



2014 TYCA “Fame” Award Winners

The Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) has announced the winner of the Public Image of the Two-Year College “Fame” Award along with “Honorable Mentions”.

FAME:

The 2014 TYCA Fame award went to Brianna Boyington for “4 Types of People Who Benefit from Community Colleges,” an article appearing *US News and World Report: College Compass*, January 29, 2014.

While Brianna Boyington’s insights may be well known to the two-year college community, she is addressing everyone at large—potential learners—rather than addressing the choir (instructors, college staff, administrators, etc.). Her article exemplifies the type of work honored by the Public Image of Two-Year Colleges committee/SIG.

- The article begins by noting, “Community college can help older and younger students transition into a college environment.”
- In general, Boyington asserts that despite challenges, the “open door” policy at community colleges provides students who 1) may not qualify, 2) cannot afford, or 3) may not fit-in to a four-year college an opportunity to “continue their education in a small diverse learning environment.
- The article identifies “four additional types of learners who may also gain from starting or completing their education at a community college.
 1. **Students who aren’t prepared to leave the nest.** (Those who want a higher education but are not ready to leave their current “comfort zone” for any number of socio/economic reasons.)
 2. **Nontraditional students.** (Identified as veterans and adults seeking to alter career paths.) Boyington quotes Tom Snyder, president of Ivy Tech who notes that. “traditional four-year schools—both public and private—are not organized to take care of adults,” while community colleges have flexibility.
 3. **Students who need additional training or certifications** (yet not a four-year degree). Boyington points out that, community colleges are also in a position to connect with businesses in the community and develop certification programs that help current professionals.
 4. **Lifelong learners.** Here Boyington notes that compared to expensive four-year colleges, community colleges are a good place for “people to invest in themselves through specialized classes and learn skills that can eventually make them money.”

In conclusion, Boyington explains that officials say, “that it is important for students to remember that community colleges are institutions that teach college-level work.” Her implication, of course, is that while a diverse group of people can all benefit from beginning or ending their higher education at a community college, students can take pride in their two-year “college level studies.”

HONORABLE MENTION:

“Community Colleges Support Entrepreneurs” by Tom Snyder, President of Ivy Tech College, for an article in the *Huffington Post*, March 18, 2014.

Snyder notes that “Entrepreneurs are vitally important to a regional economy and community colleges are in the vanguard of providing services to support them.” He further explains that community colleges have had a long history of workforce development and that recently they have expanded their efforts to successfully include “entrepreneurial development.”

According to Snyder and his sources (including the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship), community colleges have THREE main “competitive” advantages when working with entrepreneurs:

- “One, community colleges are skilled at experiential learning, which is essential to encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset. Support staff and faculty understand that entrepreneurs learn from experience and tailor coursework to meet this need.”
- Second, community colleges are co-immersed deeply in their entrepreneurial ecosystems. Their faculty members are often entrepreneurs.
- Finally, community colleges are flexible when it comes to creating coursework in direct response to the needs of the local business community.

In short, Tom Snyder’s claims paint two-year colleges in a positive light, and clearly explain that community colleges are not only viable institutions of higher but very responsive to the changing needs of the workforce to a general reading audience.