

**HIGHLIGHTS OF OKLAHOMA'S
COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA AND
NGA COMPLETE TO COMPETE INITIATIVES**



WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE CCA AND NGA-CtC PLANNING AND WORK?

Oklahoma's leadership team for *Complete College America (CCA)* and *NGA Complete to Compete (CtC)* has broad representation from the Governor's Cabinet, the State System of Higher Education, and institutional presidents. The immediate **past two chairs of the Council of Presidents** were involved in organizational meetings for CCA/CtC and will be leadership team members throughout the project. In addition, Oklahoma has two members of the Governor's Cabinet on the leadership team – the **Secretary of Education** and the **Secretary of Commerce** – who ensure important bridges to other key state government and business entities. The State System is represented by the **Chancellor and key senior staff** with operational responsibilities on the project residing with the State System. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for OSRHE serves as the state's liaison to the CCA and NGA CtC projects. The leadership team will use **State Regents** meetings, **Council of Presidents**, **Council on Instruction**, and other systemwide councils for updates and policy deliberations. Other critical partners in the work such as **CareerTech** and the **State Department of Education** will be included in expanded steering and oversight committees during the fall and spring of FY'12.



MESSAGE OF IMPORTANCE OF DEGREES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The planned rollout of the CCA projects is part of a unified economic policy initiative that involves the Governor, higher education, and business and industry. Working through the CCA leadership team and key Cabinet officials, the call has come from the Governor for these **priorities to be central to job creation and workforce development in the present and future**. The planned activities will stress that these research and data-based solutions are central to our state's attempts to have a more seamless and efficient strategy for development of talent. As a kickoff event for all activities, the Governor and Chancellor of the higher education system have called for education officials and business leaders to make **commitment to move beyond rhetoric and take these steps to address the educational pipeline challenges**. This kickoff event in form of press conference for the entire College Completion project was held on September 22nd of 2011 with a College Completion Summit involving higher education and business advisory members to be convened in the spring of 2012. All other project work began in the summer of 2011 and will continue through the following 24-36 months, a time period which coincides with the Governor's current term.

The challenges of “**Academic Preparation**” and “**Adult Degree Completion**” form a public policy puzzle that cannot be solved by choosing one or the other. Oklahoma must commit to a “two front” strategy that addresses the most pressing needs of the “emerging workforce” matriculating through our K-12 system and addresses the demands for postsecondary credential completion among our “current workforce,” the returning adult student, that represents a constituency in need of seamless and timely degree completion options.

WHAT IS THE URGENCY OF PURSUING THE CCA AND NGA CtC AGENDA?

As higher education institutions in Oklahoma experience national trends and challenges brought on by the recession – increased enrollment demands, significant calls for higher education to drive economic development, and declining and inelastic public budget allocations – postsecondary leaders are even **stronger advocates for the public and individual investments in higher education and realize the enterprise’s unique role in shaping the future of the state.** In Oklahoma, the Governor and other elected officials have joined their counterparts around the nation in **focusing on jobs, jobs, jobs.** Higher education’s response to this call requires a thorough evaluation of the system’s stewardship of intellectual, economic, social, and cultural needs of the state.

Despite Oklahoma’s commitment to performance funding via Brain Gain and focused efforts over the last decade to generate more college graduates for the workforce, some Oklahomans are still falling through the cracks. These potential students and graduates include those who are first-generation college students; from lower than average income; have ethnic backgrounds of Hispanic, African American, and Native American; and are transfers among institutions. More attention must be placed on serving these populations because **Oklahoma’s community and economic development depends on human capital development and preparing citizens for innovation and flexibility in an ever-changing economy.**

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Oklahoma cannot afford to leave any citizen behind as it enters its second century of statehood. The “direct from high school to college” participation rate is lower than desired and **solutions require multiple, collaborative strategies, not one-size-fits-all programs.** Academic preparation is a challenge evidenced by persistently high remediation rates among first-time freshmen. Participation and completion gaps exist along ethnic, age, and geographic dimensions. Once enrolled, the freshman-to-sophomore retention statistic points to a critical leak in the early college pipeline.

Equally important is the continued engagement of the adult population in education and training. The state’s population is aging and the number of high school graduates is declining; therefore, **the current workforce aged 25 to 44 must be targeted for degree completion.** At present, the “some college but no degree” population in Oklahoma is large and **represents an unrealized return on an already substantial state investment.**

Ultimately, what is proposed under the CCA and NGA CtC action plan is an acceleration of efforts to make significant improvements to two critical segments of the educational pipeline in Oklahoma: **restructuring remedial and developmental education and development of accelerated degree completion options.** Undergirding all of these efforts will be a **revised Brain Gain accountability framework** that utilizes appropriate components of the state and campus-level CCA and NGA metrics and that **reflects these new priorities by measuring and rewarding these state priorities.**

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE ON THE CCA PROJECT?

In joining the Complete College America Alliance of States and adopting the NGA Complete to Compete metrics, Oklahoma pledged **to extend its Public Agenda scope and reach, recommit to its Brain Gain performance program, and make college completion a top priority with commitments to state and campus goals, solid action plans, removal of policy barriers, and measures of progress.** Considerable steps have been taken to date in Oklahoma's CCA project. The data team has evaluated Oklahoma's state-level and campus-specific enrollment and graduation data against key degree completion statistics using the CCA and National Governors Association approved metrics. This data collection was completed and submitted to the CCA staff in October 2010 with modifications made for the CCA Innovation Challenge. A standardized report of these baseline datasets for all CCA states served as the **basis of Oklahoma's CCA Completion Academy activities** in March 2011 and has been utilized during all forums and meetings as the leadership team coordinates with key stakeholder groups in moving the project forward.

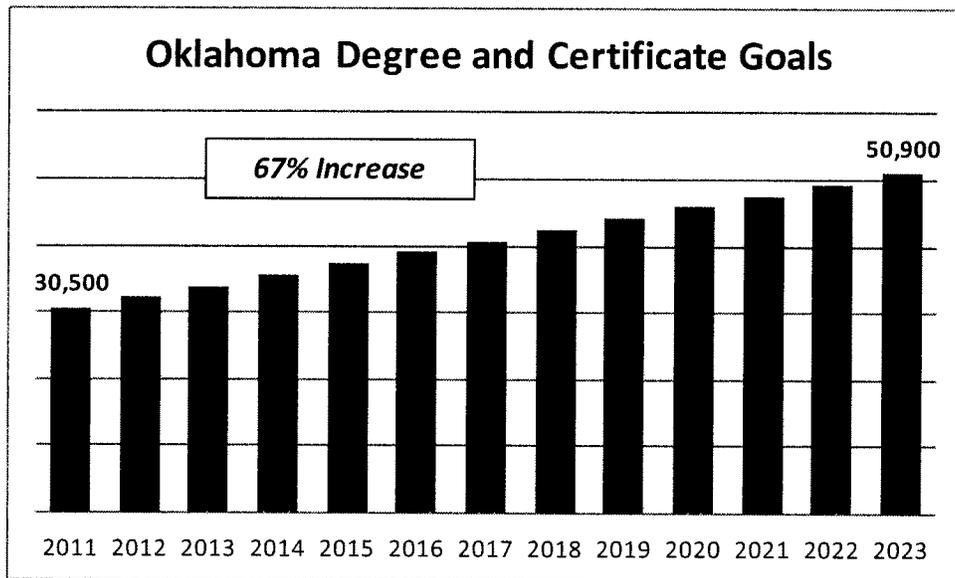
In addition to the baseline state and campus level datasets, Oklahoma has also completed an expanded policy audit that assessed the state's policies and major initiatives on a variety of postsecondary access and completion topics. The policy and program review addressed initiatives and policy framework in the areas of **student preparation, remedial and developmental studies, grant and aid opportunities, and initiatives aimed at adults, part-time students, and under-represented minorities.** This assessment also included a basic review of Oklahoma's performance funding program (Brain Gain) in support of evaluation of our incentive components for the CCA project and in anticipation of the broader and more detailed discussions within Oklahoma on possible revisions of Brain Gain and development of campus-specific college completion plans.

Though the college completion efforts of Oklahoma will expand upon current state and campus programs, there will be **new initiatives at local and state levels that will be developed to meet the degree and certificate completion goals.** Review of the CCA datasets and best practices within the CCA network of states have revealed several opportunities that Oklahoma can pursue to ensure that more students are prepared for college, that barriers to degree completion are diminished, and that graduates have certificates and degrees that have value and flexibility in establishing careers and/or advancing graduate and professional school opportunities. State and campus activities in support of these goals will include:

- **Adult degree completion initiatives in high-demand academic disciplines at the associate and bachelor's degree levels**
- **Reverse transfer initiatives that allow students with significant hours toward a degree to complete meaningful associate degrees in the short-term with clear paths to bachelor's degree options**
- **Certificate completion options through further development of cooperative agreements between higher education and CareerTech**
- **Targeted initiatives to increase freshman to sophomore retention and overall graduation rates**
- **More effective and efficient completion of remediation and freshman gateway courses**
- **Development of innovative and workforce-driven academic programs at the certificate, associate, and bachelor's levels**

- **Development of more intentional partnerships between higher education and K-12 to enable better preparation of students for collegiate success and smoother transition between 12th grade and the freshman year**
- **Better documentation of degree completion contributions of private and for-profit postsecondary education**

Finally, these CCA datasets and policy audits have served as the basis for developing statewide completion goals for Oklahoma. Higher education is committed to increasing access to quality academic programs, increasing the number of college graduates, and better preparing those graduates to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing global economy. Oklahoma’s colleges and universities currently produce 30,500 degrees and certificates annually. **To remain competitive nationally and globally, the system of higher education in Oklahoma is committed to increase the number of degrees and certificates by 1,700 each year to a level of 50,900 by 2023.** This represents a 67 percent increase over a twelve year period.



Complete College America has been impressed by Oklahoma’s early work on these completion projects and has expressed that by reaching out to Governor Fallin and **inviting Oklahoma to partner in establishing a national model for statewide completion plans.** CCA national staff and project consultants are working with OSRHE staff to incorporate Oklahoma’s preliminary work into a model plan project that can serve as an example of both process and product to the other CCA states. Oklahoma’s work to date **will also be spotlighted at the CCA Annual Convening** of the 29 alliance states on October 18-19, 2011. CCA has pledged technical assistance to support project activities outlined in Oklahoma’s initial plan and is working with the Oklahoma CCA Leadership Team to identify other potential funding sources for the work.

WHAT SPECIFIC STATEWIDE PROJECTS ARE PLANNED?

College completion initiatives in Oklahoma **must involve strategies to reach both the emerging workforce matriculating through the common education pipeline and the current workforce that is dominated by individuals that have some college or postsecondary training but have no earned degree or credential.** Oklahoma's activities as a part of the CCA Alliance and NGA CtC project will be focused on a public agenda framework that covers two fronts:

- (1) Academic preparation initiatives that offer a fundamental rethinking of the role of remediation, and**
- (2) Adult degree completion initiatives that aim to streamline degree options and remove time and sequence barriers.**

Bolstering the initiatives will be a reform of the state's successful Brain Gain Performance Funding Program that will provide **accountability and metrics for measuring state and campus progress** toward these important goals.

Initiative #1: Statewide reform and redesign of remedial and developmental education through redesign projects and a common framework established by OSRHE and implemented by colleges and universities.

Approach: All 25 college and universities are engaged in reviews of existing remedial education programs and working toward a reform of these activities that promotes more timely completion and improvements to learning outcomes. Through the Council of Presidents and Council on Instruction, the higher education system is determining general parameters of acceptable instructional delivery, assessment, and placement strategies that can guide the pilot reform activities and inform the new policy and framework. Project framework will allow for inclusion of CCA consultants as well as National Center for Academic Transformation, Education Commission of the States, and their developmental education redesign strategies and support. Oklahoma is building upon its work with ECS during the last two years on the *Getting Past Go* project.

Responsible: OSRHE serves as the lead agency and has called for the reform project. Details will be informed by the Council of Presidents, research from OSRHE, and the continual guidance from the Council on Instruction. Faculty engagement will occur in the redesign, implementation, and refinement of policy framework by utilizing academic discipline teams in Oklahoma's Course Equivalency Project. These English and math teams are already mobilized on the Common Core State Standards and PARCC projects and will be expanded to help lead the curriculum, assessment, and placement reforms. All campuses will be involved in redesign project with several piloting academic assessment, placement, and delivery reforms with a common evaluation framework.

Collaborators: OSRHE, Council of Presidents, Council of Instruction, Council of Student Affairs, Assessment Professionals, Math and English Faculty, State Department of Education, and CCA Network Remedial Reform Resources

Timeline and Workplan: Inventory and baseline assessment of all remedial & developmental programs through the ECS project will be complete in fall 2011. Pilot projects on at least 12 campuses will be initiated in 2011-12 with a common evaluation and reporting framework implemented. Using the COI Assessment Committee as a steering and oversight committee, a remedial education reform mini-conference will be held in 2011-12 to include training on course/program redesign, CCSS/PARCC, ACT EPAS, Statway/Quantway math reforms, and other best practice demonstrations from both Oklahoma

institutions and the CCA network. Policy and program redesign efforts will continue through 2012-13 with new OSRHE Assessment and Remediation policies finalized in spring 2013.

Initiative #2: Higher education will work jointly with K-12 to develop a strategy and conduct pilot activities in the 11th and 12th grades to reduce remediation demands in the transition from high school to college.

Approach: These partnerships will leverage Oklahoma's existing use of the EPAS system which tests 95 percent of all 8th and 10th grade students and connect to the research and planning for the PARCC assessment in support of Common Core State Standards. The end goal will be a meaningful bridging curriculum and interventions that make much better and intentional use of the 11th/12th grade years. Oklahoma's CCA Innovation initiative will prioritize the establishment of an "early assessment and redesigned 12th grade math" model as a primary part of the framework for redesign models and pilot projects. The CCA Leadership Team will work with K-12 leadership to understand goals of project, will establish network of institutional and K-12 partners, and will work with OSRHE and ACT staff to develop communication tools around the early assessment and bridge opportunity.

Responsible: OSRHE, the Secretary of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction will jointly lead a steering committee of discipline experts from common and higher education that will advise the development of these opportunities. Oklahoma has an extensive network of discipline workgroups from the Statewide Course Equivalency Project that have already been deployed for work on the PARCC project and are positioned for involvement in the CCA initiatives.

Collaborators: OSRHE, State Department of Education, Council of Presidents, Council of Instruction, CCSS/PARCC Network, ACT EPAS, Math and English Faculty, and CCA Network of Consultants.

Timeline and Workplan: Initial steering team conversations in fall 2011 will complement the statewide remedial and developmental redesign project that is utilizing the PARCC Higher Education Leadership group, the COI Assessment Committee workplan, and the ECS Getting Past Go project. Several remedial reform projects in the state already involve K-12 partnerships and will be evaluated throughout 2011-13 as a part of the formal remedial redesign project. Higher education and K-12 will work with ACT staff to develop communication tools around the early assessment and bridge opportunities with these tools being available in summer 2012. Pilot activities, development of regional K-12 partner networks, and policy development will continue through 2012-13.

Initiative #3: Oklahoma's nascent adult degree completion initiative, Reach Higher, will continue to be developed as a degree and certificate completion effort that involves the entire system of postsecondary education and incorporates adult student support strategies as well as academic program options.

Approach: Building upon the Oklahoma bachelor's degree consortia and the recently approved associate degree collaborative, the Reach Higher staff and campus coordinators will make a major priority of reengaging adults who are in academic good standing with significant earned credits but no degree or certificate. Several activities will be incorporated into this effort and reflected in statewide as well as campus strategies to meet degree completion goals.

- Degree audits – utilizing Unified Data System records and campus-based records - will be conducted for "missing credits" and identifying those former students closest to degree completion.

- Reach Higher staff will accelerate partnerships with business and industry to establish cohort-driven and workplace-based program delivery.
- Business engagement will also occur in development of several new degree/certificate options that are tied to emerging workforce needs.
- Finally, the Reach Higher program staff and coordinators will conduct a policy audit and data-mining exercise for a reverse-transfer project that can identify students whose course sequences and earned credits already meet associate degree and certificate requirements. This will create a more systemic role for reverse-transfer options rather than relying upon individual student initiative.

Responsible: OSRHE, the Council on Instruction, and the university and community college Reach Higher coordinators will collaborate on the primary tasks.

Collaborators: OSRHE, Council on Instruction, Reach Higher Four-year and Two-year Councils, Campus Enrollment Service Professionals, and CCA Network

Timeline and Workplan: Following the CCA Completion Academy in March 2011, much of this work was begun in anticipation of Oklahoma's acceleration of the work under the CCA program. The Reach Higher staff and academic councils have been formalized and work toward strengthening ties to business and communities began in earnest during the summer of 2011. OSRHE/Reach Higher will be piloting formal business partnerships with 2-3 corporate partners in 2011-12. OSRHE research staff began in the summer of 2011 the on-going process of conducting the data-mining to identify former students closest to degree or certificate completion. Proposals are being sought from organizations specializing in other data-mining techniques to find current contact information on former students. The Council on Instruction has assigned a review during fall 2011 of reverse transfer opportunities and policy and accreditation issues to its Admissions and Retention subcommittee. One campus is conducting a proof-of-concept pilot on reverse transfer that will support and inform the work of the COI Admissions and Retention subcommittee. All of these tasks will continue through the 2012-13 Academic Year.

Initiative #4: Develop a "program equivalent project" that bridges Career Tech credit hour completion to certificate and A.A.S. degree completion in the community colleges.

Approach: The existing Cooperative Agreements between Higher Education and Career Tech will be enhanced by developing a better tracking of these existing activities and further cultivation of these critical postsecondary relationships. The state will conduct an audit of all certificates in Higher Education and CareerTech establishing their value in the workforce, bringing them in line with national norms for certificates, and bridging opportunities with A.A.S. programs. Following this review, the state educational partners will develop more intentional certificate completion options for students matriculating from Career Tech into the higher education system. The revised structure will hold the partners and students accountable for completing the certificate and provide a stronger pathway between the earned certificate and A.A.S. degrees.

Responsible: The overall audit of certificates will be led by the Secretary of Education and Education Cabinet working with the CCA consultants. OSRHE will lead a discussion of policy implications involving the Council of Presidents, the Council on Instruction, and Career Tech.

Collaborators: Secretary of Education, OSRHE, CareerTech, State Department of Education, Council of Presidents, Council on Instruction, and CCA Network of Experts on Certificates and Bridging Programs

Timeline and Workplan: Oklahoma will conduct – using the outside help of CCA experts – a comprehensive inventory of quality and meaningful certificate activities in Career Tech and the

community colleges and universities. The audit will evaluate unnecessary duplication, identify gaps, and reconcile with workforce development goals. The certificate audit project will begin in fall of 2011 with continuation through 2011-12 with report due at end of that academic year. The work to develop more bridging opportunities for certificate completion inside of the Cooperative Agreement model will occur through 2012-13. Once established, OSRHE and CareerTech will also systemically partner - using the same data-mining techniques in Initiative #4 – to identify, locate, and market these new complete options to former students that have not completed a degree or certificate.

Initiative #5: OSRHE will conduct a full-review and revision of the Brain Gain Performance Funding program utilizing appropriate Complete College America and NGA Complete to Compete outcome and progress metrics.

Approach: The State Regents have charged the OSRHE staff to work with the Council of Presidents to develop the new Brain Gain model as a component of an overall funding formula review. In addition to existing Brain Gain metrics such as degrees produced, retention rates, and graduation rates, the project will examine and consider the inclusion of best practice performance standards such as successful completion of remedial and freshman gateway courses, successful matriculation of students on Pell grants, adult degree completion, and more outcome-focused measures.

Responsible: During 2011-12, the Brain Gain model and the overall Funding Formula model for the state of Oklahoma will jointly be reviewed for reform by a taskforce of university and community college presidents.

Collaborators: OSRHE, Council of Presidents, and Council on Instruction.

Timeline and Workplan: This work began in spring 2011 in anticipation of Oklahoma's launch of the CCA project activities. Research of possible performance indicators (including CCA metrics) was conducted during the summer of 2011 to enable the Council of Presidents Formula Taskforce to do its reviews during the fall of 2011. The COP Taskforce has met three times as of October 2011 and is scheduled to complete its work in December 2011. OSRHE staff will be completing mock-scenarios of the new base formula and performance models during October and November 2011. Additionally, OSRHE staff will finalize the analysis during November 2011 that will lead to each institution's degree and certificate completion goals (in partial fulfillment of the state's overall goal to increase the same by 1,700 annually). Supporting the state completion agenda and forming a basis of the revised Brain Gain program, all universities and colleges will adopt their annual completion goals, develop action plans to support those goals, and collect and report on common measures of progress toward the completion goals. These action and evaluation plans will be developed by each campus during 2011-12 and submitted to OSRHE by July 2012. Work will continue with the Council of Presidents, Council of Instruction, and CCA's network of advisors toward evaluation of revised Brain Gain model for use in FY'13 and beyond.

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