

**The Final Report of the Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education  
Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates:**

**A Plan for Increasing the Number of Arkansans with Bachelor's Degrees**

**August 2008**

The Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates wishes to thank Arkansas State University for graciously providing printing services for this report.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal established by the Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates (Task Force) is to design and implement policies that will enable Arkansas to meet the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) average percentage of citizens holding bachelor's degrees by 2015. The SREB average is projected to be 27% by 2015. Arkansas is currently producing 11,186 bachelor's degrees per year, and at this rate of production Arkansas will have 337,256 citizens with bachelor's degrees, or 22.3%, by 2015 [Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)a, 2008]. This means that Arkansas must increase the current production of bachelor's degrees by 64% (7,098 more graduates per year) each of the next six years to reach the SREB average.

Arkansas exceeds many SREB states in the number of high school graduates who enter college. However, a greater percentage of these students subsequently fail to complete their higher education with bachelor's degrees. That means the state funding and student tuition spent on higher education in Arkansas is used less efficiently than states with a higher rate of degree production.

**We live in a world where we compete not only with our neighboring states for the best jobs, but also with countries overseas. If we want to survive in the global marketplace, we must be fully prepared to fill the jobs of the 21st century.**

Governor Mike Beebe, June 2008

The 15-member Task Force received testimony from and studied the recommendations of national and state experts. The Task Force reviewed the state's current demographics and educational practices and looked to other states for models of best practices. From that work, the Task Force developed eight core recommendations to guide the state in undertaking a major shift in the state's current educational attainment.

1. Strengthening the Arkansas Education Pipeline
2. Improving Preparation
3. Decreasing Remediation
4. Accessing Financial Aid
5. Increasing Retention and Graduation
6. Enhancing Funding and Governance
7. Addressing Data Needs
8. Supporting Economic Development

This report outlines the changes needed to ensure that the amount of remediation is significantly reduced, and that students who enter college are successful in attaining bachelor's degrees. The report calls for the implementation of policies in FY 2008-09 that do not require legislation, as well as the enactment of legislation, where necessary, for FY 2009-10.

**The U.S. higher education system is no longer the best in the world. Too many students are falling through the cracks. At the same time, college tuition and fees are increasing rapidly. We must solve this problem at the state level.**

Julie Bell, Education Policy Director, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2008

According to Act 570 of 2007, the Task Force will cease to exist January 1, 2009. At that time the responsibility for ensuring the recommendations of the report are fulfilled and the goal of the Task Force is met will fall to the Senate and House Education Committees in cooperation with state educational agencies.

There is much work to be accomplished between the publication of this report and December 2015.

The cooperation of leaders in K-12 education, the Department of Workforce Education, the Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education, and the state's colleges and universities will be essential in achieving the critical goal of reaching the SREB average percentage of citizens with bachelor's degrees.

## FOREWORD

August 15, 2008

To: Governor Mike Beebe and Members of the Arkansas General Assembly

As required by ACT 570 of 2007, the Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates was created. The Task Force began working in September 2007 and established the following goal:

*Arkansas will reach the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) average for citizens holding bachelor's degrees by 2015.*

While we understand that this goal is a moving target due to emphasis by all states on improving their rankings, we strongly feel that the goal is attainable and critical to the future of our state's economic development. Our report is a comprehensive analysis and presents recommendations adopted by the Task Force in an effort to aid the Governor and General Assembly in considering strategies and benchmarks for reaching this ambitious goal.

I would like to express sincere gratitude to my legislative colleagues who have served on the Task Force and continually assisted me in leading this effort by giving of their time and extensive expertise. I deeply appreciate the education professionals who were appointed as members of the Task Force because of their diverse knowledge and professional experiences. The members have been totally committed to their charge as evidenced by their excellent attendance at and participation in Task Force meetings as well as work group meetings. All members have worked tirelessly in the research and preparation of this report and support the recommendations without reservation. The Task Force members are:

Representative Johnnie Roebuck, Task Force Chair

Senator Dave Bisbee, Chair, P-12 Work Group

Senator Gilbert Baker

Representative Bill Abernathy

Dr. Jim Purcell, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Dr. T. Kenneth James, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Mr. Daniel N. Marzoni, II, President, Arkansas Education Association

Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators

Dr. Ed Franklin, Chair, Two-Year College Work Group, and Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges

Ms. Robin Bryant Chair, Humanities Department, Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas

Dr. Sally Roden, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, University of Central Arkansas

Dr. Karen Hodges, Chair, Four-Year Institutions Work Group, and Interim Director of Admissions, University of Arkansas

Ms. Patricia (Patty) Weak, Past-President, Arkansas Association of Developmental Education, Ouachita Technical College

Mr. R. David Ray, Provost And Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Arkansas at Monticello

Dr. Clarence E. "Chip" Ates, Executive Vice President for Student Learning, Northwest Arkansas Community College

Dr. Calvin Johnson, Task Force Advisor, Dean, School of Education, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

The Task Force work would not be complete and successful without the assistance of staff members from the Bureau of Legislative Research. I would like to especially thank the following persons for their continued dedication and quality work with the Task Force:

Ms. Jerri Derlikowski, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research

Ms. Angie Clingmon, Former Administrative Assistant, Policy Analysis and Research

Mr. Tony Vogelgesang, Legislative Analyst, Budget and Fiscal Review

Ms. Nell Smith, Senior Research Specialist, Policy Analysis and Research

A special thanks goes to the representatives of our four-year and two-year institutions and K-12 school districts who faithfully attended our meetings and offered assistance, including the sponsorship of meetings. Former State Representative Calvin Johnson has served as a special advisor to the Task Force and shared his knowledge and expertise throughout the process. A special thanks to Arkansas State University for sponsoring the publication of this report.

The Task Force firmly believes the education level of our citizenry is inextricably tied to economic development. Work toward the realization of the Task Force goal is critical and should be a top priority for our state.

It is imperative that our state answer the call to action and provide the needed resources to implement the recommendations within this report if we are to meet the critical goal as set by the Task Force.

State Representative Johnnie Roebuck  
District 20

# INTRODUCTION

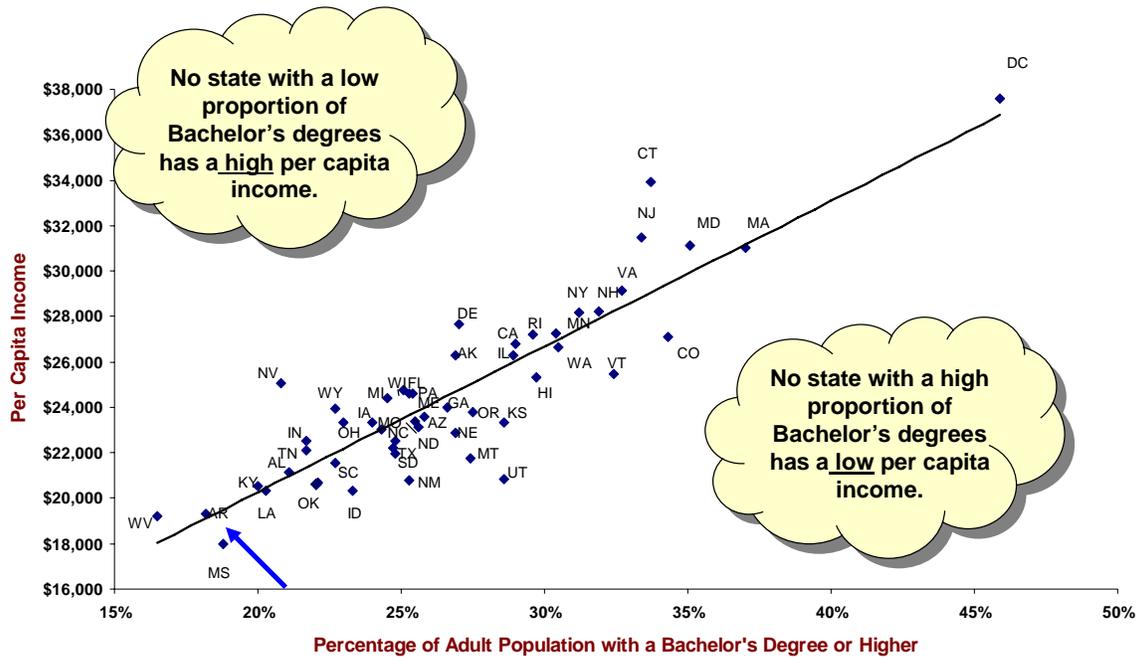
Economists have determined that almost all economic growth and prosperity for individuals and their families, cities, states, and the nation is now driven by college-educated workers (Mortenson, 2005). Statistics abound that corroborate this fact with the clearest statistic being the correlation between a state's per capita income and adult educational attainment.

Those individuals, families, cities, states and — increasingly — countries with the most education are prospering, while those with the least higher education are experiencing relative and often absolute economic decline.

Tom Mortenson, Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, June 2005

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2006, Arkansas ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation in both per capita income and the percentage of adults 25 and older with bachelor's degrees.

## State Per Capita Personal Income v. Share of Adult Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2006)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2006

Because of this strong correlation between educational attainment and state wealth, states that have fallen behind educationally and economically are implementing bold initiatives to educate their citizens.

Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that Arkansas is not developing an educated workforce. In 2002, the year prior to Arkansas's Blue Ribbon Commission on Education, Arkansas ranked 47<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in the percentage of adult population with bachelor's degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). By 2006, Arkansas had dropped to 50<sup>th</sup> with Mississippi moving ahead of Arkansas and only West Virginia lagging behind (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

There is a high correlation between a state's per capita income and its percentage of adults who have bachelor's degrees. Economic prosperity is linked with educational attainment. Nationally, the average income for college graduates is \$51,554, compared with \$28,645 for high school graduates. In Arkansas, about 81.4% of citizens over 25 hold high school diplomas, and 18.2% have bachelor's degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

The Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates was created by Act 570 of 2007 (Roebuck, Abernathy, and Stewart). The legislation established a 15-member Task Force which consisted of:

- Governor or designee (Rep. Johnnie Roebuck)
- Chair of House Interim Committee on Education or designee (Rep. Bill Abernathy)
- Chair of Senate Interim Committee on Education or designee (Sen. Dave Bisbee)
- Chair of Higher Education Subcommittee of Arkansas Legislative Council (Sen. Gilbert Baker)
- Director of Department of Higher Education (Dr. Jim Purcell)
- Commissioner of Education (Dr. Ken James)
- President of Arkansas Education Association (Mr. Dan Marzoni)
- Executive Director of Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (Dr. Tom Kimbrell)
- Executive Director of the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (Dr. Ed Franklin)
- Four higher education faculty members from each of the congressional districts who have specialized knowledge, skills, or experience in the area of remediation (Ms. Robin Bryant - Phillips Community College, Dr. Sally Roden - University of Central Arkansas, Dr. Karen Hodges - University of Arkansas, Ms. Patty Weak, Ouachita Technical College)
- A Vice President or Provost of Academic Affairs (Mr. David Ray - University of Arkansas at Monticello)
- A Vice President of Academic Affairs at a two-year institution (Dr. Chip Ates)

Act 570 requires the Task Force to:

- Compile state and national research on reducing remediation, improving retention, and increasing graduation rates
- Summarize data on rates of remediation, types of testing used to determine college readiness, characteristics of programs that are most effective in addressing skill deficits, and effectiveness of remediation for students with entering skill deficits
- Create a definition of remediation to assure consistency in reporting of remediation among colleges and universities throughout Arkansas

- Identify the underlying factors that contribute to the number of students who are not ready for collegiate level classes in certain disciplines at the time of high school graduation
- Identify best practices examples of school systems and colleges that are having success in reducing the need for remedial education
- Brainstorm new approaches that may be effective in producing increased levels of college readiness
- Attempt to clarify the role that various types of colleges and universities should play in addressing the need for remediation
- Review graduation rates of the state's colleges and universities for the past six years
- Develop a set of written recommendations for the General Assembly that will improve remediation, retention, and graduation rates at the state's colleges and universities
- Present the written recommendations of the Task Force to the General Assembly by November 1, 2008

The Task Force met 16 times beginning in September 2007. The Task Force has utilized three work groups to address issues unique to the K-12, two-year institution, and four-year institution environments. The Chairs of the work groups were: K-12: Sen. Bisbee; two-year institutions: Dr. Franklin; and four-year institutions: Dr. Hodges. These work groups met numerous times to consider research and recommendations central to their particular concerns.

## HISTORY AND CHALLENGES

Historically, Arkansas has played an important role in the American economy. As the preferred point of demarcation to the American western frontier, Arkansas was considered a land of opportunity and captured the imagination of a young nation as a land where the American dream was possible.

**Being adaptable in a flat world, knowing how to "learn how to learn," will be one of the most important assets any worker can have, because job churn will come faster, because innovation will happen faster.**

Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 2005

Arkansas has maintained a vital economy since even before statehood. However, the benefits of this economy seem to be unevenly distributed throughout the state. Today, this is evident in the disparity in Arkansas's per capita income (based on an average of incomes) of \$30,060 and its median per capita income (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) of \$19,325 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). If prosperity were more equally shared, median income and average income would be numerically more similar.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the global economy had begun to erode Arkansas's manufacturing and agricultural economy. Edward Gordon, author of *2010 Meltdown: Solving the Impending Job Crisis* (2005), found that

**Though college leaders may not have intended this, higher education — especially the four-year college sector — has become a mechanism for reinforcing social class, rather than a vehicle for fostering social mobility. That's bad for low-income and minority families. And it is bad for America.**

Kati Haycock, Director, Education Trust, 2006

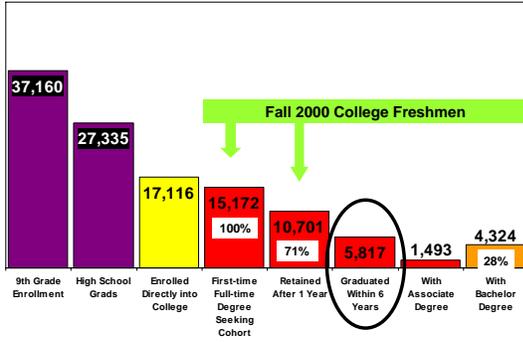
"up to 50 percent of America's adult population today lacks the advanced skills that are the foundation for most future high-paying jobs in today's complex knowledge economy." When asked about Arkansas's economic potential, Gordon indicated that the state would need to arm at least 50% of its high school graduates with postsecondary credentials by 2020 for Arkansas to be an active participant in the modern technological global economy. Without these skills, Arkansas would again be relegated to serving as a source for low-skilled labor.

There is a direct correlation between the number of college graduates and the income of a state. Without action, our destiny is certain. With action, our result is determined by the strength of our resolve.

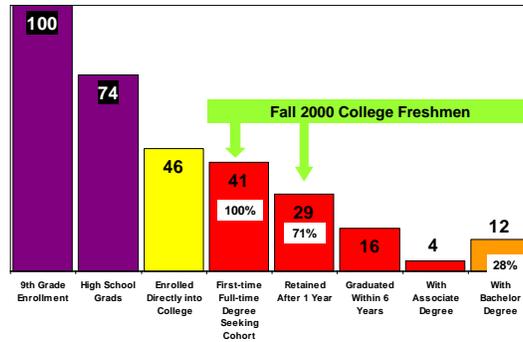
### **Challenge 1: Strengthening the Arkansas Education Pipeline**

Of 100 Arkansas ninth graders, 74 will graduate from high school, 64.7 will enroll in college, and only 16 will graduate with an associate or bachelor's degree within 10 years (ADHEa, 2008). Of the 37,160 ninth graders in 1996, only 5,817 had higher education degrees by 2006 [ADHEa/Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), 2008]. The pipeline is broken. Can a modern economy be built upon 5,817 people?

96-97 Arkansas 9<sup>th</sup> Grader's Progression into High School and College (number)



Percent 96-97 Arkansas 9<sup>th</sup> Grader's Progression into High School and College (percent)



Because of the current predicament, Arkansas will not only need to educate its high school students at a much higher rate, but it also must retool the state's adult population for the new economy. The U.S. Census Bureau (2006) reported that 284,358 Arkansans over the age of 25 have had some college education but have not completed a degree. If these individuals would complete their degrees, their salaries could on average increase by \$15,229. Enrollment of the non-traditional student will be a primary determinant of Arkansas's future economic success.

**We have to take care of the segment of the population we have traditionally left out. We need more educated people and low expectations is our enemy. We must be very clear to everyone about what we are trying to accomplish.**

Dennis Jones, President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

While many of the factors for success in postsecondary education are impacted by individual determination, there are institutional factors — both in the K-12 and the higher education system — that should be modified to enable greater individual success. As a result of the Lake View lawsuit [*Lake View Sch. Dist. No. 25 of Phillips County v. Huckabee*, 370 Ark. 139, \_\_ S.W.3d \_\_ (2007)], recent changes in K-12 funding and curriculum hold great promise. Recent modifications of the funding formula for state colleges and universities placed

emphasis on outcomes — one step in the right direction — but there are many steps that need to be taken to truly develop Arkansas's most important resource: its people. Certainly not every job in this 21<sup>st</sup> century will require a college credential, but every job in the modern economy that can support a family over a lifetime will (Gordon, 2005).

## Challenge 2: Improving Preparation

Many students enroll in Arkansas's institutions without the requisite academic skills to be fully successful in college. While students from the more economically depressed areas of the state are more likely to need remediation (ADHEd, 2008), the lack of preparation for postsecondary education is pervasive. The vast majority of remediation is in math, with only two counties producing an entering college population with less than a 25% remediation rate in math. While *Lake*

**When we recruit people to El Dorado, the first question they always ask is, "How much are you going to pay me?" The second question is, "Tell me about your schools." If our schools are not good enough, despite having the opportunity to be paid a pretty good deal of money, they are not coming. Having a strong school district is critical to our ability as a company to remain in El Dorado, Arkansas and critical to our ability to retain top talent.**

Claiborne Deming, CEO, Murphy Oil, 2008

*View School District v. Huckabee*, as previously cited, has required revision to the high school core curriculum and compelled changes in funding for public schools, remediation has not been eliminated.

The kind of skills students need to learn to be prepared for the jobs of the 21st century are different from what they needed 20 years ago. The skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require higher levels of education, and Arkansas must do more to prepare children for those challenges. Key findings from a national poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and Peter D. Hart Research Associates on behalf of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007) include:

- 88% of voters say they believe that schools can and should incorporate 21st century skills — such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills, computer and technology skills, and communication and self-direction skills — into their curriculum
- 66% of voters say they believe that students need more than just the basics of reading, writing and math; schools also need to incorporate a broader range of skills
- 53% say they believe schools should place an equal emphasis on 21st century skills and basic skills

The poll's findings are particularly relevant given the current debates over the future direction of the federal No Child Left Behind law, which is up for reauthorization. The findings are also increasingly significant as the 2008 presidential election cycle examines important domestic issues, including education. For years U.S. education policy has been focused on the important tasks of improving underperforming schools and narrowing the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged and minority students. But stopping the conversation there denies U.S. students the expanded skill set they now need for success in the globally interconnected society and workforce of the 21st century, according to the Partnership. Providing all students with 21st century skills and making education relevant to today's world are critical to closing both the achievement gap and the global competition gap.

In 2008, Arkansas for the first time was able to boast that more than half of its students at all grade levels scored "proficient or above" on the state's examinations that test for mastery of grade-level knowledge (ADE, 2008). Ten years ago, those percentages of students were all in the 20% to 40% range. This statewide achievement is an example of the dramatic increases Arkansas's public education system has experienced over the last decade as the state has implemented system-wide reforms, from raising teacher salaries to regionally competitive levels to demanding academic, financial, and facility accountability from school districts. This combination of increased funding and accountability, joined with innovative, research-based approaches to curriculum, has propelled the state to national attention. In 2007, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings pointed to Arkansas and Massachusetts as the two states with the educational reform models that other states should emulate (Spellings, 2007).

Even so, challenges for Arkansas students remain. Up to 15% of the state's high school students opt out of Arkansas's default "Smart Core" curriculum, which is the key to preparing students for success at college or in today's work place (ADE, 2008). Pockets

of schools across the state are still lagging in performance, and the "achievement gap" between majority and minority students, while beginning to narrow, remains much too wide. Arkansas is committed to continued improvement in these areas, however, and will utilize the present reforms and other proven means to reach those ends.

### **Challenge 3: Decreasing Remediation**

Remediation is required for students scoring below 19 on the ACT (or equivalent on other assessments) in any of the three areas - mathematics, English and reading by Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board Policy established in 1989 (ADHEc, 2008). Institutions refer to the intervention provided for these students variously as "remediation," "developmental education," "provisional admission," and "probationary status."

Both four-year and two-year colleges accept large numbers of students who need remediation. In Arkansas, remediated students comprise 56.1% of the two-year institutions' first-year students and 28.6% of the four-year institutions' first-year students (ADHEd, 2008). Nationally, the rates are 42% for two-year institutions and 20% for four-year institutions.

Of all Arkansas college and university freshmen, 52.9% were remediated in 2007 (ADHEd, 2008), and 27% of Arkansas students who took at least one Advanced Placement course were assigned to at least one remedial course in Fall 2007 (ADHEa, 2008).

Greater efficiency in remediating students in the shortest amount of time should be a priority in Arkansas colleges and universities. The cost of remediation in Arkansas was \$53.8 million in 2006 (ADHEe, 2008).

**The demand for higher education in the 21st century will be far different than it was 20 or even 10 years ago. In fact, the world of higher education already is rapidly changing and, in many instances, state policy has not kept pace. State legislatures are working hard to address issues related to higher education funding, access and accountability. However, important changes are occurring among the student population that will cause many current policies to quickly become obsolete and that will challenge legislative policymaking for the next decade.**

Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education, NCSL, 2007

Unduplicated Number of Fall First-Time Freshmen <sup>1</sup> Assigned to Remediation for 2007-2008					
Institution	First-Time Freshmen	All Remedial	English	Math	Reading
		%	%	%	%
ASUJ	1,733	46.68%	28.16%	38.72%	25.45%
ATU	1,543	42.90%	25.92%	34.28%	22.29%
HSU	803	38.11%	23.66%	30.76%	20.67%
SAUM	537	55.87%	40.97%	42.27%	37.43%
UAF	2899	10.93%	3.69%	7.07%	3.73%
UAFS	1,138	44.02%	18.63%	38.05%	15.82%
UALR	862	54.99%	33.76%	43.16%	31.55%
UAM	533	64.73%	46.53%	56.10%	43.15%
UAPB	819	91.70%	75.46%	84.86%	73.63%
UCA	1,793	29.89%	4.13%	28.00%	6.97%
Total Four-Year	12,660	39.50%	22.50%	33.02%	21.09%

Note 1: The category "First-Time Freshmen" includes full- or part-time students who enroll in college for the first-time, and it is not limited to students who enroll directly from high school.

Developmental education is a major issue at two-year campuses. As open-door institutions, one of the four missions of a two-year college is to help students prepare for college-level courses through effective developmental courses and student services.

**In other words, America is a large and diverse country with a real inequality problem. This will, over time, translate into a competitiveness problem, because if we cannot educate and train a third of the working population to compete in a knowledge economy, it will drag down the country.**

Fareed Zakaria, The Post-American World, 2008

Students at two-year colleges have an average age of 27 compared with 23 for universities (ADHEa, 2008). A larger percentage of first-time students at two-year colleges need remediation. In the fall of 2007, the percentage of students assigned to remediation in at least one subject was 76.8% for two-year colleges and 39.5% for universities (ADHEd, 2008).

Unduplicated Number of Fall First-Time Freshmen <sup>1</sup> Assigned to Remediation for 2007-2008					
Institution	First-Time Freshmen	All Remedial	English	Math	Reading
		%	%	%	%
ANC	298	84.90%	55.03%	81.54%	52.35%
ASUB	775	62.97%	38.32%	56.52%	31.10%
ASUMH	175	64.57%	34.86%	51.43%	26.29%
ASUN	153	79.74%	58.17%	71.90%	45.10%
BRTC	319	72.41%	52.98%	52.66%	42.95%
CCCUA	152	82.24%	60.53%	76.97%	54.61%
EACC	256	84.38%	60.94%	70.31%	58.59%
MSCC	280	80.00%	60.36%	70.36%	54.29%
NAC	322	63.98%	42.55%	43.48%	34.16%
NPCC	304	83.88%	49.01%	80.26%	38.16%
NWACC	1,116	72.58%	38.35%	59.59%	30.82%
OTC	131	75.57%	38.93%	70.99%	28.24%
OZC	228	69.30%	47.81%	46.49%	34.21%
PCCUA	75	86.67%	66.67%	72.00%	64.00%
PTC	1,034	87.72%	54.26%	84.24%	53.58%
RMCC	111	72.07%	40.54%	52.25%	33.33%
SACC	137	87.59%	64.23%	78.83%	62.04%
SAUT	160	85.00%	58.75%	74.38%	57.50%
SEAC	166	86.75%	65.06%	79.52%	44.58%
UACCB	216	77.78%	50.46%	70.83%	41.67%
UACCH	195	79.49%	42.05%	65.13%	43.59%
UACCM	453	73.95%	45.92%	65.78%	40.40%
Total Two-Year	7,056	76.67%	48.41%	66.77%	42.05%

Note 1: The category "First-Time Freshmen" includes full- or part-time students who enroll in college for the first-time, and it is not limited to students who enroll directly from high school.

#### Challenge 4: Accessing Financial Aid

According to the Arkansas 2020 report (2007), the national and local focus on merit-based, rather than need-based scholarships has increasingly made college attendance more difficult for lower income students who are less likely to score well on standardized tests. Although the minority population is expected to grow significantly in the next few years, minorities are less likely to attend college and are disproportionately affected by increases in the cost of higher education. Based on the rate of increase in the cost of college attendance, the average cost of annual tuition and fees in Arkansas (\$4,010 in the 2005-2006 year) could be nearly \$8,000 by 2020 (ADHEa, 2008). In a presentation to the Task Force in October 2007, Kati Haycock, Director of Education Trust, stated that 60% of scholarship funds go to students without financial need.

Arkansas college students have access to at least 21 scholarship, grant, or loan programs, including:

- Workforce Improvement Grant
- Governor's Scholars
- Governor's Distinguished Scholarship
- Arkansas Academic Challenge
- Higher Education Opportunities Grant
- Second Effort
- Military Dependents' Scholarship
- Law Enforcement Officers' Scholarship
- Arkansas Health Education Grant
- Dental Loans
- Optometry Loans
- National Guard Tuition Assistance
- State Teacher Assistance Resource
- Teacher Opportunities Program
- Minority Teachers
- Minority Masters
- Arkansas Geographical Critical Needs
- SURF
- SREB Minority Doctoral Scholars
- Washington Center Scholarships
- Faculty/Admin. Development Fellows Matching

**We should work harder to raise achievement at faster rates and to eliminate the performance gaps that remain. Our future social and economic prosperity depends on it.**

Dave Spence, President, SREB, 2007

These programs vary in requirements, application, amounts, and administration. With this many scholarships and grants, it would appear that the students of Arkansas would be well served. However, the existing financial aid packages are cumbersome, and there are still segments of the population that continue to be disenfranchised by these programs.

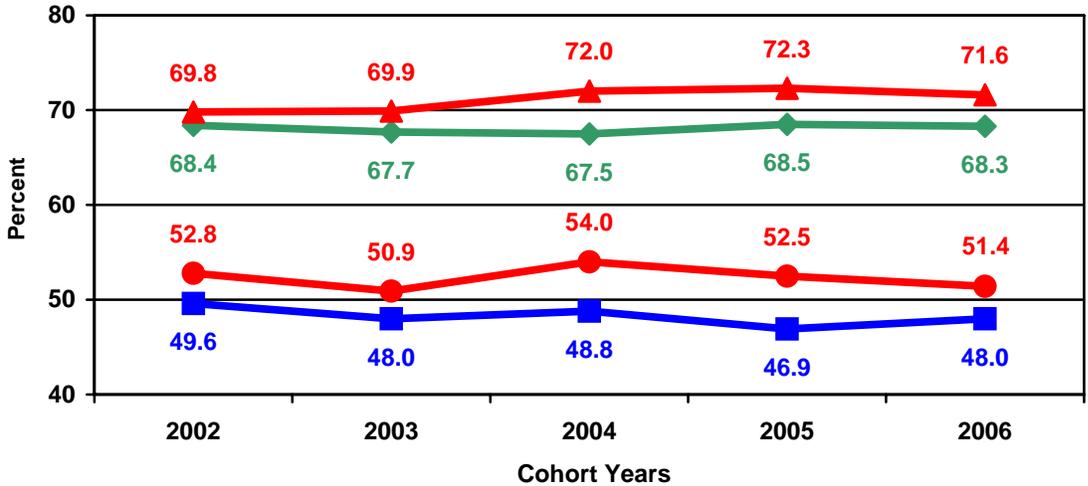
## Challenge 5: Increasing Retention and Graduation Rates

**Any measure that increases either predictability or accessibility of our higher education system will have a positive effect on retention and graduation rates.**

Nate Looney, student, former Arkansas Student Government President, 2008

Arkansas retention and graduation rates show the production of degrees has increased greatly since the 2000-2001 school year, with most of that increase resulting from rising enrollment. While degree production increased 24% since 2000-2001, enrollment increased by 21% (ADHEa, 2008). Currently, Arkansas students are retained below the national average by 3 percentage points for both two-year colleges and four-year universities.

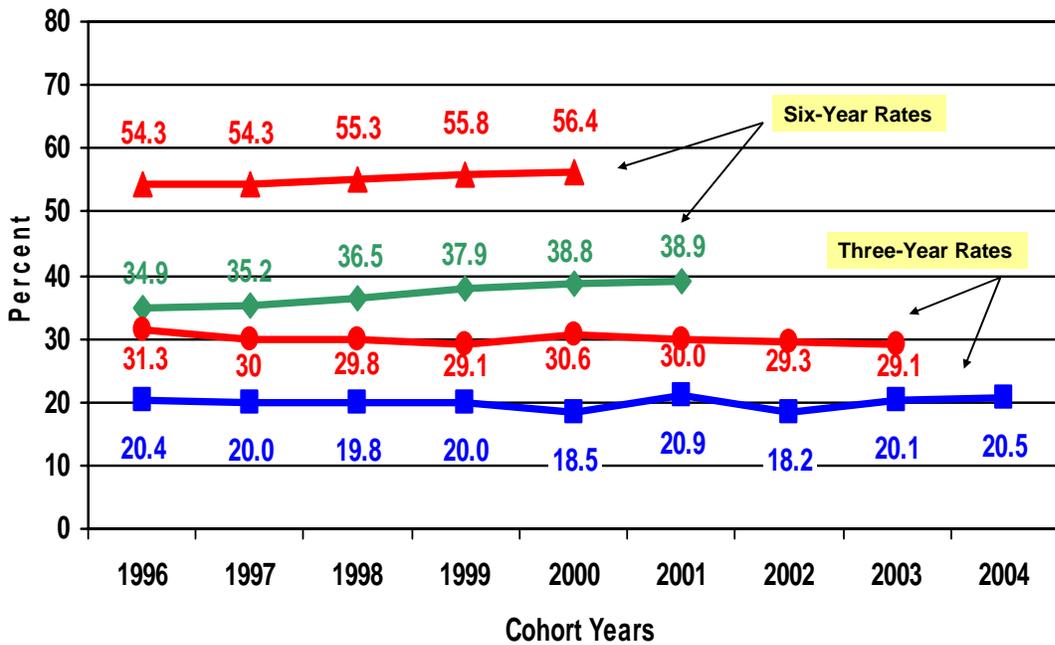
**Native One-Year Retention Rates<sup>1</sup> by Cohort**



◆ Ark Universities    ■ Ark Colleges    ▲ Nat'l Universities    ● Nat'l Colleges

Note 1: The term "native retention rates" refers to first-time full-time students who start and are still enrolled after one-year at the institution where they originally enrolled.

**Native Graduation Rates<sup>1</sup> by Cohort**



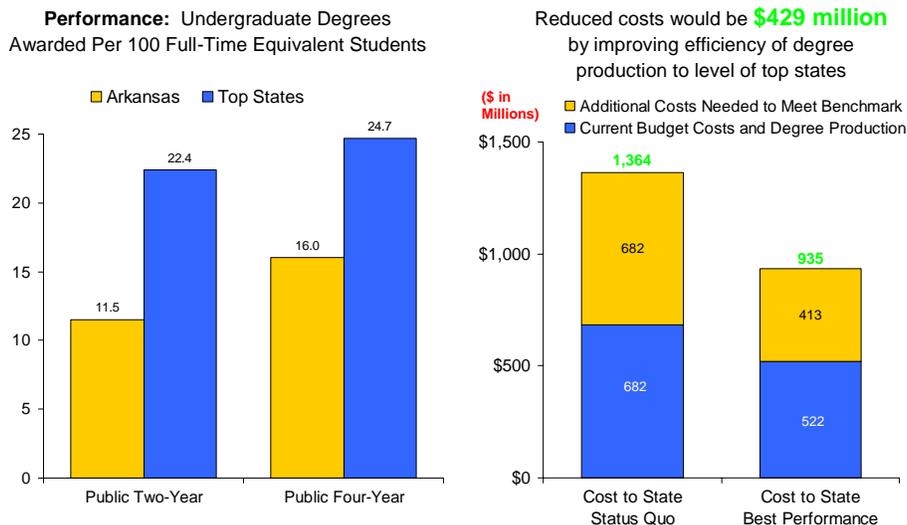
◆ Ark Universities    ■ Ark Colleges    ▲ Nat'l Universities    ● Nat'l Colleges

Note 1: The term "native graduation rates" refers to first-time full-time students who graduate from the institution where they originally enrolled.

Arkansas college and university graduation rates are below the national average. The graduation rate for Arkansas universities (the percent of first-time full-time students who graduate within six years from the institution where they originally enrolled) is 38.9%, 17 percentage points lower than the national average of 56.4%. Arkansas institutions that are selective or offer heavy incentives for high achieving students are able to increase their institutional retention and graduation rates. The 20.1% graduation rate for Arkansas two-year colleges (the percent of first-time full-time students who graduate within three years) is below the national average of 29.1% (ADHEb, 2008).

Increasing degree production could also result in more effective state spending. Recent data show that the number of degrees awarded in Arkansas per 100 full-time students is well below the number in top performing states. That means the state funding and student tuition spent on higher education in Arkansas is used less efficiently than in states that have a higher rate of degree production. An increase in the rate of degree production could significantly reduce the cost of becoming internationally competitive — defined as having 55% of adults age 25-64 with college degrees — by 2025 (NCHEMS, 2008).

### *Savings If Arkansas Reaches Top Performance in Degree Production*



Source: NCHEMS, 2008

Incentives for increasing institutional performance on these measures have proven effective. An incentive program in Oklahoma increased associate degree production 28% and bachelor degree production 22% over a five-year period. Oklahoma moved from 46<sup>th</sup> to 42<sup>nd</sup> in the state rankings of adults with bachelor's degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Retention issues at two-year colleges involve the challenge of working with part-time students who are employed, many with families. A non-traditional student is a student with one or more of the following characteristics:

- Enters college at some point other than immediately following high school graduation
- Attends part-time
- Works full-time while enrolled
- Deemed independent for purposes of financial aid
- Has dependents other than a spouse
- Is a single parent
- Has no high school diploma (GED recipient)

**Instead of simply bestowing status on colleges that only admit students who will succeed no matter where they go, we need to honor and support institutions that are helping increasing numbers of students who face far more difficult challenges in obtaining the degrees that will help them advance personally and contribute to the social, civic and economic well-being of the nation.**

Kati Haycock, Director, Education Trust, 2006

Both traditional and non-traditional college populations are susceptible to dropping out of college for the following reasons:

- Academics (poor grades, boredom with courses, change in career goals, inability to take desired courses or programs)
- Finances
- Motivation (uncertainty about goals, lack of interest in studies, inability or unwillingness to study)
- Personal concerns (emotional and physical problems for self or family member, lack of adjustment to college life, life changes [marriage, children, etc.], family responsibilities)
- Dissatisfaction with the college
- Full-time jobs

This provides a unique set of issues. These part-time students, many of whom are first-generation college students, require intensive assistance early in their college experience or they likely will not continue to the next semester. Student services are instrumental in this effort. The Career Pathways model, developed through ADHE, provides a support system that uses federal dollars to help students on welfare obtain an education, graduate, and get a job. The intensive support services have resulted in a 90% graduation/retention rate for these students (ADHE, 2006).

Arkansas's two-year colleges have been working for many years to put programs and services in place to improve student achievement. Some of the two-year colleges have received grants from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation allowing them to participate in projects to enhance student success. One 2006-07 project, led by the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year and Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC), focused on improving retention for freshmen students at four campuses (Rich Mountain Community College, Cossatot Community College, Phillips Community College, and Pulaski Technical College) with the goal of sharing the best practices developed from the grant. The Achieving the Dream project, administered by ADHE, seeks to improve success in retention, graduation, and developmental education in four

Arkansas two-year colleges. This project, which started in 2007-08 in Arkansas, will also include policy recommendations that could help improve retention at all colleges in the state. Nationally, the project involves 80 colleges in 37 states. The end result of this five-year project will be policy recommendations to improve student success.

## **Challenge 6: Funding and Governance**

The U.S. Department of Education report by the Spellings Commission (2006) clearly identified five areas of concern in higher education in the United States: access, affordability, quality, transparency, and accountability. These areas of concern exist in Arkansas higher education.

Access to Arkansas higher education has increased greatly for Arkansans. However, many students enter college with the need for remediation, which results in limited success. College also has become less affordable in Arkansas as a result of increased tuition and fees, and thus larger student loans.

**Our higher education financing system is increasingly dysfunctional. State subsidies are declining; tuition is rising; and cost per student is increasing faster than inflation or family income . . . Public concern about rising costs may ultimately contribute to the erosion of public confidence in higher education.**

U.S. Department of Education (Spellings Commission), "A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education", 2006

While financial support for higher education was increased in the most recent legislative session, the proportion of each institution's budget funded by state funds has decreased since the 1980s. The lower proportion of state funds is the result of institutional budgets increasing faster than increases in state funding. To reduce the need for tuition increases to meet that gap, there must be a clear alignment between the funding formula which generates need for the institutions, and the manner in which the resulting state funding is used. The current funding formula indicates need based primarily on student semester credit hours (SSCH) and the related needs for faculty salaries and facility space to support those SSCHs in existing programs. If the funding provided through the formula is not used for these purposes (faculty salaries, existing programs) the need remains high from year to year, and increases in other funding sources, such as tuition, occur.

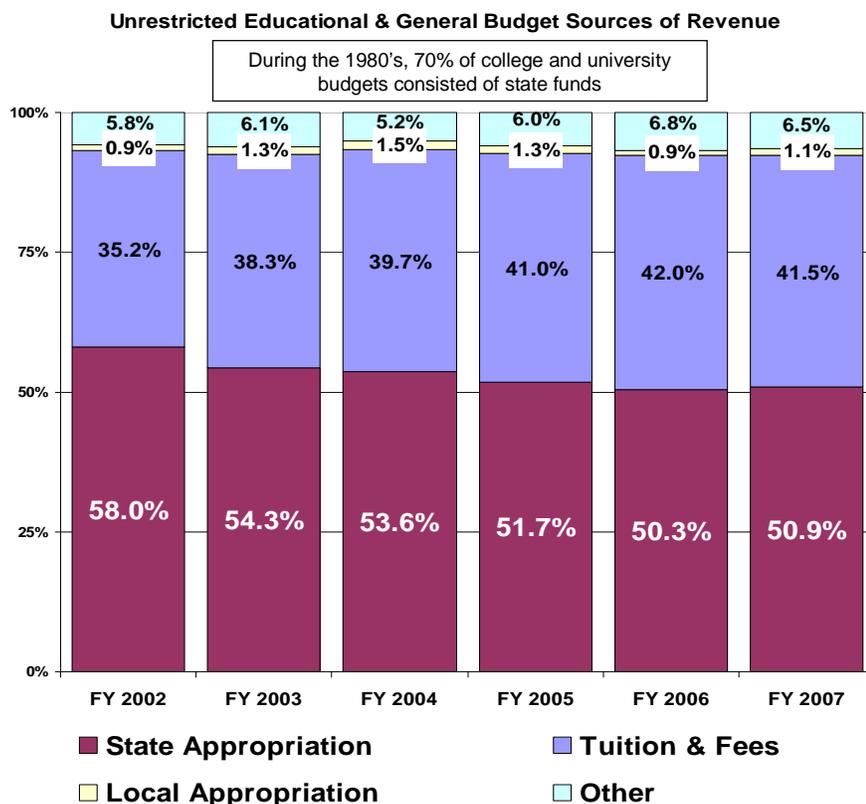
The impact of declining state support is exacerbated by institutions that respond to increased tuition costs by offering more institutional scholarships. While the idea of providing additional "institutional" scholarships is seen by the public as a positive, it in fact further erodes the percentage of institutional expenditures that goes toward instruction and related expenditures. Money spent on scholarships cannot go toward these items. In addition, as more students receive aid, the cost of tuition and fees of students who are paying full tuition must rise to meet the need.

An increase in 'state or privately supported' scholarships AND a reduction in the percentage of an institution's tuition that can be used for institutional scholarships (legislation required) can help with this component of rising tuition.

The decline in the portion of the institutional budgets provided by state support is real. Regardless of whether the money is being spent on scholarships, the percentage provided by the state is less than ever. When taking into account constant dollars, higher education is receiving less money than it received in 2002. Only additional state support can address the major cause for rising tuition. Because Arkansas is a low-income state, it should seek to provide sufficient state support for higher education that allows for low tuition.

**College costs have increased rapidly over the past two decades — far more rapidly than inflation, far more rapidly even than the cost of prescription drugs and health insurance, and far, far more rapidly than family income.**

Kati Haycock, Director, Education Trust, 2006



With the increase in the number of higher education institutions and learning sites throughout the state, academic quality must be monitored and assured. Of greatest concern is the lack of transparency and accountability for the efforts of the state's public colleges and universities. ADHE's powers are limited, and institutions sometimes do not feel obligated to follow ADHE policy or even some state laws due to lack of penalty or repercussions. Because of limited staffing and financial support for ADHE, continual and

careful oversight is often impossible. Well-intentioned legislative initiatives to require greater accountability are often minimized by the lack of sufficient personnel and enforcement/punishment measures to accompany the law.

## Challenge 7: Addressing Data Needs

**Investing in data systems that provide timely and reliable information on spending facilitates the ability to link funding to performance and outcomes. Institutions then can be held accountable for meeting designated expectations and state goals through regular reporting... This will provide legislators with the information they require to appropriate funds accordingly. Reining in unnecessary costs and improving efficiency and productivity then can help stabilize tuition to reduce the student cost of obtaining a degree.**

Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education, "Sticker Shock: What's Driving the Price of Higher Education?", 2008

While Arkansas must improve graduation rates, the state must also have a data system that tracks all students, including those who take a few courses but do not intend to get a degree. Nationally, 10-20% of students attending two-year colleges already have a degree (Townsend and Lambert, 1999) and are returning to obtain specific technical skills to get a better job or to keep their current job. Graduation rates do not

include these students, so they are not systematically tracked. If higher education institutions were better able to track those students, some could be encouraged to complete a degree or additional degrees.

Kati Haycock, Director of Education Trust, suggests that states improve data collection systems so that both policymakers and the public have easy access to honest and accurate information about student outcomes and institutional costs. She states that, at the moment, "colleges and universities get to have it both ways: they can object to being held accountable for things like graduation rates because current federal reporting systems are imperfect — for example, current systems cannot track students who leave an institution, but actually graduate from someplace else, thus count them as 'dropouts' — while simultaneously blocking efforts to improve those same systems by raising the red flag of student privacy. The truth is that the necessary data systems can be put into place without violating student privacy; Congress and the Administration should override institutional objections and install such systems as soon as possible. In the meantime, though, the current IPEDS data system should be improved in several ways, including: addition of 'Pell grant' status to the Graduation Rate Survey, so that the success of low-income students can be measured and reported; tracking and reporting year-to-year retention rates disaggregated by Pell status and race/ethnicity; and mandating and verifying the reporting (now voluntary) of transfer rates" (Haycock, 2006).

## Challenge 8: Economic Development

Education and economic development must be linked for the state's per capita income, which is a reflection of the education level of its people, to improve. No state with a low proportion of bachelor's degrees has a high per capita income. For 2007, Arkansas's per capita income is projected to be ranked 48th in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The key to improving per capita income is education and a better trained workforce.

Arkansas is undertaking steps to increase economic development in the state. In the 2007 legislative session a quick action closing fund was established for the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) by Act 510 of 2007. This fund is helping to bring new business and jobs to the state. In other efforts, existing businesses are being assisted in expansions.

To be successful in these efforts, people must be trained for the jobs created, people must be educated about the need for higher education, and college programs must be matched to the targeted sector jobs identified in the AEDC strategic plan.

**To meet the needs of our future industries we need a workforce with four-year and advanced degrees in health professions, education, engineering, biological sciences, mechanics, computer and information science, mathematics and more.**

Maria Haley, Executive Director, AEDC, 2008

**If we don't have the educated workforce to add value in the workplace, if we don't export the goods they make and the services they deliver, and import cash in return, then we don't have a sustainable economy. We know what the problems are and we know the answers. We need to wake up and do something that truly makes a difference!**

John Ahlen, Arkansas Science and Technology Authority, 2007

The state must be able to produce enough trained workers for the jobs created. Arkansas must be able to compete not just with the surrounding states, but with today's global economy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1: Strengthening the Arkansas Education Pipeline

**Challenge Statement:** There is a lack of awareness in Arkansas about the importance of a college degree. The number of Arkansans with certificates, associate’s degrees, or bachelor’s degrees is below the national average. Insufficient numbers of Arkansas two-year college students are continuing on for a bachelor’s degree.

**Evidence:** Arkansas ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percentage of adults 25 and older with bachelor’s degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Only 18.2% of Arkansas adults hold baccalaureate or higher degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Only 16% of Arkansas ninth graders will graduate from college [Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)a, 2008]. Of those students who enter a two-year Arkansas college, 20.5% of first-time full-time students will graduate within three years (ADHEb, 2008). Of first-time full-time students who enroll in a four-year Arkansas college, 34% will graduate within six years (ADHEb, 2008). Please note that in Arkansas 74 percent of first time two-year college students are full-time, compared with 95 percent of first time university students (ADHEa, 2008).

Nationally, 25% of all first-time two-year college students transfer to four-year institutions (Bradburn & Hurst, 2001). In Arkansas, the percentage of students who earn a two-year degree and transfer to a four-year institution is 11% (ADHEa, 2008). The fall 2007 report *Entering Undergraduate Transfer Students Between Arkansas Institutions* (ADHEf, 2008) noted that 2,538 two-year college students transferred to four-year institutions.

Existing barriers must be eliminated to maximize the opportunity for students to succeed. Success should be defined as obtaining a degree or certificate, reaching an educational goal, and/or transferring to a four-year institution to pursue a bachelor’s degree. Some of these barriers require policy and/or legislative changes, while others require changes in institutional behaviors.

Additionally, to meet the goal of having enough graduates to allow Arkansas to be competitive in the global economy, colleges must not overlook the need for increased numbers of minority, low income, and non-traditional students.

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
1.1. Request the Governor initiate a public campaign about the importance of a college education. The campaign should enhance the state’s ongoing efforts to improve the economy through increasing the number of bachelor’s degrees, and it should provide more specific information about the relationship between education and income. The state should involve all sectors in the promotion of the campaign and target both adults and students.	2008-09	Arkansas citizens must value higher education. A campaign to educate the state’s citizens about the importance of going to college will have a greater chance of success if the governor initiates this campaign.	ADHE will coordinate a College Access Challenge Grant in 2008-2009. This grant will have \$706,000 of federal money and \$306,000 in local funds.

<p>1.2. Encourage students within 25% of graduation to return and complete a degree. Each institution should identify these students, and send letters encouraging them to return. Remove obstacles to graduation (such as graduation fees). A statewide effort, including a media publicity campaign should be made to contact these students.</p>	<p>2010-11</p>	<p>Many students have completed significant numbers of hours, but have not obtained a degree. Some, called "stop-outs," have stopped taking classes temporarily for academic or other reasons but intend to return. States, such as New Mexico and Kentucky, are helping college stop-outs return to college and graduate.</p>	<p>\$500,000, including \$250,000 for a media campaign and \$250,000 for website development, similar to Kentucky's "Project Graduate" site.</p>
<p>1.3. Encourage two-year colleges, four-year institutions, and the Department of Workforce Education to develop a seamless transition from General Educational Development (GED) to college.</p>	<p>2013-15</p>	<p>Because 19.5% of Arkansas adults need to complete a high school degree in order to start college coursework (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006) two-year colleges and four-year institutions need to develop pathways leading from the GED into college degree programs. National models have been developed and should be emulated in Arkansas to assist in preparing students for the transition to college-level work.</p>	<p>\$1,500,000</p>
<p>1.4. Develop, implement and fund a middle school and junior high outreach program to encourage students to prepare for college.</p>	<p>2009-10</p>	<p>ADHE is receiving a federal grant designed to encourage junior high and high school students to prepare for and attend college.</p>	<p>ADHE will coordinate a College Access Challenge Grant in 2008-2009. This grant will have \$706,000 in federal money and \$306,000 in local funds.</p>
<p>1.5. Provide better information for all 11th grade students for college entry and promote Act 881 of 2007, which provides funds for entrance admission testing (ACT or SAT) for students on a voluntary basis. Counselors should be provided training for implementation of this initiative.</p>	<p>2010-11</p>	<p>If students are to be college-ready, they need early structured feedback from a college entrance examination as well as the support of well-trained counselors.</p>	<p>ADHE will coordinate a College Access Challenge Grant in 2008-2009 and 2009-10 that will provide funding support for this initiative.</p>

<p>1.6. Require each college and university to develop a transfer plan to increase the number of students who transfer between institutions to earn bachelor's degrees. The plan should include a mechanism for coordinating financial aid between institutions and innovative approaches for a seamless transfer. Colleges and universities will work with ADHE to continue developing the Arkansas Course Transfer System, which should have a common course numbering system as a component.</p>	<p>2011-12</p>	<p>The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education identified Arkansas as a low-performing state on transferability of course work across institutions (2004). To improve transferability, colleges and universities must focus on transfers and work together to eradicate barriers. The work on the Arkansas Course Transfer System project needs to be continued to include courses beyond the current 35-hour general education core classes.</p>	<p>\$400,000</p>
<p>1.7. Encourage students who have transferred to a four-year university without earning a degree to transfer back (reverse transfer) credit hours that are needed to award an associate's degree or certificate.</p>	<p>2010-11</p>	<p>Students who earn a certificate or an associate's degree will be more employable than students with accumulated hours of college credit but no degree.</p>	<p>No cost.</p>
<p>1.8. Recommend colleges and universities increase adult participation in higher education through programs such as the Beck PRIDE Center at Arkansas State University for veterans and inmate or parolee education programs.</p>	<p>2011-12</p>	<p>To reach adults with family and occupational responsibilities, innovative college-level education delivery systems will be needed. Emphasis on alternative course delivery methods will assist in adult participation in higher education.</p>	<p>Redirect existing funds.</p>

## Recommendation 2: Improving Preparation

**Challenge Statement:** Too many Arkansas students enter colleges and universities unprepared for college-level work.

**Evidence:** Up to 15% of the state's high school students opt out of Arkansas's default "Smart Core" curriculum, which is the key to preparing students for success at college or in today's work place (Arkansas Department of Education, 2008). Schools in specific geographic regions across the state are still lagging in performance, and the "achievement gap" between majority and minority students, while beginning to narrow, remains much too wide.

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
2.1. Mandate in high school senior year that students with an ACT score below 19 or the SAT equivalent take remedial courses for high school credit designed by secondary and postsecondary instructors working together.	2011-12	If students are to be college-ready, they need early, structured, and recurring feedback from a college entrance examination. They also need to take courses while still in high school to address deficiencies detected through the college entrance examination. The ADHE policy that prohibits developmental education for concurrent enrollment will need to be revised.	\$300,000
2.2. Require school districts with a high percentage of students needing remediation — as defined by the Arkansas Department of Education/ADHE — to designate required professional development for teachers that is targeted toward eliminating the need for remediation.	2009-10	Teaching for college readiness requires helping students not just learn facts but also apply learning strategies and think at higher levels. Teachers in districts with high levels of college remediation will benefit from coaching in these strategies.	Direct existing professional development funding provided to school districts as categorical funding to be used for this initiative.
2.3. Require schools to administer the following preparatory examinations: EXPLORE (8 <sup>th</sup> ), PLAN (10 <sup>th</sup> ), and PSAT (10 <sup>th</sup> ) at state expense.	Summer 2008	These examinations provide early benchmarks for student performance on the ACT and SAT examinations. They also identify the areas in need of further student development.	\$550,000
2.4. Explore the possibility of expanding the Arkansas SCHOLARS program, which is aligned with the Smart Core requirements.	Summer 2008	The Arkansas SCHOLARS program encourages students in the 8 <sup>th</sup> grade to pursue a rigorous course of study, thus increasing their ability to be college/work ready.	No cost.
2.5. Diminish the percentage of students opting out of Smart Core by 2016.	Summer 2008	Research supports that it is in the best interest of all students to engage in a rigorous course of study. High expectations are the key to student achievement.	No cost.
2.6. Support the work and recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for After-School and Summer Programs. The Task Force was created by executive order EO 07-15.	Summer 2008	Properly structured summer intervention and after-school programs can provide students with additional opportunities and support, thus increasing college readiness.	To be determined.

2.7. Establish a scholarship program to provide tuition for concurrent credit students as a way of encouraging students to get a head start on college prior to full participation in college.	2011-12	Students who have earned college credit prior to enrolling have a greater likelihood of success in college. Washington state is an example of a state currently administering this type of program.	\$5 million
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### Recommendation 3: Decreasing Remediation

**Challenge Statement:** Since many students are under prepared for college-level work, remediation (developmental education) is critical for students to succeed and ultimately receive a degree or certificate.

**Evidence:** According to a fall 2007 report to the ADHE Coordinating Board, 52.9% of students scored below a 19 on the ACT, resulting in the need to take one or more developmental courses. For two-year colleges, the numbers were even higher, with 76.8% of students testing into one or more courses and 65.6% of students testing into two or more developmental education courses (ADHEd, 2008). According to the information provided, there are large pockets of the state where the problem is much worse. In fact, 10 of the 22 two-year colleges have remediation rates reaching 80% or higher. Little data are currently collected on the success of these students after completing developmental education courses.

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
3.1. Continue using an ACT score below 19 (or the SAT equivalent) as a baseline definition of remediation. Require colleges and universities to assess students who score below the 19 threshold with a second assessment to assure proper placement. Recommend ADHE conduct research into the continued effectiveness of 19, especially in light of ACT research.	2009-10	The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board determined an ACT score of 19 as a baseline definition of college readiness in mathematics, English, and reading. Current ACT data show that students need a higher score if they are going to be successful in most colleges.	\$100,000
3.2. Mandate that colleges and universities set clear, measurable exit standards for remedial courses, to be reviewed by ADHE, that correlate with the ACT 19 threshold and send results of how students do in meeting these standards to ADHE in a biennial report that should also include student success rates in subsequent courses.	2011-12	Colleges and universities need a pre- and post-course way to document success of quality remedial instruction. Students need a way to show they have corrected college-readiness deficiencies. Data should be used to improve the curriculum to increase student success in developmental courses and subsequent college-level courses.	No cost.
3.3. Encourage colleges and universities to develop innovative alternatives to semester-long remedial courses, such as online modules, self-directed instruction, and summer camps. Higher education institutions may apply for pilot grants and may cooperate with K-12 school districts.	2013-15	Accelerating student progress toward graduation will motivate students to persist to graduation and save tuition money.	\$500,000 for pilot grants.

<p>3.4. Encourage universities and colleges to identify faculty with demonstrated teaching success with developmental education students, provide professional development/training for these faculty members; and disseminate best practices for developmental education. Be more prescriptive and individualized in working with developmental students and in providing support services for these students.</p>	<p>2009-10</p>	<p>Instructors who have been successful have a greater chance of helping these students succeed. Professional development/training will further enhance the teaching skills these faculty bring to the classroom. Developmental students benefit from an environment where their progress is followed and there is a focus on their success.</p>	<p>No cost.</p>
<p>3.5. There is much information available on best practices through the National Center for Adult Education, the Achieving the Dream project, and the Career Pathways project. Revisit these Task Force recommendations as new information becomes available through these programs.</p>	<p>2009-15</p>	<p>Data on best practices are continually updated by the National Center for Adult Education, the Achieving the Dream project, the Career Pathways project and other programs.</p>	<p>No cost.</p>

#### Recommendation 4: Accessing Financial Aid

**Challenge Statement: The #1 reason that Arkansas students give for dropping out of college is lack of finances.**

**Evidence:** Surveys conducted in Arkansas universities show that lack of funds and related issues like jobs and family obligations are the main causes of students withdrawing. The average loan debt that Arkansas university students incur is \$19,256 (Project On Student Debt, 2007).

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
4.1. Provide financial incentives to encourage associate degree recipients and university juniors to obtain bachelor's degrees. In an effort to assist with the transfer of two-year students to four-year institutions, universities should consider increasing their transfer scholarships. Similarly, in an effort to encourage university juniors to complete their degrees, universities should consider initiating a program of need-based "upper-class" scholarships. Arkansas could also explore a tuition offset program, such as the one Georgia has implemented, for qualified transfer juniors who hold an associate's degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA.	2011-12	Financial incentives are likely to increase the number of students transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions and the overall graduation rates of two-year colleges.	\$1 million
4.2. Increase the number of needs-based scholarships by expanding the eligibility requirements for the GO! Opportunities Grant and increase the funding for the GO! Opportunities Grant and the Workforce Improvement Grant.	2011-12	Increasing need-based scholarships will help increase the number of low-income and adult students who attend and graduate from college.	\$25 million \$37 million in subsequent years.
4.3. Mandate review of the 21 statewide scholarship/grant/loan programs for Arkansas students with the goals of making financial aid packages less cumbersome and more inclusive of all students, especially those most needy.	2009-10	The 21 programs vary in requirements, applications, and administration and still do not always serve the neediest students.	No cost.

<p>4.4. Revise the statute that created the Academic Challenge Scholarship to allow additional students to receive the scholarship, including those who do not enroll in an institution of higher education within 12 months of high school graduation but who meet the academic requirements and those students who did not qualify at high school graduation but meet requirements by completing an associate's degree or 60 semester credit hours and maintain at least a 2.75 cumulative GPA.</p>	<p>2011-12</p>	<p>Being able to earn a scholarship through proving oneself academically in college should be a major incentive toward retention and graduation. Those studying the revision of the scholarship guidelines might want for the same reason to insert a provision for students to win back the scholarship. Revisions to the scholarship program should not extend the number of years of eligibility beyond the four now available under existing legislation.</p>	<p>\$10 million \$15 million in subsequent years.</p>
<p>4.5. Increase the funding of state aid for student campus employment.</p>	<p>2011-12</p>	<p>Research has shown that students engaged in campus activities, including working on campus, are likely to be retained.</p>	<p>\$10 million</p>
<p>4.6. Explore giving financial incentives to Arkansas students who complete bachelor's degrees in high need areas and remain in the state for a specified period of time.</p>	<p>2013-15</p>	<p>Opportunity Maine is the model for this financial incentive to earn a bachelor's degree and contribute to the state's economy by working in the state.</p>	<p>Tax credit — loss of state revenue with offsetting economic benefit.</p>

## Recommendation 5: Increasing Retention and Graduation

**Challenge Statement:** Arkansas is much better at sending students to college than retaining them through to graduation.

**Evidence:** The 2007 college-going rate of Arkansas students was 64.7% (ADHEb, 2008). For 2006, the one-year retention rate at two-year Arkansas colleges was 48.1%. At four-year colleges, it was 68.3% (ADHEb, 2008). Research has shown that almost half of all attrition takes place during the freshman year, with the majority taking place during the second semester or before the third semester of enrollment (Cope & Hannah, 1977; Hagedorn, 2005). Educators must be more prescriptive with students who are identified early as likely to experience problems. Fostering early academic successes will lead to retention and goal attainment.

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
5.1. Require each college or university to develop an early warning student support system to intervene when students are not doing well in a class.	2011-12	Early intervention results in retaining students for longer periods with higher success rates.	No cost.
5.2. Encourage each college or university to improve student success with expanded student services, such as learning communities, tutoring, mental health services, mentoring, and the like. Current services should be reevaluated and restructured as well. This restructuring will enable the institution to provide additional services at low or no cost.	2011-12	The Career Pathways model of intrusive student support services has a demonstrated successful retention rate of 88% (ADHE, 2006).	\$500,000 increase each year to expand services above existing levels.
5.3. Require each college and university to develop a retention and graduation plan, including benchmarked goals and programs for identified high-risk students. Encourage schools to offer first-year experience courses and study of ways to redesign courses with high D and F rates.	2011-12	If Arkansas is to increase the number of adults with bachelor's degrees, students who enter college need to be retained. Arkansas institutions, however, differ in mission and constituency. Therefore, retention goals should not be the same for all Arkansas colleges and universities. Research has shown that front-loading support for new college students increases retention. Surveys of students in Arkansas colleges and universities (ACT, 2004; National Survey of Student Engagement) show that students' top reason for attending college is to obtain a good job. If students are not getting through core courses needed for their degrees, colleges and universities need to find out why and address the reasons.	No cost.
5.4. Recommend that ADHE hold a joint annual statewide conference on college retention and graduation to share best practices with both two-year and four-year institutions.	2011-12	Why should each college and university reinvent the wheel? An annual conference will also provide valuable professional development.	\$60,000

## Recommendation 6: Enhancing Funding and Governance

**Challenge Statement:** Colleges and universities lack funds to carry out these Task Force recommendations.

**Evidence:** Arkansas colleges and universities have developed a viable funding formula but do not receive enough funding to pay for 100% of their needs.

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
6.1. Provide incentive funding to colleges and universities that increase the numbers of students who are retained and/or graduated based on their approved benchmarked goals.	2011-12	If the Arkansas General Assembly approves funding incentives for the mandates in this report during the 2009 session, colleges and universities could be eligible for incentive funding in 2011.	\$10 million
6.2. Provide incentive funding for colleges and universities to target high-need employment areas and develop or expand programs in these areas; provide scholarships and grants for students who go into these areas.	2011-12	High-need employment areas in Arkansas, such as nursing, teaching, engineering, and math/science require targeted funds as incentives to focus on these needs (Governor Beebe, 2008).	\$5 million in the 1st year; \$7.5 million in the 2nd year and thereafter.
6.3. Support expansion of the Education Renewal Zone initiative (6-15-2501 et seq.).	2009-10	The program is already established and could be expanded without significant additional investment.	\$100,000

## Recommendation 7: Addressing Data Needs

**Challenge Statement: We have no systematic way of knowing if remediation, retention, and graduation policies and initiatives we put into place will be successful. In order to provide implementation strategies for graduation, retention, or developmental education, a statewide integrated data system that connects K-12, workforce education, higher education, and workforce services is needed.**

**Evidence:** There is no one “global” database in Arkansas that links K-12 with college/university data and workforce information. Only a few states have the ability to track students from K-16 to entry into the workforce. Each Task Force presenter spoke about the importance of using data to make informed decisions about policy and program needs in higher education. Creating a data system that will validate institutional needs will result in both money and time being targeted to address graduation, retention, and/or developmental education in Arkansas.

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
7.1. Determine what needs to be done to connect the systems. Start the process of either connecting the data systems or buying the software to extract the data needed. Determine staffing and funding needs to operate the system and put in a budget request. Implement a new data system, but to avoid unnecessary expense make sure that individual campuses will not have to buy new systems.	2008	Staffing positions for a data system need to be funded during the 2009 General Assembly so that the database can be operational by 2011. Such an integrated system would allow campuses to better assess programs and services provided to students, and to positively impact statewide policies and campus programs.	\$300,000 annually to expand ADHE research staffing. Additional funds in later years for enhancing Institutional Research/ Information Technology on college campuses.
7.2. Complete and fine tune a comprehensive statewide database that can track students from one level of education to another, from one college to another, and from college into the workforce.	2011-12	There must be a method to collect tracking data in order to assess the programs put into place in response to this report.	\$200,000
7.3. Implement a statewide connected data system.	2015	In order to have a connected system, software will need to be purchased or developed to allow for collection and analysis of all data.	\$2 million
7.4. Develop an all-inclusive interactive database for students and parents to use for information about Arkansas colleges and universities, programs, transferring, scholarships, and the like.	2009-10	A website like Oklahoma’s OKCollegeStart.org would provide at one site extensive information about preparing for, financing, and attending college.	\$1 million \$750,000 thereafter.
7.5. Mandate that in measuring rates of remediation, retention, and graduation, the definition of "student" will be broadened beyond “first-time, full-time.”	2011-12	While data that relate to “first-time, full-time students” will be important to certain types of data collection, such as in the current IPEDS data system, this traditional definition of a college student is insufficient for measuring remediation, retention, and graduation in Arkansas’s colleges and universities.	\$50,000

7.6. Determine the data elements needed to make good decisions for graduation, retention, and remediation.	2008	Without accurate and appropriate data, good decisions about intervention cannot be made.	No cost.
7.7. Use data from the student tracking database and the Arkansas institution information database to refine policies related to remediation, retention, and graduation.	2013-15	Policies need to be updated, and data will provide objective bases on which to make policy decisions.	No cost.
7.8. Review and revise existing higher education reporting requirement legislation. Eliminate reports where possible and combine others into one annual report .	2009	An initial review of existing legislation indicates duplicative and unnecessary reporting requirements.	Savings are anticipated.

## Recommendation 8: Supporting Economic Development

**Challenge Statement:** Education and economic development must be linked. Education must support the needs of businesses currently in the state and businesses that Arkansas hopes to locate in the state. Economic development initiatives will drive the level and type of education needed in the state. We must develop an adequate and properly trained workforce so that this resource will not limit the economic opportunities in the state. Our state must be able to compete not just with the surrounding states, but in the global economy that exists today. If Arkansas is to be competitive as a state, opportunities must exist to raise the per capita income for all Arkansans.

**Evidence:** Over 25% of Arkansas degrees attained between 2002-03 and 2006-07 were in liberal arts or general studies. Another 16% were in health professions, 11% were in business, 6% were in education, and 3% were in engineering (ADHE, 2007). Today, the most needed degrees are in health care, education, and engineering. In 2007 the national per capita personal income was projected to be \$38,611, while the 2007 Arkansas per capita personal income was projected to be \$30,060 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008).

Recommendation	Time Horizon	Rationale	Cost Estimate
8.1. Compare the current and future jobs identified in the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) strategic plan to the educational training being provided in our colleges and universities. Use this comparison to identify educational gaps in meeting economic development needs.	2009-10	To successfully improve the state's economic status, the workforce must be matched to the jobs the state will have in the near future.	No cost.
8.2. Create new programs where gaps exist and phase out existing programs that are no longer supporting workforce demands.	2010-12	Arkansas must create the workforce needed for the jobs wanted. If the demand is not met or can't be met, the jobs will relocate outside the state.	New program start-up needs are \$5 million.
8.3. Arkansas needs K-12 counselors who understand the world of work and who will serve as career coaches. The counselors need to be able to advise students on the types of skills that will be needed in the new economy. Students also need to be advised about the types of jobs that will have high demand and high wages when they graduate. Students need to understand what types of employment and what level of education will be needed to support their lifestyle goals. Three hundred career coaches are needed to serve the state.	2010-12	Current K-12 counselors have duties and responsibilities focusing on topics such as college and university admissions and financial aid. Their workloads limit their ability to meet the more comprehensive needs of all students for career coaching. South Carolina and Georgia have set up programs with career coaches.	\$15 million for 300 career coaches, or the program could be piloted in selected high-need areas of the state.
8.4. Colleges and universities in the state must train the state's workforce for competition in a global economy. Curriculum should be updated to reflect the new skills needed.	2010-12	All graduates need to have the skills to adapt to new occupations in the global economy as they will be changing careers, not just jobs, several times during their lifetime.	No cost.

8.5. Support the Educators-in-Industry Program that AEDC is re-launching.	2009-11	The program will enable Arkansas's school teachers and counselors to spend several days visiting local companies/industries and learning the skill sets needed for careers at these facilities.	To be determined from previous cost.
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**Recommendation 9: Issues for Further Study**

The Task Force recommends further study of the following topics:

<b>Issues for Further Study</b>
Review the need for alignment between the Smart Core curriculum and the courses required for eligibility for an Academic Challenge Scholarship.
Review ways to further improve coordination in a P-18 system.
Review limits on remediation in four-year institutions.
Review funding for concurrent enrollment and institutions of higher education.

## A CALL TO ACTION

***Arkansas will not be able to move forward economically without further changes in education. The time for change is now. It is time for a plan of action.***

In recent years Arkansas has made progress in addressing its educational and workforce pipeline:

- Court intervention on behalf of K-12 students
- Responsible legislative reaction to the court recommendations
- Reinvigorated interest in higher education by the executive branch
- Higher education's increased productivity of college degrees since 2000
- The recent location of a Fortune 500 technology company in the state

However, if we are to address Arkansas's unflattering position as 50<sup>th</sup> in the state ranking of adults with bachelor's degrees and move forward with strong economic development, we can no longer afford to take a position of non-effort, passivity, or denial regarding the critical importance of the educational level of our citizens.

If the goal for Arkansas is to have an adult population as educated as the SREB state average, the productivity of college degrees will need to increase by an additional 7,098 bachelor's degrees per year from the state's current production level of 11,186 degrees per year, an increase of 64%.

In order to reach that goal, we must do the following:

1. Strengthen the Arkansas education pipeline
2. Improve student preparation at all levels
3. Decrease the need for and improve remediation
4. Improve state-sponsored financial aid
5. Increase retention and graduation
6. Enhance funding and strengthen governance for higher education
7. Work toward a P-18 system of educational delivery and partnership
8. Address data needs
9. Support economic development

The proposed recommendations in this initiative are based upon intensive, thoughtful study by Arkansas's leaders in K-12, higher education, state agencies, the Arkansas Legislature and various constituent groups. The nation's most influential educational leaders were asked to contribute through a process of thorough testimony and research.

At the end of WWII, the U.S. made a bold decision to invest in the future of its economy by providing \$1.9 billion annually to the education of returning veterans of the war. This commitment to human capital helped enable the WWII generation to become the "greatest generation." Possibly, Arkansas's greatest generation is at the schoolhouse door waiting for the opportunity to propel the state into the global economy.

The Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates requests a critical initiative to enact measures to implement the recommendations proposed in this report and to provide full funding necessary to make the initiative a success in order to meet our goal of increasing economic development opportunities.

In addition to the growth in the number of degrees, the ratio of students enrolled who complete their postsecondary education, as well as the speed in which Arkansans complete their postsecondary education will have to be increased in order for Arkansas to thrive within the new economic paradigm.

## RESOURCES

The Task Force met 16 times beginning in September 2007. The members received extensive testimony and information. The PowerPoint slides and many of the other materials presented during those meetings are available on the Task Force website: [www.arkleg.state.ar.us](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us). Click on "Research Resources" along the left-hand side; then click on "Legislative Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates."

### **August 16, 2007**

1. Arkansas Department of Education News Release, ACT Scores Released, 2007
2. "ACT High School Profile Report, The Graduating Class of 2007: Arkansas," The ACT
3. "Just 17% of college-bound are up to it; Arkansas trails U.S. in readiness for freshman classes, exams show," Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 2007
4. Selected Recent Data Reflecting a Current View of Higher Education Remediation, Retention and Graduation in Arkansas, Bureau of Legislative Research, 2007
5. "Transforming Higher Education, National Imperative – State Responsibility: Recommendations of NCSL Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education," 2006

### **October 8, 2007**

1. Handout: Increasing Higher Education Degree/Certificate Completion, Dr. Dave Spence, President, SREB
2. Presentation: "Arkansas's Needs for Economic Growth and Competitiveness," Dr. John W. Ahlen, President, Arkansas Science and Technology Authority
3. Presentation: "Why Higher Education – Why Now?: A Framework for Legislative Action," Dr. Julie Bell, Education Program Director, NCSL
4. Presentation: "Higher Education and the Future of Arkansas," Dr. Dennis Jones, President, NCHEMS
5. Handout: Definitions of native and cumulative graduation rates

### **October 9, 2007**

1. Presentation: "The College Cost Reduction and Access Act," Sen. Blanche Lincoln, U.S. Senator
2. Discussion of Policy Approaches to Higher Ed Challenges, A National Perspective on Higher Education Finance, Dr. Dennis Jones, NCHEMS
3. Presentation: "Is Arkansas's Progress in Degree Completion at Risk?: Lessons From the 50th Anniversary SREB Fact Book on Higher Education," Dr. Joe Marks, Director of Education Data Services, SREB
4. Presentation: "Success Is What Counts," Achieving the Dream, Community Colleges Count
5. Presentation: "Achieving the Dream: Supporting Community College Student Success," Mr. Richard Kazis, Senior Vice President, Jobs for the Future
6. Handout: "Experts Working on Campuses in a Direct Manner with Students," Dr. Sally A. Roden, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Students, UCA
7. Arkansas: Featured Facts From the SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2007

### **November 15, 2007**

1. Presentation: Double the Numbers: Kentucky's Plan to Increase College Graduates, Dr. Steve Floyd, Deputy Director, ADHE
2. "Highlights From: More Student Success-A Systemic Solution: Achieving Better Results in Our Schools and Colleges," State Higher Education Executive Officers
3. "Lessons from Research on Performance Funding in Higher Education: Memorandum to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges," Todd Ellwein and Davis Jenkins, Community College Research Center
4. "What Does an Achieving the Dream College Look Like?: A Framework for Assessing Implementation of the Achieving the Dream Model of Institutional Performance Improvement," Achieving the Dream, Community Colleges Count, 2007
5. 2006-2007 Final Reports, Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year
6. Presentation: "Arkansas Higher Education: Moving Toward Success," Dr. Karen Hodges, Interim Director of Admissions, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Dr. Sally Roden, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, UCA; Mr. R. David Ray, Provost and Vice-Chancellor, University of Arkansas, Monticello

7. Handout: "States Requiring Testing and Placement for Remedial/Developmental Education," Education Commission of the States
8. Handout: "Arkansas Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge," Mr. R. David Ray, UAM
9. "Higher-education board ready to flex some muscle," Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 2007

#### **December 20, 2007**

1. Presentation: "Student Success Strategies Relating to Retention," Dr. Chip Ates, Executive Vice President for Student Learning, Northwest Arkansas Community College
2. "How to Define Retention: A New Look at an Old Problem," Dr. Linda Serra Hagedorn, 2006
3. "What Works in the Community Colleges: A Synthesis of the Literature on Best Practices," Carrie M. Bourdon and Rozana Carducci, University of California, Los Angeles, Graduate School of Education, Higher Education and Organizational Change Division, 2002
4. Presentation: Overview of Remediation: Two-Year College Perspective, Dr. Steve Murray, Chancellor, Phillips Community College
5. "One Step From the Finish Line: Higher College Graduation Rates Are Within Our Reach, A Report From the Education Trust," Kevin Carey, Education Trust, 2005
6. "Networks of Support for At Risk Students – Closing the Gap," Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators
7. Report Review, Ms. Patty Weak, Arkansas Association of Developmental Education, Ouachita Technical College
8. "Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges," 2007

#### **January 17, 2008**

1. Presentation: "AEA Presentation to Act 570 Task Force," Mr. Dan Marzoni II, President, AEA
2. "Pre-College Outreach and Early Intervention," The NEA Higher Education Journal, Laura W. Perna and W. Scott Swail
3. "Parental Involvement and Student Achievement," Greg Ponikvar, National Education Association, 2006

4. Presentation: "The Possibilities for Success," Dr. Jim Purcell, Director, ADHE
5. Presentation: "Celebrating CTE Educational Performance," Mr. John Davidson, Deputy Director, Department of Workforce Education

**February 14, 2008**

1. Report from Four-Year Work Group, Task Force on College Remediation, Retention, Graduation: Executive Summary of February 4 Meeting
2. Handout: Minutes, February 4 Meeting of Four-Year Work Group of the Task Force on College Remediation, Retention, and Graduation
3. Report from Two-Year College Work Group, Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention and Graduation Rates
4. Report from K-12 Work Group, Focus: Eliminating the Need for College Remedial Courses
5. "Higher Education Remediation, Retention and Graduation Rates," Dr. Calvin Johnson, Dean UAPB School of Education, Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Update
6. "House Committee Passes Reauthorization Bill," CHEA HEA Update 42, 2007
7. "Findings & Recommendations: Report on Public Education in Arkansas," Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus, 2003
8. Presentation by Mr. Chris Halley, UA Monticello
9. Presentation: "Student Input From the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville," Mr. Nathan C. Looney, President, Associated Student Government, UA Fayetteville
10. Presentation: "Student Perspective on Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates," Mr. Jason Davis, Former President, Arkansas Student Association, UA Little Rock
11. Handout: "Hoping to Retain Graduates, Maine Helps With Loan Costs," New York Times, 2007
12. Handout: Graduation Rates, Remediated First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Freshmen
13. "Colleges Woo Adults Who Have Some Credits but No Degree," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2008
14. Handout: "Each One, Reach One," 2008 New Student Symposium Registration Form, Pulaski Technical College

15. Handout: Council on Postsecondary Education, February 1, 2008, Kentucky Project Graduate
16. Handout: "What is Arkansas Doing to Close the Achievement Gap?," University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service e-Newsletter
17. Handout: "2006-08 College Access Initiative: Survey of Kentuckians with Some College"

**March 20, 2008**

1. Presentation: "Double the Numbers: Securing Kentucky's Future," Dr. James L. Applegate, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
2. Handout: "The College Board's College Readiness System," Joyce Elliott, Director, The College Board Southwestern Region, 2007
3. Four-Year College Work Group Meeting Minutes
4. Two-Year College Work Group Meeting Minutes
5. K-12 Work Group Report

**April 8, 2008**

1. Presentation: Governor Mike Beebe
2. Presentation: "College Access and Success: Where Are We? What Do We Need to Do?" Ms. Kati Haycock, Director, Education Trust, 2008

**April 15, 2008, 10:00 a.m.**

1. Four-Year College Work Group Report
2. Two-Year College Work Group Report
3. K-12 Work Group Report

**April 15, 2008, 1:30 p.m.**

1. K-12 Subcommittee Recommendations
2. Handout: Higher Education Capital Improvement Projects
3. Presentation: "College Readiness and Reduced Remediation — Access and Equity for All Arkansas Students: Past, Present, and Future," Glen Gullikson and Judy Trice, ACT Southwest Region

4. Interim Study Proposal 2007-195: that the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council study certain issues associated with capital improvement projects
5. Handout: Revision of Freshman Assessment and Placement Program
6. Handout: Freshman Assessment and Placement Program at State Colleges and Universities in Arkansas

**May 15, 2008, 10:00 a.m.**

1. Presentation: "Murphy Oil Corporation: Building A Better Future," Claiborne Deming, President & CEO, Murphy Oil Corporation
2. Presentation: "Arkansas: A Natural for Business," Maria Haley, Executive Director, Arkansas Economic Development Commission
3. Memorandum on State Admission Policies, Dr. Steve Floyd, 2008
4. Handout: "Percent of People 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed a Bachelor's Degree: 2006," U.S. Census Bureau
5. Editorial: "A first step, Graduation rates are just the start," Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 2008
6. "State to change how it doles out colleges' funds," Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 2008

**May 15, 2008, 1:00 p.m.**

1. Four-Year College Work Group Report
2. Two-Year College Work Group Report
3. K-12 Work Group Report
4. Handout: "Higher Education Reports," Ms. Sarah Ganahl, Legislative Attorney, Bureau of Legislative Research
5. Handouts: Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board Material
  - a. AHECB Tuition Policy for the 2009-2011 Biennium
  - b. Funding Formulas for the 2009-11 Biennium
  - c. Statewide Retention and Cumulative Graduation Rates of First-Time Freshmen by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age, Fall of Years 1992-2007 Entering Cohorts

d. Annual Report on Retention and Graduation of Intercollegiate Athletes

**June 19, 2008, 10:00 a.m.**

1. Handout: "Counseling high school students for postsecondary and workplace success," The Progress of Education Reform, 2008

**June 19, 2008, 1:30 p.m.**

1. Presentation: "Good News, Bad News and Worse News", Dr. John White, Chancellor, University of Arkansas

## **Material Submitted by Task Force Members - Posted on Website**

Dr. Steve Floyd

*Adding it Up*

*Double the Numbers: Kentucky's Plan to Increase College Graduates*

*Five Questions - One Mission: Better Lives for Kentucky's People*

*Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates*

*Securing Kentucky's Future*

Dr. Karen Hodges

*Remediation and Graduation NCES 2004*

Ms. Robin Bryant

*Community colleges to be rewarded for degrees by Christine Frey*

Dr. Ken James

*Engines of Inequality by Danette Gerald and Kati Haycock*

*Promise Abandoned by Kati Haycock*

*Closing the Achievement Gap - Where Are We? What Are the Most Important Roles  
For Educational Leaders?*

Representative Johnnie Roebuck

*Arkansas High Schools Alliance for Excellent Education*

*Positive Outcomes: Follow-Up of Single Parent Scholarship Graduates: Projections  
of High School Graduates by State and Race 1992-2022*

*Knocking at the College Door*

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## APPENDICES

### **Act 570 of 2007**

State of Arkansas  
86th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2007

## A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2736

By: Representatives J. Roebuck, Abernathy, Stewart

### **For An Act To Be Entitled**

AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE  
TASK FORCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
REMEDICATION, RETENTION, AND GRADUATION  
RATES; TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF  
ITS MEMBERS; TO DESCRIBE ITS MISSION AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

### **Subtitle**

AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS  
LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON HIGHER  
EDUCATION REMEDIATION, RETENTION,  
AND  
GRADUATION RATES; TO PROVIDE FOR  
THE  
APPOINTMENT OF ITS MEMBERS; TO  
DESCRIBE  
ITS MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 10, Chapter 3 is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

10-3-2401. Title.

This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas Legislative

Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation rates”.

10-3-2402. Creation.

(a) There is created the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following fifteen (15) members:

(1) The Governor or the Governor’s designee;

(2) The Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education or the chair's designee;

(3) The Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education or the Chair's designee;

(4) The Chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council or the Chair's designee;

(5) The Director of the Department of Higher Education, or the director’s designee;

(6) The Commissioner of Education or the Commissioner's designee;

(7) The President of the Arkansas Education Association or the president's designee;

(8) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators or the executive director's designee;

(9) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges or the executive director’s designee;

(10) Four (4) faculty members with specialized knowledge, skills or experience in the area of remediation representing institutions of higher education with one (1) from each of the four (4) congressional districts appointed by the Director of Higher Education.

(11) A Vice president or Provost of Academic Affairs appointed by the Director of Higher Education; and

(12) The Vice-president of Academic Affairs at a two-year higher education institution at a four-year higher education institution appointed by the Director of Higher Education.

(c)(1) The Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education or the chair's designee shall call the first meeting within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this act and shall serve as chair at the first meeting.

(2) At the first meeting, the members of the task force shall elect from its membership a chair and other officers as needed for the transaction of its business.

(3)(A) The task force shall conduct its meetings in Pulaski County at the

State Capitol.

(B) Meetings shall be held at least one (1) time every three (3) months but may occur more often at the call of the chair.

(d) If any vacancy occurs on the task force, the vacancy shall be filled by the same process as the original appointment.

(e) The task force shall establish rules and procedures for conducting its business.

(f) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but may receive expense reimbursement according to § 25-16-902.

(g) A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum for transacting any business of the task force.

(h) The Bureau of Legislative Research shall provide staff for the task force.

10-3-2403. Duties.

The Arkansas Legislative Task Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates shall:

(1) Compile information on research that has been done in Arkansas and nationally on reducing remediation, improving retention, and increasing graduation rates;

(2) Summarize data on rates of remediation, types of testing used to determine college readiness, and characteristics of programs that are most effective in addressing skill deficits, and data on effectiveness of remediation for students with entering skill deficits;

(3) Create a definition of remediation to assure consistency in reporting of remediation among colleges and universities throughout Arkansas;

(4) Identify the underlying factors that contribute to the number of students who are not ready for collegiate level classes in certain disciplines at the time of high school graduation;

(5) Identify best practices examples of school systems and colleges that are having success in reducing the need for remedial education;

(6) Brainstorm new approaches that may be effective in producing increased levels of college readiness;

(7) Attempt to clarify the role that various types of colleges and universities should play in addressing the need for remediation;

(8) Review graduation rates of the state's colleges and universities for the past six (6) years;

(9) Develop a set of written recommendations for the General Assembly

that will improve remediation, retention, and graduation rates at the state's colleges and universities; and

(10) Present the written recommendations of the Task Force to the General Assembly by November 1, 2008.

10-3-2404. Expiration of Task Force.

The Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation rates shall cease to exist effective January 1, 2009.

**APPROVED: 3/28/2007**

## Other state's initiatives to improve their populations' education

Many states have set goals to greatly increase the population of adults who have bachelor's degrees. Kentucky, Arizona, and Michigan have all indicated their intention to **double** the number of adults with bachelor's degrees within the next two decades and are implementing many initiatives to make their goals possible. Many states with less educated adult populations and low per capita income are proposing initiatives in their 2008 legislative sessions to increase higher education outcomes:

- West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin III (D) is seeking \$50 million for the "Bucks for Brains" initiative to recruit faculty and build infrastructure with the goal of finding success in fields that could result in profits.
- Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland (D) wants to pay for students to spend their final year of high school on a college campus for free. He also wants to make Ohio one of the 10 least-expensive states to attend college.
- Tennessee's Phil Bredesen (D) suggested lowering the GPA threshold that college students must maintain to keep their Hope Scholarship, from a 3.0 to 2.75.
- South Dakota's Mike Rounds (R) said another 200 students could join the 3,465 who already receive the state's Opportunity Scholarships if the ACT score requirement were lowered from 24 to 23.
- Missouri's Matt Blunt (R) asked for \$100 million for Access Missouri scholarships. The money would quadruple the state's investment in need-based grants.
- Idaho's C.L. "Butch" Otter (R) proposed in his January 7<sup>th</sup> address \$50 million for scholarships for low-income students.

Raymond Scheppach, Executive Director of the National Governors Association (NGA), said that what is particularly impressive about these initiatives is that "governors are proposing the funding increases in what promises to be a tough budget year. Usually in times of financial distress, higher education is one of the first areas to suffer spending cuts ... [M]ore governors now realize that their systems of higher education are really their major economic strategy for the future ... that [companies] go to where you have highly skilled workers."

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