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**FISCAL YEAR 2022**  
**ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
**SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**  
**FOR**  
**UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS**

**FOCUS AREA:**  
**STRATEGIES IN INCREASING ACCESS, RETENTION,**  
**AND COMPLETION RATES**

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*July 2023*

Underrepresented Groups Report  
Fiscal Year 2022

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Illinois Community College Board recognizes and appreciates the extra efforts by Illinois Community College System officials to furnish information for this report. Local leaders in the report production process include Coordinators of Student Support/Special Needs Services, Underrepresented Groups Report Coordinators, Institutional Researchers and MIS Coordinators.

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## INTRODUCTION

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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 residents 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 topics: *Strategies in increasing access, retention, and completion rates*.

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 childcare needs, which 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 student access, retention, and completion to close the achievement gap and for recruitment and/or marketing efforts to stem enrollment declines for at-risk and/or

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underrepresented groups 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.

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### KEY FINDINGS

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- Nearly one-half (45.6 percent) of students enrolled in Transfer and two-fifths (40.0 percent) of students enrolled in CTE programs were members of a minority group.
- Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest minority group enrollments in the Transfer program areas (23.5 percent) and also in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs (20.5 percent). African American students made up 11.6 percent of enrollments in both Transfer programs and CTE programs.
- Minority students accounted for 42.7 percent of Transfer graduates, compared to 39.3 percent of all CTE graduates in fiscal year 2022.
- Compared to five years ago, the total number of minority completers increased 11.6 percent.
- Over three out of five minority first-time, full-time students enrolling in Fall 2021 were retained or graduated in Fall 2022 (62.9 percent) compared to about seven out of ten White students (69.3 percent).
- About every other minority first-time, full-time student enrolled in Fall 2019 at Illinois community colleges graduated, transferred out, or were still enrolled by Summer 2022 (54.5 percent) compared to about two in three White students (67.9 percent).
- Over the past five years the graduation rate of Illinois minority first-time, full-time students who completed within 150 percent of catalog time increased from 21.5 percent (Fall 2015 cohort) to 26.1 percent (Fall 2019 cohort).
- Nearly two out of five students in the Illinois Community College System are first-generation college students.
- During fiscal year 2022, Illinois community colleges served 15,093 students with disabilities (3.8 percent of all credit enrollments).
- Females comprised 56.1 percent of the student population in fiscal year 2022 and accounted for 56.0 percent of all 2022 completions.
- Compared to fiscal year 2021, the number of minority faculty and staff increased by 8.3 percent in fiscal year 2022.
- Hispanic/Latino faculty members (5.4 percent) are the most underrepresented minority group in comparison to the student population of the same race/ethnicity (26.4 percent).

- Strategies in increasing access, retention, and completion rates of students from underrepresented groups include academic advising, mentoring, counseling, financial aid incentives, high school and university partnership initiatives, supplemental instruction, and student support initiatives in inclusive environments and educational equity.

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## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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Illinois Community College System demographic data on credit students are gathered through the Annual Enrollment and Completion Data (A1 & A2) submissions. 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. Additional sources of data for this report come from Fall Student Enrollment (E1) Data, National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) (Tables 8 & 9), and Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data (Tables 10 & 11).

### Disability Status

During fiscal year 2022, Illinois community colleges served 15,093 students with disabilities (3.8 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 = 13,522) used supportive services offered by colleges. Only about one in ten students with disabilities (10.4 percent, N = 1,571) did not use supportive services during fiscal year 2022.

Based on the unduplicated count of students with disabilities who self-reported and used supportive services, specific disabilities identified were learning, including ADHD, (53.7 percent of reported disabilities); auditory (2.3 percent); medical, including acquired brain injury and systemic/chronic health problems, (9.0 percent); mobility (2.9 percent); psychological (28.3 percent); visual (1.7 percent); and other, including speech/language impairment, deaf-blind, and developmental, (1.8 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 89.3 percent of reported disabilities. Of those services used, based on unduplicated count, more than one-half (53.7 percent) were used by students with learning disabilities, including ADHD ([2022 Student Disability Table](#)).

Census figures show a substantial number of Illinoisans with disabilities. In the 2021 Illinois census estimate, among Illinois' civilian non-institutionalized population, 7.1 percent between 18 and 34 years of age and 11.1 percent between 35 and 64 years of age had a disability. More than one fourth (26.1 percent) of the Illinois population age 16 and over with disabilities was employed ([2021 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 56.1 percent of the student population in fiscal year 2022. The percentage of Male students has averaged 44.9 percent over the past five years. Census data show little change in the proportion of Females in Illinois with 50.6 percent estimated in 2021 versus 51.0 percent in 2010 and 2000 ([ICCB FY 2021 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report](#), [U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#), [U.S. Census 2010](#), [2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates](#) Table [S0101](#)). From 2018 to 2022, the number of Female students completing degree programs increased 5.2 percent, while the number of Female students enrolled in Illinois community college credit courses decreased 20.5 percent ([ICCB FY 2018 and FY 2022 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report](#)).

## Age

The average age of Illinois community college credit students was 26.4 years in fiscal year 2022, which is unchanged from fiscal year 2021 (26.4). The median age was 21.7 years in fiscal year 2022, which is lower than the previous year (21.9). According to the 2021 population estimates, the median age of all Illinoisans was estimated to be 39.0 years. The latest census estimates also show that over three-quarters (77.9 percent) of all Illinoisans were 18 years of age or above ([ICCB FY 2022 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report](#) and [2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates](#) Table [S0101](#)).

## State of Illinois' Race/Ethnicity Distribution

State census data show that Illinois' population was 12.67 million in 2021 compared to 12.81 million in 2020, 12.83 million in 2010, and 12.42 million in 2000 ([U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#), [U.S. Census 2010](#), enter Illinois, [U.S. Census 2020 Illinois](#), and [2022 Index of Need](#) Table 1). These detailed Illinois census data indicate that the state's population grew 2.0 percent between 2000 and 2021. The state population, however, decreased 1.2 percent between 2010 and 2021, and 1.1 percent between 2020 and 2021. Illinois' 2021 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 2021, as the percent of Caucasians decreased from 73.5 percent to 70.3 percent of the population ([U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#), [U.S. Census 2020 Illinois](#), and [2022 Index of Need](#) Table 1).

The race/ethnicity data collection methodology changed for the 2000 census and changed again for the 2020 census. The 2021 state census data showed that 2.2 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 2021 data in the table. These duplicated Hispanic/Latino population counts show substantial growth, from 1,530,262 in 2000 to 2,282,133 in 2021 ([U.S. Census 2000 Illinois](#) and [2022 Index of Need](#) Table 1).

Illinois' largest minority group in 2000 was African American and in 2021 was Hispanic/Latino. Compared to 2000, African American counts in 2021 decreased from 15.1 percent to 14.7 percent,

whereas Asian American counts increased from 3.4 percent to 6.2 percent, Native American from 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent, and Hispanic/Latino from 12.3 percent to 18.0 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%
2020†	61.4%	14.1%	5.9%	0.8%	17.8%	18.2%
2021	70.3%	14.7%	6.2%	0.6%	8.2%	18.0%

\*Includes Pacific Islander

\*\*Includes two or more races

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

†The way how Census collected race and ethnicity data changed from the previous collection

SOURCE OF DATA: U. S. Census Bureau (2000, 2010, and 2020) & 2022 Index of Need, Table 1.

### Race/Ethnicity Distribution in Community College System Credit Programs

Overall, in fiscal year 2022, minority students accounted for 48.7 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 2022 data show that minority representation

*Students identifying themselves as Hispanic/Latino—100,600 in fiscal year 2022—accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments in the Illinois Community College System.*

increased from the prior year (fiscal year 2021 = 46.7 percent). Fiscal year 2022 results are above the five-year average (47.0 percent). Students identifying themselves as Hispanic/Latino students—100,600 in fiscal year 2022—became the largest minority group in 2000, and have been each year since, except in fiscal year 2012, when African American students were the largest minority group. African American students—47,952 in fiscal year 2022—constitute the second largest minority group in the latest data. Asian American students—20,945 in fiscal year 2022—constitute the third largest minority group enrolled in the Illinois Community College System. The fiscal year 2022 proportionate representation by Hispanic/Latino students was higher in comparison to the prior year (26.4 percent in fiscal year 2022 versus 24.9 percent in fiscal year 2021). The fiscal year 2022 African American student proportional representation was slightly higher in comparison to the prior year (12.6 percent in fiscal year 2022 versus 12.2 percent in fiscal year 2021). 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 (-34.5 percent), African American (-28.5 percent), U.S. Nonresident (-19.6 percent), Asian American (-14.8 percent), Hispanic/Latino (-13.9 percent), Native American (-13.2 percent), and Two or More Races (-4.7 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 three-fourths (75.2 percent) of the individuals enrolled in



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community college Adult Education coursework. In fiscal year 2022, Hispanic/Latino students accounted for nearly fifty percent of Adult Education enrollments and African American students for one-fifth of those enrollments (48.3 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively). Additionally, minority students accounted for approximately five out of every six (84.5 percent) individuals enrolled in community college ESL coursework during fiscal year 2022. Hispanic/Latino students accounted for nearly two-thirds (65.3 percent) of the community college ESL students, followed by Asian American students (9.5 percent) and African American students (5.7 percent).

**Table 2**  
**Fiscal Year 2022 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>U.S. Nonresident*</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
<b>ABE/ASE %</b>	<b>20.7%</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>75.2%</b>
Number	3,754	8,774	622	170	48	15	283	13,666
<b>ESL %</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>65.3%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>84.5%</b>
Number	1,017	11,674	1,689	596	9	19	90	15,094

\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

**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 2022, minorities comprised nearly one-half (45.6 percent) of Transfer enrollees. An examination of each minority race/ethnicity group’s representation across the Transfer program area indicates that Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest minority group enrollments (23.5 percent), followed by African American students (11.6 percent), Asian American students (6.0 percent), students of Two or More Races (3.4 percent), U.S. Nonresident students (0.8 percent), Native American students (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). **Table 3** also shows that two-fifths of students enrolled in CTE programs were members of a minority group (40.0 percent). Hispanic/Latino students also had the highest representation among minorities in CTE programs and accounted for 20.5 percent of the population. African American students had the second largest CTE program enrollment (11.6 percent), followed by Asian American students (4.3 percent), students of Two or More Races (2.6 percent), U.S. Nonresident students (0.6 percent), Native American students (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent).

**Table 3**  
**Fiscal Year 2022 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>U.S. Nonresident*</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
Transfer %	11.6%	23.5%	6.0%	0.8%	0.3%	0.1%	3.4%	45.6%
Number	25,772	52,016	13,410	1,810	573	177	7,476	101,234
CTE %	11.6%	20.5%	4.3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	2.6%	40.0%
Number	11,595	20,530	4,343	561	300	84	2,596	40,009

\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

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 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 2018 through fiscal year 2022) on first-generation college student enrollments. Fiscal year 2022 first-generation college student enrollment decreased by 0.5 percent compared to last year and decreased by 24.5 percent compared to fiscal year 2018. The overall enrollments continue to decline. Nearly two out of five students (39.5 percent) in the Illinois Community College System were first-generation college students in fiscal year 2022.

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

**Table 4**  
**First-Generation College Student Enrollment in the Illinois Community College System  
Fiscal Years 2018-2022**

	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
First-Generation College Student Enrollment	207,794	200,555	184,041	157,826	156,966	-0.5%	-24.5%
Annual Enrollment	519,387	500,477	472,478	405,444	396,958	-2.1%	-23.6%
Enrollment Rate of First-Gen. College Students	40.0%	40.1%	39.0%	38.9%	39.5%		

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 2022. [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 2022. [Table 6](#) provides a comparison of fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2022 completions in the Illinois Community College System by race/ethnicity.

[Table 5](#) shows that during fiscal year 2022, more minority graduates completed CTE degrees and certificates (N = 14,127) than Transfer degrees and certificates (N = 11,139). Minority students accounted for 42.7 percent of Transfer graduates, compared to 39.3 percent of all CTE graduates. The majority of the

*Minority students accounted for 42.7 percent of Transfer graduates, compared to 39.3 percent of all CTE graduates in fiscal year 2022.*

Transfer credentials earned by minorities was Associate in Arts degrees (50.6 percent, N = 5,635), while 29.0 percent (N = 3,227) was the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) Credentials. Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest group of Transfer minority graduates (24.3 percent) followed by African American students (8.9 percent), Asian American students (5.1 percent), students of Two or More Races (3.2 percent), U.S. Nonresident students (0.9 percent), Native American students (0.2 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). The fiscal year 2022 proportional representation of the Hispanic/Latino Transfer graduates (24.3 percent) was lower by 0.7 percentage points from the prior year (25.0 percent). Hispanic/Latino students also accounted for the largest minority group for completions in CTE programs (20.6 percent), followed by African American students (11.1 percent), Asian American students (4.0 percent), students of Two or More Races (2.7 percent), U.S. Nonresident students (0.5 percent), Native American students (0.2 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). The fiscal year 2022 proportional representation of the Hispanic/Latino CTE program graduates (20.6 percent) was higher by 1.0 percentage points from fiscal year 2021 (19.6 percent).

**Table 5**  
**Fiscal Year 2022 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>U.S. Nonresident*</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
<b>Transfer %</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>42.7%</b>
Number	2,317	6,338	1,326	248	53	20	837	11,139
<b>CTE %</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>39.3%</b>
Number	3,983	7,422	1,447	192	87	35	961	14,127

\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

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 2022 totaled 64,797. Over two-fifth (41.0 percent) of all degrees and

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certificates in fiscal year 2022 were awarded to minority students (nonwhite) whose race/ethnicity was known.

Compared to last year, there was an increase in minority completions among students of Pacific Islander students (16.3 percent), African American students (9.3 percent), Two or More Races (7.9 percent), Hispanic/Latino students (5.7 percent), Asian American students (5.6 percent), and Native American students (3.5 percent). A decrease in completions was noted for U.S. Nonresident students (-2.5 percent) since last year. Compared to fiscal year 2018, the total number of minority completers increased 11.6 percent.

**Table 6**  
**Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Race/Ethnicity**  
**Fiscal Years 2018-2022**

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<b>FY 18</b>	<b>FY 19</b>	<b>FY 20</b>	<b>FY 21</b>	<b>FY 22</b>	<b>One-Year % Change</b>	<b>Five-Year % Change</b>
<i>African American</i>	7,093	6,951	7,331	6,131	6,700	9.3%	-5.5%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	12,145	12,181	14,564	13,684	14,460	5.7%	19.1%
<i>Asian American</i>	2,521	2,589	2,791	2,719	2,871	5.6%	13.9%
<i>U.S. Nonresident*</i>	462	513	477	485	473	-2.5%	2.4%
<i>Native American</i>	197	165	130	142	147	3.5%	-25.4%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	62	56	63	49	57	16.3%	-8.1%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	1,330	1,464	1,572	1,730	1,867	7.9%	40.4%
<b>Minority Subtotal</b>	<b>23,810</b>	<b>23,919</b>	<b>26,928</b>	<b>24,940</b>	<b>26,575</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	1,811	1,626	1,647	1,660	1,808	8.9%	-0.2%
<i>White</i>	39,050	36,697	37,132	35,183	36,414	3.5%	-6.8%

\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

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

Table 7 contains trend data (fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2022) on student completers by gender. Females accounted for 56.0 percent of all 2022 completions. The number of male completers increased 9.7 percent, and the number of female completers increased 1.4 percent compared to the previous fiscal year. When compared to fiscal year 2018, the number of male completers decreased 5.5 percent, and the number of female completers increased 5.2 percent.

**Table 7**  
**Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Gender**  
**Fiscal Years 2018-2022**

<i>Gender</i>	<b>FY 18</b>	<b>FY 19</b>	<b>FY 20</b>	<b>FY 21</b>	<b>FY 22</b>	<b>One-Year % Change</b>	<b>Five-Year % Change</b>
<i>Male</i>	30,188	29,014	29,954	25,985	28,514	9.7%	-5.5%
<i>Female</i>	34,483	33,228	35,753	35,798	36,283	1.4%	5.2%

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

### **Graduation and Advancement Rate (Graduation/Transfer/Retention) by Race/Ethnicity**

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 8a](#) contains information on number and percent of first-time, full-time students at Illinois community colleges who graduated within three years (150 percent of catalog program time) of entry by race/ethnicity. Over one in four minority students from the Fall 2019 cohort graduated by Summer 2022 (26.1 percent) compared to over two in five White students (41.1 percent). Nationally, for cohort year 2018, the graduation rate within 150 percent of catalog program time for all students at public two-year postsecondary institutions was 31.4 percent, and for White students was 39.6 percent. This is based on 896 institutions, limited by Sector of institution ([NCES Trend Generator](#)). Illinois has a higher graduation rate for all students at 32.5% (cohort year 2018) compared to the national average. Examining Illinois race/ethnicity subgroups, U.S. Nonresident and Asian American students accounted for the highest graduation rate among minority students entering in Fall 2019 (43.0 and 36.5 percent, respectively), followed by Pacific Islander students (29.4 percent), Native American students (28.6 percent), students of Two or More Races (27.8 percent), Hispanic/Latino students (27.6 percent), and African American students (16.5 percent).

**Table 8a**  
**First-Time, Full-Time Students Enrolling in Fall and Graduating within Three Years of Entry at Illinois Community Colleges Fiscal Years 2016-2020**

<i>Race/Ethnicity*</i>	Fall 2015 Summer 2018	Fall 2016 Summer 2019	Fall 2017 Summer 2020	Fall 2018 Summer 2021	Fall 2019 Summer 2022
<i>African American</i>	495/ 3,496 14.2%	492/ 3,456 14.2%	520/ 3,429 15.2%	501/ 3,245 15.4%	518/ 3,131 16.5%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	1,518/ 6,180 24.6%	1,664/ 6,520 25.5%	1,896/ 6,918 27.4%	1,865/ 6,917 27.0%	2,031/ 7,348 27.6%
<i>Asian</i>	276/ 1,040 26.5%	308/ 1,072 28.7%	323/ 1,005 32.1%	392/ 1,133 34.6%	421/ 1,152 36.5%
<i>U.S. Nonresident**</i>	44/ 172 25.6%	39/ 177 22.0%	64/ 224 28.6%	82/ 236 34.7%	110/ 256 43.0%
<i>Native American</i>	22/ 80 27.5%	21/ 67 31.3%	14/ 58 24.1%	12/ 47 25.5%	20/ 70 28.6%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	8/ 32 25.0%	10/ 34 29.4%	3/ 22 13.6%	5/ 24 20.8%	5/ 17 29.4%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	179/ 847 21.1%	203/ 866 23.4%	211/ 886 23.8%	252/ 961 26.2%	262/ 941 27.8%
<b><i>Minority Subtotal</i></b>	<b>2,542/ 11,847 21.5%</b>	<b>2,737/ 12,192 22.4%</b>	<b>3,031/ 12,542 24.2%</b>	<b>3,109/ 12,563 24.7%</b>	<b>3,367/ 12,915 26.1%</b>
<i>White</i>	5,734/ 15,183 37.8%	5,679/ 14,803 38.4%	5,838/ 14,605 40.0%	5,702/ 14,179 40.2%	5,928/ 14,411 41.1%

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

\*\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System - Annual Enrollment and Completion Data and IPEDS  
Note: Table 8a of the FY 2019-FY 2022 Underrepresented Groups Report aligns with federal reporting for IPEDS. Prior reports used methodology developed by Complete College America (CCA).

Table b 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 the Fall 2019 cohort graduated, transferred out, or were still enrolled by Summer 2022 (54.5 percent) compared to about two in three White students (67.9 percent). Asian American students accounted for the highest advancement rate among minority students entering in Fall 2019 (74.2 percent), followed by Pacific Islander students (64.7 percent), U.S. Nonresident students (64.1 percent), students of Two or More Races (56.6 percent), Hispanic/Latino students (54.9 percent), Native American students (52.9 percent), and African American students (44.9 percent).

**Table 8b**  
**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 2016-2020**

<i>Race/Ethnicity*</i>	Fall 2015 Summer 2018	Fall 2016 Summer 2019	Fall 2017 Summer 2020	Fall 2018 Summer 2021	Fall 2019 Summer 2022
<i>African American</i>	1,634/ 3,496 46.7%	1,616/ 3,456 46.8%	1,539/ 3,429 44.9%	1,475/ 3,245 45.5%	1,405/ 3,131 44.9%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	3,555/ 6,180 57.5%	3,754/ 6,520 57.6%	3,868/ 6,918 55.9%	3,835/ 6,917 55.4%	4,034/ 7,348 54.9%
<i>Asian</i>	782/ 1,040 75.2%	808/ 1,072 75.4%	771/ 1,005 76.7%	855/ 1,133 75.5%	855/ 1,152 74.2%
<i>U.S. Nonresident**</i>	86/ 172 50.0%	85/ 177 48.0%	115/ 224 51.3%	149/ 236 63.1%	164/ 256 64.1%
<i>Native American</i>	44/ 80 55.0%	38/ 67 56.7%	28/ 58 48.3%	23/ 47 48.9%	37/ 70 52.9%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	20/ 32 62.5%	24/ 34 70.6%	17/ 22 77.3%	14/ 24 58.3%	11/ 17 64.7%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	502/ 847 59.3%	509/ 866 58.8%	486/ 886 54.9%	567/ 961 59.0%	533/ 941 56.6%
<b><i>Minority Subtotal</i></b>	<b>6,623/ 11,847 55.9%</b>	<b>6,834/ 12,192 56.1%</b>	<b>6,824/ 12,542 54.4%</b>	<b>6,918/ 12,563 55.1%</b>	<b>7,039/ 12,915 54.5%</b>
<i>White</i>	10,385/ 15,183 68.4%	10,231/ 14,803 69.1%	10,062/ 14,605 68.9%	9,661/ 14,179 68.1%	9,787/ 14,411 67.9%

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

\*\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

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

Note: Table 8b of the FY 2019-FY 2022 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) by Race/Ethnicity**

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 shows adjusted retention rates at Illinois community colleges within one year of entry. Over three out of five minority first-time, full-time students enrolling in Fall 2021 at Illinois community colleges were retained or graduated in Fall 2022 (62.9 percent) compared to about seven out of ten White students (69.3 percent). Asian American students accounted for the highest fall-to-fall

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adjusted retention rate among minority students enrolling in Fall 2021 (76.5 percent), followed by Hispanic/Latino students (65.3 percent), U.S. Nonresident students (65.2 percent), students of Two or More Races (61.5 percent), Pacific Islander students (61.1 percent), Native American students (58.8 percent), and African American students (49.5 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 2018-2022**

<i>Race/ethnicity*</i>	Fall 2017 Fall 2018	Fall 2018 Fall 2019	Fall 2019 Fall 2020	Fall 2020 Fall 2021	Fall 2021 Fall 2022
<i>African American</i>	1,560/ 3,424 45.6%	1,482/ 3,209 46.2%	1,470/ 3,107 47.3%	1,000/ 2,051 48.8%	1,048/ 2,116 49.5%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	4,673/ 6,898 67.7%	4,535/ 6,764 67.0	4,511/ 7,246 62.3%	3,758/ 5,764 65.2%	3,911/ 5,991 65.3%
<i>Asian</i>	820/ 1,004 81.7%	853/ 1,096 77.8%	861/ 1,119 76.9%	789/ 1,029 76.7%	827/ 1,081 76.5%
<i>U.S. Nonresident**</i>	147/ 224 65.6%	141/ 212 66.5%	167/ 230 72.6%	79/ 122 64.8%	152/ 233 65.2%
<i>Native American</i>	35/ 58 60.3%	27/ 47 57.4%	38/ 69 55.1%	55/ 92 59.8%	30/ 51 58.8%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	14/ 22 63.6%	18/ 23 78.3%	10/ 16 62.5%	7/ 11 63.6%	11/ 18 61.1%
<i>Two or More Races</i>	532/ 885 60.1%	584/ 946 61.7%	570/ 927 61.5%	479/ 797 60.1%	473/ 769 61.5%
<b><i>Minority Subtotal</i></b>	<b>7,781/ 12,515 62.2%</b>	<b>7,640/ 12,297 62.1%</b>	<b>7,627/ 12,714 60.0%</b>	<b>6,167/ 9,866 62.5%</b>	<b>6,452/ 10,259 62.9%</b>
<i>White</i>	10,284/ 14,592 70.5%	9,754/ 13,920 70.1%	9,643/ 14,143 68.2%	8,765/ 12,833 68.3%	8,506/ 12,274 69.3%

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

\*\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

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 2019-FY 2022 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, 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.



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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 2022 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>
<b><i>African American %</i></b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>
Number	698	1,137	1,249	488	568
<b><i>Hispanic/Latino %</i></b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>
Number	319	726	1,034	530	390
<b><i>Asian American %</i></b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Number	245	587	303	136	31
<b><i>U.S. Nonresident** %</i></b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Number	13	40	43	12	16
<b><i>Native American %</i></b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Number	13	24	18	8	11
<b><i>Pacific Islander %</i></b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
Number	5	10	10	2	3
<b><i>Two or More Races %</i></b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Number	55	112	150	37	21
<b><i>Minority Subtotal %</i></b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>43.3%</b>
Number	1,348	2,636	2,807	1,213	1,040

\*Includes revised college figures

\*\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data and African American/ Asian American/ Hispanic/ Native American Employment Plan Reports.

Table shows that in fiscal year 2022, minority faculty and staff accounted for 22.2 percent of tenured faculty/officials and managers, 17.8 percent of non-tenured faculty, 32.5 percent of professional staff/protective service workers, 33.5 percent of office and clerical/paraprofessionals, and 43.3 percent of service maintenance employees. Compared to fiscal year 2021, the number of minority faculty and staff increased by 8.3 percent in fiscal year 2022. The largest increase in the minority employee count from the previous year was noted for non-tenured faculty (10.9 percent), followed by professional staff/protective service workers (10.0 percent), office and clerical/paraprofessionals (5.8 percent), tenured faculty/officials and managers (5.4 percent), and service maintenance (4.1 percent).

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 [[Center for Community College Student Engagement \(2014\)](#)]. 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 9).

**Table 9**  
**Proportion of Minority Students and Faculty at Illinois Community Colleges**  
**Fiscal Year 2018 and 2028**

<b>2018</b>	Percentage of Student Representation	Percentage of Faculty Representation*	Percentage Point Difference
<i>African American</i>	13.5%	8.7%	<b>-4.7%</b>
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	23.4%	4.4%	<b>-19.0%</b>
<i>Asian American</i>	4.9%	4.1%	<b>-0.8%</b>
<i>U.S. Nonresident**</i>	0.8%	0.4%	<b>-0.5%</b>
<i>Native American</i>	0.2%	0.2%	<b>0.0%</b>
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	0.1%	0.1%	<b>0.0%</b>
<i>Two or More Races</i>	4.8%	0.8%	<b>-4.0%</b>
<i>White</i>	54.6%	81.3%	<b>26.7%</b>
<b>2022</b>	Percentage of Student Representation	Percentage of Faculty Representation*	Percentage Point Difference
<i>African American</i>	12.6%	9.5%	<b>-3.1%</b>
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	26.4%	5.4%	<b>-21.0%</b>
<i>Asian American</i>	5.5%	4.3%	<b>-1.2%</b>
<i>U.S. Nonresident**</i>	0.9%	0.3%	<b>-0.6%</b>
<i>Native American</i>	0.3%	0.2%	<b>-0.1%</b>
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	0.1%	0.1%	<b>0.0%</b>
<i>Two or More Races</i>	3.0%	0.9%	<b>-2.1%</b>
<i>White</i>	51.3%	79.4%	<b>28.1%</b>

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

Includes only students and faculty whose ethnicity was known.

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

\*\*Due to changes in the racial/ethnic terminology by U.S. Department of Education, Nonresident category was renamed to U.S. Nonresident.

SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data, Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data, and African American/ Asian American/ Hispanic/ Native American Employment Plan Reports.

Across a five-year period, Hispanic/Latino faculty and student representation both increased over the period of five years, but the increase was smaller for Hispanic/Latino faculty (4.4 percent in fiscal year 2018 vs. 5.4 percent in fiscal year 2022), than the increase for the Hispanic/Latino students (23.4 percent in fiscal year 2018 vs. 26.4 percent in fiscal year 2022). Across the same time frame, African American faculty representation increased by 0.8 percentage points (8.7 percent in fiscal year 2018 vs. 9.5 percent in fiscal year 2022), while the African American student representation decreased by 0.9 percentage points (13.5 percent in fiscal year 2018 vs. 12.6 percent in fiscal year 2022). Asian American faculty and student representation both increased over the period of five years, but the increase was slightly smaller for Asian American faculty (4.1 percent in fiscal year 2018 vs. 4.3 percent in fiscal year 2022) than the increase for Asian American students (4.9 percent in fiscal year 2018 vs. 5.5 percent in fiscal year 2022).

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## BEST PRACTICES

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This following section provides information from the Illinois Community College System about strategies for increasing student access, retention, and completion rates of underrepresented groups in fiscal year 2022. 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.

As the postsecondary education institutions emerge from the era of reacting to the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic into creating a new normal, the institutions' focus on equity needs to be reaffirmed to close the attainment gaps for students from the underrepresented groups. Many of the following practices address how institutions worked to create inclusive environments and educational equity.

### Academic Advising

To expand career exploration, development, and guidance of prospective students from special populations and underrepresented students, **Wabash Valley College** and other three Illinois Eastern Community Colleges launched Career Coach interactive software in October 2021 after reviewing career opportunities available from each program in Career Coach. Career Coach provides

*Wabash Valley College and other three Illinois Eastern Community Colleges launched Career Coach interactive software, which provides career options to prospective students that are reflective of local labor market data.*

career options to prospective students that are reflective of local labor market data. The information is available via website and utilized by recruitment, marketing, and advising departments. Career and Technical Education (CTE) advisors are trained on the Career Coach system and interact with current and future students at appointments and recruitment events. Advisors can demonstrate information more readily with the appropriate resources. The effectiveness of this activity is measured by the student satisfaction survey on the above question relating to employment opportunities with a goal to increase student satisfaction by two percent. In the Fall semester, there were 211 site visits and 93 career inventories completed on the website. The top viewed programs were bookkeeper/accounting clerk; accountant/auditor; and child, family, and school social worker.

**Prairie State College** implemented assigned advising outreach in September 2021, as the College continues to refine its methods since instituting assigned pathway advising in 2020. Focusing on relationship development and building connections across the campus, advisors conduct outreach to assigned advisees at weeks three, six, nine, twelve, and fifteen of an academic semester. The outreach on week three is an introduction of the students' assigned advisor and a wellness check. Additionally, the advisor reinforces the concept of connecting with professors and provides information regarding campus resources. The week six theme is a follow-up ascertaining the use and need for additional campus resources such as tutoring, professors' office hours, etc. The week nine outreach comes after midterms and offers students the opportunity to explore options related to the formation of study groups, meeting with professors, the use of tutoring, and the writing center. The week twelve outreach is an additional wellness check and reminder to meet with the

assigned advisor for academic planning. The theme of week twelve is to plan and register for the next semester. The week fifteen outreach is similarly themed in that it is a call to action to prepare for finals, create an academic plan with the advisor, and register for the next semester. The advising center plans to incorporate a week one outreach to all students to offer information about use of student technology, connecting with advisors, and modifying course schedules. From September 2021 to July 2022, advisors created 279 academic plans, mapping outstanding courses to complete the desired degree or certificate. This represents a 47 percent increase in completed academic plans over the previous year.

### **Access/Enrollment and Retention**

The Bringing Back Adults initiative is a grant-funded project led by New America. The initiative aims to reenroll adult semester credit students (aged 23 and older) who have stopped out during the pandemic. It provides a \$30,000 unrestricted grant and free technical assistance from Student Ready Strategies (SRS). As part of the free technical assistance, SRS worked with **Harry S. Truman College** to engage in an exhaustive review of academic policies, marketing and recruitment strategies, and other procedures that could directly impact re-enrolling adult students. At the end of the evaluation, SRS provided several recommendations to ease adult students' ability to re-enroll and be successful. The analysis found that the majority—over 68 percent—of stop out students had some SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress) hold. While having an SAP hold does not prevent a student from reenrolling, it does cut off their access to federal financial aid until the student appeals and wins their case. A high percentage of students who appealed did not win their case. Another finding was that African American students were four times as likely as Hispanic students to have an SAP hold. With this finding, Truman decided to use the grant funds to provide enrollment incentives to stop-out students, with a special emphasis on African American and Hispanic students. Once students were reenrolled, the Office of Student Services worked closely with students to develop an intervention plan to improve the chances of students winning their SAP hold appeal. As a result, over 60 percent of students have an SAP hold removed from their accounts after one term. The initiative has had a direct impact on the College's enrollment. Truman experienced double-digit year-over-year Fall and Spring enrollment increases for the first time since the pandemic.

### **Adult Education Initiatives**

To improve learning outcomes of underrepresented adult education students, increase their access to instruction, and prepare them for survival in an increasingly digital world, **Harper College** introduced digital literacy basics as part of every adult education student's orientation experience. Adult education students are defined as adults over 16 years old who have less than a high school education and/or immigrants with a lack of English language skills. This strategy was initiated in July 2021 as part of the registration/orientation process through in-person, socially distanced, and masked instruction for students under strict hygienic and COVID-19 reporting. This in-person contact was essential to serve students without digital access. There was mandatory, hands-on, computer-based training during the orientation. The College also engaged community-based partners to assist adult education students with online applications and developed a system of safe distribution of loaned technology for students in need of both a device

*Adult education students are defined as adults over 16 years old who have less than a high school education and/or immigrants with a lack of English language skills.*

and high-speed internet. This strategy increased enrollment and retention during the year of re-engaging students in an in-person environment. In the academic year 2020-2021, 509 students were served in adult education, and in the academic year 2021-2022, the number of adult education students increased to 640.

The department of Adult Education (AE) at **McHenry County College** (MCC) offers targeted opportunities for at-risk and/or underrepresented groups to explore taking classes at no cost in the areas of English as a Second Language, High School Equivalency (HSE), and Citizenship. The department is also expanding services to include bridge programs in the areas of healthcare, manufacturing, office management, and entrepreneurship. With these new initiatives, the department is also providing Integrated Career and Academic Preparation Systems (ICAPS) in the following areas: CNC machining, welding, certified nursing assistant, administrative office management, and entrepreneur agriculture. The goal is to encourage potential students of all ages to envision themselves as successful college students and provide them with the resources they need to remove barriers. MCC developed the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under Section 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The AE department emphasizes college and career readiness, including combining Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education competencies into all ESL and citizenship classes. This allows instructors to contextualize reading, math, and language acquisition. The program provides learners access to various technology resources, including online classes, hotspots, and laptops. Additionally, support services are available to all students. Support is coordinated with internal partners to ensure students receive the assistance they need.

*Harry S Truman College has changed the enrollment process to make it more efficient, including shifting to the online application, encouraging same-day testing, working closely with potential students to gather all necessary documents within a shorter period, and getting staff in the department certified as notaries.*

In the fall of 2021, the Adult Education Department at **Harry S Truman College** conducted an extensive analysis of its policies, practices, and procedures. One of the many results of this process was to implement changes to the enrollment process to make it more efficient. The investigation revealed at least two potential strategies for quick implementation in

January 2022. First, Truman made significant changes to the application and enrollment process, including shifting to the online application, encouraging same-day testing, and working closely with potential students to gather all necessary documents within a shorter period. Second, Truman worked to get staff in the department certified as notaries, which meant that students did not have to leave Truman to get documents notarized, which slowed down the enrollment process. In addition, the changes led to students enrolling in courses within one to two hours per single visit. Before, it could take students two or three separate visits to fully enroll in classes. In addition to the changes, the Adult Education Department worked to recruit and retain quality staff and faculty they have onboarded over the last three years, contributing to the increase in enrollment and retention. Another strategy employed by the Adult Education Department that increased students' access to classes began in late 2021. In close collaboration with the District Office, Truman increased the number of community partnerships to host off-campus courses for students, especially those in the surrounding Uptown community. Many students are migrants, mainly from Central American countries, and lacked access to consistent transportation to campus. As a result

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of these strategies, Truman has experienced a significant increase in adult education enrollment. Preliminary analysis showed that enrollment has increased by 40 percent since the start of the pandemic, erasing most of the enrollment losses.

College for Life provides non-credit educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to help them find their unique contribution to society and, in certain cases, to provide a pathway to access credit-bearing classes at **John Wood Community College (JWCC)**. During the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2022, two of the 16 College for Life students enrolled in credit-bearing courses. Over the course of the academic year, those two students successfully completed a total of 35 credit hours with a combined 2.77 GPA. Both students registered for Fall 2023 classes, showing retention and continued progress. Five of the 12 College for Life students registered for credit-bearing classes in the spring of 2022 for the Fall 2022 semester, showing an increase in the number of students gaining access to credit classes at JWCC. This is the most in the history of the program, which is evidence of the intentional work since the program's creation in 2017 to provide access to credit-bearing courses to this underrepresented group of students.

Since August 2021, the Adult Education (AE) program at **South Suburban College (SSC)** has provided English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at four workplace sites. The College is using braided funding with the SOS Workplace Literacy grant to provide ESL classes. The goal is to serve at least 150 students per year, increase educational attainment across the work sites, and move the students/employees into better positions within their company. The literacy grants at SSC have all been placed under the supervision of the new literacy grants manager, all under the administration of the AE Department. This allows the College to use braided funding in the SOS Literacy space and enhance the quality of instruction. This ensures that all instructors in the SOS Workplace grant will have gone through New Teacher Orientation, 12 hours of professional development, and after a year of service, complete College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) training. This has enabled SSC to bring in the experience of the manager of ESL, who has over 30 years of ESL Instructional experience to help in the structure and curriculum of workplace classes. To increase learning gains and to follow ICCB regulations regarding testing, the College has increased all classes to a minimum of 40 instructional hours and switched from the ESLOA to the CASAS exam. This is one of the approved assessments for AE and will give instructors a better picture of the educational levels of their students. ESL learners will get assessed with the CASAS test as the primary tool for pre- and post-test assessment after a mandatory minimum of 40 contact hours with an ESL instructor. Areas assessed include reading, math, and vocabulary. Based upon these scores, students will be placed with students at or near their educational functioning level. As employees develop higher English communication skills, the College incorporates as much workplace-related vocabulary, role play, and company forms as possible. So far, 172 students have been served, and managers at each plant are pleased with the increased productivity of the employees who enhanced their skills by participating in ESL classes.

*Since August 2021, the Adult Education program at **South Suburban College** has provided English as a Second Language classes at four workplace sites, which has led to the increased productivity of the employees.*

## Bridge Initiatives

The Engineering Summer Bridge Camp is a strategy that provides near-STEM-ready students immediate access to very selective engineering programs at **Wilbur Wright College** such as the UIUC Engineering Pathways. The project aims to improve students' math and science skills and provides help to transition from secondary school to college. The program also provides students an opportunity to skip a semester (or semesters) of remediation, which decreases the time it takes to obtain a degree. Most importantly, the Engineering Summer Bridge Camp provides a smooth transition from high school to college before a student is enrolled in their first semester. The camp was implemented in the summer of 2019 and in three years, the Wright College Engineering and Computer Science Program has developed and implemented the Contextualized Summer Bridge with a total of 132 near-STEM participants. One hundred twenty-seven students completed the bridge; all of those who completed the bridge eliminated up to two years of math remediation, and 54 percent were directly placed in college-level Calculus 1. All successful participants were placed in different engineering pathways, 11 students completed an Associate of Engineering Science degree and transferred after two years from the bridge program. Since inception, enrollment in the program has increased 940 percent (from 25 to 235 students). The program has achieved a 93 percent fall-to-fall retention rate among first-year students, which is significantly higher than the College's overall rate of 50 percent. To date, 75 percent of participants have transferred after two years from initial enrollment, which is higher than the College's overall transfer rate of 52 percent. The program has also developed a holistic and programmatic transfer model, thus increasing partnerships with four-year transfer institutions, resulting in the expansion of guaranteed/dual admissions programs with scholarships, paid research experience, dual advising, and students transferring as juniors. More broadly, the program has increased diversity at Wright by bridging the academic gap for near-STEM-ready students, increased self-efficacy and belonging among all program participants, and resulted in institutionalized collaborations leading to Wright College's designation as the Center of Excellence for Engineering and Computer Science within the City Colleges of Chicago.

*The Engineering Summer Bridge Camp at **Wilbur Wright College** provides a smooth transition from high school to college for near-STEM-ready students before they are enrolled in their first semester.*

With support from [GEER II funds](#), **Moraine Valley Community College** offered the Bridge to Success program during 2022. Through coursework, mentoring, and intensive support, the goal was to expedite underrepresented students through an area of Developmental Education while also completing at least one college-level course. Recruiting for the Bridge to Success program began in the early spring of 2022, and students were enrolled during the Summer 2022 term. Post-intervention outcomes were assessed after the fall semester. Moraine Valley's Student Success staff worked with high school partners to identify potential students of interest. Student Success staff hosted 10 information sessions for high school staff, students, and parents. Initial interest in the program was higher than anticipated, with 40 high school seniors expressing interest. Required workshops held in the spring were designed to ensure students had completed all admission requirements and were prepared for starting the Bridge program. After the workshops, a total of 18 students participated in the program. Sixteen students earned college credit. Several elements made the Bridge program successful. First, helping students overcome barriers to enrollment by covering their costs from grant funds was a win-win scenario. Second, the workshops helped

students prepare not only for the transition to college, but also for the rigor of college coursework during the condensed summer format. Finally, the intensive support from staff and faculty ensured students felt welcome and had adequate academic support for success in their courses.

*City Colleges of Chicago's Career Bridge programs, as part of the campus Strategic and Equity Plans, help students improve their reading, writing, math, and English language skills while earning an industry-recognized certificate that can lead to entry-level job opportunities and careers.*

City Colleges of Chicago's Career Bridge programs, as part of the campus Strategic and Equity Plans, help students improve their reading, writing, math, and English language skills while earning an industry-recognized certificate that can lead to entry-level job opportunities and careers. Building on the success of other bridge programs, the Advanced Manufacturing Bridge at **Richard J. Daley**

**College** is designed to provide a streamlined transition for adult education students into credit-bearing college courses that can result in entry into high-demand, high-wage jobs. The College serves over 11,000 students annually, with over 3,000 enrolled in adult education courses. The program was paused in 2020 due to the pandemic; it restarted with planning and enrollment during the summer of 2021 with a planned alignment with the newly designed advanced manufacturing curriculum. The first cohort in the redesigned bridge program began in August 2021. The program was designed to remove barriers by providing tuition-free courses, all books, materials, and any cost associated with the industry certifications. The bridge program is 74 percent Hispanic with ages between 24 and 39, reflective of the Daley community. Daley's bridge programs allow students to embark on an educational pathway with stackable credentials, giving them the wrap-around services they need, such as embedded tutoring, one-on-one advising, career assessment, wellness, and academic support. This program targets upper-level ESL and English GED students. Students enrolled in the program receive biweekly support from their adult education instructor, who attends credit classes with them and helps them prepare for exams and to review and complete assignments. The transitions specialist is available to support students via Zoom, call, or email throughout the duration of the program. Sixty-six percent of the students in the bridge program were retained and persisted in the same major through those additional resources.

### **Developmental Education and Placement Initiatives**

Developmental and remedial coursework, and the lack of preparation that places students into it, has historically presented a substantial barrier to progress through community college. A broad survey of community college developmental coursework in 2010 showed that only half of the students taking just one developmental English course completed the associated introductory course. Nationally, students from underrepresented groups, especially African American and Hispanic students, are more likely to be placed in developmental courses. To address this, students at **Harold Washington College** who do not place directly into English 101 (Composition), but either place out of or complete English 96 (Aligned Reading & Composition), take English 97 (Written Communication Skills) as a co-requisite with English 101 in combined sections. English 97 is structured to scaffold the skills and strategies that students need in English 101. By combining developmental and introductory coursework, this program supports emerging reading and writing skills while helping students maintain their pace and motivation. The racial/ethnic makeup of students enrolled in English 101/English 97 co-requisite sections and those enrolled in English 101 alone were overall similar in Fall 2021 through Spring 2022. Compared to English 101 alone, co-



requisite sections had a 10 percent greater proportion of Hispanic students, a 43 percent greater proportion of Asian students, a 12 percent smaller proportion of African American students, and a 29 percent smaller proportion of White students. Eighty-three percent of students in co-requisite sections were African American or Hispanic. The overall success rate (proportion of enrollments earning an A, B, or C grade) of co-requisite sections was only slightly lower than that of English 101 alone (57 percent vs 59 percent). Given the low rates of success typically seen among community college developmental English students, this alone is substantial achievement. Students belonging to several ethnic groups were slightly more likely to succeed in co-requisite sections than their counterparts who enrolled directly in introductory English. Notably, Hispanic students, many of whom speak English as a second language, succeeded just as frequently when enrolled in developmental co-requisite sections (57 percent vs 56 percent of those in English 101 alone).

The **College of Lake County** (CLC) recognizes the importance of key student milestones that correlate to longer-term student outcomes like credential completion. One key milestone is completion of gateway math courses. Because math credit is required for many credentials and is used across courses, earning math credits can help students progress toward credential completion. Providing pathways for students to access credit-bearing math courses that count

*The College of Lake County provides pathways for students to access credit-bearing math courses that count toward their credentials, and to avoid developmental coursework.*

toward their credentials and to avoid developmental coursework unless necessary is a key strategy the College has pursued to improve student completion of gateway math and ultimately student credential completion. Math faculty have championed collaborative change in math course pathways. In Fall 2019, they reframed advising materials, partnered with advisors to promote general education math, and allowed this path to lead to other math courses, eliminating a semester of developmental courses for many students. They also partnered with 19 local high schools to implement a transitional math course that qualifies students to enter credit math at CLC. In fall 2018, prior to this work, 49 percent of all math enrollments were in developmental courses, compared to only 18 percent in Fall 2021. The faculty formed a Math Equity Team and launched a course that leads to champion success and equity across all math sections. General education math course success rates went from 44 percent in the academic year 2018-2019 to 62 percent in 2020-2021. In the academic year 2021-2022, progress on this work continued, with ongoing attention to teaching and learning improvements in the most common gateway math courses. The outcomes of this work have demonstrated improvement across student populations. Prior to the changes, only 24 percent of the Fall 2018 cohort of new credential-seeking students successfully completed a credit-bearing gateway math course within their first year. Among the Fall 2021 cohort of new credential-seeking students, 39 percent completed credit-bearing gateway math within their first year. While this improvement has been realized among all students, it has had a major impact on underrepresented student populations who were traditionally more likely to be placed into developmental math coursework. For example, for African American students, successful gateway math completion within the first year has gone from 12 percent (Fall 2018 cohort) to 22 percent (Fall 2021 cohort). For Hispanic students, successful gateway math completion within the first year has gone from 20 percent (Fall 2018 cohort) to 37 percent (Fall 2021 cohort). While equity gaps still exist, the College continues to assess and improve its work

to ensure that students have equitable access to and success in credit-bearing gateway math courses that will lead to credential completion.

The Portable Transitional Quantitative Literacy and Statistics Math course was approved by the State of Illinois in the spring of 2019 and offered by **Harper College** in the area high schools starting in the fall of 2019. The goal of transitional math is to help high school seniors who are not deemed college-ready by the end of junior year (target population) to become college-ready upon high school graduation. The transitional math class was designed by a collaboration of both high school and college math faculty. Passing this class with a C or above allows students to use that class grade as placement into either Quantitative Literacy or Statistics courses at any community college and several four-year colleges throughout Illinois. Harper College uses multiple measures as placement to determine college readiness in mathematics. The area high schools have several Advanced Placement and dual credit courses available for seniors to earn college credit while still in high school. Students who are not ready for those courses are registered for the transitional math class in their senior year. In June 2021, the districts had 402 students who received a C or higher in the transitional math class. Of those, 205 came to Harper in Fall 2021 and 114 enrolled in a math class and 91 did not. Of those who enrolled in a college-level math class, 45.1 percent got a C or above. College math courses were online during this time, and the comparable success percentage of students who took the developmental class at Harper was only 46.9 percent for that same year. In June 2022, 530 students completed the transitional math course in Harper's districts. Of those, 449 received a grade of C or above and had the opportunity to start in a college-level math class their first semester in college. In the past, African American and Hispanic students were disproportionately represented among students who traditionally would not take a math course in their senior year. The transitional math course has been a big success by providing a course with enough of a "carrot" to entice students to take it in their senior year. Not only are their math skills not atrophying for a year, but they are now placing into college-level courses, which allows them to skip placement exams and developmental courses in college.

**Illinois Central College (ICC)** redesigned developmental education in fiscal year 2022 as part of the multi-year cycle of updates to improve college readiness and student transitions across the educational ecosystem and help students a) avoid unnecessary developmental education courses or b) successfully progress through those courses in a way that does not negatively impact success in future college-level coursework. ICC expanded the multiple measures pilot

*Illinois Central College (ICC) expanded the multiple measures pilot for determining the college readiness of incoming students. The cumulative high school GPA of 2.7 or higher is now officially the preferred placement metric at ICC.*

for determining the college readiness of incoming students. Initial outcomes showed students placed by GPA did as well or better than their classmates placed by other measures in terms of course success (72.78 percent course success for GPA-placed students vs. 71.04 percent for those placed by other measures) and semester GPA (2.47 for GPA-placed students vs. 2.55 for students placed by other measures). After piloting multiple measures, data indicated that students placed into college-level courses by their high school GPA performed as well or better than their peers placed by other measures. (Success rates in the highest enrolled "college-ready" courses were .39 points higher for GPA-placed students than for student placed by other measures.) The Champion Team approved the project for delivery in March 2022. The cumulative high school GPA of 2.7

or higher is now officially the preferred placement metric at ICC. Between the adoption of the 2.7 cumulative high school GPA for college-level placement, the implementation of high school transition courses, the continued expansion of Early College opportunities, the availability of Supplemental Instruction, as well as Math and English curriculum redesign efforts, ICC reduced placement in developmental math by 30 percent, developmental English by 32 percent, and placement into both developmental subjects by 20 percent.

The College Study Seminar (CSS-100) was introduced in Fall 2010 at **Morton College** to remediate issues with retention, specifically associated with students who placed at the developmental level. The course was designed as a result of the College's involvement in [Achieving the Dream](#). Students who placed at lower levels of developmental coursework took longer to transition to college-level classes. An analysis showed that 39 percent of first-time students placing into developmental English from 2006-2008 completed their sequence within three years. The CSS-100 course was designed to help bridge the gap between developmental and college-level coursework. In 2016, retention rates rose for women taking CSS and were five percentage points higher than the college-wide average for women. As the course has developed, the retention of CSS students has improved. Between 2017 and 2022, students taking CSS-100 were more likely to be retained than degree-seeking students who did not take CSS-100. On average, semester-to-semester retention rates were over eight percentage points higher for CSS students. Sub-group analyses show the course is benefiting many underrepresented populations. First-generation students were more likely to be retained if they took CSS-100, with retention rates six percentage points higher on average than first-generation students not taking CSS-100. Higher retention rates were also observed for women. Approximately, 85 percent of women who took CSS-100 were retained, compared with 70 percent of those who did not. Among the larger race/ethnic groups at Morton College, Hispanic students had higher retention by approximately 10 percentage points when taking CSS-100, African American students had retention rates seven percentage points higher, and White Students were four percentage points higher compared to when they did not take CSS-100.

English faculty at the **College of Lake County (CLC)** have implemented a co-requisite Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) model. Providing pathways for students to access credit-bearing English courses that count toward their credentials is a key strategy the College has pursued. The department piloted the model in the fall of 2011 and brought it to full scale in the spring of 2020. At scale, the ALP model accounts for 90 percent of students needing some developmental English and eliminates a semester of developmental coursework. Rather than taking a developmental course followed by the gateway English Composition I course, students enroll directly into the English Composition I course and a support class that takes place within the same semester, typically scheduled immediately prior to or after the English Composition I class time. With ALP, 63 percent of enrolled students are completing credit English and the co-requisite support class; only 49 percent were completing the former two-semester sequence. Additionally, English faculty designed a directed self-placement during the pandemic as one of several multiple measures and have begun transitional English in four local high schools with more planned for 2023-2024. These efforts have led to improvements in students' successful completion of gateway English. Successful completion of gateway English within the first year increased from 68 percent (Fall 2018 cohort) to 70 percent (Fall 2020 cohort). In the academic year 2021-2022, the College continued to assess its model and the impact of various delivery modalities begun

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Work continued to infuse an equity approach in the teaching and learning practices across sections of the ALP model. Although the overall success rate of the Fall 2021 cohort declined (63 percent) compared to the Fall 2020 cohort, improvements for underrepresented populations have been seen. Improvement in outcomes has been seen especially among African American students, as English faculty aimed to improve outcomes for this population. Among African American students, successful completion of gateway English within the first year increased from 54 percent (Fall 2018 cohort) to 59 percent (Fall 2021 cohort). The College is committed to ongoing work to assess and improve its ALP model and leverage this effort to close equity gaps across all underrepresented student populations.

*Lake Land College offers two co-requisite courses, MAT 115 General Education Pathway and MAT 124 Statistics Pathway, which give STEM students the opportunity to complete a credit-bearing math course in their first semester.*

Approximately 50 percent of **Lake Land College** students are placed into developmental math. The College currently offers two courses in developmental coursework: MAT 005 Beginning Algebra and MAT 006 Intermediate Algebra. These are courses for students with a major in the STEM or Elementary Education pathway. Only 44 percent of students that place into MAT 006 Intermediate Algebra will pass MAT 130 College Algebra within a year, and it is much lower for students that place into MAT 005 Beginning Algebra. Research has shown that students that begin with a credit-bearing course are more successful.

Consequently, Lake Land also offers two co-requisite courses, MAT 115 General Education Pathway and MAT 124 Statistics Pathway, which give STEM students the opportunity to complete a credit-bearing math course in their first semester. Placement in math courses is determined using the Recommendations of the Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers and Illinois Community College Chief Student Services Officers on Placement Methods and Scores. Lake Land uses the highest placement out of SAT (530 or above), ACT (22 or above), ACCUPLACER, high school transcript (7th or 8th semester high school GPA of 3.0 or higher on 4.0 scale and have completed four years of high school math), transitional math (TM001), or GED (165 or above) for MAT 130 College Algebra. The co-requisite college algebra course is a six-credit hour course (four contact hours and three lab hours) that meets for seven hours per week. It is a concurrent course model with the instructor starting each unit with the pre-requisite material and then continuing into the college algebra material. The instructor alternates between lectures, lab work, and group work throughout each class. The wrap-around supports for this course include but are not limited to placement counseling using multiple measures, mandatory advising with a counselor and faculty advisor, additional time working with the instructor, OER book, free graphing calculator rental, and free math tutoring. In the Fall 2022 semester, Lake Land pilot tested its co-requisite college algebra with eight students who would have assessed into Intermediate Algebra. All eight students passed the tutorial part of the course and passed college algebra with a C or better and seven of the eight students are currently enrolled in the spring semester.

**Shawnee Community College** was one of ten cohort community colleges participating in the ASPIRE Project through Women Employed from the July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, and worked to lay the foundation for the math redesign and development of co-requisite courses in both the STEM and general education pathways. The College's overall goal was to redesign the course sequence in the math pathway to decrease the time to degree completion for students testing into

developmental math. In the spring of 2022, the math department developed a multiple measures placement chart for math and English placement. Along with the multiple measures placement chart, the math department revised the math sequence flowchart for the STEM and statistics pathways. For students in the quantitative literacy and statistics pathway, co-requisite courses were developed for MAT 109 General Education Mathematics with review, and MAT 209 General Elementary Statistics with review, and will be offered to students in the fall of 2023. For students in the STEM pathway, MAT 120 College Algebra with review co-requisite was developed in the spring of 2022 and offered for the first time in spring of 2023. When the College compared the results of the academic year 2020-2021 DERA report to national studies on the success rates of students enrolled in co-requisite courses, the need to develop and offer co-requisite courses in math and English to enhance persistence and completion was evident. At the time of the DERA report, the College was only offering the traditional developmental math sequence that consisted of MAT 039 Developmental Math, MAT 041 Introduction to Algebra, and MAT 043 Intermediate Algebra. Students were placed in math courses based on test scores from ACCUPLACER. Of the 37 students who were placed into the developmental math sequence, only eight percent (three students) passed a gateway math course with a C or higher within the academic year 2020-2021. Furthermore, the same three students were the only students who completed a gateway course with a C or higher and completed 24+ credit hours. Simply put, eight percent of the academic year 2020-2021 math developmental education cohort were retained fall-to-fall under the traditional math developmental education model, emphasizing the importance of co-requisite course development for persistence and completion.

### **First Year Experience**

Traditionally, over 60 percent of first-time students at **Kankakee Community College (KCC)** are also first-generation students. These students typically do not have the external support to help them navigate the college experience and transition into the college environment. To help these first-generation students become acclimated to the college community, KCC began a First Year Experience (FYE) course starting in the fall of 2020. First-time students at KCC who

*Kankakee Community College requires first-time students who enroll in a transfer or associate in general studies degree to complete First Year Experience, an eight-week course to help them navigate the college experience and transition into the college environment.*

enroll in a transfer or associate in general studies degree are required to complete an eight-week course as part of KCC's FYE. In this course, students gain self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as college students, improve self-management and critical thinking skills relating to the college learning process, develop improved cultural competence and communication skills, practice and adopt a variety of study skill strategies for college learning, develop awareness of financial challenges faced by community college students, and produce a Master Academic Plan designed to help them reach program or degree completion. After seeing success in student persistence and course completion for all courses, the faculty teaching this course reflected on the experience and implemented improvements to further increase success. A requirement was added to the course in August 2021 for students to intentionally interact with a librarian and have additional training regarding information literacy and services offered by the library. First-time students who completed the FYE course in the academic year 2021-2022 saw an increased rate of retention over their peers who did not complete the course. FYE students were retained at 72 percent through their first academic year, in comparison to their peers who were retained at 55

percent. Retention to their second Fall was at 56 percent and to their second Spring at 51 percent, as compared to their peers at 42 percent and 37 percent, respectively. In addition to these overall gains, students who completed the individual meetings with librarians were retained at the rate of 62 percent, and obtained a cumulative GPA of 3.06, as opposed to their peers who did not meet with the librarians, and were retained at 34 percent, with a cumulative GPA of 2.06.

### Financial Aid Opportunities

In the spring of 2022, **Lincoln Land Community College** (LLCC) embarked on a project to create awareness of the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid available for qualified undocumented students residing in Illinois. This application provides a way for qualified students to apply for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant, Illinois' largest need-based grant program for low-income students. The project was funded through an initiative of the Campus

*Lincoln Land Community College has created awareness of the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid for qualified undocumented students by distributing flyers and brochures, and placing a newspaper ad.*

Climate Team which creates an opportunity for LLCC's faculty and staff to apply for funding for projects of their own design related to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The campaign was centered out of LLCC's Beardstown Outreach Center in Cass County. Need was identified from the U.S. Census Bureau information showing there are 20.7 percent Hispanic and 9.3 percent non-white races listed as other among the Cass County population, with 16 percent having a bachelor's degree or higher. One hundred flyers were hung in local businesses and public buildings. The flyers, which contained information in Spanish and English, included a QR code directing the user to a LLCC webpage for more details and personal help, if needed. Five hundred brochures were created, also containing information on the Alternative Application, and directing the user to the LLCC webpage. The brochures were printed including Spanish, English and French and were distributed across all five LLCC locations. Finally, an ad was placed in the Cass County Star-Gazette newspaper to advertise information about the Alternative Application.

### High School Partnership Initiatives

The Center for Multicultural Access and Success (CMAS) at **Joliet Junior College** (JJC) is committed to enhancing the academic achievement with early access opportunities, holistic support, cultural enrichment, mentoring, and advocacy of all pre-college and college students with an emphasis on minority, undocumented, and the historically under-served students. CMAS consist of two institutionally funded departments, Multicultural and Undocumented Resources (MUR) and International Student Services (ISS), two federal TRIO programs, Student Support Services (SSS) and Educational Talent Search (ETS). The CMAS' initiatives include Black Teen Summit and Latinx Empowerment Conference. The objective of Black Teen Summit is to increase access to education by exposing African American students to inspirational stories that encourage persistence to postsecondary education. Among eligible high school seniors in attendance in February 2021 that indicated their year of graduation, 52 percent enrolled at JJC subsequently. Latinx Empowerment Conference is an annual event to increase access to education by exposing Hispanic high school students to inspirational stories that encourage persistence to postsecondary education. Among eligible seniors in attendance in May 2022 that indicated their year of education, 45 percent enrolled at JJC subsequently.

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The **Spoon River College** (SRC) Financial Aid Department has hosted Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion events since 2006. The events are promoted with direct mail to high school seniors, social media, websites, and direct communication from high school counselors. During FAFSA completion events, SRC helps eliminate barriers to FAFSA completion by assisting current and prospective students and families with filing their application for federal and state aid. The events are offered at every SRC site and at each district high school. The events at the high school are offered in the evenings so family members can attend. FAFSA completions include an overview of the aid application process, what to expect after filing the FAFSA, questions to ask prospective colleges/universities, how to find scholarship opportunities and how to look out for scholarship scams, an overview of the types of aid available by filing the FAFSA and other sources of funding, distinctions of dependent vs independent student, and reminders to reapply by filing a FAFSA each year. Open workshop settings allow students and families to complete the FAFSA at their own pace. SRC financial aid staff are onsite to assist with any issues that may be encountered. A helpful tips handout is provided to high school counselors prior to the events so students and families are better prepared. When attendees leave the event, their FAFSA is completed, and they are also familiar with the SRC Financial Aid staff. Since the date of implementation, hundreds of students and families have been assisted with the financial aid process. With the completion of the FAFSA, a high school graduation requirement in the State of Illinois, attendance at these events has increased. SRC provides the necessary technology for students and families when hosting onsite, which eliminates a barrier for those with no computer or internet access.

**Shawnee Community College** (SCC) was awarded the Innovative Bridge and Transition (IBT) Grant from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, and in January 2022, the College created a position of coordinator of high school partnerships and pathways. This role was to enhance growth opportunities and connection with district high schools. Previously, SCC did not have one central

*Shawnee Community College has created a full-time position of coordinator of high school partnerships and pathways to enhance growth opportunities and connection with district high schools.*

full-time person to work with the district high schools on dual credit needs. A listening tour was completed with all local administration at SCC's district high schools. School superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, dual credit teachers, and school counselors shared the vision for their district high school. SCC shared how the College could support them to help meet their vision. Relationships were enhanced by open and regular communication with the stakeholders at each district high school. Dual credit offerings and teacher qualifications were reviewed to determine future course offerings. The coordinator regularly communicates with the dual credit lead instructor, dual credit instructors, school counselors and SCC representatives. If a SCC representative has any dual credit concerns, the coordinator will help facilitate a resolution. Early College Handbook and dual credit timeline was created and distributed to district high schools and SCC faculty and staff to explain procedures and guidelines. The coordinator contacted all dual credit teachers to find out the current textbook used for each of their dual credit courses. A list was compiled of classes that needed updated textbooks. The IBT grant allowed the College to purchase updated editions of dual credit textbooks. SCC is helping increase equity and access to dual credit throughout the district. Due to teacher shortage, some district high schools do not have the qualified faculty to teach dual credit in their high school. SCC began working on developing Early

College and dual credit offerings to help with the equity gap. The coordinator works with each school to ensure their needs are being met whether coming to one of the college's campuses or having a qualified faculty member go to the district high school. The coordinator will meet with any teacher at a high school district to ensure the Dual Credit Quality Act is followed by professional development plans.

Women and people of color are historically underrepresented in American architecture. As late as 2018, women received only 36 percent of architecture degrees awarded at all levels, despite making up a growing majority of total postsecondary degrees. African American and Hispanic students received only 16 percent of degrees issued. A first step to including more members of these groups in the architecture profession is introducing them to their study and practice at an early stage in their careers. The Teen Fellows program, run jointly by **Harold Washington College** (HWC) and the Chicago Architecture Center, brings Chicago Public High School sophomores and juniors to HWC's downtown campus to take college-level architecture classes. Eighty-five percent of CPS sophomores and juniors are African American or Hispanic. Classes are free, and the program provides computers and a stipend to better allow students of all means to participate. Fourteen students completed the program starting in Summer 2021. Of these, thirteen were African American or Hispanic, and ten were women. Only two students received below a B average in their coursework.

*The Teen Fellows program, run jointly by **Harold Washington College** (HWC) and the Chicago Architecture Center, brings Chicago Public High School sophomores and juniors to HWC's downtown campus to take college-level architecture classes.*

**John A. Logan College** (JALC) offers an orientation course, ORI 100, to high school students both on campus and in the district's high schools. This course provides students with information as they are making decisions about college and builds confidence in their ability to attend and succeed in college. ORI 100 does not require certain placement testing scores, tuition is waived for high school students, and total fees and textbook costs are \$30. ORI 100 was piloted in 2017 and went campus-wide in the fall of 2019. Due to COVID-19 and a transition to all online offerings in 2020, JALC returned to offering this course in the district's high schools during the academic year 2021-2022, and most of the high schools now participate. Approximately 70 percent of JALC district high school students graduated with college credit in 2020 and 2021, and while the headcount has remained steady, the number of credit hours earned increased dramatically over the last several academic years. While the credits earned by high school students may showcase academic preparedness for college-level coursework, there is still a lack of understanding regarding how to navigate the college environment and college expectations. To determine the course topics, JALC conducted a study of ORI 100 participants during the Fall 2021 semester. Participants were asked in a pre-course assessment what barriers they anticipated in college. The responses of high school students almost solely fell into the categories of time management, transitioning to college, college-level coursework, persistence, motivation, paying for college, social interaction, and stress. The concerns reported by high school students allowed JALC to incorporate topics such as communicating with instructors, campus technology, career exploration, emotional intelligence, and paying for college into the curriculum in a more in-depth way. High school students expressed the most concerns about paying for college and choosing a major, so significant time is spent on these topics. When asked about their best experiences in the course,



high school students reported course content, easier transition to college, social interaction, overall positive experience, and that they believed their ORI 100 instructor cared about them and wanted them to succeed. Based on these findings, JALC has created a summer bridge ORI 100 section that will be offered for the first time to help minority, low-income, and first-generation high school seniors transition to JALC.

The KC Now program provides high school students with opportunities to fulfill high school and college coursework simultaneously while still in high school. The initial concept of this program was developed to try to expand opportunities for high school students attending smaller, more rural high schools with fewer dual credit approved coursework options and fewer teachers qualified at the dual credit level. The KC Now partnership between **Kaskaskia College (KC)** and these high schools provides access to dual enrollment at levels comparable to larger high schools with more dual credit within the district. The initial pilot program of KC Now was implemented in August 2020. It was designed based on feedback from an advisory group composed of college personnel and high school administrators. This group assessed equity gaps to identify the high schools' needs regarding curriculum and accessibility for the students. A KC staff member is a dedicated coordinator and advisor for the KC Now program to assist high school partners with selecting appropriate coursework to contribute to the students' chosen career pathways. The college waives 50 percent of the tuition for courses agreed upon by the high school and college. The KC Foundation has provided funding to provide financial assistance to eligible students for the remaining 50 percent of the cost. Students qualify for this funding by showing evidence of meeting free or reduced lunch within their public high schools. This funding support is removing barriers for students with economic hardship. During the Fall 2021 semester, nine students successfully completed 54 credit hours of college credit through the KC Now program. During the Spring 2022 semester, three students successfully completed 21 hours of college credit through the program. Within this population served, two students reported to be Hispanic/Latino, four students were first-generation students.

**Lincoln Land Community College** partnered with two area organizations, The Outlet and Douglas Prep, through a summer initiative called "NextLevel" to host students, ranging in age from 14 to 17 for summer programming. The Outlet's mission is to help young fatherless youth develop the ability to make responsible life decisions, hold spiritual values, explore their gifts, and realize their dreams. Douglas Prep's mission is to work collaboratively to ensure students are provided with the skills necessary to become productive members of society. Several college departments came together to expose NextLevel students to technology and culinary experiences, as well as college and career options. The program ran for four hours per day, four days per week, for four weeks. The first hour of the day was focused on exposing students to career options, with a presentation and hands-on activities for each area. Topics included construction, radiography, EMS, agriculture, HVAC, welding, auto tech, sonography, and transfer degrees. Workshops were given on goal setting, college costs and how to pay for college, vision boarding, time management, and stress management. The remaining time was spent in a camp which included Black Rocket Camp weeks, in video game making and YouTube content creation, and in Culinary Camp weeks in cooking and baking. Sixty students were served with this initiative. Students reported that they were interested in career paths that they were not previously aware of existing. Long-term study will show the impact of the program as the students reach college age.

Underrepresented Groups Report  
Fiscal Year 2022

The Prep Academy is a partnership between **Richland Community College** and Decatur Public Schools (DPS) District 61. High school students are provided the opportunity to complete a zero-cost Associate of Arts degree for the duration of their four years in high school through coursework offered both in the high school by qualified high school faculty and on Richland's campus by Richland faculty. Richland and DPS administrators

*The Prep Academy, a partnership between **Richland Community College** and Decatur Public Schools (DPS) District 61, provides high school students the opportunity to complete a zero-cost Associate of Arts degree during their four years in high school.*

collaborated to create a four-year plan that starts with a single college course per semester in the freshman year, followed by two college courses per semester in the sophomore year, and concludes with the courses on Richland's campus that students take for a half day in the junior and senior years. Over several years, individual students from feeder K-12 Districts have completed a program on their own, but Richland recognized that these successes were limited to students with presumably more resources and support to complete the task. The purpose of the Prep Academy was to provide the same opportunity to diverse populations within the DPS District. The first Prep Academy cohort launched in the Fall 2021 semester. DPS and Richland officials conducted orientation sessions for each of the eighth-grade schools in DPS during March 2021, along with orientation sessions for their parents/guardians. Part of the equity focus was to use a variety of measures to accept students in the cohort apart from overall classroom performance. A total of 52 students were accepted into the first cohort. The demographic breakdown of the 52 students included 40.4 percent African American, 11.5 percent multi-race, 7.7 percent Hispanic, and 69.2 percent female students. The first cohort was enrolled in one course each semester at their high school in Spring 2022. All coursework uses Richland's Canvas Learning Management System, and all participants are introduced to Richland's services. Additional services were identified following the first year of implementation, including after-school mentoring and support. Dual credit faculty use Thrive, an early-alert system, to identify students in need of support. While two students chose to withdraw from the program, after the freshman year, 50 out of 52 students from the first cohort completed both courses successfully and were ready to move to their sophomore year. Richland and DPS repeated the process in February 2022 to accept the second cohort of students. The second cohort had 94 applications and 55 students accepted into the program. The second cohort included 36.36 percent African American, 16.36 percent multi-Race, 5.45 percent Hispanic, and 61.82 percent Female students.

Rockford Promise is a non-profit community organization that offers full-tuition scholarships to graduates of Rockford Public School District 205. During the academic year 2021-2022, 47 Promise Scholars enrolled at **Rock Valley College** (RVC), many from families with low socioeconomic status. Because these students are more likely to leave college without completing a degree or certificate, RVC provides several intervention strategies continuously throughout the year. The College currently utilizes an open advising model where students will see any advisor who is available. However, Promise Scholars have access to an assigned advisor who serves as the primary point of contact. This advisor, in addition to being knowledgeable of campus resources, is also aware of community resources that can be of assistance for this student population. The advisor and the Dean of Advising and Retention also serve as club advisors for the Rockford Promise Scholars club. The club meets weekly during the academic year and exists to provide members of the club opportunities to serve as leaders of their campus and community by

organizing activities such as community service, campus activities and events, food drives, and other similar events. Outside of planning and organizing activities, the club provides Promise Scholars with the opportunity to engage and interact with one another in a relaxed atmosphere. Finally, as a fully recognized club, members also can engage and collaborate with other club leaders, faculty, and administrators on campus. Participating in cultural activities is an opportunity that individuals from low socio-economic background rarely engage in. For instance, Promise Scholars had the opportunity to attend a performance of the Rockford Symphony Orchestra. Club members also experienced opportunities to explore different cultures by dining at restaurants they might not otherwise experience. Lastly, members of the club visited Northern Illinois University's and University Illinois-Chicago's campus. During these visits, club members were provided with the opportunity to learn about and explore prospective academic programs. There are 47 students enrolled at RVC who are receiving Rockford Promise scholarships. To maintain scholarship eligibility, they are required to earn at least a 2.0 GPA. Promise Scholars exceeded this minimum with an average GPA of 3.11. Thirty-one (66 percent) of scholars earned a GPA of 3.0 or higher while nine (19.1 percent) earned 4.0 GPA. Additionally, 41 (87.2 percent) of Promise Scholars persisted from Fall to Spring. One student completed degree requirements and transferred to a four-year institution.

### Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative

As a major operator in the conveyance industry, the Chicago Transportation Authority (CTA) has endeavored to broaden its reach beyond municipal support services by focusing on restoration for justice-involved individuals. Through the Second Chance program, participants are assisted with reentry through job training that focuses on self-sufficiency and social mobility. Returning citizens, victims of abuse, and others who face barriers to

*Olive-Harvey College has partnered with the Chicago Transportation Authority to provide the educational component of the Second Chance program, which targets justice-involved individuals, victims of abuse, and others who face barriers to employment.*

employment are offered training which includes networking, mentoring, and educational opportunities. **Olive-Harvey College** has partnered with CTA to provide the educational component of the program. As both a Predominately Black Institution (PBI) and emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), all programming is strategically aligned with Olive-Harvey's mission and uses equity as the framework. Olive-Harvey provides the Class-B CDL license training, where upon completion a permit is earned authorizing owners to operate CTA vehicles. Since the summer of 2021, Olive-Harvey has operated four cohorts preparing 103 individuals and yielding a 98 percent retention rate and a 92 percent success rate. In comparing Second Chance participants to non-participating students, the outcomes were comparable, denoting that with access and opportunity, lives can be transformed. In addition to academic achievement, program completers are afforded the opportunity to explore two avenues with CTA, Bus Servicer or Bus Operators—both offering a livable wage and a chance to positively contribute to their community.

## Mentoring/Counseling

Peer-to-Peer Outreach is a mental health strategy that was implemented at **Olney Central College** during the academic year 2021-2022 to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, promote mental health awareness, and provide students with tools and resources to help them manage their mental health. This is accomplished through peer-to-peer outreach efforts that focus on providing students with relatable, personal stories of mental health struggles, coping skills, and self-care strategies. Olney Central College hosted multiple

*Peer-to-Peer Outreach is a mental health strategy at **Olney Central College** to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, promote mental health awareness, and provide students with tools and resources to help them manage their mental health.*

mental health speakers for freshman orientations, which provided personal stories that demonstrated that mental health struggles are common, and that help is available. Speakers were also invited to speak in multiple classes to reach a wider audience, and bulletin boards were created to provide students with mental health resources and information. During Freshman Orientation, students were provided with information on mental health coping skills, and tables were set up at the beginning of the semester to provide students with additional information and resources. The college also organized a cookie decorating table at the end of the semester, with over 50 participants, to promote self-care. By incorporating a peer-to-peer approach, this mental health strategy helped reduce stigma around mental health issues and provided students with resources and coping skills to help them manage their mental health. Overall, the success of this mental health strategy was measured by the positive feedback received from students, faculty, and mental health professionals. The college plans to continue implementing this strategy in future academic years to ensure that mental health remains a priority on campus.

BetterMynd is an online therapy service for college students at **Rend Lake College** (RLC). It was implemented in July 2021 to improve the mental health of RLC students. BetterMynd gives students access to virtual counseling from the privacy and convenience of their laptops and smartphones, with sessions available during days, nights, and weekends. The select network of licensed counselors are intentionally diverse, representing different racial identities, cultures, and languages, as well as specializing in various mental health issues. Upon registration, students are able to select a BetterMynd counselor that is right for them by identifying the issues they are dealing with, their preferences for a counselor, and their availability. Students meet with a member of the RLCares team, who performs a brief evaluation to see if the student could benefit from the services of individualized counseling, beyond what is provided on campus. If it is agreeable with the student, they are set up, and allowed to have five 50-minute sessions with a counselor that they select from a list that is chosen specifically for their needs. In nearly all cases so far, most students felt like their immediate needs were met with the five sessions.

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) updated and expanded the procedures for students not in good standing to include an Academic Success Plan (ASP). This new procedure was developed in October 2021 and approved by the Board of Trustees to begin July 1, 2022. This system is in place for all students throughout IECC; however, it can be especially impactful for first-generation college students. During the academic year 2021-2022, **Lincoln Trail College** (LTC) served an unduplicated headcount of 793 students with 528 of these being first generation. With 66.67 percent of the student population falling into the category of first generation, IECC is

sensitive to barriers that can impact these students. They are more likely to face several obstacles while in college such as lack of college readiness and need for development coursework, lack of support from family, difficulty adjusting to the collegiate environment, and financial instability ([League for Innovation in the Community College](#)). All students are supported through LTC first-year experience course, but some students need additional assistance in remaining successful. The ASP assists the advisor or retention coordinator in this recovery process by providing a framework, supporting the students through the development of solutions, and directing them to a variety of support resources. At the end of every term, IECC's Records department will update the student standings of any student who was enrolled in that term. Students can fall into one of five areas of academic standing: good standing, academic warning, academic probation, program suspension, and college suspension. Any student not in good standing receives a letter from the institution notifying them of their new status. When students come in for advising for future semesters, they receive a copy of the ASP to help them identify what obstacles led to their struggles in the previous semester(s) and they work with their advisor to think through ways to overcome the obstacles in the future. Students are then held accountable through scheduling additional meetings with their advisor for check-ins throughout the upcoming semester. At the end of Spring and Summer 2022 semesters, sixty-two students at LTC were not in good standing and received notification of their status. Twenty-four of these students enrolled in the Fall 2023 semester and 62 percent of the students were successful in the subsequent semester. Evaluation of the program will continue and include monitoring how many students have a successful semester while on the academic success plan by completing the term with a 2.0 semester GPA.

**Danville Area Community College (DACC)** expanded mental health services in November 2021. With the State's implementation of the [Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act](#), the College responded with the following strategies: 1) Created a mental health webpage; 2) Continued in-house counseling services (with employees employed prior to the Act); and 3) Established a partnership with a local mental healthcare provider, Crosspoint Human

*Danville Area Community College established a partnership with a local mental healthcare provider to offer free mental health counseling to students and training to Advisement and Counseling staff on local mental health issues and resources.*

Services, to offer free mental health counseling to students and training to Advisement and Counseling staff on local mental health issues and resources. Students can submit a referral form for counseling services through the Advisement and Counseling website. Appointments and walk-ins are available. Over 25 students and staff completed referrals for mental health services. A therapist is part of the regular Advisement and Counseling services which provides a level of discretion with students checking in at the front desk and following the same protocol as other appointments. The therapist trains Counseling and Advisement staff on how to access and explore campus/community resources for students. Minors can access therapeutic services, which are free of charge, with a parent's permission. This includes dual credit students. With the funding, mental health resources and materials were purchased to share with students/staff. This was to increase awareness, provide basic information on services, and to serve more students/staff. With increased awareness, a DACC professor stepped up to provide professional development services for staff. The chosen method also provided social/emotional support for students. Within this reporting period, five mental health seminars on topics such as Suicide Prevention and Helping Yourself or Others with Mental Health were provided. In April 2022, the Counseling department hosted a

mental health speaker who was a licensed counselor from Crosspoint. Two faculty members had their classes attend, which indicates the need to cover the topics and how faculty taking the initiative to help address mental health needs is so important.

To ensure students had the best likelihood of successful completion, **Illinois Central College** (ICC) implemented multiple initiatives including the advising redesign. A component of the redesign included a pilot of success coaching that resulted in an 18 percent increase in persistence for coached students compared to their uncoached peers. Success coaching was particularly impactful for African American students, whose persistence rates were 33 percent higher when coached. To bring the coaching initiative to scale, all ICC student success advisors have participated in intensive professional development leading to success coaching certification through InsideTrack. Advising was identified as the highest level of student dissatisfaction on the College's last CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) survey. Now the satisfaction rate on advising exit surveys is 96 percent. ICC also implemented the Degree Planner application that enables every student—regardless of full-time or part-time status—to develop their own personalized plan to completion. Furthermore, the College automated onboarding support via Target X, piloted the First Semester Experience, and integrated Career Clusters into the catalog, website, and organizational design. ICC also established the Minority Student Retention Team (MSRT), a cross-functional team focused on fostering a sense of belonging for minority students at ICC; the MSRT distributed “Finals Survival Kits” (300 in December and 500 in May), delivered a Black History Month film festival, supported campus events including an art exhibit and a study break activity during May finals, and developed communications to increase the sense of belonging and connection. MSRT will increase membership, adding unrepresented areas of the College as well as student members in the academic year 2022-2023. The rate at which students graduate, transfer, or are still enrolled has increased from 58 percent to 64 percent, with the African American student rate increasing from 41 percent to 47 percent. The overall College rate and the African American student rate both increased by six points. This rate is better than ICC's state peer institutions, as well as the state and national rates.

**Wabash Valley College** (WVC) has increased accessibility to support services for underrepresented students including students with disabilities. In 2021, the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinators joined the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). This resource provides the ADA coordinators with precious resources that help them handle the intricate issues they encounter regarding handling the needs of special population students with disabilities. The resource will be utilized in meetings and policy development regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the Fall semester, staff focused on educating the students about community, curricular, and mental health accommodations available that can provide equitable outcomes to special populations students. The New Student Orientation was redesigned to include guest speakers from mental health agencies and food pantries that serve Wabash County. WVC Academic Success Center staff attended the AHEAD Conference in October. Open Education Resource options were explored in conjunction with textbook loan libraries to support special populations. In December the work from the semester long project of Symbiosis wrapped up. This project pairs nicely with IECC's existing and continued Quality Matters standard for online education best practices and providing equitable online education delivery. Faculty planned to begin adding closed captioning to online videos. Increased utilization of community and college services has led to a slight increase in

student headcount and persistence across almost all programs. The effectiveness of this activity is also measured by the student satisfaction survey with a goal to increase student satisfaction by two percent. Project goals to retain students in special populations contribute to the diversity and learning culture and provide increased opportunities to those students.

Like most institutions, **Moraine Valley Community College** utilizes a Standards of Academic Performance (SOAP) policy and series of progressive interventions. Due to both student feedback and the need to shift during the pandemic, the Counseling and Career Development Center moved the Academic Success Workshop (ASW) intervention into an online format.

*Moraine Valley Community College eliminated all equity gaps in the Academic Success Workshop intervention for students earning below a 2.0 GPA for the first time.*

The ASW is the lowest-level intervention for students earning below a 2.0 GPA for the first time. In addition to making the intervention available 24/7 and allowing unlimited access, a major goal was ensuring that students from underrepresented backgrounds had similar post-intervention academic outcomes. The initial online ASW was built in the College's Canvas Learning Management System for a pilot during December 2020 and January 2021. From Spring 2021 to Fall 2022, an associated equity-focused research project assessed potential equity gaps and directed revisions to the ASW to reduce/eliminate these equity gaps. In addition, the new ASW included a required survey as the last step of the intervention. This gave the committee members access to feedback from students on their academic struggles as well as non-cognitive factors (e.g., work, family, finances, etc.) that led to their poor performance. This data has been analyzed by Institutional Research to identify major non-cognitive factors impacting students and has resulted in concerted efforts to provide students with additional support, so they can focus on their academics. Post-ASW equity gaps were reviewed for two different groups: 1) racially diverse students compared to white students, and 2) Pell-eligible students compared to those who did not utilize Pell. In 2021, data indicated that three out of four outcome metrics in the project showed equity gaps of greater than 10 percent. After significant work by the committee to enhance the ASW intervention, as well as more intensive follow-up by counselors, the data analyzed for the academic year 2021-2022 showed that all equity gaps had been eliminated or are considered closed (a gap of less than the 10 percent benchmark). Additionally, students who completed the online ASW showed an average increase in completing over one additional credit hour in the semester post-intervention.

### **Mentoring/Counseling for African American Students**

**Malcolm X College** (MXC) offers the I Am African American Male (IAAM) mentoring program, which aims to build a cohort of African American men to improve academic achievement, self-esteem, social competence, self-efficacy, student retention, and graduation rates. The immediate goals are providing positive male role models, encouraging self-respect, creating a sense of brotherhood, and building healthy relationships. The long-term goal is to close the opportunity gap; the cohort of MXC men will serve as mentors for other African American students. They will address inequity in education that hinders the intellectual growth of this underserved population by fostering student growth and promoting the following core values: accountability, community, diversity, empowerment, learning, and respect. The MXC team implemented the IAAM mentoring program in the fall of 2021. MXC mentees participate in weekly meetings with their mentors and student-focused workshops. IAAM mentors represent a cross-section of positions throughout

MXC, including deans, program directors, faculty members, advisors, IT specialists, and security personnel. Their broad knowledge base, skill set, and dispositions give mentees access to a wealth of knowledge and insight into potential career opportunities. In the fall of 2021, the retention rate for MXC African American males who did not participate in the IAAM program was 57 percent. In comparison, the retention rate for those MXC African American males who did participate was 93 percent (37 out of 40 students retained). Out of the original cohort of 40, 18 students are currently enrolled, and 14 mentees graduated. For the spring of 2023, the MXC mentors are serving 25 males. Because of its success, MXC submitted a request to the office of Congressman Danny Davis for \$1.8M to scale the program and to pay for a partnership with the Black Fire Brigade to increase the number of African American emergency medical technicians. Congress approved \$1M, which the MXC will receive in September 2023. MXC plans to share the program with other colleges and universities.

With the retention and success rates of African American males much lower than other student populations on campus, **Danville Area Community College** made it a priority to increase student engagement and improve graduation, transfer, and employment rates. ICONIC is an example of one of the strategies in place. It prepares African American males for academic/employment success by introducing them to resources/tools on campus or in the community, by offering and supporting student-developed social activities, by helping them establish a positive network of peers and mentors, and by introducing them to opportunities outside their day-to-day world. ICONIC group members meet routinely with the coordinator. The relationship is established early in the students' academic path, preferably before their first semester. Program focuses on learning about services through interactions with financial aid, the Foundation (for scholarships), counseling, academic deans and faculty members, career services, Vermilion County Works (a WIOA program), and community agencies/partners. Successful second-year students mentor first-year participants. ICONIC participants deem the group a "brotherhood." They work on campus and participate in campus activities. ICONIC is linked to the TRIO program and several ICONIC participants serve as TRIO Ambassadors. In the academic year 2021-2022, three students transferred to a four-year university, two student athletes transferred laterally to another community college, three students entered the workforce, three students completed/graduated, and 15 students were retained in the program.

### **Professional Development**

To increase professional development opportunities to support a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture, **Waubensee Community College** implemented Common Read Book Discussions. The College hosts bi-weekly book discussions and examines the lessons from the common read to enhance the employees' understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion. One of the book examples is *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes affect us and what we can do* by Claude Steele. Furthermore, in Fall 2022, the College launched several Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) which are employee-led, voluntary groups organized around shared identities, common interests, characteristics, or affiliations. They include Asian American and Pacific Islander faculty and staff, African American faculty and staff, Hispanic faculty and staff, LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, and Women in Higher Education. Sustained Dialogues are held virtually for maximum attendance and offered three times a semester. This year's topics included Beyond the Rainbows and Parades: A discussion on topics impacting the LGBTQ+ community and Land Acknowledgement and Beyond: Discovering our Waubensee Name. The Office of Faculty



Development has focused on offering comprehensive faculty development programming that provides with the place, space, and resources to acquire, share, and deepen their knowledge, skills, and experience related to inclusive teaching excellence. Lastly, Waubonsee has three significant external partners that provide frameworks and opportunities to further learn and strengthen inclusive teaching: 1) The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE)—Certificate in Effective College Instruction and Fostering a Culture of Belonging Micro-credential; 2) Quality Matters (QM)—Introduction to QM and Applying the QM Rubric; and 3) The Northern Illinois Faculty Development Consortium—Shared support and programming.

## Recruitment

The Bloomington-Normal Chapter of the National Association of Colored People (BN-NAACP) hosts a local competition for high school students: Academic, Cultural, Technological, and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO). ACT-SO is a year-long enrichment program designed to promote high academic and cultural achievement among high school students. ACT-SO culminates with local, regional, and national competitions. The ACT-SO scholarship fund for students participating in the BN-NAACP’s ACT-SO was established in Spring 2022 to increase the enrollment of high-achieving students of color at **Heartland Community College**. The Heartland Foundation was able to award two NAACP-affiliated graduating seniors with full scholarships for Fall 2022.

*The ACT-SO (Academic, Cultural, Technological, and Scientific Olympics) scholarship fund was established in Spring 2022 to increase the enrollment of high-achieving students of color at **Heartland Community College**.*

## STEM

Phenotypic Plasticity Research Experiences for Undergraduates (PRECS) is a **Parkland College** and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) inter-institutional program supported by a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The objective is to provide research opportunities, mentoring, and scientific training for students pursuing degrees at community colleges and thereby increase their likelihood of maintaining successful trajectories in STEM. In addition, it seeks to support participation of students who are underrepresented in other ways, including underrepresented minorities, students with disabilities, non-traditional age students, and first-generation college students. PRECS hosted 32 students from community colleges across the country during the summers of 2017 through 2019. Another award was granted in the summers of 2021 through 2023, of which 11 students were hosted during Summer 2021 and 10 in Summer 2022. PRECS participants undertake authentic laboratory research experience and receive training on how to successfully navigate transferring to a four-year institution. They are connected to institutional resources, their research mentors, and fellow students. The first six days of PRECS take place at Parkland involving an intense training to ensure participants have basic skills necessary for program success. During the research immersion, the group meets for professional development seminars which include creating scientific posters, graduate school and careers, imposter syndrome, and outreach activities. Outreach activities include volunteering at a “Science at the Market” booth at local farmers market, discussions with high school students of success in a STEM major, and also participation in programs at UIUC College of Engineering. As a capstone project, PRECS participants design and present a research poster at the Illinois Summer Research Symposium

(ISRS). Each participant is matched and receives direct mentoring from a UIUC faculty and a day-to-day research mentor. Students conduct research on their own project which culminates in the participant presenting their research at ISRS. Forty-three students from across the country have been supported through PRECS of which the majority have continued science-based degrees by either continuing at their home institution or transferring to a four-year institution. Earlier cohorts have since entered the scientific workforce or graduate programs. Many students continued to pursue research opportunities, presented at conferences, or have published scientific articles. Underrepresented groups supported by PRECS have been 43 percent first-generation college students, nine percent students with disabilities, 34 percent non-traditional aged students, and 34 percent students from under-represented minorities.

The purpose of the Geo-Engineering Innovation through Undergraduate Scholarship (GENIUS) program at **Triton College** is to foster the next generation of scientists and engineering by focusing on recruitment and retention of students in STEM majors from low-income backgrounds with high academic potential. The GENIUS Program provided full tuition, fees, and books, and included a summer enrichment week where

*The Geo-Engineering Innovation through Undergraduate Scholarship (GENIUS) program at **Triton College** provided full tuition, fees, and books to students in STEM majors from low-income background with high academic potential.*

students were able to meet each other and the faculty mentors through cohort building activities and be introduced to the many support offices on campus as well as some of the surrounding transfer universities and local companies hiring STEM majors. While enrolled in the program, students had monthly meetings with a faculty mentor and access to a program coordinator that could connect them to whatever research or support they might need while they finished their program. Many of the student scholars participated in optional interdisciplinary undergraduate research opportunities with a faculty member and other students. These projects generally lasted one or two semesters and students would then present their findings and presentations or posters at regional student-centered conferences. Some students competing against students from research universities were awarded prizes for best research projects. The project also helped foster many transfer pathways for four-year colleges and universities, including scholarships and guaranteed admission program. Overall, 41 students went through the program and 26 (63 percent) received a STEM degree or transferred to a university in a STEM program. This is compared to the 23 percent of Triton students that normally graduate. The program also closed the completion gap. The baseline Triton completion rate for White students is 30 percent, 24 percent for Hispanic students, and 10 percent for African American students. Of GENIUS scholars, the rates were 56 percent for White, 66 percent for Hispanic, and 80 percent for African American students. For students that participated in undergraduate research, 80 percent successfully completed and 100 percent presented at a conference.

The Promotion of Underrepresented Minorities in Academic STEM Alliance (PUMA-STEM), which was implemented in the fall of 2019 for five-year project period, is focused on strengthening underrepresented minority student success in STEM at primarily undergraduate institutions in the Chicago area. The alliance includes Elmhurst University, Benedictine University, Concordia University Chicago, Dominican University, Lewis University, North Central College, Saint Xavier University, and **College of DuPage** (COD). The goals include (1) an increase of the number of

underrepresented minority students graduating with STEM majors in the alliance institutions from 146 to 292 for the five-year grant period, (2) improved retention of underrepresented minority students in STEM between the first and second years by closing the retention gap between underrepresented minority (URM) and non-URM students by at least 50 percent, (3) increased number of underrepresented minority students entering STEM graduate programs by at least 25 percent, and (4) improved successful transfer and persistence of underrepresented minority students from two- year to four-year institutions, increasing URM transfer student graduate rates in STEM by at least 25 percent. The PUMA-STEM alliance meets as a group monthly to strategize recruitments efforts for students, peer mentors, and summer research mentors and mentees. The alliance has run the research program successfully for three consecutive summers (2020, 2021, and 2022). COD has had 18 students from underrepresented minority groups participate and complete successful summer research projects at partnering institutions. To help with recruitment, the COD STEM Club was established, and an academic success coach has been working with students. These institutional resources will provide academic and peer-mentoring support for COD students.

### Student Support Services

The embedded tutoring program at **Kishwaukee College** was implemented to address identified gaps in student performance in gateway math courses. The College committed to a math success program as one of the strategies for the Partnership for College Completion (PCC), intended to eliminate the achievement gap for underserved populations. Embedded support removes barriers for student access to tutoring and enriches student understanding of content knowledge and academic success skills in collaboration with faculty. The Math Lab was implemented in the fall of 2020 as a pilot program. In the spring of 2021, the personnel in the Math Lab refined processes with faculty and recruited additional professional math tutors. The scaled program was implemented in the academic year 2021-2022. Faculty may request embedded support, and service is prioritized for math gateway courses. Embedded tutors maintain communication with faculty throughout the term to discuss necessary supplementary content skills, prerequisite knowledge, course requirements, supplemental materials, instructor expectations, and common student hurdles. They attend and participate in synchronous class in-person or online, and/or asynchronous class activities. They also send targeted communications to students on resources and supplementary learning aids; provide drop-in tutoring office hours, scheduled tutoring appointments, and study groups; assist students in navigating technology for coursework; and work with students on developing supplementary content skills and refreshing prerequisite knowledge. The fiscal year 2022 data show that pass rates were higher in math courses with embedded tutors for both African American students (57.1 percent) and Hispanic students (53 percent) than in math courses without embedded tutors (48.8 percent for African American students and 45.3 percent for Hispanic students). Similarly, withdraw rates within racial breakdowns were lower in math courses with embedded tutors.

*Kishwaukee College implemented the embedded tutoring program to address identified gaps in student performance in gateway math courses.*

As part of the **Kankakee Community College (KCC)** strategic enrollment management planning process, KCC administrators identified a gap in student supports offered for non-academic persistence. The college had put in place academic support for students in the Student Success

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Center, which had seen gains, but there were still at-risk students. Retention and Success navigator positions were introduced in August 2021 as a complementary service to the academic Student Success Coaches and the Student Success Center which offers tutoring and academic support to students across the College. The navigator position was created to assist students with social and emotional barriers that may lead to their withdrawal from classes, establishing wrap-around services for all KCC students. The navigators meet with students to assess services the College can offer or connect students to in the community. Initially KCC had one navigator that was assigned to the Health Careers programs. After great success, the College began to put in place a plan to expand the navigator services to all students at KCC and expand the navigator offerings in service. The navigators have created a process for connecting students with additional emergency funding opportunities. These services are offered with the caveat of follow-up meetings with the navigator to ensure students are creating long-term solutions for their challenges. They have also begun offering financial literacy training and resources for students, developed a lending library specific to many CTE areas, connected students with mental health services, developed relationships with an extensive list of community programs to which they can connect students for long-term needs, and participated as an advocate in many college committees and processes. In the first year, the navigator attained on average 90 percent retention rate for the students they assisted. Seeing such great success in retention and realizing the gap that this navigator was meeting, the College added an additional navigator in the Fall 2022. At the start of Spring 2023, the navigators had aided to a seven percent increase in overall retention for KCC, which is now at 73 percent. This spring the College is adding an additional navigator that will focus on serving the needs of and recruiting Hispanic and ESL populations.

The Multicultural Entrepreneur Program (MEP) at **Black Hawk College** (BHC) serves students from underrepresented populations, individuals from different cultural heritage and identities, and first-generation students that aspire to be future entrepreneurs and business leaders. The advisor coordinates and works with offices across the institution supporting students on English as Second Language skills, academic skills, mentoring relationships, business internships, community development opportunities, and work experiences that build on and encourage the students' interests in entrepreneurship and business leadership. The program was started in June 2021 with the hiring of the multicultural entrepreneurial advisor. By Fall 2021, programming began for the students which includes workshops, entrepreneurial leadership and social impact development, language and culture classes, and internship opportunities. Through a weekly meeting, students join for educational opportunities. The MEP has created a place of belonging for students from underrepresented populations who aspire to be future business leaders. A donation from a community philanthropist allowed for the funding of the position of multicultural entrepreneurial advisor position. The MEP advisor builds relationships with the businesses and organizations within the community and creates opportunities for student connections. These connections include a multicultural mentoring program, entrepreneurial leadership and workshops, language and culture classes, and an internship program. The MEP is aligned with three of the five strategic priorities in the fiscal year 2022-2024 Strategic Plan: Be a leader in student success and outcomes; Embrace Diversity, Equity

*The Multicultural Entrepreneur Program at **Black Hawk College** serves students from underrepresented populations, individuals from different cultural heritage and identities, and first-generation students that aspire to be future entrepreneurs and business leaders.*

and Inclusion as a Part of Who We Are; and Strengthen the Community Through Engagement and Workforce Development. Through the MEP the College has demonstrated that while student course success is lower than all other non-dual credit students at BHC, their term retention rate and persistence rate reflect they are doing better than their peers.

Perkins V legislation emphasizes diversity and equity of underrepresented groups; however, underrepresented groups are not automatically eligible for Perkins Project services as race is not a “Special Populations trait” that is eligible for Perkins Student Support Project services under the law. Given the legislative emphasis, in 2021, **Lewis and Clark Community College** began writing into the annual Perkins Application that career program students of color will be eligible for Perkins Project services regardless of whether they possess any of the Special Populations traits under the law. This policy for the College’s Perkins Project must be approved each year by ICCB. Perkins Project services for most eligible career program students include the loan of required career specific textbooks (or the provision of a digital/ebook or access code if a physical book is not available). For eligible students in some of the Allied Health programs, Perkins provides required career specific supplies/materials such as uniforms, shoes, stethoscopes, or gait belts. By expanding Perkins Project services to all students of color, regardless of if they have a Special Populations trait, the College has increased its percent of students served by Perkins by seven percent.

In Fall 2021, **College of DuPage** sent a survey to all CTE students inquiring what types of student support would help them be successful. With a response rate of 18 percent, 66 percent of those students identified themselves as meeting one or more special population criteria. Seventy-nine percent of students identified they needed assistance with purchasing textbooks, and 52 percent of students identified they needed technology support via laptops and wi-fi hotspots. The laptop loan program launched on a pilot basis during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. By the Fall 2021 semester, the laptop loan was no longer a pilot program and students were able to apply for technology support at any time during the semester. Students submit an online application that lists their CTE program, enrollment status, and that they self-report meeting at least one of the Perkins special populations groups. Once the application is approved (typically within 24-48 hours) the student receives an email that they can pick up a laptop and/or Wi-Fi hotspot at the College of DuPage library. The CTE Textbook Support program launched on a pilot basis during the Spring and Summer 2021 semesters. By the Fall 2021 semester textbook support was no longer a pilot program and students were able to apply prior to the start of the fall and spring semesters. The program provided students with \$250 to use towards textbooks and e-books on a semester basis. The CTE laptop loan program served 174 students and the CTE Textbook Support program served 256 students throughout the academic year 2021-2022. One measurement of success was the term persistence rate (fall to spring), which ranges 75-78 percent for the College. The term persistence rate for the students receiving textbook support was 89 percent.

Faculty office hours can give students valuable time to better understand a class and professor expectations. Traditionally, faculty office hours are one-on-one and available by a signup sheet or appointment. While office hours are available and advertised to the students by faculty and listed in the course syllabus, the number of students attending office hours has declined. Students may feel intimidated, may not feel worthy of the professor’s time, or may feel like they are imposing. Some students might not prefer the one-on-one format. To make faculty more accessible and

inclusive to students, **Frontier Community College** (FCC) has begun Instructor Walk-In Hours in August 2021. Three FCC faculty are scheduled for a total of five hours each week for approximately 10 weeks throughout the 16-week semester. Subjects covered include mathematics, science, and composition. The open office hours are held in FCC's Academic Success Center, which houses the library, computer lab, and study areas. This open concept allows students to visit their instructors in a casual environment. Faculty can help students in an individual or group format. Students already at the library studying can easily approach their instructor for more clarification or insight. Faculty have reported a 20 percent increase in student attendance in walk-in office hours from regular office hours. Success rates for students (excluding withdrawals) enrolled in the math, science, and composition courses taught by the three FCC faculty are 100 percent, 97 percent, and 90 percent respectively.

The Student Crisis Fund was created to assist students whose circumstances prevent them from continuing their education at **Carl Sandburg College**. The Carl Sandburg Foundation offers several grants to students to help with the cost of tuition, books, and other educational expenses. The Foundation also recognizes that unexpected expenses can derail a student's education, so grants are available to students who are in crisis or have an unexpected need arise, so that they do not need to choose between their education and the life circumstances that may pose a barrier to their persistence. A committee

*The Nurses in Need Grant is a combined effort between the **Carl Sandburg College** Foundation and the Galesburg Community Foundation, which is utilized for academic and non-academic expenses that may affect students' ability to continue their education in the Allied Health Programs.*

reviews the applications and determines approval based on full completion of the application, attached documentation, meeting eligibility requirements, and the availability of funds. Crisis funds are meant to be used for non-academic, non-recurring, one-time expenses where payment is important to the student's continued enrollment at Sandburg. Possible needs that could be considered include, but are not limited to, housing insecurity or unexpected change in housing arrangements; loss of income or unemployment; unexpected medical bills; technology access; or emergency vehicle repairs. The Nurses in Need Grant is a combined effort between the Carl Sandburg College Foundation and the Galesburg Community Foundation. Applicants must be enrolled in a Sandburg Allied Health Program (Dental Hygiene, Medical Assisting, Phlebotomy Technician Certificate, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Mortuary Science, Nursing Associate's Degree, Basic Nursing Assistant, Nursing, Radiologic Technology) to be eligible for the Nurses in Need Grant. Nurses in Need Grants are to be utilized for academic and non-academic expenses that may affect students' ability to continue their education in the Carl Sandburg College Allied Health Programs. The Foundation awarded \$42,000 in direct student support in the academic year 2021-2022. Recipients of foundation grants identified the following basic need insecurities: 12 percent had insufficient internet access; 58 percent experienced financial crisis; 27 percent requested assistance with rent, montage, or utility expenses; 32 percent cited childcare as a barrier to course attendance; and 45 percent struggled to find consistent transportation in rural areas. Based on these data, grant efforts increased in 2022 to student support needs. Examples include a Jump Start program for books and supplies and the dedication of the \$100,000 Adult Bridge as direct student support.

**Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC)** believes every student deserves access to educational opportunities that enable their success. The College intends to improve its ability to serve the adult learner population by enhancing the services available to these students, especially in terms of opportunities for low-cost, minimal-time credit options; thereby attracting more adult students. The plan is to target and serve specific adult special population students as defined by Perkins, which may include the economically disadvantaged, individuals preparing for non-traditional fields of study, single parents, English learners, and the homeless. The Adult Learner Initiative Program was funded as part of the CTE Leadership grant. It was originally implemented in November 2020 and has since been transitioned to Perkins as part of Special Populations. Recruitment of learners from this population will be increased by establishing and building upon existing partnerships with local community organizations, churches, and businesses as well through social media and radio ads. Retention will be focused on an expansion of curricular options and learning modalities, including expansion of prior learning assessment and online/blended learning opportunities as well as a dedicated advising process. Finally, success will be enhanced for these students by having properly trained and dedicated staff and faculty members who are both aware of the needs of the adult learner and the wealth of experience with which the adult learner comes to IVCC. The efforts of this support system will be augmented by online and web-based resources that allow the learner to access it at their convenience.

Students from special populations face financial barriers in CTE programs with textbook expenses. The textbook loan library helps promote the completion of degrees and certificates within CTE programs as it allows students to focus more on their degree attainment and less on the financial burden that the cost of textbooks, uniforms, and equipment may cause. **John A. Logan College (JALC)** has a loan library for Perkins eligible CTE students. The library includes textbooks, tools, equipment, and uniforms that students can borrow on a semester basis. JALC assisted 63 students in fiscal year 2022 via the Perkins Loan Library. Fifty students persisted or returned for Fall 2022. This is a retention rate of 79.4 percent.

The TRIO Student Support Services program has existed at **Sauk Valley Community College** for nearly thirty years. The program strives to create innovative programming that serves and supports Sauk's most at-risk populations, students who identify as first-generation, low-income, or who have a documented disability. This program is funded by grants through the US Department of Education. Currently, over 90 percent of all Sauk students qualify to participate in the TRIO Student Support Services program. The program's current capacity is just over 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. Due to the many services provided by TRIO advisors, TRIO students have higher than average retention and completion rates.

Math and English boot camps were piloted in the fall of 2020 at **Southwestern Illinois College** (SWIC). In the spring of 2021, chemistry boot camps were added at faculty request. Boot camps were developed in response to revised Multiple Measures to help students prepare for the expectations of college-level math and writing courses. Boot camps are offered the week prior to classes starting and at the first week of the semester, both in-person and online at all campuses. They review core concepts that students are expected to know prior

*Southwestern Illinois College offers math, English, and chemistry boot camps that review core concepts that students are expected to know prior to starting the course and provide an overview of study strategies that will help students be successful in their courses.*

to starting the course and provide an overview of study strategies that will help students be successful in their courses. Math and chemistry boot camps review the course syllabi to better understand expectations and introduce technology platforms such as MyMathLab, WileyPlus, LoggerPro and calculators. Writing boot camps cover key terminology of the writing process to familiarize students with language that may be used in their classes. Students receive a tour of the Success Center, an overview of resources, and a free SWIC Planner. Boot camp facilitators connect with students, which make them more comfortable with seeking out resources at the Success Center earlier in the semester. All boot camps include handouts that are tailored specifically to help students better prepare for their courses. Exit surveys were initiated with the chemistry boot camps to assess learning outcomes and student satisfaction. Results were used to adapt and improve boot camps as needed. In fiscal year 2023, exit surveys were implemented for all boot camps. Mass emails are sent to all students enrolled in courses that would benefit from the boot camps. Students are invited to pre-register through an online system. Informational materials are provided to academic advisors and posted throughout campus. Based on faculty requests, boot camps have also been developed and adapted for specific programs such as Practical Nursing, Nurse Assistant, and Pharmacy Technician, and are offered at different points during the semester and focusing on course specific content. Success Center staff continue to find ways to adapt and improve boot camps to better serve student needs.

**City Colleges of Chicago** formed a partnership with LIFT-Chicago in the spring of 2019. LIFT-Chicago's mission is to break the cycle of poverty by investing in parents. This non-profit organization recognizes that the country's higher education system isn't designed to support individuals who are raising families. As a result, its goals are to provide deep, individualized support to student parents through one-on-one coaching and workshops for families, covering topics like building financial security, resume upkeep, job searching, and wellness. These parent-chosen workshops address many of the barriers that often get in the way of student parents completing their educational programs. LIFT-Chicago takes a two-generation approach, working exclusively with parents of young children to build well-being (Hope), financial strength (Money), and social connections (Love). LIFT-Chicago members work with participants for up to two years to break down various goals (increase income, repair credit, build savings) into steps with obtainable outcomes. As part of the program, LIFT-Chicago provides \$150 unrestricted quarterly cash stipends to participants, for up to two years, boosting individual and family financial well-being. Since the partnership's inception, LIFT-Chicago has served 155 City College of Chicago student parents, 62 from **Kennedy-King College** alone. In the last program year, 94 percent of City College of Chicago parenting students served made progress toward their financial goals and the same number progressed in their education, key indicators of economic security and well-



being. Additionally, 65 percent of student parents reported reduced levels of stress, and 95 percent reported having built at least one trusting relationship.

**Carl Sandburg College** recognizes that students who have food insecurities need help finding optimal success. The Resource Room Campus Food Pantry was enhanced to meet this growing demand. Located on Sandburg's main campus, The Resource Room is open to any Sandburg student or employee in need. Fresh produce, fridge and freezer items, and non-perishable shelf items are available during regular pantry hours, or appointments are welcome throughout the week. Students can take what they need and are not limited to the number of visits to the Resource Room. Sandburg serves as an approved partner with Great River Bend Food (GRBF) Bank. A new GRBF site opened in Galesburg, which increases the amount of fresh and frozen food available to the College. To accommodate the increase in use and offerings, the Resource Room moved into a bigger space that is more convenient to the students and equipped with more extensive refrigerated storage. The Branch Campus also has a Resource Room. Fresh produce, fridge and freezer items, and non-perishable shelf items are available to any student or employee in need. Understanding the needs of the rural area of Carthage, Sandburg has elected to open the Resource Room to the community. Carl Sandburg College received a grant from the Tracey Family Foundation to move the Branch Campus Resource Room to a larger area and equip it with more storage for fresh, frozen, and dry goods. From August 2022 through January 2023, Sandburg's Resource Rooms accepted 6,102.5 pounds of food and served 610 individuals.

The Chicago STAR Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship at City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) that covers tuition, books, and class materials not already covered by financial aid for CCC courses on an approved academic pathway. If a student is not eligible to file for financial aid (via FAFSA) or is not awarded financial aid, STAR scholarship waivers cover CCC-approved expenses. Any Chicago public or charter high school graduate who applies within one year of their high school graduation, who is completion-ready, meaning they have an ACT score of 17 or higher in math and English or earns 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), 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. Home schooled and GED students are ineligible for the STAR scholarship. Additional requirements to be awarded the STAR Scholarship are that (1) students must give their consent (or denial) to have their contact information and student data shared with STAR Transfer Program colleges and universities offering transfer programs especially for STAR Scholarship recipients, (2) students must file for and complete the FAFSA process or complete an online certification form indicating they are ineligible to apply for financial aid, and (3) students must be on an approved CCC academic pathway. Implemented in the fall of 2015, the Chicago STAR Scholarship has been a successful tool for recruiting and retaining students at **Wilbur Wright College**. Since inception, Wright has averaged more than 540 STAR recipients per year. Of these 67 percent have been Hispanic, while Asian and African American students make up another 13 percent of recipients. Just over half, (52 percent) of recipients have been female. Fall-to-spring retention rates for scholarship recipients have averaged at 92 percent, which is twenty percentage points higher than the College's overall retention rate (71 percent). The fall-to-fall retention rate for recipients has averaged at 83 percent since inception, which is thirty points higher than the colleges overall average retention rate for the same period (average =

50 percent). STAR Scholars who begin in their first fall term of eligibility have an average three-year graduation rate of 52 percent compared to the college's average IPEDS graduation rate of 27 percent. STAR scholars transferring after degree/certificate completion have a comparable transfer rate to the college's overall rate of 52 percent, though STAR scholars are more likely to transfer to a four-year institution immediately after completion, while the same is not always true for non-STAR completers who transfer.

As a result of data compiled during the development of the Equity Plan, **Elgin Community College** (ECC) saw an opportunity to provide direct and highly relevant wrap-around support to students from historically marginalized groups with the establishment of a Student Success Coaching program in the fall of 2021. Initially designed to ensure students made most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic were provided equitable support and continued making academic progress, three student success coaches were hired to provide individualized, intrusive, high-touch, holistic support to African American, Hispanic, Pell-eligible, and students with disabilities. Data suggested students from these groups enrolled in at least one online class, and those enrolled in at least one developmental course would benefit most from the support of a success coach, so these populations were focused on in the first pilot year of the program. The embedded success coach attended class sessions, integrated coaching support and resources into the curriculum in collaboration with the faculty, conducted classroom presentations on relevant and timely resources, and provided direct individualized and group support for all students in the class. Eighty-eight percent of students who met with a coach during the Fall 2021 semester were retained into the Spring 2022 semester, compared to 69 percent who could have met with a coach but did not. Students who met with a coach were more likely to progress in their developmental education math or English sequence or progress out of developmental education and into college-level math, compared to students who could have met with a coach but did not. Students who met with a coach had a mean fall term GPA of 2.04, compared to students who could have met with a coach but did not, who had a fall term mean GPA of 1.67. The average successful completion rate for an LTC 099 College Literacy class is between 52-55 percent. The spring 2021 LTC 099 with the embedded Success Coach saw a student pass rate of 71 percent. ECC has committed to continuation of funding for the Student Success Coach program.

Leaving behind family and friends to come to another country or another part of the country is a life-changing experience. The Student Family Mentoring Program at **Frontier Community College** assists international and other students far from home in overcoming these challenges. This program, implemented in August 2020, provides social support for newly arrived students, and reduces their isolation. It also provides an avenue for students to socialize with individuals outside their cultural group and to learn from and spend time with local families and individuals that are familiar with the area. Host families range from single individuals to families with children. They are active members of the community and have a desire to learn more about another culture. Host families commit to hosting a student for the duration of their stay at Frontier. This is usually for a nine-month period. Ideally, families and students should meet at least twice a month but keep in contact with each other on a more regular basis via text, phone and/or email. During the academic year 2021-2022, twenty-one students participated in the Student Family Mentoring Program. Eight

*The Student Family Mentoring Program at **Frontier Community College** provides social support to international and other students far from home.*

students graduated and seven were retained for their second year. Six students transferred to another institution.

It has been a priority for **Lincoln Trail College (LTC)** to address food insecurity for students so that they can thrive while attending college. The College has made improvements to the LTCares Closet, the on-campus food pantry. Focusing on providing a quality food pantry has helped to reach first-generation college students who typically struggle with several barriers: lack of college readiness and need for developmental coursework, lack of support from family, difficulty adjusting to the collegiate environment, and financial instability ([League for Innovation in the Community College](#)). In addition, it has served ethnic minority populations, students in rural areas, and non-traditional learners who could also be supporting a family while attending college. The food pantry at LTC began as a joint venture for the College's Student Senate and Phi Theta Kappa organizations as the students in those programs saw a need in their fellow classmates in 2020. During the Summer 2021 term, the United Way of Crawford County sent volunteers to help remodel the food pantry space and assist in reorganizing the pantry to provide maximum efficiency. Once completed, the pantry was stocked with non-perishable food items such as canned goods, noodles, and cereals; perishable food items including bread, milk, meat, and eggs; hygiene products such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, deodorant; school supplies such as notebooks, folders, writing utensils; and home items such as laundry detergent and toilet paper. This provided expanded offerings to LTC students to ensure all types of needs were being met. In addition, the pantry attempts to stock all items needed for a full meal. At least ten students visit the food pantry each week. The food pantry is regularly restocked with perishable and non-perishable items every two to four weeks throughout the semester.

The Peer Coach Program at **Olney Central College** aims to support and increase student success through regular check-ins and event promotion, ultimately helping students feel more connected to the campus community. The program utilizes a two-way texting platform to allow peer coaches to check in with students throughout the semester. Students can ask questions and get help without going to a faculty member or advisor. The peer coaches also encourage students to participate in campus events such as the club rush, where students can interact with other students and faculty advisors to learn about clubs and organizations on campus. The Peer Coach Program has four types of messages that are sent to students. First, introductory messages introduce the peer coach and offer help if needed. Second, positive messages, such as Active Minds' Buddy Check challenge, promote student well-being and positivity. Third, informational messages, such as those promoting suicide prevention awareness and resources. Finally, promotional messages, such as the Club Rush event, invite students to participate in campus activities. The Peer Coach Program has shown success in helping students feel more connected to the campus community and in increasing student retention rates. During the academic year 2021-2022, 83 percent of students who received regular check-ins from peer coaches were retained, while only 68 percent of students who did not receive check-ins were retained. Additionally, 78 percent of students who participated in the Club Rush event reported feeling more connected to the campus community. The program has also received positive feedback from students, who appreciate the convenience and support the peer coaches provide.

Comprehensive, wrap-around services for students with learning differences are provided on an ongoing basis at **Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC)**. Services begin when a student first

has contact with the Center for Accessibility and Neurodiversity (CAN), and continue throughout the student's tenure, and sometimes beyond. They provide robust, individualized, and systematic support to assist students with learning differences in their successful transition to college, their coursework, and, ultimately, their degree completion. This support may include, for example, one-on-one orientation/ or small group orientation, individualized accommodations, regular check-in appointments, course progress monitoring, study skill/ time management intervention, among many others. Interestingly, students who qualify for these services may request them while they are still juniors or seniors in high school (e.g., dual credit students may invite the CAN coordinator to attend IEP meetings with their high school counselors) and they may still use them as they get ready to leave IVCC (e.g., students who may need help on how to transition and/ or transfer to another institution of higher learning). Since the summer of 2020, on average, 80 percent of the students with learning differences who use CAN services were successful (with a C or better) in their courses. Active CAN students also have a better chance to persist with and complete their courses and/ or programs of study, with an average of 72 percent doing so. These percentages clearly demonstrate that the wrap-around services provided by CAN are needed by IVCC underrepresented student populations and that they are helping these students to be successful in their coursework.

*The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) helps advance equity by assisting **Joliet Junior College** in recruiting and retaining students of color through intentional outreach efforts, intrusive advising efforts, and cultural programming that provide underrepresented students a sense of inclusivity.*

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) contributes to the mission of **Joliet Junior College (JJC)** by providing outreach, academic guidance, personal support, cultural resources, and leadership opportunities to enhance the educational experience and facilitate the academic and personal growth of underrepresented students. The program helps advance equity by assisting the College in recruiting and retaining students of color through intentional outreach efforts, intrusive advising efforts, and cultural programming that provide underrepresented students a

sense of inclusivity. One area of emphasis in the academic year 2021-2022 includes outreach to undocumented students through Multicultural and Undocumented Resources (MUR), DREAMers Advancing in Leadership and Education Initiatives (DALE), Lockport High School ESL classes, and Joliet West Dreamers Club. MUR staff assisted undocumented students in applying to JJC through the alternative electronic application until the Workday Application was launched. Other outreach activities included Early Childhood Cohort Bilingual Presentation, Tanguis Community Festival in Joliet, An Introduction to JJC in Joliet Central High School, and Lockport High School Si Se Puede! DACA and Dreamers Pathway to College Presentation in Spanish. In Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, MUR and Financial Aid staff participated at Discover JJC by assisting Admissions Office with Spanish Language presentations for Financial Aid and general college information. MUR provided an overview of programs of study and steps for getting started at JJC. The presentation was tailored towards prospective and undocumented students and their families. In Fall 2021, MUR reached out to five students and their families. In Spring 2022, seven students attended the Spanish Presentation. Moreover, in Spring 2022, CMAS/MUR staff also manned a table during Discover and interacted with twelve students and their families.

The **Kishwaukee College** Foundation established the “Champions Fund” program in 2012 to assist students who are struggling to enroll or stay enrolled in college because of a financial emergency. In 2019, a committee was formed to revise the Champion’s Fund program to focus holistically on the support services needed for students to be successful. At that time, the Foundation was also able to secure a larger amount of funding to support this revised initiative and the increased need for Kishwaukee’s students. The program is open for all students currently enrolled and actively pursuing a credit program, or GED/adult education classes. Opportunities for assistance include food/meals support, books/supplies, housing/rent, childcare, medical/vision, transportation, utilities, and tuition. Students requesting funds meet with an academic advisor, counselor, or other type of case manager to identify additional support services that may be available to support the student and keep them enrolled and on a path to completion. The fiscal year 2022 data shows increased completion, persistence, and graduation rates by race, specifically for the African American and White students. Of the 58 students who received funding, 55 (95 percent) completed their courses, 16 (28 percent) graduated, and 25 (60 percent) persisted to the following semester. Course retention for African American recipients was 84.9 percent versus 76.8 percent for all other African American students and 97 percent for White students versus 90.5 percent for all other White students. Full-time fall-to-fall persistence for African American recipients was 66.7 percent versus 41.9 percent for all other and 30.4 percent of African American recipients graduated versus 22.6 percent of all other African American students (program declared only). The graduation rate of White recipients was 46.7 percent versus 31.1 percent of all other White students.

**Lewis and Clark Community College** expanded its portfolio of student support services in 2020 to include services beyond traditional academic services such as tutoring and advisement. Examples of these additional services include several snack pantries, a hygiene closet, crisis counseling, and emergency loan services. These support services are provided free of charge and are tracked to provide usage data. In the academic year of 2022, snack pantries were utilized by students who were African American (N = 35), Asian (N = 1), Hispanic (N = 9), or Women (N = 17). Emergency loan was awarded to students that were African American (N = 4), Hispanic (N = 1), or Women (N = 4).

Students facing food insecurity often find themselves making the difficult decision to choose between paying their tuition, transportation, and healthy food. In response, **Morton College** created a food pantry. The Panther Pantry was introduced in the spring of 2019 and continues to expand each year. At opening, the pantry was housed in the Student Activities Office which offered limited resources and canned goods. The department evaluated this initiative and considered student feedback to help launch a permanent location for the pantry in 2020. The new location replaced an unused office and provided enough space to include storage racks of food, a refrigerator, and additional space for toiletries and office supplies. With the support of the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD), offerings include a wider variety of food options, holiday meal boxes, toiletries, access to programs and other food pantries. The Giving Thanks Dinner encourages students and staff to join together for a Thanksgiving holiday dinner. This event was inspired by student stories of not having a family to celebrate with, being unable to travel home, or not having enough funds. The

*Morton College launched Morty Meal Card program for students demonstrating need who receive up to \$30 a week that can be used in the College’s cafeteria.*

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College was awarded a grant to distribute \$10 meal vouchers. Each participating student was eligible to request up to two meal vouchers per week which covered an entrée, a side, and a drink. With the grant's support the pantry welcomed a meal planning coordinator. Subsequently, the Morty Meal Card program was launched for students demonstrating need. Participating students receive up to \$30 a week on a card that can be used in the cafeteria in the same way other students use credit cards to pay. The pantry continues to expand its services based on student and community feedback. Results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in Spring 2022 showed retention was influenced by the Panther Pantry. For students caring for dependents who are food insecure, the intention to continue enrolling at Morton College increased from 63 percent to 71 percent when they were served by the Pantry. The population seeing the greatest retention improvement, those caring for dependents, were more likely to be first-generation, non-traditional, women, and non-White. From 2019 to 2023, the pantry served over 2,000 students. Most users are 18-24 years of age (45 percent), 36-49 (14 percent), or over 65 (9 percent). The ethnic breakdown includes 81 percent Hispanic, seven percent White, and five percent African American students. The pantry serves 51 percent female and 48 percent male students. Pantry users disclosed they used this service to also feed their family which often includes a child (24 percent), spouse (14 percent), or parent (13 percent).

*Prairie State College implemented a mandatory online new student orientation, in which students meet other students and faculty, discover how to use vital technology, become familiar with some academic vocabulary, learn about departments they may need during their first few days as a student, and prepare to register for their first semester.*

Best practices show that students who complete orientation are more successful and more persistent in completing their degrees ([Deggs, 2011](#)). The mandatory online New Student Orientation (NSO) offered by **Prairie State College** (PSC) has five objectives. In completing the NSO, students will meet other students and faculty, discover how to use vital technology, become familiar with some academic

vocabulary, learn about departments they may need during their first few days as a student, and prepare to register for their first semester. PSC sought to identify an online software package that would complement the vision of the Orientation Committee and ensure the NSO learning objects were satisfied. Innovative Education's Go2Orientation platform was selected as a partner. Go2Orientation provides a robust and interactive online experience as it includes a variety of engaging activities such as flip cards and slide shows, to keep students' interest. It has been branded with the Prairie State Logo and personalized for the student user. Most importantly, it is user-friendly and provides advanced data capture functionality allowing the First Year Experience Department to track and report student usage. To ensure compliance, PSC Information Technology Resource department created a hold to prevent registration until the student completed orientation. Daily reports are received identifying students having completed orientation. Existing student correspondence was also modified to enhance awareness of the online orientation and importance respective to both the enrollment process and student success. Since its launch in May 2022, a total of 636 students completed NSO, compared to an average of 204 completers between 2015 and 2019. This represents a 212 increase in the number of first-time students completing orientation. Additionally, 69 percent of students who completed NSO accessed their Desire2Learn portal during their first semester. Finally, of the 636 students who completed orientation, 54 percent of the students enrolled for the Fall 2022 semester.

To assist student athletes with course completion, retention, and the goal of completing a degree, **Spoon River College** (SRC) has instituted several initiatives including mandatory participation in study tables for every student athlete. SRC also implemented an early warning process that identifies at-risk and referred student athletes. SRC implemented study tables for student athletes in the fall semester of 2016. A new position of coordinator was added in 2019 and focuses on assisting student athletes with goal attainment. All student athletes are required to start a fall semester with two hours of study table. Every four weeks during a semester, faculty members submit grade updates for each student athlete. Student athletes that have all A or B grades on the first four-week grade check are not required to complete study table hours. Students with any C grades are required to complete four hours of weekly study table hours. Students who have any D or F grades are required to have six hours of weekly study table hours. To further support academic achievement, grade point average tracking began for student athletes in 2018. Since that time, grade point averages have increased or remained above the minimum requirement. The Athletic Department continually reviews processes and procedures and updates them when necessary.

Since students often express that they are experiencing food insecurity, **Rend Lake College** (RLC) established monthly Free Food event for students in August 2021. The College found that charging for food during various student engagement events inhibited some from participating. The goal was to offer food at no charge, so that all students could participate, regardless of their financial ability to pay. The College also has informational offerings/tables set up during these events that provide information about campus/community resources. This allows students to explore additional service offerings in a non-threatening environment. With the assistance of the Bridge Grant, RLC now offers at least two days each month of the Fall and Spring semester where the student body is provided with free breakfast or lunch. The College also provides free snacks/fruits/drinks for other events such as finals week to help reduce test anxiety. Attendance in the free food events had increased exponentially since August 2021.

### **Student Support Service for Ethnic Minority Students**

The Building Lasting African Culture and Knowledge (BLACK) Student Success Program (BSSP) for improving the enrollment, retention, and completion of African American student populations at **Oakton College** was implemented in January 2020. The program initiative supports the College's effort to provide systemic outreach to all enrolled African American students to help

*The Building Lasting African Culture and Knowledge (BLACK) student success program at **Oakton College** helps all enrolled African American students connect, build community, and assure access to college resources.*

connect, build community, and assure access to college resources. The Equity Coordinator for BLACK Student Success is a professional within the Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity. BSSP meetings are held weekly, in a hybrid fashion allowing for members to sign on from either campus or from a remote location via Zoom. If students are unable to attend, meetings are recorded and a link to the meetings is sent to members upon request. The Equity Coordinator for BSSP implements a weekly framework for student outreach to both members and the larger community. Utilizing student email and social media as primary forms of communication, the Equity Coordinator for BSSP sends weekly email communication to members. The Equity Coordinator for BLACK Student Success actively works to connect BSSP members to key resources across the

college. Specifically, from July 2021 to June 2022, the Equity Coordinator has helped a total of 10 students complete their Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) and Alternative Applications. Additionally, a total of 12 students were connected to the College's Wellness Center and linked with a student Care Coordinator. Students also utilized Oakton's Caring Closet, which is a campus-wide food insecurity initiative that offers access to non-perishable food items and self-care items to Oakton students at no cost. According to data obtained from the College's Institutional Research office, students in the BSSP (n = 71) achieved an aggregate term grade point average of 2.65, while the larger comparison group of students identifying as African American (n = 395) achieved a term grade point average of 2.48. Further, 63 percent of students in the BSSP re-enrolled in classes the following semester, while those in the larger comparison group re-enrolled in classes at a rate of 60 percent.

**Heartland Community College** increased the number of Supported Student Organizations (SSOs) by including multicultural student organizations in August 2021 with the purpose to ensure that underserved student populations are able to participate in diverse student organizations, even in times when a student leadership void exists. Multicultural SSOs reduce opportunity gaps among student populations and improve student satisfaction. Furthermore, strong and vibrant multicultural student organizations are critical to moving forward our equity, diversity, and inclusion goals. When student activities returned to campus after the COVID-19 pandemic, most student organizations needed previous leadership to offer historical background and guidance. The Black Student Union (BSU) was able to sustain engagement with the change in designation as an SSO. The advisors were able to offer events and programs that led to BSU establishing one of the first full leadership teams across student organizations in Fall 2021.

In celebration of the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution Designation, the Center for Organizing Minority Programs to Advance Student Success (COMPASS) at **Oakton College** organized three programs in support of the College's on-going Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AAPIHM). This year, in consultation with Student Life and Campus Inclusion, and the Center for Campus Inclusion and Diversity, the program was moved to April instead of May. The goal of the Heritage Month program was to promote the visibility of the Asian American community and celebrate the accomplishments of the Asian American students. On April 5, Dr. Jacqueline Mac, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Higher Education at NIU, talked about disrupting the exclusion of Asian Americans in Higher Education. The program was done virtually in partnership with Northeastern Illinois University and about 50 people were in attendance. On April 27, COMPASS launched its inaugural AAPI Cultural Graduation, recognizing 10 Asian American graduates. On May 5, the AAPI Heritage Month ended with the College's first Asian Night Market at the Skokie Campus, with 250 people in attendance.

The purpose of **Waubensee Community College's** Latinx Resource Center (LRC) is to increase understanding throughout the College of the culture, history, and contributions of Hispanics. The LRC serves students through a variety of cultural programming and support services for Hispanic students as well as providing resources and support to the surrounding communities through co-sponsoring cultural events. The LRC also provides support and resources to address common barriers to success and completion including paying for college, balancing family and school, and immigration challenges. The LRC officially opened its doors in March 2022 and had its first full



semester of activities in fall 2022. The LRC team has developed several exciting student retention and engagement programs such as CAMINOS (Creating Alliance through Mentoring and Inclusive Navigation of Opportunities for Students) Peer Mentoring Program, Colegio de Empoderamiento (Parents and Family Program), and Latinx Summer Institute (LSI). CAMINOS currently has 10 active students (five mentors and five mentees). CAMINOS students are offered one-on-one meetings, retreats, movie nights, study hours, and field trips to support their engagement with the college and their peers. The purpose of the Colegio de Empoderamiento is to provide opportunities for families and prospective students to learn about the student experience in higher education. The Latinx Summer Institute is a free, weeklong program in early August to help students start their academic year successfully. During the Fall 2022 semester, the LRC team met with 60 students in one-on-one meetings.

### **Student Support Services for Students with Disabilities**

**Highland Community College's** Student Services Department collaborated to develop an event to help recruit and retain traditional-aged students who identify as having a disability. The interactive tour, named S.O.A.R. (Support Organization Advocacy Responsibility), fosters a sense of belonging and provides prospective students from area high schools with information about wrap-around services and disability accommodations at the college level. These services include Career Services, Student Advising, Disability Services, Community Support Resources (N.I.C.I.L., RAMP, DORS, Goodwill, and U.M.O.S.), and Project Succeed. Along the tour, students meet the director of enrollment and records, transitional math instructors, retention and learning services director, and librarians. Parents, counselors, and high school special education instructors are also encouraged to attend with the prospective students so they can learn about resources and continue to support their students. Each event is limited to 50 participants to maintain a relaxed setting and encourage participation. S.O.A.R. was piloted in May 2022. Based on its popularity, the event was expanded to two separate visits for the academic year 2022-2023. One was held in the fall and the second is scheduled for the spring. A special registration event is also scheduled for May 2023 for S.O.A.R. participants. At the end of the fall S.O.A.R. event, participants were surveyed, with the responses providing evidence of participant satisfaction.

**John Wood Community College (JWCC)** supports Career and Technical Education (CTE) students pursuing an Associate in Applied Science Degree or a Certificate who have one of the following special forms of need: economic need, a documented disability, a single parent (or pregnant), be in or aged out of foster care, homeless, youth of a parent on active duty in the armed forces, English language learners, students pursuing a degree non-traditional for their gender, or out-of-workforce individuals. The Perkins program provides support in the form of textbook loans, mileage assistance, bus passes, nursing scrubs and shoes, welding kits, and tutoring. The support helps to limit the barriers that students face, which helps the students focus on completing their education and entering the workforce right after earning their credentials. In the 2021-2022 academic year, Perkins supported 59 students. Six of them had a documented disability, 13 were single parents, one was in foster care, and 10 were non-traditional students. Those 59 students were supported with book loans and welding kits totaling \$5,728.86 in funds spent, \$5,150.63 was spent on mileage and bus passes, and one student needed an interpreter so \$7,345.28 was spent on interpreter mileage.

**Southeastern Illinois College (SIC)** offers physical and academic accommodation for in-need students on an individual case basis. The objective is to achieve equity by making sure students receive proper accommodations that comply with ADA guidelines for the academic year. Elements for success include contacting and establishing one-on-one connection with students needing physical or academic accommodations for classes and making sure they are implemented efficiently with transparency and clarity to instructors while also maintaining confidentiality to allow students inclusivity with anonymity free of stigmatization. This can be measured in the documentation submitted from students kept on file that tracked which students needed and were provided with accommodations. There were 15 students with ADA accommodation requested between July 2021 and May 2022 noted on file. Anecdotally, students from underrepresented groups seemed to indicate more confidence in their classes and an improvement in percentages due to the interventions implemented through meeting with advisors and getting accommodations after providing appropriate paperwork for documentation. Additionally, students gain confidence by understanding the academic process of not only their specific major but gain a better idea of how higher education works in general. This is specifically important for the underrepresented student, who, in the vast majority, also serves as a first-generation college student. Educators who worked with the reporting efforts responded favorably to the system and the positive changes that occurred from it as well, noting that students were walking into their courses better prepared due to a richer understanding of what the class is about and why they needed to have taken the class.

The mission of Disability Support Services (DSS) at **Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC)** is to ensure that all students with a documented disability are provided equal access to academic and extracurricular programs. DSS and the SVCC community as a whole embrace and promote a diverse culture amidst students, staff, faculty, and administration. DSS engages in the interactive

*Disability Support Services at **Sauk Valley Community College** engages in the interactive process with each registered student to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations that effectively meet the student's needs and serves as a liaison between students, faculty, and staff.*

process with each student registered with DSS to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations that effectively meet the student's needs and serves as a liaison between students, faculty, and staff. DSS participates in and provides information for New Student Orientation sessions, including in-person and online sessions. Transition folders are offered in both print and electronic copy to provide resources for prospective students, including high school students who have expressed interest in attending SVCC. DSS has a technology lending program, including digital voice recorders, LiveScribe pens, laptop computers, and applicable software such as Read&Write by TextHelp. Course materials are offered in braille as necessary and ASL Interpreters are contracted to support students. Tutors are available through DSS and work in the Learning Commons Tutoring Center. Tutors are familiar with supporting students who may learn differently and support all students seeking out tutoring. DSS provides annual training to faculty to provide DSS updates. Frequent collaboration with the SVCC Instructional Designer and Information Technology Services (ITS) ensures online course offerings are accessible. During the Summer 2021 term, 34 students registered with DSS. During the Fall 2021 term 78 students registered with DSS and during the Spring 2022 term 66 students registered with DSS. The total number of (duplicated) students who registered with DSS during the academic year 2021-2022 was 178. Students registered with DSS attempted 508 credit hours and completed 339 credit hours

(66.7 percent). The total number of degrees and certificates awarded to students registered with DSS at SVCC was 22. Furthermore, 80 developmental credit hours were attempted by students registered with DSS and 56 developmental credit hours were completed (70.0 percent).

**Southeastern Illinois College (SIC)** utilizes the Starfish software, which assists in facilitating student retention. The program allows faculty to raise “flags” or markers attributing to issues concerning attendance, low course averages, missing or late assignments, low exam or quiz grades, and the need to withdraw a student for prolonged absence in a course. The flags are then transferred to an academic advisor or success coach on campus, that will then personally contact the student via phone, voicemail, or email to encourage the student to reach out to their instructor, make scheduled tutoring appointments, seek ADA accommodations, or offer resources to the student to be more academically successful in that course. For the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2022, there were a total of 25 Starfish flags raised for ADA students; 18 completed their courses with a “C” or higher, five students dropped or withdrew from their classes, receiving a “W” or “WA,” and two students finished the course but earned below a “C.” The program showed effectiveness of 72 percent retention among ADA students for courses flagged at-risk of dropping or withdrawing. The use of this early alert software demonstrates connection from the advisement and success coaching staff alongside students and will continue to be utilized in future semesters for students with disabilities to help retention and aid in supplying important resources and information.

### **Supplemental Instruction**

To help students through early retention challenges, such as mastering core concepts, **Highland Community College** implemented Supplemental Instruction (SI) and embedded mentoring services in transfer and occupational programs, including biology, chemistry, English, history, First Year Experience Seminar, math, CNC machining, and nursing, utilizing COVID-19 learning renewal funding. The College began offering the first SI courses in fiscal year 2021. SI is part of an integrated academic support program designed to help students learn how to be successful in courses where they have historically faced barriers. Supplemental leaders work closely with the faculty to select material previously difficult for students and use that to plan the supplemental sessions. The leaders also involve the students in an active learning environment by engaging them with each other and the course content. The SI leaders use facilitation strategies, collaborative learning techniques, and various learning strategies. An embedded tutor is a successful student who can lead classroom discussions and mini breakout sessions or provide in-class tutoring sessions. Tutors also offer regularly scheduled out-of-class tutoring sessions. By embedding tutors directly in the classroom, they foster a connection with the academic support services the Success Center provides. Embedded services were paired with other support services, including completing the Mid-year Student Assessment (MYSA) and reviewing the results with an advisor. About 78 percent of the students completing the College Student Inventory (CSI) and MYSA met with an advisor (199 students out of 257 completing an assessment). Of the students completing the MYSA in the fall of 2022, 13 percent were African American, Hispanic, or multiethnic. Eighty-four percent of the MYSA respondents were first-generation college students. Student perception of their academic motivation and general coping improved from the beginning of the semester in all

*Highland Community College implemented Supplemental Instruction and embedded mentoring services in transfer and occupational programs to help students through early retention challenges.*

aspects of their experience except for their commitment to the college and social engagement. After having planned to implement a pilot with four courses utilizing embedded supplemental instructors, Highland has expanded to 22 courses and more than 500 hours of embedded services during the Fall 2023 semester.

### University Partnership Initiatives

Many community college students interested in pursuing an education major and teaching career struggle to make sense of the complex academic requirements associated with the degree and report being unable to leave personal and familial responsibilities to transfer to a university to complete their training. These challenges can disproportionately affect students from diverse and first-generation backgrounds, further exacerbating difficulties in increasing diversity within the teaching profession. In working to address these and other common issues,

*The Partnership to Lead and Empower District Grown Educators (PLEDGE) Program is the result of a partnership between **Elgin Community College** and Northern Illinois University's College of Education to increase access for underrepresented students who would like to become teachers.*

**Elgin Community College** (ECC) began deliberate conversations with Northern Illinois University's (NIU) College of Education with the goal of forging a partnership to increase access for underrepresented students who would like to become teachers. The result was an intentional, equity-based student support and completion program called the Partnership to Lead and Empower District Grown Educators (PLEDGE) Program. Students able to enroll full time are admitted as a PLEDGE cohort, taking most of their coursework together and building community along the way. They have full access to ECC and NIU student support for duration of the program (library access, technology, and childcare). Clear 2+2 transfer pathways and educational plans were developed in deep collaboration between ECC Transfer Services and NIU Transfer Services/Department of Education. Bachelor's degree completion is through NIU on ECC's campus. The program admitted its first cohort of 15 students in the summer of 2019, and welcomed the most recent group of students, Cohort 4, in the summer of 2022. Cohort 2 began in the summer of 2020 and consisted of 20 students, 15 of whom (75 percent) were from underrepresented backgrounds, largely Hispanic. Cohort 2 (like Cohort 1) enjoyed a 100 percent graduation rate in May 2022, with students earning a BS in Elementary Education degree with ESL or Bilingual Endorsement. Most graduates are working in-district. Cohort 3 began in the summer of 2021 and consisted of 18 students, 13 of whom (72 percent) were from underrepresented backgrounds. Currently all these students (100 percent) are on track to graduate on time in May 2023. The PLEDGE partnership between ECC and NIU is an excellent example of a community college recognizing an opportunity gap inflicting real-world costs upon students and the district, and partnering with stakeholders to provide relevant and meaningful solutions that produce tangible benefits for all.

### Workforce Preparation Initiatives

In Fall 2021, the Dean of Liberal Arts and the Vice President of Academic Services at **Richland Community College** met with leaders at the Empowerment Opportunity Center (EOC) in Decatur, to discuss possible partnership opportunities for Early Childhood Education (ECE) training. The EOC houses both the BabyTalk Early Head Start and Anna Waters Head Start Programs, which serve young children who are from historically marginalized and/or underserved populations. The various stakeholders identified continuing education for their staff as a need that Richland could

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help meet. Individuals with college credit hours, particularly in ECE, help the organizations fill much needed teaching assistant and lead teacher positions. Beginning in the spring of 2022, staff members from both childcare providers were able to participate in accelerated, hybrid classes offered conveniently at the EOC campus after their regular workday. Other childcare providers were also given information and invited to take advantage of this opportunity. To prepare for this teaching model, the dean of liberal arts worked with the head start director to remove barriers that might prevent students from enrolling. Richland provided multiple opportunities for students to meet with financial aid staff and student success coaches on the EOC campus. The dean of liberal arts also worked with Workforce Investment Solutions to ensure that students were connected with resources to help offset costs of tuition, books, and fees. Fourteen students participated in the EOC course offerings during the Spring 2022 semester. Representative of the early childhood profession, many of the incumbent workers participating in the inaugural class are from underrepresented groups. Eight students identified as African American, and one student identified as Asian. Thirteen students successfully completed the course. Six students continued taking courses and are close to completing a certificate that can lead to two Gateways to Opportunity credentials.

To help develop, implement, and expand its apprenticeship opportunities, **Lake Land College** has hired a full-time apprenticeship coordinator to work with nontraditional students and local businesses to place students in apprenticeship programs in high demand career fields. Students will be paid by local businesses while completing their apprenticeship duties and, at the same time, will take courses at the

*Lake Land College has hired a full-time apprenticeship coordinator to work with nontraditional students and local businesses to place students in apprenticeship programs in high demand career fields.*

college to receive a certificate or degree. They will also hone their skills for the workplace. Once students complete their apprenticeship and their college coursework, they will have full-time employment in a high demand career field that will help them to support their families and contribute to the economic prosperity of the Lake Land College district. This project provides a seamless transition for students between postsecondary education and employment. Project goals include at or above proficiency scores in apprenticeship work goals, as well as maintaining a cumulative “C” average in all college coursework. Objectives for these goals include the creation of a professional development plan for each student as well as the monitoring of student grades each semester. Currently, Lake Land College has 14 students enrolled in the apprenticeship program. Of these 14 students, six are industrial maintenance repairers, three are industrial maintenance mechanics, one is an automotive technician, two are early childhood educators, one is a fleet driver, and one is a construction driver. Three of these students are women and two are minorities. Only one student had planned to enroll in college prior to their apprenticeship. A total of seven different employers in Lake Land College’s district are sponsoring these apprentices. One of the apprenticeships is non-registered and the remaining 13 are all registered apprenticeships.

The Weekend Warriors Program in Manufacturing Engineering Technology began as a pilot in the Summer 2019 semester at **Richard J. Daley College**. The Weekend Warriors program is a partnership between Daley and the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), which provides the opportunity to address violence in the southwest side of Chicago. It is designed to engage individuals who have had encounters with the criminal justice system. The program is structured

to deliver an intensive advanced manufacturing curriculum and career focused activities, and proactively addresses incidents of high violence which usually take place on weekends. At the end of the program students earn a basic certificate in advanced manufacturing. Daley provides education content and credit-bearing courses while IMAN supports students with robust holistic and wrap-around services. Education elements led by Daley College include welding, blueprint reading, materials, and robotics. In addition, the College supports foundation skill development in math, writing, and computer literacy. Critical elements of the success of this program led by IMAN staff include participant recruitment, case management, coordination, counseling, transportation, meals and supplies as well as artistic and musical therapy programming. The programming blends activities to increase success such as music, art, dance, and annual weekend overnight excursions. The racial/ethnic makeup of students in the Weekend Warriors program is 81 percent African American, 12 percent Hispanic/Latino, five percent multi-racial, and two percent Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The highest percentage of students, 78 percent, are in the age range of 18-32 and the participant gender is 93 percent male and seven percent female. Based on a formative assessment, the program has undergone some changes to best address the needs of participants. The second iteration of this program ran two student cohorts in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 and a total of 26 students participated. The third iteration ran three student cohorts in the academic year 2021-2022 and a total of 50 students participated, with many students continuing past the Basic Certificate to continue to progress towards the Advanced Certificate in Welding Engineering Technology.

Raising Aspirations through an Inclusive Student Experience (RAISE) is a unique certificate program that operates on the **Rock Valley College (RVC)** main Campus. The program is a collaborative initiative between RVC and local school districts to provide an inclusive and supportive postsecondary education program for young adults who have intellectual disabilities and who desire to participate in a comprehensive college experience. RAISE increases access to postsecondary educational opportunities for a population of students who have difficulty accessing, and succeeding in, traditional programs. Students develop academic, vocational, and life skills while being socially integrated into the College community. RAISE began as a small pilot program in the spring of 2010; however, a significant change in the program occurred in June of 2021, when the program was approved by the US Department of Education as a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Program. This designation is significant as there are only a few such programs in the State of Illinois. Further, becoming a CTP-designated program means that students are now eligible to apply for Federal Financial Aid, which further increases the number of students who can access the program. Participating school districts not only serve as a solid referral base, but also cover the cost of tuition, provide transportation, and contribute aide support for participating students. This collaboration has enabled the program to grow and provides financial support for the program, as RAISE is a self-sustaining program. This collaboration provides an avenue for students with intellectual disabilities to transition from high school into a postsecondary program where they not only get to experience college, but also learn skills to help them prepare for competitive employment opportunities. RAISE is a well-established program which is evident by its longevity (the program has now been operating for over a decade) and enrollment growth (from 11 students in 2010 to over 40 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). Post-COVID-19, enrollment is beginning to climb again and approximately 30 students were enrolled in 2021.

**Black Hawk College (BHC)** data showed that most African American and Hispanic students enrolled in CTE majors enrolled in programs which resulted in employment in low-wage occupations. Furthermore, females have been underrepresented in this nontraditional occupation. To increase the number of female and minority students entering high-wage, in-demand occupations, BHC developed an Automotive Technology Career Pathway, which offered multiple entry and exit points made up of stackable certificates and industry-recognized credentials culminating in the Automotive Repair Technology AAS degree with possible certification as an Experienced ASE Technician. Automotive Technology Advisory committee contributed to the development of curriculum from December 2020 to March 2021, which was then submitted for approval to BHC Curriculum committee and ICCB. Between June and September 2021, career exploration activities were created, and professional development provided for high school counselors. The Fast-Track model was developed as a means for individuals currently employed in the automotive industry to earn ASE certifications in a short period of time while continuing to work. This model also includes an entry point for dual credit high school students. Additionally, adult education faculty collaborated to contextualize curriculum and develop a bridge between the two programs. Students in a variety of levels of adult education courses will have the opportunity to accelerate their progress to a career in Automotive Technology. The bridge includes a final project based on computer and communication skills that employers said were needed. The consultant worked with the Automotive Technology Program Advisory committee to ensure that the curriculum was relevant to their needs and included appropriate industry credentials. The Automotive Technology Program Advisory committee is made up of local auto dealerships as well as Quad City Area Career Center (ACC) automotive faculty ensuring simultaneous curriculum alignment between high school and college programs providing opportunities for high school students to earn dual credit. The long-term program enrollment goals for this effort include increasing enrollment for female students and African American and Hispanic/Latino students in Automotive Technology by 20 percent by the academic year 2023-2024.

**Kaskaskia College (KC)** is in the third year of receiving the Workforce Equity Initiative grant through ICCB funding. The purpose of the grant is to create, support, or expand short-term (less than a year) workforce training opportunities in high-need communities focused on specific sectors with identified workforce gaps. Targeted population must include African American participants representing a minimum

*The purpose of the Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) grant is to accelerate the time for underrepresented individuals living in poverty to enter and succeed in postsecondary education/training programs that lead to employment in high-skilled, high-wage, and in-demand occupations.*

of 60 of the population served by the grant. The first year of the grant began in November 2020 with staff being hired in the first part of 2021. To meet the objectives of the grant, three staff were hired to carry out the goals that include a project lead, a coach/advisor, and a recruiter. The role of the coach is to oversee the student caseload and to provide wrap-around student services as well as act as the advisor for choosing programs and enrolling in courses. The recruiter is responsible for recruiting students into the programs and working closely with the coach/advisor. For the period of this report, 50 students were enrolled in certificate programs with 40 (or 80 percent) being African American averaging \$20.83 in hourly salary. The goal of the grant is to assist students with employment and in achieving a salary that is 30 percent above the living wage. The living wage during this time for KC area was \$17.58. Wrap-around support services include

intensive advising and check-ins, essential employability and soft skills training, and life skills development to prepare students to meet the academic and employment needs of regional business and employers. Free tutoring and access to Talkspace, an online therapy service, are also available. There were 32 students out of a total of 50 participants completing a certificate. Three additional students continued their education.

As one of 18 participating community colleges awarded the Illinois Community College Board Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) grant, the goal at **Kennedy-King College** is to provide skill training and education to underrepresented individuals that lead to high-wage employment. From July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, Kennedy-King expended 93 percent of \$1.2M funds associated with educating and training over 125 scholars, of which 65 percent were African American, in the following Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs: Construction Carpentry, Plumbing and Fire Protection, Combination Welding, Overhead Electrical Line Worker, Construction Masonry, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Automotive Technology and Cyber Security. Scholars receive full tuition scholarships, textbook books, transportation assistance, tools, equipment, and training apparel relative to their program of study. As a result, 83 percent of Kennedy-King's WEI Scholars successfully completed their program, earning either a Basic/Advanced certificate or an Associated in Applied Science degree. They were exposed to union apprenticeship training programs and comprehensive career development services. Dedicated WEI staff increased scholar exposure to construction industry professionals and career pathways which garnered 68 percent of the College's completers to be employed in leading industry sectors earning an average wage of \$23.89 per hour. Completers of Kennedy-King's Overhead Electrical Line Worker program contributed favorably to the wage average, as employment with ComEd and Nipsco range between \$29-\$41 per hour. Automotive Scholars engaged in paid internship placements with the City of Chicago Englewood Fleet Maintenance Facility. The top five completers at the College's satellite campus, Dawson Technical Institute, were hired as teacher assistants to Kennedy-King's Construction Trade programs and compensated at \$15 per hour for 16 weeks. By using WEI grant funds, Kennedy-King College improved the quality of instruction and training experience of scholars enrolled at both Kennedy-King College and Dawson Technical Institute. The College was able to make substantial improvements by updating and replacing outdated equipment, beautifying construction training labs, improving technology in classrooms and computer labs, and adding state of the art technology in the common area at Dawson Technical Institute which has now been repurposed for career development activities, such as career fairs and networking symposiums.

As social shifts nationally continue to illuminate challenging dynamics that impact community and police interactions, the antiquated approach to crime prevention is not sustainable. Strategies that employ a partnership between police, community members, and other stakeholders are proving to be a more effective approach. This begins with the development of future police officers who are representative of the various communities in the city. Furthermore, these future peace officers must reflect, in some way, those who most frequently have interactions with the police. In response to the need for the reimagining of public safety, **Olive-Harvey College** (OHC) has partnered with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to create the new Criminal Justice AAS option—One Year and Out. The College provides a full 60-credit-hour program to be completed within the course of one academic year. In the AAS program students are educated in the areas of Criminal Justice, African American Studies, Psychology, and Professional Responsibility. This



curriculum, while created by OHC, has been vetted and fully approved by the experts—the Chicago Police Department. In Fall 2022, OHC launched the program with its inaugural cohort. Of the 26 initial students, 85 percent successfully completed the initial term. And while 15 percent did not successfully complete all courses during the first term—all (except one) are continuing to persist. As such, they are on pace to complete the AAS in Criminal Justice by Summer 2022. Integral to the success of the program is the access of underrepresented students and support from both OHC and CPD to ensure degree attainment. In obtaining the degree, students are best equipped to enter the public service sector as a police officer. The CPD aids in this effort by providing completers with a waiver from the Chicago Police Officer Exam (CPOE), along with other accommodations for those entering the Police Academy.

*The Illinois Small Business Development Center at McHenry County College established recurring Female Business Owners Peer-to-Peer Engagement Groups.*

Funded by the CARES Act, the Illinois Small Business Development Center (ISBDC) at **McHenry County College** established recurring Female Business Owners Peer-to-Peer Engagement Groups in the academic year 2021-2022. These groups or, “roundtables” have been beneficial for the clients involved, as well as a great learning experience for the center. With the assistance of a trained facilitator, members have constructed peer-

developed ideas to enhance their business outlay, had a sounding board to strategize, and encouraged each other to execute their plans. Additionally, roundtable group members were invited to attend several in-person development events that covered topics such as entrepreneurship, logistics, and marketing. The Female Business Owners Peer-to-Peer engagement series took place monthly and split into two groups: established business owners and emerging business owners. The meetings took place over two consecutive days each month and featured a different theme. The themes offered varied, and included Overcoming Imposter Syndrome, Grant Funding Availability and Grant Writing for Female Entrepreneurs, and Cyber Security for Small Business, among others. Membership of the roundtable groups varied based on availability to attend meetings. Group guidelines required members to be established clients with the ISBDC, maintain confidentiality of discussions and the privacy of other members, as well as regular meeting attendance. The Established Women Business Owners Group had 13 unique attendees and the Emerging Women Business Owners Group had 17 unique attendees for a total of 30 participants.

The purpose of the Support for Workforce Training (SWFT) Program at **Parkland College** is to support underrepresented students in accessing training with wrap-around supportive services to facilitate successful completion and positive employment outcomes. SWFT was implemented in 2019 and was funded by the Illinois Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI). The program expanded in 2022 to include the SWFT + Healthcare which is funded by the Pipeline for the Advancement of the Healthcare Workforce Program. The SWFT is part of the WEI Consortium Lumina Employment Connection Project, which was implemented in 2022. The Support for Workforce Short-Term Training program coordinates community partners to ensure that underrepresented, primarily African American students have access to free, short-term training, including certifications in healthcare, transportation, construction/manufacturing, and business/IT. SWFT offers a weekly stipend to assist with day-to-day financial barriers such as living expenses, transportation, and childcare. Upon program completion, students work with Parkland’s Career

Services to assist in connecting with employers about job opportunities. The SWFT + Healthcare program supports students in eligible Parkland allied health/nursing programs. Scholarships are provided for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and stipends through the SWFT Healthcare Scholarship. Additionally, students receive academic support, intensive wrap-around advising, and job skills preparation. The program is available to students admitted to one of Parkland's qualified programs and who meet one of four expanded criteria, per the PATH program requirements. These include low-income students, identified underrepresented minorities or ethnicities, first-generation college students, and entry level incumbent healthcare workers. Through the Lumina Employment Connection Project, SWFT is leading a coordinated approach for employer engagement across the institution through the Employer Engagement Steering Committee. SWFT is creating a customer relationship management system to facilitate employer information sharing and promote interactions with employers. The Employer Engagement Steering Committee creates interactions with employers that highlight Parkland workforce development programs, including the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion through hiring SWFT students. In 2022, SWFT Short Term Training served 159 students and SWFT + Healthcare served 110 students. Currently, there is 74 percent completion rate for awarded students, with a 75 percent completion for African American students. Additionally, 70 percent who completed short-term certifications meet the target employment wage of \$19/hour or more with an average of \$22.34/hour.

**Southwestern Illinois College** implemented programmatic changes, including multiple measures with the focus on improving the quality of applicant to the Practical Nursing (PN) program, retention and completion of program students, and increasing licensure success rates. In the summer of 2021, the College reviewed and revised program curriculum with experienced, tenured nursing faculty and leadership, created standardized assessment methods throughout program, and implemented the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) training modules and testing for students throughout PN program. In the fall of 2021, new, non-tenured program faculty were mentored and trained in curriculum, assessment, and educational methodology. Furthermore, student handbook was revised to align to nursing practice act; learning contracts were implemented for academically struggling students as well as mandatory ATI NCLEX-PN practice exam, review course, and end-of-program Success Center Workshops focusing on learning strategies for improving study skills, including memorization techniques for medical terminology, reviewing math skills, and developing stronger critical thinking skills; a three-day bootcamp was developed for entering PN students for improving study skills, including memorization techniques for medical terminology, reviewing math skills, and developing stronger critical thinking skills; monthly faculty meetings were established to review curriculum, assessment, student early intervention and program outcomes; and a Coordinator of Nursing Success position was introduced to provide content specific tutoring services to PN students to improve in-time remediation and retention. The PN program implemented standardized lab and clinical rubrics along with consistent exam/assignment assessment methods throughout the program. Revisions to the student handbook occurred to provide consistent implementation of program expectations within the classroom and clinical setting. Implementation of ATI style questions were embedded throughout the curriculum to reinforce critical thinking and application skills by exposing students to NCLEX style questions. In the fall of 2022, the pass rate on the exit exam was 70 percent while the previous fall was only ten percent. Seventy-nine percent of students enrolled in the PN program in 2022 were minorities.

## Workforce Preparation Initiatives for African American Students

The Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) III (Grant Period December 1, 2020, to June 30, 2023) targets African American students who reside in eight community areas on Chicago's West Side, recruiting up to 275 students in seven **Malcolm X College** (MXC) career programs: Basic Nursing Assistant (BNA), Child Development: Preschool Basic Certificate, Community Health Worker; Emergency Medical Technician; Emergency Medical Technician—Paramedic, Medical Assisting, Medical Billing, Medical Coding, Patient

*The WEI Project MPACT program elements at **Malcolm X College** include expansive financial support for student participants, student development and engagement through a supportive MPACT community and strategic partnerships and strengthening institutional capacity to deliver services that support student success.*

Care Technician; Personal Fitness Trainer; Pharmacy Technician, Phlebotomy; Physical Therapist Assistant, Practical Nursing, and Sterile Processing. WEI consists of a comprehensive, integrated experience incorporating career planning (exploration), preparation (classroom, clinical, and co-curricular experiences), and development (ongoing professional learning). The WEI Project MPACT program is aligned with MXC's commitment to equity and inclusion. Its participants obtain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their chosen career paths. The program elements include expansive financial support for student participants, student development and engagement through a supportive MPACT community and strategic partnerships and strengthening institutional capacity to deliver services that support student success. Participants received first-dollar scholarships to cover tuition costs and stipends, and reimbursements for uniforms, background checks, and drug tests required by programs and clinical sites. Furthermore, they received assistance for transportation, as well as vouchers to cover book and school supply purchases. MXC increased the enrollment of Project MPACT by eight percent and created sustainability and infrastructure improvements for programs. Unduplicated enrollment of MPACT for fiscal year 2021 scholars totaled 276 students, which exceeded the project's initial target of 275 students. Of those 276 students, 114 reside in westside neighborhoods, and 58/114 (50.9 percent) are African American. The WEI program has successfully engaged the target population: 60.1 percent of students are African American, and 40 percent reside in one of the targeted westside neighborhoods.

**South Suburban College** received an award for the Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) grant in Fall 2019. The grant is designed to serve constituents of District #510 with a focus on serving African Americans in ten communities that meet the criteria of "Disproportionately Impacted Areas". This project focused on employment sectors that have identified workforce gaps in Nursing, Patient Care Technician, and Barber Technician. The WEI grant project provides comprehensive participant resources to achieve project goals. The goal of the WEI is to accelerate the time for participants to enter and succeed in postsecondary education/training programs that lead to full-time employment in high skilled, high wage, and in-demand occupations paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage (\$17.50/hr.) or is on a pathway to a family sustaining wage. The college adopted a case management model with wrap-around services/activities to support students from recruitment through employment. Services include advising/counseling, student assistance program (mental health services), tutoring, financial support, progress monitoring, workshops, professional development, job placement assistance, and individual intervention services. Most of the objectives have been met or exceeded. Out of 228

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participants enrolled in the project, 82 percent of students are African American, 168 participants earned certificates, 87 participants are employed, and 99 participants earn at least \$17.68 per hour.

The Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) is a grant program sponsored by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The purpose of the WEI grant is to accelerate the time for students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education/training programs that lead to employment in high skilled, high wage, and in-demand occupations. The primary deliverable of this grant is employment after completion of the credential aligned with regional workforce gaps that provides a full-time job paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage or is on a pathway to a family sustaining wage. WEI began September 18, 2019, with 15 Illinois community colleges receiving WEI funds. **Triton College** is one of the original 15 community colleges that received the award. WEI is currently in its fourth grant cycle year. Triton College continues to have successful WEI grant results. This success is due to the consistent work of the advisors and employer relation experts who regularly meet with students and employers. The completion and transition specialist (CTS) are advisors that meet monthly with students and stay in regular contact with Instructors to ensure students complete certificates and pass any required state exams. The employer relations specialist (ERS) develops and implements career readiness strategies such as hosting career fairs, company site visits, career readiness workshops, and on-the-spot interviewing events. The CTS and ERS collaborate to ensure student retention, job readiness, and job placement within the industry of the students' respective certificates. For the period of July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, Triton College was a leader among the WEI community college consortium in outcomes achieved. For this period, 164 participants completed credentials. Of the credentialed participants, 92 percent received employment, which is 27 percent above the required placement goal of 65 percent. The average hourly wage for those employed is \$18.68. Participants received certificates in 13 different programs and four major industry sectors: automotive, business, healthcare, and IT. Triton College also met its goal of recruiting those who identify as African American (60 percent of the recruited participants). Finally, Triton WEI had a 2021-2022 certificate completion rate of 69 percent, nine percent above the required 60 percent target.

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