SHIFTING FUTURES FOR USA HIGHER EDUCATION --ADULT LEARNERS & WORKERS

Carol Kasworm
North Carolina State University
Carol.kasworm@gmail.com
THREE EXPLORATORY FRAMES

- NATIONAL USA DEMOGRAPHICS
- CURRENT HE LANDSCAPE POLICIES & PROGRAMS ADULT LEARNERS/WORKERS,
- IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES
- CURRENT POLICIES/PROGRAMS MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH OLDER ADULTS
AGING SOCIETY

- 13.7% - 65 or above population
  One in seven Americans are 65 years of age or older
- 20% of workers are 50 years of age or above

MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

- 50.4% of Children under the age of 1 are minority
- Caucasians – median age is 42
- Hispanics – median age of 28
- By 2060 – Hispanics will be 1/3 of American population
Adult Workforce Learning Needs

- Job Access based on Credentials -- Focus upon minimal two-years of college
- Continuing Education - Required yearly updating... Employers concerned about generative knowledge development
- Major shifting of knowledge and skill needs – no longer a “triangle of expertise”
- Impact of aging workforce (retirements) and cultural changes – growing minorities and millennials
**Adult Learners in HE**

- **32%** of undergraduate learners are adults (25 age and above)
  - Total 17.3 million undergraduates (2013)
    - 5.5 million are adults
- **40 million** adults (25 & above) identified as college non-completers (In 2012)
- **FOCUS ON A “KNOWLEDGE-CENTRIC WORKFORCE”**
Adult Workers as Learners

- **Full-time workers** – 40% of adult students
  - 60% are part-time students
  - 40% are also full-time students

- **Part-time adult workers** – 42% of adult students

- **Non-work adults** = 18%

- Tuition Reimbursement primary support for workers [over half of part-time students/full-time workers receive tuition reimbursement]
Key Policy/Program=
Distance Education

27% - of all undergraduate students enroll in DE courses in 2012-2013

• 14% - have taken at least one DE course, plus
• 13% - enroll exclusively in DE program
[93% are adult students]
Key Policy/Program
Stylized programs for adults

Accelerated degree programs –
[4-6 week courses], credit assessment alternatives,
adult-support services
recruit non-completers (2 ½ years)
private (nonprofit/for-profit) college

Evening programs-
Weekend programs-
Key policies - Access

1) TRANSFER POLICIES - state policies, as well as institutional policies
2) ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES - several national testing options, course assessment options, portfolio assessment (PLA)
3) ADULT-ORIENTED recruitment, counseling, advisement, career counseling
Key policies – access (cont’d)

4) FLEXIBLE ADMISSIONS (Open Access), AND RESIDENCY POLICIES

5) VARIED STRATEGIES OF OUTREACH AND SCHEDULING
   • Including distance learning, off-campus, cable
   • State programs targeted to re-entry adult workers
Key policies focused on Knowledge/Skills

6) RECONFIGURED CURRICULA AND OFFERINGS
   • Competency-based, Business- influenced
   • Rethinking noncredit (including MOOCs) for assessed credit

7) ACADEMIC FACULTY TRAINED For Teaching ADULT LEARNERS

8) FACULTY AS WORK PRACTITIONERS
KEY STATE POLICIES

NEW POLICIES REGARDING FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT

• Institutional /State – fixed tuition with completion in four years of coursework
• Several states offering free tuition for re-entry adults --- particularly focused on vocational training

STATE-FOCUSED SUPPORT POLICIES ON ADULT STUDENTS

• Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, Connecticut, Indiana and WICHE consortium (Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota and South Dakota)
Future Policy Implications

- Contractual partnerships between business/industry and HE institution
  - Offering academic programs and professional development courses on-site of businesses
  - Co-Designing curricula
  - High school/two-year college joint degrees – vocational-oriented

- Growing trend in Certificates, Nanodegrees (micro-degrees) focus upon vocational/technical - credit/noncredit
  “Stackable credentials”
Futuristic implications

- Georgia Tech Scenario...Lifelong Education
  - Two years of coursework and then coming back into college throughout lifetime. Believing that major learning is episodic based upon changing work and life needs
- Nonformal/informal learning sector - Entrepreneurial efforts
  - New non-HE offerings, certificates,
Multicultural undergraduate programs and policies

- Collegiate Racial/ Ethnic Distribution in 2014
  - Hispanic – 16%
  - Asian – 6%
  - Blacks – 15%
  - American Indian/Alaska native – .08%
  - Whites – 59%
Institutional Background

- Federal & State Anti-discrimination laws
- Over 59-64% of minorities attend minority-serving institutions (1,240 institutions) (not HBCU’s or Tribal colleges), more often two-year institutions located close to regional minority communities. More often these minorities were first-generation, lower-income, and women than men. Valued because of closeness to families, lower cost, and community supported
- Historic Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) – 100
- Tribal Colleges - 34
Institutional responses

- Mission - students, faculty and staff are multicultural
  - Focus on multicultural competency
  - Create welcoming environment, training
- Targeted recruitment and outreach
  - Pre-entry and entry support programs
  - Financial aid supports (low-income students)
- Racial Climate Focus – classroom and on-campus
- Academic focused programs on Race/Ethnicity
Older, senior learners

- State policies providing tuition waivers for 65 and older in public universities with space available
- Many CE units offer noncredit programs targeted to senior adults – on a cost recovery basis
  - Osher Lifelong Learning Institute – OLLI/ Encore or other institution designations
  - Alumni College weekends
  - Road Scholar (Elderhostel), Senior trek, others
- College/ Community partnerships – Retirement communities, CE professional Ed – gerontology focus.