

June 26, 2007

Amy F. Robins
Program Director
Jobs for the Future
88 Broad Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
Electronic transmission

Dear Amy:

Durham Technical Community College submits this report to Jobs for the Future on progress in the Breaking Through initiative.

Summary of the program to date/status of deliverables:

- A cohort of approximately 20 students in the Basic Skills program who were interested in pursuing careers as Certified Medical Assistants were enrolled in a basic skills course in the fall of 2006; however, the college was delayed in employing an instructor with the appropriate background to deliver contextual basic skills instruction during the winter semester. In an effort to make up lost ground, recruitment began for all three cohorts (one for each pathway) in the spring. Approximately 150 students have been surveyed, and to date 18 have been accepted into the Breaking Through cohorts (4 in Medical Assisting; 5 in Early Childhood; 9 in Industrial Systems). Enrollment in these cohorts is “multi-entry” meaning new students may be added to the cohorts each week after completing the orientation course and screening for the initiative.
- The college has employed a Case Manager/Counselor (George King) to serve as the students’ point of contact throughout their enrollment in the college. The college has also employed three faculty members (Al Jones, Schenika Silver, and Quincy Wright) who are providing cohort-based instruction for the students in the three career areas.
- Three student mentors who have completed the Basic Skills Program (Jenee Marshall, Toni Rigsbee, and Chris Simpson) and are enrolled in college courses have been hired and trained through our counseling department to work with students in the initiative. One mentor has been assigned to each faculty member and is working with the faculty member and the Case Manager to support students along the pathways.
- The enhanced orientation course for basic skills students continues to be the first point of contact for recruitment into Breaking Through. In this course, instructors

review test-taking skills prior to administering the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). An assessment of specific student academic needs and possible personal issues (such as transportation) is conducted as part of the assessment. In addition, content from the college's Human Resource Development (HRD) program has been included in the orientation course. The HRD program prepares students for the world of work by focusing on carrying out job searches, writing resumes, preparing for and conducting job interviews, and meeting employers' behavioral expectations.

- The college has obtained a computer software package (MECA) to be used as part of the basic skills orientation program. This software includes both interest inventory and skills assessment components, and it will be used to supplement the instructional activities in the basic skills program. Installation of this software should be completed by August 15.
- The college has extended an offer of employment to an ACCESS database programmer who will assist in tracking student data for Breaking Through. We intend to connect this database with our Achieving the Dream database to continue to track students as they transition to college. We intend to arrange a consultation with Peter Ewell later this summer for assistance regarding our tracking system.
- A number of the Basic Skills faculty members have been trained to teach the College Transitions course for adult high school and GED students. This course is modeled after the college-level First Year Experience course (ACA 111), which is required for all students in associate in applied science degree programs. Basic Skills students who take the College Transitions course earn both a certificate for a free college course and a waiver for the ACA 111 course.
- In May, the three Breaking Through instructors, the case manager, and eight other members of the Basic Skills Department attended the Adult Basic Skills Professional Development Institute at Appalachian State University. The week-long institute provides professional development for administrators, instructors, literacy volunteers, and graduate students throughout the state of North Carolina. The focus of the 2007 institute was teaching mathematics. Several workshops focused on teaching math using a functional context approach to make content relevant and meaningful to working adults.

What obstacles have we encountered?

- Although interest is high among our student population, follow-through and commitment to the initiative has been problematic. Our first cohorts began in June 2007 with small numbers. While we have the structure and faculty members in place now and can accommodate larger numbers, students' schedule preferences have limited our first enrollment to fewer than 20 students. The courses are run as "multi-entry" which enables students to enroll as they complete the admissions process to our basic skills program throughout the term (instead of enrolling only at the beginning of the term).

- The college is in the process of moving to a new campus-wide data system; therefore, technical assistance has been delayed. We are just now loading MECA to be used to assess student interest in and aptitude for the three career pathways.

Presentation of data we have now:

- As of June 25, 2007, 181 individuals who have applied for or been enrolled in basic skills courses have expressed interest in one of the three Breaking Through pathways:

Medical Assisting	100
Industrial Systems	39
Early Childhood	42

A number of these individuals tested at a level indicating they are not yet ready to participate in their particular cohort of choice. Others did not follow through on the enrollment process or enrolled in general basic skills courses and have since dropped out. Others remain interested but are unable to participate in these cohorts because of schedule conflicts (such as child care, transportation, or other personal issues).

Current enrollments in the three cohorts are as follows:

- Medical Assisting – 4 students
Gender: 1 male, 3 female
Race/Ethnicity: 4 African-American
Average Age: 25.5 years, with age range of 18 to 34 years
- Early Childhood – 5 students
Gender: 1 male, 4 female
Race/Ethnicity: 5 African-American
Average Age: 25 years, with age range of 18 to 37 years
- Industrial Systems – 9 students
Gender: 8 male, 1 female
Race/Ethnicity: 7 African-American, 1 Caucasian, 1 no race indicated
Average Age: 32.4 years with age range of 18 to 47 years

Please contact me if you need additional information. Thank you for your support of Durham Technical Community College's efforts to serve our community more effectively.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)

William G. Ingram

Senior Vice President/Chief Instructional Officer