



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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**Assembly Higher Education Committee
May 8, 2014
Assembly Bill No. 2236
College Affordability Study Commission**

The state colleges and universities applaud the focus of the sponsors of this legislation and the committee today on the need to make a college education more affordable for New Jersey residents.

Our institutions pledge to work closely with College Affordability Study Commission proposed in the bill, and we appreciate that our sector would have a designated seat on the Commission.

The bill directs the Commission to study the creation of an Affordable Degree Program through degree program partnerships between county colleges and four-year public institutions. Several of our institutions already have degree-program partnerships with county colleges, including reverse transfer agreements. These partnerships with county colleges include:

- Kean University and Ocean County College's partnership, established in 2005, allowing students completing their associate's degree to continue their studies with a Kean bachelor's degree with Kean courses offered on the OCC campus. The program currently offers 28 baccalaureate degree programs and five master's degree programs, and it launched a Ph. D. in Nursing Educational Leadership last semester. More than 1,500 students are enrolled in the Kean Ocean programs.
- New Jersey City University's partnership with Hudson County Community College for a reverse transfer articulation agreement, and for dual admission with HCCC for Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Geoscience, Management, Mathematics, Nursing, and Physics. NJCU has also partnered with Brookdale Community College as a founding member of the New Jersey Coastal Communiversity at Wall.
- Ramapo College and Bergen Community College work to identify students in STEM fields and create four-year plans for these students to begin at BCC and complete their degree at Ramapo.
- Richard Stockton College and Gloucester County College's Dual Degree Program, entered this year, which guarantees admission to qualified graduates of GCC into Stockton's undergraduate program. GCC students transferring to Stockton before completing their associate's degree can participate in the Dual Degree Program in a reverse-transfer arrangement. Stockton also has Dual Degree agreements with Atlantic Cape Community College and a similar guaranteed admission agreement with Burlington County College.
- Gloucester County College and Rowan University are expanding the Rowan/GCC partnership agreement that is already in place. The current agreement allows students who complete their associate degree at GCC to seamlessly transfer to Rowan University to complete a bachelor's degree on Rowan's main campus or to stay on the GCC campus and earn a Rowan Liberal Studies degree.

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*The College of New Jersey
Kean University
Montclair State University*

*New Jersey City University
Ramapo College of New Jersey
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey*

*Rowan University
Thomas Edison State College
William Paterson University*

The new and expanded partnership includes more academic offerings taught on both campuses by faculty members from both schools. There is also a steep discount on the last two years of GCC students' tuition if they pursue their bachelor's degree in one of the Rowan programs being offered on GCC's campus. This partnership greatly increases opportunities for more students to earn a Rowan degree and creates a more affordable four-year Rowan degree.

With regard to the creation of a Pay Forward, Pay Back pilot program, the work of the Commission would need to focus on several challenges posed by this model. First, from the perspective of the institutions, is the need to fund the transition costs to the new program. One report on the Pay It Forward program established in Oregon indicates that it would cost Oregon \$9 billion over 24 years before a sufficient number of graduates were paying to sustain the system. In New Jersey, the 12 senior public colleges and universities relied on over \$1.6 billion in revenue for tuition and fees in fiscal year 2013. Replacing that integral source of funding for our institutions over the proposed 15-to-20 year starting period of the program is a critical issue.

Another key consideration is the long-term costs to students. Students may pay more for their tuition and fees under the Pay Forward, Pay Back plan than they do currently. The study in Oregon, as shown on the attached chart, indicates that the average student "paying it forward" would pay an extra \$7,400 over the actual cost of tuition and fees.

The state colleges and universities look forward to working with the sponsors of this bill and all the members of the legislature to keep a college education within the reach of New Jersey's students. We must strengthen the partnership between our institutions and the state to maintain higher education as a public good that promotes economic development and civic engagement, while at the same time decreasing the financial burden on our students and their families.