

PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

Accelerating action to close the graduation gap

Bi-Annual Common Report

The Partnership for College Completion is thankful for your continued support and we look forward to discussing this report in detail at the upcoming Investors Council meeting on February 26, 2018 from 10-11:30AM at the Brinson Foundation 737 N. Michigan Ave, Chicago IL

Greg Darnieder – Chair, Board of Directors

Kyle Westbrook- Executive Director

Introduction

The Partnership for College Completion (PCC) has made considerable progress in executing on the strategic plan that was approved by the PCC Board of Directors in May of 2017. This consensus driven strategic plan represents the best opportunities for PCC to leverage existing and anticipated resources to improve college graduation rates for low income students throughout the region. While the organization is confident in the approach and path forward, increased concentration on public policy will be evident in 2018.

Looking Back

In 2017, PCC launched key initiatives to elevate student success and college completion in the region. Those initiatives include: Presidents for Latino Student Success, University Trustee Training, Unequal Opportunity, as well as launching a Public Policy Committee.

Presidents for Latino Student Success

In August of 2017, PCC launched a regional collaboration of college presidents and their leadership teams to begin a year-long planning and technical support series focused on those colleges implementing an evidence based approach to improving Latino student outcomes. Following the August meeting, PCC surveyed all participating institutions on their evidence based practices and held check in calls with all teams in September and December. In October, the second quarterly meeting was held in Washington DC in connection with Excelencia in Education's Acceleration Latino Student Success convening. The third quarterly meeting was held on January 24th at Dominican University. The fourth and final meeting of the group in which colleges will announce the new initiative that they are launching because of this collaboration is scheduled for April 12 at 9AM at the Arturo Velazquez campus of Daley College (2800 S. Western, Chicago, IL 60608). Investors are invited to attend.

Public University Training

On October 30, 2017 PCC led a first of its kind training for state public university trustees titled "*Student Success and Trustee Leadership.*" PCC contracted with Jose Luis Santos, former Vice President of Higher Education Policy at the Education Trust and author of "Higher Education's Critical Role in Increasing Opportunity in America: What Boards Should Know" to develop the content and delivery of the 78-minute session for 47 trustees from state public universities from throughout the state. Because of the training, PCC has been invited to lead an on-campus session at Northern Illinois University and was able to connect in person with Rachel Lindsay, Interim President of Chicago State University. Boards at Western Illinois University and Governors State University have also expressed interest in PCC leading a session on their respective campuses.

Unequal Opportunity: A Look at Who Graduates and Why it Matters

On September 26, 2017 PCC released its first public facing report on college completion rates in Illinois. Beginning at National Louis University, PCC led four regional engagements with stakeholders throughout the region. These events at Governor's State University, the College of Lake County, and Waubensee Community College provided PCC unique opportunities to engage in dialogue about college completion with multiple colleges and universities. Local media outlets, downstate television and radio stations, and online media reported on the story with PCC prominently featured on WBEZ, WGN Radio, WVON, and Illinois Public Radio. See the newsroom section on the PCC website (www.parntershipfcc.org/newsroom) for more a sample of media coverage.

Looking Ahead

Closing the Gap

Responding to an expressed need from leaders in higher education and building from Presidents for Latino Student Success, PCC will launch in September a regional collaboration focused on improving outcomes for African-American, Latino, and adult students. Closing the Gap will focus on institutions publicly committing to closing their completion gaps by 2025, developing robust action plans, building communities of practice, and public reporting of data. Based on a set of core beliefs that emphasize the importance of evidence based approaches to closing the completion gaps in higher education, Closing the Gap will bring together higher education leaders and professionals across the region with external partners (e.g. Complete College America, Excelencia in Education) to focus on using data to identify challenges and implement evidence based approaches to solving those challenges. The launch date and public announcement is tentatively scheduled for September 25, 2018.

Regional Outcomes

PCC recently received the long-awaited completion data for students in the seven-county region. Brad White from the Illinois Education Research Council is currently reviewing the data and will update PCC on the timetable for the data analysis and reporting. PCC anticipates publishing the Regional Outcomes report in May of 2018.

Social Belonging Video Intervention

PCC has led an ongoing collaboration between the College Transitions Collaborative, the University of Illinois Chicago and the Reach Higher initiative to develop a video based intervention aimed at improving students sense of belonging on campus. PCC is currently identifying research partners to implement and study the intervention at UIC, NIU, and NEIU in the fall of 2018.

Policy Agenda

The PCC Public Policy Committee, consisting of external policy experts from Advance Illinois, Education Systems Center, Lumina, Young Invincibles as well as PCC Board members, continues to meet to refine the PCC Public Policy agenda. Given the need for continued research and analysis and the beginning of the legislative session in Springfield, PCC will focus this year on building relationships with relevant elected officials and staff to ensure that once the PCC is

ready to announce its policy agenda, the organization is a known commodity and thought leader with lawmakers. PCC has begun a year-long engagement with contract lobbyists MJS Associates (www.mjsillinois.com). MJS partners, former State Senator Ed Maloney and former Vice President of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development for the Illinois Community College Board Dr. Elaine Johnson, bring decades of experience, relationships, and knowledge of higher education and the Illinois General Assembly to PCC as it engages more deeply in the public policy space.

Board

The PCC Board has prioritized two interrelated areas for consideration in the near term. First, the PCC Board Development Committee met for the first time in November to develop a set of priorities and action items to continue to strengthen the PCC donor base. Among the possible considerations are a PCC luncheon featuring a nationally known and inspirational speaker on higher education issues as well as elevating development as a priority in the expansion of the PCC Board.

Members of the PCC Board Nominating and Governance committee and the full Board are currently engaged in developing and vetting a set of recommended candidates for board expansion that takes into consideration development, diversity, as well as geography. In the coming months, the PCC Board expects to finalize a list of potential members for Board consideration this summer.

Operations

PCC continues to refine and improve upon its operational core. In 2018 PCC began utilizing Trinet as its cloud-based HR and payroll backbone. Similarly, PCC has contracted with Forefront to continue to provide ongoing bookkeeping and accounting support. PCC has solicited proposals for audit services and have identified Desmond and Ahern as the PCC auditor. Desmond and Ahern brings a specific focus on and knowledge of small nonprofits that will undoubtedly strengthen PCC systems and protocols.

PCC has also identified an opportunity to strengthen its development functions by moving to an integrated grants management software solution while also participating in a comprehensive development assessment to: identify ways to strengthen existing donor support, develop a development strategy that is linked to the organization's strategy, and provide formative evaluation on existing donor management. PCC is currently meeting with firms specializing in development assessments to formalize the relationship and process.

Key Meetings

In addition to engagements throughout the region connected to the release of *Unequal Opportunity*, PCC has participated in panel discussions and presentations such as: *The Impact of Community Colleges Panel Discussion* at Moraine Valley Community College; *The Cost of Public Higher Education* at the Union League of Chicago; *Closing the Gaps* at Illinois State University. PCC has also conducted breakout sessions at the Thrive Chicago / Collaborative for Undergraduate Success second annual convening on student success entitled *The Transfer*

Experience, and at the Illinois Education Research Council's *Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium*. Finally, PCC has participated in ongoing planning for the Statewide Education Research Consortium.

Lessons Learned

Public Awareness

The Partnership is grateful for the strong strategic communications support that Jasculca Terman has provided. However, given that the scope of PCC's communications needs have evolved and are more clear, PCC has decided to release a new strategic communications RFP with a more streamlined scope of services that reflects lessons learned about ongoing communications needs for the Partnership.

Technical Support

The Presidents for Latino Student Success partnership with Excelencia has been a great introduction of the Partnership as a direct technical support provider to colleges and universities. However, several colleges expressed a need for focused attention on prioritizing the needs of African-American students. Thus, a more expansive and comprehensive approach to technical support for colleges has been developed. PCC continues to elicit feedback from college presidents about the specific approach that PCC should pursue in building this community of practice while leveraging outside expertise.

Summary and Next Steps

The 2017 calendar year was an exciting and productive one for the Partnership for College Completion. The Partnership launched several important initiatives in raising **public awareness** about college completion, providing **technical support** to colleges and their trustees, and began formulating a **public policy** agenda to create a policy environment that focuses on student outcomes. As exciting as 2017 was for PCC, 2018 looks to be even more promising as PCC focuses on what the organization considers its signature initiative: ILEA as well as continued public awareness and public policy initiatives. As PCC continues to build its operational culture, it will refine its internal processes to reflect best practices in nonprofit management.

Attachment A

Board of Directors

Greg Darnieder (Board Chair) - *Former Senior Advisor to the Secretary on the College Access Initiative*, U.S. Department of Education

Dave Agazzi - *Former Vice President of Administrative Affairs*, College of Lake County

Arne Duncan - *Managing Director*, Emerson Collective

Sherry Eagle - *Executive Director Emeritus*, Institute for Collaboration, Aurora University

Judy Erwin - *Managing Director*, Kivvit

Ricardo Estrada - *President and CEO*, Metropolitan Family Services

Brian Fabes - *CEO*, Civic Consulting Alliance

Adam Levine - *President*, Circle of Service Foundation

Laz Lopez - *Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning*, High School District 214

Joseph McCoy - *Partner*, Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP

Nivine Megahed - *President*, National Louis University

Tim Schwertfeger - *Former Chairman and CEO*, Nuveen Investments

Liz Thompson - *President*, The Cleveland Avenue Foundation for Education

Staff

Kyle Westbrook - *Executive Director*

Lisa Castillo Richmond – *Managing Director*

Emily Goldman - *Policy Manager*

Jonathan Lopez - *Operations Coordinator*

Attachment B

Public Policy Committee

Comprised of local and statewide policy experts, the PCC Public Policy Advisory Council:

1. Provides critical feedback on the broad goals and specific elements of the PCC policy agenda
2. Provides ongoing advice and counsel on operationalizing the PCC policy agenda with members of the IL legislature
3. Will serve as a forum for coalition building in support of advancing effective policies in the Illinois legislature and beyond

Members

Debra Bragg, Professor Emerita, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Meegan Dugan-Bassett, Policy Consultant, Lumina Foundation

Sherry Eagle, PCC Board Member

Judy Erwin, PCC Board Member

Ric Estrada, PCC Board Member

Jonathan Furr, Executive Director, Education Systems

Martina Hone, former Democratic Education Policy Director, U.S. House of Representatives

Sarah Labadie, Senior Policy Associate, Women Employed

Laz Lopez

Ginger Ostro, Executive Director, Advance Illinois

Erin Steva, Midwest Director, Young Invincibles

Attachment C

Higher Education Advisory Council

Comprised of Vice Presidents from public and private two-year and four-year nonprofit institutions throughout the state, the HEAC will:

- Provide critical feedback on current and future technical support efforts aimed at colleges and universities, as well as feedback on how the PCC will operationalize these supports
- Suggest innovative, new ideas for technical support for PCC to consider implementing
- Develop a method of evaluating and spotlighting successful programs that are improving outcomes for low income and first generation students

Members:

Debra Baker – Vice President Academic Affairs, Triton College

Nikos Varelas – Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, University of Illinois Chicago

Anne Birberick – Vice Provost Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Northern Illinois University

Aarti Dhupelia – Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, National Louis University

Eric Lugo – Vice President and Senior Advisor, City Colleges of Chicago

Lynette Stokes – Vice President, Academic Services, South Suburban Community College

Aurelio Valente – Vice President of Student Affairs, Governors State University

Ronald Williams – Vice President for Student Services, Western Illinois University

Appendix D

Key Relationships

Advance Illinois – Advance Illinois is providing ongoing thought partnership to the PCC as well as providing support and editorial comment on the Illinois higher education meta-analysis. Advance has also been a significant partner in crafting and refining the PCC Public Policy Agenda.

Excelencia in Education – Excelencia is a national voice on supporting Latino student success and is partnering with the PCC to provide its first regional cohort support model for leaders interested in improving Latino student outcomes.

University of Illinois Chicago – The University of Illinois Chicago has been a strong partner with PCC on three separate initiatives. First, since November of 2016 UIC has been integral to the development of the Social Belonging intervention. UIC has also joined Presidents for Latino Success, as well as serving as a lead partner in helping to define the agenda of the Higher Education Advisory Council.

City Colleges of Chicago – CCC, Thrive Chicago, One Million Degrees and PCC are currently collaborating on a grant opportunity from the Lumina Foundation to fund an intervention to support adult learners in CCC. In addition, CCC Chancellor's office has facilitated tight connections between PCC and individual college presidents to ensure alignment and collaboration on regional plans for working with Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Illinois Student Assistance Commission – ISAC has provided PCC public data on first generation low income college students throughout the region. They are also partnering with the Illinois Board of Higher Education to provide PPC a linked dataset.

Illinois Board of Higher Education – IBHE has been a strong partner in collaborating with Excelencia in Education and will support PCC and Excelencia in gaining support for the cohort from within IBHE public institutions. IBHE has also been a strong partner in developing the Trustees Student Success Training.

National Student Clearinghouse – NSC is the nation's central data source for college going rates and trends. PCC has identified the NSC as the long-term data partner for providing state level and regional snapshots on enrollment, transfer and completion.

Thrive Chicago – PCC continues to participate in the Postsecondary Working Group of Thrive Chicago. In recent weeks PCC has begun another partnership with Thrive Chicago, City Colleges of Chicago, and One Million Degrees to apply for a Lumina Foundation Talent Hubs grant.