Northeast Resiliency Consortium – TAACCCT Round 3

Housatonic Community College – FORWARD Program

Sustainability Plan

HCC’s FORWARD program was a new initiative funded by the United States Department of Labor’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant program (TAACCCT) as part of the Northeast Resiliency Consortium (NRC), a collaboration of seven east coast colleges – Atlantic Cape (NJ), Bunker Hill (MA), Capital (CT), Housatonic (CT), Kingsborough (NY), LaGuardia (NY) and the lead, Passaic County (NJ) Community Colleges – in partnership with Achieving the Dream and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Over the past three years, FORWARD has helped to train a highly-skilled and resilient workforce of dislocated workers, veterans, underemployed, and unemployed individuals with the goal of employment in high-demand jobs in healthcare and information technology occupations. As of September 30, 2016 we have enrolled 796 students of which 386 have successfully completed grant program. New non-credit and credit programs have been developed with help from our industry partners aligned with industry needs. Additionally, innovative instructional methods and technologies have been integrated into these programs. Students have accelerated their progress to successful outcomes utilizing Prior Learning Assessment, resiliency training, internships/work-based learning, and job placement assistance. New non-credit to credit latticing has been created between similar programs to allow a student to continue to increase their educational attainment.

Housatonic Community College is entering a period of significant transition. The college appointed a new president in April 2015. The college is going through a process to create a new strategic plan. This plan will engage faculty, staff, students and community leaders and create a strategy for a broader awareness of Housatonic across the community. In Spring 2016 the college adopted a new mission and vision statement. The strategic planning committee then held several focus groups with the college, its partners, and the community. They are now working on compiling that information into a solid strategic plan. The strategic plan will have a tremendous focus on student success and will also include a lot of best practices from the grant including resiliency, student communication, and proactive advising.

**Sustainability Team**

* President
* Dean of Academic Affairs
* Dean of Administration
* Dean of Students
* Grant Coordinator of the TAACCCT
* Institutional Advancement
* Coordinator of Career Services for TAACCCT’
* TAACCCT Faculty

Along with the members, we will be consulting with and combining practices with FESP program coordinator (Financial Economic Success Program), faculty and staff which offer similar student support that will align with sustainability.

**Vision -**

The vision statement of the college was recently revamped, our team was part of the committee that created the new vision and mission statement. The new statement aligns with our student success agenda and institutional priorities and goals.

*Our purpose at Housatonic Community College is to empower all individuals to develop to their full potential. We are committed to lifelong learning for all. As a knowledgeable and dedicated faculty and staff, we work together with students in a learner-centered, supportive, and stimulating environment. We prepare students to participate in, and contribute responsibly to, our global society.*

*Housatonic strives for:*

* *Affordable, accessible, and high-quality higher education;*
* *Sensitivity to students with diverse backgrounds, needs and goals;*
* *An intellectually active and culturally rich environment that features one of the largest art collections of any two-year college in the country;*
* *A state-of-the-art campus with up-to-date technology and facilities designed to serve students, community groups, and local businesses;*
* *A vital liberal arts foundation to help students to develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills;*
* *Certificate, training, and associate programs for transfer to baccalaureate institutions, for specific job and employment skills, and for personal enrichment;*
* *Comprehensive student support services that work proactively with students for their success;*
* *Active partnerships with the community, businesses, and other educational institutions.*

**Top Strategies for Sustainability**

**New/Expanded Programs of Study**

All programs modified and/or created by the grant will be continued at the college as long as there is a demand for the courses. The programs were created utilizing Labor Market Information Data and show a strong correlation with the needs of the job market in the Bridgeport SMA (Statistical Metropolitan Area). Thus far all programs have been successful and are helping to adequately prepare our students for the workforce. The instructors hired through the grant will also be sustained as long as the programs meets the required student enrollment. The following programs were created or modified by the grant:

*Non-Credit:*

* Certified Nurse Aide
* Patient Care Technician
* Pharmacy Technician
* Certified Professional Coder
* Certified Medical Reimbursement Specialist
* Community Health Worker
* Emergency Medical Technician
* CompTIA A+
* CompTIA Network+
* CompTIA Security+

*Credit:*

* A.S. in Medical Assisting
* A.S. in Computer Information Systems
* Computer Repair Certificate
* Computer Security Certificate
* Networking Certificate

**Labor Market Information**

The college will continue to utilize Labor Market Information in order to make informed decisions when making program choices. Students also need to use this information in order to make better informed career decisions. The college will continue to utilize EMSI and explore other software such as Burning Glass in order to follow labor market trends in order to meet the demand in the area. We also implemented career coach into the campus website so students can utilize the tool in order to create a career path.

**Advanced Technology - IPAS System**

The Board of Regents is looking into software for system-wide implementation. The first program that will be implemented at Housatonic Community College is Degree Works, a comprehensive, web-based academic advising and degree audit tool that helps students, faculty, and staff successfully navigate program requirements. A consultant was hired through the Northeast Resiliency Consortium, to assist with the implementation of the program into the college. The program will be live during the Fall 2016 semester. The Connecticut State Colleges and University system and the college are also looking at early alert software to help with student retention and completion. The college implemented an early alert taskforce which members of the grant are part of to determine the best choice for Housatonic.

**Resiliency Competencies**

The Northeast Resiliency Consortium has created a definition for resiliency and a list of resiliency competencies including critical thinking, adaptability, self-awareness, and collaboration. We have incorporated these competencies into several different aspects of the student’s experience on campus.

We are including them in both New Student Orientation and Freshmen Seminar courses. After implementing a resiliency workshop in orientation we receive positive feedback from our students. We showed a 55% increase in knowledge of classroom strategies after attending the session. Due to the positive results these sessions will continue to be included in both.

We also aligned Community Health Worker, Linux, and SQL programs with the resiliency competencies, which will serve as a model when implementing the competencies college wide. In the fall we will make several webinars available to our faculty at their convenience in order to spread the work on resiliency. These webinars will include multiple classroom examples and the importance of the competencies as it relays to student success.

We conducted a Professional Development workshop for faculty during the Spring 2016 semester to identify faculty champions who will utilize competencies in additional courses. The Forward Grant program will be taking interested faculty champions to both the NRC learning event in October 2016 and to Dream for the Resiliency Summit in February 2017.

HCC will also continue to work with The Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security in Bridgeport to offer FEMA trainings for healthcare and informational technology programs.

HCC will be offering a series of workshops about the new technology created by Smart Sparrow in order for faculty and staff to be able to utilize it in their classes. Smart Sparrow in conjunction with grant staff and faculty created an exciting new online course designed to build community college students’ resiliency skills through conversation, play, and personal reflection, all by having them work independently outside of the classroom. Faculty and staff can utilize this tool inside and outside of the classroom to help engage their students. The program also comes with metrics that can help an instructor tailor classroom instruction based on student results. Workshops are being held in Fall 2016 in order to teach faculty how to use this tool effectively.

**Student Support Services - Retention/Advising**

Based upon the work of Tinto (2004), Boylan (2001), and McGillin (2003) on improving retention in programs, we used a high touch point model with our students. This allows us to stay in touch with our students and to be available as needed. Programs utilizing proactive academic advising build structures that incorporate intervention strategies and mandate advising contacts for students who otherwise might not seek advising. This advising model is also being used with the Financial Economic Success Program grant at HCC and is showing high success rates. Working together with FESP and other departments, we will combine the strategies and find a way to utilize this proactive advising with the students that need it the most.

We will develop a way to identify the students that may require this method to succeed. A successful intervention we developed was phone advising students that did not register for the following semester in a timely manner. After calling them 33.3% of them registered for the following semester.

The president has made this type student support a priority in his vision for the college. Utilizing multiple student focus groups and survey he will identify areas that need modification.

**Prior Learning Assessment**

Through the TAACCCT grant, PLA has gone through a transformative change here at the college. With the NRC, we identified the different kinds of PLA that are already available. We also identified that our sister college Charter Oak State College does portfolio assessments for students; they also do course assessments for non-credit programming (CCAP).

*Non-Credit to Credit Articulation Agreements*

With the help of a Computer Science professor, HCC was able to develop an internal articulation agreement from non-credit to credit programming, providing an avenue for these students to continue seamlessly into a degree program. This articulation agreement will be sustained by the college along with the programs. The grant team also developed a “How to” document for other faculty to be able to develop similar articulation agreements. This document will be presented to the faculty with the Computer Science professor’s help during the Fall 2016 semester, in order to provide them with the tools to complete this process. This will continue to spread the regional work of the grant.

Utilizing the CCAP process, we were able to obtain credit value for some of our non-credit classes through Charter Oak State College. The CCAP process involves faculty evaluating the course by looking at the syllabus, course outline, textbooks, resources, and lesson plans to determine a credit value amount. The grant staff is still working on articulating these credits into a degree here at the college.

*Portfolio Assessments*

We revamped the college catalog to include that portfolio assessments can be completed through our sister institution, Charter Oak State College. The process and contact information is available in the catalog. The grant team is planning on doing a workshop in the Fall of 2016 for our front line support staff, admissions, and counseling to ensure that they know where to send students.

We will also create a brochure in the Spring of 2017 on portfolio assessments with Charter Oak State College’s contact information. Credit can then be transferred from Charter Oak State College to Housatonic Community College or another transfer institution for the students to complete their degree.

**Reactivation of the Achieving the Dream Committee**

The grant has worked with the college and the president to re-activate the Achieving the Dream committee both Core and Data team. A new group was established with members from both the original team and with new college members. The charge for the committee is to look at all of the different student services that are offered at the college and determine if there are obstacles for students. The committee will also identify new grant opportunities that will help increase student success and retention. Utilizing predictive analytics, we will determine the need base for our new incoming students before they arrive on campus. This committee will be critical as we move forward in implementing grant strategies as well.

The team will be analyzing the work of the grant and comparing existing processes to see which if any procedures create road blocks for students. Information for this reevaluation of policies and procedures will be gathered by conducting focus groups with students, faculty, and staff. We plan to use the institutional capacity tool from Achieving the Dream to help access the HCC community to better prepare the institution for change. We also plan to make use of the many resources available to us from Achieving the Dream such as speakers from colleges who have successfully put into practice some new models that would help achieve positive change.

**Work-Based Learning**

Through the grant, work-based learning opportunities have grown in all grant areas of concentration, healthcare and information technology. We added a new internship course with a clinical component to medical assisting, information technology continues to identify new apprenticeships and opportunities and our community health worker requires student to complete a 50-hour externship in order to graduate. We continue to build relationships with businesses in the area to increase the amount of internships offered to students.

The president created a new Office of Career Services, Internships, and Experiential Learning at the college to scale up the internship work that started under the grant. The Coordinator of Career Services, for the TAACCCT grant, has also been retained by the college and works in the center. Selected staff and faculty members are working together to establish an internship “How to” manual in order for faculty members to use in their programs.

**Grants Management Development**

Throughout our work with the grant, we identified a need for a grant fiscal and program auditor to ensure that the college followed all grant specifications both programmatic and fiscal. In March of 2016, the president moved the Assistant to the Grant Coordinator, one of the TAACCCT grant staff, to the finance department in order to handle fiscal responsibilities for all of the college grants. This move will allow the college to obtain more grants in order to meet the employment demands of the area and ensure student success.

**Metrics**

The college is in a process of transformation due to change in leadership and identification of specific deliverables that were measured from this grant and others. In order to meet the specification for these grants, the department of Institutional Effectiveness and Information Technology staff now both report to the Dean of Administration. This partnership will allow the college to easily access more data on our students and improve our ability to make informed decisions.

The college is looking for a new predictive analytics system in order to measure student success in real time to impact retention. This would give us the ability to predict what students may be in danger of not completing based on a combination of prior high school information and current semester data points such as attendance and first time quiz and test grades.

We will work with our Degree Works program, currently funded by the CT Board of Regents, which will be able to measure program growth and program interest. This product will help our students adhere to their pathways by sending alerts for classes that students sign up for that will not count towards their program. The college is also looking to gain an early alert system in order to keep students successful within their pathway. All of these different software systems will be able to identify trends and areas that are in need of improvement and will help with retention.

**Strategic Partnerships and Roles –**

* Achieving the Dream – Providing us with resources to help develop student success agenda and data metrics.
* Area Industry Partners – Continue to enhance our student programs and provide experiential learning opportunities.
  + People’s Bank
  + Aquarion
  + Optimus Health Center
  + Southwest Community Health Center
  + Bridgeport Hospital
  + St. Vincent’s Hospital
  + Datto
* Area Workforce Development Agencies – Continue to provide us with students and resources for students to reach completion.
  + The Workplace – WIB
  + Workforce Alliance – WIB
  + Department of Labor
  + Career Resources
* Community Agencies –Serve as a referral resource for students working with them to overcome barriers.
  + Department of Social Services
  + United Way
  + Family Services Woodfield
  + Goodwill
  + Salvation Army
  + Mercy Learning Center

**Sustainability Resources Secured or Plan in Place –**

The college is seeking out new grants to continue to develop new programs and services to students. Two new grants that already been identified include the American Promise grant and a Title 3 grant. The American Promise grant application was submitted in August of 2016.

The college has already secured funding for sustaining the faculty and therefore sustaining grant programming.

* 3 Full Time Faculty (Math, IT, and Medical Assisting) have been moved to college budget.
  + Math Professor Total: – $85,017.66
  + Medical Assisting Total – $107,594.50
  + Information Technology Total –$ 66, 302.86

The college is looking for ways to place forward staff in the operating budget and the ongoing operations of the college in order to scale grant ideas and functions. The college has committed the following staff as of 9/30.2016:

* Career Coordinator was moved to the newly created Career Services Internships and Experiential Learning Office in order to continue and expand the work we have done with experiential learning and internships.
  + Total – $79,077.70
* Assistant to the director of the grant was moved to the fiscal office for a much needed grants fiscal person. She is helping with all grant reporting and budgets
  + Total – $75,122.32

We will utilize our industry partners in provide additional financial resources for internships and externships. We will continue to create new partnerships reaching out to community resources and alumni.

The college received in April of 2016 the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Education and Training Grant which will help us to fund free trainings for students that are receiving SNAP benefits.

The Housatonic Foundation will continue to grow in order to enhance and fund programs and students.

Housatonic’s concentration to improve student success and retention will help to retain students, which will increase the budget. The additional monies will help to pay for sustaining grant best practices.