



Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0: College Sustainability Plan Central Piedmont Community College

I. Best/promising practice(s) identified during the project.

- A. The implementation of workplace learning (co-op) within the college's IT Services department has provided students the opportunity to earn relevant work experience related to their program of study. Students have the opportunity to apply the skills they are learning and make valuable connections that can lead to employment. It has also established an effective recruiting and training strategy for employers. The two major employers have been CPCC's IT Services and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.
- B. The establishment of a course sequence which includes Basic Skills to STEM, co-op opportunities, and a diploma track for IT education has provided a training pathway for students at all levels with relevant coursework and workplace learning opportunities leading to industry recognized certifications, a college-conferred diploma, and employment.
- C. The offering of specialized career services via a Student Success Coach with IT experience provided students the opportunity to receive individual and group coaching on topics such as writing resumes, drafting a persuasive cover letter, executing job searches, utilizing social networks, interviewing, and conducting effective follow up.
- D. The listing of job skill competencies (competency documentation) on the certifications earned by students has allowed students to adequately document and articulate their skills to potential employers.

II. Rationale for institutionalizing the best/promising practice(s) identified above.

- A. One of the barriers to employment for low-skilled learners is the lack of relevant work experience. Internship and co-op programs provide students with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in their field as well as experience with transferable 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration (teamwork), and communication.
- B. Maintaining the Basic Skills to STEM pathway, STEM co-ops, and the diploma course sequence is beneficial to students at all academic levels who wish to enter lucrative STEM fields. Formalizing the course sequence and career pathways will enable the college to leverage this work to build pathways to additional industry sectors such as healthcare and advanced manufacturing.
- C. Employing a Student Success Coach who specializes in IT recruiting and employment has proven to be more effective than a general career services representative because of their familiarity with the field, its employers, and established networks. Student Success Coaches are critical to the success of students and ensuring that they persist in the program. The college has found that this has had a significant impact on retention, which directly affects FTE revenue earned by the college as well as performance measures.

- D. Listing job skill competencies on students' certifications can serve as a reference and documentation of the skills that they have acquired through their education, and is beneficial during job interviews. The reference is valuable to both the student and employers when discussing relevant training and experience, and how this can be applied to the workplace.

III. Fiscal implication(s) for institutionalizing the best/promising practice(s) identified above.

- A. There is a cost for the workplace learning course associated with co-op opportunities for curriculum programs. As long as the course is part of the program of study, the course fee would be eligible for reimbursement with the student's financial aid package.
- B. The Basic Skills to STEM pathway and the D91 diploma track were approved by the North Carolina Community College System office and will continue to be offered beyond the grant period. The Basic Skills to STEM pathway has been integrated into the ongoing offerings of CPCC's division of College and Career Readiness and is funded through federal literacy dollars that flow through the North Carolina Community College System. The D91 diploma track will also continue to be offered through the college's Information Technology division and sustained using institutional funds.
- C. The fiscal implications for institutionalizing the Student Success Coach are salary and fringe benefits associated with this part-time position at the college.
- D. There is a minor printing cost associated with documenting competencies on a student's certificate.

IV. Partnerships/sponsorships established during the project that should be continued.

A partnership with It-ology was established as part of the CPCC Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 project. It-ology is a professional association, comprised of Charlotte IT companies, that promotes training for IT professionals. IT-ology members have assisted with developing the Brighter Futures curriculum and their company members have agreed to consider CPCC students for both co-op opportunities and permanent employment.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and CPCC's IT Services department have placed eighty-two Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 students in co-ops which have provided valuable work experience.

CPCC will continue to partner with the Charlotte Works workforce development board so that interested applicants are referred to CPCC for enrollment in technical skills training courses.

V. Internal institutional collaboration during the project that should be continued.

Internal institutional collaboration will be continued with the CPCC Workplace Learning/Cooperative Education Department to provide possible co-ops in the Information Technology Services (ITS) department.

Internal institutional collaboration will also be continued with the CPCC Foundation to identify donors to fund scholarships and textbooks for students who are not eligible for other financial aid, such as Pell Grants.

Internal institutional collaboration will be continued with the CPCC ITS department, which provides the college with support of technology and technology infrastructure. CPCC's ITS provides co-op opportunities to IT students.

VI. Integration timeline for identified activities.

The activities identified (co-op opportunities, collaboration with the CPCC Foundation, specialized career services, and competency documentation) will continue through the fall 2015 semester to ensure success of Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 students. Because most of these practices will have minimal fiscal impact, it is expected that integration beyond the grant period will be appropriate and manageable.