

DesignForScale: NORTH CAROLINA

CREATING A MOVEMENT THROUGH A STUDENT SUCCESS LEARNING INSTITUTE

The DesignForScale Series encourages the field to develop a more strategic and cohesive approach to scaling student success reforms at and across community colleges. The series affirms that it is time to be more systematic, serious, and organized about designing visionary, integrated reforms to be implemented at scale, while maintaining appreciation for questions, new evidence, and college context. The series highlights innovative state efforts to scale structured pathways reforms across the community colleges in their states; other states seeking to scale reforms will find these approaches instructive.

Photograph courtesy of Denver Community College



CREATING A MOVEMENT, NOT A MEETING

Increasing student success at community colleges requires the strong, ongoing involvement of each institution's faculty and staff. Unfortunately, engagement efforts too often fall short. The traditional one- or two-day professional development meeting is not nearly enough to foster the long-term systemic change needed to significantly improve student outcomes at a single college, let alone to scale change across a state or the nation.

[Completion by Design](#) asks each participating state to create a "learning community" to help spread its model. Recognizing the shortcomings of traditional approaches, the [North Carolina CBD cadre](#) is taking a different tack, and creating an intriguing model for others grappling with implementing reforms at scale.

North Carolina has designed a Student Success Learning Institute that seeks to support the scale of proven reforms more systemically and scientifically by creating long-term engagement with faculty and staff across North Carolina, fostering planning, and leading to action to help substantially more low-income students complete a degree or credential. Ed Bowling, Executive Director of the North Carolina cadre, notes that CBD is an ongoing process—a series of decisions, choices, and changes—not a cookie-cutter replication strategy. The SSLI seeks to emulate that change process to the extent possible.



WHAT IS THE STUDENT SUCCESS LEARNING INSTITUTE?

The Student Success Learning Institute (SSLI) puts CBD principles into action. It is a cohort-based network of community college faculty and staff that is designed to spread knowledge and spur innovation over time. Campus-based teams not previously involved in CBD take ownership over the goal to increase student success and keep momentum going at their institution, while accessing expertise from national CBD partners and sharing their experiences to help colleagues at other colleges.

The North Carolina Community College System Office is coordinating two year-long cohorts of the SSLI. The first began in fall 2013, with 27 colleges. The second cohort will start in fall 2014. All 58 community colleges have been invited to take part.

Deep Learning and Engagement



Create a cohort-based, long-term engagement of campus Student Success Teams

Create a **learning process** that seeks to replicate the **learning process** of implementing CBD principles

Provide ongoing resources, supports and activities

Build to an action plan

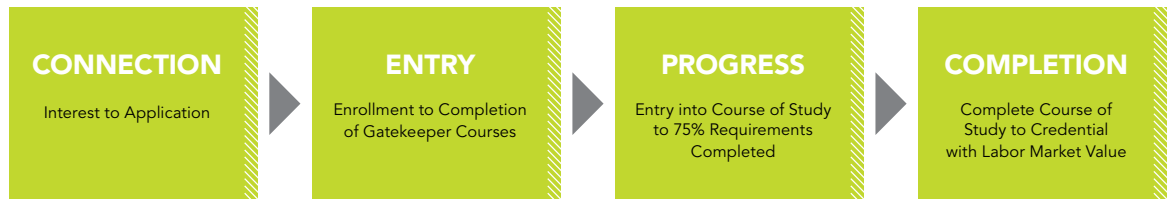
COMPLETION BY DESIGN

Completion by Design works with community colleges and their state partners to significantly increase credential completion and graduation rates for low-income students. The initiative, funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), takes a new approach to an old problem, aiming at comprehensive institutional transformation to create permanent improvement. CBD collaborates with faculty and staff at a group of colleges to make systemic changes in policies, programs, and practices that strengthen pathways to completion while maintaining access and quality without increasing cost. The initiative also aligns state policy to support the colleges' work, and builds knowledge about how to succeed in this work at a large scale, with the goal of spreading CBD principles to other colleges in the state.

NORTH CAROLINA CADRE

The North Carolina CBD cadre consists of five community colleges, including the state's three largest, and the North Carolina Community College System Office. Together, the five colleges serve approximately 82,000 students—nearly one-fourth of all North Carolina community college students. The cadre is focusing on redesigning programs of study, with integrated improvements in developmental education, intensive advising, and student management technology. [Florida](#) and [Ohio](#) also participate in CBD.

PREVENTING LOSS, CREATING MOMENTUM FRAMEWORK



STUDENT SUCCESS TEAMS

At each participating college, the president nominates a Student Success Team comprising the Chief Academic Officer, the Chief Student Development Officer, the Director of Institutional Research, and a faculty member. Each team learns about CBD reform strategies, such as instructional and curricular innovations, student services, uses of technology, changes in institutional policies, and how other North Carolina colleges are implementing them. Team activities, which build to an institutional action plan, include:

- > A two-day meeting for all teams in fall 2013 and a two-day follow-up event in spring 2014.
- > Regional technical assistance meetings in the winter.
- > A retreat for the leads from each campus in March.
- > An ongoing Internet-based Moodle course with webinars, participatory activities, and videos featuring “Aha Moments” and “What Not to Do” from the cadre colleges. Topics covered include identifying key performance indicators and their meaning, developing stakeholder engagement, creating structured programs of study, accelerating student entry into programs of study, and redesigning advising systems.
- > Collaboration with the five colleges in the North Carolina CBD cadre, as well as with the North Carolina Community College System, with support from Jobs for the Future.

PARTNERS IN THE SSLI

- > [North Carolina Community College System](#) funds and manages the SSLI.
- > [Guilford Technical Community College](#) is the managing partner for CBD in North Carolina and plays a key role coordinating the initiative’s design and implementation.
- > [Jobs for the Future](#) is CBD’s national partner for state policy, providing support for design, content, and implementation.
- > National partners have provided critical input into the content delivered through the SSLI—the [National Center for Inquiry and Improvement](#), the [Community College Research Center](#), and [Public Agenda](#).
- > **Faculty and staff from the state’s five CBD cadre colleges** help facilitate learning activities—Central Piedmont Community College, Davidson County Community College, Martin Community College, Wake Technical Community College, in addition to Guilford Technical Community College.

ACTION PLANS

By the end of the academic year, each college team is expected to submit a Student Success Action Plan to its president that outlines steps for implementing CBD principles. The plans will include:

- > Identification of an implementation team.
- > Activities to build faculty and staff engagement at each college.
- > Review of key performance indicators and a plan to share the data with college faculty and staff.
- > Action steps and a timeline for implementing accelerated, structured programs of study.

WHAT'S NEXT?

North Carolina's work with the SSLI has laid a strong foundation, but still more will be needed to create sustainable, comprehensive change. Student Success Teams will need to draw in colleagues and have difficult conversations about priorities, costs, and reallocation of resources to increase completion at each campus. To support them in that work, those working on the SSLI are hoping to convene campus teams more frequently, enhance Moodle resources, and develop a technical assistance plan to support each college team. Scaling this work across institutions—and eventually to every college in the state—will also require a systematic approach to organizational and cultural change and adaptive leadership, which have emerged as key concerns for the future.

“NCCCS HAS SPENT THE PAST FEW YEARS DEVELOPING A POLICY FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT COMPLETION BY DESIGN STUDENT SUCCESS GOALS AND OUTCOMES. NOW THAT THE POLICIES ARE IN PLACE, WE NEED TO FOSTER EVIDENCE-BASED SYSTEMIC CHANGE AT THE CAMPUS LEVEL IN ORDER TO SCALE THE CBD OUTCOMES STATEWIDE. THE SSLI IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE BY GUIDING COLLEGE TEAMS THROUGH CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDED, LEADING TO REAL CHANGE AND IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES ON OUR CAMPUSES.”

LEARN MORE

To learn more about Completion by Design in North Carolina, or about scaling reforms through a similar engagement model, please contact:

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—Sharon Morrissey, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer,
North Carolina Community College System