



Adult College Completion: What Have We Learned So Far?

SREB Go Alliance
2014 Annual Meeting

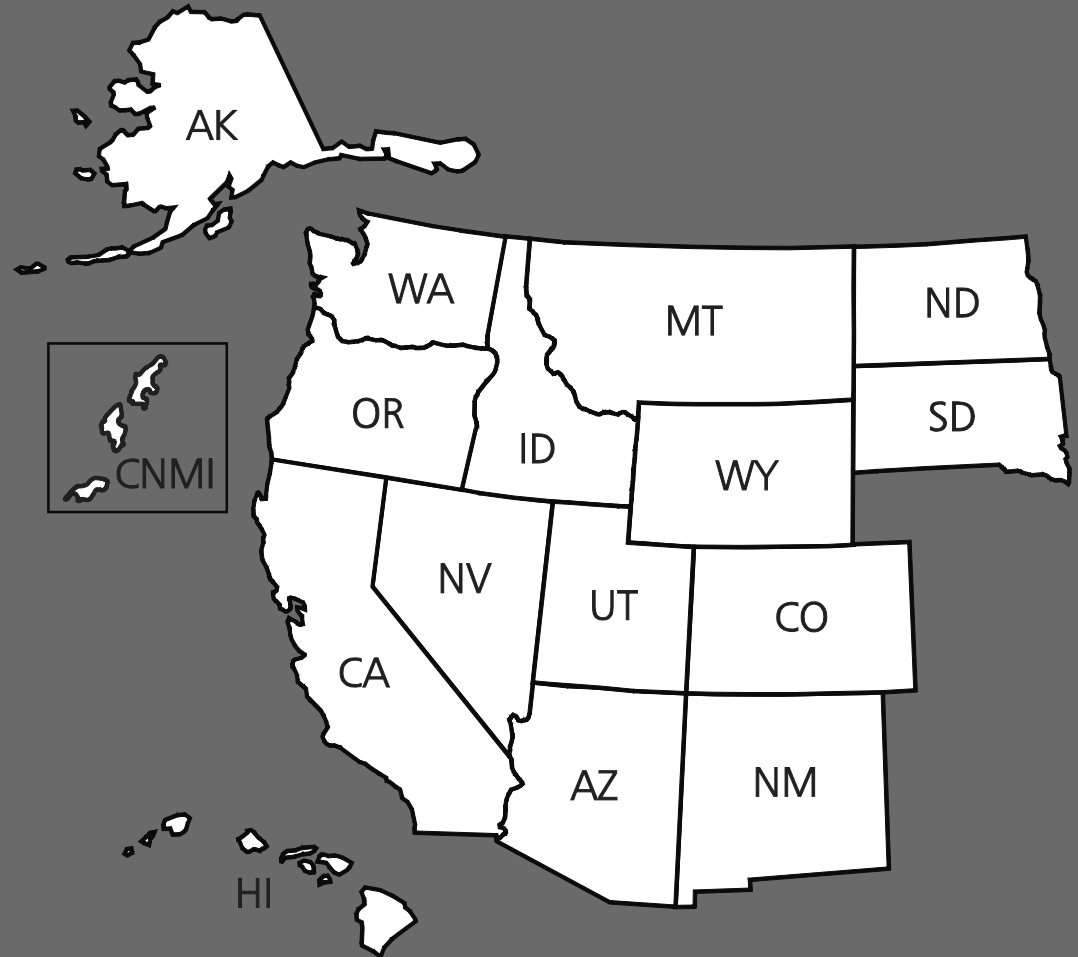
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for Higher Education (WICHE)*

Presentation Overview

- Background
- Why Serve Adults?
- What We've Learned
 - Barriers Faced by Adults Returning to Higher Education
 - A Discussion of Solutions: What's Working?

What is WICHE?

- Promotes access and excellence in higher education for all citizens of the West



Non-Traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learner

- Funded by Lumina Foundation
- To stimulate and guide state and institutional policy and practice changes so that “ready adults” can earn college degrees
 - State and institutional policies and practices
 - Five areas of focus
 - Data
 - Academic Affairs
 - Student Services
 - Financing/Financial Aid
 - Communications/Marketing

Non-Traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learner

- Six states
 - Arkansas
 - Nevada
 - Colorado
 - North Dakota
 - South Dakota
 - New Jersey

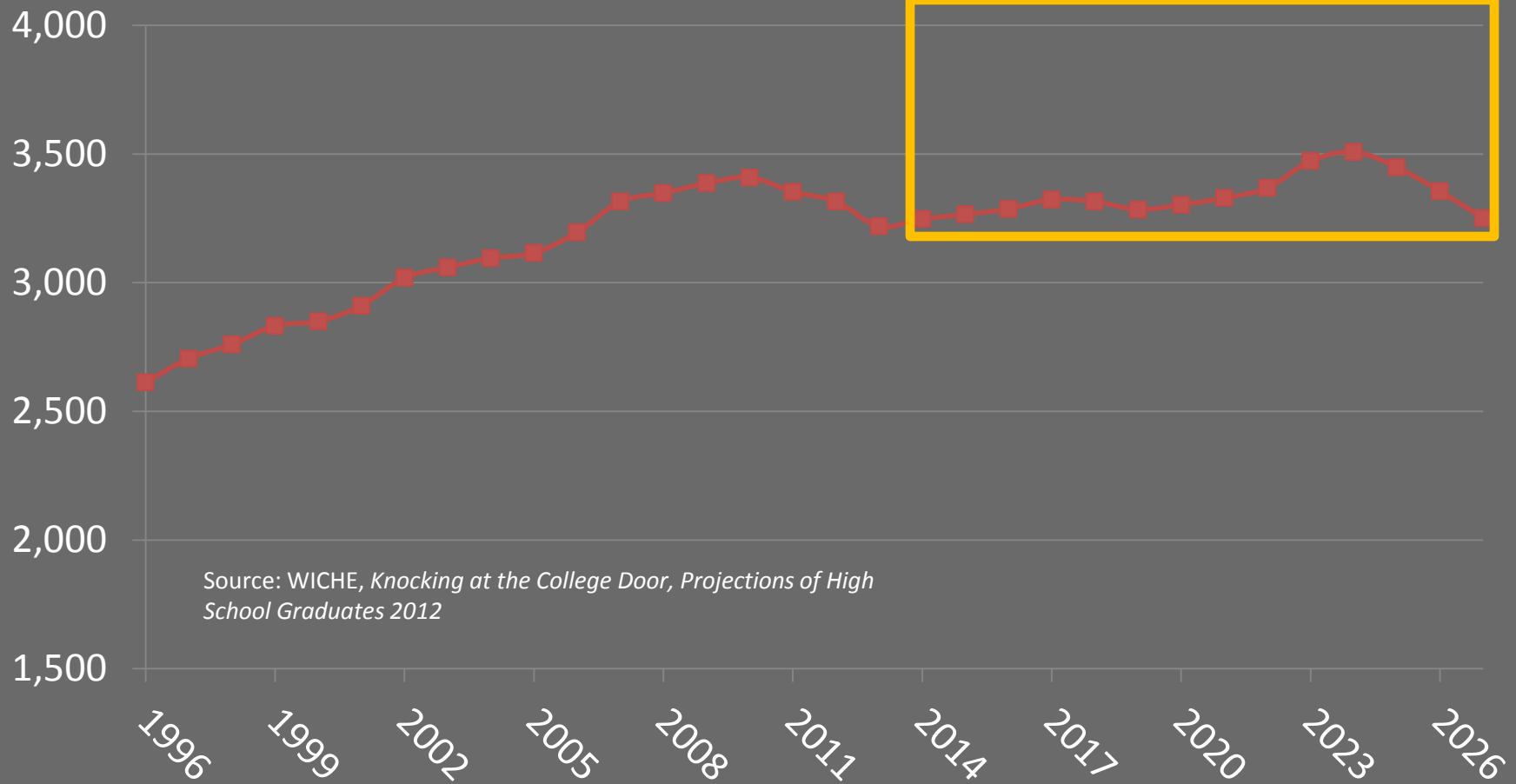
The Adult College Completion Network

- Overarching Goal: Share promising policies and practices among all stakeholders to increase degree and certificate completion by adults with prior college credit
- Membership
 - State higher education agencies
 - Workforce-focused organizations
 - Economic development organizations
 - Postsecondary institutions
 - Non-profit organizations
- Funded by Lumina Foundation; Managed by WICHE

Why Serve Adult Students?

- The nation can't reach attainment goals without serving adults
 - Similarly, most state and city goals are out of reach without adults
- Adults benefit from completing credentials
- Adults with prior college credit have demonstrated that they can succeed

Projections of High School Graduates



Source: WICHE, *Knocking at the College Door, Projections of High School Graduates 2012*

Jobs Will Require Postsecondary Education

- By 2020:
 - 24% of jobs will require a bachelor's degree
 - 33% will require some college, an associate's degree, or a postsecondary vocational certificate
- As of 2012, of working-age Americans (25-64):
 - 20% have a bachelor's degree
 - 39% have a two- or four-year degree
 - 22% have some college, but no degree

General Lessons Learned in Serving Adults

- Often referred to as “low-hanging fruit,” but are they?
- With the right supports, they can succeed!



General Lessons Learned in Serving Adults

- “Don’t reinvent the wheel,” but sort of do...

An Ingenious Shock-Absorbing Wheel for Bikes and Wheelchairs

BY JOSEPH FLAHERTY 05.05.14 | 6:30 AM | PERMALINK

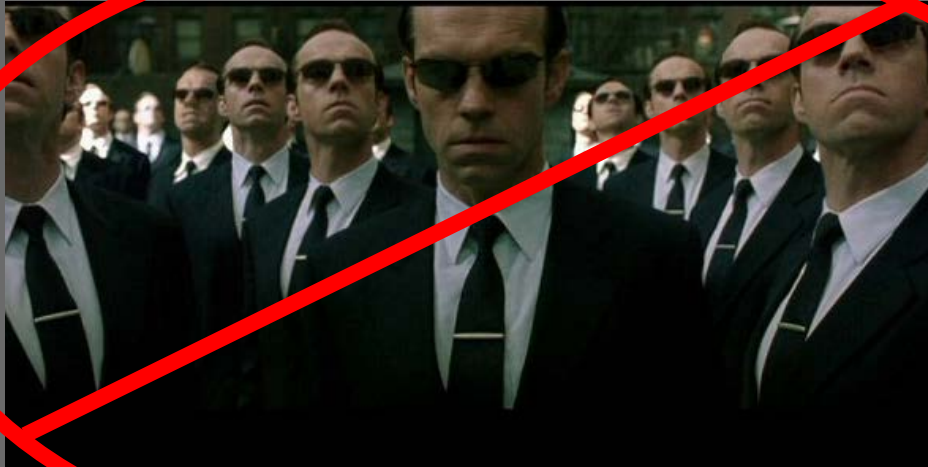
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1 / 5 When Israeli farmer Gilad Wolf broke his pelvis in 2008, he resolved not to let his crops wither on the vine and became determined to turn his wheelchair into a workhorse.

[f](#) \$ BY SOFTWHEEL

General Lessons Learned in Serving Adults



- Adult learners are a diverse group with varied needs requiring different interventions

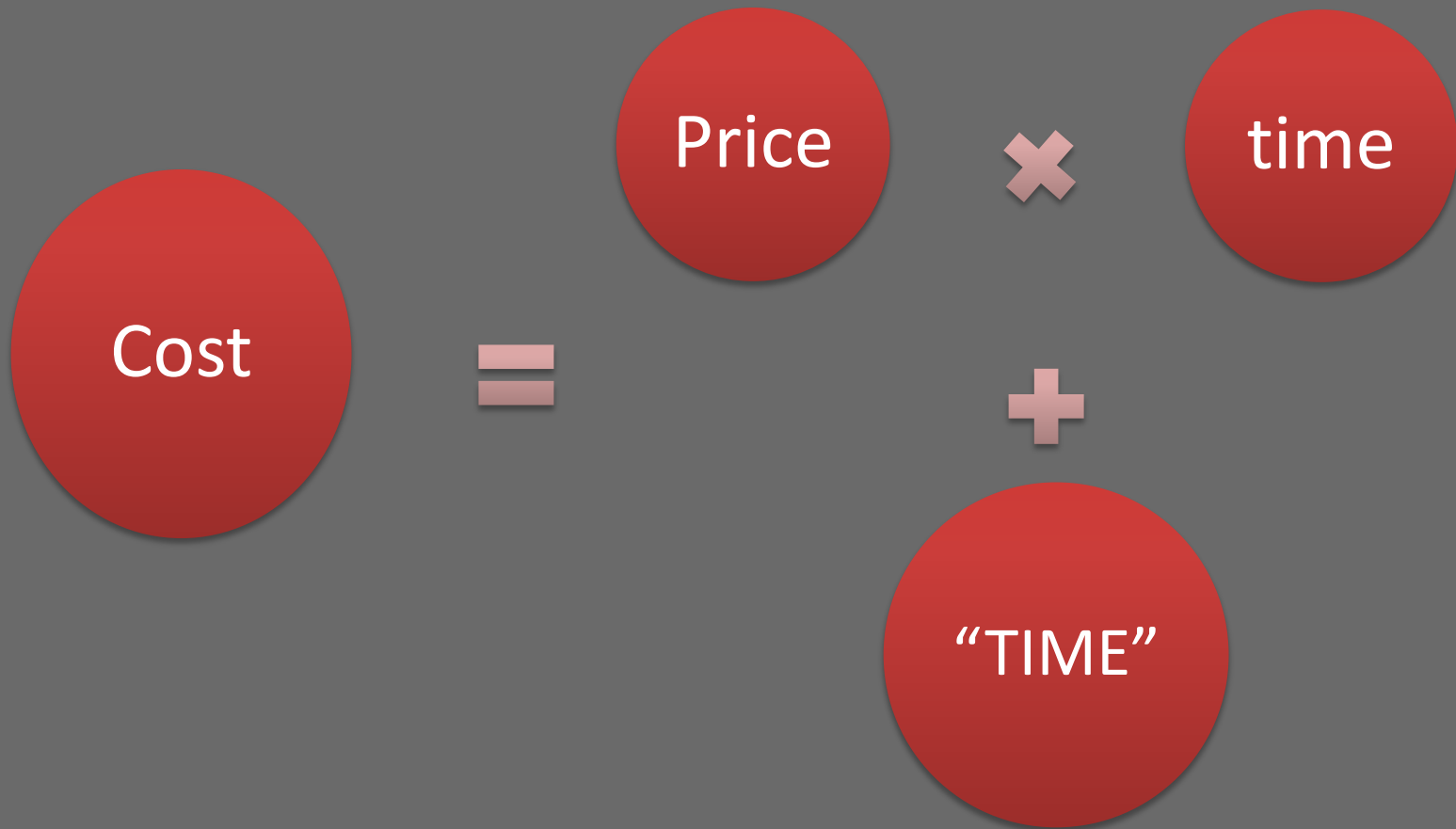
What Have We Learned about Returning Adults?

- They are concerned about three things:
 - Cost
 - How am I going to pay for this?
 - Return on Investment
 - How will this benefit me?
 - Time
 - How am I going to balance this with my busy life?
 - How long will it take to get a degree?
- They lack the support structure available to traditional students
- They may have complicated credit transfer, financial aid, and other needs

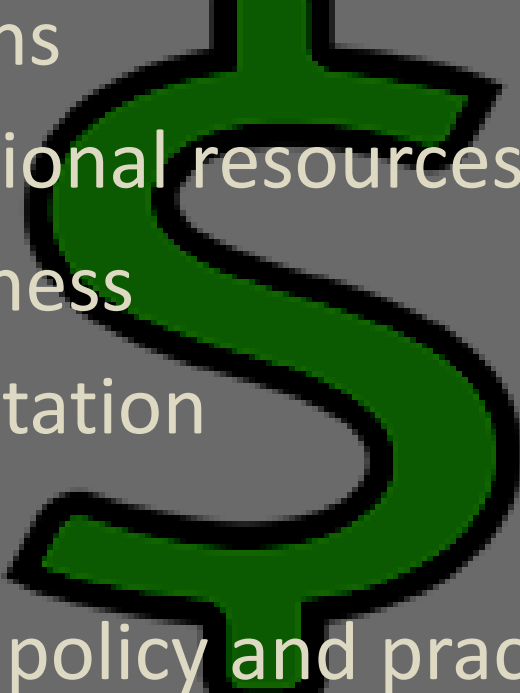
What Have We Learned about Returning Adults?

- They need flexibility – not just with classes, but also:
 - Student services
 - Academic amnesty
 - Other supports
- They can often be better served by a single point of contact

The Cost of a Credential



Strategies to Reduce Price

- Payment plans
 - Open educational resources
 - Debt forgiveness
 - Loan rehabilitation
 - Fee waivers
 - Financial aid policy and practice audit
- 

Strategies to Reduce Time (to Degree)

- Developmental courses: Redesign, placement preparation
- PLA – Move beyond just accepting it
 - How do students know if they're eligible?
 - What type of credit will they earn?
 - Market towards students and employers
- Better and more effective advising – Kentucky: 24/7 advisors
- Streamlined transfer policies – eliminate wasted time and money
- “All you can eat” – Competency-Based Education (Western Governors University)

Strategies to Save “TIME”

- Advising
- Adult-focused policies and practices
- Peer networks
- Re-entry classes
- Academic amnesty
- One-stop “conciierge” model

What Have We Learned?

- The concierge model (see brief):
 - Provides direct assistance for returning adults
 - Communicates that the institution cares
 - Can build institutional knowledge
 - Can help identify system barriers and problems
 - Can be a more efficient use of institutional resources
 - Implemented in: Nevada, Arkansas, South Dakota, Ivy Tech Community College (IN)

What Have We Learned About Employers?

- Close relationships between companies and institutions benefit both business and students
- Employers can offer:
 - low- or no-cost benefits to entice employees to complete degrees
 - Flexible work hours
 - Class meeting space
 - Mechanism for marketing degree completion programs
 - ACE CREDIT for training programs

What Have We Learned about Employers?

- BUT...there are challenges to building support among businesses :
 - Two very different types of organizations
 - Language barriers, ideological differences, speed
 - ‘Doing the right thing’ is nice, but not necessarily a persuasive argument
 - Communicate value and benefits to private sector, government, and institutions
 - Power of data and stories
 - Partnerships work: Manufacturing Institute, Goodwill, Inc., Louisville, Maine Development Foundation
 - Some businesses have ‘college advocate’: Louisville, KY – Usually HR staff, based at company to help employees return and complete degrees or certificates

What Else Have We Learned?

- State and local governments, chambers of commerce, etc. have access to large populations of potential students

What's Emerging?

- Alternative Credential Pathways
 - Competency-based education
 - Badging
- Outcomes-based Funding
- Learning Frameworks and the Quality Discussion
 - Degree Qualifications Profile
 - Empire State's Global Learning Qualifications Framework
- MOOCs

An Example From the ACC Network

IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Creating a Culture of Completion

THE GOAL:

IDENTIFY - Adults with substantial Ivy Tech credit, but not completed a certificate or degree

RECRUIT - Adults into Ivy Tech degree completion programs

GRADUATE - Adults with Associate Degrees

TRANSFER - Associate Degree graduates to IU General Studies for Bachelor's Degree

Targeting the “Low Hanging” Fruit

- Students with the following:
 - 45 or more total credit hours earned
 - 39 or more college credit hours earned
 - Cumulative GPA or 2.0 or higher
 - Not enrolled in apprenticeship
 - Degree-seeking
 - No Technical Certificates or Degrees Awarded
 - *Last term of enrollment between Fall 2006 and Fall 2009

The Concierge Service

Initial Phone calls and postcards came from our statewide marketing group

Contact identified at each campus - Interested students escalated to contact at appropriate campus

Contact served to assist student with all needs – including having access to a scholarship fund for students with 15 hours or less to complete

Additional Campus Events geared toward this population

Impact at the Terre Haute Campus

- Fall 2012
 - 1,147 students identified
 - 59 registered for classes (5%) of total
 - For Spring 2013, 41 ADC students registered
 - 30 were continuing from the fall semester
 - 16 of the “non-returning” from the fall were still in good standing

Where They are Now – All Regions

54,598 students have been sent marketing materials related to the Adult Degree Completion Project

8,423 (15%) have returned for at least 1 subsequent term

1,486 students have earned **2,006** credentials

989 students have earned **1,005** associate degrees

834 students have earned **1,001** certificates



Moving Forward...

- General Education Transfer Certificate
- Continued relationship building with 4-year institutions for transfer – including “transfer back” degree completion options
- Improved Degree Audit System
- New options for accelerating progress through educational and career pathways

For More Information

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