Applied Baccalaureate Degrees: Policy and Outcomes Evaluation at Washington’s Community and Technical Colleges

CCBA 16th Annual International Conference
March 18-20, 2016

Presented by Darby Kaikkonen
Policy Research Director
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

BETTER JOBS, BRIGHTER FUTURES, A STRONGER WASHINGTON
Policy Goals for Washington’s CTC AB Programs

Â Increase educational pathways for professional-technical associate graduates who have been limited in their ability to apply credits toward a bachelor degree.

Â Meet state goals for increasing the total number of baccalaureate degrees awarded by public two-year and four-year institutions to 42,400 per year.

Â Expand the workforce mission of CTCs further to better serve the needs of local and state employers.
Guiding Evaluation Questions for Policy Goals

Â What types of AB programs are colleges offering?
Â What is the system-level growth in programs and enrollment?
Â What are the demographics of students enrolling in AB programs?
Â What are the retention and completion rates of students in AB programs?
Â Do students of color participate in and complete AB programs at comparable rates?
Â Does having an AB degree result in higher earnings than the associate degree alone?
Â Does the return to investment in earnings differ by field of study?
Students of Color: Enrollment and Outcomes

- % Students of Color in Workforce Student Body
- % Students of Color in BAS Programs
- % Students of Color in BAS Completions

Bar chart showing enrollment and outcomes for various institutions.
Employment Outcomes Methodology

Å Method of using unemployment insurance wage data evolved over time

Å Question to be answered in 2015 analysis: what economic return to the student does the AB degree provide above and beyond the associate degree?

Å Propensity score matching techniques to create comparable groups of AAS and AB graduates for analysis
Findings

Â AB graduates differed from AAS graduates: AB graduates are older, graduate from AAS program with higher GPA, more likely to be parents, working, female, not a student of color, and less likely to have already earned a bachelor’s degree.

Â Six of the eight programs evaluated demonstrated higher earnings for AB graduates.

Â Four programs had significant predictors other than AB degree.
### Average Earnings for Associate and Baccalaureate Degree Graduates by Field of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>Associate Degree Earnings</th>
<th>Baccalaureate Degree Earnings</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Additional significant predictors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bellevue: Interior Design</strong></td>
<td>$24,429</td>
<td>$29,631</td>
<td>$5,202</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bellevue: Radiology</strong></td>
<td>$49,326</td>
<td>$76,113</td>
<td>$26,787*</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lake Washington: Applied Design</strong></td>
<td>$29,964</td>
<td>$40,239</td>
<td>$10,275*</td>
<td>Parent, prior work experience, gender, and prior bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peninsula: Management</strong></td>
<td>$20,448</td>
<td>$29,171</td>
<td>$8,723*</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Columbia Basin: Management</strong></td>
<td>$29,503</td>
<td>$33,185</td>
<td>$3,682</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Olympic: Nursing</strong></td>
<td>$45,621</td>
<td>$58,296</td>
<td>$12,675*</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seattle Central: Behavioral Science</strong></td>
<td>$23,968</td>
<td>$30,886</td>
<td>$6,918*</td>
<td>Prior work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Seattle: Hospitality</strong></td>
<td>$20,909</td>
<td>$31,930</td>
<td>$11,021*</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant, p-value < 0.05; tolerance > .5
Implications and Questions for Further Study

- For those programs whose AB graduates do not appear to have higher earnings than AAS graduates, is the AB program serving its role and function?
- For those programs where factors other than just the AB program were significant, what is the impact of occupation (vs industry)?
- For colleges thinking about new AB programs, what do you know about the earnings potential above and beyond that of the AAS degree? What is communicated to students?