

Important Information is now available about the *Affordable Care Act*, [getting ready](#) for the upcoming implementation of *Health Insurance Exchanges*, and the [choices](#) involved. Please share this information with your constituencies.

OVAE Welcomes Brandon Brown



Photograph by Bill Moser
U.S. Department of Education

Brandon Brown recently joined OVAE's Division of Policy, Research and Evaluation Studies (PRES) on a six-month detail as a participant in the President's Management Council Interagency Rotation Program. Brown is a program analyst with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Wage and Hour Division (WHD), where he works in the Division of Strategic Planning, Performance and Evaluation in Washington, D.C. While at OVAE, he will provide research assistance and data analysis in a variety of policy areas, including early education, adult education, and community colleges. He will also assist PRES staff in the

analysis of datasets, such as the American Community Survey and the Current Population Survey, as well as other industry and occupational data.

Brown is in his 12th year with WHD, where he began as an investigator in his hometown of Kansas City, Kan. There he served on the front lines of DOL, enforcing a variety of federal laws including the Fair Labor Standards Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, as well as laws governing wages and work hours on federal construction and service contracts. He conducted on-site investigations in such industries as restaurants, janitorial services, construction, hotel/motel, health care, and agriculture. In 2008, Brown moved to Philadelphia, where he served as the planning and review officer for the Northeast Region of WHD. There he oversaw the design and implementation of annual strategic enforcement plans, and conducted accountability reviews to evaluate the performance of local offices and ensure consistency in the application of the laws enforced by WHD.

Since joining WHD's national office in 2011, Brown has led the design and execution of the agency's plan for enforcing labor laws in the agricultural sector and national initiatives to combat misclassification of workers as independent contractors. He has worked closely with agency- and departmental-level IT teams to ensure data accuracy in responding to internal and external requests for WHD enforcement data such as Congressional inquiries and FOIA and media requests as well as budget, performance and accountability documents. He also has participated in the development of the agency's annual operating plan and served on an interagency data working group through the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center.

Brown holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish language and literature and a master's degree in Latin American studies both from the University of Kansas, where he specialized in the ethnomusicology of Mexico and Brazil. He currently resides in Silver Spring, Md., with his wife, Lina, and their 18-month-old son, Benjamin.

Improving Community College Student Success

[Our Piece of the Pie](#) (OPP), a youth development organization based in Hartford, Conn., recently released [Pathways through College: Strategies for Improving Community College Student Success](#). The report outlines the completion challenge facing community college students across the country and summarizes the strategies the colleges can pursue to improve student success. OPP notes that by 2018, nearly two-thirds of jobs will require a postsecondary credential, and job growth for associate degree holders is expected to peak at nearly 20 percent between now and then, double that for the workforce as a whole and exceeding the projected job growth rate of bachelor's degree holders. Community colleges will, therefore, be called upon to play an increasingly important role in meeting our nation's skilled workforce needs.

However, OPP argues, community colleges will not be able to meet this challenge without addressing the "community college dropout crisis." Citing [statistics](#) from Complete College America, OPP notes that less than 30 percent of beginning community college students complete an associate degree within three years, and the completion rates are significantly lower for low-income, minority, and older (more than 25 years old) community college students.

OPP identifies five interconnected barriers inhibiting student success and increasing the number of community college dropouts:

1. Inadequate academic preparation;
2. Remedial education;
3. Student financial aid;
4. Lack of non-academic skills; and
5. Competing obligations.

While acknowledging that many community college students were not adequately prepared for postsecondary success by the K-12 system, OPP argues "states and community colleges must implement and support aggressive and promising strategies" to increase the persistence and completion rates of community college students. OPP discusses seven promising reform strategies:

1. Improving curriculum alignment between high schools and postsecondary institutions so students who complete high school have the academic skills needed to succeed in college;
2. Reforming traditional remedial education sequences to help students begin college-level coursework more quickly;
3. Increasing early college exposure, through early college high schools, dual enrollment, and summer bridge programs, so students are exposed to college culture and coursework early;
4. Providing stronger academic, social, and career support services for students in both high school and college;
5. Reforming current financial aid and college funding policies to provide more financial incentives to students and institutions to succeed;
6. Strengthening articulation and transfer between community colleges and four-year institutions; and
7. Improving the alignment between community college programs and labor market needs, as well as providing more career guidance to students, to ensure community college students succeed in finding good jobs after graduation.

OPP concludes with a case study of its Postsecondary Success Initiative (PSI) in action at Capital Community College in Hartford. The initiative aims to provide community college students with a myriad of additional support services to promote persistence and degree completion. Its first-year persistence rates for PSI students are promising. According to OPP, noting that when "community college students receive the support they need, they can succeed, and experience the economic and social benefits that come with college graduation."

Announcements

New Procurement Opportunity for Implementing CCR Standards in Adult Education

OVAE is seeking a contractor for the new procurement Implementing College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards in Adult Education. This project will support the development and delivery of educational programs able to prepare adult students for postsecondary school and career success through the adoption and implementation of the [CCR Standards for Adult Education](#). Affordable, multi-level training and technical assistance opportunities will be provided to states and programs through virtual and face-to-face learning environments. The project builds upon previous standards efforts as referenced in the draft performance work standards (PWS). OVAE seeks a contractor familiar with both standards-based adult education and the current work on K-12 content standards and its application to this requirement. The Department is seeking input on the draft PWS before May 10, 2013, and invites interested parties to attend a market research webinar on college- and career-ready standards procurement on May 6 at 1 pm EDT. All details about the procurement and webinar may be found [here](#).

National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education Launches Website

The National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education (NCICTE), funded in 2012 and authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV), has launched its website at <http://ctecenter.ed.gov>. It features proposed research by the center, related research in the CTE resource section, and online training modules that provide guidance for translating the center's studies into practice at your college, district, or school.

Save the Date: OVAE's 2013 Community College Webinar Series Continues May 14

The third in OVAE's 2013 community college webinar series will be held on Tuesday, May 14, from 3 to 4 p.m. EDT. Building on the National Dialogue on Career Pathways held last October, this event will bring together foundation, state, and local community college representatives to discuss the central role of community colleges in career pathways systems. Whitney Smith, program director of employment at the Joyce Foundation, will discuss the importance of career pathways systems and the foundation's work to expand their development in the Great Lakes region. Jay Box, Chancellor of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, will present on the various initiatives underway in Kentucky to ease postsecondary access and transitions for youths and adults. The webinar will also highlight two promising local career pathways programs. Deborah Davidson, vice president for Workforce and Economic Development at Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, Wisc., will discuss the work of her institution to provide on-ramps for low-skill adults to access postsecondary education and training. Lupe Chavez, director of High School Programs at South Texas College in McAllen, Texas, will present that college's efforts to expand partnerships with local high schools, increase dual enrollment, and promote postsecondary transitions for young adults.

Registration information for this webinar will be sent out next week.