

STATE OF WISCONSIN

2009-11 BIENNIAL REPORT

October 2011



Wisconsin Technical College System Board

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AGENCY OVERVIEW

Mission and Purpose

Chapter 38, *Wis. Stats.*, provides that the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board is responsible for the initiation, development, maintenance, and supervision of programs with specific occupational orientation below the baccalaureate level, including associate degrees, training of apprentices and adult education below the postsecondary level. The principal purposes of the System are to provide occupational education and training and retraining programs, and to provide customized training and technical assistance to business and industry in order to foster economic development and expansion of employment opportunities. Additional purposes are to cooperate and contract with secondary schools; provide collegiate transfer programs; basic skills education; community services and self-enrichment activities; and address barriers created by stereotyping and discrimination.

Partner Agencies

WTCS maintains close working relationships with:

- the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to offer employment services, related instruction for registered apprenticeships, labor market information, and other programs;
- the Wisconsin Higher Education Aids Board (HEAB) to administer financial aid programs that benefit WTCS students;
- the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to develop technical and adult education opportunities for all people in the state, and to facilitate articulation between secondary and postsecondary programs;
- the University of Wisconsin (UW) System to serve state residents by increasing opportunities for postsecondary education and training; and
- the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to identify and develop strategies that strengthen Wisconsin's workforce and business and industry.

WTCS Board

The WTCS Board, as the WTCS governing body, is structured to reflect its mission and diverse responsibilities. The Board consists of 13 members, including 3 ex-officio and 10 non-salaried members appointed by the Governor. The three ex-officio members, as established in Chapter 38, *Wis. Stats.*, are: the DWD Secretary (or designee); the UW Board of Regents President (or designee); and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (or designee).

Of the ten appointed board members, one represents employers, one represents employees, one represents farmers, one represents students, and six represent the public as at-large members. Appointed board members serve six-year, staggered terms, with the exception of the student representative, who serves a two-year term.

The WTCS Board is empowered to determine the organization, plans, scope and development of postsecondary technical and adult education; appoint a System President; approve qualifications of district educational personnel and courses of study; establish system-wide policies; and approve district proposals for facilities development and land acquisition. The Board establishes procedures and criteria for the determining course credit, state aid, and uniform accounting for financial programs and other data required of the colleges.

During the 2009-11 biennium, the following individuals served on the WTCS Board:

| Member | Representing | Residence |
|---|---------------------|------------------|
| Mary Quinnette Cuene | Public | Green Bay |
| Stan Davis President 2009-11 | Public | Sun Prairie |
| Terry Erickson | Employers | La Crosse |
| Ann Greenheck | Farmers | Lone Rock |
| Phil Neuenfeldt | Employees | Milwaukee |
| Eddie Paul (appointed January 2010) | Students | Neenah |
| Michael Rosen | Public | Milwaukee |
| Brent Smith | Public | La Crosse |
| S. Mark Tyler Vice President 2009-11 | Public | Woodville |

The following ex-officio members served on the Board during the 2009-11 biennium:

| Member | Representing |
|--|--|
| Tony Evers | State Superintendent of Public Instruction |
| José Vasquez (appointed June 2008) | UW Board of Regents Designee |
| Roberta Gassman (through December 2010) Manny Perez (January-May 2011) Scott Baumbach (appointed June 2011) | Secretary, Department of Workforce Development |

System Office

The WTC System Office ended the biennium with 82.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) authorized positions, including 5.0 FTE authorized positions at the Educational Approval Board (EAB), which was attached to the System Office for administrative purposes through the 2005-07 State Budget. A System President, who serves at the pleasure of the WTCS State Board, leads the WTC System Office. Major staff responsibilities are divided between:

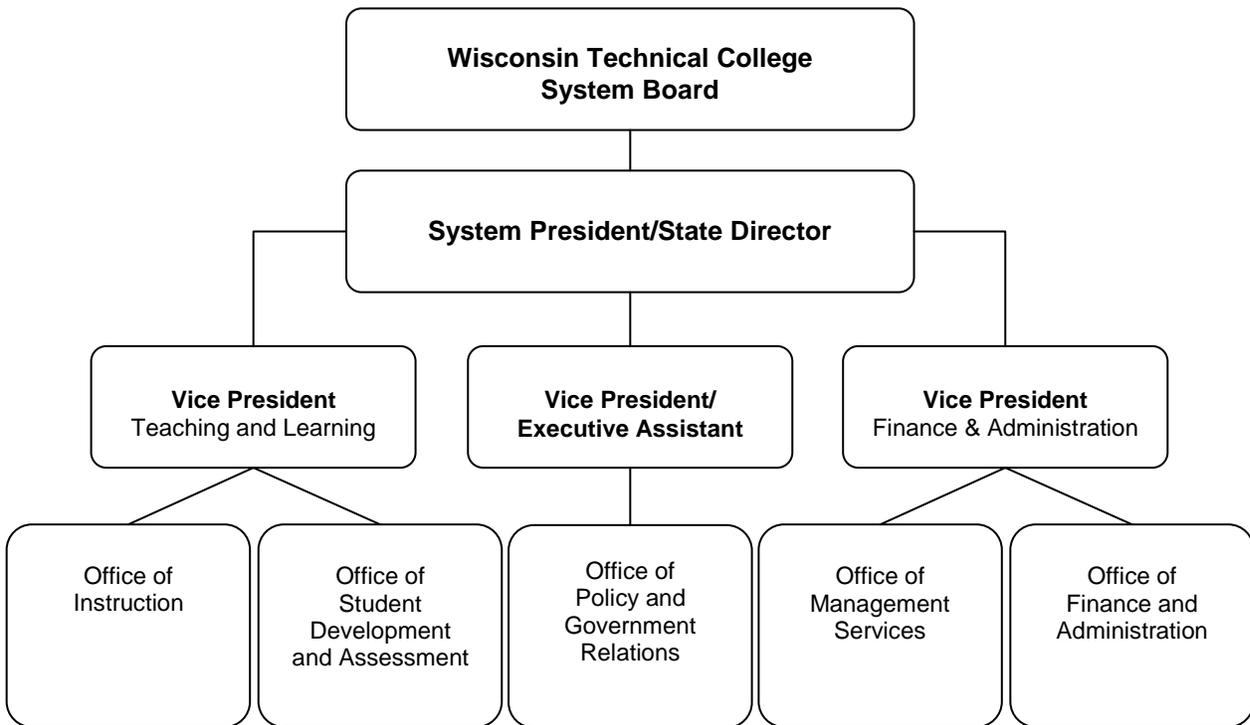
- The Division of Teaching and Learning, which oversees occupational education and collegiate transfer programs; serves as the liaison with business and industry for economic development activities; coordinates professional development and student services, including support services for people with special needs and federal and state grant coordination; provides curriculum resources; evaluates educational programs; and coordinates WTCS offerings with other educational systems.
- The Division of Finance and Administration, which is responsible for audit and fiscal services, facility approval and oversight, staff support services, management information systems, instructor certification, and personnel.
- The Office of Policy and Government Relations, which is responsible for budget development, economic analysis, policy studies, and federal and state legislative relations.

Alternative Work Patterns

WTC System Office policies have permitted alternative work patterns since 1976. In 2005, the WTC System Office adopted a revised policy that permits any employee of the agency to request an alternative work pattern.

Alternatives include, but are not limited to, part-time, shared-time, and flex-time schedules. Employee and agency work needs are accommodated through the use of non-standard work weeks and straight shift work. During the 2009-11 biennium, more than 70 employees participated in some type of alternative work pattern.

Organizational Structure

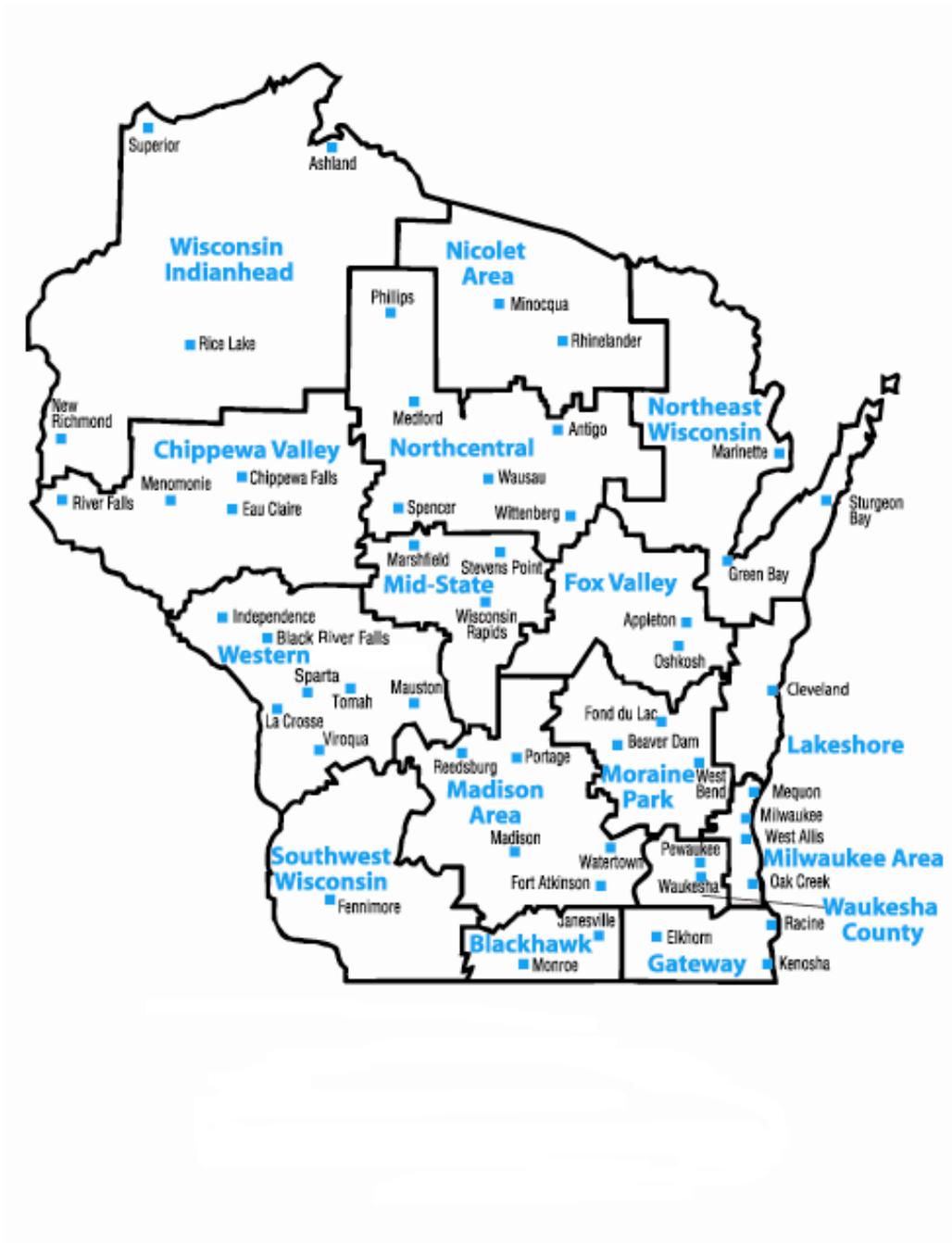


WTCS College Districts

The 16 WTCS colleges, currently with 49 campuses, deliver career and technical education that meets the needs, interests and abilities of students and the demands of the labor market. To further these purposes, WTC System Office staff provide colleges with consultation, technical assistance, coordination of activities, and support services.

Each WTCS college has unique demographic, geographic, and economic characteristics. Programs are tailored to meet local needs within the uniform program standards established by the WTCS Board. Each technical college is governed by a district board appointed by local elected officials. As with the WTCS Board, district board membership is intended to reflect the diversity of WTCS stakeholders: two members represent employers, two represent employees, one is a local K-12 school administrator, one is a state or local elected official, and three are at-large members. District boards are empowered to levy taxes on property, provide facilities and equipment, contract for instructional services, and appoint a college president who serves as chief executive officer for the district. (Map on next page.)

WTCS College Districts and Campuses



Major Program Goals and Objectives

Expand the pool of skilled workers in the State's labor force

The WTCS Board continues to approve demand-driven, cutting-edge career and technical education and training programs developed by Wisconsin's technical colleges in collaboration with Wisconsin's businesses and industry, labor, and other partners. In just the past few years, the colleges have developed state-of-the-art programs in emerging industries like nanoscience, biotechnology, manufacturing robotics, and renewable energy. At the same time, the colleges continue to deliver graduates that meet ongoing demand in core programs that produce construction, information technology, public safety, and health care professionals, among many others. To accomplish this and operate with the highest degree of efficiency, the WTCS Board discontinues about the same number of programs as it approves each year.

The WTCS Employer Follow-up Survey – which has been measuring employer satisfaction with the skills and abilities of WTCS graduates every four years since 1980 – consistently shows that WTCS graduates meet or exceed employer expectations when compared to other new employees, in both occupational abilities and other core skills. For example, 2010 survey results showed that employers overwhelmingly reported that WTCS graduates met or exceeded expectations in:

- mastery of knowledge in the field;
- ability to perform technical skills;
- ability to communicate effectively;
- relevance of skills and knowledge;
- mastery of “STEM” (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics);
- overall preparedness for employment; and
- overall technical education.

The complete Employer Satisfaction survey results are available electronically at: <http://www.wtcsystem.edu/reports/data/employer/index.htm>

Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities

The WTCS used a variety of methods to increase postsecondary educational opportunities over the 2009-11 biennium. For example, WTCS colleges emphasized responding to the needs of dislocated workers resulting from the economic downturn, continuing to providing training opportunities for incumbent workers, and developing career pathways that address skills shortages and offer low-income adults clear and reliable courses of action to progress in their careers.

During the 2009-11 biennium, WTCS colleges rapidly responded to the needs of dislocated workers, providing critical services and expanding enrollment options. The colleges implemented a number of strategies to rapidly deliver dislocated worker outreach and support services, and to expand enrollment options, including:

- adding course sections;
- offering flexible course delivery, including evenings and weekend offerings;
- working with faculty to relax enrollment limits and deadlines;
- creating dedicated Web pages with information specific to dislocated workers;
- waiving application and other fees;
- establishing computer literacy workshops;
- expanding tutoring options and other academic and student supports;
- offering “cohort” basic skills courses, so that dislocated workers can transition together;
- offering special assistance to streamline the admissions process and completion of financial aid applications;
- creating support groups and other approaches to simplify the enrollment process and offering added support in the transition to school;
- designing “FAQ” (Frequently Asked Questions) resources to assist dislocated workers and the agencies and staff with whom they interact;
- adding temporary faculty and other staff to meet demand, including reducing or eliminating wait-lists; and
- leasing additional space and equipment to expand capacity.

Employer-specific worker training will be a critical component in meeting the needs of new and expanding businesses in Wisconsin. In the 2009-11 biennium, WTCS colleges continued to serve more than 100,000 students annually through customized instruction contracts, under which the colleges design and deliver customized instruction on-site or on-campus.

The number of students served under such contracts, and the college revenue generated from them, increased in the early part of the biennium. However, the continuing effects of the deep recession that began in late 2007 affected demand for customized instruction in 2009-10 and 2010-11. Despite this, employers and workers continue to place a high value on incumbent worker training, and WTCS developed a survey instrument to gauge the economic and other impacts of the training. Early results indicate that most respondents believe WTCS contract training meets or exceeds their expectations, allowing them to improve productivity, achieve cost savings, retain or create jobs, or increase sales.

Another way to increase postsecondary participation is through the development of adult career pathways. The adult career pathway is a new way of organizing a postsecondary program as a sequence of modules that lead learners in steps toward a degree or technical diploma. Each step increases skills and improves career and earning opportunities. Industry sectors most appropriate for pathway development are those that are willing to identify sets of work competencies required to advance.

Within a career pathway, bridge instructional programming helps adults with basic skills or English Language Learning (ELL) needs take the first step onto career pathway learning and work. Bridge programs explicitly link adult basic education (ABE) and ELL

instruction with preparation for postsecondary education and occupational skill attainment.

WTCS, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and other partners successfully competed for nearly \$1.5 million in grants from the Joyce Foundation under the Shifting Gears initiative. With these funds, the Regional Industry Skills Education (“RISE”) partners have overseen the development of more than 50 adult career pathway and related “bridge” programs to increase college transitions for basic education students. The RISE partners received additional funding from the Joyce Foundation in 2009 and 2011.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Students of color as a proportion of overall enrollments continues to climb, increasing from 14.1% in 2005-06 to 16.2% in 2009-10. This representation is greater than people of color as a proportion of Wisconsin’s total population, which was about 13.8% in the last census. Moreover, increases in the number of program graduates of color outpaced growth in white program graduates by nearly 2 to 1 over the past 10 years. Finally, the number of students of color transferring to UW institutions, as well as their proportion of all transfers, have increased.

Despite this progress, significant work remains to ensure that students of color have every opportunity to succeed in college. For example, the proportion of all graduates who are students of color – 11.6% in 2009-10 – is not representative of enrollment proportions as a whole, and has remained relatively stagnant since at least 2006. In addition, students of color are significantly over-represented in Adult Basic Education enrollments.

To address persistent concerns about the achievement gap for students of color, the System Board made funding for proven programs a priority in its last two biennial budget requests. Unfortunately, these requests went largely unfunded.

2009-11 BUDGET AND POLICY ACTION

2009-11 Biennial Budget

The 2009-11 Biennial Budget Act (2011 Wisconsin Act 32) was signed by the Governor on June 29, 2009. Although the Governor had proposed a \$1.7 million annual reduction in State General Aid, the Legislature restored that cut and included a net annual increase of \$920,600, resulting in annual General Aid funding of \$119.3 million. Categorical Aid appropriations – including grant programs in areas such as health care education, new and expanding occupations, and workforce advancement training – were subject to a 1% across-the-board cut to base funding.

Act 32 also resulted in several non-fiscal statutory changes affecting WTCS, which were included in the agency’s biennial budget request, including: reducing non-resident tuition for most non-resident students; increasing the capital expenditure limit to

\$1.5 million (from \$1.0 million) before requiring a public referendum; and making technical revisions to the Workforce Advancement Training (WAT) grant program to enhance business participation.

The 2009-11 budget also made changes to the fee remission program for eligible Wisconsin veterans and their qualifying spouse and dependents. The changes required participating individuals to use certain federal education benefits before applying for state tuition and fee remissions.

The 2009-11 biennial budget also increased WTCS student financial aid, including: \$1.2 million increase over the biennium in the WTCS Wisconsin Higher Education Grant, and \$32,000 increase over the biennium in WTCS Minority Undergraduate Retention Grants. While any increase in student financial aid is vital for WTCS students, the 2009-11 increases did not keep pace with the continuing and growing unmet financial need of WTCS students, which exceeds the unmet need of all other postsecondary sectors in Wisconsin.

State Board Policies

The WTCS Board has the authority to establish system-wide policies. Policy options are developed by the WTC System Office in consultation with various stakeholders. The WTCS State Board uses a two-step process to consider possible changes and ensure the opportunity for Board input. Policies approved by the WTCS State Board are published in its policy manual, which is available electronically at: http://www.wtcsystem.edu/board/pdf/policy_manual.pdf

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONS

Wisconsin's technical colleges strive to provide graduates with the education and training that provides skills to compete in today's competitive job market. The WTCS regularly publishes data on enrollment, costs, and graduate outcomes, which are available at <http://www.wtcsystem.edu/reports.htm>

Operational Costs

In order to provide the instruction, services and activities necessary to carry out their mission and achieve their goals, WTCS colleges rely on a combination of federal, state and local revenues. In fiscal year (FY) 2009-10, the latest year for which complete financial information is available, WTCS colleges enrolled 382,006 individuals at an operational cost of \$1.0 billion.

Actual 2009-10 cost allocation data show that 67.7% of operational costs were for instruction while the next highest amounts were for general institutional (12.7%), student services (9.8%), and physical plant (7.4%). Instructional resources accounted for the remaining 2.4% of operational costs. Data on college costs is published annually, with the most recent year of complete data available at http://www.wtcsystem.edu/reports/data/cost_alloc/index.htm.

Enrollment

As shown in Table 1, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled annually increased from 72,787 in FY 2008-09 to 81,403 in FY 2009-10, or 11.8%. Table 1 also shows FTE enrollment by instructional category and the percentage of all FTEs that are included in each category for the two most recent years of complete data. Data on enrollment is published annually, with the most recent year of complete data available at <http://www.wtcsystem.edu/reports/data/factbook/index.htm>.

**TABLE 1: Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollments
by Instructional Category**

| | 2008-09 | | 2009-10 | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| | Enrollments | Percentage of Enrollments | Enrollments | Percentage of Enrollments |
| Postsecondary | | | | |
| Associate Degree | 45,999 | 63.2% | 53,421 | 65.6% |
| Technical Diploma | 8,857 | 12.2 | 9,100 | 11.2 |
| Collegiate Transfer | 7,223 | 9.9 | 8,173 | 10.0 |
| Subtotal | 62,079 | 85.3% | 70,694 | 86.8% |
| Non-Postsecondary | | | | |
| Basic Education, Hearing Impaired Program (HIP), and Visually Impaired Program (VIP) | 7,354 | 10.0% | 7,328 | 9.1% |
| Continuing Education | | | | |
| Vocational-Adult | 3,184 | 4.4% | 3,207 | 3.9% |
| Community Services | 170 | 0.2 | 174 | 0.2 |
| Subtotal | 3,354 | 4.6% | 3,381 | 4.1% |
| TOTAL | 72,787 | 100.0% | 81,403 | 100.0% |

Source: WTCS Fact Book (2009-10).

By Age and Gender

The average age for all students enrolled by WTCS colleges in 2009-10 was 34.9 years. In addition, of all students enrolled in 2009-10:

- 48.4% were age 25 to 49;
- 33.2% were less than age 25; and
- 18.4% were age 50 and over.

Historically, students in degree or diploma programs tend to be younger on average than the total student body, which includes a significant number of older adults taking vocational or occupational courses in order to maintain or upgrade their job skills. However, the average age of degree and diploma students has been increasing and was 29.4 years in 2009-10, with 46.5% of these students less than 25 years of age.

In 2009-2010, WTCS colleges reported enrolling 188,751 men and 190,253 women, while gender was not reported for less than one percent of enrollees. Of the men enrolled, 40.4% were enrolled in degree or diploma program courses, while 18.7% were enrolled in non-postsecondary courses and 51.0% were in Continuing Education courses. Of the women enrolled, 48.8% were enrolled in degree or diploma program courses, 21.2% in non-postsecondary, and 42.2% in Continuing Education courses.

Because students taking courses in more than one area are counted in each, percentages add to more than 100.0 percent.

Services for Students with Special Needs

WTCS provides specialized services for:

- students with physical or mental disabilities; and
- students who are disadvantaged, including academically or economically disadvantaged individuals, and those with limited English proficiency.

In 2009-10, 15,390 students with disabilities received specialized services. These services were supported with funds from GPR, WTCS districts, the federal Perkins Act, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) within DWD. These services enable students with disabilities to enroll and succeed in technical education programs and courses. Services include specialized guidance and counseling, needs assessment and evaluation, support services, remedial instruction, career development, adaptive equipment, and career placement.

In 2009-10, the WTCS colleges provided services to 122,696 disadvantaged students (unduplicated), of whom 77,574 were academically disadvantaged, 76,290 were economically disadvantaged, and 13,018 had limited English proficiency. Services provided to disadvantaged students – including academically or economically disadvantaged individuals, and those with limited English proficiency – are supported with funds from WTCS general state aid, local funds, targeted state GPR funds, and federal funds provided through Perkins Act and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Services provided include remediation services such as specialized reading and mathematics laboratories, note taking instruction, and staff and peer tutors.

The colleges also served other students defined as having special education and support service needs, including in 2009-10: 4,810 displaced homemakers, 28,608 single parents, 7,354 incarcerated individuals, and 11,772 students enrolled in programs for non-traditional occupations.

Graduate Outcomes

WTCS colleges annually survey the previous year's program graduates. The latest survey results for 2009-10 graduates were available in April 2011. Of the 25,712 graduates, 17,498 (68%) responded to the survey.

Among the respondents:

- 97% were satisfied or very satisfied with their WTCS training.
- 88% of those in the labor force were employed.
- 87% of employed graduates are working in Wisconsin.
- 71% of employed graduates were working in a job related to their WTCS training.

- The median salary for all 2008 WTCS graduates was \$31,200, ranging from a median of \$24,600 for short-term technical diploma graduates to \$35,700 for associate degree graduates.
- The median salary for graduates in 27 programs was between \$40,000 and \$50,000, while the median for graduates in 7 programs – Information Systems Security Specialist, Real Estate, Industrial Mechanical Technician, Technical Studies-Journey Worker, Cardiovascular Technology, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, and Automation Systems Technology – was \$50,000 or more.

Technical college graduates' success is sustained even during difficult economic times. Between 2003 and 2008, the growth in earnings by WTCS graduates averaged 8.2 percent annually, nearly twice the rate of inflation.

Grant Programs

WTCS provides a number of grants to individual technical colleges using funds received from state General Purpose Revenues (GPR), the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

These programs are intended to assist WTCS districts in providing educational and economic development services to individuals and high priority industry sectors. Grants also help promote innovative or successful practices related to priorities identified by the WTCS Board, such as:

- strengthening career and technical education programs through multi-college collaborative efforts to develop measures of technical skill attainment; and
- promoting and supporting high school-to-college transitions for career and technical education students through multi-college collaborative efforts to develop programs of study.

A summary of 2010-11 grant programs and awards is available electronically at: http://systematic.wtcsystem.edu/grants/Summary_of_Grant_Program_10-11_Final.pdf

Programs and Initiatives

Veteran Tuition Remission

Beginning in 2007-08, Wisconsin GI Bill tuition remissions for eligible veterans increased to 100%. In 2010-11, 4,446 veterans or their dependents benefited from \$10.0 million in WTCS tuition remission, with the vast majority of remissions granted to veterans enrolled part-time. The annual cost of the veteran tuition remission program increased significantly during the 2009-11 biennium, due to both the expanded tuition remission and increases in the enrollment of eligible veterans and their qualifying dependents.

WTCS strongly supports the veteran tuition remission program. However, while some state funding is available to reimburse WTCS and UW System institutions for the costs

of veteran remission, state funds cover only a small portion of the annual costs of tuition remissions provided by WTCS colleges. As a result, other students paid higher tuition to ensure that WTCS colleges complied with statutory tuition cost recovery rates. As Wisconsin's technical colleges face ever-more challenging fiscal issues, increasing state funding to support the local costs of veterans' tuition remissions has been, and will likely remain, a WTCS legislative priority.

Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Project

In 2006, WTCS worked in partnership with DWD to create a new statewide effort known as the Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) project. In November 2006, Wisconsin was one of three states that received a \$1.0 million grant award from the Joyce Foundation to fund the RISE project. In April 2009, Wisconsin received another \$500,000 grant award from the Joyce Foundation.

The RISE project supports the development of career pathway programs for low-income families by linking education and job training with employer needs in critical industry sectors. State-level program and policy changes will ensure the expansion of career pathways by combining regional successes with local, state and national expertise. Key RISE components include:

- For workers: higher skills, better job, and more accessible and navigable training and career advancement system;
- For employers: a reliable supply of workers whose skills are geared to industry needs; and
- For workforce training and education programs: more effective engagement with industry and more efficient targeting of resources.

STEM

WTCS has been collaborating with education and industry partners to increase participation in courses and programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The Career Clusters framework – established under the National Career Technical Education Foundation – is a widely used tool that promotes seamless transition from education to careers. Within this framework exist 16 separate Career Clusters, including one that is specifically designated for STEM.

As currently defined, six of the remaining 15 Career Clusters are STEM-related. Combined, WTCS colleges offer about 300 degree and diploma programs, of which approximately one-third are either in the STEM Career Cluster or are in one of six STEM-related Career Clusters:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources;
- Architecture and Construction;
- Health Sciences;
- Information Technology;
- Manufacturing; and
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

As a proportion of all WTCS postsecondary enrollments, enrollments in WTCS programs within the STEM Career Cluster make up only about 3% of total enrollments, whether measuring by headcount or full-time equivalent. However, when enrollments in STEM-related Career Clusters are included, the proportion of total enrollments increases to about 30%.

Next steps include refining the identification of STEM courses and programs within the WTCS, collaborating to expand existing efforts to promote participation in these courses and programs, and increasing the STEM participation of women and people of color. The STEM Equity project is off to a promising start, with WTCS joining a number of partners on a statewide PK-16 and industry team that is leading an effort to identify and remove barriers to STEM participation, including funding a pilot project at Lakeshore Technical College.

Engagement and Partnerships

The WTCS Board and System Office are committed to working with internal and external partners to improve the quality, availability, and cost-effectiveness of WTCS education and training programs.

The WTC System Office and individual colleges participate in a variety of cross-agency projects with the goals of:

- improving college transfer opportunities;
- enhancing college access and affordability; and
- developing career clusters and pathways.

Each of these projects involves external funding, which demonstrates that collaboration can result in new resources that expand Wisconsin higher education opportunities. Partner agencies involved in these projects include the Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development and Public Instruction, the UW System, the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation. Additional information about WTCS initiatives is available on the WTCS website at <http://www.wtcsystem.edu/index.htm>.

2011-13 BIENNIAL BUDGET AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Prior to deliberation and passage of the 2011-13 Biennial Budget Act, the Legislature passed a 2009-11 budget repair bill, 2011 Wisconsin Act 10. This bill significantly reduced collective bargaining rights for public employees and required new pension and health care premium contributions of college and System employees.

2011-13 Biennial Budget

The WTCS Board collaborates with key stakeholders in developing its biennial budget request. Stakeholders represented during development of the 2011-13 request

included the WTCS Board, college presidents, college trustees, faculty bargaining units, the Wisconsin Association for Career and Technical Education, Wisconsin Student Government, and System Office leadership.

The 2011-13 WTCS biennial budget request submitted to the Governor included:

- An annual increase in State General Aid from \$119.3 million to \$127.8 million for employer-focused college initiatives.
- An annual increase in State Categorical Aid of \$7.0 million for targeted assistance to geographic areas with sustained high unemployment and to chronically unemployed or underemployed individuals.
- An annual increase in base funding for Minority Participation and Retention Grants from \$583,300 to \$975,200 for retention and success strategies focused on students of color.

In addition, the WTCS Board requested that the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) seek biennial increases in student financial aid programs that benefit WTCS students, including a \$23.4 million increase in WTCS Wisconsin Higher Education Grants (WHEG), and a \$253,900 increase in Minority Undergraduate Retention Grants (MURG). HEAB also requested a statutory change to link WTCS WHEG funding to tuition increases.

The 2011-13 Biennial Budget approved by the Wisconsin Legislature and signed by the Governor did not include any of the items requested by WTCS, or by HEAB on behalf of WTCS. Instead, the 2011-13 Biennial Budget Act:

- reduced base funding for General State Aid by \$35.8 million (30%);
- imposed new limits on colleges' ability to levy property taxes;
- repealed a requirement that eligible veterans and dependents use the federal GI Bill prior to accessing the Wisconsin GI Bill;
- repealed a provision that allowed certain undocumented persons to pay resident tuition rates at WTCS colleges;
- reduced the System Office budget by \$1.7 million annually;
- provided new flexibility for funding college residence halls; and
- capped eligibility for, and established a sunset, for the Wisconsin Covenant program.

WTCS Strategic Directions

In September 2008, the WTCS Board adopted the following strategic directions and action steps for 2009-11:

Promote pathways to address Wisconsin's need for a qualified workforce.

Action Steps:

- Expand flexible education and training options that:
 - meet the demands of business, industry, and labor in existing and emerging industries and occupations; and
 - adapt to changing economic conditions by supporting business expansion or responding to the needs of dislocated workers.

- Enhance the transferability of occupational credits and credentials that support career advancement.
- Encourage transitions from basic education into occupational programs and alignment of education and training options with industry sectors and K-12 career clusters to address skill shortages and support high-skill, high-wage jobs.
- Simplify access to workforce education and training for small- and medium-sized businesses.

Support academic success for all students.

Action Steps:

- Implement instructional and student support strategies that support the Prepared Learner Initiative, including innovative outreach practices targeting middle and high school students and private sector partners.
- Encourage participation in programs and courses related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
- Promote student access by maintaining technical college affordability and increasing public awareness of financial resources available to support WTCS education and training.
- Close the achievement gap between WTCS minority and non-minority students.

Promote effectiveness and efficiency measures that help maintain affordability.

Action Steps:

- Support the innovative and strategic use of information and technology to support instruction and improve college operations.
- Increase data quality and accessibility for use in organizational and programmatic decision-making.
- Strengthen data security to ensure the protection of academic, personal, and medical information of students and staff and minimize potential costs of security breaches.
- Support “green” facilities construction and management practices that enhance sustainability.

Foster systemwide and regional collaboration.

Action Steps:

- Encourage the development of public-private partnerships to deliver shared workforce education and training that benefit industry sectors in multiple WTCS districts.
- Create systemwide promotional materials that reinforce the vital role WTCS plays in economic and career development.

- Promote state, federal, and private funding opportunities that improve affordability for students and accountability to taxpayers.
- Implement and promote mechanisms for sharing best practices in learning, administration, and operations.

In September 2011, the WTCS Board received an implementation report on these directions. The report is available electronically on the WTCS website at: http://www.wtcsystem.edu/board/pdf/strategic_directions09_11_final.pdf The Board is currently developing a new set of Strategic Directions for the 2012-15 period.

The Wisconsin Technical College System Board is in full compliance with state and federal equal opportunity non-discrimination laws and regulations including Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Equal Pay Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Wisconsin Fair Employment Law, Wisconsin Civil Service Law and Executive Orders, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Workforce Investment Act, the Office of Civil Rights Guidelines for the Elimination of Discrimination in Vocational Education, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and/or other applicable state or federal legislation. It is the policy of the WTCSB not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, arrest record, conviction record, political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, and membership in the National Guard, state defense force or any other reserve component of the military forces of the United States, or this state. Inquiries regarding equal opportunity may be directed to the Wisconsin Technical College System, 4622 University Avenue, P.O. Box 7874, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7874, telephone (608) 266-1766 or Telephone Typewriter (TTY) (608) 267-2483.
