

## Stockton study recommends making college more affordable

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Stockton's Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance Project issued a report Wednesday, Jan. 14 recommending changes to make college more affordable and easier to complete, and to give students the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

It proposed broadening partnerships with high schools to teach subjects and skills needed to succeed in college and the workforce, and grant college-level credit for those courses. Colleges would partner with community colleges on credit transfer, to shorten time needed to complete a degree, and to reduce college cost.

It would expand partnerships with businesses to help build programs that combine workforce and academic skills while creating internships.

The report suggests reducing the number of degree credits required for graduation by giving credit for evidence of knowledge gained outside school.

It would provide a clearly articulated set of abilities across disciplines that college graduates are expected to master, such as effective writing, speaking, and decision making, and workplace skills such as teamwork, punctuality and tolerance of diversity.

The report writers would restructure student financial aid for different types of students, programs and institutions to increase affordability, and reduce debt, and prioritize support for success programs for low-income, first-generation and adult students.

"HESIG's work to promote college access, affordability and quality is critically important to the future of higher education," Stockton President Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. said. "Stockton is pleased to work with our state and national partners to enable more students to further their educations, and to reap the value of a college degree throughout their lives."

The report offers policy recommendations and a tool kit of best practices for New Jersey colleges and state policy makers to help narrow the achievement gap for college-bound students, and to add value to the college outcomes.

A 2014 initiative engaged citizens and executives on the role of higher education in helping to secure the long-term prosperity of the state.

The HESIG project accomplished this by: convening two executive roundtable forums of state leaders from business, education, government, the media, and conducting a statewide survey of citizens to test the support for needed educational change to increase college value.

The roundtables were held at Stockton College and New Jersey City University.

Harvey Kesselman, Stockton provost and executive vice president of the college, said that these skills are a high priority for Stockton students, as part of faculty-developed Top 10 learning outcomes.

Stockton currently offers dual enrollment programs at 17 high schools, allowing students to take college courses, earning credits at reduced rates. The college also has an extensive internship program. In addition to increasing scholarships and other aid, Stockton is the only New Jersey state public school with a Grant In Aid program, which in fall 2014 offered 1,000 students scholarships totaling \$3 million.

For information see [www.stockton.edu/hughescenter/hesig](http://www.stockton.edu/hughescenter/hesig).