

# Wyoming Community College Commission Strategic Plan

**Name of Agency:** Wyoming Community College Commission

**Plan Period:** FY2009-2010 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010)

## Wyoming Quality of Life:

Two Wyoming Quality of Life results are the foundation for the Commission's strategic plan and biennial budget request:

- Students successfully educated and prepared for life's opportunities, and
- A diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equity.

The Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) collaborates with Wyoming's seven community colleges to provide educational experiences that strengthen, support and enrich communities and prepare students to successfully meet life's challenges and recognize and profit from opportunities.

Wyoming's seven community colleges provide affordable, accessible and lifelong education. The Wyoming Community College Commission supports the colleges through advocacy, coordination and collaboration. In partnership with the colleges, the Commission is committed to improving quality of life through learning.

## Basic Facts:

The WCCC is located in Cheyenne and employed 12 full time staff members to support the community colleges in FY 07. The seven community colleges, along with their 38 combined outreach centers, employed 2,825 individuals and have a presence in every Wyoming county.

**Funding:** The total 2009/2010 agency budget request is \$272,912,337. \$266,200,490 is General Fund, \$2,711,847 is Federal Funds, and \$4,000,000 is Other Funds. The total 2009/2010 prioritized Capital Construction request is \$106,258,162 of which \$63,006,743 is General Fund and \$43,251,419 is other public and private funding. We are also requesting building authority for projects totaling \$91,798,298. These projects will be funded with other public and private sources.

The most important postsecondary educational opportunities provided to Wyoming citizens by the community colleges are:

1. Academic transfer programs,
2. Career and occupational programs,
3. Workforce development,
4. Developmental and basic skills instruction,
5. Public and community services programming, and
6. Student support services.

In the next biennium, it is estimated that the community colleges will serve 40-45,000 citizens.

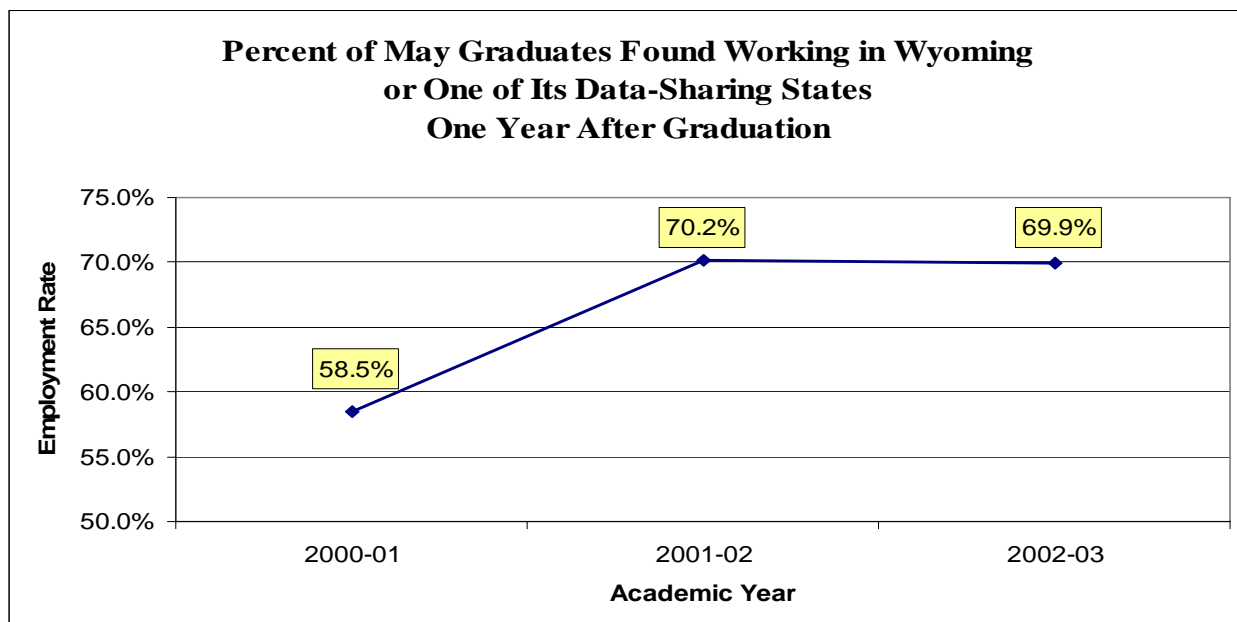
## Performance:

The community colleges responded to the need for a trained and skilled workforce by providing affordable, accessible educational and training opportunities to all Wyoming residents. For example, in addressing Wyoming's need for nurses and elementary and secondary teachers, the colleges continued to expand services to train more professionals in these areas. In collaboration with the K-12 and UW systems, the colleges prepared students for success in postsecondary education, with diverse program offerings, quality faculty and an increasing number of courses and degrees offered online.

Embracing the diversity within the state and their own communities, the colleges served students with a wide range of educational needs and goals. In 2006-07 nearly two-thirds of community college students in Wyoming attended part-time, with a majority enrolling for eight credit hours or less. There really is no "typical" community college student. A person needing Adult Basic Education (ABE) or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, a recent high school graduate preparing to transfer to a university, an incumbent worker seeking to upgrade or develop new workforce skills, or a retired person seeking to enrich understanding in a new subject—all fit the description of a community college student.

Those who enrolled in a community college did so for a variety of reasons. Some students have several goals. Wyoming's seven community colleges successfully served more than 23,000 students during the 2006-07 academic year. While the most common goals are to earn an associate's degree or transfer to another institution, other important goals of Wyoming's college students included earning a certificate, upgrading current or developing new job skills, and personal enrichment.

### Performance #1: Workforce Preparation Job Placement Rate



Data-sharing states: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, S. Dakota, Utah, Alaska, New Mexico, Texas

Source: "Wyoming Community College Graduates' Labor Market Outcomes 2005: An Administrative Records Approach," Wyoming Department of Employment, April 2006, page 15.

**Story behind the performance:**

Becoming employed after graduation is an important goal and achievement. One year after graduation, 70% of the 2002-03 graduates from the seven community colleges were employed in Wyoming or one of the nine states with which Wyoming has data sharing agreements. Graduates from academic year 2002-03 were surveyed in late 2005 and reported in 2006. This is the latest performance information available.

**Current Credit and Non-Credit Training in Support of High-Demand, High-Growth Industries**

<b>Wyoming Community College Credit Programs and Non-Credit Training In Support of the Top Five High-Demand Industries in Wyoming*</b>		
	<b>Number of Credit Degrees and Certificates Offered by Wyoming Community Colleges</b>	<b>2005-06 Headcount of Non-Credit Enrollments in Customized Training Offered by Wyoming Community Colleges</b>
<b>Construction</b>	70	29
<b>Accommodations &amp; Food Services</b>	49	0
<b>Retail Trade</b>	2	67
<b>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</b>	210	1,525
<b>Manufacturing</b>	100	171

\* Based on posted vacancies in DWS Workforce Centers for the top five industries (1 July 06 – 30 Jun 07).  
Sources: Wyoming Community College Commission, Wyoming Community Colleges, Workforce Development Activities Report 2005-2006

<b>Wyoming Community College Credit Programs and Non-Credit Training In Support of the Top Five High-Growth Industries in Wyoming</b>				
	<b>Rate of Change and Employment Change*</b>		<b>Number of Credit Degrees and Certificates Offered by Wyoming Community Colleges</b>	<b>2005-06 Headcount of Non-credit Enrollments in Customized Training Offered by Wyoming Community Colleges</b>
<b>Mining</b>	4.5%	11,219	107	834
<b>Construction</b>	3.8%	8,727	70	29
<b>Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Utilities</b>	3.2%	6,399	107	289
<b>Professional &amp; Business Services</b>	3.0%	5,432	102	646
<b>Financial Activities</b>	2.5%	2,911	63	205

\* Reflects number of additional jobs and average annual compound rate of change (2004-2014)  
Sources: Wyoming Department of Employment (Wyoming Statewide Long Term Employment Projections, Industry Roll-Ups, 2004-2014); Wyoming Community College Commission; Wyoming Community Colleges, Workforce Development Activities Report 2005-2006

**Story behind the performance:**

A workforce appropriately trained for Wyoming’s high-demand, high-growth industries positively impacts the economic health of the state. Wyoming’s community colleges played a role in providing short- and long-term training, both credit and non-credit, in those critical industries.

**New Degree or Certificate Programs In Support of High-Demand Industries in Wyoming**

Each college strives to respond to the educational needs in its service area as well as the state. The training needs will vary somewhat among the regions. A second indicator of workforce preparation is the number and type of degrees and certificates implemented by the colleges within the last year that support or align with high demand industries.

<p align="center"><b><u>New Degree or Certificate Programs</u></b>  <b><u>In Support of High-Demand Industries in Wyoming</u></b>                      Initiated by Wyoming Community Colleges during the 2006-07 Academic Year</p>		
<b>Industry with High Demand*</b>	<b><u>NEW</u> Degree or Certificate</b>	<b>Community College</b>
<b>Construction</b>		
In addition to existing training in this area , the following have been added:	Construction Technology	Eastern Wyoming College and Northern Wyoming Community College District
	Diesel Technology with CDL	Western Wyoming Community College
	Commercial Drivers License	Northern Wyoming Community College District
<b>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</b>		
In addition to existing training in this area, the following has been added:	Culinary Arts	Central Wyoming College and Northern Wyoming Community College District
<b>Retail Trade</b>		
In addition to existing training in this area, the following have been added:	Help Desk	Northwest College
	Web Design	Eastern Wyoming College
	Computer Information Systems	Eastern Wyoming College
<b>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</b>		
In addition to existing training in this area, the following have been added:	Phlebotomy Technician	Casper College
	Health Sciences	Casper College
	Dental Assistant	Central Wyoming College
	Early Childhood	Eastern Wyoming College
	Allied Health	Northwest College
	Occupational Safety and Health	Northwest College
	Physical Therapy Assistant	Laramie County Community College
	Early Childhood Education	Northern Wyoming Community College District
Medical Transcriptionist	Central Wyoming College	
<b>Manufacturing</b>		
In addition to existing training in this area, the following have been added:	Robotics Technology	Casper College and Northwest College
	Drafting Technology	Northwest College

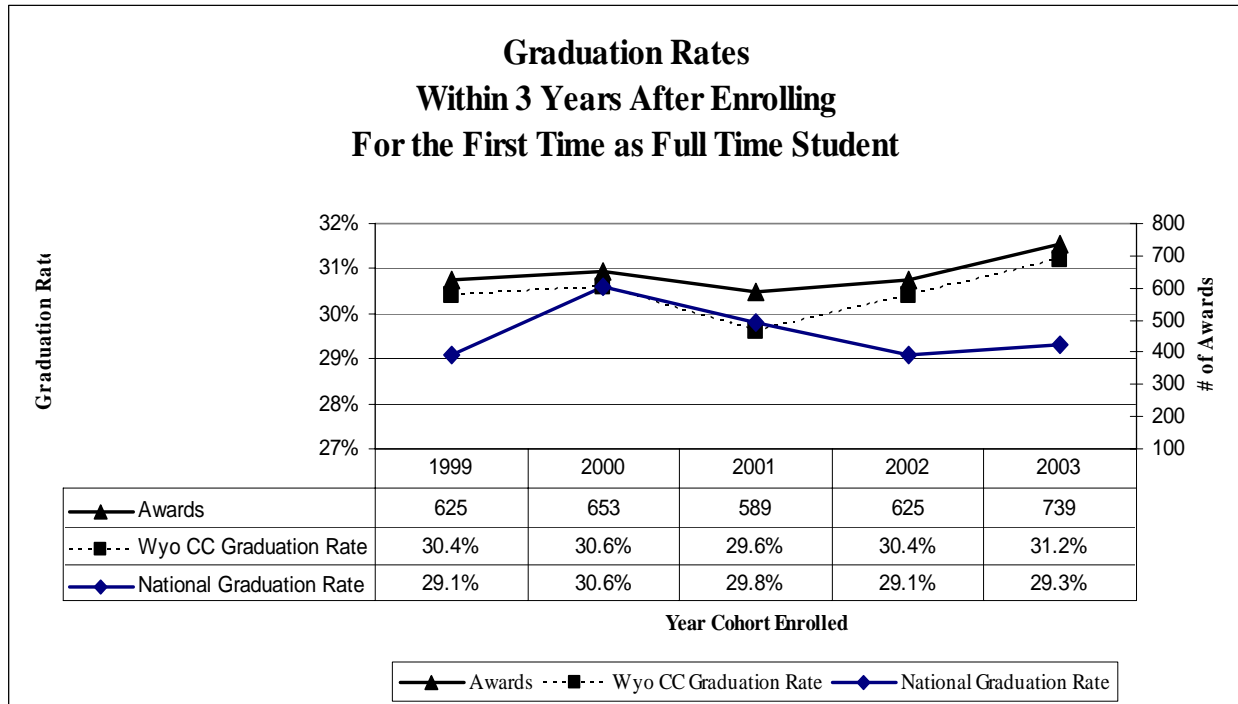
\* Industries identified based on posted vacancies in DWS Workforce Centers (1 Jul 06 to 30 Jun 07).

Sources: Department of Workforce Services, Wyoming Community College Commission

## **What do we propose to do to improve performance in FY2009-2010?**

- Seek funds through an Exception Budget Request to establish a Workforce Development Incentive Fund. The fund would support one-time, competitive incentive grants that would enable interested community colleges to pursue innovative initiatives with the potential to address workforce development needs in Wyoming. In light of these efforts, Performance Measure #1 would be revised. For example, we might focus on employment of students throughout the United States instead of just Wyoming and a few other states.
- Focus on the nursing shortage by continuing to support the Wyoming Investment in Nursing (WYIN) Program for community college and University of Wyoming students who repay their loans by working as registered nurses in Wyoming. An additional focus is the shortage of Licensed Practical Nurses in smaller communities in Wyoming.
- Focus on the teacher shortage by continuing to support the Teacher Shortage Loan Repayment Program for University of Wyoming students majoring in special education, science, mathematics and now foreign language, who repay their loans by working as certified teachers in Wyoming.
- Market the availability of the Overseas Combat Veterans educational benefit, which has the potential of retaining an educated workforce in Wyoming.
- Implement the marketing plan, which will provide information about the community college system and raise the awareness of what the colleges offer for citizens (employees) as well as business and industry (employers).
- Maintain the strong partnerships the Community College Commission has forged with other state agencies (Department of Workforce Services, Wyoming Department of Education, Wyoming Business Council, University of Wyoming) to provide more visibility and advocacy for community colleges and the programs they offer, especially in the areas of workforce training and the implementation of the Hathaway Scholarship Program.
- Monitor the colleges' implementation of the Excellence in Higher Education Endowment, which provides on-going funding to each college for improvements in the areas of faculty development, academic and occupational/technical faculty support, and equipment.
- Continue partnering with the Department of Workforce Services and the Wyoming Department of Education to produce annual updates of the sixteen Career Cluster guides for junior and senior high school students. Expand the availability of academic, career and financial information via enhanced web services.
- Develop, in conjunction with the Department of Workforce Services, a more comprehensive process of identifying both employment of community college graduates and employer satisfaction with our graduates in order to improve educational degrees and certificates at the colleges.
- Develop, in conjunction with the Department of Workforce Services and other key agencies, a process for assessing future workforce needs in Wyoming and the training and education needed to prepare the future workforce.

## Performance #2: Graduation Rate



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis Database System, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>; National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org)

### Story behind the performance:

Students at community colleges enroll for a variety of reasons, the most common of which is to earn an associate's degree. Over the five-year period from 1999 through 2003, cohorts of first-time, full-time students were tracked to determine if they completed their coursework and graduated three years (150%) after they first enrolled. Over this span of time, the number of graduates averages 646. The percentage of these students that graduated from each cohort has held fairly constant around 30%.

One reason Wyoming's performance is low is because Federal guidelines require the colleges to report graduation rates for only full-time students who complete a degree within three years after enrolling for the first time. Since, on average, 60% of the students in Wyoming's colleges are enrolled as part-time students, they are usually not able to complete a degree in three years. Some students (20.1% of the 2003 cohort) transfer to a four-year institution before graduating with an associate's degree. The Commission plans to work with the colleges to develop and implement more realistic measures of academic success, including graduation rates to more fully accommodate the unique profile and goals of community college students.

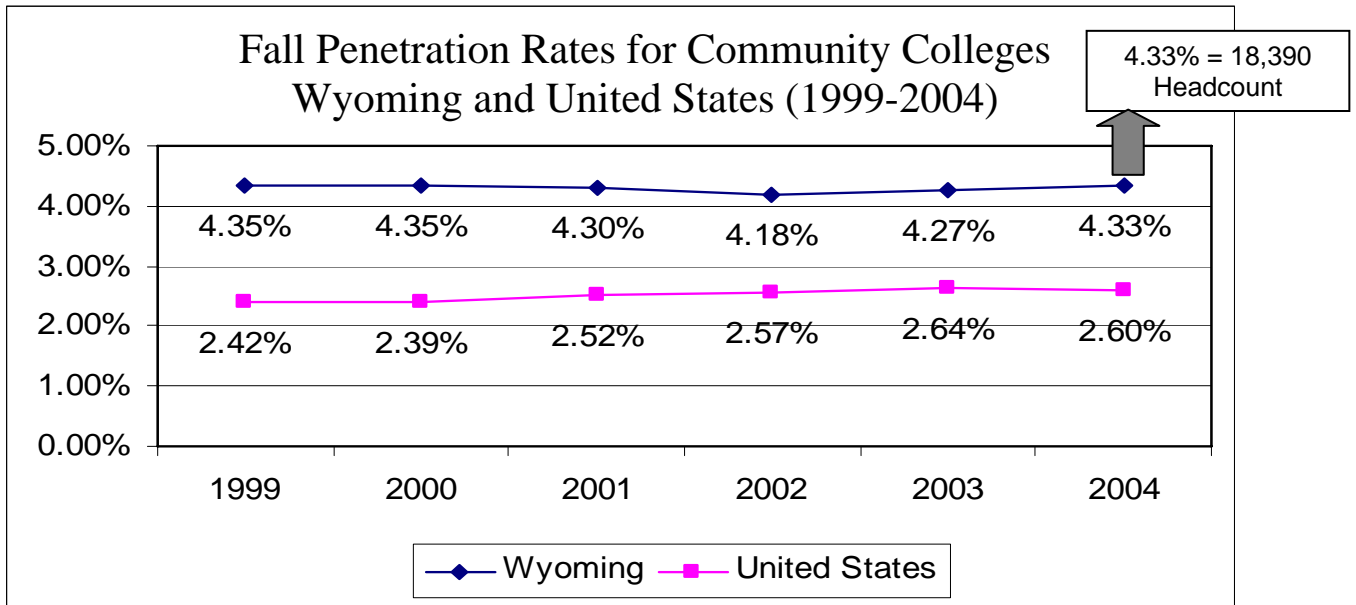
### What do we propose to do to improve performance in FY2009-2010?

- Seek funds through an Exception Budget Request to establish a Workforce Development Incentive Fund. The fund would support one-time, competitive incentive grants that would enable interested community colleges to pursue innovative programs and studies to primarily address workforce development needs in Wyoming. In light of these efforts, Performance Measure #2 would be revised. For example, we might measure more comprehensively the impact of these grant-based initiatives on student goal attainment or completion for the full

range of community college students over five to eight years, not just full-time students after three years.

- Implement the new funding model for the community colleges with accompanying review and use of more robust measures of success.
- Implement the marketing plan with a focus on supporting the Hathaway Scholarship Program as a way to increase the number of students who attend and graduate from Wyoming’s community colleges.
- Support the colleges who have chosen to budget their own funds to continue tutorial support for students for “*Smarthinking*,” an Internet-based service that connects students to trained e-instructors for tutorial assistance at any time.
- Reevaluate each of the 13 statutorily-mandated Core Indicators of Effectiveness so that more discrete information can be provided to each of the colleges to evaluate and improve their instructional and student support programs.
- Develop processes in collaboration with the colleges to effectively use the new Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to improve their instructional programs.

### Performance #3: Credit Outreach (Penetration) Rate



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis Database System, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/> National Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

#### Story behind the performance:

The number of people in Wyoming, who are enrolled in credit classes at a Wyoming community college, is called the outreach or penetration rate. The Wyoming community college system had a credit student penetration rate of 4.33% for the fall 2004 semester, which is the most current information available. This means that 4.33% of the state’s population (18,390), ages 14 and up, was enrolled in credit courses at one of the community colleges across the state.

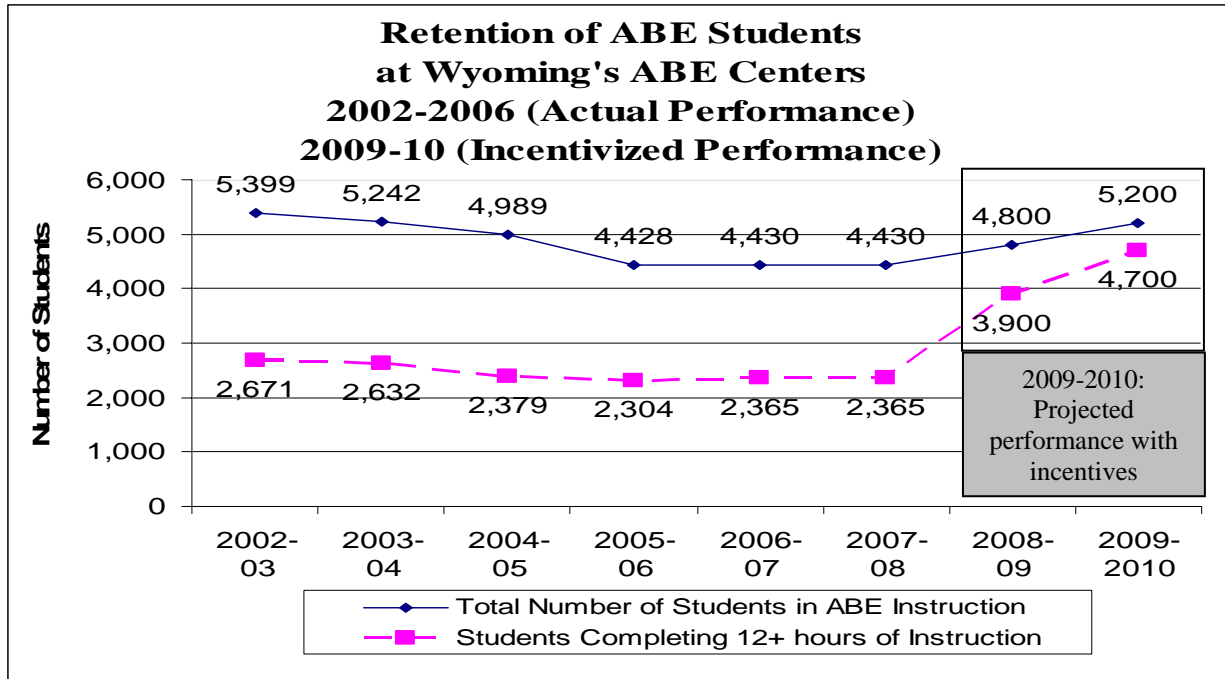
The Wyoming rate has been much higher than the national average for the last 10 years because the seven colleges have responded to the state’s rural character and geographic isolation by taking services to every county in Wyoming through 38 outreach centers.

Beyond the penetration rate for credit courses, the colleges provide comprehensive non-credit workforce training tailored to business and industry needs as well as non-credit Continuing Education and Community Service classes. In addition, several thousand individuals take advantage of the wide variety of cultural and athletic events, public forums and recreational activities as well as numerous non-credit courses offered by the seven colleges each year.

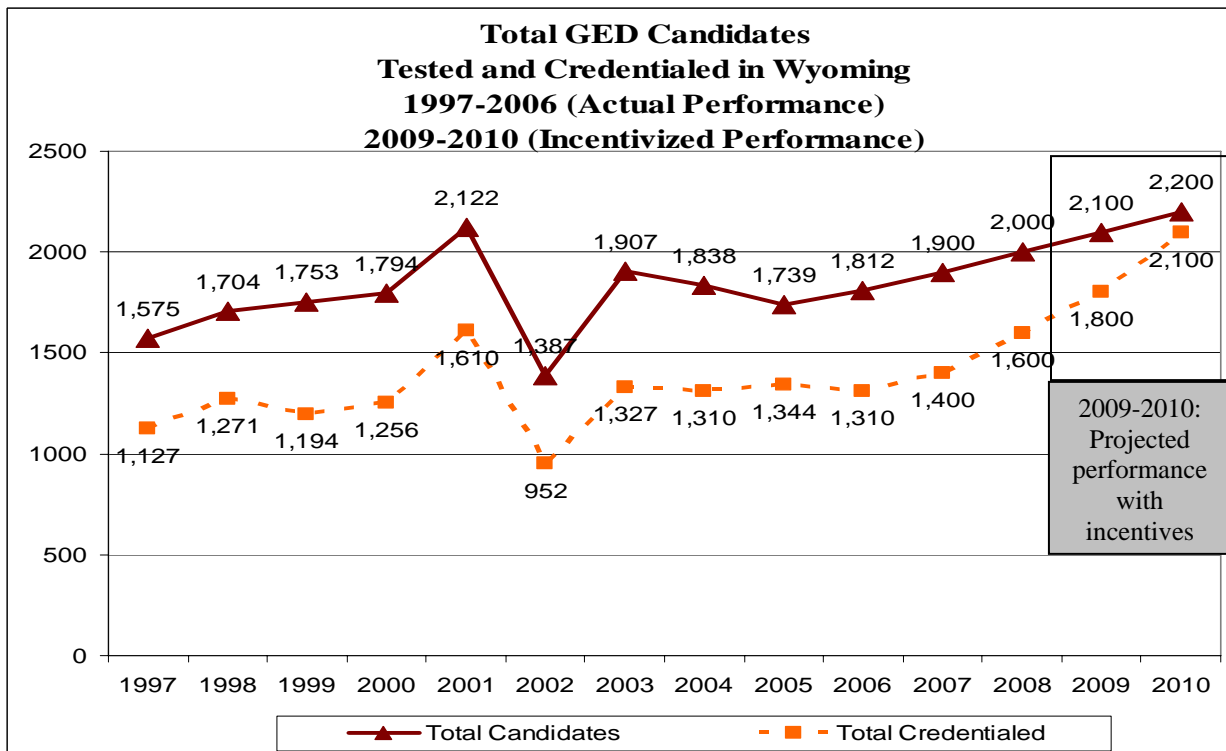
### **What do we propose to do to improve performance in FY2009-2010?**

- Seek funds through an Exception Budget Request to establish a Workforce Development Incentive Fund. The fund would support one-time, competitive incentive grants that would enable interested community colleges to pursue innovative programs and studies to primarily address workforce development needs in Wyoming. In light of these efforts, Performance Measure #3 will be modified. For example, we might include current rates of penetration for Wyoming and contiguous states.
- Implement the new funding model for the community colleges with accompanying review and use of more robust measures of success.
- Implement the marketing plan with an emphasis on providing information about the community college system and raising the awareness of the wide variety of college training and education offerings.
- Maintain the strong partnerships the Community College Commission has forged with other state agencies (Department of Workforce Services, Wyoming Department of Education, Wyoming Business Council, University of Wyoming) to provide more visibility and advocacy for community colleges and the programs they offer, especially in the areas of workforce training and the implementation of the Hathaway Scholarship Program.
- Coordinate with the Wyoming Department of Education and the community colleges to develop Programs of Study (Perkins IV legislation) which will enable high school students to seamlessly continue their education and enter the workforce.
- Support the growth of dual enrollment courses offered by the community colleges through the local high schools.
- Market the construction of the three new college career-technical facilities which will provide additional opportunities for Wyoming's citizens to be trained for the workforce.

## Performance #4: ABE/GED and Remedial Education



Source: Wyoming Community College Commission, ABE/GED Division



Source: Wyoming Community College Commission, ABE/GED Division

## **Story behind the performance:**

### **ABE/GED**

Wyoming's colleges are comprehensive educational institutions, offering Adult Basic Education, GED credentialing, credit and non-credit workforce training, academic and occupational-technical degrees and certificates as well as non-credit community service and continuing education offerings. The GED credential is a pathway to postsecondary education (51%) and/or job-related training (86%) (WCCC, GED report). The economic value of increased education for the individual is well documented. The median annual income in 2005 for a person in Wyoming (25 years and over with earnings) without a high school diploma or a GED was \$18,146 compared to \$23,548 for someone with a high school diploma (or equivalent). For those with an associate's degree, earning power is \$26,972. With a bachelor's degree, the median income is \$35,987 (U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, S1501, 2005).

In 2005, 44,883 Wyoming citizens (13.56% of Wyoming's population, age 16 years and older and not enrolled in an educational program), did not have a high school diploma (GED Testing Service, 2004). For this 13.56% of Wyoming's population, the ten Adult Basic Education (ABE) Centers in Wyoming are committed to preparing these adults with the skills needed for more productive living in our society as well as other goals like earning a GED (General Educational Development) certificate, pursuing postsecondary training and/or employment-related training.

In 2006, 1,310 individuals earned a GED in Wyoming. This number has been relatively stable for the last 10 years. In the same year, 1,812 individuals started their GED testing but never completed. This is a gap of 28% gap.

The retention of ABE students past the benchmark of 12 instructional hours compared to those who complete 1-11 hours of instruction has been relatively stable over the last several years. In 2005-06, 4,428 students completed 1-11 hours of ABE instruction while 2,362 completed 12 or more hours. This is a gap of 47%.

### **Remedial Education**

According to a recent policy report<sup>1</sup> published by ACT®, on the national scale, “roughly 75 percent of students who graduate from high school go on to some form of postsecondary education within two years of their high school graduation. Yet approximately 28 percent of freshmen entering postsecondary institutions enroll in one or more remedial courses in reading, writing, or mathematics.”

For those college students who need help before taking a college-level course, every Wyoming community college offers a series of courses in mathematics, English, reading and study skills. The community colleges jointly track and report cohorts of students that enroll in remedial English and mathematics coursework. The most recent cohort data available track the performance of these students from fall 2003 to fall 2006. Over the course of eight semesters, the data below highlight student success in subsequent mathematics and English coursework. The community colleges reported that 933 students (duplicated headcount) completed their courses with grades of “C” or better within one year, a pass rate of 32.0%.

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<sup>1</sup> “Courses Count : Preparing Students for Postsecondary Success,” July 2005

<b>Remedial Education at Wyoming Community Colleges Fall 2003 Cohort</b>					
Developmental Coursework (Fall 2003)		Subsequent Coursework (Within 1 year - by Fall 2004)	Subsequent Coursework (Within 5 Semesters – by Fall 2005)	Subsequent Coursework (Within 8 Semesters – by Fall 2006)	
<i>Enrolled</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Completed</i>	
4,969	2,917	933	975	1,198	
Pass Rate: 58.7%		Pass Rate*: 32.0%	Pass Rate*: 33.4%	Pass Rate*: 41.1%	

*\*Based on 2,917 students that completed developmental coursework*

### **What do we propose to do to improve performance in FY2009-2010?**

- Redefine the Distance Education Incentive Fund in the standard budget (\$500,000 per biennium) to address statewide needs related to preparing underserved individuals in the areas of Adult Basic Education and GED completion. At present, there is a 28% gap between the number of individuals who begin GED testing and those who earn the credential. One possible goal over the next three years would be to reduce this 28% gap, while at the same time increasing the number of individuals who are working to achieve their GED. Another focus for the redefined Incentive Fund would be to emphasize the retention of students who begin ABE instruction to a point where more are ready to successfully complete GED testing. Pursuing these initiatives would positively impact the individuals' earning capacity and have statewide benefits, especially in the area of workforce needs.
- Develop a performance-based funding model for Adult Basic Education programs, which will provide standard definitions and common measures of success in order to enhance the educational opportunities of Wyoming citizens and the retention and success of those citizen-students.
- Implement the marketing plan with an emphasis on providing information about the opportunities for citizens without a high school education to obtain free preparation for GED testing.
- Support the implementation of the success curriculum for the Hathaway Scholarship Program as a key to reducing the number of high school graduates who need remedial education at a community college.