

PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

Accelerating action to close the graduation gap

Investors Council Report

Reporting Period—8/16/2019 to 2/15/2020

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Operations

The Partnership for College Completion (PCC) has made significant progress in refining operations and professional processes while remaining focused on the organizational mission of increasing college completion rates across racial and socioeconomic lines for students in the Chicago area. Continued growth in development during the reporting period has allowed PCC to add to its existing capacity to deliver on its ambitious vision of an Illinois higher education system in which low-income students and students of color have the necessary tools and supports to complete college and achieve their career aspirations.

Board of Directors

During the reporting period, the PCC Board of Directors continued to grow with the addition of longtime PCC advocate Jim Parsons to the Board. An early and vocal supporter for the creation of PCC, Jim has continued to serve on the organization's Finance Committee and recently joined the Board as the Finance Committee Chair. In addition, St. Xavier University (SXU) student Yasmine Zavala was added to the Board to elevate student voice in Board discussions. Yasmine is a first-generation student who is a junior at SXU, double-majoring in Political Science and International Studies. She is also an active member of the PCC Student Advisory Council.

Development

During the reporting period, PCC received five new grants and renewals from three current funders. In October 2019, the ECMC Foundation awarded PCC a 3-year \$500K grant to support the Illinois Equity in Attainment initiative (ILEA). These additional resources will support increased capacity building at ILEA institutions and deepen PCC's capacity to support campus-level reform. In addition to the ECMC Foundation, the Kinship Foundation awarded PCC \$50K to support ILEA efforts. Finally, the Crown Family Philanthropies have awarded PCC two ILEA-focused grants of \$300K and \$30K, respectively. The \$300K award will be used to seed an implementation fund allowing colleges and universities to access small grants to support deployment of their respective strategies as outlined in their Equity Plans. Crown's \$30K award will support PCC's partnership with the Aspen Institute to lead a professional learning community for college presidents and their cabinets. Finally, an anonymous foundation recently awarded PCC a \$250K gift.

During the reporting period, PCC maintained a positive cashflow despite ending FY19 slightly over budget (See Appendix A). PCC staff and the Board Finance committee continue to monitor spending for the FY20 budget.

Programming

Technical Support

During the reporting period, PCC staff and leadership have continued to deepen the organization’s connections to area colleges and universities through the Illinois Equity in Attainment initiative (ILEA). Participation in the Initiative continued to grow with the addition of the College of DuPage (CoD) – Illinois’ largest community college – serving more than 24,000 students each semester. As a result, the reach of ILEA now extends to 28 colleges (12, 4-year, 16, 2-year), representing 217,000 total students or 38% of the state’s total undergraduate enrollment. Today, 67% of all Illinois Latinx undergraduates and 44% of all Illinois’ Black undergraduates are enrolled in ILEA institutions.

On October 30, 2019, all 28 participating ILEA colleges and universities participated in a full-day summit at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, IL. The event, attended by 156 leaders from across the ILEA cohort, featured addresses by Anthony Carnavale, of Georgetown University’s Center for Education and the Workforce, and Kenyatta Lovett, Tennessee’s Deputy Commissioner of Workforce and Executive Director of Complete Tennessee. The event also featured breakout sessions facilitated by colleges and university leaders and reformers from Illinois and across the country as well as focused sessions on topics including data use and making the most of National Student Clearinghouse data. With the support of PCC staff, ILEA colleges continue to make progress in developing, refining, socializing, and finalizing their Equity Plans.

PCC continues to collaborate with UChicago Urban Labs on the randomized control trial of the Social Belonging intervention. Urban Labs has begun data analysis for cohort 1 (Robert Morris University, Northern Illinois University and University of Illinois at Chicago) and will complete data collection for cohort 2 (Northern Illinois University and Eastern Illinois University) this academic year. PCC and Urban Labs plan to meet in the coming months to review data analysis for cohort 1. Preliminary results show positive and significant finds for a number of outcomes at Robert Morris University and GPA at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

This fall, PCC launched its Equity Webinar Series to address needs in programming as articulated by ILEA members. Examples of the webinars that PCC has hosted include:

- “Building Equity Minded Pathways for Student Success: Lessons Learned”
- “Transforming Hispanic Serving Institutions”
- “Turning More Tassels: How Colleges and Universities are Improving Student and Institutional Performance with Better Advising”

Technical Support, continued

In 2020, PCC continues to provide just-in-time support for colleges and universities through a robust lineup of webinars scheduled for the year as well as targeted convenings and individual, on-campus meetings where staff can provide support on equity-focused issues.

To date, 20 ILEA colleges have submitted full Equity Plan drafts. The outstanding plans will be submitted before the end of the academic year. In December, PCC staff participated in a day-long expert review of the City Colleges of Chicago’s (CCC) Equity Plans. PCC, along with leaders from the Office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, DePaul University, and Northern Illinois University, participated in the event, providing feedback to each CCC campus on their equity plans, which will be presented to the City Colleges of Chicago Board of Trustees in March 2020.

Public Policy

PCC continues to advocate for systemic developmental education reform in Illinois through the statewide taskforce created as a result of PCC-led legislation (Senate Joint Resolution 41). The Developmental Education Advisory Council, which includes elected officials, university and community college presidents, faculty groups, advocates, state agencies, and researchers, has been given the charge of inventorying effective practices from across the state and will submit a recommendation to the Illinois General Assembly on how to scale effective, evidence-based practices.

In addition to ongoing SJR 41 work, PCC has spent the fall developing and refining its 2020 legislative priorities. Through meetings of its own policy committee and external meetings with over 20 elected officials, state agencies, and researchers, PCC has developed a legislative agenda that calls for increased investment in MAP, the phasing out of MAP at for-profit colleges, inclusion of equity in college and university trustee trainings, improving access to information on assistance programs for student parents, and emergency grant funding. Already, two of the policy recommendations from the *Priced Out* series on college affordability (see Public Awareness) have been introduced into the Illinois General Assembly: Bills phasing out state aid to for-profit colleges and making standardized test scores optional at all state universities are significant steps toward increasing access and affordability.

Finally, PCC continued to build relationships with state agencies and the office of Governor J.B. Pritzker during the reporting period. In October,

Public Policy, continued

PCC's Executive Director participated in a two-day planning retreat with state higher education agency heads and Illinois Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz. At the retreat, the Illinois Board of Higher Education Board Chair John Atkinson committed to making equity and closing gaps in degree completion the centerpiece of the agencies upcoming strategic planning.

Public Awareness

AFFORDABILITY STUDY

This fall, the Partnership published the three-part series *Priced Out: On Illinois' Disinvestment in Higher Education and What Can Be Done About It*, which examines the impact of nearly two decades of state disinvestment in Illinois higher education and provides an in-depth analysis of how disparities in access, cost, and ability to pay are creating barriers for rural students and students of color. The reports conclude with recommended policy reforms – two of which have been introduced into the Illinois General Assembly – that can begin reversing these trends. The Affordability Study was an ambitious project for PCC – testing and validating the organization's research and report production skills.

Priced Out: Black Students

In *Priced Out: Black Students*, PCC provides insight into how disinvestment has been a catalyst for a college enrollment crisis for Black students in Illinois, and has created an environment wherein Black students pay, work, and borrow more to complete a college degree.

Priced Out: Latinx Students

The Partnership finds in *Priced Out: Latinx Students*, that while Illinois Latinx students are enrolling in college more than any other group or ethnicity, high costs and limited family wealth serve as barriers to attendance and completion with Latinx students attending community colleges at disproportionate rates.

Priced Out: Rural Students

In *Priced Out: Rural Students*, the Partnership analyzes how limited higher education options force rural students to travel farther, pay more, and borrow more, which limits graduates' ability to return to their local communities where it is more difficult to pay off student loan debt.

Public Awareness, continued

PRICED OUT MEDIA COVERAGE AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

The *Priced Out* series received coverage from both local and national media including, *The Hechinger Report*, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, and Northern Illinois Public Radio and was featured in more than a dozen articles.

In addition to sharing findings with the public through the media, PCC further raised awareness about the study at off-site events including the ILEA Fall 2019 Summit, Kaskaskia College, Vandalia Center in Vandalia, IL , for the release and discussion of *Priced Out: Rural Students*, and Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL, to present its *Priced Out: Black Students* report to school leadership, students, legislators and local press.

CONTINUED EARNED MEDIA

Concurrent with the roll-out and promotion of the *Priced Out* series, PCC continued to establish itself as a leading voice in college completion in the state of Illinois. PCC received coverage from *Crain's Chicago Business* and authored an op-ed on remedial education for that publication as well.



Key Learnings

Technical Support

While the ILEA initiative continues to build internal momentum within the state as a significant strategy for advancing equity in Illinois, PCC is thrilled to have the support of Mayor Lori Lightfoot. In October, at the President’s meeting of America’s Urban Campus (AUC), a collection of local colleges and universities working collaboratively to market Chicago as a higher education destination, Mayor Lightfoot delivered an equity challenge to colleges and universities to close their equity gaps in degree completion. PCC has subsequently met with the leaders of AUC to discuss how ILEA and PCC’s broader efforts can support the efforts of institutions within AUC that are not a part of ILEA. PCC has also partnered with the Aspen Institute to lead a professional learning community for college presidents and their cabinets and is working with the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California to develop a model for faculty.

Public Policy

PCC has spent considerable time cultivating relationships with elected officials throughout the state to build a statewide focus on affordability and access. Retiring Senator Pat McGuire, a strong and vocal supporter of PCC in the Illinois General Assembly has prioritized strengthening existing relationships with elected officials so that when he retires at the end of this session, PCC has advocates in both houses. Finally, PCC is leading a coalition of higher education advocates to develop and organize around an equity-driven funding formula for the state’s public universities and community colleges. PCC recently received the first version of a modeling tool for a higher education funding formula from the pro bono project from the Boston Consulting Group.

Key Connections

Public Awareness

As the Partnership continues to establish itself as a leader in the field, media outlets are increasingly soliciting the organization for its commentary on the latest developments in Illinois higher education. This fall, the Partnership was invited to go before the *Chicago Sun-Times* editorial board to present the findings of its *Priced Out: Black Students* report. The meeting proved valuable to PCC's longer-term Public Awareness interest in building its presence as a trusted and leading voice on issues of equity in attainment for the state through its capabilities in research and reporting.

FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Transforming Lives at Moraine Valley



\$100,000 to \$249,999
Great Lakes Bank Foundation
Scholarship America

\$50,000 to \$99,999
New Foundation
Heide
Scott
Blowe
Trust Company

to \$49,999
Community Healthcare Foundation
Fighters Club
Broadbent
R. Coleman
Inc.
Foundation
John R. Linn
Arphey
Bruce Nawara
Construction C
Central Region

\$10,000 to \$49,999
Adrian Clark Medical Center
Clark and Bruce Anderson
Mr. Tom and Dr. Patricia M. Biele
The Chrysler Foundation
ConEd
Dr. and Mrs. Virginia D. Cravley
Everset Lines
Fisher Foundation, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Alank Hoenes
HFC Construction Companies, LLC
Jack McLean Taylor Charitable Trust
Reverend Dr. Craig and Dr. Sylvia
Mr. Raymond and Dr. Margaret
Egan and Dorothy Mackay
Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Nash
Nash
Mr. and Mrs. William J.
Rommholz, Margherita
The Hummels and Mr.
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W.
Mr. Jon Weglar

\$5,000 to \$9,999
Andrew Family Founda
Dr. Norman Lohle-Bart
and Dr. Thomas H. Ba
Blue Cross/Blue Shield
Mrs. Margaret Bobb
Michael and Sally W
Christopher B. Butler
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew D
Karen and Charlotte
Mr. and Mrs. Philip T. Fe
Illinois Community Col
Johnson Controls, Inc.
The Kinkowicz Found
Mr. and Mrs. Paul B
Midwest Energy, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Gene
Peters



Common Quarterly Checklist

Introduction: The foundations agree to accept quarterly checklists (no longer than three pages) to identify any significant changes that have occurred during the reporting period. Checklists will be submitted on the following dates:

- Checklist Update 1: February 15
- Checklist Update 2: May 15
- Checklist Update 3: August 15
- Checklist Update 4: November 15

Note: For the quarters in which full reports are submitted, the quarterly checklist will be included as an attachment. When completing the checklists during these quarters, organizations may write, “See report” for any boxes where report narrative may provide an adequate explanation.

Quarterly Checklist Form

Organization Name	Partnership for College Completion
Primary Contact Information (name, phone, email)	Kyle Westbrook 312.857.4643 kwestbrook@partnershipfcc.org
Reporting Timeframe	8/16/20-2/15/20

Instructions: For each question below, include only the appropriate answer (Yes/No). If your answer is Yes, please provide further explanation in the space provided. If No, please leave blank. (If there are no significant changes, it is acceptable to leave all comment boxes blank.)

Common Quarterly Checklist

Quarterly Checklist Form

Organization Name	Partnership for College Completion
Primary Contact Information (name, phone, email)	Kyle Westbrook 312.857.4643 kwestbrook@partnershipfcc.org
Reporting Timeframe	8/16/20-2/15/20

Instructions: For each question below, include only the appropriate answer (Yes/No). If your answer is Yes, please provide further explanation in the space provided. If No, please leave blank. (If there are no significant changes, it is acceptable to leave all comment boxes blank.)

Question	Select One (Yes or No)	Comments
Organizational		
1. Have there been any significant changes in governance, management, operations, fundraising, or overall organizational health in the past quarter?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes No	See report narrative.
2. Has your budget (revenue and/or expenses) changed significantly (+/- 10%) in the past quarter?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes No	See report narrative.
3. Are you off-track with your revenue goals, including private, fee for service, or government?	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
Programming		
4. Have there been any significant changes to the proposed program or workplan?	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
5. Are key program outcomes off-track?	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
6. Have there been any meaningful changes (including additions) in your key partnerships that may affect your program?	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
Other		
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share?	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	

Common Quarterly Checklist

Submission Guidelines

Below is a list of the foundations accepting the Common Reporting Framework. Please use the instructions listed in the table below to submit these updates.

Organization	Submission	Specific Format/Notes
A Better Chicago	Email Shira Bernstein: sbernstein@kapfam.com	Updates: Word Document Budgets/Financials: Excel or PDF Outcomes: A Better Chicago Excel milestone tracker Other Report Requirements: A Better Chicago will continue to meet quarterly with grantees
The Brinson Foundation	Submit all reports through the Grants Portal: https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/	Updates: Word Document Budgets/Financials: Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or, if applicable, the Foundation's customized data sheet Other Report Requirements: Annual due diligence meeting
Circle of Service Foundation	Email Michael Schield: Schield@gmail.com	Updates: Word Document Budgets/Financials: Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format Other Report Requirements: The Common Reporting Framework replaces the Program Update (questions 5-6) on the COSF Challenge Report
Cleveland Avenue Foundation for Education	Email Priscilla Kersten: kerstenpriscilla@gmail.com	Updates: Word Document Budgets/Financials: Excel and PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format Other Report Requirements: Annual due diligence meeting
Finnegan Family Foundation	Email Amy Sauer: amy@theosafoundation.org	Updates: Word Document, Excel, or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel, or PDF Outcomes: Word Document, Excel, or PDF
Julian Grace Foundation	Submit all reports through the Julian Grace Grants Portal: https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/	Updates: Word Document, Excel, or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel, or PDF Outcomes: Word Document, Excel, or PDF

Common Quarterly Checklist Submission Guidelines, Continued

Below is a list of the foundations accepting the Common Reporting Framework. Please use the instructions listed in the table below to submit these updates.

Polk Bros. Foundation	Email Suzanne Kerbow: skerbow@polkbrosfdn.org	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budget/Financials: Word or Excel Outcomes: Word Document or PDF Other Report Requirements: Multi-year grants to complete additional report before re-applying. See website.
Prosper Road Foundation	Email: Joan Evans Joan@	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budget/Financials: Word Document or Excel Outcomes: Word Document or PDF
Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation	Email Shira Bernstein: sbernstein@kapfam.com	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format
McDougal Family Foundation	Submit all reports through the Grants Portal: https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format
SS Foundation	Email Michael Schield: Schield@gmail.com	Updates: Word Document, Excel, or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel, or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format in Word Document, Excel, or PDF
Square One Foundation	Email Priscilla Kersten: kerstenpriscilla@gmail.com	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format
The Osa Foundation	Email Amy Sauer: amy@theosafoundation.org	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format
The Siragusa Family Foundation	Email John Hicks: jhicks@siragusa.org And Crystal Robinson: crobenson@siragusa.org	Updates: Word Document or PDF Budgets/Financials: Word Document, Excel or PDF Outcomes: Common Reporting Tool or Organization's preferred format Other Report Requirements: Common Reporting Framework replaces the annual grant report requirement

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Priced Out: Latinx Students

On Illinois' Disinvestment In Higher Education & What Can Be Done About It

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APPENDIX B

Daily Herald

Rising tuition makes college access harder for low-income students

Madhu Krishnamurthy/ Daily Herald/ Jan 3, 2020

Rising tuition and state underfunding of public colleges and universities has put access and affordability out of reach for low-income students, experts say.

The impact is being felt most acutely by black students whose enrollment in four-year colleges has steadily declined, according to a report by the nonprofit Partnership for College Completion.

The group works with colleges and universities to improve completion rates for low-income, minority and first-generation students. It found 11,100 fewer black students attended Illinois' public and private, nonprofit institutions in 2017 compared to 2007.

"We have seen a mass exodus of black students from higher education in Illinois over the last several years," said Kyle Westbrook, executive director of the Partnership for College Completion.

On the flip side, Latino students disproportionately are enrolling in community colleges and are about 30% less likely to transfer to four-year institutions than white students, another Partnership report shows.

The declining funding of colleges and universities has led to students leaving Illinois for nearby states, Westbrook said.

For a student whose family makes less than \$30,000

a year, the cost of attending a public four-year college is about \$12,800 per year -- 50% more than the Midwestern average. That same student would pay yearly about \$17,500 to attend a private four-year college, about \$22,000 at a for-profit institution, and around \$6,200 to attend a community college in Illinois, the report shows.

Meanwhile, overall state appropriation for Illinois public universities has declined by more than 50% from 2002 to 2018. State funding of the Monetary Award Program grant for low-income students has remained static during that period, the report shows.

"Universities have passed those costs onto students," Westbrook said. "Students who can least afford it are the (ones) being priced out."

State funding has not kept pace with rising tuition costs or the increase in the number of MAP-eligible students. About 46% of eligible students receive MAP grants. Students are awarded a maximum of \$4,900.

"The award covers only about 34% of tuition and fees at our public universities. And not every student who is eligible actually receives one," Westbrook said.

The group recommends increasing state funding for public institutions serving large populations of low-income students as well as the MAP grant -- awarded based on financial need. It also urges creating a task force for an equity-driven funding formula for higher education.

Daily Herald

How community colleges are supporting low-income black, Latino students

Madhu Krishnamurthy/ Daily Herald/ Jan 3, 2020

Growing up in the Northwest suburbs, Daliyah Sanders often felt isolated from her peers as the only black student in her class practically since kindergarten through high school.

“It’s been my reality my entire life,” said Sanders, 19, of Schaumburg.

It’s why connecting with peers and professors in college was an important motivator for Sanders to stay in school. That and getting a tuition-free full ride at Harper College in Palatine through the One Million Degrees program, which helps hundreds of community college students succeed in the classroom and beyond.

Sanders transferred to Harper from a four-year college in Chicago that didn’t offer her the personalized attention she needed. Harper, she realized, was the better option because of the supports it offers minority students, such as tuition assistance, mentoring and networking.

“I chose this program because ... my friend talked about how good of an experience it was I liked the overall help it was giving to students,” said Sanders, who learned about the program as a student at Hoffman Estates High School.

Low-income minority students, like Sanders, increasingly are ditching four-year institutions due to rising tuition costs and lack of supports.

Community colleges are positioned uniquely to help these students through career path programs tailored to what local employers need, said Kyle Westbrook, executive director of the Partnership for College Completion.

“They are deeply embedded. They are closer to the communities, to the high schools,” Westbrook said. “They have been building dual-credit, dual-enrollment options for high schools that can be major access avenues for low-income student populations.”

Nearly a third of students at suburban community colleges come from low-income families and receive assistance through federal Pell grants and state Monetary Award Program grants. Many colleges have adopted programs and policies that help black, Latino and low-income students complete degree programs and transfer to four-year universities.

Elgin Community College offers robust mentoring services, including peer mentoring, for its black and Latino students, who comprise roughly 4% and 48%, respectively, of the college’s student population.

“We also have a mandatory advising program ... requiring certain groups of students that we’ve identified as having some needs to meet with their advisers before they enroll for the semester,” said

community colleges, cont'd

David Rudden, ECC managing director of institutional research.

Other interventions include expanding outreach to Latino students through the Organization of Latin American Students club. The college's Spartan Food Pantry and financial literacy program also are geared toward serving the low-income student population.

College of Lake County in Grayslake is partnering with area high schools that have higher populations of low-income black and Latino students -- North Chicago, Round Lake, Waukegan and Zion-Benton -- to provide career counseling and support.

One such experiment places a CLC college transitions coach at Mundelein High School to build relationships with students and families, and help them through the financial aid and application processes.

"Rarely it's the academic aspect that is the deterrent for student success," CLC President Lori Suddick said. Rather, it's about "affordability, not knowing how to navigate the system, and understanding how to successfully advocate for oneself within an environment that (isn't) always designed in ways to benefit people."

CLC is supporting students' basic needs through an on-campus food pantry where they can grab a snack and get free groceries, hygiene products and clothing. It also provides emergency funds, such as if a student has a flat tire or a household problem.

Students without home internet access or a personal computer can check out Chromebooks or use CLC's library hot spots. Officials also are adopting open education resources to eliminate textbook costs and creating dual-credit programs for high schoolers. The college's three campuses -- Grayslake, Vernon Hills and Waukegan -- house career path programs tailored to the needs of the communities they serve.

The college recently changed its policy of dropping

students for not paying the previous semester's fees. Once dropped, students often don't re-enroll. Students now can remain enrolled while paying overdue fees through a payment plan.

Harper partners with Barrington Area Unit District 220, Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211 and Northwest Suburban High School District 214 for its Summer Scholars program. It enrolls students coming from high school lacking skills, first-generation and underrepresented students, and those with disabilities or whose English and math skills are not up to college level.

"They get to come on campus ahead of the rest of the fall class, get an opportunity to meet students, and form friendships and bonds," said Sheryl Otto, Harper associate provost for student affairs.

Based on first-semester performance, students are eligible for a monetary award toward second-semester tuition and fees.

"It is to try and help keep them motivated and keep that momentum encouraging them to enroll," Otto said. "It's much harder once we lose those students to get them back into the institution."

Harper's partnership with One Million Degrees provides more comprehensive services targeting similar populations, helping them earn associate degrees and transfer to baccalaureate programs.

Students get support through tutoring assistance, workshops, academic advisers and personal/professional mentors. Between financial aid and scholarships through the Harper College Educational Foundation, students in the program pay no tuition costs.

Currently, 160 students are enrolled in the program -- about 10% are black, while black students comprise 4% of Harper's total student population. Of last year's

community colleges, cont'd

batch, 85% of students successfully completed the course.

College of DuPage has hosted a black student leadership conference for the last five years to engage high school students and help them understand what it means to be college-ready. COD is working on transfer partnerships with historically black colleges and universities for its roughly 7% black student population and will host a hip-hop summit this spring.

“We are trying to do things to make it an environment for African American students so they feel like they belong here,” said Mark Curtis-Chavez, COD provost of academic and student affairs.

This year, COD hosted its first Latino Leaders Luncheon with community leaders from throughout DuPage County. The college has a growing Latino student population -- nearly 27% -- and officials are starting to recruit students directly at the high schools.

“Our goal is to increase the success rates of African American and Latino students by 4% by the end of next year,” Curtis-Chavez said. “Success means three things for us: persistence, graduation and transfer.”



Nonprofit presents report on minority student equity gaps in higher education

Najla Edwards/ (NIU) Northern Star/ Nov 30, 2020

DeKALB — Black students aren't graduating at the same rates as white and latinx students, minorities are under-represented in higher education institutions and rural students struggle with returning to rural areas after college, according to a report by an Illinois nonprofit.

Partnership for College Completion presented their report Tuesday in Altgeld Hall.

Partnership for College Completion was founded in 2016 and researches policies that could ensure all students in Illinois graduate and meet their career aspirations, according to their website.

Mike Abrahamson, PCC's policy analyst and author of the report, presented the report.

Nearly two decades ago, Illinois was considered a leader in college affordability due to strong investment in its universities, the report reads. In 2002, the state covered the majority of college costs through state appropriations, like the Monetary Award Program, leaving just 28% to 30% to be covered by students through tuition and fees.

The 2002 MAP grant covered up to 100% of tuition and fees at public community colleges and four year institutions. In the fiscal year 2002, all eligible students that applied received an award, according to the report.

Illinois has become the worst in the nation regarding the size of its cuts to per-student higher education funding, the report states. Due to this, students' share of college costs increased dramatically between 2002 and 2018.

From 2002 to 2018, funding for public universities was cut over 50%, which included community colleges as well, according to The Illinois Board of Higher Education's budget recommendations.

As a result, the state shifted many costs previously covered by Illinois to the institutions themselves. This brought tuition increases and deficit spending.

At most Illinois colleges, there are wide gaps between black and white students' graduation rates, and black students are under-represented at institutions that have smaller completion gaps, according to the report.

Among the state's most selective institutions like the University of Chicago or Northwestern University, 7% of attending students are black, on average, the report finds. Less selective institutions show an average black enrollment of 14%.

Data cited by the report shows that black prospective students are more interested in applying to colleges that have the highest graduation rates for black students rather than the highest enrollment rates.

Despite this, colleges that have higher graduation rates for black students enroll significantly less black students.

continued on next page

higher education, cont'd

After the presentation, guests had lunch and continued to discuss these topics.

"I think that we are fortunate to be aware of our ability to improve as well as having a president and chief diversity officer that really are at the forefront of recognizing the value of the diversity that our students bring," Molly Holmes, director of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at NIU, said. "It's on us to close those gaps, our students aren't the gaps. We are the ones who need to know our students. Those numbers are our students that we support outside the classroom so that they can persist to graduation."

NORTHERN PUBLIC RADIO



The cost of college for black students highlighted at NIU event

Peter Medlin/ Northern Public Radio/ Nov 19, 2019

The Partnership for College Completion held an event at Northern Illinois University discussing their new reports on the cost of college, specifically for black students.

Along with university officials and local lawmakers, several black NIU students came to the event to talk about their own challenges paying for school.

Gabrielle Sims is a junior at NIU.

She said low-income and minority students can often miss out on college experience.

“You have to work a job that pays but you also want to get experienced in your field,” she said, “but the internship is unpaid, and they’re both the same amount of hours. You know you’ve got to pick between paying your phone bill or getting experience in your field to build your resume.”

The reports found black students disproportionately take on more loans to pay for college, and at higher rates of interest than their white peers.

But that’s if they can even afford to continue their degree at all.

“I know too many people at NIU, too many good students at NIU,” said Sims, “who have had to leave because they didn’t get their MAP grant like they used

to.”

The reports call for an increase in MAP grant funding and other need-based aid targeting low-income and underrepresented students.

Glennita Williams is a senior at NIU studying political science. She said she’s seen a lot of friends -- black students -- who have had to drop out because they simply couldn’t afford to continue their education.

“I was able to get grants and my first semester, but my dad had a pay increase, which kicked me out of state grants,” said Williams. “So that’s that equity versus equality because I had that opportunity, but no longer able to do that because of a situation.”

Williams said, in her case, even though NIU did a good job helping her find scholarships and grants so she can finish, she’s still going to graduate in a few months with \$50,000 worth of debt.

In the past decade, black student enrollment has dropped across the state everywhere except at for-profit institutions. Those colleges are also more costly than public or private-non-profit schools.

PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

Accelerating action to close the graduation gap

PCC: 2019 ILEA Fall Summit Recap

Partnership for College Completion/ Nov 2019

The third ILEA Summit was held October 30, 2019, on the campus of Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC) with over 150 staff, faculty and administrators from the ILEA cohort in attendance. The theme of the Summit was “Equity-Minded, Data Driven: Building Campus Capacity to Close Completion Gaps.”

The day-long event was kicked off with a warm welcome from MVCC President Dr. Sylvia Jenkins, and MVCC Student Trustee Drew Williams, followed by a presentation from Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other speakers.

Morning keynote presentations from Dr. Kenyatta Lovett, Assistant Commissioner of Workforce Services at the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, and Dr. Anthony Carnevale, Research Professor and Director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, highlighted the importance of using state-level and workforce data to build supports for students that connect college to career.

During the afternoon, Dr. Sarah Whitley, Senior Director of First-generation Student Success at NASPA, focused on higher education institutions supporting first-generation students, while Dr. Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director of the Indiana University for Postsecondary Research and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institute discussed the

importance of using student engagement data in their respective workshops.

Lisa Castillo Richmond, Managing Director of PCC presented on the “State of ILEA: From Planning to Implementation” and Mike Abrahamson, PCC Policy Analyst, presented on the recently released PCC College Affordability Studies. Additional sessions were conducted on strategy topics including: Building a data-informed and equity focused culture; Providing access and supports for undocumented students; Using student voice in our work; and Leveraging National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) dashboards.

PCC would like to thank all presenters and participants of this fall summit.



New reports analyze who pays when higher ed funding falls

Peter Medlin/ Peoria Public Radio/ Nov 8 2019

State disinvestment in higher education has put a college degree out of reach for many Illinois students. That's a key finding from a new series of reports from the Partnership for College Completion.

The "Priced Out" reports focus on the three groups most impacted by funding lapses: Black, Latinx and students who live in rural communities.

The organization says state funding for public universities has fallen 50% since 2002. Community colleges have experienced similar disinvestments.

But it's not just about disinvestment. It's also about how and where funding is given out. "We have to fund our institutions differently," says Kyle Westbrook, Executive Director of the Partnership for College Completion.

The reports propose funding changes to incentivize public universities and community colleges to recruit underrepresented students.

It also recommends scaling back merit-based programs in place of scholarships that are more based on student needs.

"What we end up doing often with our merit-based programs is we end up sort of making the rich richer," he said.

Westbrook says some students don't see some of the state's public universities as equally affordable or representative of the state's overall demographics. He says that's troubling.

"There are all of these hidden costs of college that go far beyond tuition fees and go far beyond room and board that can either enrich the experience for students, or can make the experience not as impactful as it could be, or than it is for certain groups of students who could afford those opportunities," he said.

Westbrook says they were dismayed to find black students disproportionately take on loans and debt to fund their education.

For rural students, the report finds access is the biggest hurdle, especially when populations continue to trend down in those communities.

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ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Rural Students in Illinois Shoulder More Student Debt Than Their Peers

Sarah Weissman/ Diverse: Issues in Higher Education/ Nov 8 2019

Rural students in Illinois take on more debt to attend college than their peers, preventing them from returning and contributing to their rural communities, a new report found.

The study is part of a series of three reports by the Partnership for College Completion, a higher education advocacy organization in Illinois. The series examines how different groups of students are impacted by the state's dwindling investment in higher education, after state funding for public universities dropped 50% from 2002 to 2018 in Illinois. The first two reports focused on Black and Latinx students.

The goal is to shift the focus from institutions to students in discussions about state disinvestment.

"Over the past couple of years, we've spent a fair amount of time navel gazing and tongue gnashing about the state of higher education in Illinois," said Kyle Westbrook, founding executive director of the Partnership for College Completion. "What we thought was important in these series of reports is to begin to reframe this conversation about disinvestment in higher education in Illinois around its impact on students."

The report on Illinois' rural students found that they have limited access to colleges and universities, partly because they need to travel farther than their peers.

The state has 62 private colleges but only 25 of them are located outside the Chicago metropolitan area with only seven of them serving areas with limited college access. According to the report, rural students travel over 100 miles to get to a private college versus students from cities and suburbs, who travel about 30 miles.

Meanwhile, there's a divide between rural students who can afford to leave for college and those who can't, the report found.

Rural households tend to have lower incomes but more financial stability in terms of wealth and assets. But the rural students who go to college are still incurring more student loan debt than their peers. The average cost of tuition for low-income students at a public university in Illinois is \$12,800 per year, which is steep compared to other states. Surveyed students from rural areas in Illinois who attended public four-year universities owed about \$10,500 in debt while urban and suburban students owed \$1,300 less on average.

This may be impacted by the types of institutions they attend. Rural students are more likely to attend high-cost for-profit colleges, the report found. They're also more likely to attend community colleges, where applicants for the Monetary Award Program, Illinois' financial aid, are more than four times more likely to be denied.

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rural students, cont'd

Given the distance between rural areas and most Illinois campuses, many rural students in Illinois also partake in online programs, which often cost as much if not more than other programs at public universities and private nonprofit colleges, according to a survey cited in the report.

The study also looks at the compounded access and affordability challenges for rural students of color. While Black students had similar completion rates in urban and rural areas, Latinx students from rural areas were less likely to earn a degree than their urban or suburban peers.

Because of financial strain, research shows rural students are less likely to return to their communities post-graduation. The report cites a national survey which found that 73% of rural students with the highest loan debt move to cities, compared to just 37% of rural students with the least loan debt.

Because graduates in rural areas earn lower incomes, student loan debt incentivizes them to move to cities, according to the report.

“Unintentionally, this disinvestment makes it harder for rural students to return to rural areas, which can actually speed up population loss in those areas,” said Partnership for College Completion Policy Analyst Michael Abrahamson, the report’s author. National studies show “if we can get more rural students with degrees to go back to those rural areas it can actually spur more economic development.”

The Partnership for College Completion chose to focus on rural students in part because of an “unstated but just beneath the surface sentiment” among Illinois lawmakers that college affordability is just a Chicago problem, Westbrook said. He stressed that this issue should matter to lawmakers with rural constituents too.

“Race is certainly a part of this, Black and Brown students in particular,” he said. “But it cuts across

racial lines to affect rural students. When it comes time for voting for state appropriations, we can’t set this up as a Democrat versus Republican, downstate versus Chicago area battle, because the impacts are felt across the state.”

The report concludes with a number of policy recommendations: upping the state’s investment in the Monetary Award Program, increasing funding for colleges that serve high numbers of underrepresented students, limiting or abolishing merit-based aid, offering completion grants and eliminating the Monetary Award Program at for-profit colleges.

The recommendations “chart a vision for the future” and offer ideas for “targeted reinvestment,” Abrahamson said. “The bottom line is that there’s no substitute for reinvestment in the state.”



Underrepresented students at Illinois institutions impacted by budget cuts

Sarah Wood/ Diverse: Issues in Higher Education/
Nov 1, 2019

A recent period of higher education cutbacks in Illinois has created affordability and equity gaps for underrepresented students.

That's according to new reports by the Partnership of College Completion (PCC). The reports note that from 2002 to 2018, funding for Illinois public universities was cut over 50 percent and community colleges saw a similar disinvestment. This caused many institutions to increase the cost of tuition to make up for the loss.

"When you cut education, you don't cut the costs, you just shift the costs from the state to institutions, then from the institutions to students," said Michael Abrahamson, policy analyst at PCC. "So, it disproportionality hurts students who have the least ability to pay and institutions that have the smallest financial market. It affects Black and Latinx students in Illinois in different ways but all to some degree because of how those costs are being shifted to students."

In order to analyze the state-wide underfunding impact on Black and Latinx students, PCC recently released two reports as part of a three-part series. The findings were organized based on major themes including access, cost and the ability to pay.

"We rarely talk about the impact on students and we rarely talk about the ways in which the state of

Illinois really retreating from it's historic investment in higher education has impacted the life trajectories of hundreds of thousands of students over the last 15 years," said Kyle P. Westbrook, founding executive director at PCC.

In the study, *Priced Out: Black Students On Illinois' Disinvestment In Higher Education and What Can Be Done About It*, researchers reveal that in 2017, 11,100 fewer Black students attended Illinois' public and private nonprofit colleges compared to 2007, regardless of the similar numbers of high school graduates.

Westbrook said that some of the enrollment decline was caused by the recession. It was expected that once the recession ended, enrollment would be equivalent to where it was pre-recession, if not more. However, that was not the case.

"That was really shocking and should be a cause for alarm," he added.

Only four of the 12 public universities and four of the 62 private nonprofit colleges in Illinois have a Black student population that is representative of the state's population, according to the report.

In terms of financial inequity gaps, the median Illinois Black household earns \$33,500 compared to \$62,000 for White households and is three times more likely to have an annual income below the federal poverty line. Additionally, the rate of debt is higher as 38 percent

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underrepresented, cont'd

of Black graduates owed more than \$15,000 in loans, compared to 23 percent of White graduates, the report also found.

PCC's most recent study, *Priced Out: Latinx Students On Illinois' Disinvestment In Higher Education and What Can Be Done About It*, showed similar gaps.

Latinx community college students have a completion rate of 25 percent, compared to 37 percent for White community college students. At four-year public universities, Latinx students graduate at a rate of 41 percent, compared to 55 percent for White students. National research shows that Latinx student borrowers are 61 percent more likely to default on student loans than White students, according to PCC's report.

Although Illinois saw an 81 percent increase of Latinx high school graduates as well as college enrollment double from 2007 to 2017, the rate of earning four-year degrees did not share the same growth. This is due to low transfer and completion rates. Additionally, in terms of tuition cost, Latinx families pay 39 percent of their income to attend public universities and 49 percent for private universities, compared to White families who pay 31 percent and 35 percent, the report found.

In general, in order to address these equity issues, institutions need to focus on remedial courses and developmental education to ensure that Illinois is giving students the "best possible chance to succeed," according to Westbrook.

At the state level, Illinois needs to reinvest in its institutions. Both reports advocated and recommended an equity-driven funding formula for higher education, meaning the institutions who serve the highest percentage of low-income or underrepresented students should receive a "higher appropriation than public institutions that are not serving representative portions of student populations in terms of race and socioeconomic status," said Westbrook.

Within the next week, PCC will release the last report titled *Priced Out: Rural Students* which focuses on the divide between those who can afford to leave their hometown for four-year degrees from public and private institutions and those that stay in the area to earn two-year degrees.

"Higher costs means they incur more debt and higher debt means that these students can less afford to move back to their hometown," said Abrahamson. "There's a lot of national research that says a lot of rural students do want to move back and raise families in the places they are from but with large amounts of student debt, because they stand to make more in cities, it's a less tenable proposition which is both inequitable and bad for the state."

In order to see results within the state's higher education system, the reports should be shared with both institutions and policy makers, said Abrahamson.

"I hope [these reports] will be a good launching pad for conversations on these topics," he said. "I think we have to have these conversations with the public and that this is about investment, it's about the future of our state and equity."



Black college students in Illinois get the short end of the financial stick

Delece Smith-Barrow/Hechinger Report/ Oct 25, 2019

Illinois is in a league of its own when it comes to state spending on higher education. It spent 32 percent more per full-time equivalent student, after adjusting for inflation, in 2018 than it did in 2008 – far more than any other state, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts. This spending is particularly noteworthy because 40 states spent less on higher education in 2018 than they did before the Great Recession.

Many would think the more money a state has, the more it can spend on postsecondary education. Meeting the financial needs of low-income students, for example, should be easier. But Illinois students who are the most disadvantaged – typically those from low-income households or underrepresented minority groups – are not being adequately served, according to data from the Partnership for College Completion, a regional group that works to help more students complete college in the Chicago area. Their newly released report, “Priced Out: Black Students,” shows that black students in Illinois colleges and universities are getting the short end of the stick financially.

Black families in Illinois spend 44 percent of their income, on average, to attend public institutions, while white families spend 31 percent, the report states. For private colleges and universities, black families on average spend 51 percent of their income but white families spend 35 percent.

When black students leave college in Illinois, it's often

with higher debt than their white peers, too. About 38 percent of black graduates owed more than \$15,000 while just 23 percent of white students owed this much.

The state's overall investment in higher education has increased in recent years, but Illinois has failed to allot enough money for student aid, said Kyle Westbrook, executive director for the Partnership for College Completion.

“Tuition is going up at the time that the state's need-based aid has remained flat,” he said.

Since 2002, he said, the state has appropriated fewer and fewer dollars toward the Monetary Award Program, a need-based grant for low-income Illinois students. That year, every student who was eligible for MAP received aid. Now, “about 43 percent of the students who were eligible don't even receive awards,” Westbrook said.

With less state aid available, black students are being left behind.

The students in the state who are least able to pay, who are disproportionately black, are either not attending college at all, taking out loans or going to for-profit schools that don't provide the same value, Westbrook said.

“In 2018, 46 percent of total state funding for higher education went to Illinois' pension system.”

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short end, cont'd

Sophia Laderman, senior policy analyst, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association

There are “11,000 fewer African-American students in our higher education system in 2017 than there were in 2007,” he said.

So where is all that higher education money going? To pension funds.

“In 2018, 46 percent of total state funding for higher education went to Illinois’ pension system,” said Sophia Laderman, a senior policy analyst at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, a national professional organization. Back in 2008, Illinois spent just 13.6 of its total higher education funding on pensions, the association reported.

The state is making up for years of disinvestment into its higher education system’s pension funds, said Andy Carlson, vice president of finance policy and member services at the association.

“There’s only so much money to go around,” Carlson said. “A choice has been made because they’re constitutionally obligated to fund the pension program.”

The pot of money for higher education needs to get bigger, Westbrook said, but the state must also prioritize equity when delivering its appropriations.

There is hope, however, that more students will soon receive MAP, which currently has a maximum award of \$5,340. Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker announced this month that he plans to increase the funding for MAP by 50 percent over the next five years.

“We want to make sure that as the state is reinvesting in our public institutions that we’re reinvesting in a way that is smart, targeted and equitable,” Carlson said.



Op-Ed: Remedial Courses a Black Hole for College Resources, Aspirations - More institutions should offer first-year students for-credit courses and other alternatives.

Kyle Westbrook/PCC/ Oct 24, 2019

Lurking beneath the good news on annual gains in college-going rates for black and Latinx students from Chicago is a literal black hole that likely will be the place where college and career aspirations go to die: developmental or remedial education.

Every year in Illinois, tens of thousands of students will be placed into remedial courses, mostly in math and English. Once they are placed into these developmental education courses, students rarely get out. In 2016, less than 1 in 5 students who began their college careers in developmental education courses earned a degree.

In early 2019, the Partnership for College Completion released a policy brief on remediation in Illinois, reviewing publicly available data and urging a significant overhaul of the measures used to judge “college readiness,” which place nearly 46 percent of all students enrolling in community college into remedial coursework. We also called for reforming the structure of remedial courses that serve few students well.

A broken remedial education system serves few students well but disproportionately underserves black and Latinx students.

In 2016, among students attending community college, 62 percent of Latinx and 71 percent of black students were placed in remediation, compared to 41

percent of white students. Larger societal inequities that result in disparate life outcomes for black and Latinx populations contribute to these inequities, but research shows that high-stakes tests like those often used for college placement exacerbate those inequities and calcify them into a student’s career outcomes.

Traditionally, students placed in developmental education must successfully complete a non-credit-bearing course—which often costs as much as a credit-bearing course—before they can enroll in their gateway courses. Only four years ago, some students at one community college in Chicago had to pass up to four levels of remediation or four prerequisite courses before they could enter a college English course.

These courses consume precious financial aid dollars like Illinois Monetary Award Program funds, which every year run out before all eligible students receive an award. Last year, nearly 100,000 Illinois students were turned away for a MAP grant because the funds were depleted.

Fortunately, these types of barriers are increasingly becoming relics of the past as more institutions and state legislatures look for alternatives to fix this broken system.

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remedial courses, cont'd

States such as California and Texas have prioritized co-requisite models for remediation. In co-requisite models, students who may need remediation enroll in their credit-bearing courses while being concurrently enrolled in a course or lab that provides them with additional support. A recent report on the outcomes of California reforms shows a significant increase in black and Latinx students passing gateway courses in both math and English.

There also are signs of progress in Illinois.

In 2018, the chief academic officers and presidents of the state's community colleges adopted a recommendation that colleges use alternative placement measures to high-stakes tests, such as cumulative high school GPA, since tests like SAT and ACT have been found to be more closely correlated to a student's family income than to their likelihood of succeeding in college.

Similarly, our state's high schools are increasingly offering developmental math and English. More Illinois institutions need to follow the lead of Harper College in Palatine and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, which have successfully implemented co-requisite remediation.

Illinois leaves a lot of talent on the table when too few students succeed in college, not because of a lack of will or skill, but because the systems that are meant to serve them fail them.

Kyle Westbrook is executive director of Partnership for College Completion, a nonprofit, and has more than 20 years of experience as a teacher and administrator in public education.

APPENDIX C

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