TN Reconnect

Malia Sieve, Director
HCM Strategists

January 18, 2018

STRATEGY LABS
State Policy to Increase Higher Education Attainment

SUPPORTED BY Lumina FOUNDATION
Why focus on adults?

• TN *cannot* reach 55% by 2025 without them
  – 871,000 credentials needed
  – 645,000 high school graduates

• Natural growth projections estimate 793,663 adults with credentials

• Gap = approx. 77,000 credentials
Leading up to the Marketing Campaign...

• 2008 – Conducted policy and program audits
• 2009 – Convened Adult Learner Strategies Group; gathered and analyzed data around adults and education/economic opportunities
• 2010 – Complete College TN Act enacted
• 2011 – Goal set; Drive to 55 initiative launched; PLA efforts began
• 2012 – Focus groups of adult learners
• 2014 – Market research conducted
Focus Group Findings (Public Agenda)

• Leading barriers to entry/reentry:
  – Life pressures that overwhelm educational aspirations
    • Financial & family responsibilities
  – Inability to access complete or reliable information
  – Self-doubt from negative past experiences
  – Fear of failure

• Barriers leading to stop-out:
  – Inadequate preparation
  – Difficulty obtaining information and navigating academic requirements
  – Insufficient advising services
  – Inconsistent course requirements across schools or major to major
Focus Groups (cont.)

• Factors to improve success:
  – Goal clarity
  – Early concentrating in program of study
  – Passing college-level math
Market Research Findings (Walker + Assoc.)

• 61% indicated they were not likely to return
• Equally motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic factors
• Age, finances and life stages are key drivers in deciding to return; in-school experience rarely noted as key factor in leaving
• PLA could be important facilitator in boosting enrollment
Guiding Strategies for Adult Learner Initiatives

1. Research and building the policy framework.
2. Supporting and reaching out to adult learners.
3. Supporting and building capacity within institutions to better serve adults.
4. Developing and leveraging employer and workforce partnerships.
5. Coordinating regional initiatives and promoting community ownership.
What’s Next

• TN Reconnect Success Plan
  – Student completes questionnaire to tell THEC more about themselves
    • Asks about concerns or barriers (childcare, transportation, dependents, when they can attend class)
  – Plus FAFSA
  – THEC develops a personalized Success Plan so student will know about the specific resources and supports that could help them on campus
  – Starting this spring
Advice

• Attention to student supports and the way learning occurs for adults is critical
• Engage faculty in the creative and research aspects
• If you have an idea, try it and learn from it
• Make someone at the campus responsible for this work
• Leadership buy-in and support is critical
• Collection and analysis of data is necessary
Key Takeaways

• Engaging / Reengaging adults is more than a marketing campaign
• Building a statewide framework for adults is a long process
• No single initiative will make or break success
• Know your student population