



FISCAL YEAR 2018
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

FOCUS AREA:
ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND COMPLETION



January 2020

Underrepresented Groups Report
Fiscal Year 2018

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Underrepresented Groups Report
Fiscal Year 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Underrepresented college students have been traditionally excluded from full participation in our society and its institutions. Illinois statute defines underrepresented students in higher education as citizens or permanent resident aliens who are minorities, including African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaskan Native, women, and persons with disabilities. On January 1, 2012, the definition was expanded to include first-generation college students, described as the first in their immediate family to attend an institution of higher education ([Public Act 097-0588](#)). Through the Underrepresented Groups Report, community colleges have an opportunity to report on initiatives and strategies aimed at increasing participation and achievement among minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and first-generation students. Underrepresented Groups Report production is an important annual statutory responsibility ([Public Act 099-0143](#)) for community colleges and universities. Each community college provides a report detailing current activities and programs aimed at strengthening participation and progress among traditionally underrepresented student populations. Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) staff members summarize the information provided by the individual colleges and forward it to officials from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) who combine it with responses from the public universities and forward it to the Governor and General Assembly.

This year's report begins with an overview of the demographic characteristics of community college students, completers, and faculty. External comparative information is referenced where available. The next portion of the report explores the current year's focus topic: *Access, Affordability, and Completion*.

Illinois community colleges are open-access and multi-purpose institutions that seek to prepare both traditional college-age students and nontraditional students for further education and the workforce. A number of student success measures can be applied to community college students. Graduation rates, for example, is a success measure that informs how colleges are performing in their efforts to graduate individuals who begin their studies pursuing a traditional full-time enrollment pattern. The consequence of using the federal formula of calculating graduation rates, which only includes first-time, full-time students who graduate within 150 percent of catalog program time, is that many community college students are excluded from this calculation. As a result, students who continue their studies on a part-time basis, those who transfer to four-year colleges before receiving an associate degree, and those that received courses to directly compete in the workforce before graduation, are not included in the rate. Furthermore, many high school graduates who come from low-income families or are first-generation college goers may encounter life circumstances, such as financial constraints, transportation and child care needs, that can hinder their goal to graduate within a traditional timeframe. Therefore, incorporated are other student success measures, including advancement rates and adjusted retention rates that more accurately reflect the overall quality of student learning and intellectual involvement; how well integrated students are in campus life; and how effectively a campus delivers what students expect and need based on their specific education goals. Measures of success within this report reflect graduation, transfer, and retention.

Summaries of strategies for improving access, affordability, and completion through services, programs, or initiatives that positively impact student performance at selected community colleges are featured in the second half of this year's report.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Illinois Community College System demographic data on credit students are gathered through the Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) submission. These data illustrate that Illinois community colleges serve a broad cross-section of the general population. Census data are provided when possible to offer an external reference point for reviewing the enrollment, completion, and staffing data. Additional analyses about the race/ethnicity distribution of community college credit students for selected broad program areas (PCS) are included.

Disability Status

During fiscal year 2018, Illinois community colleges served 18,006 students with disabilities (3.5 percent of all credit enrollments). This figure represents the number of individuals (unduplicated) who self-identified their disability status through the Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Submission. The majority of students with disabilities (N = 16,305) used supportive services offered by colleges. Only one out of ten students with disabilities (N = 1,701) did not use supportive services during fiscal year 2018.

Based on the unduplicated count of students with disabilities who self-reported and used supportive services, specific disabilities identified were learning, including ADHD, (55.5 percent of reported disabilities); auditory (2.8 percent); medical, including acquired brain injury and systemic/chronic health problems, (9.6 percent); mobility (3.2 percent); psychological (23.9 percent); visual (2.1 percent); and other, including speech/language impairment, deaf-blind, and developmental, (2.9 percent). There are also students with disabilities who self-identify, but do not actually use the extra services colleges can provide. Based on a duplicated count of student usage, services were provided for 90.6 percent of reported disabilities. Of those services used, based on unduplicated count, more than one-half (55.5 percent) were used by students with learning disabilities, including ADHD (2018 Student Disability Table).

Census figures show a substantial number of Illinoisans with disabilities. In the 2018 Illinois census estimate, among Illinois' civilian non-institutionalized population, 5.5 percent between 18 and 34 years of age and 10.6 percent between 35 and 64 years of age had a disability. Nearly one fourth (23.7 percent) of the Illinois population age 16 and over with disabilities was employed ([2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates](#) Table [S1810](#) and [S1811](#)).

Gender

The overall Male/Female distribution of students in the Illinois Community College System typically fluctuates little from year to year. Females comprised 54.0 percent of the student population in fiscal year 2018. The percentage of Male students has averaged 46.7 percent over the past five years. Census data show little change in the proportion of Females in Illinois with 50.8 percent estimated in 2018 versus 51.0 percent in 2010 and 2000 ([ICCB FY 2018 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report](#), [U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#), [U.S. Census 2010](#), enter

Illinois, [2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Table S0101](#)). From 2014 to 2018, the number of Female students completing degree programs decreased 8.5 percent, while the number of Female students enrolled in Illinois community college credit courses decreased 20.1 percent ([ICCB FY 2014 and FY 2018 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report](#)).

Age

The average age of Illinois community college credit students was 28.2 years in fiscal year 2018, which is a slight decrease from fiscal year 2017 (28.7). The median age was 23.0 years in fiscal year 2018, which is also lower than the previous year (23.4). According to the 2018 population estimates, the median age of all Illinoisans was estimated to be 38.3 years. The latest census estimates also show that over three-quarters (77.6 percent) of all Illinoisans were 18 years of age or above ([ICCB FY 2018 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report](#) and [2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Table S0101](#)).

State of Illinois' Race/Ethnicity Distribution

State census data show that Illinois' population was 12.74 million in 2018 compared to 12.83 million in 2010, and 12.42 million in 2000 ([U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#), [U.S. Census 2010](#), enter Illinois, and [2019 Index of Need Table 1](#)). These detailed Illinois census data indicate that the state's population grew 2.6 percent between 2000 and 2018. The state population, however, decreased 0.7 percent between 2010 and 2018. Illinois' 2018 census estimate shows that Whites/Caucasians remained the largest race/ethnicity group. However, minority populations were responsible for Illinois' overall population growth from 2000 to 2018, as the percent of Caucasians decreased from 73.5 percent to 70.9 percent of the population ([U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#) and [2019 Index of Need Table 1](#)).

The race/ethnicity data collection methodology changed for the 2000 census and continued in the 2018 census data. The 2018 census data showed that 2.0 percent of all Illinoisans identified themselves as two or more races. These individuals are included in the "Some Other Race**" column in Table 1. The question on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity was asked independently from an individual's race beginning in 2000 and is reflected in the 2018 data in the table. These duplicated Hispanic/Latino population counts show substantial growth, from 1,530,262 in 2000 to 2,208,411 in 2018 ([U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#) and [2019 Index of Need Table 1](#)).

Illinois' largest minority group in 2000 was African American and in 2018 was Hispanic/Latino. Compared to 2000, African American counts in 2018 decreased from 15.1 percent to 14.6 percent, whereas Asian American counts increased from 3.4 percent to 5.9 percent, Native American from 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent, and Hispanic/Latino from 12.3 percent to 17.3 percent.

Table 1
State of Illinois Race/Ethnicity Distribution (Census)

	<i>White/ Caucasian</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Asian* American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Some Other Race**</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino*** (Duplicated)</i>
2000	73.5%	15.1%	3.4%	0.2%	7.7%	12.3%
2010	71.5%	14.5%	4.6%	0.3%	9.0%	15.8%
2018	70.9%	14.6%	5.9%	0.6%	8.0%	17.3%

*Includes Pacific Islander

**Includes two or more races

*** Respondents identify their race; they also identify themselves in terms of Latino/Hispanic ethnicity

SOURCE OF DATA: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 & 2019 Index of Need, Table 1.

Race/Ethnicity Distribution in Community College System Credit Programs

Overall in fiscal year 2018, minority students accounted for 45.4 percent of the individuals enrolled in credit coursework at Illinois community colleges whose ethnicity was known. Race/ethnicity classifications are aligned with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards. Fiscal year 2018 data show that minority representation was

Students identifying themselves as Hispanic/Latino—116,866 in fiscal year 2018—accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments in the Illinois Community College System.

similar to the prior year (fiscal year 2017 = 44.1 percent). Fiscal year 2018 results are above the five-year average (43.0 percent). Students identifying themselves as Hispanic/Latino students—116,866 in fiscal year 2018—became the largest minority group in 2000, but became the second largest minority group in fiscal year 2012 behind African American students. In fiscal years 2013 through 2018, Hispanic/Latino students were again the largest minority group. African American students—67,101 in fiscal year 2018—constitute the second largest minority group in the latest data. The fiscal year 2018 proportionate representation by Hispanic/Latino students was higher by about one percentage point in comparison to the prior year (23.4 percent in fiscal year 2018 versus 22.3 percent in fiscal year 2017), while the proportional representation by African American students was slightly lower in comparison to the prior year (13.5 percent in fiscal year 2018 versus 13.6 percent in fiscal year 2017). Over the longer term—over the past five years—a decrease in the Illinois Community College System’s minority enrollments was noted among students identifying themselves as Pacific Islander (-72.0 percent), Native American (-60.8 percent), African American (-35.2 percent), and Asian American (-15.9 percent), while an increase was noted among students identifying themselves as Nonresident Alien (154.9 percent) and Hispanic/Latino (0.5 percent).

Student race/ethnicity representation varies across broad program areas (PCS). For example, Table 2 contains information about the distribution of Adult Education [Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE)] and English as a Second Language (ESL) enrollments. Minority students accounted for nearly three-fourths (72.9 percent) of the individuals enrolled in community college Adult Education coursework. In fiscal year 2018, Hispanic/Latino students accounted for over forty percent of Adult Education enrollments and African American students for over one-fourth of those enrollments (40.2 percent and 26.6 percent, respectively). Additionally, minority students accounted for about eight out of every ten (80.3 percent) individuals enrolled in community college ESL coursework during fiscal year 2018. Hispanic/Latino students accounted for nearly two-thirds (62.4 percent) of the community college

ESL students, followed by Asian American students (10.7 percent) and African American students (5.4 percent).

Table 2
Fiscal Year 2018 Minority Students Enrolled in Adult Education
and English as a Second Language Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	<i>Asian American</i>	<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
ABE/ASE %	26.6%	40.2%	4.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.9%	72.9%
Number	7,141	10,805	1,173	109	70	31	253	19,582
ESL %	5.4%	62.4%	10.7%	1.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	80.3%
Number	1,593	18,524	3,161	463	15	30	53	23,839

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data

Table 3 provides the distribution of minority students enrolled in the two largest program areas, Transfer and Career and Technical Education (CTE). During fiscal year 2018, minorities comprised about four out of every ten (43.7 percent) Transfer enrollees. An examination of each minority group's race/ethnicity representation across the Transfer program area indicates that Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest minority group enrollments (21.6 percent), followed by African American students (12.6 percent), Asian American students (5.2 percent), students of Two or More Races (3.0 percent), Nonresident Alien students (1.0 percent), Native American students (0.2 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). Table 3 also shows that about one-third of students enrolled in CTE programs were members of a minority group (35.0 percent). Hispanic/Latino students also had the highest representation among minorities in CTE programs and accounted for 16.5 percent of the population. African American students had the second largest CTE program enrollment (11.8 percent), followed by Asian American students (3.9 percent), students of Two or More Races (2.0 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.6 percent), Native American students (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent).

Table 3
Fiscal Year 2018 Minority Students Enrolled in Transfer
and Career and Technical Education Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	<i>Asian American</i>	<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
Transfer %	12.6%	21.6%	5.2%	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%	3.0%	43.7%
Number	33,462	57,408	13,799	2,591	563	248	7,927	115,998
CTE %	11.8%	16.5%	3.9%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	2.0%	35.0%
Number	15,439	21,644	5,055	732	375	123	2,565	45,933

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data

First-Generation College Students

Students whose parents did not attend college are at a disadvantage when it comes to postsecondary access. First-generation college students who managed to overcome barriers to access and enroll in postsecondary

Four out of ten students in the Illinois Community College System are first-generation college students.

education remain at a disadvantage with respect to staying enrolled and attaining a degree (Choy, 2001). In 2012, Illinois statute recognized the category of first-generation students as an underrepresented group needing inclusion in the Underrepresented Groups annual report. Table 4 contains comparative data (fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018) on first-generation college student enrollments. Fiscal year 2018 first-generation college student enrollment decreased by 4.6 percent compared to last year and decreased by 29.2 percent compared to fiscal year 2014. The overall enrollments continue to decline. Four out of ten students (40.0 percent) in the Illinois Community College System were first-generation college students in fiscal year 2018.

Table 4
First-Generation College Student Enrollment in the Illinois Community College System
Fiscal Years 2014-2018

	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
First-Generation College Student Enrollment	293,689	245,088	213,101	217,873	207,794	-4.6%	-29.2%
Annual Enrollment	659,712	620,191	597,290	553,174	519,387	-6.1%	-21.3%
Enrollment Rate of First-Gen. College Students	44.5%	39.5%	35.7%	39.4%	40.0%		

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data

Credential Attainment

The following section of the report supplies information about the race/ethnicity characteristics of students who graduated in fiscal year 2018. Table 5 provides a point-in-time or cross-cutting count of the number of degrees and certificates awarded to minority students within the Illinois Community College System during fiscal year 2018. Table 6 provides a comparison of fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018 completions in the Illinois Community College System by race/ethnicity.

Across all minority groups in 2018, CTE program graduates far outnumbered Transfer program graduates. Table 5 shows that during fiscal year 2018, nearly twice as many CTE degrees and certificates (N = 14,216) were completed than Transfer degrees (N = 8,165) by minority students. However, minority students accounted for 39.5

Nearly twice as many CTE degrees and certificates were completed than Transfer degrees by minority students during fiscal year 2018.

percent of all Transfer graduates, compared to 34.7 percent of CTE graduates. Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest minority group for completions in CTE programs (16.9 percent), followed by African American students (11.3 percent), Asian American students (3.7 percent), students of Two or More Races (1.8 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.6 percent), Native American students (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). The fiscal year 2018 proportional representation of the Hispanic/Latino CTE program graduates (16.9 percent) was higher by 1.3 percentage points from fiscal year 2017 (15.6 percent). Hispanic/Latino students also accounted for the largest group of Transfer minority graduates (21.8 percent) followed by African American students (9.7 percent), Asian American students (4.3 percent), students of Two or More

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Races (2.5 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.9 percent), Native American students (0.2 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). The fiscal year 2018 proportional representation of the Hispanic/Latino Transfer graduates (21.8 percent) was higher by 1.1 percentage points from the prior year (20.7 percent).

Table 5
Fiscal Year 2018 Minority Student Completers in
Transfer and Career and Technical Education Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	<i>Asian American</i>	<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
Transfer %	9.7%	21.8%	4.3%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	2.5%	39.5%
Number	2,005	4,502	881	189	45	23	520	8,165
CTE %	11.3%	16.9%	3.7%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	1.8%	34.7%
Number	4,619	6,930	1,512	237	143	33	742	14,216

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1 & A2) Data

The number of collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded to Illinois community college students in fiscal year 2018 totaled 64,671. Over one-third (36.8 percent) of all degrees and certificates in fiscal year 2018 were awarded to minority students (nonwhite) whose race/ethnicity was known. Compared to last year, there was an increase in minority completions only among Native American students (25.5 percent) and Hispanic/Latino students (5.6 percent). Decreases in completions were noted for Pacific Islander Students (-13.9 percent), African American students (-8.2 percent), Nonresident Alien students (-3.1 percent), students of Two or More Races (-1.5 percent), and Asian American students (-0.7 percent), since last year. Compared to fiscal year 2014, the total number of minority completers increased 4.3 percent.

Table 6
Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Race/Ethnicity
Fiscal Years 2014-2018

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
<i>African American</i>	9,842	10,283	9,218	7,728	7,093	-8.2%	-27.9%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	8,813	10,036	11,209	11,506	12,145	5.6%	37.8%
<i>Asian American</i>	3,481	3,278	2,795	2,538	2,521	-0.7%	-27.6%
<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	189	384	372	477	462	-3.1%	144.4%
<i>Native American</i>	309	362	187	157	197	25.5%	-36.2%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	192	202	112	72	62	-13.9%	-67.7%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	--	--	1,237	1,350	1,330	-1.5%	--
<i>Minority Subtotal</i>	22,826	24,545	25,130	23,828	23,810	-0.1%	4.3%
<i>Unknown</i>	2,649	2,688	2,477	1,843	1,811	-1.7%	-31.6%
<i>White</i>	44,337	44,554	42,852	40,472	39,050	-3.5%	-11.9%

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1 & A2) Data

Table 7 contains trend data (fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018) on student completers by gender. During fiscal year 2018, more than half of degrees and certificates were earned by females (53.3 percent). The number of male completers decreased 1.3 percent, and the number of female completers decreased 3.0 percent compared to the previous fiscal year. When compared to fiscal year 2014, the number of male completers decreased 6.0 percent, and the number of female completers decreased 8.5 percent.

Table 7
Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Gender
Fiscal Years 2014-2018

<i>Gender</i>	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
<i>Male</i>	32,106	33,077	32,911	30,590	30,188	-1.3%	-6.0%
<i>Female</i>	37,706	38,710	37,548	35,553	34,483	-3.0%	-8.5%

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1 & A2) Data

Advancement Rate (Graduation/Transfer/Retention)

Community colleges urge students to complete their associate degrees prior to transferring to a four-year institution. Nationally, research suggests a higher completion rate for those that receive their credential from a two-year college ([Baccalaureate Attainment: A National View of the Postsecondary Outcomes of Students Who Transfer from Two-Year to Four-Year Institutions](#)). Still a substantial number of community college students generate a considerable number of credit hours but then transfer to a four-year institution prior to receiving the associate degree. The federal formula of calculating graduation rates does not include these transfer-outs prior to credential attainment, and thus negatively impacts community college outcomes. The student advancement rate provides a more comprehensive picture of the range of academic outcomes sought by community college students than the graduation rate, as it tracks community college students who either graduated, transferred to other higher education institutions, or were still enrolled at the end of the observation period.

Table 8 contains information on number and percent of first-time, full-time students at Illinois community colleges who graduated, transferred out, or were still enrolled within three years of entry by race/ethnicity. About every other minority student from Fall 2015 cohort graduated, transferred out, or were still enrolled by Summer 2018 (55.9 percent) compared to about two in three White students (68.4 percent). Asian American students accounted for the highest advancement rate among minority students entering in Fall 2015 (75.2 percent), followed by Pacific Islander students (62.5 percent), students of Two or More Races (59.3 percent), Hispanic/Latino students (57.5 percent), Native American students (55.0 percent), Nonresident Alien students (50.0 percent), and African American students (46.7 percent).

Table 8

**First-Time, Full-Time Students Enrolling in Fall and Graduating, Transferring, or Still Enrolled within Three Years of Entry at Illinois Community Colleges
Fiscal Years 2014-2016**

<i>Race/Ethnicity*</i>	Fall 2013 Summer 2016	Fall 2014 Summer 2017	Fall 2015 Summer 2018
<i>African American</i>	2,049/ 4,603 44.5%	1,789/ 4,051 44.2%	1,634/ 3,496 46.7%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	3,201/ 5,571 57.5%	3,283/ 5,780 56.8%	3,555/ 6,180 57.5%
<i>Asian</i>	697/ 919 75.8%	747/ 966 77.3%	782/ 1,040 75.2%
<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	65/ 133 48.9%	75/ 157 47.8%	86/ 172 50.0%
<i>Native American</i>	41/ 78 52.6%	32/ 64 50.0%	44/ 80 55.0%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	32/ 41 78.0%	26/ 44 59.1%	20/ 32 62.5%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	418/ 708 59.0%	418/ 752 55.6%	502/ 847 59.3%
<i>Minority Subtotal</i>	6,503/ 12,053 54.0%	6,370/ 11,814 53.9%	6,623/ 11,847 55.9%
<i>White</i>	11,198/ 16,642 67.3%	10,610/ 15,536 68.3%	10,385/ 15,183 68.4%

*Race/ethnicity classifications align with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards.

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data, Fall Enrollment (E1) Data, and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

Note: Table 8 of the FY 2018 Underrepresented Groups Report aligns with federal reporting for IPEDS. Prior reports used methodology developed by Complete College America (CCA).

Adjusted Retention Rate (Fall-to-Fall Retention or Graduation)

The adjusted retention rate metric tracks the number and percentage of entering degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who are retained from fall to fall or graduate within one year of entry. This metric reflects a more comprehensive perspective, since a variety of community college certificate programs can be completed within one year. First-year retention is particularly important since new students—especially recent high school graduates—need to successfully transition to college and the accompanying elevated academic and personal responsibility expectations.

Table 9 shows adjusted retention rates at Illinois community colleges within one year of entry. Three out of five minority first-time, full-time students enrolling in Fall 2017 at Illinois community colleges were retained or graduated in Fall 2018 (62.2 percent) compared to about five out of seven White students (70.5 percent). Asian American students accounted for the highest fall-to-fall adjusted retention rate among minority students enrolling in Fall 2017 (81.7 percent), followed by Hispanic/Latino students (67.7 percent), Nonresident Alien students (65.6 percent), Pacific

Islander students (63.6 percent), Native American students (60.3 percent), students of Two or More Races (60.1 percent), and African American students (45.6 percent).

Table 9

**First-Time, Full-Time Students Enrolling in Fall and Being Retained or Graduating within One Year of Entry at Illinois Community Colleges
Fiscal Years 2014-2018**

<i>Race/ethnicity*</i>	Fall 2013 Fall 2014	Fall 2014 Fall 2015	Fall 2015 Fall 2016	Fall 2016 Fall 2017	Fall 2017 Fall 2018
<i>African American</i>	1,814/ 4,602 39.4%	1,585/ 4,050 39.1%	1,535/ 3,493 43.9%	1,574/ 3,456 45.5%	1,560/ 3,424 45.6%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	3,517/ 5,551 63.4%	3,765/ 5,797 64.9%	4,097/ 6,180 66.3%	4,484/ 6,514 68.8%	4,673/ 6,898 67.7%
<i>Asian</i>	717/ 919 78.0%	759/ 965 78.7%	810/ 1,042 77.7%	846/ 1,072 78.9%	820/ 1,004 81.7%
<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	91/ 152 59.9%	96/ 157 61.1%	100/ 172 58.1%	110/ 177 62.1%	147/ 224 65.6%
<i>Native American</i>	45/ 78 57.7%	42/ 64 65.6%	47/ 80 58.8%	33/ 67 49.3%	35/ 58 60.3%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	29/ 41 70.7%	32/ 44 72.7%	21/ 32 65.6%	22/ 34 64.7%	14/ 22 63.6%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	416/ 708 58.8%	426/ 751 56.7%	519/ 847 61.3%	553/ 866 63.9%	532/ 885 60.1%
Minority Subtotal	6,629/ 12,051 55.0%	6,705/ 11,828 56.7%	7,129/ 11,846 60.2%	7,622/ 12,186 62.5%	7,781/ 12,515 62.2%
<i>White</i>	11,368/ 16,642 68.3%	10,548/ 15,535 67.9%	10,577/ 15,185 69.7%	10,323/ 14,798 69.8%	10,284/ 14,592 70.5%

* Race/ethnicity classifications align with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards.

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data, Fall Enrollment (E1) Data, and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

Note: Table 9 of the FY 2018 Underrepresented Groups Report aligns with federal reporting for IPEDS. Prior reports used methodology developed by Complete College America (CCA).

Employee Diversity

Faculty, staff, administrators, and board members at each community college accept the responsibility of meeting the needs and demands of the area community and their constituents. To thrive in the competitive higher education marketplace, community colleges adopt a strong customer and community focus. Hence, the colleges tend to reflect the communities in which they are located. Interest in creating a diverse environment is common to all colleges across the system. Strengths and opportunities for improvement may differ by locality.

Alger & Carrasco/ American Association of University Professors (1997), Humphreys (1999), American Council on Education and American Association of University Professors (2000), Brown-Glaude (2009), and American Association of Community Colleges (2013) found that a diverse faculty promotes a positive learning environment for both minorities and Caucasians.

Table 10

Fiscal Year 2018 Minority Faculty and Staff in Illinois Community Colleges

	<i>Tenured Faculty/ Officials and Managers</i>	<i>Non- tenured Faculty</i>	<i>Professional Staff/ Protective Service Workers</i>	<i>Office and Clerical/ Para- professionals</i>	<i>Service Maintenance</i>
African American %	9.8%	7.7%	15.3%	16.3%	24.1%
Number	596	1,182	1,442	668*	646
Hispanic/Latino %	4.5%	4.1%	10.9%	11.9%	14.4%
Number	273	634	1,030	487	386
Asian American %	3.4%	4.0%	3.4%	2.6%	0.9%
Number	210	624	323	107	25
Nonresident Alien %	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	1.0%
Number	19	59	45	16	28
Native American %	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Number	15	27	18	10	8
Pacific Islander %	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Number	3	15	12	0	5
Two or More Races %	1.0%	0.7%	1.6%	0.9%	0.8%
Number	63	101	147	39	21
Minority Subtotal %	19.4%	17.1%	32.1%	32.3%	41.7%
Number	1,179	2,642	3,017	1,327	1,119

*Includes revised college figures

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data

Table 10 shows that in fiscal year 2018, minority faculty and staff accounted for 19.4 percent of tenured faculty/officials and managers, 17.1 percent of non-tenured faculty, 32.1 percent of professional staff/protective service workers, 32.3 percent of office and clerical/paraprofessionals, and 41.7 percent of service maintenance employees. Compared to fiscal year 2017, the number of minority faculty and staff increased by 8.0 percent in fiscal year 2018. The largest increase in the minority employee count from the previous year was noted for professional staff/protective service workers (16.6 percent), followed by tenured faculty/officials and managers (6.6 percent), office and clerical/paraprofessionals (6.4 percent) and non-tenured faculty (6.0 percent). The number of minority service maintenance employees decreased by 4.1 percent in fiscal year 2018.

Nationwide, community college faculty members are disproportionately White, and thus students of color are less likely to have the opportunity to engage with faculty members of their own race/ethnicity ([Aspirations to Achievement: Men of Color and Community Colleges](#)). In Illinois community colleges, Hispanic/Latino faculty members are the most underrepresented minority group in comparison to the student population of the same race/ethnicity (Table 11).

Table 11
Proportion of Minority Students and Faculty at Illinois Community Colleges
Fiscal Year 2014 and 2018

2014	Percentage of Student Representation	Percentage of Faculty Representation*	Percentage Point Difference
<i>African American</i>	15.8%	8.9%	-6.9
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	19.0%	4.0%	-15.0
<i>Asian American</i>	4.2%	3.5%	-0.7
<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	0.6%	0.3%	-0.3
<i>Native American</i>	0.3%	0.2%	-0.1
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	0.2%	0.1%	-0.1
<i>Two or More Races**</i>	3.8%	0.8%	-3.0
<i>White</i>	58.2%	82.1%	24.0
2018	Percentage of Student Representation	Percentage of Faculty Representation*	Percentage Point Difference
<i>African American</i>	13.5%	8.7%	-4.7
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	23.4%	4.4%	-19.0
<i>Asian American</i>	4.9%	4.1%	-0.8
<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	0.8%	0.4%	-0.5
<i>Native American</i>	0.2%	0.2%	0.0
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	0.1%	0.1%	0.0
<i>Two or More Races**</i>	4.8%	0.8%	-4.0
<i>White</i>	54.6%	81.3%	26.7

Includes only students and faculty whose ethnicity was known.

*Includes Tenured Faculty/Officials and Managers and Non-tenured Faculty

**Race/ethnicity classifications align with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards.

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data
and Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data

Across a five-year period, Hispanic/Latino faculty representation increased slightly (4.0 percent in fiscal year 2014 vs. 4.4 percent in fiscal year 2018), but did not increase enough in comparison to the increase in the Hispanic/Latino student representation (19.0 percent in fiscal year 2014 vs. 23.4 percent in fiscal year 2018). Across the same time frame, African American faculty representation decreased slightly (8.9 percent in fiscal year 2014 vs. 8.7 percent in fiscal year 2018), while the African American student representation experienced a sharper decrease (15.8 percent in fiscal year 2014 vs. 13.5 percent in fiscal year 2018). Asian American faculty and student representation both increased over the period of five years, but the increase was slightly smaller for Asian American faculty (3.5 percent in fiscal year 2014 vs. 4.1 percent in fiscal year 2018) than the increase for Asian American students (4.2 percent in fiscal year 2014 vs. 4.9 percent in fiscal year 2018).

BEST PRACTICES

The following section provides information about best practices for improving college access, affordability, or completion from the Illinois Community College System in fiscal year 2018. Best practices address factors woven into students' experiences that may impact their success and completion, such as coming from a low-income, first-generation, or minority background or having a disability, and provide helpful information about project components and outcomes.

IMPROVING ACCESS FOR UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS

Student Support Initiatives

In order to address the needs of many low-income and minority students without regular access to a computer or the internet off campus, the **Carl Sandburg College** Library began checking out laptops and Chromebooks to students on their library cards for use both on and off campus, a practice which

Carl Sandburg College began checking out laptops and Chromebooks to students for use both on and off campus in the fall of 2017.

started in the Fall 2017 semester. There are several elements that make this service successful: 1) there are no fines or late fees for any library materials, including electronic checkouts, as long as the materials are returned and are in good condition; 2) students can check laptops and Chromebooks out for two weeks and renew them every two weeks as needed; 3) in theory, as long as there are no holds on the items, students may check out laptops and Chromebooks for an entire semester or even for the duration of their enrollment at Carl Sandburg College. Each semester has seen an increase in laptop and Chromebook circulation. Sandburg's goal for the future is to provide mobile hotspots to circulate to students in order to supplement the laptops and Chromebooks with free Wi-Fi access.

Harold Washington College (HWC) implemented a healthy food market on campus in 2016. In partnership with Greater Chicago Food Depository, the Arlethia G. Mayes Healthy Market has served as an opportunity to connect with low-income students and help them access free and fresh food items, as well as education on nutrition and healthy lifestyles. In the academic year 2017-2018 37.2 percent of HWC students were low-income. The market has everything from cereal and oatmeal to dairy products, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Sometimes, household essentials, such as light bulbs and cookware, are also available to students. The healthy food market is a fully functioning service on campus with operations running nearly 20 hours each week. While many food market programs are volunteer-run, HWC has incorporated this initiative into their federal work-study program. The market employs students to operate the day-to-day needs, allowing HWC to provide the service for longer periods of time. Offering an on-campus food market is a signal to students that the college cares about their health and well-being, and recognizes that food insecurity is an issue faced by many students.

To help students who struggle to have consistent access to reliable food sources, **Lake Land College**, through a partnership with the Lake Land College Foundation and the Eastern Illinois Foodbank, worked throughout the 2017-2018 year to develop a plan of operation, obtain sufficient financial support, and establish a location for a permanent food pantry on campus. The pantry

opened at the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester. The overall goal of the Laker Food Pantry is to help ensure that all students have access to nutritional food and to demonstrate the college's caring for students and commitment to their success in the classroom and beyond. The Laker Food Pantry is managed by the college's office of Health Services with continuous volunteer support from other offices in Student Services and members of the Phi Theta Kappa student organization. A donation received during the Spring 2018 semester ensured that the pantry could purchase sufficient food to sustain operations for its first full year. With ongoing support from the Lake Land College Foundation and various student and community groups, the pantry now has financial support for well beyond the first year. During the first semester of implementation, the pantry served 121 individuals representing 42 households.

The goal of the [TRIO Student Support Services Program](#) (SSS) is to “increase the number of

disadvantaged, low-income college students, first-generation college students, and college students with disabilities in the United States who successfully complete a program of study at postsecondary level.”

The TRIO program helps these underrepresented groups thrive, graduate, and transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Program participants receive

supports through advising, tutoring, transfer assistance, financial aid assistance, and social and cultural programming. TRIO connects students who often struggle to successfully complete college with the learning skills and financial resources to achieve a college degree. The program helps students build social networks, provides mentoring, facilitates successful transfer to four-year universities, and empowers students to succeed in college and beyond. To be eligible for the program, students must be citizens or nationals of the United States or meet the residency requirement for federal student financial assistance, be enrolled at a college or accepted for enrollment for the next academic semester, have a need for academic support in order to successfully pursue a postsecondary educational program, and be either low-income, a first-generation college student, or a student with disabilities. All SSS grants are funded for five-year grant award cycles.

The goal of the TRIO Student Support Services Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education is to increase the persistence, academic standing, and graduation or transfer of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

TRIO has experienced great success at **Harry S Truman College**. The 2016-2017 active TRIO cohort had a 96 percent rate of fall-to-fall persistence, 96 percent maintained good academic standing, 69 percent graduated, and 47 percent graduated and transferred to a four-year institution. Truman is a Hispanic-Serving Institution. The student population is 16 percent Asian, 21 percent Black, 40 percent Hispanic/Latino, 20 percent White, and 3 percent other/multi-racial.

On February 24, 1986, a congressional resolution ([H. Con. Res. 278](#)) declared that Saturday, February 28, 1986, should be designated as "National TRIO Day" to commemorate the annual achievements of the Federal TRIO programs in communities across the country. The national TRIO Day is an opportunity to focus attention on the need for increased investments for first-generation, low-income students. **Joliet Junior College** (JJC) and Project Achieve/TRIO Programs were selected to host the TRIO Day North on February 24, 2018, through the Illinois TRIO Association, which incorporates a total of 147 TRIO programs and students throughout the state of Illinois. The day was filled with over 20 workshop/breakout sessions such as College 101,

STEM, and Career Exploration. It was hosted by many JJC faculty and staff who displayed their talent. The keynote speaker was a TRIO alumnus. JJC set a goal to have approximately 350 Illinois TRIO students/staff in attendance and exceeded that goal with approximately 500 students/staff hosted in the new JJC Event Center. The event was identified as the highest attended state TRIO Day in years.

The TRIO SSS program has existed at **Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC)** for nearly thirty years. The program strives to create innovative programming that serves and lifts up SVCC's most at-risk populations. Currently, 91 percent of all SVCC students qualify to participate in the TRIO Student Support Services program. The program's current capacity, as set by the U.S. Department of Education, is 200 students. While TRIO's general goal is to support at-risk students, the program has a few specific objectives. These objectives include increasing rates of degree completion, transfer rates to four-year universities, and retention rates. TRIO participants must also receive financial literacy education, complete the FAFSA, and maintain good academic standing. The end goal of TRIO is to support at-risk students in order to help them graduate on time, transfer to a four-year university when applicable, and to make smart decisions regarding how to finance their education.

At **Illinois Central College**, the TRIO SSS program was initially implemented during the 1990-1991 academic year and has served over 3,300 students. The program has proven to be an effective model for increasing the number of college graduates, particularly among underrepresented groups. The program serves 250 students per year and, throughout its history, has met or exceeded its retention, graduation and transfer goals. The most recent federal program year began September 1, 2015. During the September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2018, performance period, the persistence rate for 250 students in the program was 81 percent.

The TRIO SSS program at **John A. Logan College** has a goal of increasing retention, persistence, and college completion for first-generation and/or low-income students or students with disabilities while assisting them to remain in good standing academically. The services include mentoring, pro-active advisement, tutoring, and financial aid assistance. For program year 2017-18, the John A. Logan College TRIO SSS program met or surpassed all of the approved rates for the goals for this time period.

At **Lincoln Land Community College**, where the TRIO program started in November 2015, TRIO Student Ambassadors are responsible for talking with new LLCC students during the New Student Orientation. TRIO Student Ambassadors are active TRIO participants who maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher. They serve as peer mentors by encouraging students to persevere and utilize the resources available to them throughout the LLCC campus. Students utilizing the resources offered through Access & Disability Services may be able to receive executive functioning tutoring. Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable individuals to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. These skills are critical for success at the postsecondary level, and deficits in this area can often lead to academic failure. In fiscal year 2018, the TRIO program coordinated the Second Annual TRIO Summer Math Prep Institute. This six-week program was designed to instruct students in building the math skills needed to find success in their math classes, from developmental to upper-division courses. TRIO Peer Math Coaches were hired to assist the

Summer Math Prep Institute staff with encouraging and guiding program participants through their math assignments and exercises. The TRIO Peer Math Coach is now a year-round student worker position.

The **Triton College** TRIO SSS program provides academic and other support services to low-income, and/or first-generation college students or students with disabilities to increase student retention and graduation rates, facilitate their transfer from two-year to four-year colleges, and foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income and first-generation college students and individuals with disabilities. SSS programs are funded for a five-year period. Triton's SSS program was refunded for another five year period, which began on September 1, 2015. Each year of the current and previous grant cycle, the program has met or exceeded all program objectives: Objective #1–85 percent of all participants served in the reporting year by the SSS project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or earn an associate degree or certificate at the grantee institution and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year (actual attained rate: 93 percent); Objective #2–85 percent of all enrolled SSS participants served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution (actual attained rate: 95 percent); Objective #3–50 percent of new participants served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with an associate degree or certificate within four years (actual attained rate: 50 percent); and Objective #4–40 percent of new participants served each year will receive an associate degree or certificate from the grantee institution and transfer to a four-year institution within four years (actual attained rate: 43 percent).

South Suburban College implemented a Reading Center in Spring 2017 to provide reading and comprehension strategies along with skill-building techniques to the student body at large and community members, if desired. Community members are encouraged to visit the center because the college remains an important and viable higher educational institution for the Chicago Southland area. Reading specialists work diligently to evaluate, develop, and implement various techniques and instructions for a variety of learners. The center staff is currently comprised of college reading faculty and Reading Center coordinators that are reading specialists with advanced degrees and knowledge to assess as well as diagnose the reading needs of students. From July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, the Reading Center has received 331 visits from 253 different students. Twenty percent of the students receiving assistance are not enrolled in a reading class and the average GPA is 2.4. These statistics demonstrate the need for this center to support the various needs of students and the community.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) at **Spoon River College** was formed in the spring of 2016 by combining student success services and library services. The merging of these services led to the creation of a “one-stop-shop” for students to have access to a variety of services. As the LRC developed, staff felt that the students would benefit from having 24/7 access to LRC services via a

Spoon River College offers an access to the Learning Resource Center via a Canvas course site to give every student, both on and off campus, the same access to all campus resources and encourage engagement in campus activities.

Canvas course site. Canvas is the college's Learning Management System; therefore, students are spending a lot of time on that system. The purpose for creating an LRC course site is to give every

student, both on and off campus, the same access to all campus resources and encourage engagement in campus activities. The LRC implemented this new student support initiative beginning Fall 2017. During the process of developing the LRC Canvas course, staff worked with Information Technology Services to set up a process to ensure that all students are automatically enrolled each semester. The course site includes information on student accounts, peer and professional tutoring, success coaching, library services, Canvas support, study skills, and online learning support. In addition to easy contact with LRC staff, access to service information, and Canvas support, students have the option of uploading a paper through the LRC course for a LRC peer tutor to review.

Support Services and Initiatives for Minority Students

The mission of the Open Door Mentorship Program, which was implemented in the fall of 2016 at **Lincoln Land Community College** is to positively impact African American male persistence, retention and completion. Through the application of academic, career and social/emotional enrichment, Open Door mentoring participants will successfully take the first step on their educational journey while being groomed for the next level. The program connects minority male students with internships in their field of study. Students meet regularly with the program facilitator and mentors. They also attend monthly or weekly Open Door meetings and complete and follow the academic plan. Open Door men become peer mentors and volunteer in the community.

The Emerging Leaders Project is an initiative designed to increase the college retention and graduation of African American students. The project also supports student transitions from college to work. The initiative is tied to empirical data reflecting a significant gap in the course success, retention, and graduation rates of African American students compared to other students enrolled at **Illinois Central College**. The components

The Emerging Leaders Project is an initiative designed to increase the college retention and graduation of African American students. The project also supports student transitions from college to work.

of the initiative include wrap-around support provided to students, highly motivated staffing team, interdepartmental cooperation, and a *Building Success* summer bridge component for incoming freshmen. An increase in advisor-student contact, in student use of learning labs, and in-service referrals and intervention activities was recorded in fiscal year 2017.

Historically, African American males enrolled as incoming freshmen have been at a higher risk for attrition when compared to the general student population. Together We Achieve (TWA) was established in the 2010-11 academic year as a first-year learning community for African American men who are first-time college students at **Parkland College** to help improve their retention. Students in this community take classes together with extra support to adjust to the demands of college life and complete assignments with excellence. There are three major parts of the program: recruitment, academic support, and engagement. Students are selected as potential program participants before they attend on-campus orientation and are invited to participate. During orientation, they meet with a TWA advisor. The TWA faculty and advisors communicate weekly concerning the students' progress. The TWA students participate in Brother-2-Brother student club for young black men, various black student success project events, and activities such as a cookout

early in the semester and an award ceremony. Eighty-five percent of the students that participated in Fall 2017 successfully completed the semester and enrolled in classes for Spring 2018 with an average GPA of 2.36. Many of the students have developed positive relationships with the TWA faculty and staff and continue to ask for support as needed.

The purpose of the African American Male Initiative (AAMI) was to explore the academic and non-academic factors that prevent African American males from graduating from college. The target audience for this initiative was African American males enrolled at **Waubonsee Community College**. The goal was to increase recruitment, retention and graduation rates of African American males. The initiative was designed to serve as a road map to assist students who are capable of succeeding academically and for those who need guidance removing the obstacles that get in the way of their academic success. The Community Advisory Board was created to garner support for the students, to assist in recruiting younger mentors and to personally serve as mentors and sources of information when needed. Students and community members were engaged in joint meetings with the advisory group. The initiative met its objectives with the participation of 23 Waubonsee students, 12 African American community leaders, and 9 staff members. A Student Advisory Group/Student Registered Organization is being created to provide a space for African American male students to connect, to advocate for academic excellence, to support each other, and to build community.

The Men of Distinction (MOD) retention and success program at **Carl Sandburg College** was developed initially as a retention, success, and inclusion program geared toward young men of color. Soon after its implementation, Women of Character (WOC), a program geared towards the needs of young women of color was started in response to the request of several students. These organizations share the college's core values of excellence, collaboration, integrity, and respect. Each member makes a commitment to complete upon joining their respective group. This commitment includes taking ownership of their academic success, sitting in the front of the classroom, establishing a relationship with each of their instructors, developing a success plan for each class, utilizing the Tutoring Center for additional assistance, and following up when any concern arises. Each member participates in community service activities within the college district and community. The opportunity to perform community service further empowers students to become leaders and ambassadors for Sandburg. Each member is a peer mentor to other members of the organization. This increases and supports retention by supporting a sense of belonging and an obligation to succeed.

In Illinois, only 16.7 percent of the teacher workforce is categorized as minority and 76.7 percent are female ([2017 Illinois State Report Card](#)). Therefore there is a need to increase the number of minority men who are entering the education field. The Men of Color in Education (MCE) initiative is led by **Harry S**

The Men of Color in Education (MCE) initiative is led by Harry S Truman College on behalf of City Colleges of Chicago. MCE seeks to encourage and support men that are minorities to enter the field of education.

Truman College on behalf of the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC). The initiative, which was implemented in Fall 2018, recognizes that there are not enough male teachers of color in the field and seeks to fill the gap with a wrap-around support system. The program seeks to both recruit more men into the education field and support the men who are already in the field. The program

involves mentorship and support for students beginning education in the field, and mentorship and professional development for those already in the field. This year, Truman plans to support three cohorts of aspiring male educators, including Chicago Public Schools dual enrollment students who are in the Early Childhood Education and Education tracks, currently enrolled CCC students who are taking coursework to become educators and community members who have shown an interest in becoming a teacher in the community in which they reside. Program participants will have three semesters of coursework along with a paid internship and/or job placement support. Partnerships with One Summer Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, and Department of Family Support and Services will create paid work experiences for eligible students to maximize opportunities for work-based learning. Truman recruited 45 student mentees who will be fully participating in the program in Summer 2019 through coursework and internships, and selected 15 mentors from various facets of educational leadership to provide the students a support network.

The African American Outreach and Student Success Committee at the **College of Lake County** sponsors Academic Purpose and Preparation for Success (APPS), a dual academic program track that supports full-time and part-time African American students, helping to define their academic purpose and equipping them with practical strategies and tools to be successful in college. The APPS program, which was implemented at the College of Lake County in 2018, provides intensive mentoring, Seminar Fridays, college visits, community wealth-building, and career fairs. Volunteer faculty, staff, and community mentors participate in orientation and training, and matches are made based on the academic major and interests of the mentor and mentee. Most of the participants have financial security challenges, so dedicated financial aid specialists have been assigned. Participants were found to need assistance with study habits, exam skills, and career exploration, so these needs are the focus of weekly college success seminars. Among the active APPS participants who were members of the first-time, full-time IPEDS cohort, there was a 14 percent course withdrawal rate, compared with a 23 percent course withdrawal rate for the IPEDS comparison cohort of African American students who did not participate. The course success rate (Grade of A, B, or C) was 61 percent for the APPS participants, compared with 58 percent for the comparison group. Ninety-four percent indicated that they plan to remain in college.

As the result of the effort to proactively identify and engage student cohorts that have lower retention rates than the average retention rate for all degree-seeking students, **Lewis and Clark Community College** has implemented targeted student support service outreach to African American male students, which has taken place over the past year. These efforts have included increased marketing of tutoring services through student clubs and activities, athletic teams, Faculty Diversity Council, and social media through Lewis and Clark's media services department. A minority study group has also been created in response to this effort. The targeted outreach initiative seems to be successful as the fall-to-spring retention rates for African American males increased to 74 percent for the Fall 2017 cohort from 69 percent for the Fall 2013 cohort.

From 2009-2017, the **Prairie State College** (PSC) English department required students to submit an end-of-term portfolio in English 101–Composition I. The portfolio process required students to select and revise three major essays, which afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate their best work. Results from an ICCB Program Review indicated an achievement gap, seen in similar institutions nationwide. To advance fairness, the department disaggregated the data by race/ethnicity from 2012-2016. Students who identified as African American, compared to other

groups, demonstrated lower rates of retention and success in English 101. From Fall 2012 to Fall 2016, the success gap between Black or African American students and Caucasian, White American students was 20 percent. The Department held monthly meetings for full-time and adjunct faculty members to discuss student work, teaching strategies, curriculum, scoring practices, and relevant scholarship about portfolio assessment in composition courses. In the academic year 2017-2018, the Department decided to eliminate the portfolio. The Department believed eliminating the portfolio process could improve student success in this critical gateway course without compromising the rigor of instruction. The initial results show that the pass rate of African American students improved to 54 percent in Fall 2017. The English Department, whose teaching philosophy is built on reflective practice, will continue to review processes and pedagogical strategies to determine how best to serve PSC's student body.

In order to increase persistence and completion rates for the African American male population, who had the lowest persistence and completion rate in fiscal year 2018, **Rock Valley College (RVC)** designed a persistence intervention initiative. A database was created listing the identified 147 African American males registered for Fall 2018 in order to record and track the progress of these students. RVC's outreach efforts began in November 2018. Staff members and faculty committed to reaching out to students to assist them in navigating the path to persist into the Spring 2020 term. Students were contacted individually to identify if they planned to return, didn't plan to return, or are graduating from RVC. The students were called or emailed. When contacted, they were offered support and guidance if they were on track; if they were off track, RVC worked with them to help take restorative actions. If a barrier to their persistence was identified during the conversation, resources to assist them were offered if available. Compared to Spring 2018, Fall 2018 persistence rate was improved from 54 percent to 64 percent. The retention specialist will maintain contact with the African American males during Spring 2019 to increase the retention and graduation rate.

People of the Hispanic/Latino origin make up 17 percent of the Illinois population, but less than two percent of registered nurses are Hispanic/Latino.

Morton College, a Hispanic Serving Institution with an 85 percent Hispanic/Latino population, is addressing this disparity by incorporating the Compassionate All-

The C.A.R.E. program is a set of holistic interventions designed to improve student retention rates, grades, and ultimately board exam pass rates in the Morton College nursing program, where the majority of students is Hispanic/Latino, thereby increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino nurses entering the Illinois workforce.

Inclusive Retention Effort (C.A.R.E.) into its nursing program. The C.A.R.E. program is a set of holistic interventions designed to improve student retention rates, grades, and ultimately board exam pass rates in the Morton College nursing program, thereby increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino nurses entering the Illinois workforce. The interventions include a three-day boot camp in which students get to know the faculty and staff and cover important topics, such as clinical expectations, professionalism, critical thinking, and time management among other topics; weekly freshman seminars during the first six weeks of the program; and an access to open lab for extra practice and an internally curated website with nursing student resources. Some components of the C.A.R.E. program were piloted in a limited capacity during the 2017-2018 academic year, but the comprehensive elements of the C.A.R.E. program were incorporated into the nursing

program in the summer of 2018 and continue into the present. As a result of the piloted components of the C.A.R.E. program during the 2017-2018 academic year, board exam pass rates increased from 71 percent in 2017 to 90 percent in 2018. As a result of the comprehensive incorporation of C.A.R.E. program elements beginning this past summer, nursing program retention rates during the fall semester increased from 78 percent in Fall 2017 to 99 percent in Fall 2018. This increased retention rate resulted in a net gain of 33 more students retained in the program compared to last year.

The newly implemented Latino Center (in Spring 2017) at **South Suburban College** seeks to be a central resource for Latinos on campus and in the community. Its primary objective is to provide information, services, and support to prospective and current students and parents. Specifically, the center provides interpretation services for college programs and departments on-demand; escorts prospective and current students and parents from office to office ensuring they understand the process and have the information in their native tongue; creates and updates a scholarship database for Latino students, specifically for Undocumented-DREAMer students; and provides informational workshops for Spanish-speaking parents/students. The center has hired student workers for the position of Latino Liaisons and created partnerships with area high school administrators serving Spanish-speaking parents and students. From Spring 2017 through Spring 2018, 1,626 individuals utilized the Latino Center. These numbers include prospective students, ESL and High School Equivalency current and prospective students, parents looking to obtain information, students requesting general information, and parent session inquiries.

As described by the [U.S. Department of Education](#), the purpose of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions—Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (HSI STEM) and Articulation Programs is to (1) increase the number of Hispanic/Latino and other low-income students attaining degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics; and (2) to develop model transfer and articulation agreements between two-year and four-year institutions in such fields. **Morton College** is currently in year three of the 5-year STEM grant with National Louis University (NLU). The goal of Morton College's partnership with NLU is to provide comprehensive services designed to create systemic change at the institutional level, including curricular offerings, student services, and effective support of Hispanic/Latino students in STEM. Because 90 percent of Morton students are Hispanic/Latino, this grant will have a wide-ranging positive impact. While still in its early stages, Morton College is working toward developing comprehensive services to increase STEM program enrollment, create a smoother transition for transfer to NLU, and retention and graduation. Over the past two years, Morton has increased recruitment into the Computer Information Systems (CIS) program and provided visits to the NLU campus and symposiums. Students also now have access to a specific STEM academic advisor. Students have a fixed tuition rate of \$10,000 annually once they have transferred to NLU, at which point they are also considered junior students. From fiscal year 2017 to fiscal year 2018, CIS program enrollment increased by 10 percent. Attempted hours in CIS courses have increased from Fall 2016 to Fall 2018 by 30 percent.

Since Fall 2012, **Oakton Community College** has provided a support network for Oakton Hispanic/Latino students through the Association to Nurture and Develop the Advancement of Latinos in Education (ANDALE), a program that supports the personal, emotional, social, academic, and career development of its Hispanic/Latino students through workshops, academic

support, study groups, mentoring, leadership skill development, multicultural events, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) assistance with the goal of increasing the retention, persistence, and success of the college's Hispanic/Latino students. ANDALE students are led by college faculty and staff and build their leadership skills by exploring existing college resources, discussing and analyzing Hispanic/Latino identities in current affairs, and engaging with the Oakton community. Parents and family members of Oakton's Hispanic/Latino students are engaged through meet and greets and learning opportunities on how to help their Oakton students be successful. Participation of Hispanic/Latino students in ANDALE continues to increase. At the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester, the program had 6 active participants return to the program from the previous Spring 2018 semester due to a record number of 9 ANDALE student graduates. By the middle of the Fall 2018 semester, 31 additional students had joined the program, and 8 more students were added in the spring of 2019. Due to the strategic direction of providing intentional academic advising and academic support for ANDALE students, the mean grade point average of ANDALE participants is 2.9. Six ANDALE students are on target to complete and graduate in the spring of 2019 and plan to transfer to a 4-year university.

Support Services and Initiatives for Students with Disabilities

The Career Opportunity ACHievement (COACH) program, which was implemented at **College of DuPage** in August 2017, provides training in academic, career, life, and independence skills for adults with mild to moderate intellectual or developmental disabilities (ID/DD) from the District 502 region. The target audience is students 22 and older who are no longer eligible for their local school district's transition services and are seeking to further their education. The COACH program is a two-year, cohort-style program that culminates in an award of completion and provides students with the general skills needed to secure an entry-level job, including utilizing a computer to complete basic tasks, practicing appropriate workplace behavior, and demonstrating functional reading, writing, and math skills. The program will also provide students with ID/DD an opportunity to participate in the college experience and matriculation pathways for any students able to complete college-level work. The program will include an on campus internship that will give students hands-on work experience. The COACH program is currently in the 4th semester of the pilot cohort.

*The Career Opportunity ACHievement (COACH) program, which was implemented at **College of DuPage** in August 2017, provides training in academic, career, life, and independence skills for adults with mild to moderate intellectual or developmental disabilities.*

The purpose of Campus Visit Days at **Joliet Junior College (JJC)** is to provide the necessary information to potential students with disabilities to make their transition smoother. The goal is to get students to register with Disability Services and have accommodations in place before the start of the semester. Small groups of students with disabilities from District 525 high schools come to JJC's Romeoville campus and Main campus. Admissions provides information on the process to enroll in JJC. Disability Services provides a 40 minute presentation and dialogue on transition from high school to college. The presentation includes changes students will experience in their services and accommodations, an explanation of the IDEA versus the ADA, privacy rights, and student responsibilities. The presentation also includes information on documentation requirements, wrap-around services, and the steps to register with Disability Services, and a

question and answer session. The students are then given a tour of JJC, which includes a stop at Disability Services. In fiscal year 2018, Disability Services provided a Campus Visit Day to 1,370 students, which was a 26 percent increase from fiscal year 2017.

Lake Land College's Perkins Program is committed to increasing access to high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study. This federal funding allows the college to improve both academic and technical achievement of CTE students, strengthen the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, focus on program improvement, and advance accountability. Perkins is driven by an annual plan that is approved by the Illinois Community College Board. Perkins partners with the Office of Student Accommodations to address barriers to success for students with disabilities. In academic year 2017-2018, Perkins provided funding for the Office of Student Accommodations' membership to *Learning Ally* in order to effectively manage individual cases of students with visual or learning disabilities. *Learning Ally* provides audiobooks and support services for students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities requiring reading intervention because developmental reading coursework alone is not enough. *Learning Ally* bridges the reading gap by providing equitable access to grade-level content in a format students can easily absorb. The Perkins Program reports annually on performance measures and compares the college's results to state goals. Overall, Lake Land College CTE students, including those students utilizing *Learning Ally*, are exceeding expectations of negotiated performance targets.

To increase academic success of students with disabilities, Access and Disability Services at **McHenry County College** (MCC) began offering executive functioning tutoring in the Spring 2016 semester with funding from a grant by Autism Speaks. Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable individuals to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. These skills are critical for success at the postsecondary level, and deficits in this area can often lead to academic failure. Students meet with their executive functioning tutors weekly for 30 to 60 minutes per tutoring session. During those sessions, tutors help students plan and prioritize their coursework, set and achieve goals, manage simultaneous academic projects, develop good study skills and habits, solve problems in class and in daily life, and reduce distractions and impulsiveness that can derail focused study. Tutors also show students how to navigate their learning management systems, manage their time, and determine grading criteria. In the 2017-2018 academic year, executive functioning tutoring became available to all students registered with the Access and Disability Services department, and 29 students participated in the Fall 2017 semester and 34 students in the Spring 2018 semester. In the Fall 2017 semester, 75 percent of the participating students were retained (enrolled in the Spring 2018 semester), and the average GPA for the students was 2.73. In the Spring 2018 semester, 91 percent of the participating students were retained (enrolled in the Fall 2018 semester), and the average GPA for the students was 2.72. Compared to the overall college data, the students with disabilities who participated in executive functioning tutoring performed well with the assistance of this academic support.

Rend Lake College (RLC) has put in place the Learning Enhancement Center that houses disability services for students from all walks of life. The purpose is to provide accommodations for students with various disabilities in order to help them to succeed in college life. Staff members arrange accommodations based on the needs of the individual students. They also refer students

with disabilities to RLC's Writing Center where students receive assistance to strengthen their writing skills outside of the classroom. These services are provided to the students free of charge, and students may visit the center as often as they wish. RLC is in the process of developing a reporting tool that will track the success of students who take advantage of the services offered. This will enable the college to evaluate the disability, the results of the courses they were enrolled in, and their final grades.

The Rock Valley Academic Institute for Successful Employment (RAISE) program is a collaborative initiative involving **Rock Valley College** (RVC), local not-for-profit organizations, and local school districts that enables adults who have intellectual disabilities to participate in inclusive postsecondary educational opportunities, gain independent living skills, and obtain the skills needed for competitive employment. Students who successfully complete all required coursework

The RAISE program is a collaborative initiative involving Rock Valley College, local not-for-profit organizations, and local school districts to enable adults with intellectual disabilities to participate in inclusive postsecondary education, gain independent living skills, and obtain the skills needed for competitive employment.

receive a Certificate of Achievement in career readiness. The program was established in 2010 and began with 12 participating students from two area high schools. Since that time the program has grown exponentially with 83 students enrolled during fiscal year 2019. The need this program meets in the RVC region is evidenced by the strong support from area high schools. Referrals now come from six districts, all of whom provide in-kind programmatic support (transportation, tuition funding, and classroom aides) for participating students. Students who have graduated from high school may attend RAISE as a private paying student, and scholarship support is available. The RAISE program is 100 percent supported by tuition.

As one of eight departments in the Student Success and Services Division, the Accessibility and Resource Program coordinates accommodations, auxiliary aids, support services and resources for students at **Shawnee Community College** (SCC). The Accessibility and Resource Program supports SCC's commitment to diversity and inclusion and promotes student access to an equitable college experience. Services are coordinated in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. The program serves a diverse group of students including those with physical, vision, hearing, psychiatric, medical, neurological, autism spectrum, ADHD, learning disabilities and cognitive disabilities. It also coordinates temporary accommodations for students that experience significant injury or illness. The program works very closely with the Testing and Tutoring centers, TRIO, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program, area high school districts, and various other state and local agencies to ensure that the students are given the best possible opportunity to succeed. Nearly all (98 percent) of the students in the program are funded through Pell, scholarships, or Department of Rehabilitation Services. This removes the burden of the tuition being paid by the students and family thus leading to the acquisition of student loans and student debt. At the end of academic year 2018, 12 percent of the students assisted by the program graduated, and 84 percent were retained, returning the following year.

To address a concern of a disconnection for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college, the Learning Skills Center-Disability Services at **Wabash Valley College** (WVC), in partnership with the Wabash and Ohio Valley Special Education Transition Specialist, created and designed Transition Day Part I in November 2017, and Part II in April 2018. During these events, students were provided with important college information, introduced to key people on campus, and showcased what services WVC provides to help ensure academic and personal success for students with disabilities. A total of 15 seniors and two parents attended Transition Days from three area high schools. Of those 15 students, nine completed their first semester at WVC. Two of the 15 students enrolled in the GED® program at WVC. Of those two students, one completed the GED®, and one is currently enrolled. Through a questionnaire, students and parents alike expressed that they were greatly satisfied with Transition Days. This initiative has provided students with the confidence and comfortability that they need to self-advocate, while giving them a personal connection to the services WVC offers.

Improving Access for CTE Students

Success Connections Coaches is **Heartland Community College's** initiative that helps students access resources that support student success as it guides them toward completion of career and technical education programs that have a high percentage of female students such as Radiography and

Heartland Community College implemented Success Connections Coaches in Fall 2017 to help career and technical education students access resources that support student success.

Nursing. The initiative was implemented in Fall 2017. Students are paired with a college coach who assists them with setting goals and creating a specific action plan to achieve them. A focus group was conducted within the Nursing program to determine perceived barriers and resources needed to continue supporting these students in working toward degree completion. Success Connections Coaches will continue working with nursing faculty to develop targeted interventions and supports based on student feedback from this event. Another Success Connections Coaches activity was Midterm Study Fest held during the week leading up to midterms to promote effective study habits and stress management during this very hectic time in the semester. During the 2018 academic year, 141 students were served by Success Connections Coaching, 57 percent of whom identified as female.

Highland Community College's (HCC) basic nursing classes offer students an entry into the healthcare field and prepare a pipeline of students who may continue their nursing education and help meet the local need for nurses. While the population of northwest Illinois has been in a decline, it is also aging and increasing the demand for local healthcare services. In addition to meeting local workforce needs, the basic nursing course serves a high percentage of underrepresented students. In an effort to increase the number of students who could access and complete the basic nursing course and other healthcare pathways, HCC faculty initially re-structured a 16-week basic nursing course as an eight-week hybrid model in 2015. The faculty made further changes to the course delivery and curriculum in 2018, and ran the revised hybrid course as a pilot again. It is one of only six hybrid basic nursing courses in the state of Illinois. Students who enroll in the hybrid course complete 54 hours online (outside of the class) and 34 hours of lab and in-seat time for theory. They also complete 40 hours of required clinical training

in a healthcare setting. Highland's basic nursing course completers achieved a 95 percent pass rate for the certified nursing assistant exam in 2018, which is an improvement in student success. In the basic nursing course, 85 percent of the students since the fall of 2016 have successfully completed. Additionally, students achieved a 95 percent successful completion rate for the part-time nursing cohorts since the spring of 2016, and a 90 percent successful completion rate for the phlebotomy students since the Spring 2017 term. These successes provide further evidence that adding stackable certificates will also expand career opportunities for underrepresented students.

Richland Community College and the state of Illinois have seen success in training entry-level workers for the skilled trades through the IDOT-funded Highway Construction Careers Training Program. The blueprint of that program was utilized to train entry-level welders from the out-of-school youth population.

Richland Community College partnered with Workforce Investment Solutions in June 2018 to train entry-level welders from the out-of-school youth population to fill 130 open positions at Decatur's Caterpillar.

When Caterpillar, one of the largest employers in Richland's district, expressed the need for 130 new welders, the college partnered with Workforce Investment Solutions (WIS) in June 2018, to train entry-level welders from the targeted population. Students received 36 hours of math for welding, 68 hours of job readiness training, 88 hours of basic welding instruction, along with OSHA 10 certification, CPR/First Aid Certification, and heavy machinery certifications in aerial lift, scissor lift, fork lift, and skid steer operation. The training started with 10 students, and all 10 students graduated the training on July 30, 2018. WIS worked with Richland to place each student in a work experience immediately following graduation with Richland hosting individual interviews on campus. One individual returned to the college to receive the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council safety credential. Eight individuals completed work experiences; one individual went directly to work after completing the class. As of January 2019, three of the individuals were employed and took advantage of the WIOA-approved on-the-job wage re-imbursement training. The success of this program resulted in Richland Community College creating an Industrial Job Skills Training Program that incorporates many components of the Welding, Warehouse and Job Skills training. The new program is a 360-hour training program that now includes manufacturing hand skills and increased hours in the other trainings included in the original course.

According to the [United States Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the demand for Certified Nursing Assistants is growing faster than nearly any other occupation. Members of **Black Hawk College's** (BHC) CNA Advisory Board regularly indicate the need for more nursing assistants, including those with Spanish language capabilities. To address the needs of the college's local community, BHC partnered with the Esperanza Center in Moline in January 2018, to offer the CNA program at their location aimed at minority female students, some of whom were first-generation. This program is often seen as a first step into the healthcare field. The Esperanza Center is located in the heart of one the area's largest Hispanic/Latino populations. Childcare was also offered on site. The program was completely funded by outside sources—Global Communities: \$10,640 for tuition and fees; and United Way: \$962.55 for textbooks, \$948.75 for supplemental ESL instructor to support the students, and \$300 to pay instructors for review sessions prior to students taking their state exam. The BHC Quad City Foundation paid for uniforms and equipment. Of the eight

students enrolled, seven completed the course and achieved state certification. At the time of last contact, all of the eligible graduates indicated that they were currently employed in the field.

Other Access Initiatives

Frontier Community College began in 1976 as the “Campus Beyond Walls” under the concept of taking education to the counties included in the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges District No. 529 in rural southeastern Illinois. Frontier Community College’s campus has since expanded but remains true to that original purpose. Every semester classes are offered at satellite locations surrounding the area for individuals who are not able to travel long distances to one of the main campuses within Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. These classes can be held at community buildings, churches, high schools, or businesses. Class offerings include transfer-level classes, various physical education courses, adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, career and technical education courses, and community education. In addition to traditional face-to-face courses, Frontier Community College offers online classes. Offering courses at these satellite locations along with online education increases access to continuing education. In Spring 2018 semester, a total of 36 different courses were offered between seven different locations reaching 202 students. Twelve online courses were offered reaching 147 students.

Frontier Community College offers classes at satellite locations in rural southeastern Illinois for students who are not able to travel long distances to one of the main campuses within Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.

Lincoln Trail College (LTC) implemented the Zipwhip Business Text Messaging service in 2018, as an additional communication method to reach potential and current students, and assist in ensuring student matriculation from the start to the end of the semester. Many of these students are first-generation; thus, unaware of or lacking parental assistance with admissions, advising, enrollment, financial aid, withdrawal, and other college processes. With each face-to-face interaction between students and the Office of Admissions and Records, LTC provided students the opportunity to complete texting release forms, allowing LTC to communicate with students via text message. Those students completing the forms received periodic texts from the college about admissions, advising, enrollment, financial assistance, and withdrawal processes and deadlines, as well as advising and support service appointments. Students also had the ability to reply to texts with questions and comments. The college allowed students to opt out of texting services at any time. From January to July, 2018, LTC’s Office of Admissions & Records and students exchanged 453 messages, including 191 messages sent to students and 262 student reply messages. Anecdotally, most replies from students were questions about processes, relating to the outbound messages from the college to the student. Given these numbers, the objective of adding a communication medium to reach students was successful.

Like the majority of public colleges and universities in Illinois, **John A. Logan College (JALC)** has faced a budget crisis caused by the continued reduction in state funding coupled with declining enrollment. In response, the college has developed a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) to face these challenges. The guiding force behind the creation of the plan was to provide the college with clear, measurable, and strategic goals focused on maintaining, and ultimately

growing, enrollment. JALC's fiscal years 2020-2023 SEMP was created by the college's Recruitment and Retention Committee during 2018. The committee was comprised of twenty faculty and staff representing all functional areas at the college. The focus of the SEMP is to support students as they prepare, persist, and prevail. Two distinct student populations were identified: (1) those taking the "direct pathway"—students who earn a high school diploma and plan to attend college immediately following high school graduation—and (2) those on an "alternate pathway"—students who do not attend a traditional high school or do not enter college the fall semester immediately following high school completion. These two groups have different needs that call for unique strategies and interventions to promote their success at JALC. The strategies for the alternate pathway students include being responsive to workforce needs, developing individual visions for success, increasing flexibility in offerings and services, assisting students in overcoming challenges, expanding program completion, simplifying the transfer process, and developing a pathway that leads to career success. The results of the fiscal years 2020-2023 SEMP will be monitored and evaluated. Furthermore, baseline data will be established for all enrollment and retention categories within the plan, which will determine the direction of the next SEMP.

John Wood Community College's Online 2x2 Program is an accelerated online program, which allows students who are unable to attend classes on campus to take two eight-week online classes at a time to complete an associate degree in two years. This allows students with work and home schedules access to classes and to complete a degree in an affordable delivery. Concentrations in accounting, business, economics, education, history, psychology, and sociology are available. These credits will transfer to a 4-year university. An additional winter session of online learning has been added to the program that has been active since the Fall 2014 semester. In the fall of 2018, John Wood was recognized as one of the best colleges offering online learning in the Illinois by the [Community for Accredited Online Schools](#). John Wood was ranked sixth among the state's community colleges offering online degrees based on quality, affordability, flexibility and degrees granted to students.

In the fall of 2018, John Wood was recognized as one of the best community colleges offering online learning in Illinois by the Community for Accredited Online Schools.

Admissions Call Nights began at **John Wood Community College** in the fall of 2017. Each year, it was noted that students would be admitted to John Wood, and upon registering for classes, did not have all the paperwork or financial aid forms completed, so they were unable to register. This inability to register often put the students as late registrations and put them slightly behind the initial start of classes, which became a possible cause of non-success. By contacting students two-three weeks prior to the start of classes during Admissions Call Nights, students were able to complete their paperwork and enter classes on time. This gave students a higher rate of success. Admissions Call Nights will continue to occur to assist students and will be reviewed for any improvement needs.

Access to and affordability of course-required materials—such as textbooks, manuals, gear, and calculators—are issues that come to the attention of librarians at the start of every semester. While the **Richland Community College** Library has taken steps to help students gain access to textbooks in an affordable manner—such as budgeting for additional reserve copies or locating the

latest edition within a statewide consortium (CARLI/IShare)—the lack of a graphing calculator was problematic. For the Fall 2018 semester, the Library purchased two Texas Instruments 84 graphing calculators at the request of the faculty members to fill the gap in their classes. Both calculators were checked out immediately on an in-library use only basis. Before Week 5 Library staff realized that the number of calculators was not sufficient to meet the need and that the borrowing period was not working for students' schedules. The borrowing period was expanded to last through the end of the semester (Week 16). Anticipating greater demand, the Library purchased an additional ten calculators currently being processed for a 16-week checkout. Using the circulation system, the use of the calculators can be tracked—the dates of use and the number of circulations—and tie this data to student information.

IMPROVING COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Initiatives for High School Students

Since the academic year 2016-2017, high school students who qualify for free or reduced lunch have received tuition waivers for dual credit courses at **Illinois Valley Community College** (IVCC), thus creating access to college courses for those students who have already been identified as economically disadvantaged. Students are only responsible for the \$5.00 registration fee. Students qualifying for the tuition waiver in the academic year 2016-2017 were retroactively adjusted for the waiver. The academic year 2017-2018 credit hours increased 22 percent as a result of the new program in place. Student head count also increased from 112 in the academic year 2016-2017 to 122 in the academic year 2017-2018.

Illinois Valley Community College offers tuition waivers for dual credit courses to high school students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Black Hawk College piloted the transitional math program with two area high schools in academic year 2017 and expanded it to four high schools starting August 1, 2017. The idea behind the program is that students that place into developmental math (often first-generation students or minorities) are considerably less likely to complete a college degree or certificate than students who do not place into developmental coursework. By offering the transitional math program, high school students are provided a better pathway for their success. The program consisted of the Qualitative Literacy students (non-STEM, non-tech students) taking a placement exam and placing into MATH 092 and 094, Math Literacy for College I and II. The instructors at the high schools were provided with the materials and guidance on how to teach the courses, which are not the standard lecture courses and require a great deal of group work by the students. Also, the content requires more problem-solving and less regurgitation of algorithmic processes. The costs for the students were far less than what they would have been as college students because they did not have to pay tuition, and the high schools found a less expensive way to provide the textbook/written materials and the online access. This provided access that a large number of students would not have otherwise had. Upon successful completion, the program allows students direct access into credit-bearing coursework without the need to take a placement exam.

The **Harper College** Promise Scholarship offers every eligible public high school student in Harper College's district the opportunity to earn free tuition for up to two years if students meet

specified criteria while in high school. They have to maintain good grades, have good attendance, persist to graduate on time, take and successfully complete a rigorous college ready curriculum, and participate in community service. These skills reflect attitude—meaning that Promise students will have developed the skill sets employers expect and understand the realities of work. Each of the criteria are defined clearly and have specific metrics that must be met (e.g., minimum GPA, number of absences, hours of community service, etc.). Once at Harper, the students must continue to meet specified criteria (e.g., must enroll full-time, maintain a minimum GPA, etc.) to maintain their earned tuition. The first high school freshman class (class of 2019, anticipated to enroll in Harper for Fall 2019) enrolled in the Harper College Promise Scholarship Program during the 2015-2016 school year. As of early Fall 2018, nearly 2,000 students in the class of 2019 remain eligible to benefit from the Harper Promise Scholarship and enroll at Harper in Fall 2019. The second largest ethnic group enrolled in the program is the Hispanic/Latino population, which also represents Harper's second largest ethnicity of students and its fastest growing demographic. While it is too early to provide compelling evidence that the program is clearly improving access and affordability to Harper College's underrepresented populations, the early evidence suggests that Harper will see more students from underrepresented groups gain access to an affordable education.

Kaskaskia College (KC) has collaborated with area high schools to offer the Foundation After School College (FASC) program. The FASC program is a unique and innovative solution to the dual credit losses suffered by area juniors and seniors because of dual credit cuts after instructor credentialing changes made by the Higher Learning Commission. Members of KC staff, faculty, and high school administrators and guidance counselors have come together each semester to plan a regional schedule of classes offered both online and after school at Education Centers located throughout the district. Courses were chosen by the high schools based on dual credit losses that had the most significant negative impact to students. Times and locations of class offerings were based on surveys of the student population. The Kaskaskia College Foundation has funded this initiative. Students are responsible only for textbook costs and course lab fees. This gives high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to take classes tuition free. The program was piloted during the Fall 2018 semester. Thirty-seven students participated through the semester, representing 115 credit hours earned, with a collective cost savings to the high school students of \$17,135. For the Spring 2019 semester, 61 students were registered to participate, for a collective 211 credit hours, representing a collective savings of approximately \$31,439.

In fiscal year 2018, **Kishwaukee College** enhanced the Academic Achievement Scholarship opportunity by providing an additional scholarship, the College Scholar award of \$500 per semester for four semesters, which allows for more in-district high school students to receive funding towards their education. Prior to fiscal year 2018, the college offered a single level Academic Achievement Scholarship, President's Scholar award of \$1,000 per semester for four semesters, that required students to have a 3.75 or higher GPA, a written reflection statement, and two to three character references. In fiscal year 2018, an additional scholarship opportunity was created for students who had a 3.25-3.74 GPA providing more students tuition assistance by adding the second tier opportunity. The college collaborated with the Kishwaukee College Foundation to assist with adding the additional scholarship opportunity by obtaining additional funding donation from the Foundation. The Academic Achievement Scholarship offers high school seniors the opportunity to attend Kishwaukee College with tuition assistance for those who may not have

chosen to attend college because of cost. In Fall 2018, 31 new students qualified for this enhanced scholarship opportunity and were awarded \$500 per semester for two years. A total of \$15,500 in new scholarship dollars was provided to increase access and affordability for incoming in-district high school students.

In 2017, **Prairie State College** (PSC) received a grant to fund thirty Early College (EC) students from two of District 515 high schools. The grant addressed the need to mitigate the lack of diversity in both color and gender in the information technology field. The grant paid the tuition (27 credit hours of transferable college credit), books, test preparation, and Cisco Network Associate Certificate and Computer Support Associate Certificate exams for 29 high school students. All the students met the criteria for a low-income individual and lived in a high poverty area. All the students enrolled in the program were either Hispanic/Latino or African American, which are the most underrepresented groups in the information technology field. In addition to college courses, students participated in Off Site Internships (OSI). The goal of the OSI was to expose low-income minority students to emerging careers in the Information Technology (IT) field. Students found the OSI experience very beneficial and were impressed at how the companies treated them with respect. A full-time IT faculty member was given reassigned time to navigate the students and act as a liaison with the high school advisors. The faculty member met with the students on a weekly basis as well as the faculty teaching them. Weekly progress reports were sent to the high school advisors. All students received 27 hours of transferable college credit, as well as Computer Support Associate and Cisco Network Associate industry recognized credentials. Twelve of the students received their A.A.S. in IT as high school students. Because of the success of the 29 students, the high schools in District 515 will be providing the same opportunity for students even without the support of the grant.

Rend Lake College (RLC) is dedicated to offering services that will assist area high school students in making the transition from high school to college. RLC facilitates this by hosting a Transition Summit in March of each year. The purpose is to provide information to students on the services and opportunities available at the college level to help them succeed. Area high school juniors and seniors, and all students with disabilities are invited to attend the Transition Summit that is held on campus. This is a daylong workshop where they hear a keynote speaker and hear presentations on goal setting and making an educational plan. They also receive information on the various services offered, such as disability services, tutoring, appropriate clothing for the workplace, and appropriate code of conduct. They also receive additional information on the various programs offered at RLC, which range from obtaining a certificate that will allow them to directly enter the workforce, to obtaining an associate degree and transferring to a university.

The purpose of the Cahokia High School Dual Enrollment Welding Program is to provide access for minority students to a college level career and technical education program funded entirely by the high school, provide completers with welding credentials necessary for living wage employment, and provide students a pathway to an A.A.S. in welding. **Southwestern Illinois College** (SWIC) and Cahokia High School formed a partnership in Fall 2017 allowing high school students to take welding courses at the East

Southwestern Illinois College and Cahokia High School formed a partnership in Fall 2017 allowing high school students to take welding courses at the East St. Louis Community College Center.

St. Louis Community College Center (ESLCCC). The program allows students to attend general education classes at Cahokia High School in the morning and welding classes at the ESLCCC in the afternoon. Students receive intensive instruction, mentoring and modeling delivered by faculty experienced with the needs of low-income and minority populations. Area businesses support the program by providing tours of modern manufacturing facilities and construction sites. The program is also supported by labor unions that provide information about their respective careers and the process for becoming members. Students who successfully complete the designated coursework each semester earn a Welding Technology Certificate (14 credit hours) at the end of the fall semester and a Welding Technology Advanced Certificate (12 credit hours) at the end of the spring semester. From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, the completion rate was 100 percent, and 23 certificates were awarded. The program is a successful model that is being presented to other high schools throughout SWIC's district for consideration.

Kennedy-King College (KKC) has offered eligible students from neighboring high schools the opportunity to enroll in college credit courses for many years. In recent years, however, the Dual Credit Program at KKC has expanded significantly as KKC has expanded offerings for existing high school partners and developed new partnerships with additional high schools. In fiscal year 2018, 236 students successfully earned college credit through KKC's dual credit program, up 56 percent from fiscal year 2016 (151 students). Earned college credit provides students a head start toward earning their degree and also significant savings toward their overall cost of college because enrollment in dual credit courses is free. The program's success is largely attributable to the development of active partnerships among KKC faculty, staff, partner high schools, and CPS leadership. A key role in KKC's program execution is that of the Dual Credit Faculty Coordinator, who is responsible for assuring academic integrity and fidelity to the curriculum and instruction for all off-campus college credit offerings. This includes professional development sessions, observations, and mentorship for high school teachers. This model creates an environment in which organic relationships can form and thrive at the instructional level, ensuring quality programming that prepares students are actively engaged in college-level coursework.

Women continue to be underrepresented in the STEM fields. Therefore, the Women in STEM Career Exploration Day was designed at **College of DuPage** (COD) to celebrate women in STEM careers and provide high school freshman and sophomore girls with the opportunity to interact with positive role models and participate in hands-on activities in order to encourage more women to have positive experiences with STEM and to pursue STEM careers. The event, which took place on October 19, 2018, included career panel group discussions with women in the STEM fields and a tour of COD's STEM facilities. The career panel was in a nontraditional format in which the panelists each sat at a table and the students rotated through different tables every 7-10 minutes. Another major component that made this event successful is that the lunch was provided for students by COD. Because of the free or reduced lunch program, many teachers have indicated that they would not be able to bring students to the event if lunch was not provided because they are legally obligated to provide a lunch for students who qualify for that program. Offering free lunch for the students removes this barrier and increases access to this career exploration for students who may otherwise be prevented from attending similar events.

In partnership between **Elgin Community College** (ECC) and District 509 school districts, dual credit programs are provided to area high school students. The purpose is to provide qualified and

prepared high school students with an option to speed up completion of college credentials through early postsecondary opportunities. Dual credit program costs are covered in part or in whole by partnering school districts as a means to promote affordability and increase college completion. Dual credit program options expanded in 2016-17 to allow high school students to enroll full time in ECC classes that also satisfy high school graduation requirements. The program options for part-time dual credit enrollment are also expanding in 2019-20 in two significant ways. First, additional options for students to earn college credit in both general education and career and technical education courses on campus will be available. In addition, qualified high school faculty will teach dual credit courses, and students will be able to participate in the courses at their high schools. This expansion is expected to notably improve access to more high school students. Moreover, districts intend to expand access to dual credit beyond the population of students who has traditionally enrolled in Advanced Placement courses. With each new cohort, an increasing number of students are minorities and the first in their families to attend college. In addition to expanding access, dual credit programs provide considerable cost savings to students and their families. Finally, dual credit students perform well in college-level courses and even outperform their non-dual credit counterparts in several ways and across demographic groups. First, dual credit students earn higher overall GPAs than overall GPAs aggregated for all ECC students. Secondly, dual credit students are more successful with regard to course grades (grades of A, B or C) and credit hour completion than non-dual credit peers.

The primary goal of the Upward Bound (UB) program is to assist low-income, academically at-risk, first-generation college students with successfully completing high school and to prepare them for enrollment and completion of college. **Kishwaukee College's** UB program offers a variety of resources such as weekly afterschool academic tutoring at DeKalb High School four days a week, education and career planning,

Kishwaukee College's Upward Bound program assists low-income, academically at-risk, first-generation college students with successfully completing high school and college preparation.

financial literacy, life skills workshops, college admission assistance, ACT and SAT preparation, college visits, academic and personal support, and a six-week summer academy program at Kishwaukee. Finishing the first year of the grant cycle in the 2017-18 academic year, the TRIO UB program met and exceeded program objectives. UB successfully recruited 62 students to the program, exceeding the 'Funded to Serve' performance metric at 103 percent of the goal. UB successfully surpassed the Eligibility Criteria goal of 66 percent with a 75 percent performance. UB successfully met the Secondary School Retention and Graduation goal at 100 percent. UB also exceeded the Secondary School Graduation performance metric by 100 percent with the successful graduation of two UB seniors from DeKalb High School. Both students matriculated to Kishwaukee College for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Kankakee Community College (KCC) held the first Explore KCC day for Manteno Middle School on April 20, 2018. Its purpose was to introduce and expose Manteno Middle School's eighth-graders to college and career readiness, including specific programs in agriculture/horticulture, arts, business, education, law enforcement, and math & science. A panel of local human resources professionals offered a question and answer session focusing on what they look for when hiring employees for their businesses. At the conclusion of the event, students were encouraged to work with their high school guidance counselors to develop academic course

schedules to align with their specific career area of interest. One hundred and fifty-two eighth-graders, 76 female and 76 male, attended the Manteno Middle School's Explore KCC day. Human resources representatives from five area businesses participated in the employer panel discussion. All aspects of the event were successful. The student participants are now freshman and continue to tailor their high school course schedules to align with their career interest areas. KCC and Manteno Middle School have agreed that this will become an annual event. If additional school districts are interested in participating in this type of event, KCC plans to offer it on a day when no credit classes are being held to accommodate the large number of eighth-graders.

Scholarships

Kennedy-King College (KCC) strives to design programming with underserved students in mind. KCC's student population is comprised almost entirely of underrepresented minorities. In fiscal year 2018, KCC's college credit student population was 78 percent African American, 14 percent Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent multi-ethnic Non-Hispanic, and 3 percent White. Sixty percent were women. KCC launched the Emerging Scholars (ES) program (originally called the "Pre-Honors" program) in the spring of 2017, after recognizing a gap in support and available opportunities for students with demonstrated academic potential, but insufficient credentials for KCC's Honors Program, Phi Theta Kappa. The mission of the ES program is "to guide students through their evolution from students with academic potential to individuals that exceed their own expectations and perceived limitations, while striving for self-actualization and academic excellence." This spring, KCC is launching its fifth ES cohort and results to date have shown that participants retain and complete programming at a greater rate than their peers. The program model has four phases: Learning Yourself, Learning to be a Scholar, Learning to Lead, and Learning to Give Back to the Community. Each phase defines success through clearly defined learning outcomes. In addition, program participants are afforded special opportunities and priority preference for certain on-campus employment and internship opportunities. In many cases, students can earn college credit through these opportunities.

The Chicago STAR Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship at City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) implemented in Fall 2015 that covers tuition, books, and class materials not already covered by financial aid for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) graduates with a B average or better on an approved academic pathway. It is a "last dollar" scholarship. If a student is not eligible to file for financial aid (via FAFSA) or is not awarded financial aid, the STAR scholarship waivers cover CCC-approved expenses. Any Chicago public or charter high school graduate who applies within one year of high school graduation, who is completion-ready, meaning they have an ACT score of 17 or higher in math and English, an SAT score of 460 in writing and 440 in math (if SAT is taken before March 1, 2016, 410 in writing and 400 in math), a 3.0 GPA or greater at high school graduation on a 4.0 scale (or a 3.75 on a 5.0 scale), and enrolls in one of CCC's pathways, is eligible for the STAR Scholarship for up to three years after CPS graduation or until completion of a CCC associate degree, whichever comes first. This includes undocumented and international students.

The Chicago STAR Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship at City Colleges of Chicago that covers tuition, books, and class materials, not already covered by financial aid, for Chicago Public School graduates with a B average or better on an approved academic pathway.

The Chicago Star Scholarship has been a successful tool for recruiting and retaining students at **Wilbur Wright College**, which is a learning-centered, Hispanic-serving institution. The college's initial cohort consisted of 319 (176 female and 143 male students; 68.0 percent Hispanic/Latino) in Fall 2015. Through Summer 2018, 196 (61.4 percent) students from the cohort had completed a basic or advanced certificate or an associate degree. For the Fall 2016 cohort, 78 students (25.7 percent of the cohort) have completed a certificate of degree as of Summer 2018. Retention among this group is high with a fall-to-fall retention rate of 84.4 percent, which was more than 20 percentage points higher than the rate (54.6 percent) for new, non-STAR students. The Fall 2016 cohort also has a significantly higher retention rate than new, non-STAR students—89.5 percent v. 49.6 percent. Retention for the Fall 2017 cohort was 86.7 percent compared to 46.2 percent for new non-STAR students. More than half of the cohort (58.3 percent) were still enrolled at Wright or another CCC in Fall 2017. To date, 69 students from the Fall 2015 cohort who completed a certificate or degree at Wright have also transferred to another institution, with Northeastern Illinois University (N=22) and the University of Illinois at Chicago (N=18) being the most common transfer destinations.

Harper College entered into a partnership with One Million Degrees (OMD) with the purpose of increasing degree completion among low-income, highly motivated community college students. The OMD program accepts students as OMD Scholars.

One Million Degrees is a program that motivates low-income community college students to succeed at school, in work, and in life.

The success of the program resides in the intrusive and consistent holistic supports the Scholars receive while pursuing their degrees. OMD provides Scholars with critical resources such as coaching, individualized tutoring, financial assistance, academic advising, and life skills and career readiness training that ensure successful degree completion and launches them into promising careers and transfer institutions. The initiative began in 2014 with 41 OMD Scholars. In 2018, OMD at Harper College served 137 students. Many of the Scholars are from underrepresented populations. The 2017 cohort had a 95 percent fall-to-spring retention rate, and 77 percent of the Scholars had a GPA of 2.0 or above. The Scholars in the 2017 cohort successfully completed over 80 percent of their course work, and more than 50 percent of the 2017 Scholars enrolled full time. Within the last year, 34 Scholars have successfully completed a credential or transferred to another college or university.

The Sauk Scholars Program was created as a way to bring the area's most dedicated students to **Sauk Valley Community College** (SVCC). These students must be either in the top 10 percent of their graduating class in their respective high schools or must rank in the 90th percentile for their composite ACT or SAT score. As students at SVCC, they enjoy 12 hours of tuition waivers per term; however, they must meet several criteria in order to continue enjoying that benefit. One such condition is that these students must complete 24 volunteer hours each year at SVCC and in the community. Furthermore, these students must also ensure that they maintain a GPA of 3.0. Sauk Scholars was first implemented at SVCC in the 2003-2004 academic year. During the state budget impasse, the number of credit hours waived per term decreased to twelve credits per term. Due to the high GPA standards of the program, Sauk Scholars students have a higher completion rate than the average SVCC student.

The purpose of the SWIC Foundation Scholarship Program is to provide educational access to all **Southwestern Illinois College** (SWIC) students, inclusive of underrepresented groups, by offsetting unmet financial need based on donor guidelines. Foundation scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$6,000 annually. Donors, comprised of individuals, businesses, and organizations, outline their scholarship criteria based on individual guidelines. Scholarship information is distributed to high schools, community libraries, as well as through Facebook, college websites, and email. Students submit a single online application that matches them to available scholarships. Selections are made by scholarship committees comprised of faculty, staff and Foundation representatives. Scholarship notifications are made prior to the start of the fall semester giving students ample time to make enrollment and financial aid decisions. Students accept their scholarship award(s) online and submit a thank-you letter with their photo, which is forwarded to the donor, thus promoting continued support for future students. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the Foundation awarded 250+ scholarships totaling nearly \$300,000 to help cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, supplies, equipment, and living expenses, and 13 students with disabilities, 61 first-generation students, 36 minority students, and 113 female students were awarded scholarships. To continue increasing educational opportunities for underrepresented students, six additional targeted scholarships were recently established for the upcoming 2019-2020 academic year. The primary goal of the new scholarships is to encourage East St. Louis High School graduates residing in East St. Louis to pursue a two-year career and technical degree at SWIC.

To increase affordability, in Fall 2016 **Frontier Community College** implemented the Wayne and Helen Blackmer Scholarship, which awards financial assistance to first-generation students. This award was created in the memory of Wayne and Helen Blackmer, whose proudest accomplishment was making sure all their children received a college education. The selection committee, which consists of members of the Blackmer family, look for a student who exhibits good character and high academic achievement that without receiving some type of financial assistance, would not be able to afford college. This scholarship awards in-district tuition for a maximum of 16 credit hours per semester for two semesters. Applicants must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester and maintain a 3.0 GPA. They must be first-year students at Frontier Community College and live in Wayne County. Applicants must submit an essay of 500 words or less describing their plans of achieving their goals through a college education. The Wayne and Helen Blackmer Scholarship is currently in its third year and has awarded three students with scholarships. The first two students both graduated and transferred to four-year institutions. The current scholarship recipient is scheduled to graduate in May 2019 with an Associate in Science and Arts.

Low Tuition and Tuition Waivers

The Basic Nursing Assistant (BNA) program at **Malcolm X College** (MXC) is a certificate program that prepares students to work in the health care industry as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). In fiscal year 2018, the program served 473 students, of which 85 percent were minority and 88 percent were female. In order to make the program more affordable, MXC reduced its tuition 44 percent, from \$1,069 a semester to \$599 a semester, in the start of fiscal year 2018. The goal of making the BNA program more affordable allowed the

In fiscal year 2018, Malcolm X College reduced tuition for the Basic Nursing Assistant program from \$1,069 a semester to \$599 a semester to make the program more affordable.

program to become more accessible to the entire student body, including potential students from the community. Thus, as an indirect result of this tuition structure, enrollment in BNA for fiscal year 2018 was 10.2 percent larger than the fiscal year 2017. In fiscal year 2017, the BNA program retained 86 percent of its first-time students, and 80 percent of these students earned a certificate award as a CNA. In fiscal year 2018, the BNA retained 90 percent of its first-time students and 85 percent of these students completed.

As a Hispanic Serving Institution, **Richard J. Daley College** serves a diverse student population with multiple intersections to promote STEM programming. Daley utilizes varsity athletics as a recruitment tool to provide an accessible and affordable education, which allows student athletes to continue to compete at a higher level. In fiscal year 2018, the college offered additional tuition waivers (nearly 65 percent increase) for all four varsity sports, allowing for a more affordable education for over one dozen additional student-athletes. Tuition waivers provide financial assistance to Chicago-area students who otherwise could not have afforded an education, particularly students unable to file for financial aid. Also, an athletic team room was re-located next to the athletic director's offices, which allows staff to closely monitor study hall hours and individual grades. Daley's athletics program served 46 student-athletes in fiscal year 2018, nearly a 44 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. Over 82 percent of the student-athletes who attended Daley in Fall 2017 were retained in the Spring 2018 semester, a 15 percent increase from the previous year. The retention rate for men's and women's basketball was 100 percent in fiscal year 2018. Due to the increase in tuition waivers, the college was able to offer additional aid to recruit a women's basketball team for fiscal year 2018. The average GPA for the women's basketball was 2.92, the highest of all team GPAs in fiscal year 2018.

Southeastern Illinois College (SIC) has maintained affordability through low tuition. The majority of the SIC student population is on some form of financial aid, and many pay for their tuition and fees in full through a Pell grant. At the time of the January 2017 Board of Trustees meeting, the college had only been paid 44 percent of what the state owed, causing the college to consider more fiscal management strategies, while still maintaining their promise to remain affordable. Thus, the Board of Trustees did increase tuition, but modestly, in order to remain conservative and still meet the needs of SIC's economically depressed area. The Board set the tuition at \$106 per credit hour, effective Summer 2017. While some institutions were raising their tuition dollars by an extreme amount to offset the budget impasse, Southeastern only increased by \$7. The increase was comparable to other regional community colleges, but still below the state average.

Illinois Valley Community College offers reduced tuition for incoming students with 30 credit hours from dual credit or dual enrollment. This initiative, which was launched in fiscal year 2017, is designed to promote access and affordability to students who began their college studies as high school students. These students will continue to receive the dual credit discounted rate for their tuition (75 percent of full-tuition) during the course of completing their degree, so long as they are registered as full-time students and are continuously enrolled in a program of study.

Emergency Financial Assistance

McHenry County College (MCC), with the support from the Friends of McHenry County College Foundation, implemented the Student Success Fund (SSF) in August 2017. SSF provides students with immediate financial support for expenses related to an unexpected unique emergency that places their continued education at risk. Emergencies include an accident, illness, death of a family member, fire damage, or need for temporary housing. The fund can provide a student with up to \$500. The student must meet certain eligibility requirements, such as maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. There are some expenses that the Foundation will not cover, such as tuition and fees, parking tickets, and entertainment costs. In the 2017-2018 academic year, fifteen students were awarded SSF dollars. Funds were distributed to pay for textbooks, car repair/payment/insurance, rent/house payment, medical expenses, and daycare expenses. Of the fifteen students who received funds, twelve students completed all their courses for the semester in which they applied for the SSF. Of the four students who had a course withdrawal, one student maintained full-time student status, while the remaining three completed the semester at part-time student status. Ten students enrolled in classes for the following semester, and five have since graduated from MCC with a certificate or degree.

Mc Henry County College's Student Success Fund provides students with immediate financial support for expenses related to an unexpected unique emergency that places their continued education at risk.

Moraine Valley Community College, in partnership with the Moraine Valley Foundation, provides emergency financial assistance to students who experience an unexpected financial crisis, which impacts their ability to stay enrolled and complete their education. Examples of qualifying emergencies include natural disaster or fire damage, medical emergency, travel emergency, accident/injury, divorce, homelessness/need for temporary housing, unemployment/losing unemployment benefits, or death of a parent, spouse, or significant other. Generous donor funds to the Foundation are utilized to provide direct third-party payments up to \$500, Walmart gift cards, gas cards, and bus passes. In extenuating circumstances, students may access these resources twice in a single year. The initial program was started in 2007, with a \$5,000 contribution by the college to help students with small grants to purchase books. In 2017, the Emergency Financial Assistance Program underwent a redevelopment. The Foundation's executive director worked with a group of stakeholders to simplify the application process, reduce the credit enrollment threshold for accessing funds, increase the number of qualifying emergencies, and gave authority to the Student Engagement staff to administer the distribution of gift cards and bus passes. All of these changes resulted in considerable administrative improvements to the program that made it easier for students to access these resources. In reviewing data of the students who utilized Emergency Financial Assistance Funds, approximately 85 percent stayed enrolled and completed the semester in which the award was made.

Olive-Harvey College instituted the Emergency Aid Program in January 2018. The program allocates funds to students going through emergency financial situations. Over 80 percent of the Olive-Harvey college credit student population receives some form of financial assistance. For many of those students, an unexpected automobile repair, medical bill, or loss in wages can mean the end of their college goals. By providing funds to assist students with unexpected expenses, Olive-Harvey supports students' persistence toward degree completions. Other student success

strategies include academic advising, veteran support services, disability access services, and counseling services, which cross-refer and coordinate services to support and retain Olive-Harvey students throughout the academic term. The Wellness Center manages the grant where students would apply for the emergency funding. The Wellness Center promotes the Emergency Aid Program through referrals by staff, faculty, or student peers. These referrals occur during face-to-face meetings through student support and academic support. All staff and faculty understand their role in retaining students, and referring the students to the necessary supports is key to serving the student population. Part of delivering the funds to the student requires a team to review the appeal and assess what resources could assist the student after the funds have been dispersed. The Wellness Center encourages the students to continue services as a counseling client to assess any additional needs. The Wellness Center provides socio-emotional support as well as online financial literacy education. In fiscal year 2019, the grant was used to administer financial support to 15 students. Out of those 15 students, 14 students completed the Spring 2018 term.

Financial Literacy Initiatives

In Fall 2017, **Moraine Valley Community College** implemented the Financial Literacy Online Module. All students who receive financial aid for the first time are required to complete the online module. Targeting first-time financial aid recipients allows the college to make contact with students early in

At Moraine Valley Community College, all students who receive financial aid for the first time are required to complete the Financial Literacy Online Module.

their academic careers, presumably before students encounter pitfalls and dilemmas that can put their college completion in jeopardy. The Moraine Valley Financial Literacy Online Module goes into detail about financial aid basics, types of aid, applying for aid, borrower responsibilities, and repayment strategies. To access the module, students have to register at the Financial Literacy 101 website. The module titled *Paying for College* includes various topics such as types of financial aid, creating aid strategy, understanding financial need, applying for aid, and choosing the right loan. Upon completing the module, each student is required to take the course quiz. A final grade is then calculated for the module. Students must receive at least 70 percent to complete the module. If students do not receive a passing score, the final quiz must be retaken until a passing score is received. Once successfully completed, students are eligible to complete the financial aid process. In the 2017-18 academic year, 2,544 students completed the online module. Of those completers, 1,428 returned for the Fall 2018 semester, producing a 56 percent retention rate for first-time financial aid recipients who completed the online module.

In 2009, **Elgin Community College (ECC)** created a financial education program, Financial Smarts, to address concerns that financial limitations can be a barrier against college completion. The aim of the program has been to educate students, families, and community members about financial literacy—how to prepare a budget, how to manage debt, and improve understanding of financial aid and student loans. Prior to its launch, ECC students were borrowing more through student loans, the cohort default rate was rising, and students were struggling to remain enrolled due to financial barriers. Housed in ECC's finance department, the program unites the finance and student services divisions and consists of events and lessons offered during new student orientations, first year success courses, within program courses, and as online tutorials. Additionally, mandatory one-on-one loan advising has been carried out since 2012. Many positive

outcomes can be attributed to Financial Smarts. First, the number of loans and amounts of loan debt at ECC has significantly decreased over the nine fiscal years of the program's run. The number of loans awarded decreased from 1,844 in fiscal year 2010, to 735 in fiscal year 2018, and direct loan amounts decreased from \$6.4 million to \$2.8 million over this same period. Finally, ECC's cohort default rate continues to remain low as a result of one-on-one loan advising. The rate has declined by almost half, from near 20 percent in fiscal year 2010, to just over 12 percent today. The Financial Smarts program exemplifies ECC's commitment to equity by allowing students with limited financial wherewithal to attend college.

The Financial Aid FAFSA Workshops and Information Nights at **Kankakee Community College** (KCC) provide access to college and promote affordability to students who otherwise would not be able to attend college without the assistance of financial aid. The Financial Aid FAFSA Workshops help current and future students, as well as their parents, complete the FAFSA application. Assistance is provided no matter which school the student plans on attending. Students who wish to attend KCC can also complete the KCC Foundation Scholarship application during the same workshop. The Financial Aid Information Nights gives current and future students, as well as their parents, an overview and introduction to the financial aid process. It informs them of what to expect during the FAFSA process, cost of attendance variances by type of institution, different types of financial aid offered, and where they can get additional help or information. The information provided is general and applies no matter which school the student plans on attending. There were 75 students in attendance during 12 workshops in the 2017-18 school year. Attendees included high school students, nontraditional students, and single moms.

The objective of the Default Prevention Plan at **Waubensee Community College** was to reduce the Cohort Default Rate for student loans, which for fiscal year 2011, was at a high of 18 percent. This was accomplished by reviewing institutional practices in the areas of student borrowing and default prevention and making recommendations based on available information and student and borrower data. Process and policy changes were implemented beginning in fiscal year 2015, to reduce overall borrowing and the institutional default rate. The recommendations included reducing borrowing by only offering loans to non-Pell eligible students; promoting intelligent borrowing by having students who request loans indicate the expenses for which they need the loan, provide documentation of these expenses for loan increases, and confirm that they have checked the National Student Loan Data System for their current loan balance; converting from online to in-person entrance counseling; and entering into a contract with a company that will obtain borrower information from multiple servicers and use this information to contact delinquent borrowers in order to assist them with realistic options before their loans go into default, including the resumption of payments and short-term forbearance. Consequently, the cohort default rate decreased to 11.2 percent in fiscal year 2015, from 18.0 percent in fiscal year 2011. As a result of the cohort default rate being below 15 percent for the last three years, first-year, first-time borrowers do not have to wait 30 days for their loan disbursements, and students who borrow loans for one term will receive one disbursement at the beginning of the term rather than one disbursement at the beginning of the term and one disbursement at the mid-point.

IMPROVING STUDENT COMPLETION

Academic Advising/ Coaching/ Counseling/ Tutoring

At the end of May 2017, a survey was sent to faculty of **Wabash Valley College** asking for feedback to improve and expand the efforts of the Learning Skills Center. One area that was overarching was the need for student support in the areas of time management, study skills, test taking, organization, learning style implementation, test anxiety, and classroom etiquette. With this feedback, walk-in workshops were designed to offer quick, engaging, and effective strategies that focus on a variety of skills to promote student success and completion. The workshops were designed for all students, but underrepresented groups are often those most in need of the extra assistance. Walk-in Workshops were 15-20 minutes of fun, interactive, and meaningful information sessions, and students were able to immediately apply what they learned. Instructors were emailed a flyer of available workshops, and at any time, could request a workshop be presented in their classroom. Each month, a new workshop was created and added to the workshop list. A total of 19 workshops were presented to classrooms from Social Services and Nursing to Diesel Equipment Technology and Advanced Manufacturing.

Wabash Valley College's Walk-in Workshops were designed to offer quick, engaging, and effective strategies that focus on a variety of skills to promote student success and completion.

Coaching for Academic Success (CAS) was implemented at **College of Lake County** (CLC) in 2014. The program helps students maximize their potential, collaborates with faculty and staff to develop solutions, and engages students with college resources and programs. Academic coaches inspire students to achieve course success and persistence through effective communication, critical reflection, self-advocacy and resiliency. They contact students during the first week of classes (during class and through CLC email) and provide coaching information. Coaches also email helpful information throughout the semester. Students may receive an early alert notification from an instructor or coach. Early alerts are related to academic performance on assignments and exams, class attendance, understanding course material, and other areas where students could benefit from additional support. Coaches contact students via email, phone, or text to discuss the alert. Coaches then provide support, referrals to CLC resources, such as tutoring and advising, and conversations about student success. There were 226 developmental English students who participated in CAS coaching in fiscal year 2018, 118 referred by their instructor and 108 self-referred. The students who sought out the coaching (self-referred) seemed to benefit the most from the program, with only 7 percent withdrawing from the course and 91 percent receiving a passing grade.

The Perkins Grant Peer Tutoring Program is focused on improving the academic success and college completion for underrepresented groups at **Malcolm X College** (MXC). The Peer Tutoring Program allows first-year career program students to receive assistance in gaining competencies in their courses and allows Peer Tutors (second-year career program students) to demonstrate their understanding of the career program content while building leadership skills. Funded by the Carl D. Perkins grant, a federal grant designed to improve career and technical education programs with the goal of students earning workforce credentials with economic value, peer tutoring began as a pilot in the Fall 2017 semester for the following career and technical education programs: Mortuary Science, Radiography Technology and Respiratory Care Technician. MXC measured

the success of the program by the number of students who attended tutoring and by the improvement in the course Midterm GPA to the Final GPA. Data for the 2018 fiscal year shows an increase in tutoring hours from the first year as compared to the tutoring hours in the second year. In most of the radiography courses in fiscal year 2018, students who received tutoring had scored better final GPAs as compared to their midterm GPA.

The Stress Reduction Lab is located within the Student Counseling Center at **Heartland Community College** (HCC). The purpose of the stress lab is to provide students a place to practice a variety of relaxation techniques and approaches to stress reduction. Stress can be a major obstacle to student success. Once students are introduced to the stress lab and trained to use the equipment and relaxation techniques, they can come to lab during regular office hours of the Counseling Center to practice relaxation. A scale-up effort related to use of the lab began in Spring 2018, when the college purchased, installed, and trained staff to use the equipment and technology. The stress lab was introduced to approximately 100 CTE students by May 2018. In June, the Counseling Center started scheduling individual appointments using an electronic recordkeeping system. Students in the Physical Therapy Assistant program, 60 percent of whom are female, were involved in the scale up project and are being trained to use the equipment and techniques associated with the stress lab.

The Daley College Wellness Center assists students, faculty, and staff with free mental health counseling as well as other essential social services. Two full-time counselors, along with six interns from local master's programs, offer individual counseling, lead group therapy sessions, run various programs, and disseminate basic social services information such as housing, low-cost health care, legal services, etc. Prior to fiscal year 2017, the Wellness Center did not have enough space to conduct individual counseling, which resulted in turning clients away and scheduling them for a later date when space was available. To address this issue and ensure access to essential services, the Wellness Center was relocated to new space at **Richard J. Daley College** in fiscal year 2018. This new expansion consists of three individual counseling rooms, a sports psychology room, a meditation room, a group therapy room, a testing room, and separate offices for the two full-time counselors and the interns. Best practices indicate that students who regularly attend counseling sessions are retained at a higher rate. The additional space resulted in increased utilization of services and counseling sessions in fiscal year 2018.

The goal of the Graduation Project, which was implemented in Fall 2012 at **Wilbur Wright College**, is to ensure that all potential graduates are carefully monitored by their assigned advisors until they complete their degrees or certificates. Advisors use a caseload management model to monitor and support students and utilize GradesFirst as the main communication tool and the PeopleSoft system to conduct the degree audits. Educational plans are created or modified during the fall semester for students who have earned 45 hours or more toward graduation. Once a student is deemed eligible for graduation, a comprehensive outreach is conducted, including personal phone calls, emails, and letters to ensure students apply for graduation. Since inception, the college has increased its IPEDS graduation rate from 11 percent in fiscal year 2012, to a projected rate of 28 percent in fiscal year 2018. Among Hispanic/Latino students, the college's largest demographic, completion of the Associate in Arts almost doubled, from 164 in fiscal year 2011, to 315 in fiscal year 2018. During the same time frame, completion of the Associate in Science among Hispanic/Latino students increased six-fold, from 20 to 121. The completion of the general

studies degree also increased among Hispanic/ Latino students, from 30 in fiscal year 2011, to 100 in fiscal year 2018.

Initiatives for At-Risk Students

About 20 percent of **Highland Community College** (HCC) students receiving financial aid had a financial aid warning, termination, or exceeded status in 2018. Since 2015, student services staff at HCC have been providing outreach to students on financial aid termination to help them connect with an advisor and develop academic support plans. Recognizing

Highland Community College's Success Center created a watch list of students who were on financial aid warning status in the early alert system, which allows for monitoring, outreach, and increased intervention to occur earlier in the semester.

that about 90 students were placed on warning status each semester, HCC staff began exploring ways to focus outreach and retention efforts on this group of students before they reached termination, with the goal of helping these students return to regular financial aid status. With new retention, persistence, and completion targets selected in 2018, the college increased its use of early alert and targeted several cohort groups at risk of dropping out or stopping out, including students on financial aid warning status with a history of poor academic performance. Beginning in Fall 2018, the HCC Success Center created a watch list of students who were on financial aid warning status in the early alert system, which allows for monitoring, outreach, and increased intervention to occur earlier in the semester. One of the departmental goals is to increase the number of referrals to early alert by 25 percent and term-to-term persistence of these student cohorts by 10 percent. The college uses Maxient software to manage its early alert process, and the system automatically sends an electronic notification to the retention coordinator when an alert is submitted. The Maxient program also allows staff to monitor students who are on a “watch list.” The Success Center is notified when an alert is entered for someone with a warning status. The data demonstrates that the college’s early alert process is providing outreach to the targeted underrepresented student population. Additionally, the number of early alerts entered continues to increase. HCC is on track to meet the goal of increasing the number of referrals by 25 percent in the 2018-2019 school year.

The Persistence Project, which **Oakton Community College** implemented in 2015, promotes a pedagogy that emphasizes equity-based, student-faculty engagement in order to increase student persistence. Faculty participating in the Persistence Project engage in a faculty/student engagement protocol in which each student becomes known as an individual person and learner. Faculty members commit to a series of activities throughout the semester to achieve this, including learning the names of all students and scheduling 15-minute conferences with each students within the first three weeks of the semester, discussing the benefits of obtaining an associate degree, and contacting students who are struggling in the class and offering help. This pedagogy can be applied in all modes of delivery—face-to-face, online and hybrid classes. The Persistence Project is led by a shared governance committee that includes faculty, administration, and staff members who provide orientation activities, professional development, and support throughout the semester. Oakton set a goal to significantly increase the college’s overall student fall-to-fall persistence rate from 45 percent in academic year 2014-2015 to 54 percent by academic year 2019-2020. The initiative’s contributing efforts and success has helped to close the gap towards the overall 54

percent goal marked for 2019-2020. Oakton is on target to soon achieve the 54 percent persistence rate, with its current overall 2017-2018 fall-to-fall persistence rate at 51 percent. The success of the initiative rings true for Hispanic Persistence Initiative participants who persisted at a 57 percent rate in year 2016-2017, and remained close to that impressive rate at 56 percent during the 2017-2018 academic year. Hispanic/Latino non-participants persisted at a 51 percent rate in 2016-2017, and a 53 percent rate in 2017-2018.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) workshops began running in Fall 2017 at **Olive-Harvey College**. At SAP workshops students learn about the effect of negative SAP and how it can jeopardize their progression and financial aid. Many students obtain SAP holds due to not successfully completing courses. Students can have these holds released if they provide evidence of mitigating circumstances. In SAP workshops, staff guide students through the appeal process. Each student will receive a one-on-one consultation about their academic history, what terms to mitigate, and what documentation is acceptable based on their circumstance. All SAP appeals go before a committee that includes representatives from various departments. The committee meets once a week to rule on SAP appeals. If a SAP appeal is denied, the student is notified and has a 10-day time frame to submit additional documentation. The director of financial aid will rule on the appeal. If a SAP appeal is approved, the student must meet with their academic advisor to complete an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP). The AIP outlines how the student obtained a hold, a plan to be successful, and a what-if calculation with their grades. Of the 328 enrolled students who had a SAP hold in Fall 2017, 229 students submitted an appeal (70 percent), and at least 58 percent of these were approved.

Liberal Arts (LA) 100, Student Opportunity for Success, is a one credit hour course designed to assist students in their transition into the college environment, to encourage their success and attainment of goals, and to foster relationships that will help facilitate this success. Students who are enrolled full time at **Spoon River College** (SRC) and are on academic probation, with semester GPA under 2.0, are required to take LA 100. The goal of the course is to instill wise choice-making skills so the students apply what is learned in the course and ultimately increase their GPA sufficiently to be removed from academic probation. The first LA 100 course at SRC was taught in the spring of 2006. The student success coach, trained to assist students with learning new study strategies, overcoming text anxiety, and designing academic and career goals, provides instruction for LA 100. The majority of students enrolling in Fall 2015 through Spring 2018 in the LA 100 course improved their GPA. Of the students enrolled in LA 100 and receiving a grade, 66 percent had an increase in their GPA, meeting academic standards for that semester.

Southeastern Illinois College piloted the Starfish retention system at the beginning of the Spring 2015 semester, and the system is now used by all faculty and adjuncts. Starfish provides a convenient way to track students—raising flags when students' patterns of behavior become concerning and ensuring people on campus are aware and are able to intervene. This type of system is helpful when working with underrepresented groups by creating awareness and providing methods for improvement. Starfish is comprised of five potential flags instructors can use to indicate at-risk behaviors: attendance concern, low average in a course, behavioral concern, low quiz/test scores, and missing/late assignments. Faculty members are given period surveys to complete on their classes to flag students for these behaviors. Once a flag is raised by a faculty member, advisers and retention staff members are to follow up by making phone calls, leaving

voicemails, and sending emails to the students who were flagged. They also write notes in the system, which are automatically sent to the original faculty member who issued the flag. These communications with students include encouragement and information on tutoring, advisement, and other intervention strategies. In the Fall 2017 semester, 557 flags were issued by faculty and followed up by advisers and retention staff. Of those flagged, 35.1 percent of those students completed with a C or better, while only 21.6 percent dropped the course. Additionally, 56 percent of those students who were flagged were enrolled in classes in the Spring 2018 semester.

Initiatives for Developmental Students

The purpose of co-requisite support as described by [Complete College America](#) (CCA) is to “increase gateway course completion within the first year by enrolling entering students into the college-level math and English courses, providing those who need additional help with a concurrent course or lab that offers just-in-time academic support.” In August of 2017, **Lewis and Clark Community College** began enrolling students that would have otherwise been placed in a developmental math course, into a college-

Co-requisite remedial education places students into both developmental and college-level courses in the same subject at the same time, which allows students to receive targeted support to help boost their understanding and learning of the college-level course material.

level math course with a built-in CCA co-requisite support course. A total of 42 African American students enrolled in CCA sections of Technical Math 1 (MATH 125), College Algebra (MATH 131), Elementary Mathematics Modeling (MATH 137), and General Education Statistics (MATH 145) in academic year 2018, with 57.1 percent of students receiving a grade of A, B, or C for both fall and spring semesters. When factoring the need under the previous developmental math sequence of having to complete one to three developmental math courses before enrolling in a college-level math course, it is estimated—using historical success rates—that only 20 of these 42 African American students would have completed a college-level math course in academic year 2018. The 24 African American students completing a CCA math course represents an estimated 20 percent increase in college-level math completion for African American students.

Olney Central College (OCC) has undertaken a goal of reducing the number of hours a student spends in a developmental course by requiring the developmental course to be taken in tandem with a college-level course. The initiative was implemented in Fall 2017. College students that test into developmental education, who are often diagnosed with learning disability and/or are first-generation college students, are placed into an eight-week developmental course followed by an eight-week college-level course, rather than the traditional semester long developmental course. These students are provided with tutoring support in both courses. This approach will help students succeed, within the developmental course, and has shown a positive effect on completion of a college-level credit. Using the approach of co-requisites in both Mathematics and Communications courses, OCC now has a rate of 51 percent from those entering into developmental education and completing a college credit within a year’s timeframe.

Harold Washington College (HWC) was awarded Pathways to Results (PTR) funding aimed at improving student transitions to and through postsecondary education and into employment. With the goal to improve pathways and programs of study by addressing inequities in student outcomes,

HWC focused on dismantling the equity gap for career and technical education students to better prepare them to be successful in required, credit-level English and Math classes. This assessment was achieved through mixed-method approaches, notably, the implementation of embedded advisors in developmental courses at HWC in Spring 2018, which created more asset-based interactions with students, added support system, and fostered a family-like environment constructed through the asset-based approach. Since inception of this program HWC has expanded the model and tripled the number of students with an embedded advisor in Math and English courses, impacting nearly 250 students to date. The English developmental course has shown the greatest success with higher success rates than English developmental courses without an embedded advisor. Retention rates in classes with embedded advisors remained relatively on par with those that did not have embedded advisors.

Initiatives for Adult Education Students

Over 300 students enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at **Triton College** possess a degree from their native country. Eighty-six of those students possess advanced language proficiency, but despite their high level of skill, many report being unemployed or underemployed, working in low-wage jobs unrelated to their academic training. The CareeReady program, funded by an ICCB Innovative Bridge and Transitions Grant, provides opportunities for high-level ESL students to pursue industry recognized credentials in their field of study, to engage in workforce preparation

The CareeReady program, funded by an ICCB Innovative Bridge and Transitions Grant, allows English as a Second Language students who possess degrees from their native country to pursue industry-recognized credentials and develop employability skills.

activities, and to secure employment or transition to a degree or certificate program. The program represents a successful collaboration between Triton's adult education department and continuing education department. Students engage in online coursework to prepare for industry-recognized credential exams. Initially, students complete a 10-week MS Office credential and then transition to an industry specific course in their field of study. While courses are offered in an online format, students are required to attend face-to-face classroom sessions held in a computer lab on campus where they receive language support from an experienced ESL instructor/coordinator who also provides assistance navigating the online instructional environment. To date, three cohorts of students (18 total) have been enrolled in the program. Ten students have earned a Microsoft credential. Seven of these students are now preparing for industry-recognized credential exams in their field of study. Two students have been offered jobs in their field.

Prior to Spring 2018, **Lincoln Trail College** (LTC) offered two High School Equivalency (HSE) opportunities each term, both in the evening. Potential students requested a day section. To accommodate these students, mostly from first-generation, economically disadvantaged, and academically disadvantaged backgrounds, the LTC adult education program increased its HSE offerings to include a day section. The purpose of this addition was to increase access to high school equivalency coursework for students who worked second or third shifts, had family commitments, or other circumstances that prevented enrollment in evening HSE coursework. The expectation was to enroll at least eight students in Spring 2018; 17 students enrolled in each of the January to March and March to May classes, exceeding expectations. Five of those students

completed their high school equivalency by the end of the semester, equivalent to or slightly higher than typical semester completion rates.

Olney Central College implemented a scholarship program in Fall 2016 that provides financial assistance to students completing a High School Equivalency Certificate that transition into a career and technical education or a transfer degree program. Since implementing the scholarship program, OCC has awarded, on average, two scholarships per year. Often students receive financial aid, and with the infusion of \$2,000 over the period of two semesters, their financial aid can buy materials such as books, tools, or uniforms. Completion of programs is a struggle for every student demographic, but for those entering college from adult education, the length of time from start to finish is extended and often contributes to students leaving. For fiscal years 2017 and 2018, four high school equivalency graduates utilized the scholarship with 85.5 attempted credit hours, 56.5 completed credit hours, and an average GPA of 2.66. None have completed their program of study to date; however, they were able to meet the financial burden of college through this scholarship opportunity.

The **Kaskaskia College** adult education and literacy department collaborated with the Marion County Court Services to provide high school equivalency classes at the Marion County Court facilities. The entire student population for the class was individuals who were referred to the program from either the Marion County Circuit Court or the Marion County Drug Court. After several months of planning and coordinating, this pilot program was implemented, and the first class was held on February 21, 2018, with eleven students. The classes were offered two days a week for three hours per session. Those referred by Drug Court can receive reduced time off their probation by attending and participating in the program. The convenient location housed in the Court Services facility allows the students easy access to both probation, drug counselors, and educational career services. Students are monitored by representatives of all agencies to sustain retention. Each student upon entering into the program is pretested by using the TABE test. The TABE test identifies the skills the student already possesses and assigns an equivalent grade level. The instructor then uses this information to develop and implement appropriate curriculum to instruct the student. The average for this initiative was the 5.6 grade level. The completion of this program reduces significantly the risk of recidivism and is offered at no cost to the student. In addition, Kaskaskia College offers an adult education scholarship for each student in this class once they pass their high school equivalency exam. This allows for an easy transition from adult education into a CTE program or an associate degree at Kaskaskia College.

Other Completion Initiatives

To meet retention, persistence, and completion goals, **Danville Area Community College** (DACC) collaborated on several student success efforts that worked toward systemic change. One impactful initiative is Operation Graduation, which was implemented in the Spring 2017 semester. Overall, the goal of the initiative is for the entire campus to focus on the college's graduation rate of first-time, full-time

Danville Area Community College implemented Operation Graduation in the Spring 2017 semester that focuses on the graduation rates of first-time, full-time degree and certificate-seeking students.

degree and certificate-seeking students. Academic advisors engage first-time, full-time students through a series of phone calls during the fall and spring semesters. Each cohort is monitored

yearly to see which students are continuing the next year, have transferred or graduated, or have withdrawn from the college completely. A chart on cohort progress and comparisons to previous years is shared across campus to see if gains are occurring. The chart follows students for three years, as the three year graduation rate is the most commonly used and shared with third-party stakeholders. In the cohort's fourth year, the director of admissions and records reviews all students who are close to attaining a degree or certificate and contacts them via letter, email, or phone call to make sure they have filled out their graduation paperwork or have registered for any remaining classes they may need. Demographics of the fall cohorts are reviewed by departments and committees to identify and introduce strategies, reduce the performance gaps, and increase successful completions. Overall graduation rates for the Fall 2013 cohort and Fall 2014 cohort increased from 36 percent to 38 percent between the Spring 2017 and Spring 2018 terms. It was determined that more effective and personal strategies need to be applied to help African American males succeed at DACC. Research was conducted and plans were made to start a new mentoring group that will pull from the Operation Graduation cohorts.

Danville Area Community College introduced the Getting Ahead initiative and the SPENT exercise for faculty as part of scaled-up efforts to educate students and staff on understanding the underresourced minds that will lead to improving student success. Getting Ahead Curriculum Infused with Success in College, INST 101, began in Fall 2015, and continued at the Danville Housing Authority through Spring 2018. The Getting Ahead curriculum, part of Ruby Payne's *aha! Process*, guides students through an investigation of the impact of economic class on their lives. It helps them build resources to successfully navigate the complex worlds of college and the workplace, plan for a brighter future for themselves and their families, and contribute to a sustainable community. Individuals who grow up in generational poverty learn to understand and adopt successful life strategies and function effectively in the middle class environment of education and employment. Students work to understand the mental models of generational poverty, along with the mental models of the middle and the upper mindsets, and learn to apply these concepts to their own environment. The curriculum has influenced the mindsets and actions of everyone involved—the students in poverty, social service agencies, the college, community leaders, and businesses and employers.

To learn how to reframe policies and procedures to meet the students' needs while maintaining high standards, the SPENT exercise for faculty and staff was implemented in Fall 2017 at DACC. It challenges players to make it through the month on their last \$1,000. Changes in employment, housing, medical costs, and other expenses force the SPENT player to make difficult choices that often compromise the health, safety, or integrity of their families. As the result, DACC faculty, staff, and administrators show greater understanding of mindsets and barriers with probing questions when assessing services, policies, and procedures. During fiscal year 2018, policies were updated (drop/withdrawal policy grace period added), programs were introduced (Bonus Course Waiver), and mentors were provided to all first-time, full-time students.

The purpose of the Title IX Pregnancy Program is to provide advocacy and support to pregnant students enrolled in **Parkland College**. The goal is to enhance students' ability to complete their academic goals and remain successful in classes during their pregnancy, delivery, and recovery, while encouraging continued enrollment to complete their academic goal. The program, which was initiated in August 2016, provides a case management structure to ensure pregnant students

are given opportunities to make-up missed work. Students complete an intake form and program agreement contract with the dean of students, supply pregnancy documentation, and meet with the wellness center coordinator and with their faculty. According to the agreement, students call the office of the dean of students to report any absences due to pregnancy complications. Faculty of record are notified of excused pregnancy-related absences and length of time until student plans to return to class. Students must meet with faculty within a week upon returning to campus/logging back into online class to set up a plan to complete missed course work. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the office of the dean of students registered and worked with a total of fifty-six students; of those students, thirty-four were enrolled in credit courses, and twenty-two were enrolled in high school equivalency classes. The thirty-four pregnant students completed a total of four hundred ten credit hours in the 2017-18 academic year, and there were five graduates and two known transfers. A review of the students' records indicates that sixteen of the thirty-four students continued their enrollment post-delivery.

Intercollegiate athletics play an important role in the educational process of **Shawnee Community College (SCC)** students. The college offers a wide range of sports. Outstanding coaching in both the men's and women's divisions makes the athletic programs first class endeavors. The college is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). All teams participate in Division I-Region 24 and National Tournaments. In the fall of 2018, SCC added a team liaison to the athletic department that assists student-athletes with the transition from high school to the college life. This person is also responsible for advising and retaining student-athletes. There are nearly 90 student-athletes on campus at SCC that has five NJCAA certified sports and issues 84 scholarships. Men's and women's basketball have 15 scholarships each. Baseball and softball have 20 scholarships each. Volleyball has 14 scholarships. SCC athletes generally take a minimum of 15 hours per semester and participate in academic advisement and mandatory study tables.

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