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NEXT LEVEL

POSTSECONDARY CTE LEADERS

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HOW TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

& OTHER STORIES FROM THE NEXTLEVEL POSTSECONDARY LEADERSHIP FELLOWS



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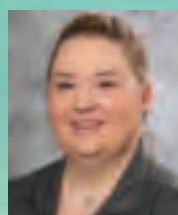
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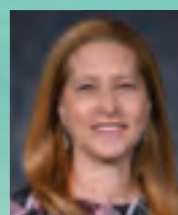
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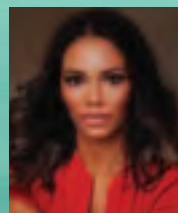
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WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOUR STUDENTS FACE IN PURSUIT OF POSTSECONDARY CTE? AND HOW CAN EDUCATORS ADDRESS THOSE CHALLENGES?

“Flexibility and educational support are the two biggest challenges students face in pursuit of postsecondary CTE. Flexibility is a challenge when students face life circumstances that can make attending classes during specific times difficult. The challenges associated with caring for older parents or young children make attending school difficult when having to work around doctor’s appointments, availability of child care, and working to support their families. Finding ways to provide more flexible access to CTE will not remove those barriers but will allow students the ability to work around them. School attendance policies that track hours attended vs. days attended can allow students to work ahead or catch up when they must miss class to attend to work or family issues. Providing access to full-time evening or online/hybrid CTE offerings can also provide additional flexibility to assist students with families.” **–Dustin Hicks, Meridian Technology Center**

“Students face many challenges in the pursuit of postsecondary CTE. One of these challenges is life outside of school: family issues, financial struggles, balancing work with school, and personal health issues. I believe educators can help with these issues by being aware of resources their institution may have to help students. And be willing to have conversations about these non-academic barriers.

“Employability skills are another challenge. And for this, an educator’s most helpful tool is patience. Students need to be taught what the expectations are and why those expectations are important, and then the expectations have to be reinforced.” **–Erica Perrine, Temple College**

“One of the biggest challenges facing postsecondary CTE students is the school-life balance. Developing creative strategies for support systems to help maintain a healthy school-life balance is important for institutions to consider when striving to increase student recruitment, retention and overall student success. Institutions can address these challenges with supports that include creating on-campus support centers that provide academic and emotional support, basic needs items such as food, and connection to other community resources like health care, housing, or utility and financial assistance. Supports could also include addressing the rapid technological advancements of the last decade and the needs this creates for some students.” **–Taija R. Jackson, Uintah Basin Technical College**

“The adult students within the Ukiah Valley are challenged by a lack of training programs and a limited number of employers. As educators, we can and should pursue more funding to expand our programs and make stronger connections with local employers. Additionally, our students struggle with the financial burdens that are related to pursuing education. Without the ability to work a full-time job while attending training programs, students may struggle to make ends meet. Identifying grants, scholarships and community donations can help to ease students’ financial stress.” **–Eric Crawford, Ukiah Adult School**

“There is a lack of awareness in traditional higher education about the quality of learning that occurs in technical education. And this limits the ability of students to receive credit used toward degrees. Without clear educational pathways, many technical education students choose not to continue their formal education beyond the certificate.

“My university is addressing this obstacle in several ways. The first is to expand the number of pathways from technical education certificates to degrees. The second is through formal articulation agreements both between academic institutions and interdepartmentally.” **–Kari Lamoreaux, Utah State University**

“In my experience, CTE students often have fewer opportunities to engage in student life activities that further their learning and expand their networks. Educators can address this challenge by connecting with career and technical student organizations and local and national professional associations; developing an alumni network; and creating community within and across programs through cross-disciplinary projects.” –**Ryan Francis, Amarillo College**

“Postsecondary students, especially those relying on work or loans to support their education, are always mindful of whether and how their degrees and even individual courses will contribute to successful careers. Educators should respect this return-on-investment perspective in every class we teach and perhaps in every assignment.” –**Jim Egenrieder, Virginia Tech**

“There is a strong push in northern Virginia for students to attend four-year colleges and universities. Therefore, many students and their families don’t fully understand the opportunities that community colleges and a technical education can afford. Northern Virginia Community College offers a number of programs to prepare students for in-demand careers, such as cybersecurity, data center operations, nursing and business administration.” –**Kathleen McNamee, Northern Virginia Community College**

“Our adult students come to us with jobs, family, and other obligations that they must figure out how to balance with becoming a student. As educators, we must offer more flexible scheduling options, competency-based education, and credit for prior learning to meet the needs of our diverse adult learners. Our adult learners come to us with a breadth of knowledge and experience that should be acknowledged. Flexible scheduling that includes online and hybrid options are necessary. This can present challenges to educators — especially CTE educators who often teach hands-on, skills-based courses — but these challenges in turn present opportunities to explore competency-based education and credit for prior learning.” –**Pam Gibson, Fayetteville Technical Community College**

“Today, students are sorting through mixed messages about what kind of education they need after high school, or if they need any postsecondary education at all. Employers and students are changing their expectations, and what they want from their degrees has changed. Increasingly, it’s skills over degrees. So, colleges are starting to embed micro-credentials, digital portfolios and integrated immersion, or internship experiences.” –**Speranta Klees, West-MEC**

“Over the last three years, the career and technical educator preparation department at SUNY Oswego has seen a remarkable surge in enrollment rates. Industry professionals are motivated and excited to pass on their knowledge, skills, and guidance. This quick shift in enrollment identified an instructional gap as the department needed more staffing to handle student needs.

“To solve this problem, the department presented its data, identified department needs, and advocated for increased staffing. As a result, the department hired two new faculty. We are pleased that the numbers keep growing, and we are better prepared to impact student and industry needs.” –**Cynthia Thomas, SUNY Oswego**

“Navigating postsecondary institutions and networking with their classmates and teachers tend to be challenges for our students. Educators at the secondary level can help their students understand postsecondary institutions by reviewing and explaining the organizational chart of the system and/or taking them to visit the campus offices to meet program faculty and staff. A scavenger hunt competition locating information on the institution’s website and resources on campus to solve problems can be a fun and motivating activity. Once students are taking classes on campus, postsecondary educators should take some class time to help students connect with their classmates.” –**Carol Erwin, Wayne State College**

“Financial uncertainty is a substantive barrier. The big investment is a troubling dilemma for many students: How do I strike the balance of bettering myself today so that my family and I can have a better tomorrow? Leveraging community resources to assist CTE is more important than ever. Educators can create solutions by challenging themselves to better understand their community. Strategically building referral services and prioritizing relationships with local partners will ensure that wrap-around services function well.” –**Colleen Maynard, Manatee Technical College**

WE ASKED THE FELLOWS HOW TO...

I really enjoy swimming, especially during the summer. Swimming relaxes me and is an excellent form of exercise. Consider the following guidance for new swimmers.

1. Start with a depth that is comfortable for you, then work your way up.
2. Become comfortable with water movements (e.g., kicking and arm strokes). These are foundational for swimming, fun, and drowning prevention.
3. Trust the water, and don't be afraid. You will be fine if you don't panic.
4. Have fun!

–Cynthia Thomas

I'm an avid kayaker and have been doing it most of my life. First, decide if you want to paddle on flatwater, whitewater, or in the ocean. Then select the appropriate boat and paddle for the type of water. I enjoy paddling on all types of water but spend most of my time on the flatwater portion of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Once you've got your boat and paddle and have researched the water conditions, grab a friend and head out on your adventure!

–Kathleen McNamee

Showing gratitude to colleagues is a wonderful way to foster positive relationships. Here is a quick how-to guide:

1. Write a thank-you note or email.
2. Be genuine and sincere.
3. Be specific.
4. Choose the right time and place.
5. Share credit and recognition.
6. Celebrate milestones and achievements.

–Taija R. Jackson

I am an avid gardener. In particular, I enjoy growing and caring for fruit trees. The two practices that I have found to be most helpful are mulching and foliar feeding. By mulching, the soil is kept cool, soil moisture is retained, soil organic matter is increased, microbial life explodes, carbon is sequestered, and water infiltration is increased. Foliar feeding ensures that the trees have all of the nutrients necessary to produce new growth and high-quality, nutrient-dense fruit.

–Eric Crawford

To take your carrot cake recipe from great to superb, follow these tips:

- Soak raisins for several hours or overnight in Grand Marnier. You may also consider adding a half-cup of Grand Marnier to the recipe, when adding raisins.
- Toast chopped walnuts and coconut, separately, in a dry skillet for maximum flavor.
- Add the juice of half a lemon to your cream cheese frosting.
- Freeze the cake for 45 minutes before frosting.

–Speranta Klees

Career development is a key component of CTE and often involves coordinating events such as career fairs, open houses, and CTSO competitions. Event coordination can be stressful without a clear plan. Here are some important steps:

1. Identify your target audience.
2. Organize your team.
3. Establish your budget and resources.
4. Plan the schedule and flow of the event.
5. Communicate!

–Pam Gibson

I am relatively adept at developing projects. First, goals and objectives must be defined. Then conduct a needs analysis to identify gaps and requirements. Key performance indicators are set, and a timeline is created. Continuous monitoring and evaluation help make necessary adjustments and improvements.

Effective communication, collaboration and professional development are vital throughout the process. Scalability and sustainability considerations are essential for long-term success. Lastly, celebrating achievements and recognizing positive impact ensure motivation and engagement.

–Ryan Francis

Final thoughts

“Experience the power of technical education!”
–**Taija R. Jackson**

“To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.” –**Carol Erwin (and Dr. Seuss)**

“Thank you NextLevel Postsecondary CTE Leadership Program, ACTE, *Techniques* (Hi, Lia!), staff, my mentor Dr. Christy Ponce, and ECMC Foundation. I am learning so much this year, thanks to all of you.” –**Speranta Klees**

“I’ve really gotten a lot out of this fellowship!”
–**Kathleen McNamee**

“Thank you for the opportunity to share.” –**Ryan Francis**

“Education has been a very rewarding career. I am thankful for the connections that I have made through this profession and the opportunities that have resulted.” –**Eric Crawford**

“A newly formed postsecondary committee within the Work-based Learning Division is welcoming new members. Join us to explore and address challenges related to WBL in postsecondary CTE.” –**Jim Egenrieder**

“As I engage with fellow teachers and administrators, I come to realize that many of us encounter similar challenges. It is reassuring to know that I am not alone in these experiences, and I greatly appreciate the chance to collaborate.”
–**Kari Lamoreaux**



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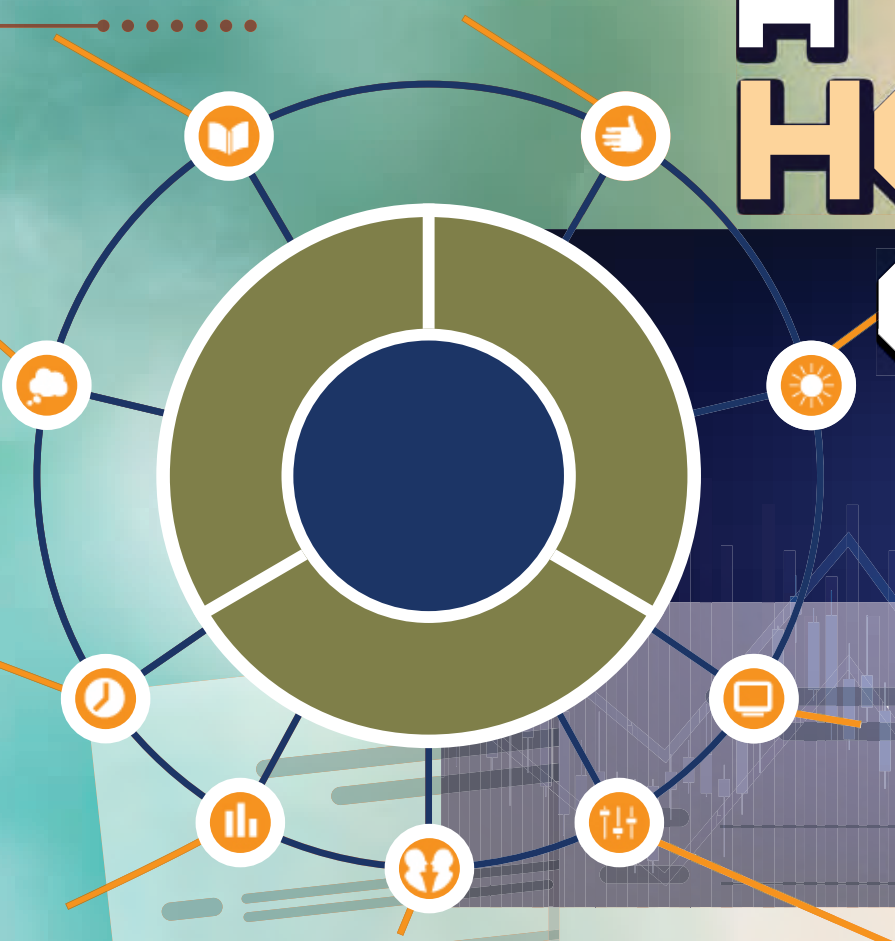
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A HOW-TO GUIDE



- Integrating employability skills development
- How to support our students
- Through the lens of CTE
- Create a better test
- A path to funding in Kentucky



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