

“Leveling the Playing Field for All Schools, Including Career Colleges”

Study analyzes how private, for-profit institutions serve students as measured by various educational outcomes

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A research study previewed last month during the annual meeting of the Career College Association in Orlando demonstrates what most career colleges have believed for some time: That they can respectfully compete with more traditional institutions when it comes to retaining and graduating students, and sometimes they do an even better job.

In summary, the research—done by the Educational Policy Institute and financed by the Imagine America Foundation—shows that: Career colleges do a good job of helping students persist and attain a degree, especially viewed in light of the risks or challenges presented by their students; career colleges do a better job with students who are less prepared for higher education than public institutions; and career colleges, therefore, play a critical role in this new era of global competition and the re-engineering of the American workplace.

Having such information is important because there is an increased push by both state and federal governments to link the financial support postsecondary institutions receive to their success in retaining and graduating students from their schools.

Nancy Broff, general counsel for the Career College Association for 15 years and now an attorney in private practice with Dickstein Shapiro, LLP, was one of the study’s presenters at last month’s CCA convention. She hopes the data from this study will put career colleges on a level playing field when it comes to financial support, especially since there has been an

increased amount of funding going into both federal and state student financial aid.

“Although now we’re seeing states cut back because they’re all having horrible financial problems. But, particularly on the federal level, we’ve seen a really big increase in the amounts of aid available to students over the last two years. And based on what we’re now seeing, both in Congress and in the Obama Administration,

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we’re absolutely interested in increasing funding streams to student financial aid. But we also want to know that some of our policy concerns dealing with retention and graduation and cost of college are also being addressed,” she says. “For instance, there’s a new Perkins Program being proposed by the Administration that would completely revamp the current Perkins Program, which is a low-interest loan program for needy students. One of the things the Administration has said is, ‘We would like to talk about allocating institutions’ share of funds from this new Perkins Program based not just on the number of students with financial need, but also we’d like to find a way to reward those institutions that can show us