

Pearson's Learning Solutions Meet Community Colleges' Needs in Today's Economic Times
New Survey of Community College Leaders Finds Rising Enrollments, Declining Budgets

NEW YORK, March 18, 2009—The shaky economy is putting increased pressure on the nation's community colleges, long a pillar of communities across the US, as recent high school grads and transfer students who can't afford tuition at public or private universities, and unemployed workers seeking training for new jobs, look to their local community colleges for help.

These economic realities call for increased investments in education—exactly the strategy that Pearson, the global leader in education publishing, technology and services, continues to pursue in its mission to improve lives around the world through education.

And now, a new, national survey of the nation's community college leaders underscores that rising enrollments and declining budgets are straining the system. The survey was conducted by the League for Innovation in the Community Colleges and The Campus Computing Project, in partnership with Pearson. More than 100 community college presidents and district chancellors participated in the survey, conducted in February and March 2009.

“The survey's findings underscore that in today's economy, accelerated investment in new learning solutions is absolutely critical to meet the demand for college readiness and retention, as well as workforce training and development,” said Jim Behnke, Chief Learning Officer at Pearson. “Our educational content, products and services, including Pearson eCollege, an integrated online learning environment, and our MyLabs online learning programs, are offered as integrated solutions to help community colleges address the challenges they're facing right now.”

The survey results are available from the League for Innovation (www.league.org) and The Campus Computing Project (www.campuscomputing.net).

In the survey, community college leaders report an increase in enrollments for full-time, part-time and reverse transfer students, along with gains in the number of students enrolling in workforce development programs, including occupational/vocational education, remedial/developmental and health care courses and degree programs.

But despite these enrollment gains, more than 57% of community college leaders said their budgets had been cut from the previous academic year, and they had also experienced mid-year budget cuts. However, more than two-thirds, or 66.3 percent, of respondents said they believed that President Obama's stimulus plan passed by Congress last month will benefit their institutions and communities.

“The dramatic enrollment gains over the past 12 months confirm that the nation's community colleges are at the forefront of both individual efforts and community responses to the economic downturn,” said Geraldo E. de Los Santos, president and CEO of the League for Innovation in the Community Colleges. “The survey also confirms that the community colleges are on the receiving end of the ‘do more with less and do it better’ mantra often heard during periods of economic upheaval.”

Pearson's proven educational solutions offer community colleges ways to cost effectively increase capacity to meet these demands in innovative ways. For example, Pearson recently partnered with the Louisiana Community & Technical College System (LCTCS) to create the nation's first completely customized, online learning program that provides access to course materials via the AT&T Blackberry

Curve. The partnership, working with LCTCS faculty, brings together Pearson content with CourseConnect, the company's suite of state-of-the-art, online courses, for a tailor-made solution that meets the needs of students and faculty. Pearson eCollege manages the actual day-to-day technical aspects of the program, freeing LCTCS faculty to focus solely on educating their students.

Another survey finding shows that online course enrollments continue to grow: More than 92 percent of respondents reported increases in the number of online courses offered by their institution in the past year. "Online courses typically provide students with on-demand convenience—anytime, anywhere learning—and often save students time and money because they are not commuting to campus," said Kenneth C. Green, founding director of The Campus Computing Project, the organization that designed and managed the survey.

About Pearson -- Pearson (NYSE:PSO), the global leader in education and education technology, reaches and engages today's digital natives with effective and personalized learning, as well as dedicated professional development for their teachers. This commitment is demonstrated in the company's investment in innovative print and digital education materials for preK through college, student information systems and learning management systems, teacher professional development, career certification programs, and testing and assessment products that set the standard for the industry. The company's respected brands include eCollege, Prentice Hall, Addison Wesley, Benjamin Cummings, MyLabs, and many others. Pearson's comprehensive offerings help inform targeted instruction and intervention so that success is within reach of every student at every level of education. Pearson's commitment to education for all is supported by the global philanthropic initiatives of the Pearson Foundation. Pearson's other primary businesses include the Financial Times Group and the Penguin Group. For more information, go to www.pearson.com.

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About The League for Innovation

The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international organization dedicated to catalyzing the community college movement. The League hosts conferences and institutes, develops web resources, conducts research, produces publications, provides services, and leads projects and initiatives with more than 900 member colleges, 160 corporate partners, and a host of other government and nonprofit agencies in a continuing effort to make a positive difference for students and communities. Information about the League and its activities is available at www.league.org.

About The Campus Computing Project

Begun in 1990, The Campus Computing Project (campuscomputing.net) is the largest continuing study of the role of computing, eLearning, and information technology in American higher education. The project is widely cited by campus officials and IT industry executives as a definitive source for data, information and insight about key IT planning and policy issues affecting US colleges and universities.

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