Building Funded Pathways to Living Wage Careers

The theme of this year’s “State of the State” report is onward and upward! The first half of 2021 proved as challenging as the whole of 2020, but our programs withstood those challenges, found new ways to innovate and serve students in spite of them, and are moving forward with renewed signs of growth and a commitment to serve our students with greater equity through lessons learned in shifting to remote instruction and services. There is a lot of talk about hybrid approaches and newly flexible schedules for our students in the coming year.

Our ultimate goal in BEdA is to provide equitable programming for all Washingtonians to realize their potential as they launch on a supported college and career pathway to living-wage employment and strengthen the vitality of their communities. We do this in the name of advancing racial and economic justice. We measure our success by the success of our students.

Our biggest two-in-one, programmatic, pathway-based initiative in service of our goal is the expansion of I-BEST in guided pathways and the greater adoption of Ability to Benefit system-wide, especially in the use of our state-defined, federally approved option for students that allows them to access both Washington College Grant and Pell Grant funds the first quarter they enroll in college programming if they co-enroll in I-BEST and High School Plus. Initial co-enrollment numbers are small (think less than 100) but this was our first year of implementation, when programs were more focused on innovations in online delivery of instruction and student services for necessary reasons.

Additional initiatives to extend our pathways and equity work include:

- **IET in Corrections** – through an OCTAE-funded project with RTI International we are helping to develop guidance and support to expand I-BEST and I-BEST-like programming in corrections education programs. Will Durden and the eventual I-BEST Policy Associate are guiding this work forward with content expertise provided by Pat Seibert-Love.
- **IET and Community Based Organizations** – Jodi Ruback is working with our funded CBO partners to explore how I-BEST-like programs can be implemented by CBOs in partnership with employers.
- **I-BEST @ Work** – we continue to seek expansion of adult education into incumbent worker training programs with the I-BEST @ Work model, which can be adopted by college and CBO partners in collaboration with employers. This is also a key area for collaboration with Title I WIOA partners. The new I-BEST Policy Associate will have their hands full picking up this important initiative as well as serving our traditional, college-based I-BEST programs.

We lift up all BEdA programs across the state as each have navigated their unique circumstances to serve students remotely with courage, talent, and tireless advocacy on behalf of our students. Equal kudos goes to the committed and resourceful BEdA staff for assisting the field in the continued pivot to remote and hybrid forms of instruction and student services.
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Professional Development
If innovative programming is the educational structure we put in place in order for our students to reach their goals, professional development for our funded providers is how we ensure that our programs have the tools necessary to be successful within those structures. To that end, professional development aligned to our racial equity goals is equally central to our goal. A handful of our key upcoming projects include:

- Decolonizing ELA – a community of practice, organized by Monica Wilson and led by BIPOC faculty, that partners with Dr. Motha from the University of Washington to increase leadership capacity across the system for departmental, institutional, and system reform.
- High School Plus Roundtable – our yearly roundtable, led by MarcusAntonio Gunn, will feature Dr. Milner, a nationally recognized scholar, for a keynote presentation on analyzing and using data from a race equity perspective in curriculum, policy, and programming planning. There is much system interest in this roundtable and we are inviting stakeholders across the agency to participate.
- ELA in Pathways will advance our work of integrating ELA coursework into guided pathways initiatives. This project, led by Jodi Ruback, will develop three (and potentially more) Canvas-based modules, including one on worker rights, for ELA 4-5 students to transition from earlier level learning and prepare for selection and entry into a pathways program. The modules, like all of BEdA’s PD offerings, will be open-licensed so that programs can contextualize and customize the modules to fit specific program offerings. Further technical assistance and training opportunities will help faculty adopt this new work.

Enrollment Update
BEdA
Despite continued enrollment challenges, signs of recovery are on the way. Our winter quarter year-to-year comparison registered a 25% drop in enrollments from winter 2020 to winter 2021, but this was better than the fall year-to-year comparison, which yielded a 35% drop from fall 2019 to fall 2020.

HS+ and I-DEA have experienced some drops as well, but overall have performed well and have experienced less severe drops than BEdA overall. End-of-year reporting is the best way to look at those programs and as we have only winter quarter data to analyze, those figures will be looked at in our fall report once we have a full academic year of information to compare.

We anticipate the rollout of the AEAC-commissioned BEdA marketing project to assist colleges and CBOs in recruiting for their programs in the coming academic year and look forward to providing updates as that initiative moves forward.

I-BEST
I-BEST continues to do better than BEdA as a whole from a percentage drop comparison, and is on par with some of the better-performing programs across the college system, with only an 8% drop from winter 2020 to 2021 year-to-year comparison. We are encouraged by the continued success of I-BEST and its adaptation to online delivery.

Demographics
Our BEdA programs serve a diverse population. Based on winter 2021 enrollment data, we know that:
Race
- 40% (7,459) of our students are historically underserved students of color
- 30% (5,478) of our students report as White
- 21% (3,845) of our students report as Hispanic
- 12% (2,233) of our students report as Asian
- 10% (1,770) of our students report as Black or African American
- 10% (1,873) of our students report as 2+ Races
- 1% (118) of our students report as Pacific Islander
- 1% (261) of our students report as American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 16% (2,979) of our students did not report a race.

Gender
- 64% of our students report as female; 36% as male

Age
- 37% of our students report as under 25
- 63% of our students report as 25 and above
  o 25% of our students report as 30-39
  o 24% of our students report as 40 or above

Faculty ratios
Faculty ratios are holding steady at 24% full-time, 76% part-time BEdA faculty for the past two years.

BEdA Staffing
After a full academic year without a dedicated I-BEST Policy Associate we are finally hiring for this critical position. Expect an update on who has been selected, and possibly an introduction, by the time of the retreat!

Next up is our hire for the WABERS+ help desk role, which we hope to announce soon. This position also provides other critical administrative support functions for the BEdA team.

Upcoming RFA
We are in the final year of our five-year grant cycle. This year we are engaged in the work of designing a new five-year open and competitive grant process that incorporates the system and BEdA-level vision statements that center racial equity.

Corrections Education
Corrections education continues to navigate unprecedented terrain as programs work to incorporate Washington College Grant and restored Pell funding for students! In the midst of these changes we continue to focus our attention on expanding I-BEST in Corrections and connecting our corrections education programs to guided pathways. Thanks to councilmember Loretta Taylor for her advocacy and leadership for our students!

Here to Serve
This report was prepared by William S. Durden, Director of BEdA. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions, comments, or requests for additional information – wdurden@sbcctc.edu.