coaching. It is unknown if these promising practices will be evaluated and integrated into existing college structures.

Promising Practices:

- Individual job search and resume support
- Resumes formatted and targeted to industry standards
- One on one support, follow up
- Career coach awareness of and ability to discuss community and government resources for students in need
- Ability to follow students from recruitment to placement
- Engagement of student from program interest to job attainment.
- Contact with students through phone, email and in person
- Formalization of procedures for non-credit, workforce development programs (enrollment, retention, completion and placement)
- Academic monitoring
- Workplace readiness training
- Intensive one on one case management
- Career coaching helped with completion and job readiness
- Career coach availability when students had a problem or a success to share.
- Classroom visits

It is important to note that promising practices highlight the amount of **one-to-one support** provided to students throughout their time at the college.

Questions 35-40 Job Readiness and Placement

A key focus of TAACCCT is to assist students in obtaining high-wage, high-skills jobs in the first quarter after exit from the college. Thus the following questions were posed to get a sense of job readiness and job placement strategies that were developed during the grant and whether there were plans for them to be sustained.

Eight colleges indicated that new or enhanced **job readiness** strategies were developed. Six of the eight indicated that these strategies will be replicated. Strategies include:

- Re-socialization skills for inmate population

- Open house sessions for potential students which included presentation from industry partners
- Employer engagement during class
- Providing resume and interview preparation
- Workplace readiness workshops and individual appointments
- Introducing job search and soft skills strategies early and throughout training
- Industry specific resume development which did not exist prior to TAACCCT
- Employer participation in school sponsored job fairs

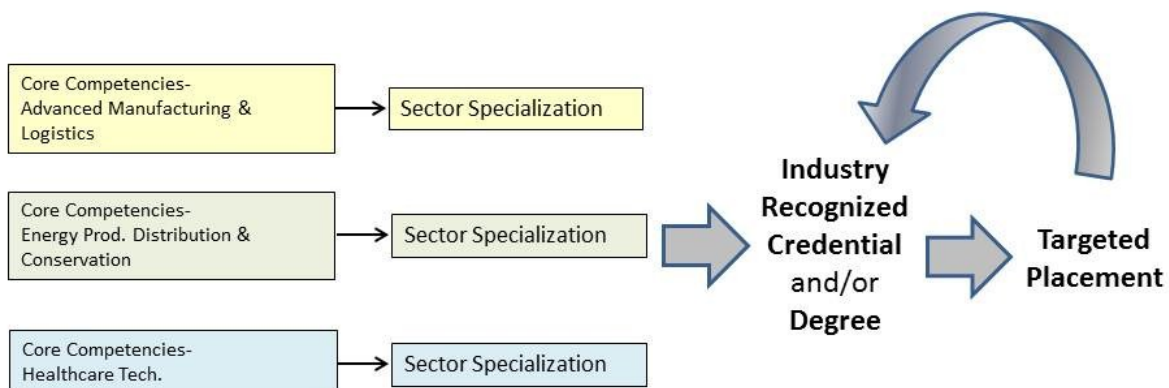
Seven respondents indicated that new or enhanced **job placement strategies** were developed and 5 of these 7 indicated that strategies will be replicated (placement strategies may vary from readiness strategies in that they include job development and/or employer engagement). They include:

- Building relationships with local companies in preparation for referring training completers
- Holding open house sessions for potential students which included presentations from industry partners
- Working with a job developer
- Making the Career Coach the primary college contact for employers seeking to hire completers
- Providing semester based workplace readiness seminars
- Creating strong advisory boards where companies were involved with developing the curriculum including job readiness
- Corporate visits

Questions 41-43 Career Pathways

In alignment with Priority 3, *building programs that meet industry needs, including developing career pathways*, the consortium colleges developed pathways that provided stackable and industry recognized credentials in Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare Information Technology and Regional Energy.

TAACCCT career pathways followed the model outlined in our statement of work and provided below:



Survey results show that 13 colleges developed career pathways as part of their TAACCCT program.

Six colleges indicated that there are plans to further develop these career pathways, another 4 did not know at the time of the survey and 4 indicated that the career pathways would not be further developed.

Career Pathways include:

- General interest in computer science and/or medicine **to** HIT Specialist program **to** positions in regional hospitals
- Non-credit roustabout energy production tech certificate **to** Energy Technology Credit Certificate
- Welding Pathway
- CDL Pathway
- Industrial Maintenance Technology Pathway
- Medical office **to** Medical Coding and Reimbursement
- Intro. to Advanced Manufacturing **to** Industrial Maintenance **or** Welding **or** CDL **or** Wastewater Treatment Operator
- Advanced Manufacturing Technology pathways
- Machinery Repair **to** Electrical Construction **to** Electrical Construction Technology Degree
- Machinery Repair Cert. **to** Electromechanical: Automated Systems Degree
- Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning Cert. **to** HVAC Diploma **to** HVAC/R degree
- Entry level metal fabrication **to** welding **and** CNC operator
- Certified Production Tech. **to** Mechatronics **or** Process Control Tech **articulating** to 30 credits toward Associate Degree
- Mechatronics Pathway
- Petroleum Technology Pathway
- Prior learning credits for Digital Patient Records Certification, Geothermal and PV Solar Installer

Question 44 What Would You Change?

We were interested to know what TAACCCT Project Directors would change to their scope of work knowing what they know now. We asked them to consider 5 areas and indicate if they would or would not change any element of each area. The answers were varied and included comments on individual programs and the project as a whole.

All 14 respondents provided an answer for each category listed above.

Knowing what you know now about TAACCCT, and if you could re-write your college's Statement of Work, would you change any of the following:

Answer Options	Yes	No	Maybe	I don't know	Rating Average	Response Count
Staffing structure	5	8	1	0	1.71	14
What would you change?						6
Programs Offerings and Schedule	5	9	0	0	1.64	14
What would you change?						5
Equipment Purchases	4	8	1	1	1.93	14
What would you change?						5
Recruitment/Enrollment Eligibility	0	13	0	1	2.14	14
What would you change?						0
Outcome Data Tracking	5	7	1	1	1.86	14
What would you change?						6
Other:	2	4	0	6	2.83	12
What would you change?						2
<i>answered question</i>						14
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Comment: We were not surprised to see that colleges would change their scope of work on some level since, over the life of the grant, we have had many conversations with TAACCCT staff about how to meet metrics while providing the best experience for participants. These conversations included looking at staffing, program offerings, equipment, recruitment and data tracking. In many instances, we worked with TAACCCT staff to adjust, change or enhance these areas of their programs.

Staffing Structure: The majority of respondents, a total of 8, would not change the staffing structure but five would. Two colleges indicated that they would add a job developer to their staff. Two other colleges commented that they would change the Project Director position. In one case the respondent would like to see it as a full time position, in another the respondent believes the position should be paid (not a duty assumed by existing staff). One respondent would increase the career coach position to full time and other indicated that they would like to see direct supervision of the project by the division dean.

Comment: In year 2 of the grant, the consortium agreed to engage a statewide job placement vendor to assist with placements and retention. This developed out of conversations we had highlighting the inability of career coaches to act as job developers due to the demands of recruiting, vetting and supporting students during training. Only five colleges budgeted for a job developer and therefore, at the majority of schools, Career Coaches were taking on this role until we engaged the statewide vendor.

Program Offerings and Schedule: The majority (9) would not change program offerings and schedules but 5 would. Changes include:

- More emphasis on short term training, including breaking up larger programs into smaller modules.
- Adding Welding to the original scope of work
- Eliminating Regional Energy programs due to solar energy being dropped from the high priority occupations list one year into the grant.
- Offer more rolling admission
- Changing the sequence of offerings.

Comment: Throughout the grant colleges had the opportunity to adjust the programs offered provided they met all DOL requirements. In year 2, DOL approval was given to add additional programs of study not in our original scope of work, specifically, CDL and Wastewater Operator. Some colleges began offering programs at different times, such as evenings and weekends, in an effort to respond to student needs. That said we had still expected a few colleges to indicate on the survey that they would change the schedule of offerings as we heard, at times throughout the grant, about difficulties in filling classes.

Equipment Purchases: Eight colleges would not change equipment purchases; 4 would. Colleges would purchase more or different types of equipment. As referenced in the program offering section, solar energy equipment would not be purchased by one college.

Recruitment/Enrollment Eligibility: Thirteen respondents indicated that they would not change any elements of recruitment/enrollment eligibility and 1 respondent did not know at the time of the survey. There were no comments in this section.

Comment: In the course of the grant, recruitment posed a challenge for a portion of the colleges so these results were surprising to the Grant Administration Office. During the grant, several colleges expressed difficulties with students not finishing the course, not having the appropriate existing skills required by employers and not being as committed to finding employment as they may have initially expressed. That said, many strategies were developed and implemented to recruit the best possible participants within the confines of program design (training offered, eligibility requirements, cost). Respondents may believe that all avenues were explored and therefore would not change any recruitment strategies. Enrollment requirements were also closely monitored in relation to recruitment and enrollment goals throughout the grant. Colleges appropriately responded to enrollment issues and/or lulls in several ways, two of which included assessing and adjusting eligibility requirements and changing program fees.

Outcome Data Tracking: Five colleges would change outcome data tracking while 7 would not (1 indicated “Maybe” and another did not know). The general consensus would be to develop a more user friendly way of collecting and tracking data. Additionally, one respondent indicated that the long term outcome data requirement set by DOL was “very difficult”. Another would like to see more required contact with students and career coaches after completion.

Comment: The consortium engaged a statewide vendor to develop and support an online database and student portal for TAACCCT 1. Unfortunately, the platform was not developed according to specifications, was delayed and had frequent usability issues. While functional, it did not meet all the needs and/or expectations of most staff.

Reference to the DOL tracking requirement may refer to our employment retention metric which is defined as a student who is employed in both the second and third quarter after the placement quarter. This amounts to 6+ months of tracking after employment.

Other: One respondent would like to see “stronger evaluation points in addition to the DOL metrics”. Another indicated that charging a small fee for programs would impact training retention.

Questions 45-46 Innovations and Additional Comments

We sought to identify any innovations or impactful practices that were developed by the colleges during TAACCCT. We asked respondents to list innovations in service delivery. Thirteen respondents provided an answer to this question. It is interesting to note that the innovations were varied but can be inexplicably connected to influencing better student outcomes.

Three areas of innovation stand out:

- Increased one on one time with students,
- New program development and,
- Career Coaching.

Specifically, colleges identified the following innovations:

- Ability to offer HIT specialist program to a wide geographic area with lower enrollment requirements (these programs would not have been rostered if not for TAACCCT funding)
- Tuition free class
- Resume and job search assistance
- Increased one on one with students
- New programs that can now be offered to the public
- Strengthened industry partnerships
- Courses and programs that meet the needs of area employers
- Improved recruitment techniques
- Student focused support helping student navigate systems of finance, enrollment, classwork and preparation for employment.
- Utilization of Key Train for non-credit programs
- Closer relationship with CareerLink system; use of CWDS system to assist with job search
- Securing employment for students while still enrolled in training or internships

- Embedding industry credentials in academic programs.

Our last question asked for additional comments regarding the sustainability of TAACCCT at the college level. These general comments, from 6 respondents, indicate that project directors feel sustainability of TAACCCT will depend on affordability and CareerLink funding, support from college administration and the business community and the continued development of TAACCCT programs of study.

SurveyMonkey Results

Exports of the survey from SurveyMonkey are saved in two separate PDF documents. One provides a summary of the data including graphs and responses to open-ended questions. The second provides all 14 individual responses surveys.

At present, the files can be found on the shared network drive at the following:

<..\FINAL REPORT\SurveyMonkey -Sustainability Summary Report.pdf>

<..\FINAL REPORT\Survey monkey-Sustainability Individual Responses.pdf>