

Western Colorado Community College

Background

Western Colorado Community College administrators state that they leverage their Perkins funding by combining it with resources from other sources to achieve their goal of always “putting students first.” This has allowed WCCC to expand student support services, acquire new equipment/tools and provide professional development opportunities for their faculty. As a division of Mesa State College, WCCC has strong curriculum alignment with their parent institution to facilitate the transition to four-year degrees.

Key Innovation(s)

Perkins funding has been vital to WCCC’s expansion of student services to more fully serve the students who come to their dedicated subsidiary campus. For example, WCCC innovatively uses Perkins dollars to help fund a *peer tutoring program* which assists students with learning.

Additionally, they use these resources to dedicate: a *Student Advisor* to provide accurate information on CTE programs, financial information, and skills needed; and an *Education Access Services Coordinator* to better identify and serve special needs students.

Funds have not only been used to develop plans of study and career cluster/pathways but to train staff on how to use each for student advising.

Faculty professional development has been focused toward gaining a national perspective on the *transition points* in a student’s learning pathway.

WCCC is proud that they have been able to sustain the presence of a PBS-affiliate TV station on their campus for the benefit of their students. Plus, they have creatively implemented the building of a new construction trades building by having it be funded and built by local construction companies.

Key Factors to Implementation

WCCC positions their programs so that they are relevant to local and state needs. They also focus on the *transferability of the skills* they teach.

Programmatic success has been achieved by using Perkins dollars to acquire equipment, tools and supplies that will keep programs on the cutting edge of emerging technologies.

WCCC has made a strong commitment to providing teachers with the *tools to do their jobs more effectively*. As such, Perkins dollars have helped fund: a conference for teachers on working with students with vocational disabilities; the purchasing of equipment, tools and supplies; industry training for teachers to keep them current with curriculum and workforce needs; a *mentoring program for new teachers*;

and sending staff to the National Association for Career and Technical Education (NACTE) conference to gather information about how to move programs to the “next step.”

Looking toward *improving student transitions* to their parent institution and other 4-year programs, WCCC has been seeking approval from Mesa State to offer applied general education courses at their campus.

RESULTS

WCCC’s deployment of Perkins funding for student support services has resulted in strong student retention (many students are returning for the Spring 2010 semester). Increased support has also helped students become more successful in their coursework, consequently, making them more prepared to pursue higher degrees. Moreover, WCCC believes their strong focus on student success and outcomes has given their students a set of skills to put them at the top of “Best Qualified Applicant” lists.