The CollegeKeys Compact™

2012 Catalog of Effective Practices

Programs and practices that expand options for students from low-income backgrounds
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Overview

Successful Strategies for Serving Low-Income Students

The CollegeKeys Compact™ is a national call to action to school districts, colleges and universities, state education agencies, and nonprofit organizations to identify, share and expand programs and practices that address the needs and challenges of low-income students and help them get ready for, get into and get through college. The College Board is committed to disseminating information about these effective practices and recognizing exemplary programs through the Innovation Awards program.

Effective Practices

To date, more than 625 institutions and organizations have signed on to the Compact, reaffirming their commitment to expanding opportunities for students from low-income backgrounds. This catalog showcases programs that were submitted for consideration in the 2012 Innovation Awards. We hope this catalog will be a useful resource for educators and policymakers alike, and that others are inspired by the excellent work being done around the nation to help students from low-income backgrounds.

CollegeKeys Compact™ Statement of Beliefs

In recognition of the right of every student to prepare for, enroll in and succeed in college, as a member of the College Board’s CollegeKeys Compact, we believe that:

- All students are capable of being prepared for college and that educators, families, communities and policymakers have the responsibility to ensure that all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, graduate from high school ready for college success.
- All qualified students from low-income backgrounds should receive particular consideration in recruitment, admission and financial aid, and that colleges and universities should make every effort to meet the financial needs of this population in ways that make enrollment and full participation in the college experience possible.
- Colleges and universities have a responsibility to provide essential academic support, financial aid, and targeted social and emotional support to ensure that all enrolled students will have every chance to succeed in their chosen academic programs.

To learn more and join the CollegeKeys Compact, visit www.collegeboard.org/collegekeys.
Low-Income Students

The College Board considers the following students to be low-income:

Students enrolled in schools with large numbers of students from low-income backgrounds or enrolled in schools with low college-going or high dropout rates.

–OR–

Students whose families are eligible to receive economic subsidies targeted to low-income families, including students who are:

- Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs.
- Part of a family receiving public assistance.
- Residents of federally subsidized housing.

–OR–

Students who are homeless, in foster care or deemed to be wards of the court.

–OR–

Students who will be first-generation college attendees (neither parent has a college degree) and require some or all of the services needed by the students identified in the first three categories.

The Innovation Awards program was established to:

- **Disseminate** information about effective practices so they can be replicated, adapted and improved.
- **Recognize** exemplary programs that have proven effective in improving success for low-income students.
- **Mobilize** educators, institutional leaders and policymakers to promote policies and practices that expand opportunities for low-income students to get ready for, get into and get through college.

A review committee was established comprising two representatives from each of the College Board’s six regions in K–12 and higher education. Submissions were evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Relevance**: Alignment to the principles and priorities outlined in the Compact
- **Innovation**: New, creative and sustainable strategies for advancing the goals of the Compact
- **Impact**: Demonstration of meaningful progress toward stated goals of the initiative
- **Potential**: Opportunity for replication and adaptation by other educators, institutions and policymakers

In each of the six regions, three exceptional initiatives — one each in the categories of Getting Ready, Getting In and Getting Through — were eligible to receive special recognition for their innovation and demonstrated efficacy in increasing the percentage of low-income students who get ready for, get into or get through college successfully.

Winning submissions received an award of $5,000 to help expand or sustain their program. The awards were presented formally in a ceremony at each of the College Board regional forums in January and February 2012. The College Board applauds these winning programs, whose achievements have been noted throughout the catalog.
2012 Innovation Awards
Effective Practices Review Committee

Antonio Boyle, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, South Carolina State University, S.C.
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Introduction

In 2007, at the urging of the Financial Aid Standards and Services Advisory Committee of the College Scholarship Service Assembly, the Board of Trustees of the College Board convened a Task Force on College Access for Students from Low-Income Backgrounds.

The Task Force forged a collaborative agreement between the College Board and its members that created a commonly accepted definition of “low-income student” and identified ways to remove all identifiable barriers, financial and nonfinancial, to college access for those students meeting the definition. Task Force subcommittee members, with broad experience in administration, counseling, admission, financial aid, student services and enrollment management, explored the issues raised by the Trustee resolution. They identified barriers, research findings and strategies for success to ensure that all students, especially low-income students, get ready for, get into and get through college.

Based on research conducted by the Task Force, the CollegeKeys Compact (CKC) was released in 2007. The Compact is a national call to action to school districts, colleges and universities, state education agencies, and nonprofit organizations to make college success a reality for all students, including those from low-income backgrounds. With a network of more than 625 members, the Compact focuses on finding model solutions that help low-income students get ready for, get into and get through college. Through the Compact, the College Board and its CKC partners affirm their belief that all underserved students have a right to an affordable, accessible and successful college experience.
GETTING READY
Achieve Transition Program
Seminole County Public Schools
Sanford, Fla.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) created the Achieve Transition Program to assist students who struggle academically and who are at-risk for dropping out of high school. Focused on the key transition period between eighth and ninth grades, the program concentrates on providing a target population of high-need, diverse and primarily low-income students with opportunities for educational interventions and supports for accelerated learning. The goals of the program are to increase student achievement and develop successful transitions between grade levels for at-risk students, leading to reduced retention and improved graduation rates.

Students attend a six-week summer program focused on intensive accelerated education in English, algebra and science. The premise of the project is that acceleration, not remediation, is the best approach to catching up students to their peers. Students focus on the first few chapters of each course, develop background vocabulary and complete several of the required readings providing for a preview of each ninth-grade course addressed in the program.

Upon successful completion of the transition program, students enter the ninth grade without restrictions, resulting in opportunities to participate in athletics or extracurricular activities. Through the program’s adult mentor support, students continue to achieve academically, move on to higher grade levels and graduate.

MEASURING SUCCESS Data indicate that the transition program is meeting and exceeding the district’s expectations. Prior to implementation, zero percent of the target student population graduated from high school. During the pilot year of data collection for the high school transition program (2009–2010), services were provided to 493 students who were transitioning from eighth grade to ninth grade. Each of these students demonstrated some element of being at-risk for high school dropout, such as low grade point average, multiple retentions, overage for the grade cohort, or low proficiency on the state standardized assessments in reading and mathematics. Following the summer transition program, all students were successfully promoted to the ninth grade. In 2010–2011, 68 percent of the students who remained in the district were promoted to the 10th grade. Each year, the percentage of students with grade point averages above 2.0 has increased, with 69 percent in 2010–2011. Transition students are continually earning more attempted credits as each student progresses through high school. Of major importance as an outcome of the program is a decrease in the number of students who drop out of school. Within the program’s three cycles, no Achieve student has been recorded as a dropout from the school district.

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Advance College Experience
Community College of Philadelphia

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Advance College Experience is an innovative model providing low-income alternative education students early access to postsecondary programs. Implemented by Community College of Philadelphia (CCP), students from various alternative schools and GED programs enroll in courses at CCP and gain early exposure to the college academic and social experience. The program design is modeled after CCP’s already existing program for academically motivated high school students.

The program is unique in that each student is enrolled in a college-level course as a noncredit student. Students are exposed to the academic rigor of the regular credit-bearing course. Students receive 63 hours of college-level instruction and upon completion of the course with a C or better are converted to credit-bearing status, receive college credit and officially begin their postsecondary journey. Students exhibiting the need for additional academic support do not receive a failing grade, but instead remain as noncredit students, gaining college experience for taking a noncredit course. The program is designed to be a student-friendly, academically nonpunitive introduction to college.

CCP subsidizes the cost for operating this program, which helps to offset the challenge low-income students and their families or secondary schools may face in funding participation in the Advance College Experience.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success is measured by the number of students who complete the program earning a C or better, thus receiving college credit. Additionally, success is measured by the number of students who enroll in college upon attainment of secondary school credentials. Last year, 22 students took Advance College Experience. Seventeen students completed the program with a grade of C or higher, earning college credit. Student experience surveys have also gathered critical data about student experiences as they relate to readiness for college-level work, exposure to college life and increased interest in enrolling in college upon completion of secondary school.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a rigorous college-preparatory program geared toward students who traditionally fall in the “academic middle” and who are underrepresented at the postsecondary level. Students willing to accept the challenge are accelerated into Honors and AP® courses while simultaneously receiving support pertaining to what AVID deems the “hidden curriculum.” The AVID course emphasizes Cornell note-taking, study strategies, time-management, 21st-century skills and college awareness that will facilitate academic success in a postsecondary institution. In addition to the dedication to academic excellence, the program encourages students to become active members within their schools and local communities in order to prepare them for leadership roles within the university community. Students gain admission into the program through a rigorous recommendation and screening process to ensure that only those individuals truly dedicated to their personal growth and success take part. Plymouth Whitemarsh High School is the first district in the state of Pennsylvania to implement the program and has already gained national recognition.

MEASURING SUCCESS All 2010 graduating AVID seniors (17 students), none of whom had been in honors or AP courses, were all enrolled in honors and AP classes by the time of their graduation. One hundred percent of this graduating class was accepted into college and earned $648,000 in scholarship awards. The 2011 graduating class (18 students) mirrored the previous class in honors and AP enrollment and in college acceptances. The 2011 class earned $1.4 million in scholarships. Many of these students were minorities, economically disadvantaged and first-generation college attendees.

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BCCHS AP® & Early College Program
Baruch College Campus High School
New York, N.Y.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION At Baruch College Campus High School (BCCHS), all students are enrolled in a college-preparatory program, which is taught at the honors level. Students prepare for college by completing four years of science and math, extended science lab hours, and four additional English writing credits. All students work closely with the college office staff of a full-time guidance counselor and a part-time teacher. Students progress through all four years of their high school education with an advisery group that supports them both academically and emotionally.

In ninth grade, students are paired with senior mentors who support them in transitioning to high school. In 11th grade, students begin a curriculum called “Junior Institute” in which they begin the college-going process by looking at colleges, thinking about majors and career paths, and taking the SAT®. In collaboration with Baruch College, all high school juniors visit the college’s career center and take a career inventory. In their senior year, students continue with the Senior Institute, where advisers and teachers guide them through the college process, college essay writing and completion of an independent Senior Exit Research Project that students defend before a panel of teachers.

The college office meets individually with all students and their families, takes students on college trips, hosts in-school college visits and runs a college fair in collaboration with three other small New York City high schools. Evening events are held for families, in both English and Chinese, to guide parents through financial aid, college choices and the college process.

BCCHS is 62 percent free and reduced price lunch. BCCHS believes in leveling the playing field by giving all its students equal access and knowledge about the college process and a rigorous education.

MEASURING SUCCESS Over the past 10 years, BCCHS has experienced a 95–100 percent college acceptance rate; currently the graduation rate is 98 percent. AP class enrollment mirrors the diversity of the school with Asian, black, Hispanic and Caucasian students in the classes. Students who may not be as strong academically, but demonstrate a solid work ethic, have the opportunity to take AP courses. In partnership with Baruch College, BCCHS offers early college courses to juniors and seniors who can take Calculus and Psychology for college credit. There are students who entered high school below reading level and succeeded in an AP class at BCCHS.

BCCHS alumni state that BCCHS prepared them for college. They feel like college is “easy” compared to high school, and that they are able to handle the workload, work independently and feel confident in college.

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Be A Mentor! BAM!
Central Islip Senior High School
Central Islip, N.Y.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Be A Mentor! (BAM!) was born from a need to address the graduation rate at Central Islip Senior High School. Situated in a poor community with a large immigrant population, the school was identified by New York State as a school in need of improvement. The faculty recognized that reform had to come from within and address the specific needs of Central Islip students.

The goal of BAM! is to encourage and nurture mentoring relationships between senior students and staff for the explicit purpose of providing the guidance and help that will enable students to graduate and pursue a college degree. Faculty recognized the need for mentors for several reasons:

- Many families are bilingual, and help with high school work and college applications may be difficult for them. Mentors can address this need.
- Many families may not be aware of high school graduation requirements or the college application process. Mentors guide students to ensure that graduation requirements are met and applications are submitted.
- Faculty often feel overwhelmed by the number of students who need individual guidance.

Through BAM! mentors focus their attention on their chosen students, and records are kept to ensure that those students who need help are receiving it.

The program targets seniors in danger of not graduating, and $1,800 scholarships were awarded to 12 students who had made the greatest turnaround. An extension of this program is BAM, Jr., which is student-to-student mentoring. Seniors are paired with freshman and mirror the BAM! program.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success can be seen in two ways. First, the graduation rate increased from 62 to 65 percent in one year, with the most growth occurring in the subgroups of students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). The graduation rate for students with disabilities increased from 40 to 55 percent, and ELLs increased from 28 to 31 percent; the graduation rate for Latino students increased from 54 to 61 percent. These modest results are encouraged by the growth seen in a short period of time for students who face the greatest challenges. Secondly, the number of students mentored by staff is impressive. Currently 39 students are being mentored by 26 teachers who volunteer their time and talents. This number will increase after the first marking period when additional students will be identified.

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College and Career Readiness  
Houston Independent School District  
Houston, Texas  

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION  
The Houston Independent School District’s (HISD) College-Readiness Compact Making an Impact is a comprehensive plan to increase the number of college-ready students. HISD’s effective practices for getting students ready for college include: providing the rigorous SpringBoard® curriculum to middle school students; increasing the number of AP courses offered in high school to at least 15 per school; providing extensive training to over 800 teachers on the SpringBoard curriculum; providing AP teaching strategies to over 1,000 teachers; and providing college and career readiness counseling to all HISD students.

HISD’s College-Readiness Compact goals are to:

- Increase student achievement via rigorous curriculum and effective instruction
- Promote and expand access to Pre-AP®, AP and IB courses to low-income students
- Increase teacher capacity
- Increase parent/guardian awareness and education about college/career opportunities

A major focus is to expand access to college readiness programs for low-income students by paying for PSAT/NMSQT®, SAT, AP and IB exams and to recognize student success through a Cool to be Smart annual celebration.

MEASURING SUCCESS  
HISD has seen the following improvements in student achievement:

- The number of AP courses taken by African American students grew by 152%. For Hispanic students, the number more than doubled from 2009 to 2011.
- The graduation rate for Hispanic students increased from 65.9% in 2009 to 70.7% in 2010. For African American students, it increased from 68.4% to 73.7%.
- With more than 95% of juniors taking the SAT in 2011, the amount of scholarship dollars offered to students was an all-time district high of more than $120 million, of which $34 million was awarded to African American students and $38 million to Hispanic students.

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College Bound 101
Twin Rivers Unified School District
North Highlands, Calif.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Twin Rivers is a newly merged unified school district. Historically, the district has scored the lowest on the California High School Exit Examination (CaHSEE) passage and graduation rates compared with other districts in Sacramento County. Eighty-two percent of the students are socioeconomically disadvantaged and over 40 percent come from homes where English is not the primary language.

College Bound 101 was designed to give graduating college-bound seniors the skills they need to be successful in either a two- or four-year college. Students receive direct instruction from alumni and experts in the field on what to expect in college, how to select classes and a major, and the ins and outs of financial aid. Guest speakers talk about establishing good credit and the importance of financial discipline. College housing staff share the reality of life in the dorms, and community college staff share tips for transitioning from a two- or four-year college. Students learn about setting short-term and long-term goals.

After completing the workshop, students are eligible to apply for a scholarship through Project DREAM, the district’s education foundation. This scholarship targets homeless and foster youth, as well as students who overcome adversity to be accepted to a four-year college. Fifty-eight students received a $400 Target shopping spree for dorm supplies, and 25 of them received new laptops to take to college.

MEASURING SUCCESS During the first two years of the College Bound 101 program, success was measured by increased attendance in College Bound 101. Enrollment doubled between the 2010 class and the 2011 class, largely based on what students and staff heard about the class. Student evaluations indicated that 95 percent of students learned key new information, and 83 percent suggested trainings earlier in high school. Over 65 percent of students volunteered to come back to help with 2012 training to better prepare the next class of students.

Students in the 2011 class were asked to send their first college semester's report card in exchange for a $100 Target gift card. This tool will track how students are doing academically in college as well as provide a sense of how many students are staying in college during the difficult first year.

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The College Crusade of Rhode Island
The College Crusade of Rhode Island
Providence, R.I.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The College Crusade of Rhode Island provides the state’s most comprehensive college readiness program for sixth- through 12th-grade students in low-income, urban districts. Supported by a nationally recognized advisory system, the overarching goals are to increase the number of underrepresented students who graduate from high school, gain access to college and persist in postsecondary education by offering a rich continuum of academic enrichment, career exploration, social/personal development and college-preparation programs that are provided after school, on weekends, during school vacations and over the summer months. In addition, since 2001, more than $23 million in postsecondary scholarship support has been provided to over 3,000 students.

Each year, the College Crusade serves approximately 3,500 sixth- through 12th-grade students in the Rhode Island school districts with the highest concentration of need: Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls and Woonsocket. Collectively, 80 percent of the students in these urban districts are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and 75 percent come from minority families. The concentration of economically disadvantaged students the College Crusade serves is even higher; 97 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch and 88 percent are from minority families. Additionally, 76 percent of Crusaders will be the first in their family to graduate from college.

MEASURING SUCCESS Crusaders have outperformed nonparticipants on standardized tests in the four urban districts served. In addition, over the past four years:

- Crusaders graduated high school at a 70% rate vs. 61% for students in the four urban districts served by the program.
- Crusaders have gone on to postsecondary institutions at much higher rates (59%) than students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile in the state (42%).
- Crusaders, despite being from overwhelmingly economically disadvantaged environments, have higher first-year retention rates than all students at the state’s public higher education institutions. At the University of Rhode Island, the average first-year retention rate for Crusaders was 87%, versus 80% for all students; at Rhode Island College, 80% of Crusaders were retained, versus 76% for all students; and at the Community College of Rhode Island, 67% of students were retained, versus 61% for all students.

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**College Institutes**

**Project GRAD Houston**

Houston, Texas

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** With 20 years of college access and success work in Houston’s neediest communities, Project GRAD Houston has explored the barriers and challenges of college access from the perspective of the students and families they serve. Project GRAD has successfully addressed much of the aspiration/access divide by providing a continuum of services that remove perceptual barriers, immerse students in paradigm-changing experiences and walk them through the admission/enrollment process. Project GRAD does this with thousands of students, many of whom believed they would never attend college.

Ultimately, the goal of College Institutes is increasing the percentage of students who enroll in college. These university-based, academic-focused programs average three weeks in length and allow students to “see themselves as college students” by offering an exciting array of programs, including energy explorations, advanced mathematics and biology, business, financial literacy, liberal arts, STEM, and digital communication/digital gaming. Daily transportation and a student stipend encourage participation. The institutes immerse each student in the world of college and surround them with professors and college students who came from neighborhoods like theirs. This past year, Project GRAD offered 16 College Institutes, attended by more than 1,200 students.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** A 2011 study found that for students with high school GPAs between 2.0 and 3.5, attending even one College Institute increased the likelihood of future college enrollment by the same percentage as increasing their high school GPA by 1.5 points. Attending two institutes placed a student with a 2.0 GPA on the same college enrollment trajectory as a student with a 4.0 GPA.

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College Quest

Harlem Educational Activities Fund (HEAF)
New York, N.Y.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Harlem Educational Activities Fund, Inc. (HEAF) provides an extended continuum of educational and youth development and leadership opportunities to high-potential, underserved students from New York City, from sixth graders through college graduates. College Quest is the high school component of HEAF’s academic and youth development programming. College Quest’s goal is to provide first-generation college students with academic rigor, social and emotional support, leadership, and life experiences needed to successfully transition into high school, graduate on time and gain admittance to a four-year college.

College Quest begins by preparing students for high school during a one-week academic and youth development “boot camp” on a college campus. College Quest offers traditional college readiness activities such as college tours, writing, SAT prep and math classes. Additionally, HEAF offers youth development classes where students explore values, identity development and life skills needed for the successful completion of high school and college. In addition to core programming, students can take advantage of career exploration internships in law and medicine. Students develop leadership skills through a peer advisory team, a leadership council, and sororities, fraternities, and service learning programs. College Quest has partnerships with institutions of higher education and nonprofits that give students access to college classes, summer precollege and travel programs. Students enter their senior year of high school with a multitude of experiences to reflect upon during the college application process. During the yearlong senior seminar and end-of-year senior retreat, students discuss college and financial counseling as well as their expectations of college and how they may differ from reality.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of College Quest is measured by the percentage of students who complete high school, are accepted into four-year colleges/universities and matriculate into college upon graduation.

- 100% of HEAF scholars complete high school on time.
- 100% of HEAF scholars are accepted into a four-year college/university. Of those acceptances, 58% are to tier one colleges/universities.
- 98% of HEAF scholars matriculate immediately into college.

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College Readiness Program

Boston Collegiate Charter School
Dorchester, Mass.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The mission of the Boston Collegiate Charter School (BCCS) is to prepare each student for college. The college readiness program begins in fifth grade and is intentional, comprehensive, fueled by data and executed by a team of seasoned leaders. As many BCCS students will be the first in their families to attend college, they must see college as something attainable and begin the process of visualizing themselves on a college campus.

Many BCCS high school students struggle to perform as seniors. In college, BCCS graduates struggled with certain academic and social skills. The college readiness program, therefore, was designed to create students who were strong and well prepared in both academic and self-advocacy skills. College readiness was developed from three angles: school culture (advisories named after the colleges their advisers attended, common walls filled with college posters and information); curriculum (a rigorous academic program vertically aligned to the content and skills college students need to know and be able to do in order to be successful, coupled with a Collegiate Skills curriculum that explicitly teaches the softer college readiness skills); and programs (Bridges to Success, College Road Trip, College Prep Days, Junior Internship and SAT Prep).

MEASURING SUCCESS College enrollment data are the best evidence of the program’s success. Over 93 percent of the class of 2010, the first class to benefit from the college readiness programming in its entirety, is enrolled in college this year. The exceptions are two students who elected to join the Marine Corps. This trajectory represents a significant improvement over earlier graduating classes that did not have access to the same level of college readiness programming and alumni support. By comparison, 81 percent of the class of 2009 is still enrolled in college, and 71 percent of the class of 2008 is still enrolled in college. The positive trend demonstrates the success of the college readiness programming when experienced in its entirety.

Feedback from alumni is the best source of qualitative data found to demonstrate the success of the college readiness program. Since the inception of the program, feedback from BCCS alumni enrolled in college indicates that 100 percent of them feel prepared for the many challenges of college, from social challenges to academics.

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College-in-the-High-School
Bridgeport High School
Bridgeport, Wash.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Bridgeport High School developed the College-in-the-High-School program, enhanced by AP courses, to allow students to earn college credit while in high school. With an open enrollment policy, the target audience is Hispanic, high poverty and 100 percent eligible for free and reduced price lunches. College-in-the-High-School addresses academic needs and courses, and vocational courses as well. The program is supported by AVID in the middle school. In an effort to meet President Obama’s 2020 challenge for increased college graduation, Bridgeport provides opportunities and encourages all students, without exception, to become lifelong learners through the pursuit of higher education. Bridgeport students taking AP courses are required to take the AP Exams, and in turn, the district pays for the exams. Along with this, college credits are paid for by the district through various grant sources, thus eliminating the cost barrier for students to earn college credit. All students must take and pass the local community college entrance exam in order to enroll in College-in-the-High-School courses. The college courses are taught by qualified instructors on the Bridgeport High School campus, thus eliminating the transportation barrier that students of poverty face. The entire high school staff has been trained in AVID strategies, and most have been trained at Advanced Placement® Institutes and workshops. The focus for all staff is continued professional development to support Bridgeport’s vision and goals.

MEASURING SUCCESS In 2003, Bridgeport High School offered one college course in English to three students. In the 2011-12 school year, Bridgeport High School offers nine AP courses and 12 academic college courses, as well as seven different vocational courses. In a demonstration of Bridgeport’s success, 75 percent of the class of 2011 graduated with academic and vocational college credits, and all graduates were accepted into college. Since 2007, 62.6 percent of Bridgeport graduates are attending either a community college or four-year university.

Bridgeport High School was one of three national finalists in President Obama’s Race to the Top Commencement Challenge in spring 2011. Bridgeport High School and Wenatchee Valley Community College were awarded the 2011-12 Team Award from the Washington State ASCD for the College-in-the-High-School program. In 2010, Bridgeport received the Washington Achievement Award for Extended Graduation Rate, and the Bridgeport School District Board of Directors was awarded the NSBA Grand Prize National Magna Award for its vision and expansion of Bridgeport’s College-in-the-High-School and Advanced Placement Program. In 2009, Bridgeport High School was awarded the Washington State Achievement Award for Overall Excellence and Language Arts.

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**CollegeR**  
*City of Knowledge*  
Pomona, Calif.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** In 2003, City of Knowledge adopted CollegeEd® as a mandatory eighth-grade course to prepare students to start thinking about college admission and success and plan their high school courses. The middle school curriculum was revised to include college-preparatory courses such as algebra, chemistry, geometry, Honors biology and freshman English. Students receive help in areas of need. ESL students receive guidance to shine in subjects like mathematics and sciences.

The high school program is based on college preparation for all students. AP courses are available to all students and service projects are required. Students may take the PSAT/NMSQT in seventh grade, with fees waived for low-income families. Parents receive weekly student progress reports and all students receive tutoring. City of Knowledge meets regularly with parents and students in groups and individually to discuss curriculum; contracts outlining expectations and consequences are signed. High school students take courses at community colleges to gain firsthand college experience. Teachers, staff, volunteers and parents receive professional development. Parents and community leaders attend the CollegeR celebration.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** This year, City of Knowledge had three students who received AP Scholars; two received AP Scholars with Distinction. Two of the AP Scholars were from low-income families. Low-income students have received scholarships to several University of California schools, including UCLA and UC Berkeley. About 90 percent of the high school students who take UC/CSU transferable junior college courses while in high school receive A scores. City of Knowledge has seen 100 percent college matriculation to the University of California and California State University.

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Compact for Success
Sweetwater Union High School District
Chula Vista, Calif.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Compact for Success is a partnership between San Diego State University and the Sweetwater Union High School District. The Sweetwater District is made up of three-quarters minority students, with 42,000 students as diverse as the district is large. One in four students is an English learner and more than half qualify for free or reduced-price meals. The initiative sets rigorous academic benchmarks. Students who earn a 3.0 GPA, complete the California State University A–G college course curriculum, pass entry college exams in English and math, and take the SAT or ACT are guaranteed admission to San Diego State University. Since the Compact was signed in 2000 when the first eligible students were in seventh grade, Sweetwater revamped the curriculum, increased academic counseling for students and parents, implemented academic support opportunities, and developed a college-going culture. The result is a 51 percent increase in the number of students admitted to the university from the 2006 graduating class. More significantly, the number of graduates who are meeting college proficiency — without remediation — jumped 578 percent since 2000. Two thirds of all Sweetwater graduates attend college upon graduation.

MEASURING SUCCESS During the last 11 years, the Compact for Success has guided the district’s growth in improving student achievement. Scores on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) have risen significantly; San Diego State University English faculty codeveloped a rhetorical approach to reading and writing that has greatly prepared students for college-level work; and Sweetwater teachers, administrators and faculty created pacing guides for each grade level to ensure that students build a solid foundation of academic skills. Sixty-four percent of Sweetwater seniors graduating from the class of 2011 met proficiency compared to 14 percent from the class of 2000.

Sweetwater graduates at San Diego State are outperforming their peers from other school districts and are much more likely to graduate from the university in four years than their counterparts.

In the Sweetwater District, the road to college begins in middle school and continues through high school. The district’s — and the community’s — emphasis on increasing college-going rates resulted in the Sweetwater District Board of Trustees taking an important step. Last November, the board approved a resolution to make the A–G college-prep curriculum the default curriculum for the district. In October, the board will take the next step by changing district graduation requirements to reflect the increased academic rigor.

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COP Program
Midtown Educational Foundation
Chicago, Ill.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The College Orientation Program (COP) is designed to support and advance young men and women in high school who desire to succeed in college and beyond. The program guides and motivates students through the college matching and acceptance process with character development, academic enrichment, career and professional exploration, college readiness activities, individual advising, summer apprenticeships and internships. The participation of parents, through attendance at seminars, presentations and advising meetings, is a fundamental expectation of the program.

Midtown Educational Foundation’s (MEF) weekly interactive character classes teach students the value of creating their own paths toward a positive future. The interactive curriculum teaches students to consider the longer road and consequences in their everyday decision-making skills. Students learn the value of true friendship as well as how to be a true friend. The curriculum supports students’ chosen paths by teaching the habits (honesty, tenacity, reliability) of achievers.

MEASURING SUCCESS This year, the senior class of 2011 achieved 100 percent high school graduation and college enrollment. This was MEF’s 12th consecutive senior class to accomplish this feat. Students enrolled in schools such as the Chicago University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (School of Engineering), North Park University, Bradley University and Connecticut College.

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Cum Laude
Woodstock High School
Woodstock, Ill.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** Students at Woodstock High School must meet eight target points in order to be a Cum Laude graduate: (1) meet or exceed standards on all sections of the Prairie State Achievement Exam or exhibit PLAN to ACT test score growth; (2) participate in one sport, club or activity during high school; (3) demonstrate community involvement; (4) earn at least 260 credits during high school (five credits per class with a few exceptions); (5) earn a 2.5 GPA or higher; (6) be a good citizen — no suspensions or good conduct violations; (7) maintain a 95 percent attendance rate during both junior and senior years; and (8) complete at least one capstone course or one AP course. All students are part of the targeted group, and staff and administrators ask students to set their goals as freshmen, creating a “game plan” to achieve this exclusive recognition.

The program seeks to reduce the discrepancy between the percentage of low SES Cum Laude graduates and low SES seniors, thereby giving those students with low SES the same opportunities available to all other students and building the foundation and confidence needed to be successful in post-high-school goals.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** The success of the practice is measured by the number of students who graduate with Cum Laude status:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Graduating with Cum Laude Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>44 out of 428 or 10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>49 out of 408 or 12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008–2009</td>
<td>93 out of 413 or 22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009–2010</td>
<td>111 out of 386 or 28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>83 out of 259 or 32.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also measured by the number of students who attempt the program throughout their four years:

**Percentage of Senior Class Earning Partial Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 of 8</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 of 8</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>3 of 8</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of 8</td>
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<td>56.9</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>47.2</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>53.9</td>
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<td>22.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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DBQs — Helping Us Move from Good to Great

School Board of Lake County, Florida
Tavares, Fla.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Document-Based Questions (DBQ) process embeds problem solving and high levels of cognitive complexity in teaching and learning. A DBQ is a free-response essay question requiring students to analyze and sort multiple expository documents and functional texts to support their side of an argument. The DBQ process is used in social studies in grades four through 12. It is the district’s intent to expand the DBQ process into the additional content areas of science and language arts in grades four through 12.

The goal of the DBQ project is to ensure that all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, are prepared for advanced courses in high school. DBQs provide a foundation of writing and reading skills along with high-level thinking skills including data and document analysis. By the time students take their first AP classes in high school, they will have answered numerous AP-style essay questions and be comfortable with the question format and writing style. The need for this project is underscored by research demonstrating that low-income, ethnic minority and rural students who take at least one AP class and exam attend college at higher rates and are more successful once enrolled than similar peers who have not taken AP courses.

MEASURING SUCCESS In Lake County high schools, where three DBQs were completed prior to the test administration, the gains from 2010 to 2011 were between 7 and 18 percent. Leesburg High School is a minority-majority school with 55 percent low-income students and Lake County’s lowest achieving high school. It was ranked in the bottom 5 percent of all Florida high schools as rated by the Florida Department of Education. In 2010, only 60 percent of 10th-graders scored above proficiency on the Florida Writes assessment. On the 2011 Florida Writes performance-based persuasive essay, 67 percent of Leesburg High’s 10th-graders scored above proficiency, a gain twice that of the state gain. Across Lake County, student scores on the 2011 10th-grade writing exam increased by 7 percent, whereas the state average gain was 3 percent.

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Directed Multi-Tiered Intervention

Charter School for Applied Technologies
Buffalo, N.Y.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Ensuring all students are successful requires an innovative and systemic approach to meeting the needs of those students who do not initially meet academic proficiency, and this core belief drives Charter School for Applied Technologies’ innovative program. Teachers collaborate to create valid and reliable assessments derived from the state’s learning standards. The assessments are scored utilizing eDoctrina, an assessment tool developed at the school, which enables teaching teams to derive raw scores and track the competency of specific standard-based knowledge. When the data suggest that a student is struggling in a particular subject, the student is placed in a targeted intervention. The most common form of targeted intervention is the STAR/Intervention period at the end of the school day, where teachers assemble students from many different sections to relearn a concept that presents difficulties according to the eDoctrina software. Enforcing a “No-Zero” policy, students who need to finish incomplete homework or projects are also provided the opportunity to attend the intervention period, while students not directed by the system are dismissed. The layered system of interventions is targeted, specific and timely.

MEASURING SUCCESS The Charter School for Applied Technologies, an independent public school, serves 1,666 students from predominantly low-income backgrounds in grades K–12. The districtwide free and reduced lunch rate is 87 percent. The first class graduated 94 percent of its classmates, and the last three graduating classes achieved 100 percent graduation rates.

Students in the system are expected to remain productive following graduation, whether by pursuing postsecondary education, vocational school, the military or proceeding straight into the private sector. How this is accomplished is a testament to the innovative spirit and dedication of the faculty who refuse to allow students to fail, insisting that learning be accomplished through multiple opportunities inherent in the STAR/Intervention period that is structured into the high school day. Of the 93 students graduating last year, 79 percent pursued postsecondary education. Since 2009, the number of students receiving Advanced Designation Regents diplomas has risen from 21 percent to 39 percent.

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Family Access Weekend for College Readiness

Project GRAD Atlanta
Atlanta, Ga.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Family Access Weekend for College Readiness, a two-day annual event held on the campus of Emory University, grew out of the need to address the low college-going enrollment for low-income and underserved students enrolled in Project GRAD high schools. After implementing the first college access program for students in 2006, it was determined that the program would be more effective if students and parents were engaged simultaneously. In 2007, Project GRAD Atlanta hosted its first Family Access Weekend for College Readiness. The weekend of activities is designed to inform and engage ninth- and 10th-grade students enrolled in Project GRAD high schools and their parents about what it takes to go to college and the role of parents as partners with their children in the college readiness process. The residential program for students and parents includes: transportation to the event; overnight accommodations; meals; a series of workshops that focus on academic achievement, standardized testing, college affordability and the college admission process; and panel discussions about college enrollment with former Brumley-GRAD Scholars currently enrolled in college and parents of former Scholars.

MEASURING SUCCESS The program’s success is measured by the increase in program participants’ knowledge about college and their awareness of the Project GRAD Atlanta college readiness programs. Students and parents are provided pretest and posttest surveys to gauge their awareness. Additionally, success is also measured by the increase in the percentage of students and parents who attend the Family Access Weekend for College Readiness.

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Getting Ready
Medgar Evers College Preparatory School
Brooklyn, N.Y.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Teacher preparation is a major focus of the Getting Ready program at Medgar Evers College Preparatory School. As a result, all AP teachers attend the one-week AP Summer Institute and the one-day workshop in their content areas. Additionally, once per month, all AP teachers get together informally to analyze student performance, discuss strategies and exchange best practice ideas, all in an effort to improve student performance and interest.

AP Parent Information sessions are held twice a year and are designed to provide information about the AP Program, to gain parents’ support and to empower them to serve as motivators to their children.

Parents and students are given information on and are encouraged to attend college fairs, specifically the Big Apple Annual Fair and the school’s annual college fair. Financial aid workshops for parents and students are provided through CUNY and Medgar Evers College. These efforts are intended to create a positive college-going culture within the school.

MEASURING SUCCESS Since the implementation of the program:

- Student grade point averages have increased by at least 5%.
- SAT scores went up by at least 70 points.
- Student participation in AP increased significantly. In 2009, 88 students scored 3 and above on the AP Exams. In 2010, 142 students scored a 3 and above on their AP Exams.
- 98% of students graduated with Regents and Advanced Regents diplomas.

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Getting Ready

Reach for Excellence
Atlanta, Ga.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Reach for Excellence is a nonprofit, classroom-based academic and leadership enrichment program serving students who do not have access to the teachers and resources that can provide better educational opportunities to keep them on the path to college. Through its mix of academic, cultural and community-based experiences, this tuition-free program prepares talented, limited-income middle school students to meet the challenges of college-preparatory programs and high schools. Students and their families commit to three six-week summer sessions and two years of Saturday sessions throughout the school year. Classes are small and focus on core subjects, including language arts, math, social studies, study skills, etiquette, business, computer studies and SAT preparation. Courses are designed to integrate academic skills with life experiences. Core courses are supplemented by community service projects, curriculum-based field trips and opportunities to engage in in-depth studies. Students visit area high schools and meet with admission directors from boarding schools. Students are not told where to attend high school but are prepared and encouraged to compete for those programs that will assist them in staying the course for a brighter future.

MEASURING SUCCESS One hundred percent of Reach graduates attend high school; 92.3 percent of Cohort E are attending college. Reach for Excellence graduates are currently enrolled in Holy Innocents Episcopal, Marist School, Mount Vernon Presbyterian, The Lovett School, The Paideia School, Wesleyan School and The Westminster Schools, all located in Atlanta, as well as boarding schools throughout the United States.

Colleges attended by Reach graduates include Harvard University, Yale University, Emory University, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, University of Georgia, Georgia Tech University and Spelman College.

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Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI)
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) is a program in the University of Cincinnati Partner for Achieving School Success (UC PASS) that targets foster youth who are “aging out” of foster care. UC PASS launched HEMI in partnership with Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners and Hamilton County Job and Family Services to help foster youth transition successfully from high school into college or other postsecondary programs. HEMI recruits, trains and supports high quality university, community and corporate mentors who offer tutoring, friendship, advice, guidance, test preparation, and awareness of and access to financial aid and scholarship opportunities and other college access resources. UC PASS employs a full-time program coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of HEMI. Program support includes training and support for mentors, quarterly group activities, college access and awareness activities, monitoring of student academic performance and social activities, and preparation for life skills.

The overarching goals of the program are to ensure that foster youth graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary education immediately after high school, and graduate with a certificate, associate or baccalaureate degree.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** Prior to the implementation of HEMI, there were approximately 150 high school seniors each year who were “aging out” of the foster care system in Hamilton County. Of the 150 seniors, 45 youths (30 percent) would graduate from high school and three students (2 percent) would pursue some sort of postsecondary education. During its initial year, HEMI paired 12 high school seniors with mentors. All 12 students (100 percent) graduated from high school and enrolled in a postsecondary program or college. In its second year, HEMI again saw 100 percent high school graduation of its 13 high school senior program participants, and all 13 are pursuing a postsecondary program or college.

Since the goals are high school graduation, college enrollment, retention and graduation, the initiative’s performance is measured against adequate academic progress (GPA/credit earned), student retention rate and student graduation rate. All of the HEMI participants who were seniors in high school in 2009 and 2010 graduated from high school and entered a postsecondary program. With the expansion of HEMI, retention is being measured at the University of Cincinnati and other colleges and postsecondary programs.

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LEAD (Linking Education and Diversity) College Access Program
Northeastern University
Boston, Mass.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The LEAD (Linking Education and Diversity) College Access Program provides a 1:1 and 2:1 mentoring model with the goal of “Getting Ready: Applying to College with Confidence and Success” for students in Boston Public Schools. An emphasis is placed on outreach to low-income, first-generation high school students. LEAD, serving 50+ Boston resident students per year with the help of 40 trained college mentors, maintains the philosophy that all students deserve a chance at college application support. LEAD’s application asks only for the high school junior’s commitment to the weekly two-hour lab and his or her commitment to college, as the program is designed to serve the needs of students who are locked out of other programs in the city of Boston due to GPA and other criteria. LEAD seeks to address an increasing gap in the guidance and support around the college admission process, including college knowledge, self-advocacy, college motivation, recognizing the importance of nontraditional leadership, and communicating transferrable life skills. The target audience of LEAD is rising seniors in the greater metropolitan area of Boston, Mass., who are interested in going to college.

MEASURING SUCCESS Over the past three years, LEAD has maintained a 90 percent retention rate with students who complete the program. Additionally, program growth increased by nearly 50 percent from year two to year three, marking a significant need in the community and level of recognition in the school systems, amongst families, and in community-based organizations. Finally, LEAD considers its college-going data an indicator of its success: 100 percent of its students — many of whom are considered at-risk or high need — are admitted to college.

School counselors, families and community-based organizations within the city of Boston are recognizing LEAD as a viable program for their students’ success. Many students remark that LEAD provided them with a “regular and expected class time” and a “teacher just for me” to aid in the often “overwhelming” college process.

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Mandatory Support
Heritage High School
Vancouver, Wash.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION During the 2008-09 school year, Heritage High School began examining baseline data regarding student failures. At that time, approximately 41 percent of students had one or more failing grades during the first semester of the academic year. The total number of students with one or more Fs was 806 out of 1,992. To provide mandatory support during the school day, a schoolwide tutorial program was implemented. Students who have a GPA below 2.0 or who have an F in any class are assigned to a 25-minute tutorial four times per week. Those students who are above that standard are rewarded with an extended lunch period.

The tutorial list is established every six weeks, so students move in and out of tutorial based on their success in their classes. For the 2011-12 school year, the average school GPA increased to 2.5 in response to the program. An AP tutorial was implemented for those students who have a C- or below in an AP class.

MEASURING SUCCESS During its first semester of implementation, the number of course failures decreased by 242 as compared to the first semester of the previous year. Over 90 percent of teachers surveyed indicated that they believed that the tutorial program was having a positive impact on student learning. Student focus groups reported that the program was a positive support. Many students reported that they used the tutorial for extra support even when it was not assigned to them.

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Multifaceted Approach to College Access Program

Omaha South High Magnet School
Omaha, Neb.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Multifaceted Approach to College Access Program is a guidance program designed to serve low-income students in their preparation for postsecondary education. In the 2008-09 school year, Omaha South High Magnet School (OSH) had 81 percent of their student population on free and reduced lunch 77 percent ethnic minorities and 54 percent first-generation college students. The program began as a comprehensive effort to help students remain on grade level, to graduate within four years and to develop postsecondary options. In order to address these issues, the guidance staff began working with the faculty and administration to identify students for Advanced Placement classes, to offer Zero Hour/Saturday classes to students who need accrual courses for graduation, and to partner with the EducationQuest Foundation along with the Sherwood Foundation in an effort to increase the college-going rate. Beginning this year, the PSAT/NMSQT will be offered at no charge to all 11th-grade students, AP Potential software will be used to identify students for AP placement and all students will be provided with online access to the SAT to prepare for the test.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of this program is measured in a variety of methods, including:

- Attendance: During 2010-11, OSH improved daily attendance by 11%.
- Graduation: The 2010 graduation rate increased by 7% over the previous year.
- Postsecondary going rate: The rate of students attending a postsecondary institution increased from 44% in 2008-2009 to 47% in 2009-2010.
- Scholarships: Scholarships earned increased from $2.3 million in the 2008-09 academic year to $5 million in the 2010-11 academic year.

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Pre-Professional Internship Program
Trinity High School
Garfield Heights, Ohio

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION  Trinity High School students receive a thorough academic preparation for college that includes internship experiences closely aligned to their course work. The program allows all students to explore career and professional paths prior to enrolling in college. The goals of the internship program are to:

- Enrich a traditional college-preparatory education with an expanded network of professional learning sites so students gain real-world experience and application of their academic course work;
- Help students refine their career choices and understand the educational requirements needed to attain their aspirations; and
- Enable students to collaborate with college-trained professionals and develop a mentor relationship.

The program was designed to help instill in all students a desire for postsecondary education and develop within them the skills necessary for college and workplace success. Internship sponsors are drawn from Cleveland-area businesses that want to help shape the future workforce and cut down on the brain-drain common to the area. Research indicates that the best and brightest students seek employment elsewhere upon graduation from college.

Ninth-grade students spend their freshman year preparing for their internship experience by engaging in career exploration, completing interest and skill surveys, and engaging in workplace readiness classes. Toward the end of that year they choose an internship path aligned with their career aspirations. They can select highly specialized internships in medicine, graphics and animation, or information management and system design. They can also choose internships centered on business or the liberal arts. During grades 10, 11 and 12, students spend one day each week at an internship placement aligned to their career path and specific course of study. The school day and year have been lengthened to assure students are in classes long enough to earn a traditional Carnegie unit.

MEASURING SUCCESS  College-bound Trinity seniors earned a mean score of 529 in critical reading (national = 497), 515 in mathematics (national = 514) and 515 in writing (national = 489). The combined scores show Trinity High School students achieve the suggested SAT benchmark score of 1550, indicating a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a B average or higher during the first year of college. Trend data collected over a five-year period indicate steady growth in SAT mean scores.

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S-FAST, Success For All Students Team
Social Justice High School
Chicago, Ill.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Greater Lawndale Little Village School for Social Justice believes that the academic, personal/social and career domains of students must be addressed by utilizing research-based practices and data-driven initiatives. Success For All Students Team (S-FAST) enables the school counselor, social worker, college and career coach, teachers, parents, support staff and administrators to address the needs of all students. Quantitative and qualitative data within S-FAST are utilized to identify, design, implement and analyze interventions that address student needs, target academic and social developmental needs, and focus on primary prevention. The Greater Lawndale School for Social Justice’s counseling program is designed to assist in the development of the whole child. To function successfully in today’s society, students need to increase their sense of self-worth, enhanced positive attitudes and advocacy. Project-based and problem-based learning that addresses real-world issues through the lenses of race, gender, culture, economic equity, peace, justice and the environment is the catalyst for developing learning and the counseling curriculum. The counseling program, implemented during the school year, serves all students and is an integral part of the educational process at Social Justice. This comprehensive program requires the cooperative effort of counselors, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and the community. By accessing and practicing the skills that are addressed throughout this program, students improve the quality of their lives and are able to improve the quality of their families and community.

MEASURING SUCCESS From the 2009 school year to the 2010 school year, S-FAST data showed that:

- Ninth-grade attendance improved from a 91.4% to a 92.8% average.
- 10th-grade attendance improved from a 90.6% to a 91.5% average.
- 11th-grade attendance improved from an 86.3% to a 90.0% average.
- 12th-grade attendance improved from an 82.1% to an 82.5% average.

From the 2008 school year to the 2010 school year, the one-year drop-out rate decreased from 6.4 to 3.0, the Freshman On-Track rate increased from 68.4 percent to 78.8 percent, and discipline referrals decreased by 40 percent.

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STAC (Start Thinking About College)
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, Nev.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION One of the greatest early indicators of college readiness for low-income students is achievement in eighth-grade standardized tests. High achievement in these tests displays a significant correlation to college readiness as measured by meeting college admission requirements in the senior year of high school. The University of Nevada Reno’s Center for Student Cultural Diversity brings low-income, first-generation seventh-graders onto its college campus to Start Thinking About College (STAC). Early outreach is one of the most effective ways to help students gain access to a college education. The goal of STAC is to remove the barriers caused by a culture of low achievement and low expectations for high-ability low-income students. STAC targets students who are most at-risk by inviting 15 middle schools to its campus. While on campus, seventh-graders (88 percent of whom are historically underrepresented students of color) are ignited with passion by college graduates who share their inspirational stories of success despite a family history of poverty and low educational attainment. The seventh-graders attend workshops facilitated by intercultural office coordinators and college students about the steps required to properly prepare for college. After the workshops, the students are shown what the campus community, buildings and staff are like through a campus exploration with current college students. The day concludes with a lunch and interactive presentation by several multicultural organizations affiliated with the Center for Student Cultural Diversity.

MEASURING SUCCESS STAC’s success is measured by how effective the program is at reaching its target audience. Areas of strength are the partnerships with 15 different middle schools in the Truckee Meadows metropolitan area. Counselors at each middle school identify students who have college aspirations but may not be supported by a college-going culture or a family that is affluent or has had any experience with higher education. STAC brings over 15 percent of students from the greater Reno area to campus.

Another goal of STAC is to increase the college-going rates of historically underrepresented students and students from low-income and first-generation backgrounds. The most reasonable measure for success will be the rate at which students participating in the program enroll in college. Since this process will take six years to measure and the program started three years ago, the data are not yet available. What can be measured is the breadth of the reach. Of the 4,956 students enrolled in seventh grade in Washoe County, 770 attended Start Thinking About College in 2010.

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UPike Today
University of Pikeville
Pikeville, Ky.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION UPike Today is a dual credit program with the goals of (1) enabling students from schools with large numbers of low-income families to earn college credits that will transfer to other postsecondary institutions, and (2) assisting these students in believing that they can graduate from high school and be ready for success in college.

The program offers extra challenges for high-achieving students while at the same time allowing other students the opportunity to become acquainted with college experiences. Dual credit students are given a tour of the University of Pikeville campus, make identification cards (allowing for free admission to all university sports events and discounts by local restaurants and businesses) and set up a Web account. Their course grades are posted on WebAdvisor, and they have access to campus facilities and services. Students who successfully obtain at least five dual credit hours from UPike are eligible for a $2,000 academic scholarship, renewable for four years if the student maintains a 2.5 GPA.

UPike Today addresses the need for all high school students to be ready for college success upon their graduation. Having personalized IDs and Web accounts makes them feel part of the university. The campus visits and tours help them become familiar with what education after high school really looks like. The scholarship opportunity reinforces that financial assistance is available and that they already have a start on obtaining the resources necessary to pay for their college education.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of UPike Today is tracked through the number of students enrolled in dual credit courses and by the number of schools/districts involved with the program. Before 2010, one local high school was involved and students were allowed to come to the campus to take a course or two during the school day. In the 2010–2011 school year, 86 students representing three high schools in three districts enrolled in at least one dual credit course. In August 2011, UPike enrolled 304 high school juniors and seniors in the dual credit program, with representation from eight high schools and six school districts. Eight different courses are offered for dual credit, varying in schools according to teacher qualifications.

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Valley View High School Medical Spanish Minor Initiative

Valley View High School
Valley View, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Implemented during 2009, the Valley View High School Medical Spanish Minor Initiative is a unique collaborative involving Spanish language programs at the high school, community college and university levels. It targets and motivates high-performing bilingual students to pursue a career in the health professions. The goal of the Initiative is to position students to face the challenge of eliminating language barriers that can significantly compromise the quality of care for Spanish-speaking patients and to become tomorrow’s bilingual and bicultural leaders in the health professions.

Beginning in the ninth grade, bilingual students undergo a rigorous academic program in Spanish language and literature that prepares them to pass the AP Spanish Language and Spanish Literature exams. In the 11th grade, students who have passed both exams enroll in a dual credit two-semester sequence of courses designed to build medical terminology in Spanish, to develop skills in medical interpreting and to develop patient interviewing skills in Spanish. The courses are accredited by South Texas College. In the 12th grade, students complete two upper-division courses at the University of Texas Pan American. These two advanced courses build translation and writing skills in Spanish, develop knowledge of health promotion and health education for Spanish-speaking communities, and introduce students to the basic concepts of public health.

As they gain levels of language proficiency that facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of advanced skills, students are exposed to personal experiences in dealing with language-based health disparities that further strengthen their motivation, investment and commitment to serving Spanish-speaking communities as health professionals.

MEASURING SUCCESS Progress toward the quantitative success of the Initiative is measured through an interinstitutional tracking system that follows students from high school and into higher education. To date, 42 Valley View students completed the Medical Spanish program before graduating high school. Of the first 26 students, 98 percent enrolled in an institution of higher learning the semester following graduation; and 58 percent of all 42 students enrolled in a four-year university immediately upon graduating, compared to 30 percent of the general Valley View student population.

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YouthBuild of North Central Montana
Montana State University-Northern
Havre, Mont.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The mission of YouthBuild of North Central Montana, located on the campus of Montana State University-Northern, is to provide each member of the program the knowledge and skills to be an active, positive and productive participant in their communities. The program employs a holistic approach to instruct at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 24 in academics, social skills, and metacognition and vocational (carpentry) skills. The program meets the young men and women at their current level and allows them to build on their successes. The program is integrated: academics support vocational needs; vocational classes reinforce social and employability skills; and all of the classes help to build the character and esteem of the youth.

The at-risk youth of rural Montana often come from poverty. Eighty-five percent of YouthBuild participants are Native Americans. More than likely, they will have been in trouble with the law and are dealing with an addiction problem. Homelessness and transient living are realities. They have very low self-esteem, little hope and no goals. Postsecondary education is a distant dream. YouthBuild offers hope by building interpersonal skills, employability skills, character and successes. Every day is the start of new opportunities.

YouthBuild has a low student-to-instructor ratio. Participants number 20 students per 20-week session. Staff are expected to participate in other classes in order to get to know the students in a different setting. The staff meet three times per week to discuss students, program improvements and program needs. The communication between staff members is a critical part of the success of the program.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of the program is demonstrated through the students’ achievements of HBI (Home Builders Institute) PACT (Pre-Apprenticeship Certification and Training) Carpentry certificates, the attainment of GEDs and the gains in literacy and numeracy scores as measured by the standardized TABE testing. Last year 88 percent (30 of 34) of the students who completed the program earned PACT carpentry certificates. Forty-four percent (12 of 27) of the students who needed a GED earned it. The total number of numeracy and literacy gains was 45, and the average daily attendance rate was 78 percent.

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GETTING IN
College Access Initiative
Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School
Washington, D.C.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The College Access Initiative serves some of the District of Columbia’s most under-resourced students; 99 percent are African American, and 79 percent qualified for federal free and reduced meals in 2010–2011. The aim is to ensure that every student who graduates from Thurgood Marshall Academy is thoroughly prepared to succeed in college. Support is consistent, beginning before students are even enrolled at Thurgood Marshall Academy, to their senior year and beyond. Designed to complement Thurgood Marshall Academy’s rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, the Initiative provides classes, resources, workshops and support for students, many of whom will be the first in their families to attend college. A full-time college counselor designs and implements the program, the goals of which are:

- 100% of graduating seniors will take the SAT at least once.
- 25% of graduates will complete an Advanced Placement course.
- 100% of seniors will participate in college access programs.
- 95% of families will complete the FAFSA financial aid paperwork.
- 67% of students will receive tuition scholarships or grants.
- 100% of seniors will be accepted to one or more colleges.

MEASURING SUCCESS The College Access Initiative has achieved remarkable outcomes:

- 61 out of 73 11th-graders took the SAT in 2010–2011.
- 46% of students graduating in 2011 successfully completed an AP course during their high school careers. Additionally, 40.7% of all students taking the AP Exam earned passing scores of 3, 4 or 5, and 36% of seniors earned passing scores.
- 100% of graduating seniors participated in College Access programming.
- The class of 2011 earned $3.3 million in scholarship funding from the DC College Success Foundation, their respective schools and private scholarship endowments.
- 100% of students received financial aid through FAFSA.
- In 2011, for the seventh year in a row, 100% of seniors were accepted to college.
- 90% of seniors in the classes of 2008–2010 enrolled in college within a year of graduating from Thurgood Marshall Academy.

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**College Access Program**

**Bottom Line**

Jamaica Plain, Mass.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** By age 24, 77 percent of students from the highest-income families earn at least a bachelor’s degree while only 10 percent of students from the lowest-income families achieve the same. To address this disparity, Bottom Line’s College Access Program guides low-income and first-generation students through the college application and financial aid processes. Counselors work one-on-one with students throughout the school year and build trusting relationships that allow Bottom Line to address any barriers students face. While the services each student receives depends on their personal needs, each student is offered guidance in five areas: lists, essays, applications, financial aid and college choice. The program’s ultimate goal is to help 100 percent of high school seniors get accepted to college. Most importantly, counselors work to place students in colleges at which they will be successful — colleges that suit their academic, financial and personal needs. Bottom Line’s College Access Program currently serves students in Boston and Worcester, Mass., and New York City.

Bottom Line’s program model is designed to provide students with consistent support from the beginning of the college application process until college graduation. Furthermore, students are supported one-on-one rather than in groups. By building trusting relationships with students during one-on-one meetings, counselors can personalize College Access Program services and guide students through any obstacles that arise. Lastly, the College Access Program focuses on helping students apply to and enroll in colleges that suit their academic, financial and personal needs. By focusing on college fit, counselors are able to help students attend colleges at which they are more likely to complete a degree.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** Bottom Line uses a custom online student database to track each student’s progress through the application and financial aid processes as well as to store pertinent information such as high school grades, SAT scores and tax returns. Using this database, Bottom Line identifies the next steps that students need to complete and track college acceptances and financial aid awards; monitors the success of its services; and tracks the acceptance rates of each high school class. The College Access Program achieved a 98 percent acceptance rate in Boston and a 100 percent acceptance rate in Worcester. Furthermore, each student completes the FAFSA. More importantly, many continue to receive support during college and complete a degree. Of the students who join the College Access Program, 74 percent complete a degree within six years.

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College Prep Program
Taylor High School
Taylor, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION With over 51 percent of the student population economically disadvantaged, one of Taylor High School’s goals is to assist its students with college admission and funding. The anchors of its programs are the Advanced Placement, Dual Credit and Early College programs, where students can graduate from high school with college-credit hours. Incoming ninth-graders of first-generation college families as well as low-socioeconomic students are also offered the opportunity to spend their high school years at an early college high school. Students spend their entire four years in preparation for postsecondary education, with all college courses paid for, and most graduate with about 60 college hours.

Taylor High School sponsors several events to further assist students in their decision-making and application process, including an evening and Saturday session for FAFSA completion (where childcare is provided) and a college fair where 54 four-year colleges, two-year colleges, technical schools and the military spend the afternoon with students and their parents. Through a partnership with Temple College, Taylor High School is a member of College Connection, where representatives from the college assist senior high school students with the common application and administer the ACCUPLACER® test so that the groundwork for college admission will be completed at school. Individually, counselors meet with every student in the fall to discuss their current progress, their goals for the future and what steps need to be taken to realize these goals. Free and reduced lunch students are offered waivers for the SAT, ACT and college admission. An SAT-prep class is offered for state credit. A “GO” Center helps students locate materials about test prep, admission, financial aid and college. All students can access the program Bridges, where students create online portfolios, four-year plans and résumés; prepare for job interviews; and conduct research about their college and career interests and goals.

MEASURING SUCCESS Statistics from the PSAT/NMSQT are used to help to populate Taylor High School’s Pre-AP and AP classes. AP participation rates and scores (as well as participation numbers), dual credit grades, exit-level TAKS scores, and the FAFSA and Common Application completion rates are monitored and analyzed.

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Compact for Success
San Diego State University
San Diego, Calif.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Sweetwater Union High School District in southern San Diego County has at least 55 percent low-income students and over 90 percent nonwhite enrollment. Initiated in 2000, Compact for Success is a guaranteed admission partnership between the Sweetwater District and San Diego State University (SDSU) with the goal of improving college attendance and completion rates. Students who meet five benchmarks during grades 7–12 are guaranteed admission to the university and are supported each year by core activities to prepare them to enter college. These benchmarks include maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA through the senior year of high school; completing all of the A–G course requirements for acceptance at SDSU; staying continuously enrolled in the Sweetwater District from ninth grade on; satisfying both the entry level math and English placement requirements; and taking the SAT or the ACT. Beginning in seventh grade, students complete motivational and monitoring programs, including campus visits to SDSU, recognition assemblies and financial aid events. Compact Advisers are assigned to each Sweetwater middle school. Once enrolled, students receive additional mentoring, tutoring, internship, advising and study abroad support through the SDSU-sponsored Compact Scholars Program. Financial aid is provided to those students who are eligible to receive it through a partnership with the Sweetwater Education Foundation, a nonprofit group founded by interested educators and community members. Over 26,738 Sweetwater students participated in Compact for Success activities in the 2009–2010 school year.

MEASURING SUCCESS Since the first class entered SDSU in 2006, more than 1,672 Sweetwater students have enrolled at San Diego State under the Compact, and over 400 students have received more than $1.6 million in scholarship awards. Applicants have grown from 789 to 1,747 in 2010 (122 percent). The number admitted has grown from 639 to 1,069 in 2010 (67 percent). The number of Compact scholars who graduated within four years of enrolling at SDSU is 20.9 percent compared to 27.7 percent for all other students admitted in fall 2006. The Compact scholars’ retention rate parallels that of other students. Overall, the percentage of students meeting the A–G college entrance requirements who graduate from the Sweetwater Union High School District has grown from 28 percent in 1999 to 37.4 percent in 2008.

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Estudios Universitarios a su Alcance — A College Education Is Within Your Reach: A Free Workshop in Spanish

Prince George’s County Public Schools
Adelphi, Md.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Estudios Universitarios a su Alcance/A College Education Is Within Your Reach is an annual event conducted in Spanish for Prince George’s County Public School (PGCPS) Latino families. The purpose of this program is to fill an information gap by providing an opportunity for Latino families to learn about college preparation, application and financial aid in a setting in which they feel comfortable and in a language they understand. The event, located on a university campus, includes a keynote speech in Spanish by a Latino community leader followed by separate workshops tailored to families with students in different grades. The workshop session topics are: Financial Aid/FAFSA for 12th-graders; the College Application process for ninth-, 10th- and 11th-graders; and Planning Early for Your College Dream for sixth- to eighth-graders. After the sessions, the program continues with a college and community agency fair geared toward Latino families, which includes 20+ colleges and 20+ community agencies. Families may also participate in a campus tour.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of the program is measured by attendance data that show a steady increase in the number of attendees. Approximately 960 Latino parents/students participated in the program in 2011, compared to approximately 75 attendees in 2001. In addition, each year, the event participants (students, parents, college representatives and community agency representatives) are asked to complete an evaluation of the event. Data collected from the most recent 2011 evaluations found that only one-third of families had received previous information on college preparation. However, a larger percentage of respondents with children at the higher grades (46 percent) noted that they had attended similar meetings, therefore showing that these families likely attended this event in a prior year when their child was at a lower grade level. Additional highlights of the evaluations from the 2011 program include: 96 percent of the attendees rated the program as “excellent” or “very good,” and 94 percent of attendees rated the grade-level session they attended as “useful, complete and well organized.” In addition, over 98 percent of the college and community agency representatives participating in the fair stated that the organization of the fair, number of parent/student contacts and feedback from the parents was “excellent” or “very good.”

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GO Center Program

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) GO Center Program’s mission is closely aligned with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s goal of “Closing the Gaps” by 2015. The GO Centers seek to provide students and parents with an increased understanding of the benefits of higher education and assist them in taking the necessary steps for postsecondary planning. TAMUCC GO Centers aim to build on this initiative, and to find ways to address the academic and social factors that prohibit students, especially minority and low-income students, from successfully transitioning into and obtaining a postsecondary education and/or career. The three main goals of the GO Centers are to: (1) increase the number of students who apply and receive admittance to institutions of higher education; (2) engage the parent community in higher education planning through the use of financial literacy; and (3) enhance the university’s efforts to help guide students on a successful journey toward higher education.

The GO Centers are strategically placed inside the high schools at the Career Center. College students work 20 hours in the GO Centers assisting high school students with college preparation, such as helping students fill out college applications or assisting students through financial aid packages and everything in between.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of the TAMUCC GO Centers is measured in several ways. At each participating high school, there are at least two TAMUCC students who serve as mentors. The college students work approximately 20 hours a week and are responsible for tracking the high school students. Intake reporting is completed for each high school student utilizing the GO Centers. This intake includes demographic information and tracks the progress the student makes with college preparation throughout the academic school year. Monthly reporting provides the cumulative total number of students assisted at each school. Since the beginning of the program, over 6,500 students and parents have been assisted with college, financial aid and scholarship applications as well as general information about higher education. Of the 6,500 students/parents served, 3,928 are Hispanic, and 2,317 students have enrolled at TAMUCC for at least one semester.

In 2009–2010, the GO Centers served a total of 2,361 students. Sixty-three percent of the total students served were Hispanic, 34 percent were first generation and 47 percent were classified as low income and first generation.

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LEDAscholars Program
Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America
New York, N.Y.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Each year, Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) recruits approximately 60 high school juniors from around the United States. LEDA specializes in identifying these outstanding students who may otherwise remain unrecognized by passive college recruitment efforts. To date, LEDA has worked with more than 350 Scholars; 61 additional Scholars joined the LEDA community in June 2011. Scholars have come from 28 states and the District of Columbia, and are low income, with a median family income of about $32,000. More than 60 percent of LEDA Scholars are first-generation college students and 62 percent are women. LEDA Scholars also represent diverse ethnic backgrounds.

LEDA Scholars spend the summer following the 11th grade immersed in the Aspects of Leadership Summer Institute, housed on the campus of Princeton University, one of LEDAs institutional partners. This summer program focuses on leadership development, writing instruction, standardized test preparation, college guidance, college visits and community building. During the Scholars’ senior year, guidance throughout the college admission, selection and financial aid processes is provided.

MEASURING SUCCESS The measurement of effectiveness begins with the tracking of the Scholars, from the application stage through their postgraduate pursuits (employment, graduate school, etc.) and soliciting feedback from participants. During the admission process, LEDA captures all information (academic, demographic, socioeconomic) that is submitted as part of the application process in order to gauge whether the target population is being served. During the college guidance process, updated academic information (GPAs, test scores) as well as college lists, admission outcomes and scholarship outcomes are recorded.

Overall:
- 27% of Scholars attended/are attending Ivy League schools.
- 48% of Scholars attended/are attending “Most Competitive Schools” (as classified by Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges).
- For the high school class of 2011, 48.5% of Scholars were accepted to at least one Ivy League college/MIT/Stanford.

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National College Advising Corps
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, N.C.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Through a nationwide consortium of colleges and universities, the National College Advising Corps (NCAC) aims to increase the number of low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students entering and completing higher education. By hiring and training recent graduates of partner institutions as full-time college advisers in underserved high schools, Advising Corps programs work in communities nationally to provide the advising and encouragement that students need to navigate college admission and financial aid. Advisers commit to serve for one or two years to help students plan their college searches, complete admission and financial aid applications, and enroll at schools that will serve them well.

Advisers focus their efforts on students who have the potential to enroll but may not otherwise attend because of real or perceived academic or financial barriers. NCAC’s near-peer advisers offer individual advice and encouragement and help students identify and apply to colleges that closely align with their interests and goals. The Corps currently employs 322 advisers and will serve over 110,000 students in 14 states this year.

MEASURING SUCCESS The work of NCAC focuses on the college enrollment measurable outcome, and both direct outcomes and research-validated inputs are being tracked. The comprehensive evaluation of NCAC began in 2009.

Initial results of the evaluation:
- NCAC has proven to be effective in both urban and rural markets. In Providence, R.I., NCAC treatment schools showed a 14.4% increase in college going compared to control schools. In rural North Carolina, a similar increase was found between treatment and control schools.
- Overall, an 8 to 12 percentage point increase in college enrollment rates can be concluded across all sites.
- NCAC high schools see an average increase of an additional $1 million in scholarship support for their college-going students.
- NCAC high schools show an increase in college visits, college fairs, FAFSA completion, SAT/ACT registration and school morale.

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Rural Alliance for College Success

Springdale, Wash.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Because of geography, small enrollments and persistent poverty, rural schools struggle to provide their students with the rigorous curriculum and guidance necessary to prepare all students for college access and success. The Rural Alliance for College Success seeks to make comprehensive school improvement centered on college success the rule rather than the exception. The Alliance is a coalition of 42 districts spread across eastern and central Washington and includes all of the two- and four-year colleges and universities in the region. Its guiding purpose is postsecondary success for all students. The CollegeKeys Compact serves as the blueprint for action for the Alliance, which seeks to improve its schools through a three-pronged strategy: share and replicate best practices, connect with statewide programs, and fill gaps in academic programs by developing and securing funding for high-quality, sustainable projects.

Task forces have been formed around the following priorities: K–16 alignment to assure academic readiness (includes Pre-AP, AP, dual enrollment and college in the classroom programs); family outreach to assist parents and students through the application and financial aid process; college and career guidance; data collection, analysis and use; and advocacy to disseminate results and to make the case for stable, public funding for programs and services that work. The task forces are composed of K–12, higher ed and nonprofit personnel.

MEASURING SUCCESS Successes have been seen regarding the design, development and funding of needed projects in year one of the project. In addition, other organizations have sought out the Alliance as partners for their own grants, e.g., Eastern Washington University, to increase teacher capacity for teaching American history via a Distance Master’s program serving rural teachers.

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Sacramento State 4 All
Valley High School
Sacramento, Calif.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION At Valley High School, every student who meets their A–G requirements is entitled to apply to California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) at no cost. The process for identifying students begins in May of their junior year. Student transcripts are reviewed to see if they meet A–G requirements. Students who need to remediate a requirement are consulted, and summer school is recommended. In August, the transcripts are again reviewed and senior schedules are modified to accommodate any remediation that needs to occur.

In September, a major push is made to get seniors to complete fee waivers for the SAT. Students are notified in October that they qualify for the Sacramento State 4 All program. They are given a copy of the paper application to use as a worksheet for completing the online application.

The event culminates in application workshops in mid-November. Through small-group sessions, Valley’s counselors and Sacramento State University’s admission officers ensure that all qualifying students complete an online application. Application fees for seniors are covered through fee waivers or are paid for by the school.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success of Sacramento State 4 All is measured through admission data reported by Sacramento State University. The main goal of the program is to ensure that all students who meet A–G requirements complete an application to CSUS.

Over the last five years, an average of 98 percent of students who completed their A–G requirements participated in the program. In the first year of the program, 42 percent of the senior class met their A–G requirements and completed an application. Last year, 57 percent were eligible and completed their applications for a 15 percent increase. The process of transcript reviews triggered the real success of the program — early identification and remediation of A–G course work. This has resulted in a progressively increasing college-going rate. Not only are more students applying, but over the last five years, there has been a 5 percent increase in students enrolled in CSUS alone.

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Senior Focus
Onate High School
Las Cruces, N.M.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Onate High School has a large population of first-generation, underrepresented minority students. Onate High School aims to meet one-on-one with 95 percent of its 452 seniors to offer support throughout the college admission process.

Services include:
- Discussion of college and financial aid options.
- Writing assistance for personal statements and résumés, and ongoing scholarship information.
- College fair at the high school with approximately 25 colleges participating. This program is mandatory for all seniors.
- Transportation to a local university three hours from Las Cruces for diversity and exposure to options.
- Identification of scholarships for underrepresented students, hand delivery of scholarship information to students and follow-up.
- Completion of a New Mexico State University and/or community college application by 95% of seniors.
- Completion of a senior portfolio by all seniors by 2015. Each portfolio will include a résumé, cover letter, two letters of recommendation, transcripts and acceptance letters to at least one local university or college, and a declared high school major.

MEASURING SUCCESS The goal is for 95 percent of seniors to complete a university or community college application. Onate High School has a strong partnership with New Mexico State University and Dona Ana Community College. Both schools will provide monthly reports on the status of Onate High School student applications.

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Single Stop MDC
Miami Dade College
Miami, Fla.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Miami Dade College (MDC) is the largest campus-based undergraduate institution of higher education in the country, with 68,376 credit students in fall 2010. Sixty-seven percent of MDC students are low income and 46 percent live below the poverty threshold. MDC’s credit-seeking student population is nontraditional. To extend college access to these individuals, MDC inaugurated Single Stop MDC in September 2010 at two of its largest campuses, in partnership with Single Stop USA, a nonprofit antipoverty organization. Single Stop’s four-part model combines benefits screening and counseling with tax preparation and legal and financial counseling, all in one location.

Single Stop targets low-income individuals unable to attend college because of financial and social barriers. Many do not realize that they may be eligible for public health insurance, food stamps, housing subsidies and other benefits. Prospective students meet one-on-one with trained counselors, who assess their needs and use cutting-edge software to determine eligibility for an array of benefits in 15 minutes, help complete the application process, and follow up so that students get the resources they need. The program also provides free on-site financial coaching to address issues such as debt management and budgeting; legal counseling to assist with eviction, immigration status and other problems; and tax preparation to ensure access to tax credits and to satisfy financial-aid filing requirements.

MEASURING SUCCESS In 2011, the program served a total of 2,026 students for a total value of benefits and services of $3.62 million:

- 1,072 students received benefits screenings and application assistance, for a value of $1.1 million.
- 954 students received tax preparation services, for total tax refunds of $1,205,745, an average of $1,332 per student.
- 195 students received legal services for issues such as family law and eviction prevention, worth $557,000.
- 347 students received financial counseling, worth $748,000.
- 243 students received assistance with FAFSA.

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Summer Bridge Programs
Hillsborough County Public Schools
Tampa, Fla.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION In its continued efforts to provide Hillsborough County Public School (HCPS) teachers with the tools and skills necessary to improve their instruction and create a college-going culture, the district created summer programs that are providing students with a pathway to college readiness starting at the middle school level. Since 2008, HCPS has offered a series of Summer Bridge programs that have become a springboard for students preparing to enter high school and for those on the brink of college acceptance. The district’s three innovative programs target students in the middle and high school levels regardless of socioeconomic status. Hillsborough Summer Scholars Academy, which targets rising eighth-graders, is modeled after the Duke TIPS program and works in partnership with the University of Tampa. Students participate in a one-week intensive program where they are taught by both high school teachers and college professors. Low-income students are awarded district-funded scholarships to cover tuition cost. Since its inception in 2008, GAP I (Go-AP) has been instrumental in helping incoming ninth-graders transition into high school. The one-week camp offers students an introduction into the rigors of honors and Advanced Placement courses while providing them with social building blocks that will lay the foundation for success as a high school student. HCPS and the University of South Florida have established a strong relationship that has resulted in the continued success of the GAP II Camps. GAP II is a one-week residential program where current high school students get to experience “college life.” Serving as the “final stage” of the district’s Summer Bridge programs, GAP II emphasizes the importance of AP and honors courses and provides students with an upper hand in the college selection process.

MEASURING SUCCESS Student participation in Pre-AP and AP course work has increased 36 percent in the past two years alone, with more than 8,000 students currently in AVID classes and increased numbers of students taking the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT. HCPS produced 68 semifinalists for the 2011 National Merit Scholarship Program, leading the state of Florida. In 2011, HCPS administered 32,712 AP Exams, with 12,372 of those exams resulting in a score of 3, 4 or 5. In 2011, HCPS administered AP Exams resulting in a 38 percent pass rate. Since 2006, HCPS has tripled the number of Hispanic and African American students taking AP Exams. In addition, HCPS has increased the number of students in dual enrollment classes. In the 2009 cohort of 1,378 GAP I students, 3,308 AP classes have been taken to date.

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GETTING THROUGH
Academic Developmental Program
Pennsylvania Institute of Technology
Media, Pa.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The mission of the Academic Developmental Program (ADP) is to provide students with individualized learning and stronger academic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. ADP seeks to:

- Utilize the dedicated faculty and effective one-on-one tutoring and counseling to provide students with an environment that substantially increases the degree of academic success and enhances personal growth.
- Provide an emphasis on personalized experience and ensure that all committed learners have the proficiency to maintain the academic rigor, integrity and accomplishment of learning outcomes simultaneous with their programs of study.
- Promote an environment in which students are encouraged to increase their level of concentration and focus, leading the way to increased confidence and motivation through continuous personal learning.
- Provide students with the development of stronger test-taking strategies, study skills and additional educational resources required to succeed in their programs of study.

MEASURING SUCCESS ADP assesses each student by the ACCUPLACER Placement Examination. The computerized exam measures the student’s skill level in the areas of reading, English/writing and mathematics.

The results of these tests, along with a subsequent interview with an admission counselor, determine if the student will be enrolled in ADP or is qualified for immediate enrollment in the associate degree or certificate programs. ADP has two levels: Level I students need only minor remediation, while Level II students require more extensive developmental course work.

The premise upon which the Academic Developmental Program was established is that a student entering college with only minor deficiencies can benefit from a one-on-one tutoring program where the learning is customized to his or her specific needs. Therefore, the student is not financing a developmental course for an entire three-month semester when he or she just needs a minor brush-up.

As a direct result of the Academic Developmental Program, the School of Professional Programs course retention and program completion rates have risen close to 20 percent from 2006 to 2008. The ADP program was successfully replicated at the Philadelphia Center in February 2006, with course retention rates and program completion rates of 81 percent.

A total of 1,200 students have completed ADP. Since the establishment of the Academic Developmental Program in 2005, the program has been instrumental in retaining over $10,848,000 in revenue for the college.

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**Advising Across the Campus**  
**Marian Court College**  
Swampscott, Mass.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** Marian Court College (MCC), a two-year, private, commuter college, enrolls low-income, first-generation students who live on the north shore of Massachusetts. One of the college's goals is to provide academic, financial and personal support to all enrolled students.

Over 95 percent of MCC students benefit from some type of financial aid, and 80 percent of those students come from families who have zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC). All 150 students receive individualized attention from dedicated faculty and staff. MCC has a ratio of 15:1 with a graduation rate of 64 percent (versus 13 percent at peer institutions) and a 70 percent transfer rate to four-year institutions. These significant success rates can be directly attributed to Advising Across the Campus.

Five full-time faculty, in addition to their regular office hours, each have on average 20 advisees. MCC faculty rely on their life experiences as practitioners to advise students on course selections, career exploration and transfer options upon completion of their two-year degrees. At MCC, advising is a decision-making process wherein students realize their maximum educational potential through scheduled meetings with their adviser. The advising is ongoing throughout the academic year, and it is the responsibility of both student and adviser to have effective communications. These relationships continue well beyond the MCC years as faculty then become mentors.

The college also has quarterly Student Academic Performance Plans (SAPP) meetings where at-risk students are identified and procedures are established to offer extra support. SAPP meetings include the academic dean, registrar, CFO, bursar, academic counselor, financial aid director and admissions director. SAPP meetings are proactive rather than reactive to students’ needs.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** As a specific outcome of faculty advising and quarterly SAPP meetings, MCC realized an increased retention rate of 63 percent in fall 2010 to 70 percent in fall 2011. The college also observed that graduates are attending a broader range of colleges upon graduation from MCC than in previous years.

Marian Court College graduation surveys indicate that the number one reason for student satisfaction is the interaction with faculty. This interaction, whether through the classroom, advising or community service, gives students a sense of belonging and often lasts for several years after graduation. There are no graduate or teaching assistants at MCC, and students respect and appreciate the opportunity to forge strong relationships that last for many years. The students also value the small class sizes and the confidence they find to continue their studies (70 percent earn a bachelor’s degree).

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Carolina Firsts
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, N.C.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Carolina Firsts is a university-wide campaign to encourage the enrollment, retention and graduation of first-generation college students (FGCS). Being a FGCS is one of the strongest predictors of failure to persist at Carolina. The goals of Carolina Firsts are to celebrate FGCS successes, provide examples of successful FGCS and ensure FGCS are aware of and fully utilize the support services on campus. Carolina Firsts reaches out to students and their families throughout the university journey from acceptance to orientation, through the first-year experience until graduation and the pinning ceremony, when first-generation students wear “firsts” pins with their caps and gowns. Carolina Firsts includes university programs and initiatives, a student organization, and educating the campus community at large on the contributions, stories and unique experiences of FGCS at Carolina. Nearly 20 percent of the undergraduates at Carolina are FGCS, recognized as “Carolina Firsts” and highlighted as a point of pride for the institution. This strengths-based model encourages students to view their first-generation experience as an asset and not a limitation.

MEASURING SUCCESS Carolina Firsts’ success is quantitatively measured by the graduation rates of first-generation college students. Since beginning the Carolina Firsts campaign, the percentage of FGCS students graduating within five years has increased from 75 percent in 2007 to 79 percent currently.

Progress toward meeting program goals is also measured through student focus groups and surveys. A thematic analysis of data found that students who participate in the Carolina Firsts program have developed an “enhanced sense of pride” as well as a “sense of belonging” at the university. This finding is especially significant because the literature on retention has demonstrated that a sense of belonging among college students is related to increased institutional commitment and academic motivation. Analysis of qualitative data also demonstrated the presence of “transformative learning experiences” among program participants in the student organization. Additionally, students have reported that participating in Carolina Firsts programming has increased their feelings of connectedness between the home environment and the school environment.

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Designing Our Community (DOC)
Montana State University
Bozeman, Mont.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Designing Our Community (DOC) is a Native American–serving engineering program within the College of Engineering at Montana State University (MSU). DOC has been in existence since 2003 and has become one of the nation’s leading Native American engineering programs through initiatives that recruit, retain and graduate Native American students in the fields of engineering, engineering technology and computer science. DOC serves seven tribal reservations within Montana and many other tribes in the Northern Rocky Mountain region of the United States. Through the efforts of DOC, in the last eight years, the number of Native American students majoring in engineering, engineering technology and computer science at MSU has risen, producing more Native Americans entering the workforce in these fields. Main initiatives used to recruit, retain and graduate Native American students include: Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), a service learning seminar course, a summer bridge program, Teaching Engineering Applications in Math and Science (TEAMS), a minority engineering student center (EMPower Student Center) and a student adviser (the DOC Program Director). DOC continues to be funded by both federal agencies and corporate foundations because of its success with its Native American students.

MEASURING SUCCESS Designing Our Community’s success is measured in the enrollment numbers and percentages of Native American students into the College of Engineering (COE), as well as the college graduation rates of the Native American students. COE’s total Native American enrollment in 2003, when DOC began, was 35 students. This number increased to 63 students in 2010, with another 35 entering in fall 2011. The percentage of Native American students in the College of Engineering also increased with each year of DOC’s existence, moving from 1.7 percent in 2003 to 3 percent currently. In 2003, COE graduated a total of two Native American students. Over the past four years the COE has averaged seven Native American students graduating each year; in spring 2011, a record number of 10 Native American students graduated from the COE. DOC has also maintained COE retention rates above the campus rate for Native American students (now 70 percent).

DOC has increased College of Engineering and Montana State University visibility at reservation communities. It has also established a reputation for supporting Native American students by building a “community” for Native students. Designing Our Community connects Native American students and communicates the importance of engineering and engineering degrees.

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EDGE — Engage-Develop-Guide-Empower

Thomas College
Waterville, Maine

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Thomas College EDGE program provides first-generation students with an opportunity to build early successes in college. Students participating in the program are retained into the second year at a substantially higher rate (78 percent versus 57 percent) than students of the same admission profile who did not participate. The program’s goal is to increase the number of first-generation students persisting to the second year. EDGE consists of two primary elements:

- An intensive, early 3-credit course.
- Proactive academic coaching through the first year.

The intensive, early 3-credit course is a quantitative analysis course required for graduation. The course was chosen for the EDGE program because it demonstrated a positive impact on retention when offered as part of the general education curriculum. Proactive academic coaching, which also demonstrated a positive retention impact when offered on a voluntary basis, also continues to demonstrate value. By maintaining ongoing support relationships with students, academic coaches are able to intervene with students quickly and effectively.

Students who successfully complete the summer intensive element earn a stipend toward the cost of fall semester books. Students who continue to meet with their academic coaches during the fall semester and who maintain academic eligibility to return for the spring semester earn a second stipend toward the cost of their spring books.

MEASURING SUCCESS The purpose of the Thomas College EDGE program is to increase the number of first-generation college students persisting to the second year of college. To date, 100 percent of participating students have successfully completed the intensive course element of the EDGE, including both 2010 and 2011 participants. EDGE participants completed the fall semester, attended the spring semester and returned for a second year of college at higher rates than the comparison cohort. In addition, EDGE students appear to have a slightly higher mean GPA and maintain good academic standing at a higher rate than members of the nonparticipant cohort. Both of these indicators suggest that the academic support components of EDGE have positively impacted participating students’ overall performance.

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EOE First-Year Interest Groups — Success in Engineering Starts Here

The University of Texas at Austin

Austin, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Equal Opportunity in Engineering (EOE) Program’s First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs) are designed to increase the retention rate of first-year minority students in the Cockrell School of Engineering (CSE). Offered throughout the fall and spring semesters, EOE FIGs assist students by building a support network that includes peers, upper-division students, faculty and professional engineers. EOE FIGs were initiated to address the following challenges: (1) the gap in retention rates between minority and nonminority students in the Cockrell School of Engineering; (2) the large percentage of African American, Hispanic and Native American students with limited exposure to strategies for academic success in higher education; and (3) the large percentage of African American, Hispanic and Native American engineering students with limited knowledge about available academic resources.

EOE FIGs provide active support and prepare students to be academically successful in the Cockrell School of Engineering. The goals and objectives for EOE FIGs include the following: (1) develop a community of learners who feel connected to their peers, faculty and staff; (2) help students make a successful transition from high school to university learning; (3) help students form study groups; (4) increase student knowledge about engineering, strategies for academic success and university services/resources; and (5) increase the number of African American, Hispanic and Native American students who receive degrees from the Cockrell School of Engineering.

MEASURING SUCCESS Since fall 2003, 652 first-year students have enrolled in FIGs. In fall 2010, first-time-in-college students included 259 underrepresented minorities, 71 percent of whom were registered for a FIG in the Cockrell School. Thirty-one percent of the incoming minority engineering students were enrolled in an EOE FIG for fall 2010.

To date, 75 percent of EOE FIG participants have either graduated from or are still enrolled in the Cockrell School of Engineering. The average one-year retention rate in engineering for EOE FIG participants is 92 percent, 11 points above the college average. The average two-year retention rate in engineering for EOE FIG participants is 78 percent, 12 points above the college average. The average six-year graduation rate in engineering for EOE FIG participants, 52 percent, matches the college average.

FIG participants are invited to complete program evaluations mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected and used to evaluate the effectiveness of EOE FIGs and to direct future efforts to enhance the program.

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Native Pathways to Success — Supplemental College Orientation Program

Montana State University
Bozeman, Mont.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Montana State University (MSU) is the land-grant institution in the state of Montana with a student enrollment of 14,218 students and a Native student enrollment of 549. To address Native student needs, MSU conducts a two-day supplemental orientation called Native Pathways to Success for incoming first-year Native American/Alaska Native college students. The goals of the program are to assist incoming Native students in making early connections with support staff and to develop skills for a smooth transition into university life. Native Pathways offers workshops in time management, goal setting, study skills, financial aid and budgeting, and team building. Students are informed of special support programs for Native students such as peer advising/mentoring and personal and group counseling. A special and unique component of the Native Pathways program is cultural attunement: traditional Native meals, talks from Native mentors/role models, “Talking Circle” (group sharing) and a charge from a tribal elder. Such cultural activities support Native parental and community values that are the strength of traditional Native cultures.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success is measured, in part, by the retention rate between fall and spring semesters and between the first and second years. The campus and the Montana University System track graduation rates and have access to similar data from peer institutions. Other measures include rates of participation in the American Indian Council (student organization) and campus and departmental support programs (such as tutoring, peer mentoring and community engagement).

It has not yet been determined if the special orientation program can be successfully linked to a higher graduation rate for Native students; however, there was an increase in retention of first-year Native students from 69.8 percent in 2009 to 76 percent in 2010 and a 10 percent increase in Native student enrollment from fall 2010 to fall 2011.

MSU employs two surveys, one that assesses student opinions about the value of the Native Pathways program and one that parents complete. Anecdotally, students and parents value and like the program. During spring 2011, participants in the first Pathways orientation program were interviewed to determine if the program addressed needs that they believed, in retrospect, were important. The sense of the students was that Pathways provided the basis for their academic and social successes. In addition, more students participated in cultural, social and educational endeavors than in previous first-year cohorts, as measured by class attendance, participation in American Indian Council activities and “Talking Circle.”

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Pacific Islander Partnerships in Education
University of Washington
Seattle, Wash.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Pacific Islander Partnerships in Education (PIPE) project is a college mentorship program conceived to proactively address the low retention and graduation rates of Pacific Islander students at the University of Washington. Its primary mission is to enable and sustain an environment for underrepresented students in a large university that will be conducive to students’ well-being so that they are able to find meaning in their college experiences, graduate and move on to productive careers. This is done through peer mentorship and collective studying, as well as socializing and community service, that spring from a Pacific Islander traditional culture that values family and communal relationships, respect for one another and one’s traditions and giving back or being compassionate and generous. PIPE has been effective because students experiencing their culture on campus tend to find meaning in their classes and eventually become more successful students. All types of students are welcomed into the PIPE program, but it specifically targets low-income and first-generation Pacific Islander students.

MEASURING SUCCESS PIPE’s success is measured by the growing numbers of students graduating from the University of Washington, the increase of study table members and the relationships built within the community. PIPE strives to build off of Pacific Islander traditions such as community growth rather than the Western idea of individual success. When students find their communities in unfamiliar institutions, their culture becomes a source of empowerment, which helps them become successful in their college careers. The baseline measurement of success in quantitative terms is the number of participants in the program and the number who graduate, both of which have been increasing since the inception of PIPE.

Advisers regularly meet with mentors and mentees to check on their academic and social well-being. Mentors are required to always be in dialogue with their mentees. PIPE participants are asked about the quality of their experiences via exit interviews. As evidence of successful efforts at student retention and graduation for Pacific Islanders, PIPE won a campus-based Diversity Award, a recognition given to no more than two campus units every year. This was testimony to how PIPE is valued for its work with underrepresented students, sense of innovation and resourcefulness, and the extent to which students’ lives are transformed. The program has also made possible the start of other related mentorship programs such as Adelante (for Chicano/Latino students), Yehawali (for Native American students) and Ubuntu (for African and African American students). All success stories are passed on orally, as befitting Pacific Islander tradition.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) Program is a national fellowship program that promotes diversity by preparing undergraduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds to get through college. Over the last 30 years, PPIA has provided a rigorous summer undergraduate academic program during the junior year that is combined with real-world professional development training to strengthen and support students’ undergraduate education and completion. PPIA's support extends beyond college by creating a bridge to graduate school opportunities. PPIA alumni go on to some of the most prestigious U.S. graduate schools of public policy and international affairs and pursue rewarding careers serving the public good. PPIA university consortium members provide critical financial support to diverse and low-income students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend graduate school. For over 30 years, PPIA has been at the forefront of promoting diversity in public service and nurturing the full potential of students as leaders and change agents in all sectors of society. PPIA is one of the largest diversity initiatives at the postgraduate education level in the history of the United States, and it is the largest such initiative in professional public service to support master’s and Ph.D. degrees for students from diverse backgrounds.

MEASURING SUCCESS The PPIA Program’s success is measured by the number of alumni who complete their undergraduate education and continue on to complete their graduate education. Success is also measured by having alumni take on leadership positions in government, nonprofits, international organizations and other institutional settings and make a positive contribution to society. A goal of the PPIA Program is to promote the inclusion and full participation of underrepresented groups in public service and to advance their leadership roles throughout civic institutions serving domestic and international affairs. The PPIA National Office is currently working collaboratively with Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, through the Princeton Survey Research Center, and has launched a major survey of the over 3,000 alumni of the PPIA program. One important goal for this survey is to gather evidence about the impact of the program to help grow and strengthen PPIA. An analysis and report is expected in 2012.

The PPIA Program successfully maintains over 30 nationwide university partners that serve as consortium members. These consortium members provide financial support and scholarships to PPIA alumni so that they can continue to graduate school and ultimately pursue careers as public leaders, policymakers and change agents.

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Retention Outreach Team
Georgian Court University
Lakewood, N.J.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION At Georgian Court University, the full-time first-year students’ classes are made up of at least 50 percent first-generation students. Forty-nine percent of all students are Pell eligible (adjusted family income of $40K or less). The Retention Outreach Team is a collaborative initiative between the dean of students office, assistant dean for student success, counseling, financial aid, advising and career services. The goal of the team is to provide comprehensive outreach to first-generation first-year students at highest risk of institutional departure by providing the skills, knowledge and support required for college “survival” and success. Students are identified by way of the electronic early warning system, Student Support Service (SSS — a federally funded TRiO program for first-generation, low-income students), and the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF — a state-funded program that recruits and enrolls first-generation students from underserved and economically distressed high schools). Students are also given an intent-to-leave survey administered through their First Year Seminar class.

MEASURING SUCCESS The efforts of the Academic Early Warning System and the Retention Outreach Team have had a positive impact on both overall retention rates, as well as that of first-generation students. Almost 75 percent of students referred to the Academic Early Warning system remain in good standing. The efforts of the Retention Outreach Team resulted in 60 percent of students who stated that they intended to leave the university being retained from the first to the second year. In addition, 80 percent of students identified as at-risk of leaving due to low institutional commitment and lack of involvement were retained from the first to the second year. The retention rate for students is reported as high as an 84 percent first-year retention rate for EOF and an 85 percent retention rate for those in the SSS program.

As a whole, Georgian Court is a nurturing and supportive environment for first-generation students, as evidenced by the university’s commitment to EOF and SSS targeting first-generation and low-income students. In 2008–2009, 83 percent of SSS students achieved good academic standing. When calculated over a five-year period, the average five-year graduation rate of SSS students is 53 percent, and the average six-year graduation rate is 64 percent, about the statewide percentage. The university’s most recent five-year graduation rate for all first-generation students (56 percent) is identical to that of the general student population. First-generation, low-income students are intentionally nurtured and encouraged to take on key leadership roles on campus. In fact, the current SGA president is a student who falls within this category and has become a model for other first-generation, low-income students.

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Rowdy Cents — Making Sense of Money and Time Matters
The University of Texas at San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** In response to the need for personal finance and time management awareness at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), the Graduation Initiative, an office devoted to increasing the number of UTSA undergraduates completing degrees, set forth a plan to help students better manage their money and time to graduation.

Paramount in the program’s goals was the desire to have an engaging, attractive, interesting and fun website to deal with the relatively unexciting topics of personal finance and time management. The vision for Rowdy Cents — Making Sense of Money and Time Matters is to increase students’ personal finance literacy awareness so they will better manage their money and time while in school. Additionally, woven into the online program is the concept that “time is money” and that graduating sooner, rather than later, will net greater earning potential, less debt and greater hopes of a brighter and more financially rewarding future.

**MEASURING SUCCESS** Using Google Analytics, the following usage statistics were collected from the Rowdy Cents — Making Sense of Money and Time Matters website between August 2010 and August 2011:

- Linkages to Rowdy Cents from other websites increased from nine to 13.
- Website pages were viewed on 15,042 occasions by 5,879 visitors.
- There was an average of 16 visits per day, viewing 2.27 pages per visit with an average of one minute and two seconds of time spent per visit.
- Returning visitors made up 88% of the traffic to the site, while 12% were new visitors.

Furthermore, each year, the Graduation Initiative is invited to participate as guest lecturers in first-year student seminar courses offered by the Learning Communities program at UTSA. Instructors augment their units on money management with the Rowdy Cents tools and resources. The Learning Communities program is particularly popular with first-generation college students, assisting students by providing them with a bridge between the two worlds of high school and college.

Based on user feedback collected using Survey Monkey, consistently 100 percent of respondents say the website was helpful. The most popular reasons they give for visiting the site include budgeting, money-saving tips and setting financial goals.

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University College
Langston University
Langston, Okla.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The University College (UC) of Langston University is the “umbrella” under which all first-year students and sophomores reside until they reach their junior year or complete 60 semester hours toward a degree program. At Langston, approximately 95 percent of the students are first-generation college attendees. As the academic home for first-year students and sophomores, the UC is the place for students to go when they have unanswered questions; are registering for a new semester; need resources such as a tutor, a mentor, a study group or help learning how to get organized; or require a place to study. It is where students go when they need guidance; wish to explore career possibilities; need a referral to medical or mental health facilities, directions to the library, course planning, techniques; or want a system for budgeting student loans or information about anything relating to their college experience. The UC is a place of resources. A staff of eight academic advisers, the director of retention and a coordinator of retention, the coordinator of the associate degree program, the financial literacy adviser and the assessment and career services specialist reach out to students. All UC staff teach at least one course, either Academic Achievement (academic skills for associate degree students) or Personal and Social Development (PSD, a required course for all first-year students), and each member of the UC staff has the opportunity to become acquainted with a small group of new students. In addition to tutors and small study groups, advisers also conduct informational sessions with first-year students in their dorms, after traditional office hours. Referrals are made to basic skills labs (three of them across campus) or to the UC Learning Lab.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success is measured in terms of retention rates, and all described strategies are targeting the retention of students and the strengthening of their respective individual prospects for graduating, either with an associate or a bachelor’s degree. From school year 2009-10 to 2010-11, the retention rate was 65 percent, a modest but positive departure from the prior year’s rate of 62 percent.

The UC Learning Lab has become more popular, with a 60 percent increase from October 2010 to September 2011. It is anticipated that the usage percentage will rise, and that use of the online A+ Learning System will result in improved academic performance of users.

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Previous Innovation Award Winners

2010

GETTING READY:
- Hispanic Youth Institute – Hispanic College Fund, Washington, DC
- Advancing College Opportunity – Stark Education Partnership, OH
- Connecting Aspirations to a Plan – South Portland High School, ME
- Destination College: It’s Elementary! – Orange County Public Schools, FL
- College Conexion – Our Lady of the Lake University, TX
- Getting Ready – Punahou School, HI

GETTING IN:
- Reach for College! in Schools – Reach for College!, Washington, DC
- Admission Possible – Admission Possible, MN
- Dual Enrollment Initiative – Eastern Connecticut State University, CT
- Close the Deal – Jefferson County Public Schools, KY
- Sophomore Summit – Klein Forest High School, TX
- Registration for a College-Ready Transcript for All – North Central High School, WA

GETTING THROUGH:
- Program for Students with Cumulative GPAs of Less than 2.0 – Westchester Community College, NY
- Gen-1 Theme House – University of Cincinnati, OH
- Learning Outcomes Initiative – Miami Dade College, FL
- Compass Learning Community – University of Central Oklahoma, OK
- Chico Student Success Center – California State University Chico, CA

2011

GETTING READY:
- SEO Scholars Program – Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, NY
- Blueprint: College – Ohio State University, OH
- College Readiness for All: A System-wide Approach – Hillsborough County Public Schools, FL
- Dream Project – University of Washington, WA

GETTING IN:
- ISA College Prep/Acceptance – Wyandanch Memorial High School, NY
- Vandy Fan for a Day – Vanderbilt University, TN

GETTING THROUGH:
- Onward College Support Program – Harlem Educational Activities Fund, NY
- Purdue Promise – Purdue University, IN
- College Success Program – Bottom Line, MA
- Student Transition Empowerment Program – George Mason University, VA
- College Persistence Program – College Forward, TX
- College Life 101 – University of Nevada, Reno, NV
About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 5,900 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

The Advocacy & Policy Center

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board’s principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

advocacy.collegeboard.org