**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**TAACCCT Sustainability Toolkit**

**Thursday, August 4, 2016**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

LAURA CASERTANO: All right. Again, welcome to "TAACCCT Sustainability Toolkit." I'm going to turn things right over to our moderator today, Samantha Brown. She's a TAACCCT staff lead for the Department of Labor. Samantha?

SAMANTHA BROWN: Thank you. Hi, everyone. Welcome to the launch of the sustainability toolkit. We know that sustainability is an area of interest for all TAACCCT grantees, and we hope that each of you will find both the toolkit and the information and examples presented today helpful.

On the next slide you will see all of the groups that are involved with the TAACCCT Learning Network. All of these groups provide TA and resources to TAACCCT grantees, and today's webinar is presented by Jobs for the Future with assistance from Maher & Maher. And now, I would like to introduce our facilitator for today, Jennifer Freeman, program director at Jobs for the Future. Jenny, take it away.

JENNIFER FREEMAN: Thanks, Samantha, and hi, everyone. So you'll see on the slide that it actually says I'm with American Association of Community Colleges, which is not true. As Samantha said, I'm with Jobs for the Future, and we do a lot of work with AACC and have a PowerPoint template left over from a previous webinar that they ran.

So that's what that's about and – but I also – I wanted to say that I am here today joined by two grantees, Leah Palmer who is the executive director of the Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute which is at Mesa Community College – they're a round three single-site grantee – and Heather Raines who is the operations and communications coordinator at Bridging the Gap in West Virginia run by the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia. They're also round three, and they're a consortium. Both Leah and Heather have really, really great examples to share with you of how they approach sustainability, and we thought it would be really helpful for all of you to hear from people from both different types of grants, single and consortium.

What we're going to be walking through today is, as Samantha said, the sustainability toolkit, which we have developed to help all of you in your sustainability planning. We know that many of you have been thinking about sustainability from the beginning. Many of you have already been doing specific planning. But hopefully, even if you're kind of midway through the process, this toolkit will still kind of provide a framework and a structure to go through that process methodically. And for those of you who haven't started yet, we really hope that this is helpful.

So before I turn it over to – before we engage Leah and Heather in their examples, I want to just set the stage a little bit for – set the stage about sort of the issues of sustainability and why we're talking about sustainability at this point. But let me first ask of you – we have a poll, and this is just an open answer, if any of you could just type in your answer to this question. What sustainability planning efforts is your program currently engaged in? We'll just give you all a few minutes to type something in there. And it's a question that could lead to a paragraph answer, which of course we don't have time to do. So just say briefly we've started. We're identifying things – identifying innovations to sustain. Haven't started. Any kind of phrase like that to give us a sense of where you're at, and we'll give you all a couple minutes to do that.

OK. Yeah. I hear people talking about budget needs. Julie Crowley (sp) has specific things they know for sure they're going to be sustaining. Someone's involved in writing a draft. I see a number of points about curriculum changes. So this is all great. So you're all in some – many of you – most of you it sounds like are in – or the people who've written so far are in some stage of the process. Let's just wait a minute and you all can kind of scan down and see what other folks are doing and I see some people are still typing. So we'll just wait just a minute.

OK. And as you're all wrapping up we will move on and start to talk about why we're focused on sustainability and why we know you are too and also try to give you a sense of definition of sustainability and provide for you kind of a broad way to think about sustainability, not in terms of specific programs that you've run and the curriculum you've developed, as much as that's important to sustain, but also thinking about the innovations that have made those programs successful, really kind of parsing the specifics around what you've done to – in terms of instructional design, in terms of how you support students, in terms of how you work with employers, etc.. Kind of parsing all of that and really honing in on those innovations that are really successful, using your data to do that, and then thinking through a strategy to make sure that they can be sustained.

So anyway, so to the question of why, the simple answer is your funder wants you to, but also I think we all want to. We all realize that this is a very, very big investment of time and money and effort to make some pretty dramatic changes in how colleges design and deliver programming so that it's industry-aligned and improve student outcomes. And that's an investment that Department of Labor and none of us really want to have just go away. There's been so much learned through TAACCCT, so much developed. Let's find ways to keep it going and to really affect broad – the broad community college change agenda that so many of your institutions are involved in.

So this is just kind of for background, if any of you are in the process of talking to your teams and are wanting to make a case for or wanting to explain to people why you're even talking about sustainability and how Department of Labor thinks about it. As I just said, it really is about looking at your strategies and your activities and thinking about how you continue them but also how you apply them to non-grant-funded programs, how they can be applied to and how they have – thinking about how they have changed your college's approach to programming, college and your consortium.

So as I said, Heather and Leah are going to provide many examples from their experience, but I wanted to share just a couple of things from other grantees around the country so you can kind of get the sense of the breadth of sustainability efforts that are going on there. So in several places – and I just mentioned three here that I'm well aware of off the top of my head, Wisconsin, Colorado, and Louisiana, they have developed credit for prior learning processes that have really helped to accelerate the success for students in their programs.

And what they've done with those processes is made them much more transparent and created policies so that they're – so students really have an easier way to apply their previous learning experiences to the program that they're in to accelerate their pace to completion. So in these colleges they've actually turned those into statewide policies that have been taken on by the entire community college system in those states.

Moving over to the work-based learning box here, Michigan is just one example. They took their work-based learning models which involved people learning on the shop floor with employers and turned those into registered apprenticeship programs and in that way were able to take great practices for some programs and really codify them and make them a permanent program and a permanent new way that people can develop skills.

In this case it's in manufacturing. And then many, many other colleges have taken their relationships with employers and the way they've worked with employers and really turned that into a permanent way that the college now does business, taking what was an advisory board to a higher level in terms of engaging employers in doing some of the training themselves, providing work-based learning opportunities, helping to write the curriculum, etc., etc., and really solidifying those practices with those employers so that many people within the college are engaging in the same kind of process with employers, regardless of industry.

So those are just a few examples, and I know many of you have many, many others that you've written into the chat box. And what I also wanted to say is that the sustainability toolkit, which is available in the file share section for download, the toolkit also mentions a number of other examples so you can learn from your colleagues around the country.

What the toolkit also does is – and what it primarily does is it offers a six-step process with kind of worksheets and questions that you can actually work through with your – with a team at your college or in your consortia to identify what you want to sustain, what's worth sustaining because that's an important question. What's really been effective, and what do we want – and therefore, what do we want to sustain? And then building a specific plan around that in terms of how you're going to sustain it through collegewide policy, through professional development, through statewide policy, through whatever mechanism it might be.

The other thing I wanted to say about the toolkit is that, when you go to WorkforceGPS where it will live at on a page at WorkforceGPS and at the end of this slideshow we'll show you the link to that. On that page is also not only the toolkit but also a set of worksheets. So the toolkit is in PDF form, which is hard to – you can't actually kind of use it as a document to write in electronically, but we have a series of worksheets in Word and Excel that you can actually manipulate yourselves, change them as you like, use them to actually do the process. So we hope that that's helpful to you too.

So walking through, here's how the toolkit works. We just have some screenshots of some key portions of the toolkit. So step one. So here is our toolkit cover. Step one is thinking about who should be on your planning team. It's really critical that you get sort of a broad array of people at the college, and I – without talking at length about this myself, I want to turn this over at this point to Heather to talk to you about how she approached the issue of pulling a planning team together on this. So, Heather, take it away. I'm sorry. It was Leah is actually what we were –we were talking about Leah's process at Mesa Community College.

LEAH PALMER: Thank you. Hi, everyone. So at Mesa Community College we are a round three grantee and it was just after the end of round two that we started working on our sustainability plan and putting our team together.

And part of that was a result of what I call early and often, which means that it is not the first time that impact and potential and integration was discussed with college leadership. Nurturing your internal champions become part of your team as you move along in the process. So identify who those are that are touching the things that are showing some success and partnership and making a difference.

But by the time we were closing out year three we had already drafted some of the things and had taken it to our college president, our VPs, and some of the faculty as champions. We also had some employers who had written into some of the things that they hoped would continue and be part of this and so they were ad hoc to the team in getting started but early and often. They should be hearing from you at the end of your grant. You should actually with your signatory and others and your internal champions nurturing them all the way along before you even get to building your sustainability team.

MS. FREEMAN: Great. Thank you for that, Leah. And one thing I wanted to say is, as I mentioned, this is just a screenshot of the actual toolkit. This screenshot, as you can see at the bottom here, it says external members. On the full toolkit page you'll also see reference to a whole bunch of external members that you might consider including on your planning team, such as workforce development boards, career centers, community-based organizations.

All of those external members that have been an important part of your success could certainly be a part of your sustainability plan too. And I know that in the case of many of what you're – a lot of you are doing they certainly are. So I wanted to make sure that you were aware that we're not just talking about the college but really people outside of the college too who have really made an important contribution to your success, obviously including employers.

So, Heather, I know that you kind of approached this at Bridging the Gap in a somewhat different way. Do you want to talk to us a little bit about that?

HEATHER RAINES: Sure. Thanks. So with Bridging the Gap we are a consortium, and that includes nine community and technical colleges in our state. And it is a little difficult to talk about sustainability because it's just two different levels. It's first statewide. We have statewide initiatives, things that we want to keep going, but also it comes down to institutional levels.

And we can make suggestions all day long, but it comes down to them and what they really want to do. And I think what we've seen with initiatives, both getting things started and sustainability, it is critical and this will sound like of course we all know to do this but to have presidential buy-in at the institutional level, there's nothing like it. We've seen it with trying to get initiatives to go through the TAACCCT grant but also with sustainability. If you do not have that, it will not happen.

And I just want to kind of comment on what Jenny said about the external members. We are very big into sector strategies. We have multiple resource meetings. We have multiple meetings with employers, and there's a lot of great mix going on with that. And if your sustainability plan does not include something that benefits the employers or helps in satisfying the need of the employers, it will not work. So you really need to take them into consideration when you're looking at sustainability, and that's all I have on that.

MS. FREEMAN: OK. Thanks. That is a really, really important thing to keep in mind related to your employers.

So OK. So after you've pulled your team together, one thing I think we didn't say is that the team really, really needs to be fully aware of what's happened, what's been done obviously before you can begin to kind of think about sustainability with them. And what they're also going to need to do is be thinking about how is – how are the things that you've done aligned with broader goals? So Heather mentioned it's really, really critical to get the buy-in of the president.

As you all well know, the buy-in of the president and many others is more likely when what you're doing with your TAACCCT grant is aligned with broader institutional goals, with the president's goals. Sometimes it's with the goals of the higher ed system or mandates, directives of the higher ed system. Some of you are in states where there's been massive developmental education policy change at the state level. So as an example of something where you're really being driven in a direction to – when that direction is consistent when your TAACCCT innovations are consistent with and aligned with those kinds of drivers, it just makes it much easier to sustain things.

So I know that – Leah, going back to you, I know that you had some thoughts about how what you were trying to sustain at Mesa was aligned with some broader goals. Do you want to talk to us about that?

MS. PALMER: Yes. Completion and retention is huge right now, and so having some of the things that we've put in place with our TAACCCT grant, being able to seize the contact hours and the nurturing that's happening with students and getting them completed, even in our early stages we were able to see from one year to the next persistence.

The other thing that was important was industry certification latticed in our curriculum. Industry certifications haven't really been an analytic that community colleges have been that concerned with. It's a nicety but when we're seeing this as a completion, we are now as a college embracing this as a metric that we're going to start measuring and that's really important.

And then the last thing is employment. Many of our faculty can tell you anecdotally where their students are being placed and have very personal relationships with their students and with their advisory members and employers in the area, but to be able to actually say where these people are getting jobs and whether or not those who were already employed are getting pay bumps is incredibly important to the leadership of the college because that's what their community is asking them.

That is what industry and sectors are asking of them. And so this means that they're going to be able to, in their vision and mission, have greater spectrum of where their students are being successful. And that is a huge buy-in because I think that's the wave of community colleges in the future are going to have to answer those questions.

MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. Well, and in fact some states have already moved in the direction of having that be one of the – a performance metric that drives funding. I don't know if any of you are in those states, but it's certainly something to – certainly, if that is happening, that would be a big part of a data point that would be – and a policy driver that would really help your sustainability efforts.

So, Heather, you had – so we kind of – Leah, I mentioned – I appreciate those mentions of data, which is our next point, but before we get there, Heather, what did you want to tell us about your guided pathways to success initiative and alignment there?

MS. RAINES: So in West Virginia we are the poster child for no money, to be quite frank, and when we think of sustainability, we always think of the dollar amount. And we in West Virginia definitely cannot think like that because, just to give you a little bit of background, since 2008 we as a state had about $120 million in cuts for higher education. We are a very small state. We have 1.8 million people, and that population is going down. We are also an energy state, which means our markets are very volatile and we have seen major budget issues and – (inaudible) – $270 budget gap this recent legislative session and it was an absolute nightmare. The state almost shut down because we could not come to a decision.

So when we're looking at sustainability, I think it's very important for institutions and a consortium to have honest and realistic conversations about what you can and cannot do and really to not think about that dollar amount. When we started out, it looks like, what are we going to be able to sustain? We have no money. But we've done so much up-front work and trying to really spend the money on these one-time things that will continue for the college. We can sustain so much more than what we thought we could, and so just knowing your market, knowing your state, and being futuristic about it and just understanding the reality that you have is crucial to sustainability because we're living it right now.

MS. FREEMAN: So, Heather, it sounds like your kind of being very clear about how you're defining sustainability is important because in a situation like yours and that many folks are in where there just simply isn't new money, you're absolutely right. Most people, when they hear sustainability, think how are we going to continue supporting the budget of this? So any tips there? Any ways that you folks communicated how you're thinking about sustainability so people didn't immediately close down because they thought you were talking about money?

MS. RAINES: I think we really tried from a project management from the consortium level to just consistently say, it's not about money. It's not about that. And we've done just so many things we've created.

You talked about PLA in the beginning. We made a PLA website that cost us a lot of money, but it's an amazing thing that we're going to get so many students to use. They can go on. They can learn about prior learning assessment. They can learn – figure – enter information into a life experience inventory, and that's a tool that all nine colleges can use. We paid for it. It's up front, and just those one time things that you can do and you can come up with a plan to use that throughout the state. It's just really nice to know that it's not all about money, and once you get down to it you can do a lot.

MS. FREEMAN: That's great. Thank you. So much of what both of you just said talks about is – kind of looks at the question of data or uses data to talk about your success, to point to what has been successful, and to make a case for sustaining those things. So, Heather, do you want to continue on and tell us a little bit about how data came into play in your efforts?

MS. RAINES: Sure. So the big initiative that we have here recently that we've done statewide is guided pathways to success. I'm sure most people know what I'm talking about. Any of you that don't, what I'm talking about is where you have an actual pathway for students. You build them a map. So having a student pick a program of study, and there are many elements to this. Whether it's block scheduling or you push 15 to finish, it's all about getting them through two years and then making sure you build in mechanisms where they have certifications and they have these – (inaudible) – that they are going to meet.

So what ended up happening was that I talked about presidential buy-in really early on. Well, we had just that. We had a president who fell in love with guided pathways, and he did all kinds of research about how beneficial it would be for the college. And he found out that at his institution he only retained about 18 percent of his students, and so he was losing $2 million in revenue from that.

Now, you heard me talk about the budget issue, and we're losing $2 million at one institution. We could really use that $2 million. So then when we looked at data from other states like Tennessee, they were doing technical programs in their guided pathways, and they had 75 percent retention rate. And when we told this to a group of faculty and registrars and presidents and our project managers, you just saw their eyes light up, and they said, oh, my gosh. This is just a great opportunity.

So we really used that as a selling point to tell them, this is possible. We just have to get in the weeds with it, and we can do this. So having those data points will not only sell the initiative, but it's also going to help you sustain it because of what potentially you have.

MS. FREEMAN: That's great, and so in your case you kind of borrowed data points from other places that had the same initiative. In other cases the data comes from your own – from your APRs, from possibly your quarterly narrative reports. Sometimes data is testimonials, employers who say, oh, my gosh. People are – we want to hire more people from your college because people are so well-trained.

So, Leah, I know that you had a really great example about how data really drove your sustainability planning. Do you want to talk to us a little bit about that?

MS. PALMER: Sure. Back to industry certifications, when we started tracking the number of students that were getting their AWSs, their NIMS, their J-STD, their CAD, and their SOLIDWORKS, suddenly what it looks like in terms of success at Mesa Community College and being able to articulate that to both your internal and your external community became very different.

And so we actually had to create a different analytic. The other thing that we have done is we have measured the traffic that has come in and out of our navigator's office both by contact hours, e-mail, and contact on the web, all of those things so that we could actually point to the intervention level of an individual and the impact.

And data doesn't tell everything. There are things that data can't tell you. Momentum is hard to measure in a program, but what is really important is that you're able to show them that you're making a measurable difference.

MS. FREEMAN: That's great. Thank you. And one thing I want to tell everyone about the toolkit, as I – since you're just seeing little snapshots here, this page, this discussion of data offers some very specific examples of the type of data points that you could use to make a case for certain aspects of certain innovations, certain aspects of your success. And it also suggests some ways that you can collect data.

If you know something is successful but you just don't have – that was not a particular measure that translates to a data point on the APR, there are ways to collect data after the fact. There's focus groups to be done. There's the kind of look that Leah just described. There are ways – some of the data you're collecting are just in the course of performance measurement process is going to support your innovations.

But in other cases you'll know that an innovation is successful or you'll have a hunch but you'll need to potentially go collect some data – additional data to support that hunch. And the toolkit walks you through some of that thinking. Yeah. Did someone want to say something?

MS. PALMER: I wanted to give a sense too of impact on your success. We developed a social media strategy and we actually created Twitter and a Facebook and we came up with strategies like throwback Thursdays, follow-up Fridays, manufacturing Mondays. We had students who actively engaged in being content providers for the Twitter and the pictures and the things, and then we actually could come back and look at the analytics of how many people were following, how many people were engaging in this.

And those kind of analytics, just even ask on your website, if you have a webpage, what can you do to freshen it and what can you do to see it, because your connectivity to your external community as well as you connectivity to your internal community is measurable. Many of you have intranet. Are you telling your success stories to your own internal community? Those are the things too to consider.

MS. FREEMAN: Great. Thanks. Those are some really great examples and good ideas related to social media. So now, I want to switch over. Before we go on with kind of the next steps leading to developing the plan, we have a question for you. We – so if you could – again, it's an open response. Type your answer into the chat box. What innovations have been most successful in your grant, and what data do you have to support it?

And, actually, while you are typing, Leah, someone has a question for you. "What do you mean by throwback Thursday?" Can you – very interesting.

MS. PALMER: So that's actually a great question. Part of the building of capacity is our new equipment that we got and some of the things that we've done with the grant and the college having better facilities. We've actually gone back and had slides of the old manufacturing lab and some of the things that just shows from then to now – before 3-D printing, now 3-D printing. Things like that that give people a sense of progress.

MS. FREEMAN: That's great. That's a fun example.

So while you're – let's see. Let's just give people a minute to kind of share what they're doing here. Proactive coaching. And as you're typing, as you're letting us know what you are thinking about sustaining, also let us know what data you are using. It will be helpful for everyone to be able to see that. I see a lot of employer engagement being offered here as something that's being sustained. I see navigators being sustained.

I see block scheduling. Matthew Sweeney (sp), not to put you on the spot, but I am I guess. If you are able, if you have thoughts about how, what data supports the fact that block scheduling is an important thing to sustain, I'd love to hear what it is because that's one where I imagine people will fear that they don't have the right data.

But I can imagine also that maybe you have higher completion rates, higher enrollment levels because people are – it's a scheduling format that allows you to get more adults in the program. I don't know what it is, but I'm curious to find out what it is. Enrollment data is improved – OK. Great – since that transition.

And John Heemstra (sp) is also talking about sector engagement and placement, equipment donations, positive feedback. So many, many multiple data sources. So this is – it looks like it's a combination of the data that you all collect through your – for your performance reports but also those more informal pieces of – parts of data or sources of data. Tina talks about lower dropout rates with block scheduling.

OK. Well, that's great. Thank you very much, all of you, for sharing that, and before we move on to the rest of the toolkit, I think we should – I'd like to pause. I mean, a lot has been said. Leah and Heather are talking through a lot of great examples and a lot of interesting kind of process steps, and I'm wondering if anyone has any questions at this point for Leah or Heather or me. And we'll just wait for a minute to see. So feel free to throw up your questions.

OK. All right. Well, if you feel – as we go along – we don't have to wait until the very end for questions. If any of you have any questions as we go along, we will pay attention to what's in the chat box, and we'll be happy to answer them. But let's go back, Laura, if we could, to the slide deck. And so thank you for that, and so let's go on to our next step.

So the next step, I want to explain a little terminology here. In this step we are talking about the mechanism that you're going to use to sustain your innovations. So what we mean by mechanism is the particular – is how really. How? What specifically is going to be built, developed, done to make sure that the innovation is a permanent part of the college?

So here are some examples that you can see on the screen from the toolkit. If you have a partnership with a career center around the use of navigators, let's say, codifying that in the memorandum of understanding is a really important way to sustain that. That would be – that's what we mean by a mechanism.

Advocating for a statewide policy. So in the case of the credit for prior learning examples that I mentioned earlier, they turned it into statewide policy. So – in order to make it permanent, and I know also in that case professional development among advisors was a big part of making that change also because a lot of people – a lot of colleges have credit for prior learning on the books, but oftentimes students don't know about it.

Advisors don't refer to it. It's not sort of a regular part of the discussion with a student who's entering about whether or not they can have some background that would allow them to more quickly attain the credential that they're seeking. So that – so turning something that's informal like that into a policy is what we're talking about here. Restructuring community college offices and then of course identifying additional funding. If there is a situation where that is the plan for your innovation, then that is a mechanism also.

So hopefully that is clear what we're talking about in terms of mechanisms, and I want to turn it over to Leah and Heather to talk about how that's playing out in their cases. Leah, you've got a particularly interesting way – mechanism for sustaining your navigators. Can you describe that to us?

MS. PALMER: Sure. So the reason that we started early is that we realized that, even as much as we wanted to have some of our strategies be replicated across other programs and sector certificate programs, that we needed to have some budget that would bridge the transition between closing out year four and the college budget which starts July. So we didn't want to lose our talent.

So we sat down and looked at what kind of enrollment increases do we need to have in order to justify budget being reallocated for the navigators, and what other roles can the navigator take so that it isn't in isolation to where it's just the TAACCCT grant but can be more cross-functional? And so we actually did a five-year strategic plan that marshalled out what kind of enrollment increases in the program would justify putting resources towards funding the navigators and what kind of train-the-trainer programs could we look at to build a pipeline of navigators so it wasn't episodic or just based on a talented one person.

So those are the conversations that came around the value of finding funding actually and looking how budget planning cycles of both the college and soft resources could be aligned so that perhaps in our five-year plan we were looking at transitioning to other soft funded resources while we're transitioning to operational dollars.

MS. FREEMAN: And then, Heather, you had – tell us about – tell us what mechanism you had used around guided pathways to success or what mechanism you're working on for that innovation.

MS. RAINES: Sure. So one thing that we mentioned was professional development. We have done a lot of professional development in the realm of guided pathways. We had about seven meetings over the course of a few months, and we structured them to where the same people came to every meeting because we didn't want to have this have to go back and reiterate everything that we had already said because in the morning we had consultants come in.

And they talked about guided pathways and then the elements of what that meant, and in the afternoon it was a work session. They had a worksheet. They had to answer really specific questions about their institutions, what barriers to students that they were facing. Did they need different technology? Just so many different questions, and we still have all of that documentation, all the questions, all the worksheets that we went through.

And we've had people come in and talk about map pathways, just really anything that we needed, and we got into a conversation actually this week – this is very timely – that the next step we need to do was to train our faculty on intrusive advising because we don't really have a lot of just, quote, unquote, "advisors." So we want someone to sit down and talk to our faculty members and say, this is really what we mean by intrusive advising, and you need to do X, Y, and Z. So that will be our next step for our faculty members.

The second component was an actual living document. We created academic maps for all the technical programs, and it's very simple. There are a lot of arrows. It shows a paragraph about what an academic map is. It shows exactly where the student will get a certification, what the – (inaudible) – are and what that looks like, whether it's a one-year certificate, whether it's an associate's degree, and it's just a clear picture so that when a faculty member is advising a student and they can sit down and say, you're going to go from A to Z and this is exactly how it's going to go. So we had the professional development, and then we created something that our institutions can use.

MS. FREEMAN: Great. Written documents to lay out what those guided pathways are.

And, Leah, I think you might have had other examples that you wanted to share, or are you going to save those for another segment? Are there other mechanisms that you wanted to talk about?

MS. PALMER: I'll get back to you.

MS. FREEMAN: For other innovations. OK. All right. That will come up next. So one thing that we're not going to talk about much here but I want to – and the toolkit isn't focused on because I know we've been really talking a lot about the fact that many of these innovations are about policies and practices and they don't require funding. However, we know that sometimes some things would – will require additional funding, and sometimes that is going to be a piece of your sustainability plan.

So there's a little bit of discussion about that in the toolkit, and the toolkit will lead you to some resources on that like something called – we have – JFF developed a braided funding toolkit that helps colleges walk through all the various funding sources that they might braid together to support things.

And there's also – if you look at example E here – there's a college in Missouri that actually developed a return on investment tool, and with this tool – it's an Excel spreadsheet where they plugged in the increase in retention or increase in completion, I suppose, that the navigators created. So they saw students who had worked with navigators. They saw that those students completed at rates 20 percent higher or whatever the percentage is – some percent higher than typical students who did not have the benefit of navigators.

Then they took that extra 20 percent, and they calculated what that meant in terms of additional tuition dollars for the college when those students remained and completed and were paying tuition. And it ended up demonstrating that the college – basically, that increase in tuition paid for the navigators. They paid for themselves and then some. And so one thing that you'll find in the worksheets that I mentioned that accompany this toolkit is that ROI tool.

We have the specific example from Missouri but then also a template. And you can plug in your own numbers, your own calculations, if you have seen increases in retention or completion due to whatever innovation, and can turn that into what it means for the college in terms of tuition increase. That could be a potentially very useful tool.

And I also want to draw your attention to part A, which is not really so much finding brand-new funding, but it's a way of using the funding that you have, restructuring existing staff roles, integrating into those roles some of the functions and strategies that have been used, developed through TAACCCT funded staff. Leah, this is what I – this – I know that you were successful doing this with your navigators. Do you want to talk a little bit more about how that worked at Mesa?

MS. PALMER: Yes. In terms of what we – what we looked at is we actually looked at external funding that we have been in collaboration with other colleges and other programs on that have kind of tried to seize the momentum that we've already carried, and we've looked at the years and the strategies within those other funded programs that are going to be using our navigators and using our resources as partners and seeing how we can braid that together.

We also took what they call here 301 money, which is your state-funded and federally-funded CTE, career and technical funds that are allocated to the colleges and to your postsecondary and K-12 programs. And we're going to use that as bridge money as we're looking at increased enrollments from the navigators and retentions with that ROI to then build in the operational dollars.

MS. FREEMAN: That's great. Thank you. And before we move on, I see that Brant (ph) has a question that is an interesting one. "Are there lessons learned from rounds one or two of what not to do or what not to try when it comes to sustainability?"

And that is interesting, and I guess I am not aware of sort of something that round one or two – there are some great examples of round one sustainability efforts. As you mentioned that, Brant, I'm realizing that one thing that we – if someone could find this, we could put it in the file share or in the chat room. There is the transformative change initiative which is out of the University of Illinois did a lot of research about round one, and they just put out – they've just put out a nice piece on the sustainability and scaling efforts. They use the term scaling, growing, building up innovations. They have a really nice piece on what round one grantees did to scale their efforts and sustain them. And so we will – we'll find that link and give it to you.

But other – so does anyone – Leah, Heather, do either of you have thoughts on that? Any what not to do kinds of cautions?

MS. PALMER: I'd like to just throw out that a lot of times sustainability – and remember any program that you have and that you're trying to keep going is probably in competition for similar dollars that somebody else in the college or your administration is evaluating.

And so it's kind of important that you look at not looking like you're just trying to preserve your own job or that you're not looking at what's in it for you. I think it's important that, if you can clearly articulate what's in it for the college and what's in it for the student and lead with that at all times, it will be received so much differently even by the colleagues who are also looking at sustaining something within the college.

One of the mechanisms that I think you were alluding to too, if I can bridge to that, that was important is part of the TAACCCT kind of mission and vision is that you would share best practices and work with other programs and assist other TAACCCT grantees and etc. And partnerships are built through those relationships. And we belong to a district, and perhaps many of you also belong to a district as a college where there are other colleges in your district.

We have 10 colleges in the Maricopa district. Four of us have manufacturing programs. Interestingly, we are working together as a mechanism to create a virtual as well as perhaps even bricks and mortar center of excellence that allows employers to see us as a resource in a sector strategy rather than just colleges with programs. And so we're trying to move away from just driving someone to ourselves but looking at how part of that sustainability is in the partnership and the collaboration and the sharing with others. They're part of that center of excellence model.

MS. FREEMAN: That's great. Heather, any thoughts on this sort of any what not to dos?

MS. RAINES: Not really. I think Leah made a really good point, but I would love to know. I feel like Brant. What are the what not to dos and what not to try when it comes to sustainability from the rounds one and two?

MS. FREEMAN: I think – I mean, I think the one what not to do is kind of the flip side of what you've been all recommending. What not to do is kind of talk about it at the bitter end, sort of at the end say, oh, by the way, we're supposed to be sustaining some of this. But early on engage a lot of folks at the college and across the consortium in considering what the successes are and what really – what of those practices are really going to drive significant change, significant increases in completion and job attainment at your college.

MS. PALMER: Can I lend one – I want to lend one more thing, and this is I'm sure a sentiment that most TAACCCT grantees feel at one time or another. It's very easy because these are difficult times in education. The TAACCCT grant is rigorous and requires a lot of attention, and there's always the difference between the plan that you had in the beginning and the realities of the plan that you had at the end.

And what tends to happen, because I have done this with other TAACCCT colleagues, is you commiserate. You commiserate inside your college, and you commiserate with each other how hard and difficult some of these things are. And sometimes we do that because it's a sense of community, but at other times when it's time to go get your sustainability money, your negative comments or perhaps sentiments have outweighed any positive messages that you've put in the universe about your successes and impacts.

So I'm just saying make sure that you lead with the positive messages to the very community and the very institutions that you're going to want to help pick up and keep those wonderful things that you've created going.

MS. FREEMAN: That is such a great point because I know having talked to a lot of you on conference calls and in our conferences and things there – these grants can be tough to manage. We all know that and we all know that the performance metrics can cause a lot of questions and conundrums and there's all kinds of aspects of this that can be challenging as a grant. And so sometimes as a project manager it's hard to pull your head out of those weeds to what Leah's saying. What is the good stuff here?

And let's promote that and let's make sure our college knows about that because some people talk about colleges – people across the college getting grant fatigue. Oh, don't talk to me some more about that TAACCCT grant. It's so exhausting. There's so much work to do. That's – you don't want to be putting out messages or attitude that leads to that grant fatigue so that people can't hear that actually it's really, really great stuff that is going to make a real difference for your college. So thank you so much, Leah, for saying that.

All right. So here we are to the – almost to 3:00 o'clock and also to the end of the sustainability toolkit, which is actually developing a work plan. So this is in the toolkit. There's a line for each of the innovations that you've determined through this process that you're going to sustain, and then in the left-hand column there you'll see that's where you indicate the mechanism you're going to sustain it with, the policy, the professional development, the what have you. And then get down to action steps. What specifically do you need to do to get there, and who's going to take the lead?

So, Leah and Heather, do either of you – do you want to just jump in on what this process has looked like for you?

MS. PALMER: Well, I'm happy to say that as Mesa Community College we are at the tail end of our sustainability work plan, and it has been submitted for approval. And we have been reassured that the braiding of the funding will happen in one way or the other, which allows my staff to exhale and allows us to continue with our creativity versus preservation.

The other thing is this toolkit that wasn't part of what I had to work with that now everyone on this webinar has to work with is incredibly helpful, and I wish I would have had it. Not that I missed too many of the steps, but the way that it has been designed can actually help you get to where you want to go. And I'm very appreciative of the work that went into designing it.

MS. FREEMAN: Great. Thank you. Well, I'm – like I said to Leah offline, I'm sorry that it was not out there sooner, but I really, really hope that for many of you who are beginning this process, obviously you're all thinking about it. But if you're starting to get down into the details of how to really kind of make it real and getting into this process in a very concerted way, I hope that it's helpful to you.

Heather, any last steps about the work plan process for you?

MS. RAINES: Sure. So since we're a consortium, it can be hard to keep track of all the moving parts in all the different colleges. And what we did was we visited or made site visits to each college, and we sat down for about six hours with each college and went through the entire statement of work, everything a deliverable, and we pinpointed them down and asked, do you plan to sustain this and how?

And it was a really great conversation because as a consortium sometimes you just can't get in those conversations because there's just so much going on. And we were able to come up with ideas for them, and we had these just really great conversations. And so I think this sustainability toolkit will be really helpful to have those conversations for other consortium grants. I think it will really foster just some great information.

And then as far as the actual work plan, we had a project management system that each institution is responsible for a project on there. And for every deliverable, in the comment section we have to say whether or not that deliverable will be sustained and how. It's a living document. We can go to it. We can change it, and it's worked very well for sustainability to track our deliverables and also keep all of our finals so in the future if someone says, hey, how do we sustain that or what do we need to do next, we've got it there. So I really encourage you to have something like that.

MS. FREEMAN: Great. Thank you for that advice, and all right. So we have time for just a couple questions, and luckily, some of you have asked some as you've gone along. Does anyone have any questions you want to ask before we wrap up? If so, just type them in the chat box. I also wanted to say I did find the link to the products of the transformative change initiative. So I put that in the chat box, if any of you want to look at that. They have a number of products which are excellent about a variety of innovations created by TAACCCT grants, but as I said, also on that page you'll find the one related to what round one has done.

Link didn't open. You know why, Amber? I think that you need a forward-slash after – between "tci" and products. So sorry about that, people. And we will also – when we send out materials afterward, we can also – if this link is not working, we'll double check that and get you the right one. All right. Any other questions? Michael Freeman is typing. "Thank you." OK.

OK. Well, it is 3:00 o'clock now. Thank you all for listening. I hope this was helpful. Please hang on for a minute to answer some survey questions about whether or not this webinar was useful to you. Take care, everyone, and thanks so much, Heather and Leah, for your insights. It was great.

MS. PALMER: Happy to be here.

MS. RAINES: Thank you.

MS. FREEMAN: Thank you. Bye-bye.

MS. CASERTANO: All right. Great. Thanks, everyone.

(END)