The Education Pipeline

July 2015

As we begin a new fiscal year and prepare for the start of the next academic one, I want to take a few minutes to tell you about an important community-wide education initiative, the Carrollton/Carroll County Education Collaborative (CCEC). Over the last several months, representatives from UWG, West Georgia Technical College, and both the Carroll County and City of Carrollton school systems have met to discuss how we can come together to help better prepare our community to succeed focusing educational obtainment and post-secondary success.

Our community faces a number of challenges on this front. Many local students, particularly first-generation, do not consider college an option, much less a given. Carroll County is about five percent below the state in terms of high school graduation and just 18 percent of Carroll Countians age 25 and over have a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to the state percentage of 28. Those that do attend are not always well-prepared for college-level work and may have difficulty progressing and graduating. Further, almost 19% of Carroll County lives below the poverty level, making financial access a major barrier to entry and success.

The CCEC, which is based on the University of Texas, El Passo’s groundbreaking El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, is designed to bring together key stakeholders from across all areas of local education. Its goals are to improve student preparedness for, access to, and interest in college and to increase retention, progression and graduation rates at all levels.

The collaborative will also work to retain that well-educated workforce after graduation. After all, a more educated talent pool and strong educational system helps attract business and commerce, provides more qualified workers for local businesses, and creates higher individual earning potential, which stimulates local economy, raises property values, etc.

Currently, the collaborative is focused on two specific areas: dual enrollment and early college literacy/readiness. Subcommittees have begun work in both areas. This month, renowned access expert Dr. Susana Navarro will visit Carrollton to talk with the collaborative and help provide direction and information. Together, we are working to create programs and partnerships that will revolutionize our approach to education in this region.

In today’s shifting landscape, collaboration between educational partners is more important than ever and I’m proud to be represent UWG and be the catalyst in this important initiative. In the coming months, I’ll be sharing more on this important topic and on our progress toward our goals. As you go about your day-to-day duties, please know that UWG and, by extension, our faculty and staff, are part of big things these days – not just on our campus, but in our local community and in the state, as well. I would expect nothing less from an institution poised to become the best comprehensive university in the nation.

Best,

Kyle