

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE
LEADERS OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

From the Board of Trustees of the College Board

the
CollegeKeys
Compact™

**GETTING READY, GETTING IN,
AND GETTING THROUGH COLLEGE:**
EXPANDING OPTIONS FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS



October
2007

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Acknowledgments

As co-chairs of the College Board Task Force on College Access for Students from Low-Income Backgrounds appointed by the Board of Trustees of the College Board, we want to express our gratitude for the contributions of many individuals whose assistance made this report possible.

Our first acknowledgment goes to the Board of Trustees itself, which created the task force, got it under way, and supported it as it went about its task. The Board of Trustees has been a steadfast national advocate for efforts to improve the preparation, admission, and graduation rates of students from low-income backgrounds. Georgette DeVeres, associate vice president of admission and financial aid at Claremont McKenna College, and past chair of the Board of Trustees, played a key leadership role in launching the task force. We want to thank also Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, for his leadership and contributions in helping us shape and refine this document. We are deeply indebted to him; his advice, guidance, and support for the effort were invaluable.

All of the members of the task force contributed in innumerable ways to this report, but we want to single out the leadership roles played by several task force members. Ann Coles, senior advisor for college access, The Education Resources Institute, led a working group on student preparation (getting ready). Carroll Easterday, coordinator for college counseling, North Central High School in Indianapolis, chaired the group on admissions and financial aid (getting in). Shirley Ort, associate provost and director of scholarships and student aid of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, led the effort to explore student persistence to degree (getting through). We are indebted to them all and to the members of their working groups.

We were the beneficiaries of impressively professional support from leaders and staff within the College Board. Dorothy Sexton, vice president of governance and an officer of the Board of Trustees, was a key leader of the task force as a member of the steering committee. Dorothy's staff prepared and planned our meetings and assisted us with travel to talk with College Board members across the country. Two former staff leaders at the College Board provided valuable help, also as members of the steering committee. Martha H. Salmon offered her wisdom and experience in engaging the College Board's regional offices and prepared many presentations for the membership. Kathie Little's professionalism, keen eye for detail, and comprehensive grasp of the challenges helped keep the steering committee and the task force on track. Deb Thyng Schmidt, a skilled writer and consultant to the College Board, faithfully recorded our meetings, and her comprehensive minutes and notes were invaluable records of our activities. Vicky Centeno kept track of our travel and hotel needs, while the College Board's Marketing and Publication Services unit designed the report.

We appreciate the work of Don Hossler, professor of educational leadership at Indiana University’s School of Education and several of his graduate students, along with College Board intern Matthew Schwieger. They made sure we properly understood and correctly interpreted the research cited in our report. We also wish to thank Natalia Hart at the Ohio State University, Don Saleh at Syracuse University, Graig Meyer of the Blue Ribbon Mentor Program, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, Clint Gasaway at Wabash College, and Lynzie DeVeres, then a senior at Oberlin College, for joining with a subcommittee of Task Force members in developing a working definition of “low-income.” Producing a commonly accepted definition of low-income was a critical task in moving our work forward.

As part of the task force’s work, we developed a video to convey the urgency of these issues through the eyes of students, parents, and educators. The video and sound team of Ethan Vogt and Stephen Hopkins from Furnace Media in New York brought remarkable expertise, creativity, and commitment to this effort.

The core of this document depends on analyses developed by the working groups. We appreciate the work of James Harvey of James Harvey & Associates, Seattle, Washington, in getting our ideas on paper and editing this document.

We realized from the beginning that the Task Force work would be divided into distinct phases—a research and recommendation phase, which this report completes, and an implementation phase, which now begins. To that end we hope that our work will be useful to a variety of College Board–initiated working groups, including the College Board Commission on Access, Admission, and Success in Higher Education; the Admission in the 21st Century Task Force; the Rethinking Student Aid Study Group; and the National Commission on Community Colleges, as well as to the College Board staff engaging in implementation strategies. We also hope that the research and recommendations will be useful to the membership at large, both within and outside the CollegeKeys Compact™ that it establishes.

Steven E. Brooks
Task Force Co-Chair

Youlonda Copeland-Morgan
Task Force Co-Chair

Executive Summary

The CollegeKeys Compact™

This is not simply a report from the Board of Trustees of the College Board; it is a call to action. We ask that you join us in a great new national effort to reshape American education and to make the American Dream a reality for young people all across the country.

When individuals have access to a college education, we know that society as a whole benefits. Inarguably, the distribution of these benefits is uneven across our country, a matter we believe is an urgent concern for us as individuals and, collectively, as a nation.

Recent estimates indicate that nearly one-half of all *college-qualified* low- and moderate-income high school graduates do not enroll in a four-year program of college study because of financial barriers. As a nation committed to equal opportunity and to maintaining a competitive edge in the world, we must be steadfastly intolerant of financial barriers that bar our young people from reaching their full potential and, consequently, our full potential as a nation.

Low-Income Students

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

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

–OR–

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

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

–OR–

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

–OR–

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

While the financial barriers to seeking a college education are clear, other challenges are less evident. These obstacles include poor preparation, low expectations, and lack of reliable information about college possibilities and the value of college attendance. These conditions threaten our place in the world, our standard of living, and the quality of life for all Americans.

We believe that:

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

Now is the time to mobilize the resources of talent in our association and the commitment among the 5,200 institutional members of the College Board so that students from low-income backgrounds are prepared for a better life. We ask that our members join in a new partnership, the CollegeKeys Compact. Together, we can encourage college success for low-income students through a broad array of services that help them get prepared for college and then succeed after admission.

The Compact is based on research conducted by the College Board's Task Force on College Access for Students from Low-Income Backgrounds, and it is driven by member commitment to the belief that all underserved students have a right to an affordable, accessible, and successful college experience.

The broad goals outlined here compose an ambitious agenda. We propose moving the agenda forward by establishing a powerful partnership of mutually reinforcing expectations between the College Board and its members, and among the members themselves. Joining the Compact will provide benefits; it will also raise expectations of you, the partners.

To further this agenda, the College Board is committed to accelerating its transformation from its traditional role as a “testing organization” to its emerging role as a leading national advocate for equity and excellence in education. In return, the Board of Trustees asks you, the leaders of American education, to join the Compact by:

- Formally agreeing to the major statements of belief listed above;
- Completing a detailed inventory of your institution’s strengths and needs with regard to student readiness, achievement, and success;
- Assigning a team of senior leaders to explore these issues;
- Establishing measurable institutional goals for expanding your institution’s progress; and
- Committing to monitoring and publicly reporting your progress.

In its leadership role, the **College Board pledges to:**

- Establish, implement, and maintain the CollegeKeys Compact.
- Establish a goal of eliminating all fees associated with admissions and financial aid for target students.
- Work with its members and others to build on the most effective policies and practices to get students ready for, into, and successfully through college.
- Assist its members in their efforts to establish peer review and evaluation of the ongoing components of the Compact.
- Serve as a relentless advocate at the national, regional, state, and local levels to expand programs designed to support college preparation, access, and success.
- Establish a recognition program that provides incentives to colleges and universities to undertake new and creative recruitment, outreach, admissions, financial aid, and retention programs.

Schools and school districts that join the Compact are expected to:

- Expand the rigor of high school courses and establish a college-preparatory curriculum as the default program for all.
- Mount college awareness programs and pay attention to parents.
- Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators around admissions and financial aid practices.
- Enter into partnerships with higher education institutions to support recruiting fairs, campus visits, and fee waivers.
- Monitor progress and share data.

Colleges and universities that join the Compact are expected to:

- Create early outreach programs and new partnerships with schools, including more college fairs, school visits, campus overnights, and other strategies that emphasize the importance of college attendance to high school and middle school students.
- Expand “holistic” admissions evaluations, and to the extent possible, commit themselves to waiving application fees for all low-income students.
- Establish need-based aid and clear and accurate cost-of-attendance budgets as priorities.
- Intensify academic support and encourage degree completion, through activities that provide tutoring, supplemental instruction, study-skills instruction, and the development of learning communities that serve the needs of low-income students.
- Monitor progress and share data.

Now is the time to make good on the promise first made by President Abraham Lincoln when he signed the Morrill Act during the Civil War, and restated in some fashion by every post-World War II president of the United States: The American Dream will be kept alive and well because no student is turned away at the college door because his family is poor...because each

American has a right to expect that if she works hard she will be able to obtain a first-class college education...because access to the fruits of a college degree remains a defining element of American life.

Today, as America enters fully into a new century, is no time to lose sight of that dream or lose faith in the promise of the American future. Far from it. We should build with confidence on our strengths. In this third century of our national life, the Board of Trustees of the College Board believes that hope for our common future rests on drawing from the best in our past. We can maintain the dream of a better life for all. We can do so if, together, we sustain the great educational legacy bequeathed to us by our parents and pass it on, undiminished, to our children and to theirs.

Introduction

“I am somehow less concerned with . . . Einstein’s brain than I am with the near certainty that people of equal talent lived and died in cotton fields and sweatshops.”

—Stephen Jay Gould

I believe this report may be the most significant issued by the College Board during my tenure to date as president. I do not reach that judgment lightly. In recent years, the College Board has published many important statements—on the importance of writing, the need to improve teaching, and the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2007 rulings on school diversity, among other topics. But this document is special. At its core is a sense that access to the fruits of higher education for all (including degree completion) is not only the right thing to do as this society moves fully into the twenty-first century, it is also the smart thing to do.

As the world around us changes, becoming ever more complex, it requires higher levels of education and skill for all. Education is the vital tool young Americans need to manage their lives. It is also the essential underpinning of our national capacity to succeed in a newly globalized economic environment. Put simply, our country cannot prosper without fully developing all of its human resources. Indeed, as the evidence developed in this report indicates, a “degree gap” of young college graduates exists between the United States and several advanced industrial nations. Closing that degree gap will require that American students from low-income backgrounds graduate from college at the same rate as their more fortunate peers.

It would be both morally wrong and competitively foolish to foreclose young people’s options for higher education, based even in part on income. And yet, that is where we find ourselves today. As this report makes clear, income makes a big difference in college attendance and graduation.

That realization gave rise to this “open letter” from the College Board’s Board of Trustees. The letter is issued to the 5,200 members of the College Board—schools, colleges and universities, agencies, and nonprofit organizations. We ask you to join us in creating CollegeKeys™, a Compact to breathe new life into the College Board’s long-standing commitment to help more low-income students attain a college degree. Together we can aim to prepare more low-income students for

CollegeKeys Compact™

Statement of Beliefs

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

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

an excellent college education, get them in, and get them through. The Board of Trustees is prepared to devote substantial resources to the effort.

What this document is really about is the recognition that all of the benefits we enjoy in the United States depend in significant ways on education. Our rights as citizens require us to be able to evaluate new information, sort out complicated and difficult issues, and articulate our thoughts intelligently and persuasively. Our individual ability to earn a living requires each of us to master a growing body of knowledge and complex new technologies, while working with people from diverse backgrounds. Our nation's capacity to prosper depends on the excellence of our human resources in a globally competitive environment. All of these things—our individual rights and income, and our national ability to compete in a ferociously competitive,

globalized world—require that we develop the most essential skill of all—minds equipped to think, the very “product” in which higher education specializes.

The dual imperative that we do both the right thing and the smart thing was captured brilliantly in a comment by the American paleontologist, Stephen Jay Gould, one of the great scientists of the late twentieth century and for many years the Agassiz Professor of Zoology at Harvard University. Gould once said:

I am somehow less concerned with the weight and convolutions of Einstein's brain than I am with the near certainty that people of equal talent lived and died in cotton fields and sweatshops.

We do not pretend that tapping the talent of all the potential Einsteins in low-income communities will be quick or easy. It will be hard work. It will be hard on K-12 schools, most already struggling to give a better future to their students. It will be hard on colleges and universities, almost all doing the best they can with limited financial aid, to help low-income students. And it will be hard on students and their families, many dealing with great difficulties in their lives with grace and fortitude. We know it is hard, but the effort must be put forth. And consider the potential returns of finding even one more world-class scientist, much less an Einstein, Stephen Hawking, or Stephen Jay Gould. If we put in the effort, the benefits that come back to schools, colleges and universities, and students and families will repay the sweat, sacrifice, and strain many times over.

In the end, this report is about both the dignity of each of us as individuals and our future as a people. I am pleased to be associated with it and deeply indebted to the members of the Low-

Income Task Force, which developed it.¹ The task force worked diligently in developing this important statement, a summary of months of research and analysis that is more fully laid out in the appendixes. I want to thank, in particular, the task force's co-chairs, Steven E. Brooks and Youlonda Copeland-Morgan, for their patience and skill in leading the task force successfully through a difficult and demanding assignment.

Gaston Caperton

President

¹The charge guiding the task force's work can be found in Appendix A.

Chapter 1

What Is the Issue?

We write with a sense of great urgency. For millions of young people in the United States, the American Dream is at risk. Recent estimates indicate that financial barriers alone prevent nearly one-half of all *college-qualified* low- and moderate-income high school graduates from enrolling in a four-year program of college study.² Annually, according to these estimates, more than 405,000 students fully prepared to enter a four-year college will not do so (4.4 million a decade) and 170,000 will attend no college at all, two- or four-year (about 1.7 million a decade). The financial barriers are clear, but we believe the challenge extends beyond money to include poor preparation, low expectations, and lack of reliable information about college possibilities and the value of college attendance. These conditions threaten our place in the world, our standard of living, and the quality of life for all Americans.

This document outlines a new Compact to build the capacity of the College Board and its members to get low-income students ready for, into, and through college. We ask you to join us in this effort.

Our country and our educational institutions are at a critical point. A nation committed to equal opportunity and to maintaining its competitive edge in the world cannot tolerate wasting the talent of so many of its young people so casually.³ We understand that this is a difficult task. We know, too, that a host of social and systematic problems complicates the issue—widespread income inequality, childhood poverty, family instability, the politics of immigration, and inequities in public school finance, to mention only the most obvious. The undertaking becomes all the more formidable as voting referenda and court rulings circumscribe the ability of schools and universities to take personal factors such as race and ethnicity into account in the effort to encourage educational diversity.⁴

²Ellen Ficklen and Jeneva E. Stone, *Empty Promises: The Myth of College Access in America*. (Washington: Report of the Advisory Committee on Student Aid, June 2002.)

³For a discussion of these issues see: Center on Innovative Thought, *Teachers and the Uncertain American Future* (New York: The College Board, 2006) and Kirsch, Irwin et al., *America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future*. (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 2007).

⁴See for example *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978); *Gratz v. Bollinger* 539 U.S. 244 (2003); *Grutter v. Bollinger* 539 U.S. 306 (2003); *Meredith v. Jefferson* 551 U.S. (2007) and *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District #1*, 551 U.S. (2007). Ballot initiatives are numerous. In 1996, for example, California voters approved Proposition 209 to prohibit the consideration of race, ethnicity, gender, and other factors in state education and employment. In 1998, Washington voters approved Initiative 200, which banned government from “discriminating against” people due to race, color, sex, national origin, or ethnicity.

Still, the task must be taken up. New challenges press upon the United States, many of them related to our ability to secure our economic future:

- It is well established, as Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said in June 2007, that “Ninety percent of the fastest-growing jobs require postsecondary education or training.”⁵
- Although they still have a long way to go to catch the United States, newly industrializing nations such as India and China have committed themselves to remarkable growth in college-educated human resources, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.⁶
- While the U.S. continues to lead the world in the proportion of adults with four-year degrees, the proportion of young adults enrolled in higher education is now higher in several other advanced nations than it is in the United States.⁷
- Recent estimates indicate that to close the “degree gap” that exists between our country and several other industrialized nations, the United States should plan on increasing the number of associate degrees awarded by 25 percent and the number of bachelor’s degrees by 19 percent by 2025, an increase that will require ensuring that “students from low-income backgrounds achieve the same levels of attainment we see today among whites and Asian Americans...and wealthier students.”⁸

We share your pride in everything American education has accomplished for this society and its people. American schools, colleges, and universities have helped create a dynamic, fluid, and civil society.⁹ They have promoted social mobility, spurred economic growth, and integrated newcomers into our national life. They have encouraged democratic values and the nation’s civic culture, while creating marvels of life extension through research and modern medicine. Like you, we understand that the benefits of a college education are simply indispensable to our young people and to our common future. No one can question our joint commitment to educational equity and excellence. The issue lies not in our commitment, but in our capacity to implement our ideals in practice.

The Board of Trustees believes that it is time our institutions redoubled their efforts to help the nation renew its commitment to the American Dream. That dream has always held that all, by dint of hard work, will be able to go as far as their talent and industry take them. In the twenty-first century a college degree is increasingly the foundation of that dream.

⁵“Secretary Spellings Delivers Remarks at Boston Higher Education Summit.” (Press Release, U.S. Department of Education, June 14, 2007.) “Postsecondary education” is a term of art that includes two- and four-year colleges as well as for-profit proprietary postsecondary institutions. Secretary Spellings’s remarks are available at: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/06/06142007a.html>

⁶For a discussion of these issues see Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* (Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 2007) and Gary Gerreffi and Vivek Wadhwa, *Framing the Engineering Outsourcing Debate: Placing the United States on a Level Playing Field with China and India*. (Durham: Pratt School of Engineering, Duke University, 2006).

⁷Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2006* (Brussels: OECD, 2007).

⁸Travis Reindl, *Hitting Home: Quality, Cost and Access Challenges Confronting Higher Education Today*. (Boston: Making Opportunity Affordable, March 2007). Reindl compares degree production for younger and older adults in member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), including the United States.

⁹Throughout this document “schools” refers to public or private elementary, middle, or secondary schools. “Colleges and universities” refers to two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

Fortunately, the current environment has created a true window of opportunity for the kind of significant, sustained change we envision. Three conditions exist today that give us reason to be optimistic about achieving the ambitious goals outlined in this report:

- More and more students and parents understand the relationship between a college degree and future success—and between a college degree and access to the full economic, social, and cultural benefits of American life. Public opinion polls illustrate that the educational and career aspirations of low-income parents for their children are as high as—and often higher than—the aspirations of parents from middle- and upper-income families.
- Federal and state policymakers recognize the need for policies and programs that raise standards and achievement for **all students**. This dual commitment to equity and excellence is reflected in the federal No Child Left Behind and Higher Education Acts, and in the many new state initiatives focused on raising standards and increasing academic rigor. We applaud the strong commitment to preparing all students for success in college and work. And we intend to leverage this commitment as we pursue the agenda outlined in this report.
- Member institutions of the College Board—schools, school districts, and colleges and universities—have supported a wide variety of equity initiatives. At member colleges and universities, for example, we have seen extensive growth in outreach efforts, summer bridge programs, efforts to reduce loan burden, need-blind admissions policies, and other strategies to make college more accessible to students from low-income backgrounds.

We know that equity and excellence can be pursued together. Recent research indicates that colleges and universities do not have to choose between diversity on campus and admissions selectivity and excellence. Programs that are carefully designed to prepare, recruit, and retain students once enrolled on campus improve college graduation rates without narrowing access.¹⁰ Now is the time to build on that research. We need nothing less than a new commitment to mobilize the resources of talent and commitment in our association and its members so that students from low-income backgrounds are prepared for a better life in which they are the architects of their future.

It is the right time. It is the right issue. And the College Board and its members are the right team.

Students from Low-Income Backgrounds

In identifying students from low-income backgrounds, the College Board believes schools and colleges must look at those students receiving economic subsidies and those enrolled in schools with low college-going or high dropout rates. This underserved population also includes those who are in foster care, wards of the court, or first-generation college attendees. We also count those who have identified themselves as in need of assistance by enrolling in such programs as TRIO, AVID¹¹, or similar programs.

¹⁰See Colleen O'Brien and Jennifer Engle, *Demography Is Not Destiny*. (Washington: The Pell Institute, March 2007).

¹¹The “TRIO” programs are a series of federal educational outreach programs enacted in 1965 to encourage college attendance. The best known include Upward Bound, Talent Search, and student support services. AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) is a fifth- through twelfth-grade system designed to prepare students for college eligibility and success.

In a globally competitive environment, the national interest is best served by identifying and enrolling every student able to benefit from the college experience. In light of the economic imperative facing the nation, the College Board has cast as wide a net as possible in its description of low-income students. The College Board believes that all underserved students have a right to an affordable, accessible, and successful college experience.

Low-Income Students

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

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

–OR–

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

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

–OR–

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

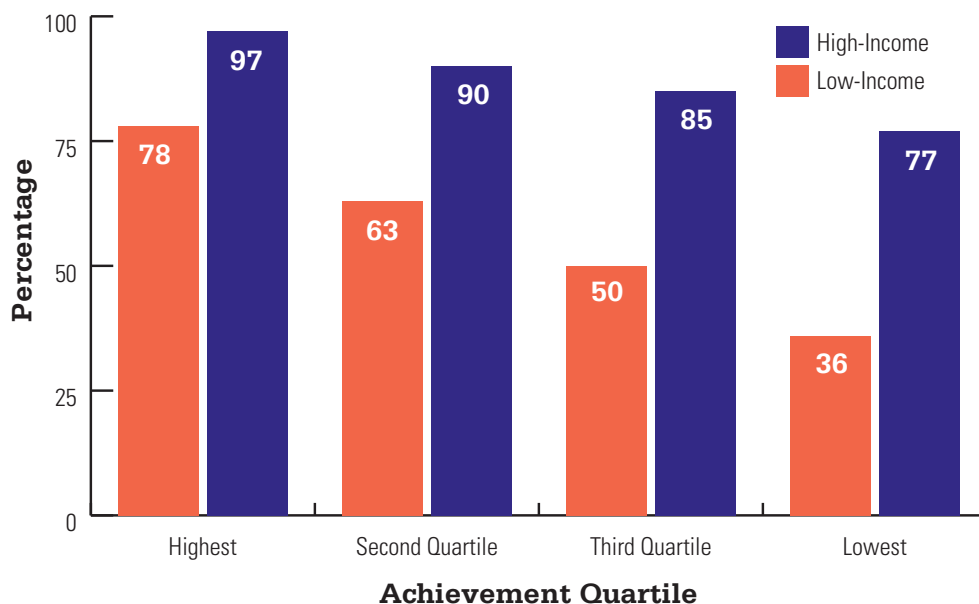
–OR–

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

Is it conceivable that many of the low-income students left looking through the campus gates were not prepared for college? Secondary school preparation, as we will note, is a major concern, but it is not the entire problem. An analysis from the National Center on Education Statistics sheds light on the issue. Income makes a big difference in college attendance. High-achieving students from low-income families have about the same chance of enrolling in college as low-achieving students from wealthier families (see Figure 1). From Figure 1, three conclusions are immediately apparent:

- For both high- and low-income students, college attendance is related to achievement in secondary school. The higher the level of achievement, the better the chance a student will attend college, whether from a background of wealth or poverty.
- At each achievement level, the advantage for upper-income students is hard to ignore. At the lowest achievement level, a wealthy student is about twice as likely to attend college as a low-income one.
- Most remarkable of all, a high-achieving student of limited means has about the same chance of attending college (78 percent) as a low-achieving student from a more advantaged background (77 percent).

Figure 1: College-Attendance Rates by Income and Achievement



Lack of resources undoubtedly contributes to this situation.¹² Even institutions staffed by people with the best of intentions can only do so much in the face of underfunded K–12 programs and what has become an inadequate student aid partnership between the federal government, states, and institutions. In a fair and equitable society, such disparities in educational opportunity would not be tolerated. The joint challenge facing us all is to find a way to eliminate these disparities.

This report focuses on equity and on excellence—both of which should be hallmarks of any effort to increase college access and success among students from low-income backgrounds. We believe new efforts must not only open the door to opportunity but also heighten expectations, raise standards, and provide the support necessary to enable low-income students to achieve excellence in the classroom and laboratory. Creating the right conditions must be accompanied by a commitment from all to ensure that students will excel. Excellence, of course, costs, but as President Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education observed in 1983, “in the long run mediocrity costs far more.”¹³

¹²Figure 1 is a 2007 analysis of 1997 results from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS). “Low income” in Figure 1 refers to students from families in the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes; “high income” refers to the top 20 percent of all family incomes. The highest to lowest achievement quartile rankings represent the distribution of student outcomes on NELS-administered achievement tests. See Gerald Danette and Kati Haycock, *Engines of Inequality: Diminishing Equity in the Nation’s Premier Public Universities*, (Washington: Education Trust, 2007) and National Center on Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education*, 1997, NCES 97-388, (Washington: GPO, 1997).

¹³National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Washington: U.S. Department of Education, April 1983.

Chapter 2

A Vision for the Future

All of us should look with confidence on our capacity to meet the challenges outlined in Chapter 1. From the outset, the nation's schools, colleges, and universities have been essential tools of economic and democratic growth.

The educational accomplishments of the United States are substantial and significant. Our institutions have supported and expanded the national interest in innumerable ways. As the twentieth century began, about 13 percent of American adults had a high school diploma, community colleges did not exist, and only about 27,000 bachelor's degrees were awarded annually.¹⁴ By 2003, 85 percent of the adult population had a high school diploma, community colleges were awarding 665,000 associate degrees annually, along with hundreds of thousands of certificates, and four-year colleges and universities were awarding 1.4 million bachelor's degrees.¹⁵

In providing for universal public schooling through grade 12 and broadening access to the fruits of a college education, public policy has enabled the nation's schools and colleges to serve as prodigious engines of opportunity, social mobility, and economic growth. No matter the crisis facing the United States, Americans have always placed the nation's schools, colleges, and universities at the heart of the national response. And, whenever the United States has called, its schools and institutions of higher education have always responded.

A New Call and the Need for a New Response

Now our institutions are called upon again. Our new challenge is to see to it that students from low-income backgrounds are represented in, and graduate from, colleges and universities at the same rates as their more affluent peers.

How will we know when we have succeeded? Join us as we think about what a more powerful, efficient, effective, and equitable educational future might look like.

¹⁴National Center for Education Statistics (2005). *Digest of Education Statistics* (NCES 2006-030), Table 8 and also Table 246.

¹⁵National Center for Education Statistics (2005). *Digest of Education Statistics* (NCES 2006-030), Table 8 and also Table 246.

A Better Educational Future

The year is 2020. It is 13 years since you received this letter. Enough time has passed that the students who were entering kindergarten as we wrote to you are now knocking on college doors. In that time, through the Compact described in this report, American schools, colleges and universities, state agencies, and nonprofit groups have collaborated to fully develop the capacities required to get large numbers of low-income students ready for, into, and through college.

Here are just a few of the highlights of what we will be able to see in 2020:

- A college-going culture is embedded in American schools, because a college-preparatory program has been established as the “default” secondary school curriculum, and all students take a college readiness assessment with the results used to improve instruction and expand expectations for college attendance.
- Middle school and high school curricula are aligned with standards for success at the next level, and extensive assessment and monitoring systems identify underperforming students early and accelerate their learning. Each student has an individualized plan for college; parents, guardians, and mentors are regularly informed on student progress and college readiness, and each student has access to a “college coach.”¹⁶
- Rigorous high school courses are available in every secondary school. Honors programs, Advanced Placement courses, and International Baccalaureate programs are the norm in American high schools, not the exception. And low-income and minority enrollment in these efforts reflects their presence in the student population.
- High dropout rates are a thing of the past, as schools and colleges cooperate to establish tutoring, study skills, and mentoring programs as early as middle school to support student learning and engagement.
- College and university partnerships with schools encourage the extension of admissions recruitment into middle schools, and into middle and high schools experiencing the greatest educational challenges. The partnerships offer a continuum of college and career exploration programs, including campus visits, college awareness programs, and assistance completing admissions and financial aid forms.
- The admissions process and the transition from high school to college receive a lot of attention. Waivers for admissions and testing fees are near universal for low-income students, and well publicized. Early college, dual enrollment, and bridge programs (involving schools and colleges) are common. Most colleges and universities are committed to holistic admissions practices that take noncognitive factors into account in the admissions process.
- Changes in financial aid policy and practice reflect increased institutional commitment to meeting students’ full need. Aid eligibility criteria for low-income students are simplified; low-income students can expect their full need to be met without overreliance on loans or jobs; institutional cost-of-attendance budgets fully account for expenses; and grants finance summer school for low-income students to accelerate their chances of academic success.

¹⁶Throughout this document “parents” should be understood to include biological parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, guardians, and mentors.

- Once on campus, students find that tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills programs, and small learning communities integrate academic instruction during the first year. Support activities affirm students’ cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds; student performance is actively monitored and “early warning” systems identifying academic challenges are in place; and comprehensive support systems provide academic, career, and personal counseling along with mentoring and social support to target students.
- Statewide articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions guarantee that community college students are able to enroll at four-year institutions without needlessly duplicating course work.
- Need-based financial aid that accurately assesses full costs and realistically meets full need (through a combination of grants, loans, and jobs) is a powerful tool encouraging student persistence through graduation.

The details of how this vision can be brought to life are spelled out in the Compact described in Chapter 3. What we want to emphasize here is the goal, with which, surely, few can find fault: Students from low-income backgrounds should be prepared for, enrolled in, and graduated from college at approximately the same rate as their more affluent peers.

But if we are to reach that goal, a lot of work needs to be done. All of us need to collaborate to get more students ready for, into, and through college.

Getting Ready

“You don’t really understand the seriousness of planning unless you are pushed enough by someone. It wasn’t emphasized enough in my high school.”

—Community college student
Northern Virginia Community College

“A lot of parents in this county did not go to college. We have a very low college-going rate. It’s under 20%. They just don’t... think their kids need to go to college... It’s hard to break that cycle.”

—Jay Palmer
Coordinator, GEAR UP
Chatham County, North Carolina

A complete listing of the difficulties in this area is daunting. They range from poor academic preparation, low expectations and aspirations, and anxiety about costs and expense, to limited curricular offerings and teacher and administrator biases. These challenges can be thought of in three broad categories: poor preparation, lack of school support, and lack of family and community experience with the academic world. Any of these difficulties creates huge problems for students’ college aspirations.

Preparation. For some students from low-income backgrounds (as, obviously, for some upper-income students) preparation is a barrier.¹⁷ Many schools enrolling low-income students do not offer rigorous college-prep courses or curricula. The Advanced Placement Program® or other challenging sequences in science, mathematics, history, literature, or the arts may not be available. Teachers, especially in mathematics and science, are frequently poorly prepared to teach their subjects.

¹⁷The discussion throughout this section relies on an extensive research review completed by the College Board’s Low-Income Task Force. With regard to “getting ready,” see, for example, A. Gamoran, A.C. Porter, J. Smithson, and P.A. White, *Upgrading High School Mathematics Instruction* (1997); The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, *Closing the Graduation Gap: Toward High Schools That Prepare All Students for College, Work, and Citizenship* (2003); M. Kirst and A. Venezia, *From High School to College: Improving Opportunities for Success in Postsecondary Education* (2004); and D.L. Stevenson, K.S. Schiller, and B. Schneider, *Sequences of Opportunities for Learning* (1994). A complete summary of the research is included in Appendix D.

"We are going into middle schools to get families to plan. All the studies show that planning is tied to academic success."

—**Libby Sears**

*Financial Aid Counselor and Academic Adviser
Northern Virginia Community College*

"I had a valedictorian arrive here with her mother in tow, crying and saying, 'Tell my mother it's OK for me to go to UT.' A lot of times the family will say, 'No, we want to keep you close. We don't want you to get hurt. We want you to be around here. Your role is with the family.'"

—**Mike Ore**

*Associate Director of Admissions
The University of Texas at Austin*

"I grew up in a single-parent household. It was always emphasized that for me to get anywhere in life, to be successful, I needed to go to college. What really went wrong... was my transition from middle school to high school. My middle school was nowhere near to what it should have been. It was just do the bare minimum and you get A's."

—**High school student**

Columbus, Ohio

"My mother, anytime I needed help, she couldn't always help me. Anytime I had math problems, or when I was taking algebra courses or geometry, she couldn't help. She was always working. So it's hard to get that experience in the sense of someone who's familiar... and can share their knowledge [about school]."

—**First-generation undergraduate student**

San Diego State University

Counseling, particularly college counseling, is often limited. Preparation for college entrance examinations is either not offered or not encouraged.

Indeed, many students enter high school poorly prepared for the academic demands of a college-preparatory curriculum. A common issue is that students in schools with concentrations of low-income students enter high school with poor reading skills. Although upper-income students will frequently

have been introduced to algebra in middle school, low-income students often first meet demanding college-prep math sequences in high school.

School Support. Lack of school support can also be a serious challenge.¹⁸ There is enough anecdotal and survey evidence to conclude that some teachers, counselors, and administrators, as well as university officials do not believe that all students are capable of being prepared for, or successful in, higher education. So we find some overburdened guidance counselors and teachers investing more time in a limited number of students who are viewed as "college material," while putting less effort into students perceived to have less talent. Students themselves seem to be aware of these dynamics, with some low-income students reporting that they need to be strategic in choosing teachers who "really taught" and valued them as students. Even in schools offering college-prep programs and the Advanced Placement Program, students from low-income backgrounds may be left in the dark about them or counseled away from these possibilities.

Families Unfamiliar with Higher Education. An enormous challenge is that many first-generation students and their families are intimidated by the prospect of applying for admission to college or being on campus.¹⁹ This can limit student aspirations. Students from

low-income backgrounds report receiving little support from adults (either parents or counselors) during the application process. Neither the students nor their families clearly understand the benefits of a college education, the college selection and application processes, or availability of financial aid to help finance the cost. Parental and student anxiety about family finances, the effects of students leaving home, and concerns about social isolation and loss of friends and family

¹⁸See Appendix D, particularly Robert C. Dickeson, *Collision Course: Rising College Costs Threaten America's Future* (2004); P. McDonough, *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity* (1997); P. McDonough and S. Calderon, *The Meaning of Money: Perceptual Differences Between College Counselors and Low-Income Families About College Costs and Financial Aid* (2006); and R. Stanton-Salazar, *Manufacturing Hope and Despair: The School and Kin Support Networks of U.S. Mexican Youth* (2005).

¹⁹See Appendix D, particularly L.W. Perna, *Differences in the Decision to Attend College Among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites* (2000); P. McDonough, op. cit., J. Steinberg, *The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process* (2003); and G. Kao and M. Tienda, *Educational Aspirations of Minority Youth* (1998).

can be powerful disincentives. Peer influences also play into this dynamic, with poverty and social inequity frequently creating negative biases about the value of college attendance in some communities.

In Sum: Any of the difficulties cited above—poor preparation, lack of school support, or confusion about the world of higher education or the benefits of college attendance—can seriously undermine a student’s chances of making a successful transition from high school to college and on to receipt of a degree. Experienced in combination, as they often are, the barriers are formidable, sometimes almost insurmountable, absent heroic effort on the part of students, families, educators, or mentors.

Getting In

Even students who have successfully cleared the hurdles of preparation and planning find themselves with new hoops to jump through in the admissions and financial aid processes. They include an overemphasis on traditional quantitative measures during admissions, complicated and confusing admissions, aid, and transfer processes, along with insufficient financial aid.

Income and Opportunity. Other things being equal, traditional admissions processes can work against students from low-income backgrounds. Overreliance on quantitative measures complicates the effort to get more first-generation and low-income students into college. These students often have not had the opportunity to receive a first-rate education. Many attend schools without the resources required to provide the best academic preparation. It is often true that students from low-income backgrounds attain lower grades, present lower scores on admissions tests, and present transcripts with less challenging course sequences. Access to quality instruction, more educational resources, and greater support from home and community are essential if the gaps in test scores and college enrollment are to be closed. At the same time, more holistic admissions processes can do a lot to identify the strengths and talents of students from low-income backgrounds.

Opaque Processes. Even experienced applicants can find the admissions and financial aid processes to be so confusing as to

“For a student coming from a low-income background, just seeing the fact that you require \$40 or \$50 [as an admission fee] can take your institution out of their realm.”

—**Kedra Ishop**
Associate Director of Admissions
The University of Texas at Austin

“One of the things we are trying to do with students is to make sure they are aware of financial aid opportunities and the financial aid process.”

—**Carol Mowbray**
Director, Student Financial Aid and Support Services
Northern Virginia Community College

“There are a lot of steps. When I give an information session, I just feel like I’m overwhelming people. I go, ‘OK, first you need to submit this, then there’s this, then there’s two essays, then there’s a paper résumé.’ Often their eyes are just getting bigger and bigger. They’re thinking, ‘Oh, my goodness.’ That can be very discouraging when you think there are a lot of hoops to jump through, just to get into this school.”

—**Amy Yearwood**
Assistant Director of Admissions
The University of Texas at Austin

“We live on a small dairy farm. We milk about 55 head of cows. Anything that my parents made went back to the farm. They didn’t make any money. So I supported myself. I paid for insurance, food, sometimes I would help with the gas and electric bills.”

—**Undergraduate student**
The Ohio State University

“In urban areas, you know, we come from low-income backgrounds. We don’t know prices, we don’t know numbers. All we know is that it’s expensive. That, right there, will kind of have people going, ‘Well gosh, we’re merely making it day to day. My parents are making ends meet. How am I going to do this?’”

—**Undergraduate student**
The Ohio State University

be “Byzantine” in the words of one analysis, and a “gauntlet” in another.²⁰ First-generation students are likely to find negotiating these challenges particularly difficult. The complexity of the admissions and aid eligibility systems and notification processes can mystify even experienced parents. Parents and students are expected to familiarize themselves with a confusing new language of Early Decision, Early Action, regular admission, deferred admission, spring admission, “FAFSA,” “EFC,” and a bewildering variety of loans, offered on different terms with different rates.²¹ While the processes, and multiple deadlines and forms associated with them, may appear transparent from behind the desks of those who created this system, they can be bewildering to families encountering it, particularly for first-generation students without experienced mentors to guide them.

Inadequate Financial Aid. In the face of parental anxieties about expenses and annual public criticism of rising costs, estimated costs on some campuses are frequently understated (ignoring, for example, the expense of travel, laptops, and a variety of “user fees” such as library duplication costs or graduation gown rentals). Meanwhile, funds are insufficient on most campuses to cover full student need. This situation leads to an entire array of academically defeating coping strategies on the part of students from low-income backgrounds. Students from many first-generation families, suspicious of loans and afraid to borrow, work too many hours, frequently off-campus, limiting study time and their ability to engage in the full college experience.

In Sum: In the face of these difficulties, it is hardly surprising that some students are discouraged from applying to college and that many, lacking mentoring or informed guidance in understaffed schools, miss critical admissions and financial aid deadlines.

“We get a lot of information. . . . I just wish it were easier to access it. It’s so hard. . . . I don’t know where to start. Then there’s FAFSA, like. . . these deadlines, everything is so fluid and I [worry that I] don’t know what I’m doing. I’m scared. I don’t want to mess up anything.”

—High school student
Columbus, Ohio

“Part of the problem is that we expect students and parents to come to us. We need to start going to them as well. We need to go out to the communities, out to the parents, out to the high schools and talk to the parents and explain the process and let them know that we’re here for them.”

—Alex Gonzalez
Associate Director of the Scholarship Office
The University of New Mexico

“It is a tremendous cultural shock for a student from inner-city Los Angeles to step on the Claremont Colleges campus.”

—Maria Torres
Chicano-Latino Student Affairs Center
Claremont Colleges

“Often students are not successful if they try to be a full-time college student and work full time. For too many students, when they do that, something has to give, and too often it’s school. It’s never the job.”

—Libby Sears
Financial Aid Counselor and Academic Adviser
Northern Virginia Community College

Getting Through

Traditionally, most colleges and universities felt they had met their obligations to first-generation students by recruiting and admitting them and awarding financial aid, confident that, once enrolled, students could fend for themselves. Recent research indicates, however, that getting a degree for students from low-income backgrounds can

²⁰See, for example, Kati Haycock, *Promise Abandoned: How Policy Choices and Institutional Practices Restrict College Opportunities* (2006); A.C. Dowd, *A Research Agenda for the Study of the Effects of Borrowing and Prospects of Indebtedness on Students’ College-Going Choices* (2006); Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, *Student Aid Gauntlet: Making Access to College Simple and Certain* (2005); and Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, *Empty Promises: The Myth of College Access in America* (2002).

²¹FAFSA stands for “Free Application for Federal Student Aid”; EFC stands for “Expected Family Contribution.”

“I was a real stabilizing factor in my family when I was there. When I left, my whole family life kind of ended up dissolving. I felt really bad that I should be there for [my younger brother]. This is the time he needs someone the most.”

—Undergraduate student
Harvey Mudd College

“Socially, you really don’t know who to hang out with, because back home you’re around your culture. Especially for me. I come from a border town. I’m so used to seeing other Native Americans and they understand me. They understand as far as the way I dress, the way I talk, the way I act, my accent. They understand me and it doesn’t become a factor of me having to prove myself.”

—Undergraduate student
The University of New Mexico

be at least as difficult as getting in.²² Indeed, low-income students are far less likely to graduate, or graduate on time, than their upper-income peers. Poor preparation, culture shock, and the lack of clear articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges all present difficulties.

Remediation and Achievement. It is no surprise that students from low-income backgrounds and underresourced schools often arrive on campus poorly prepared for the demands of college work. Frequently lacking a complete college-preparatory program, many require remedial college work. Low first-year GPAs often threaten to lengthen time to degree. Almost inevitably, persistence to the degree becomes more challenging, particularly as student costs accumulate for additional time on campus.

Unfamiliar Culture. The gap between the social and economic structures and expectations that many low-income students experienced in high school and those they encounter in college can be enormous. Low-income students frequently report a lack of comfort with the campus culture. They experience difficulty fitting in and finding friends

with whom they share common interests, and they report particular challenges around the need to support themselves (and often their families) financially. All of these issues work against academic success. These challenges, which are reported with remarkable consistency by low-income students, are intensified many times over and in different ways if the students have dependent children, experience guilt about leaving families behind, or have unique and special needs (e.g., legally no longer able to rely on foster parents and hence without a home during the holidays).

Articulation Challenges. Students who begin their college careers on two-year campuses face unique difficulties. In many states, pathways between two- and four-year public institutions are not well defined, even if formal statewide articulation agreements exist. Many public and private colleges refuse to honor some of the credits earned at community colleges. Financial aid for community college transfers is often a problem, as aid on four-year campuses is usually committed to students who began on the campus and persisted. Unlike the practice with regard to entering freshmen, transfers (whether from community colleges or other four-year institutions) are unlikely to benefit from focused orientation programs organized around what they need to know to succeed in their new environment.

“My mom works. She works six days a week, just to support me and my sister and our relatives back home in Haiti. I felt guilty because my mom’s always working, my sister (she’s six years old now) spends most of her time in day care and I used to, like, help her with . . . counting, her ABC’s . . . I used to help around the house. Anything that was broken around the house, I had to fix it just because I knew how to read the manual.”

—Undergraduate student
Harvey Mudd College

“My friend, his dad owns his own business and he was working with his dad full time and coming to school. And he decided to drop school because he was making more money working with his dad. You see your smart friends and you think they’ll do something awesome with their life and they just drop out of school because of the money. It’s discouraging and sad.”

—Undergraduate student
The University of New Mexico

²²See Appendix D, including D. Allen, *Desire to Finish College: An Empirical Link Between Motivation and Persistence* (1999); X. Chen and C.D. Carroll, *First-Generation Students in Postsecondary Education: A Look at Their College Transcripts* (2005); A.F. Cabrera et al., *Increasing College Preparedness of At-Risk Students* (2006); and C. Adelman, *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College* (2006).

Articulation is a significant issue. Large numbers of low-income students are concentrated on community college campuses (in part because it makes economic sense to complete as many credits as possible at low-cost two-year institutions). And many community college students transfer to four-year campuses. At California State University, for example, fully two-thirds of the students enrolled in the system's four-year campuses transferred from one of the state's community colleges. Intentional strategies need to be developed for these students. Unless college credit, financial aid, and housing and counseling practices are developed to clearly support these students, they risk becoming afterthoughts on four-year campuses.

In Sum: Completing college successfully can be a problem for many students, no matter their economic background. But the challenges facing students from low-income backgrounds are different in degree and kind from those confronting others. Low-income students often arrive with poorer preparation than many of their peers. Many low-income students bring with them a great deal of anxiety about how to fit in and how to renegotiate their bonds with family and community. If they have tried to make their way through to a four-year degree by starting in a community college, they often find four-year institutions unsympathetic. These difficulties require the most sensitive and supportive responses on campus.

A New Compact: CollegeKeys

We hope that what seems apparent to us comes through clearly. The benchmarks we need to set include proportionate representation of low-income students among those who enroll and those who graduate. These benchmarks will not be easy to attain. The persistence of the challenges outlined here demands a comprehensive approach that draws on best policy, practice, and research to transform how our schools, colleges, universities, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations relate to, and work with, students experiencing the greatest educational challenges.

The Board of Trustees asks you to join us in a great new national effort. We propose nothing less than a dramatic reshaping of the way in which schools, colleges, and universities collaborate to prepare, recruit, enroll, and graduate students with the greatest educational challenges.

If you will join us in this effort, we can reshape American education. We think of it as a new Compact, CollegeKeys. By working together, we can breathe new life into the American Dream.

Chapter 3

An Action Plan: CollegeKeys™

The reality of the American Dream has not always matched the rhetoric. Still, the arc of American progress has always been clear. When challenged, Americans have always opted for expanding the circle of opportunity, enlarging our freedoms, and providing equality of opportunity.

The task before us is by no means simple. We have no desire to minimize the difficulties. The issues of preparation, enrollment, and persistence outlined in Chapter 2 have been ongoing problems in American higher education for generations. Despite that reality, several significant new developments make the outlook for change more promising today than it might have been in the past.

The first is the growing national awareness that the days when it was acceptable for some to go to college while others did not (and everyone found reasonably well-paid work) are over. Higher education is responsible in important ways for this society's health and well being, as well as for earning power and the quality of individual lives. In a democracy, such an important public good cannot be rationed based on ability to pay.

Second, as noted in Chapter 2, analysts and public leaders are beginning to recognize that a substantial increase in the number of associate and bachelor's degrees awarded will be required to meet the nation's workforce needs between now and 2025. Moreover, they understand that closing the "degree gap" between the United States and several other member nations of the Organization for Economic Collaboration and Development (OECD) will depend on producing the same levels of educational attainment among students from low-income backgrounds that are common among wealthier students.

Finally, the demand to serve the needs of students from low-income backgrounds is grounded not solely in an appeal to the nation's goodwill, but in an appeal to its self-interest. If altruism is not a sufficient motivator, economic realism should be. A society is only as strong as its weakest members. It is hard to know how the United States can continue to succeed if large numbers of low-income students continue to fail.

We ask you to share our optimism that a new effort, grounded in these new realities, can make a great difference. More than that, we ask that you join the College Board in this new effort, the CollegeKeys Compact, a partnership between the College Board and its members. The overall goal will be to encourage college success for low-income students through a broad array of initiatives that help them get ready for, get into, and through college.

What is suggested below lays out the main approaches of CollegeKeys. It is a set of principles developed by a task force appointed by the Board of Trustees.²³ *A more detailed plan for implementing the Compact will be developed during a second phase of this work.*

²³In the interest of clarity and brevity, this chapter lays out just the broad principles in each of the three areas. The task force developed essential priorities under each principle and they are contained in Appendix B.

Getting Ready: Priorities for Preparation and Planning

The Board of Trustees believes that all students are capable of being prepared for college and that educators, families, communities, and policymakers have the responsibility to ensure that all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, graduate from high school ready for college success. To these ends, the CollegeKeys Compact will:

1. Foster college expectations for all students from low-income backgrounds (from early childhood through grade 12) by working in partnership with educators, policymakers, and community and business leaders.
2. Provide all students from low-income backgrounds with the academically rigorous preparation needed to make college success an achievable goal.
3. Organize advocacy campaigns at national, state, regional, and local levels to promote investment in preparing all students from low-income backgrounds for college success.

These principles for getting ready can be expected to shape the expectations and behavior of each of the Compact partners and the pledges that will be required of each. Here we wish merely to stress that these principles (and the priorities arising from them in Appendix B*) are designed to make sure that more low-income students are ready to go to college when they graduate from high school.

Examples of Effective Policies and Practices: Getting Ready

- **College for Texans “Go Theater” Project:** Students from the University of Texas El Paso, through the College for Texans program, travel to high schools with low college-going rates and dramatize situations related to the student college experience. Follow-up discussions focus on the importance and challenges of being the first in the student’s family to pursue higher education.
- **Fifth-Graders Go to College:** The Connecticut Association of Professional Financial Aid Administrators (CAPFAA) partners with the Hartford Mayor’s Office, the Hartford School System, and the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education to build college aspirations for fifth-graders. A daylong workshop held at a partner college offers workshops on Career Exploration, College Is Possible and Affordable, and College Is Fun. Colleges and universities in the greater Hartford area participate.
- **Parent Assistance Services:** The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA), a nonprofit state organization that serves students and families pursuing higher education in Massachusetts, trains presenters who deliver more than 350 college financing sessions across the state, coordinated and promoted by MEFA. Parents can register for an e-mail advisory program, which communicates important information at regular intervals in the college financing process.

*Appendix B contains a list of Compact principles along with a set of priorities for action associated with those principles.

Getting In: Priorities for Admission and Financial Aid

The Board of Trustees believes that all qualified students from low-income backgrounds should receive particular consideration in recruitment, admissions, and financial aid, and that colleges and universities should make every effort to meet the financial need of this population in ways that make enrollment and full participation in the college experience possible. To these ends, the Compact will:

1. Help students and their families fully understand and successfully navigate college admissions and financial aid processes.
2. Utilize a broad range of qualitative information to complement traditional measures of college readiness in recruitment as well as in a holistic admissions evaluation process.
3. Implement effective student aid policies designed to narrow the gap in enrollment and graduation rates between students from low-income and affluent backgrounds.
4. Affirm the value of an educational pathway for students who begin their journey toward a four-year degree by attending a two-year institution.

This set of principles (and the accompanying priorities in Appendix B*) is designed to make sure that colleges make enrollment and full participation in college life possible for low-income students.

Examples of Effective Policies and Practices: Getting In

- **Amherst College Telementoring Program:** Amherst students from underrepresented backgrounds work with high school juniors and seniors via telephone to provide practical support and guidance throughout the application and selection process. They assist with everything from completing applications for admission to interpreting financial aid packages to choosing the right school.
- **Comprehensive Articulation Agreement:** The North Carolina Community College System and the University of North Carolina established the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement in 1997. The agreement ensures the transfer of general education and elective credits between the 58 community colleges and 16 constituent universities of the UNC system. Additionally, every community college student who completes the 44-hour General Education core or the A.A. or A.S. degree with a GPA of 2.0 or higher and a grade of C or better in every course is assured admission at one of the 16 constituent campuses. Twenty-two nonprofit independent colleges and universities in the state have also subscribed to the articulation agreement.
- **Conference on Sharing Effective Practices:** Across the nation at least 44 colleges and universities have adopted programs in the past few years that are designed to help students from low-income backgrounds graduate from college debt-free by offering aid to meet demonstrated need in the form of grants, scholarships, and loans. These 44 institutions came together to share their effective practices at a conference in the fall of 2006. In order to share even more widely they have listed their programs at <http://www.unc.edu/inclusion/initiatives.pdf>.

*Appendix B contains a list of Compact principles along with a set of priorities for action associated with those principles.

Getting Through: Priorities for Achievement and Success

The Board of Trustees believes that colleges and universities have a responsibility to provide essential academic support, financial aid, and targeted social and emotional support to ensure that all enrolled students will have every chance to succeed in their chosen academic programs. To these ends, the Compact will:

1. Create environments that stimulate learning, along with a sense of community and connectedness among students, faculty, and staff, with the goal of improving academic performance and personal development.
2. Implement policies and practices that provide appropriate financial support to enable students from low-income backgrounds to focus on their academic course work and participate fully in the collegiate experience.
3. Ensure that articulation agreements are clear and coordinated.

This set of principles (and associated priorities in Appendix B*) is designed to ensure that when low-income students are ready to enroll, colleges and universities are ready for them.

Examples of Effective Policies and Practices: Getting Through

- **First-Year Learning Team (FLight):** Southeast Missouri State University provides freshmen with one of six holistic learning/living community experiences that assist them in the academic and social transition to college life. A First-Year Learning Team consists of 25 students who are enrolled in two courses that are centered on a particular theme or area of interest. The team works closely with a peer mentor, a veteran student.
- **Freshman Initiative Program (FIP):** Bronx Community College's program is a comprehensive academic and counseling program for a select group of first-semester students who require at least three remedial courses. FIP consists of five major components, including: (1) the Freshman Outreach, Caring, Understanding, and Support (FOCUS) Center, a holistic counseling center; (2) psycho-educational testing; (3) peer counseling; (4) rapid contact counseling for early intervention; and (5) revised orientation and career development courses for personal development and improved coping skills.
- **Student Success Program (SSP):** Saint Xavier University's program, funded by Title IV TRIO grant funds, provides academic and personal support services for academically, economically, and physically challenged students until they complete their baccalaureate degree. The program consists of four full-time professional staff members, a mathematics specialist, and 20 to 30 employed peer tutors and mentors. Peer mentors meet with student participants weekly and are responsible for their academic and social integration into the campus by modeling appropriate student behaviors and providing referrals to program services. The mathematics specialist teaches semester-long math workshops that include technology use, problem solving, and critical thinking. The staff monitors academic performance continuously and provides special interventions for students experiencing academic difficulties.

*Appendix B contains a list of Compact principles along with a set of priorities for action associated with those principles.

CollegeKeys: Mutually Reinforcing Expectations and Pledges

The broad goals outlined above make up an ambitious agenda. It is an agenda that the College Board Trustees can suggest and support, but which it has no power to impose. Organizing and managing the complex set of changes involved in improving the conditions under which students from low-income backgrounds are prepared for, admitted to, and graduate from college demands significant changes in policy and practice, backed by the best and latest research.

What the College Board can do is move the agenda forward by establishing a powerful partnership of mutually reinforcing expectations between the College Board and its members, and among the members themselves. The Board of Trustees envisions this as a formal alliance; joining the Compact will provide great benefits to all the partners and the students they serve. It will also raise expectations of you, the partners, including asking you to commit yourselves to the Compact by formally agreeing to the major statements of belief in the introduction and completing detailed inventories on what you are doing and what more you are prepared to do to advance this important work.

The CollegeKeys Compact, in short, asks a great deal from you. Because it does, we want to be very clear about what the College Board is prepared to do and what it sees as its responsibilities as a member of this “partnership of mutually reinforcing expectations.”

The **College Board** is committed to accelerating its transformation from its traditional role as a “testing organization” to its emerging role as a leading national advocate for equity and excellence in education. In this leadership role, the College Board pledges to:

- **Establish the CollegeKeys Compact:** The College Board will take the lead in establishing the Compact.
- **Implement and maintain the Compact:** The College Board will devote the significant resources required to ensure timely implementation and maintenance of the Compact.
- **Establish a goal of eliminating all fees associated with admissions and financial aid for target students:** The College Board intends to redesign and expand its existing \$26 million fee-waiver programs, and to establish fee-waiver eligibility early in the middle or high school years so that students and families are not required to reestablish it annually.
- **Build on effective policy and practice:** The College Board will work with its members and others to build on the most effective policies and practices to get students ready for, into, and successfully through college.
- **Support peer review and evaluation:** The College Board will assist members in their efforts to establish peer review and evaluation of the ongoing components of the Compact. The objective will be to affirm and help improve members’ efforts.
- **Serve as a relentless advocate:** The College Board will support members’ efforts through an advocacy agenda at the national, regional, state, and local levels—and will work to expand access to existing programs and tools designed to support college preparation, access, and success.

- **Establish a recognition program:** The College Board will launch a recognition program that provides incentives to colleges and universities to undertake new and creative recruitment, outreach, admissions, financial aid, and retention programs to increase access and success for students from low-income backgrounds. The program will recognize and reward innovation among the nation’s colleges and universities—and will create new model initiatives that can be disseminated and replicated through the Compact network.

In announcing the CollegeKeys Compact, the College Board commits itself to those seven activities. Of necessity, they will involve significant expenditures for staffing, outreach, fee waivers, and implementation.

In return, the Board of Trustees asks you, the leaders of American education, to join the Compact by doing five things. First, we ask that you sign a commitment that your institution (school or school district, college or university, state education agency, or nonprofit organization) agrees with the belief statements contained in this document. Second, we ask that you complete a detailed inventory on your institution's strengths and needs with regard to college readiness, student achievement, and student success. We ask, also, that you assign a team of senior leaders to address these issues. In addition, we ask you to establish measurable institutional goals for expanding your institution's progress (based on the detailed inventory). Finally, we ask you to commit to monitoring and publicly reporting your progress.

While we are convinced that the College Board’s commitments and the broad expectations of institutional partners laid out in the preceding paragraph point all of us in the right direction, the precise nature of how to proceed remains a matter for discussion with the membership. Appendix C contains suggestions for detailed inventories for each of the four major partners: school districts and schools, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and state education agencies. We intend to launch the Compact by holding an extended conversation with the partners about how to reshape the inventories and, indeed, develop the Compact.

Against that backdrop, the Board of Trustees outlines five major expectations for schools, school districts, and colleges and universities that accompany membership in the Compact.²⁴

Schools and School Districts are expected to:

- **Expand the rigor of high school courses and establish a college-preparatory curriculum as the default program for all:** Expectations for student performance must be raised. Students should be required to opt out of, rather than opt in to, a college-preparatory curriculum (with an expectation that the family and student academic advisement would be a required part of the opting-out process). Opportunities for AP®, International Baccalaureate, or honors courses should be universally available in high schools, with the expectation that all students, including low-income students, will be informed of their availability and academic value.
- **Mount college awareness programs and pay attention to parents:** Every middle and high school should regularly mount college awareness programs for both students and family. A critical component of these programs should involve expanding student and family awareness of fee

²⁴The expectations described here represent broad elements of CollegeKeys. The inventories contained in Appendix C are broader, much more detailed, and include, also, inventories for state education agencies and nonprofit organizations.

waivers and encouraging the use of such waivers. All parents want their children to succeed, but a variety of economic and cultural factors inhibit parental understanding of the value of a college degree for their children. Parental education should be a high priority of the Compact.

- **Provide professional development for teachers and administrators:** More mentors and advisers need to be found for low-income students. One expectation of Compact participants will be support for professional development of teachers, counselors, and administrators around admissions and financial aid practices, as well as content and pedagogy.
- **Enter into partnerships with higher education institutions:** CollegeKeys will develop a directory of schools and colleges and universities committed to the effort. Middle and secondary school leaders will be encouraged to work with college and university partners to encourage recruiting fairs, campus visits, and fee waivers.
- **Monitor progress and share data:** Good intentions, while critical, will not be enough. The expectation is that Compact participants will maintain data on such vital statistics as proportion of low-income students in college-preparatory programs, enrollment in rigorous courses, success in applying to two- and four-year institutions, success in transfer between two- and four-year institutions, and on-time diploma and degree completion. All partners (schools, and colleges and universities) should monitor their progress in meeting expectations and share the data with one another.

Colleges and universities must also do their part. They will be expected to:

- **Create early outreach programs and new partnerships with schools:** Nothing expands young people's aspirations like the news that they have a right to expect to attend college. Colleges and universities should commit themselves to more college fairs, school visits, support for campus overnights (and other ways of marketing the importance of college attendance) as early as the middle school years.
- **Expand "holistic" admissions evaluations and encourage fee waivers:** Recent evidence indicates that admissions offices can turn to evaluations that give greater emphasis to noncognitive factors without adversely affecting the quality of entering classes. The Compact hopes to expand this approach. To the maximum extent possible, university partners should also commit themselves to waiving application fees for all students from low-income backgrounds.
- **Establish need-based aid and clear and accurate cost-of-attendance budgets as priorities:** Colleges and universities will be asked to make need-based awards a priority, at a minimum increasing need-based aid at the same rate as merit-based aid. Every effort should be made to meet the need of low-income students without excessive reliance on loans or jobs. Colleges and universities will be asked to develop and communicate very clear and accurate cost-of-attendance estimates, which will become the basis of financial aid awards.
- **Intensify academic support and encourage degree completion:** Colleges and universities will be asked to integrate academic support with teaching and learning, particularly during the first year. They can do so by expanding tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills instruction, and the development of learning communities. The Compact encourages institutions to reward faculty who engage with low-income students as mentors and advisers and to expand the number of statewide agreements that permit two-year graduates of approved transfer programs to earn a baccalaureate without unnecessary duplication of course work.

- **Monitor progress and share data:** As with middle and secondary schools, improving data collection and analysis is essential. Colleges and universities should expect to maintain information on admission of students from low-income backgrounds, success in transfer between two- and four-year institutions, and on-time degree completion. All partners should monitor their progress in meeting expectations and share this data with each other.

Other Partners

Clearly, others need to be brought into the partnership as well, if it is to be effective. State education agencies are constitutionally and legally responsible for public school operations within their boundaries. They typically operate under constitutional provisions requiring them to provide something like an “efficient system of public free schools” (Texas) or meet the state’s “paramount duty...to make ample provision for the education of all children....” (Washington).²⁵ State education agencies also shape higher education and higher education finance in many ways. State agencies bridge both education worlds and need to become strong partners in the Compact. Finally, nonprofit groups, including foundations, increasingly support school, college, and university operations and shape school and university programs. The Board of Trustees hopes to involve them in the Compact as well. Appendix C, which provides sample inventories for districts, schools, and colleges, also includes draft inventories for these other partners.

The launching of CollegeKeys and the gathering of formal agreements by which schools, districts, colleges and universities, state education agencies, and nonprofit organizations enter the partnership will be a major undertaking and will take time. This will be Phase II of the work of the Low-Income Task Force. A number of College Board commissions and study groups will participate in Phase II. At this point, the Board of Trustees is pleased to lay out the vision of change contained in this letter and the expectations for the College Board and its members. With this vision and these expectations, the work is underway.

Benefits for All

Finally, the Board of Trustees wants to speak directly to students and their families and to schools, colleges, and universities. We know we are asking for a great deal from each of you. We understand that significant sacrifice will be required, but we ask you to step up to the plate because, in the end, everyone—students, schools, and colleges and universities—will be the better for it.

What we are requesting comes down to what all of us, in and around the College Board, want for our own children and for the schools and institutions of higher education they attend or with which we are associated. A reasonably good rule of thumb in policy and practice is to think about what your own children need, and you are unlikely to go far wrong.

²⁵“Educational Equity and Quality: Brown and Rodriguez and Their Aftermath.” Remarks of Lee C. Bollinger (President, Columbia University), The College Board Forum, November 3, 2003. Bollinger’s detailed speech is an excellent review of how education advocates, rebuffed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973 when they argued that education was a basic civil right under the U.S. Constitution, turned to state constitutions to argue for financing equity and adequacy.

So, how can students and families benefit from CollegeKeys? First-generation college students will get the advantages that families experienced with college attendance take for granted. Their families know that in a large, diverse system of higher education, making good decisions about college requires information, solid academic preparation, and advance planning. Students and families in low-income communities will get a great deal out of the Compact proposed here because it helps create the decision-making structure and frameworks that students from very sophisticated and experienced families already use.

Schools also stand to benefit. Most are now struggling to meet new demands for accountability, for closing the achievement gap, and for demonstrating that no significant gaps exist in graduation rates for students from different backgrounds. The CollegeKeys Compact outlined here holds out the promise of more help with best practice, additional mentors to motivate students requiring assistance, and new partnerships with higher education. The Compact, far from diverting K–12 schools from their mission, promises to support the mission, while demonstrating educators' commitment to accountability.

Leaders at two- and four-year institutions will also find a lot to like in the Compact. College and university demographics have been changing, and they are likely to change even more dramatically in the years immediately ahead. Students of traditional college age are becoming scarcer. Young women already outnumber young men on campus. The Compact promises to address these challenges by working to expand the pool of traditional college-aged students from which you can select and helping prepare more low-income males. You can look for an additional benefit as well: In previous years, your interest in students from low-income areas may have been modulated by a concern about their qualifications. With CollegeKeys solidly in place, you can be assured that each student from a low-income background will be a well-prepared one.

A Legacy Passed On to the Future

At the outset of this document, we argued that universal public education through grade 12, and broad and deep access to the benefits of higher education have provided the United States with remarkable benefits. That remains true, despite the reality that low-income students have not enjoyed equal access to college, much less equitable outcomes in terms of degree completion.

This is not the first report to draw attention to these challenges, but, if we are able to establish the Compact described here, it might, happily, be the last. To meet the nation's workforce needs, the number of associate degrees awarded must increase by 25 percent in the next generation, and the number of bachelor's degrees by 19 percent. These levels of growth clearly require educational attainment levels for low-income students that match the levels of their more affluent peers. What has long been a moral truism is turning into an economic fact of life: Our society is only as strong as its weakest members.

Now is the time to make good on the promise first made by President Abraham Lincoln when he signed the Morrill Act during the Civil War, and restated in some fashion by every post-World War II president of the United States: The American Dream will be kept alive and well because no student is turned away at the college door because his family is poor...because each American has a right to expect that if she works hard she will be able to obtain a first-class

college education...because access to the fruits of a college degree remains a defining element of American life.

Today, as America enters fully into a new century, is no time to lose sight of that dream or lose faith in the promise of the American future. Far from it. We should build with confidence on our strengths. In this third century of our national life, the Board of Trustees of the College Board believes that hope for our common future rests on drawing from the best in our past. We can maintain the dream of a better life for all. We can do so if, together, we sustain the great educational legacy bequeathed to us by our parents and pass it on, undiminished, to our children and to theirs.

THE COLLEGE BOARD—COLLEGEKEYS COMPACT™

PARTNERS' COMMITMENT

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

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

To ensure that all students from low-income backgrounds have the full array of college opportunities, (name of school, local education agency, college or university, state education agency, or nonprofit organization) agrees to expand its current efforts by:

1. Conducting the CollegeKeys inventory of our current initiatives to support the college readiness, achievement, and success of students from low-income backgrounds.
2. Engaging a team of senior leaders to review our current commitments to supporting the college aspirations of students from low-income backgrounds and identifying opportunities for expanding these efforts.
3. Establishing measurable institutional goals for expanding our current efforts to support the college aspirations of students from low-income backgrounds and implementing strategies for achieving these goals.
4. Monitoring and publicly reporting our progress in achieving our institution's CollegeKeys goals.

Within six months of signing this pledge, we agree to complete the CollegeKeys inventory and to establish goals for expanding our current efforts to improve college access and success for students from low-income backgrounds. We agree also to provide the College Board with a statement of our goals and a summary of our inventory results.

Institutional Leader's Signature (Principal, Superintendent, Chancellor, President, CSSO, SHEEO, or CEO)

Name: _____

Position Title: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Institution Name and Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Person responsible for coordinating Compact-related efforts: _____

Position Title: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Meeting the Needs of Students from Low-Income Families

The College Board has long been a leader in this area. The development of the SAT® itself was an effort to identify potential among students from all walks of life. The College Scholarship Service® was organized so that no prepared student would be denied access to higher education because of lack of funds. Among the College Board's other efforts:

- An investment of hundreds of millions of dollars to develop the **College Readiness System**, an aligned, comprehensive set of teaching, learning, counseling, and assessment tools for grades 6 through 12. It aims to prepare all students for college.
- **CollegeEd**®, a comprehensive college awareness program for middle and high schools, now used in nearly 1,600 schools and organizations and reaching more than 500,000 students.
- **SpringBoard**®, a powerful teaching and learning system for grades 6 through 12 (for English and mathematics) now in use in 500 schools.
- **Fee Waivers:** Last year, the College Board provided more than \$26 million in fee waivers for low-income students who participated in the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT®, and AP® programs, and CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®. Many districts and states cooperate to make fee waivers a reality.
- **Advanced Placement Program® (AP)** courses in more than two dozen disciplines offering college-level courses in high schools across the United States. In 2006, more than one million students took nearly two million AP Exams, hoping to gain college credit.
- Support for **leadership development** programs such as the National Superintendents Roundtable for school superintendents and principals.
- **Comprehensive school reform** efforts. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the College Board has implemented its EXCElerator™ program in 27 schools in Chicago, Denver, Jacksonville, Tampa, and Washington, D.C., and established a College Board School program in 14 New York City schools.
- **Inspiration Awards:** Annually, the College Board selects three winning high schools for College Board Inspiration Awards. Despite overwhelming odds, these schools take remarkable steps to give their students the bright futures they deserve. The award winners receive \$25,000 each; five honorable mention schools also receive awards of \$1,000.

The CollegeKeys Compact can extend, improve, and multiply the effects of such efforts many times over.

APPENDIXES

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Appendix A

College Board Task Force on College Access for Students from Low- Income Backgrounds Charge

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

The Task Force will work to forge a collaborative agreement between the College Board and its members that will create a commonly accepted definition of “low-income student” and then seek to remove all identifiable barriers, financial and nonfinancial, to college access for those who meet the definition. The work of the Task Force will include ways to identify students, beginning in middle school, who can benefit from a streamlined college entrance process, and to help those students understand that they are “invited” to college.

First, a working group with broad experience in administration, counseling, admissions, financial aid, student services, and enrollment management will explore the issues raised by the Trustee resolution. Second, the working group will be joined by political leaders and chief executive officers of educational and business institutions to consider the implementation of the recommendations of the working group.

Appendix B

Principles and Priorities Guiding the Compact

Getting Ready: Priorities for Preparation and Planning

The Board of Trustees believes that all students are capable of being prepared for college and that educators, families, communities, and policymakers have the responsibility to ensure that all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, graduate from high school ready for college success. To these ends, the CollegeKeys Compact will

1. Foster college expectations for all students from low-income backgrounds (from early childhood through grade 12) by working in partnership with educators, policymakers, and community and business leaders to
 - Provide professional development workshops for Pre-K–12 teachers, counselors, and other school staff about how their beliefs affect the college-going aspirations and achievement of low-income students.
 - Include such instruction in teacher preparation programs.
 - Prepare mentors, volunteers, and parent leaders to provide college planning information to students from low-income backgrounds and their parents, and assist them with college planning.
 - Offer students age-appropriate campus experiences beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school.
 - Promote policies at the federal, state, and local levels to foster postsecondary aspirations and expectations for low-income students.
2. Provide all students from low-income backgrounds with the academically rigorous preparation needed to make college success an achievable goal by
 - Providing teachers and instructional leaders with the content knowledge and pedagogy to enable students from low-income backgrounds to complete academically challenging course work successfully.
 - Equipping teachers and counselors with skills and strategies to help low-income students prepare and plan for postsecondary education.

- Including instruction about college preparation and planning in counselor and teacher preparation programs.
 - Convening teams of high school and college faculty at local, regional, and state levels to align content of college-preparatory courses with the knowledge and skills required for success in first-year college courses (using research-based frameworks such as the College Board Standards for College Success™ and the American Diploma Project).
 - Creating and implementing a curriculum to teach students the habits of mind and academic behaviors and expectations required for high achievement in rigorous high school and first-year college courses.
 - Providing test preparation workshops and free access to online admissions prep-test modules for students from low-income backgrounds.
3. Organize advocacy campaigns at national, state, regional, and local levels to promote investment in preparing all students from low-income backgrounds for college success by
- Convening leaders from business, higher education, K–12, community, and faith-based organizations to persuade them of the importance of preparing all students for college and identifying actions they can take to build public support for achieving this goal.
 - Presenting the findings and recommendations of this document at meetings of key stakeholders at all levels (local, state, regional, and national).
 - Monitoring and publishing data (similar to the College Board’s College Pricing and Student Aid *Trends* reports) that indicate progress toward the goal of college readiness for all students.

This set of principles and priorities is designed to make sure that more low-income students are ready to go to college when they graduate from high school.

Getting In: Priorities for Admissions and Financial Aid

The Board of Trustees believes that all qualified students from low-income backgrounds should receive particular consideration in recruitment, admissions, and financial aid and that colleges and universities should make every effort to meet the financial need of this population in ways that make enrollment and full participation in the college experience possible. To these ends, the CollegeKeys Compact will

1. Help students and their parents fully understand and successfully navigate college admissions and financial aid processes by
 - Establishing mentoring programs and partnering with local target schools to help students with the admissions and financial aid processes.
 - Providing free professional development for counselors and teachers at target schools to increase their knowledge of the admissions and financial aid processes.

- Establishing programs to help parents of middle and high school students understand the admissions and financial aid processes and support their children’s aspirations.
 - Creating a national database of retired professionals to serve as a national “Counselor Corps” to work in target schools to help students with the application processes.
2. Utilize a broad range of qualitative information to complement traditional measures of college readiness in recruitment as well as in a holistic admissions evaluation process by
 - Encouraging colleges and universities to include students from low-income backgrounds in building their recruitment plans.
 - Supporting efforts in which colleges provide professional development programs for admissions personnel that introduce the breadth of holistic evaluation and an understanding of the role of traditional measures of college readiness.
 - Supporting research into noncognitive assessments and measures to inform decisions about student potential for college success.
 - Advocating the addition of “weights” recognizing the enrollment and graduation of low-income and first-generation students in all rankings of institutions.
 3. Implement effective student aid policies designed to narrow the gap in enrollment and graduation rates between students from low-income and affluent backgrounds by
 - Emphasizing the need for realistic student expense budgets that support full participation in college life for all students and ensuring that low-income students receive adequate funding to purchase tools needed for success, such as laptop computers.
 - Striving to meet the full need of students from low-income backgrounds with grant aid, after awarding a reasonable amount of work and loan.
 - Supporting public policies that make the determination of federal aid eligibility simpler and more predictable so that likely awards can be communicated more clearly and earlier in the application process.
 - Making every effort to support increases in federal, state, and institutional investment in need-based aid.
 4. Affirm the value of an educational pathway for students who begin their journey toward a four-year degree by attending a two-year institution by
 - Advocating financial aid policies at four-year institutions that give the same consideration for grant aid to transfer students as first-year students.
 - Developing programs that introduce community college students and faculty to the values, traditions, and expectations of four-year colleges, and vice versa.
 - Developing mechanisms to identify community college students interested in transferring to four-year institutions.

This set of principles and priorities is designed to make sure that colleges make enrollment and full participation in college life possible for low-income students.

Getting Through: Priorities for Achievement and Success

The Board of Trustees believes that colleges and universities have a responsibility to provide essential academic support, financial aid, and targeted social and emotional support to ensure that all enrolled students will have every chance to succeed in their chosen academic programs. To these ends, the CollegeKeys Compact will

1. Create environments that stimulate learning, along with a sense of community and connectedness among students, faculty, and staff, with the goal of improving academic performance and personal development by
 - Implementing strategies to improve student retention and success (e.g., mentoring, early warning notification, Summer Bridge programs, and “intrusive” advising).
 - Allocating adequate institutional resources to support services essential to student retention and success (e.g., learning disabilities’ assessment, supplemental instruction and tutoring, learning center and writing center services, math labs, health care, and personal counseling).
 - Hiring and supporting teaching faculty who demonstrate a commitment to success for all students, especially nontraditional or underprepared students.
 - Rewarding teaching faculty and staff who excel in student advising and mentoring.
2. Implement policies and practices that provide appropriate financial support to enable students from low-income backgrounds to focus on their academic course work and participate fully in the collegiate experience by
 - Ensuring that students from low-income backgrounds apply, and apply on time, for need-based aid.
 - Maintaining grant and scholarship assistance from year to year.
 - Providing maximum grant support for students from low-income backgrounds and supporting efforts to simplify the financial aid process.
 - Setting realistic limits on student and family debt and helping students understand the benefits of reasonable borrowing.
 - Establishing realistic limits on hours worked, mindful of suitability of student employment job placement and location.
 - Ensuring that financial aid packages are adequate to facilitate involvement in a broad range of learning opportunities (e.g., study abroad, participation in learning communities, field trips, and the like).
 - Providing institutional grant aid to students who need to attend summer school in order to restore academic eligibility.

3. Ensure that articulation agreements are clear and coordinated by

- Structuring agreements between two- and four-year institutions to ensure that students can achieve a baccalaureate degree without a loss of credit or unnecessary duplication of course work.
- Adopting policies that ensure equitable distribution of institutional grant and scholarship support for transfer students.

This set of principles and priorities is designed to ensure that when low-income students are ready to enroll, colleges and universities are ready for them.

Appendix C

Inventories for Compact Members

The College Board CollegeKeys Compact™ Inventory

School Districts and Schools

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

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

To ensure that all students from low-income backgrounds have the full array of college opportunities, our school/school district agrees to continue its current activities, expand existing efforts, and plan additional initiatives, as indicated by the boxes checked on the inventory contained in the pages that follow.

Signature of School Principal (for schools) or Superintendent (for school districts)

Name (*please print or type*): _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Institution Name and Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of person responsible for coordinating Compact-related efforts: _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing address: _____

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for School Districts and Schools

Getting Ready: Preparation	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Promoting policies at the federal, state, and local levels to foster college aspirations and expectations for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making the college-prep curriculum the default requirements for high school graduation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aligning middle school completion standards with the requirements for success in high school college-preparatory courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aligning high school curricular standards with the standards for success in first-year college courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening college credit courses to all interested students, including AP®, IB, and dual enrollment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing the expectation that all students are capable of success in rigorous college-preparatory courses in high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing safety net structures, in the form of tutoring, mentoring, and study groups, designed to support academic success for students experiencing challenges with mastering rigorous course content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing professional development for teachers and counselors to gain skills and knowledge needed that will sensitize them to the cultural, linguistic, and learning modalities of a diverse student population.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing professional development workshops for teachers, counselors, and other school staff about how their beliefs affect the college-going aspirations and achievement of students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arranging for all students to take the PSAT/NMSQT® or PLAN at no cost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving the PSAT/NMSQT to all students and using the experience and resulting data to develop/expand the college-going culture and develop individual plans for skill building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informing income-eligible students of the availability of fee waivers for admissions tests, AP Exams, and college and financial aid applications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering all students a continuum of college and career exploration and counseling activities, including a college awareness curriculum, campus visits, and exposure to careers that require college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing families with the information and resources needed for them to support their children's college aspirations and planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing all students with a college "coach" who can support their college aspirations and assist them with planning and applying for college and financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing systems to identify underperforming students early and accelerate their learning in college-preparatory courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing systems for helping students establish an individualized academic plan for college readiness and put in place a monitoring and engagement system for helping students achieve their plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing test-preparation workshops and free access to online admissions prep-test modules for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for School Districts and Schools

Getting In: Admissions and Financial Aid	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Helping students from low-income backgrounds apply on time for financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training administrators, teachers, and counselors in the basics of college planning, admissions, and financial aid for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing training for counselors and teachers in assisting students with completion of application processes for college admissions and financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Putting in place a system for providing assistance to students who complete the required processes for admissions and financial aid, but who might still need additional counseling support from a school professional to make the transition from high school to college a reality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing mentoring programs and partnering with colleges to help students from low-income backgrounds with admissions and financial aid processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing mentors, volunteers, and parent leaders to provide college-planning information and assistance to students from low-income backgrounds and their families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing a monitoring and engagement system managed by an identified counselor or other professional for guiding students through the college application and financial aid application processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

Getting Through: Achievement and Success	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Conducting follow-up studies of high school graduates from low-income backgrounds about their college enrollment and academic performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using feedback from high school graduates from low-income backgrounds about their college experiences and challenges to improve college preparation and planning resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

As a Compact partner, we agree to monitor our progress in meeting the expectations and share our data and effective practices with the College Board. Attached is a brief (no more than 300–500 words) description of what we plan to do, including identification of partners who might be involved.

The College Board CollegeKeys Compact™ Inventory

Colleges and Universities

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

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

To ensure that all students from low-income backgrounds have the full array of college opportunities, our institution agrees to continue its current activities, expand existing efforts, and plan additional initiatives, as indicated by the boxes checked on the inventory contained in the pages that follow.

Signature of President or Chancellor

Name (*please print or type*): _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Institution Name and Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of person responsible for coordinating Compact-related efforts: _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing address: _____

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for Colleges and Universities

Getting Ready: Preparation	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Partnering with school systems and high schools to help them align high school completion standards with the requirements for success in first-year college courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborating with school systems to recruit, prepare, and support new teachers to work in targeted schools serving low-income communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing content area professional development for English language arts, mathematics, and science teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partnering with middle and high schools to offer students and their parents/guardians a continuum of college and career exploration and counseling activities, including a college awareness curriculum, campus visits, and assistance completing admissions and financial aid applications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training teachers and counselors in the basics of college planning, admissions, and financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing/expanding dual enrollment and bridge programs to help students make successful transitions to college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting school efforts to provide academic support for students challenged in college-preparatory courses, including tutoring and reading, math, and study skills development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for Colleges and Universities

Getting In: Admissions and Financial Aid	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Expanding efforts to recruit students from low-income backgrounds into the admissions applicant pool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing fee-waiver programs that cover special pre-matriculation expenses such as college admission application and acceptance deposits, housing deposits, orientation program fees, etc., for income-eligible students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving greater emphasis to noncognitive factors in reviewing admissions applications of students from low-income backgrounds (holistic admissions review).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting realistic student expense budgets that include all relevant educational costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognizing the unusual hurdles that students from low-income backgrounds face, when assigning levels of self-help (e.g., expected student loan, work-study, or contributions from summer savings).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting the full need of students from low-income backgrounds with a reasonable mix of grants, work, and loans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing the institutional commitment to need-based aid for students from low-income backgrounds, e.g., by	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(a) dedicating a share of new tuition revenue money each year; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) committing a share of auxiliary enterprise profits (e.g., licensing/trademark revenue, or student stores revenues); or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) dedicating earned income from unrestricted endowed sources for aid targeted to students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing financial aid policies and practices that are known to foster matriculation, engagement, and retention by	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(a) offering the same proportion of grant aid to transfer students as is awarded to other students;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) exercising discretion in granting “on-time” applicant status to students from low-income families who miss the aid application deadlines the first year;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) implementing a “promise”-type program specifically targeted to students from low-income families to increase the certainty of available aid;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) simplifying and clarifying aid eligibility standards; and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) providing sufficient aid so that students from low-income backgrounds may participate in field trips, and study abroad programs, as do their more affluent peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for Colleges and Universities

Getting Through: Achievement and Success	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Implementing articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions to ensure that students can achieve a baccalaureate degree without unnecessary duplication of course work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing social activities, advisement, and support that affirm students' cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrating academic support services/skills instruction into the teaching and learning curriculum in first-year college courses, which may include	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(a) tutoring;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) supplemental instruction; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) living/learning communities and similar efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing comprehensive personal and academic support services for at-risk students, which may include	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(a) developmental or remedial education programs for underprepared students;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) supplemental instruction;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) peer-assisted academic support for students in introductory "gatekeeping" courses with traditionally high failure rates;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) tutoring and mentoring;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) academic, career, and personal counseling;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) financial literacy instruction and guidance; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) assessments and special services for students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing an early warning system that actively monitors student performance, intervenes when students experience academic difficulty, and follows up on student progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting academic policies that create a path for restoration of academic eligibility (once lost), subject to "learning contracts" or other commitments to fully utilize campus academic and personal support services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting financial aid policies and practices known or intended to further student success and increase graduation rates. Examples include	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(a) ensuring that the amount of grant aid in a student's financial aid package is sufficient to encourage continued enrollment (persistence);	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) exercising discretion in granting "on-time" aid applicant status;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) providing grant funding for summer school for low-income students who need to restore academic eligibility;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) providing short-term loans or supplemental funds for unexpected or unusual allowable personal expenses (e.g., medical, car repair, learning disabilities testing, etc.); and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) creating a "second chance" whereby institutional or private funds are used to "cure" defaulted student loans, thus restoring federal student aid eligibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

As a Compact partner, we agree to monitor our progress in meeting the expectations and share our data and effective practices with the College Board. Attached is a brief (no more than 300–500 words) description of what we plan to do, including identification of partners who might be involved.

The College Board CollegeKeys Compact™ Inventory

Nonprofit Organizations

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

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

To ensure that all students from low-income backgrounds have the full array of college opportunities, this nonprofit organization agrees to continue its current activities, expand existing efforts, and plan additional initiatives, as indicated by the boxes checked on the inventory contained in the pages that follow.

Signature of President or Chief Executive Officer

Name (*please print or type*): _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Institution Name and Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of person responsible for coordinating Compact-related efforts: _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing address: _____

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for Nonprofit Organizations

Getting Ready: Preparation	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Establishing the expectation that all students are capable of success in rigorous college-preparatory courses in high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging students to take rigorous college-preparatory courses, including honors, AP®, IB, and dual enrollment courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching students the habits of mind and academic behaviors and expectations required for high achievement in rigorous high school and first-year college courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing students with academic skill-building workshops to help them develop their understanding of course content, reading and study skills, and the habits of mind needed to succeed in rigorous course work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing safety-net structures in the form of tutoring, mentoring, and study groups designed to support academic success for students experiencing challenges with mastering rigorous course content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing/supporting systems for helping students establish an individualized academic plan for college readiness and putting in place a monitoring and engagement system for assisting students on achieving the plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing all students a continuum of college and career exploration and counseling activities, including college and career-awareness workshops, campus visits, and exposure to careers that require college degrees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing families with the information and resources needed for them to support their children's college aspirations and planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering students age-appropriate campus experiences beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arranging for all students from low-income families to take the PSAT/NMSQT® or PLAN at no cost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing test-preparation workshops and free access to online admissions prep-test modules for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informing income-eligible students of the availability of fee waivers for admissions tests, AP tests, and college and financial aid applications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing students with a college "coach" who can support their college aspirations and assist them with planning and applying for college and financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing bridge programs to support students in making successful transitions from middle to high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocating for policies at the federal, state, and local levels to foster college aspirations and expectations for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for Nonprofit Organizations

Getting In: Admissions and Financial Aid	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Establishing mentoring programs and partnering with colleges to help students from low-income backgrounds with admissions and financial aid processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing mentors, volunteers, and parent leaders to provide college-planning information and assistance to students from low-income backgrounds and their families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training administrators, teachers, and counselors in the basics of college planning, admissions, and financial aid for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training for counselors and teachers in assisting students with completion of application processes for college admissions and financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informing income-eligible students of the availability of fee waivers for admissions tests, AP tests, and college and financial aid applications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing students with a college “coach” who can support their college aspirations and assist them with planning and applying for college and financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing bridge programs to support students in making success transitions from high school to college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing a monitoring and engagement system managed by an identified counselor or other professional for guiding students through the college application and financial aid application processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping students apply on time for need-based aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

Getting Through: Achievement and Success	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Providing bridge programs to support students in making successful transitions from high school to college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing information, mentoring, and other ongoing support to the students we send to college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving as an ongoing resource for students and families regarding college requirements, managing college costs, and various aspects of campus life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing career-related mentors, internships, and summer jobs for low-income students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting follow-up studies of high school graduates about their college experience and of the academic performance of students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using feedback from high school graduates from low-income backgrounds about their college experiences and challenges to improve college preparation and planning resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

As a Compact partner, we agree to monitor our progress in meeting the expectations and share our data and effective practices with the College Board. Attached is a brief (no more than 300–500 words) description of what we plan to do, including identification of partners who might be involved.

The College Board CollegeKeys Compact™ Inventory

State Education Agencies

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

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

To ensure that all students from low-income backgrounds have the full array of college opportunities, this state education agency agrees to continue its current activities, expand existing efforts, and plan additional initiatives, as indicated by the boxes checked on the inventory contained in the pages that follow.

Signature of Chief State School Officer, State Higher Education Executive Officer, or Chief Executive Officer

Name (*please print or type*): _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Institution Name and Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of person responsible for coordinating Compact-related efforts: _____

Position Title: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing address: _____

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for State Education Agencies

Getting Ready: Preparation	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Developing and implementing policies that establish the expectation that all students are capable of success in rigorous college-preparatory courses in high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making the college-preparatory course sequence the core curriculum required for high school graduation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aligning middle school completion standards with the requirements for success in high school college-preparatory courses and high school graduation standards with the requirements for success in first-year college courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing certification policies that require teachers to have the content knowledge and pedagogy to enable students from low-income backgrounds to complete academically challenging course work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviewing certification requirements for administrators, teachers, and counselors to insure that preparation programs include college readiness for students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing leadership for integrating data systems to track the progress of students from middle schools through a college degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and publishing data that indicate progress toward the goal of college readiness for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing P–16 Councils to galvanize stakeholders across sectors in planning and implementing efforts to improve college readiness and success of students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convening leaders from business, higher education, K–12 community, and faith-based organizations to persuade them of the need to prepare all students for college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing support for income-eligible students to take the PSAT/NMSQT®, PLAN, college admission and AP®/IB examinations, and dual enrollment courses at no cost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying and disseminating actions that leaders from all sectors can take to build public support for preparing all students for college participation and success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting a continuum of college and career exploration activities for students, including a college awareness curriculum, campus visits, summer enrichment programs, and exposure to careers in knowledge-based fields.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizing college access marketing campaigns to motivate students to take actions to prepare and plan for college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing families with the information and resources needed for them to support their children’s college aspirations and planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for State Education Agencies

Getting In: Admissions and Financial Aid	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Establishing holistic admissions policies in considering students' applications for admissions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging colleges to include students from low-income backgrounds in building their recruitment plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating need-based financial aid policies and processes that are predictable and easy to understand, and that reinforce students' preparation for college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting realistic student expense budgets that include all relevant educational costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocating for increased state commitment to need-based aid and other state policies that ensure that the full need of students from low-income backgrounds is met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing the state's commitment to need-based aid versus merit aid, and making every effort to meet the full need of students from low-income backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging institutions to develop provisional admissions programs that permit underprepared students to enroll on the condition that they participate in a structured program with intensive monitoring and support during the first year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rewarding institutions that balance their mission between excellence and equity, and maintain a quality education for all while demonstrating a commitment to access for low-income populations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allocating supplemental payments (per capita grants for operating revenues) to institutions that identify and serve students from low-income families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing a blueprint for shared responsibility for college financing, identifying an estimate of what is needed as the state's investment for each of the next five years, and keeping this measure in front of the legislature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asking institutions to fund the first semester of each student's need—complementing federal aid—then funding on a reimbursement basis for each student who continues to be enrolled for each subsequent term (paying for performance/incentive funding).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing school–college partnership programs to help students from low-income backgrounds with admissions and financial aid processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting campaigns to help families of students from low-income backgrounds to understand college admissions and financial aid opportunities and the actions their children need to undertake to get ready for, plan for, and succeed in college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

CollegeKeys Compact—Inventory for State Education Agencies

Getting Through: Achievement and Success	Implemented	In Progress	Planned	Not Applicable
Simplifying the renewal processes for state need-based aid for students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing strategies to improve student retention and success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Requiring institutions to report retention and graduation rates by income.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring that state transfer articulation policies are transparent and facilitating the movement of students from two-year to four-year institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting public hearings on research findings that inform policy about why students succeed and fail at higher education institutions; focusing on effective practices that are research based.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allocating supplemental payments to institutions for each at-risk, low-income student who successfully progresses from the freshman to the sophomore year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding research studies that demonstrate to the legislature the value of the state's investment in need-based aid and/or student support services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating incentives to reward universities for serving the dual missions of access and excellence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing a reward system for institutional "accountability" and "performance" that acknowledges differences in inputs and measures the quality of outputs in terms of the value added.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing financial literacy programs for families and students to broaden their understanding of how to manage college costs and the benefits of reasonable borrowing for college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe)				

As a Compact partner, we agree to monitor our progress in meeting the expectations and share our data and effective practices with the College Board. Attached is a brief (no more than 300–500 words) description of what we plan to do, including identification of partners who might be involved.

Appendix D

Barriers, Findings, and Strategies: What the Research Says

College Board Low-Income Task Force

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS: PREPARATION AND PLANNING*

Subcommittee Members

Ann S. Coles, Chair

J. David Armstrong, Jr.

George Chin

Joel V. Harrell

Laurice Penny Sommers

*Research findings compiled by Dr. Kristan Venegas, Assistant Professor, University of Nevada, Reno, and the Pathways to College Network. Strategies from the Pathways Network publication, *A Shared Agenda: A Leadership Challenge to Improve College Access and Success* (2004)

College Board Low-Income Task Force: Preparation and Planning

Students' Aspirations

Major Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Low-SES students lack social networks and cultural capital related to college-going.

Low-SES students lack understanding of the benefits of a college education; they have misaligned ambitions about their career options.

Low-SES students lack awareness about college access and financial aid resources.

Students' Aspirations

Research Findings: Predictors of College-Going and College Success

A recent review of four-year college enrollment using NCES data found that in addition to academic preparation, social and cultural capital enhances enrollment possibilities for black, Latino, and white students.

Source: Perna, L.W. (2000). *Differences in the decision to attend college among African Americans, Hispanics, and whites.*

Less than half of low-SES high school students report receiving help from an adult in preparing for college.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents.*

15 percent of low-SES high school students believe that they are doing most of the college preparation work on their own.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents.*

Low-SES students are less likely to have supportive peer, family, and schooling networks during the college preparation process.

Source: McDonough, P. (1997) *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity.*

School contexts affect students' choices about their postsecondary plans. Students who attend high schools that have established connections with local colleges and universities have more postsecondary choices. Better connected schools tend to be high-income schools.

Source: Steinberg, J. (2003). *The gatekeepers: Inside the admissions process of a premier college.*

Students who attend high schools in low-SES urban communities lack access to resources in school, community, and home settings.

Source: Tierney, W.G. & Colyar, J.E. (2006). *Urban High School Students and the challenge of access: Many routes, difficult paths.*

A study of educational aspirations from eighth to twelfth grades using NELS:88 data found that SES is the most important factor in maintaining aspirations to high school and beyond.

Source: Kao, G. & Tienda, M. (1998). *Educational aspirations of minority youth*

Low-SES students are less likely to go to college than students from families who have prior college-going experience and can provide a college-going culture or resources in the home.

Source: Horn, L.J. & Chen, X. (1998). *Toward resiliency: At-risk students who make it to college*.

Low-SES students are less likely to have an integrated set of personal experiences, classroom experiences, and other career-related knowledge to accurately plan for their post-high school and post-college career plans.

Source: Csikzentmihalyi, M. & Schneider, B. (2000). *Becoming adult: How teenagers prepare for the world of work*.

90 percent of high school students stated plans to attend college, even if their career choices did not require this level of education. Students are not able to accurately align academic and career goals.

Source: Schneider, B. & Stevenson, D. (1999) *The ambitious generation: America's teenagers, motivated but directionless*.

91 percent of low-SES students who participated in a study of college aspirations believed that they would complete a college degree.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents*.

High school seniors increasingly set high goals, but often their goals are unrealistic and out of their reach.

Source: Reynolds, J., Stewart, M., Macdonald, R., & Sischo, L. (2006). *Social Problems*.

11 percent of low-SES students agreed with the statement, “I don’t believe that college is for someone like me”; the highest percentage of students agreeing with this statement were white, rural males.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents*.

Low-SES students are less prepared for college; however, low-income and non-black Hispanic students are less likely to apply for college or take college examinations even when they have met the academic qualifications for admission.

Source: Berkner, L. & Chavez L. (1997). *Access to postsecondary education for the 1992 high school graduates*.

A survey of Latino and black students who have taken the ACT exam demonstrated that they are still not sure of the multiple steps involved in college planning, admissions, and financial aid.

Source: Noeth, R.J. & Wimberly, G.L. (2002). *Creating seamless transitions for urban African American and Latino students*.

Low-SES students’ ability to access college and financial aid information is challenged by the lack of availability of the technological resources and informed systems of support.

Source: Vargas, J. (2004). *College knowledge: Addressing the information barriers to college*.

Among other myths about college admissions and aid requirements, more than 50 percent of students in a study of California’s Latino youth incorrectly believed that you need to be a U.S. citizen to apply for college financial aid.

Source: Zarate, E. & Pachon, H.P. (2006) *Perceptions of college financial aid among California Latino youth*.

Trained college peer counselors in low-income urban high schools were unable to pass a “college and financial aid” quiz including basic information on financial aid. These students, who were to be helping other students, lacked some fundamental knowledge of the financial aid process.

Source: Tierney, W.G. & Venegas, K.M. (2006). *Fictive kin and social capital: The role of peer groups in applying and paying for college.*

Students' Aspirations

Strategies to Overcome Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

What K-12/Outreach Can Do

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster college-going aspirations beginning in elementary grades and continuing through community college. Use adults and college students to talk about pathways to college. Provide repeated experiences for students on college campuses. • Establish school district policies designed to elevate student aspirations. • Provide opportunities for students and parents to learn from low-income students who are succeeding in college, and their parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use terminology that addresses social/cultural issues, e.g., “scholarships.” • Acknowledge and tailor communications about college planning and application processes support for nontraditional or ad hoc parents, as well as traditional parents, in their first language. • Create peer support groups focused on college planning for middle and high school students. |
|--|--|

What Higher Ed Can Do

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster college-going aspirations beginning in elementary grades and continuing through community college. Use adults and college students to talk about pathways to college. Provide repeated experiences for students on college campuses. • Provide opportunities for students and parents to learn from low-income students who are succeeding in college and their parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use terminology that addresses social/cultural issues, e.g., “scholarships.” • Develop students’ and parents’ knowledge of economic and social benefits of college. Seek advice from families about what they need in order to support their children’s college aspirations. |
|--|---|

What the College Board Can Do

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use terminology that addresses social/cultural issues, e.g., “scholarships.” • Develop students’ and parents’ knowledge of economic and social benefits of college. Seek advice from families about what they need in order to support their children’s college aspirations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and tailor communications about college planning and application processes support for nontraditional or ad hoc parents, as well as traditional parents in their first language. |
|---|--|

What the Government/Others Can Do

- Foster college-going aspirations beginning in elementary grades and continuing through community college.
- Establish state policies designed to elevate student aspirations.

Expectations—Fostering College and Career Aspirations

Major Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Parents of low-SES students do not expect college-going because of:

- Inadequate understanding, misperceptions of benefits and opportunities.
- Fears related to lack of financial resources and familiarity with college.
- Family involvement in students' education restricted by limited financial resources, transportation, time (because of other responsibilities), language skills, and confidence.
- Birth parents no longer involved with students.
- Students living in foster care.

Many teachers and counselors believe that not all students are capable of being prepared for and succeeding in postsecondary education. Such beliefs result in low-income and minority students receiving less instructional time, academic support, and encouragement.

Negative biases and social forces among peers and in the community do not support college-going, e.g., poverty, drug trafficking, violence, and social inequity.

Expectations—Fostering College and Career Aspirations

Research Findings: Predictors of College-Going and College Success

About 10 percent of low-SES parents with students ages 15–17 believe that their children are not college material.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents.*

40 percent of low-SES parents have talked with their children about college, but would leave the decision up to them.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents.*

Only 20 percent of parents said they were “pushing” their children toward college enrollment. Of these active parents, most were in rural or suburban areas, rather than in urban areas where low-SES students predominate.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents.*

Less than 35 percent of low-SES parents believe that their children should start to think about college before the eighth grade.

Source: Ad Council. (2006). *College access: Results from a survey of low-income teens and parents.*

A study based on NCES data found that family background is more likely to affect a consistent college-going pattern for low-SES students than their more affluent counterparts.

Source: Goldrick-Rab, S. (2006). *Following their every move: An investigation of social class differences in college pathways*.

Foster care students are less likely to identify an individual who might serve as a college-going “advocate” in place of a birth parent, since caseworkers and foster parents are not able to fully act in those roles—i.e., foster parent income cannot be used when completing financial aid forms.

Sources: Davis, R. (2006). *College access, financial aid and college success for undergraduates from foster care*.
Corwin, Z.B. (2006). *Fostering college access: How social networks affect educational attainment for youth in foster care*.

Corwin, Z.B. (2005). *Foster youth and financial aid*.

Qualitative data gathered on students and parents in the Latino Home School Project showed differences in expectations and aspirations based on gender. Messages to Latinos are to return money to the family, while messages to Latinas involve delaying romantic relationships and protecting oneself in the event of a divorce.

Source: Zarate, M. E. & Gallimore R. (2005). *Gender differences in factors leading to college enrollment: A longitudinal analysis of Latina and Latino students*.

Though the socioeconomic gaps between black and white families have tightened, there are persistent differences in the measurement of wealth (i.e., generations of wealth) versus income (yearly pay) and college-related social capital between these families. Both of these issues impact college-going and ability to pay for college.

Sources: Alon, S., Domina, T., & Tienda, M. (2006). *Intergenerational transfer of human capital: Ethnic differences in college*.

Conley, D. (1999). *Being black, living in the red*.

A study of aspirations and expectations of Latino parents found that even though aspirations for college-going are in place, parents tailor their expectations for children’s current academic performance based on the family’s current socioeconomic status. Such findings emphasize the effects of a culture of multigenerational poverty and a weak locus of control.

Source: Goldenberg, K.P., Gallimore, R., Reese, L., & Garnier, H. (2001). *Cause or effect? A longitudinal study of immigrant Latino parents’ aspirations and expectations, and their children’s school performance*.

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute conducted a telephone survey of more than 1,000 Latino parents in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, and detailed case-study interviews of 41 of those parents. 65.7 percent of the parents who participated in the study failed a mini-test on factual college knowledge.

Source: Tornatsky, L.G., Cutler, R., & J. Lee (2002). *College knowledge: What Latino parents need to know and why they don’t know it*.

Low-SES parents and parents of color feel uninvited or discouraged from participating in school-related activities. Auerbach’s research with families of color in Los Angeles showed that parents’ narratives were centered around “pushing,” enacting “counterstories” against the advice of school personnel and feelings of being “rebuffed” in school settings.

Source: Auerbach, S. (2002). *“Why do they give the good classes to some and not to others?” Latino parent narratives of struggle in a college access program*.

As early as middle school, and more often even sooner, middle-income families are more likely to socialize their students toward college readiness via: engagement in “valued” extracurricular activities; discussions that require traditional critical thinking skills; and supplementing in school experiences with out of school academic enrichment.

Source: Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*.

Teachers’ and students’ college-going expectations are not in sync. Teachers often have lower expectations for low-SES and minority students.

Sources: Pathways to College Network (2004). *A Shared Agenda: A leadership challenge to improve college access and success*.
Gandara, P. & Bial, D. (2001). *Paving the way to postsecondary education: K–12 intervention programs for underrepresented youth*.

A survey of high school teachers found that about one-third of them believe their students could go to a four-year college. The same survey found 71 percent of secondary school students sought to attend a four-college while only 8 percent planned for a two-year community college.

Source: Metropolitan Life (2000). *MetLife survey of the American teacher 2000: Are we preparing students for the 21st century?*

Low-SES and minority students receive less instructional time, academic support, and help from their teachers in comparison to their in-class peers.

Source: Rist, R. (2000). Author’s introduction: The enduring dilemmas of class and color in American education.

Counselors who provide college-related information positively impact students’ aspirations and motivation.

Source: McDonough, P.M. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*.

A study of college guidance counselors and their financial aid knowledge found that they often had perceptions about what their advisees (low-income urban students of color) should be saving or spending for college. These perceptions influenced the types of institutions that students were advised to attend.

Source: McDonough, P.M. & Calderone, S. (2006). *The meaning of money: Perceptual differences between college counselors and low-income families about college costs and financial aid*.

High student-to-counselor ratios create various challenges for counseling staff to provide adequate, personalized services.

Source: Hugo, E. (2004). *Rethinking counseling for college: Perceptions of school and counselors roles in increasing college enrollment*.

Teachers and counselors in low-SES rural and urban schools invest more time and resources into those few students who are seen as college bound.

Sources: Bettie, J. (2003). *Women without class: Girls, race, and identity*.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2001). *Manufacturing hope and despair: The school and kin support networks of U.S.-Mexican youth*.

Low-income students in urban, rural, and suburban high school settings were aware that they needed to be strategic in choosing teachers who “really taught” and valued them as students.

Sources: Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2001). *Manufacturing hope and despair: The school and kin support networks of U.S.-Mexican youth*.

Tierney, W.G. & Colyar, J.E. (2006). *Urban high school students and the challenge of access: Many routes, difficult paths*.

Low-SES students who enroll in postsecondary institutions are more likely to come from less stable neighborhoods; they are more likely to have experienced social disorder and violence, particularly if they come from racially segregated neighborhoods.

Source: Massey, D., Charles, C., Lundy, G., & Fischer, M. (2003). *The source of the river*.

Schools that serve low-income students are most likely to be located in low-income neighborhoods in which classroom and community conditions affect opportunities for learning and defer college aspirations.

Source: Kahlenberg, R. (2001). *All together now*.

Peer influence and college-going for low-SES urban youth impact college aspirations and plans. Recent research found that friends' plans are the single most important factor in low socioeconomic urban minority high school graduates' decisions of whether or not to enroll at least half time in a four-year college or university.

Sources: Sokatch, A. (2004). *Peer influences on the college-going decisions of low socioeconomic status urban youth*.

Sokatch, A. (2005). "It depends on your friends": A qualitative investigation into peer influence on college-going decisions of low-income urban youth.

Low-income black female high school students with academic prowess and/or college-going aspirations cite their need to identify ways to shift their relationships with peers and others as part of the process of navigating acceptable identities between and across communities.

Source: Horvat, E.M. & Lewis, K.S. (2003). *Reassessing the "burden of 'acting white'": The importance of peer groups in managing academic success*.

Expectations—Fostering College and Career Aspirations

Strategies to Overcome Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

What K-12/Outreach Can Do

- Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators about how their belief systems concerning students and college-going affect student achievement.
- Engage business, higher education, philanthropic, and community leaders in advocating for college preparation for low-income students with parents, school leaders, and policymakers.
- Organize and support campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of college for all students and to prompt students and parents to take actions to prepare for college. Provide information in parents' first language.
- Monitor and publish data that indicates progress toward the goal of college readiness for all students, including low-income students.

What Higher Ed Can Do

- Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators about how their belief systems concerning students and college-going affect student achievement, and include teacher, counselor, and administrator credentialing programs.
- Incorporate evidence of a college-going culture for all into teacher, counselor, and administrator education programs.
- Organize and support campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of college for all students and to prompt students and parents to take actions to prepare for college. Provide information in parents' first language.

What the College Board Can Do

- Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators about how their belief systems concerning students and college-going affect student achievement.
- Organize and support campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of college for all students and to prompt students and parents to take actions to prepare for college. Provide information in parents' first language.
- Engage business, higher education, philanthropic, and community leaders in advocating for college preparation for low-income students with parents, school leaders, and policymakers.
- Monitor and publish data that indicates progress toward the goal of college readiness for all students, including low-income students.

What the Government/Others Can Do

- Include information and training on how educators' belief systems concerning students and college-going affect student achievement in credentialing programs for teachers, counselors, and administrators.
- Incorporate evidence of a college-going culture for all into regional accrediting association reviews and teacher education programs.
- Organize and support campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of college for all students and to prompt students and parents to take actions to prepare for college. Provide information in parents' first language.
- Engage business, higher education, philanthropic, and community leaders in advocating for college preparation for low-income students with parents, school leaders, and policymakers.
- Monitor and publish data that indicates progress toward the goal of college readiness for all students, including low-income students.

Information and Encouragement to Help Fulfill Aspirations

Major Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Low-SES students lack information about college options, admission requirements, admission tests, and application processes as well as financial aid availability and application processes.

Systems for delivering college-planning information to low-income students and their families are inadequate because of:

- Limited college counseling and application assistance in low-income schools and communities.
- Few college awareness, exploration programs for middle and early high school students; such programs are not part of the regular school curriculum.
- Little access to the Internet or other resources for college planning and applications for students at low-income schools.

There is a lack of financial resources and connections among schools, families, community-based organizations, and neighborhoods related to low-income students' college readiness and college-planning assistance.

Information and Encouragement to Help Fulfill Aspirations

Research Findings: Predictors of College-Going and College Success

The National Center for Education Statistics report, "Getting Ready for College," found 91 percent of students and parents report plans for higher education, but are unable to accurately estimate the costs of college. Students and parents tended to overestimate these costs, especially for public institutions. For example, in 1998-99, the average yearly in-state undergraduate tuition at public four-year colleges was approximately \$3,200. Eleventh- and twelfth-grade students and their parents estimated tuition to be between \$5,400 and \$5,800.

Source: Horn, L.J., Chen, X. & Chapman, C. (2003). *Getting ready to pay for college: What students and their parents know about the costs of college tuition and what they are doing to find out.*

Research has shown that low-income students are more likely to rely on their guidance counselor solely, rather than seeking advice from parents, peers, or siblings.

Source: Cabrera, A.F. & La Nasa, S. (2001). *On the path to college: Three critical tasks facing America's disadvantaged.*

This finding has been found particularly salient for first-generation Latina students.

Source: Zarate, M. E. & Gallimore, R. (2005). *Gender differences in factors leading to college enrollment: A longitudinal analysis of Latina and Latino students.*

There are cracks in the K-16 college access pipeline that need to be fixed in order to provide curricular and cultural connections for the transitions from elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college.

Source: Venezia, A., Kirst, M.W., & Antonio, A. L. (2003). *Betraying the college dream: How disconnected K-12 and postsecondary education systems undermine student aspirations.*

Although there are college-preparation programs available in middle and high schools that emphasize college-going for low-SES students, the full impact of these programs is not fully known.

Sources: Gullat, Y. & Jan, W. (2005). *How do pre-collegiate academic outreach programs impact college-going among underrepresented students?*

Gandara, P. & Bial, D. (2001). *Paving the way to postsecondary education: K-12 intervention programs for underrepresented youth.*

Research suggests that college-preparation programs need to focus and define their capabilities to increase academic preparation, peer support, college counseling, and extracurricular activities. Program leaders also need to consider how they make decisions about the timing and evaluation of these interventions.

Sources: Jun, A. & Tierney, W.G. (1999, Spring). *At-risk urban students and college success: A framework for effective preparation.*

Tierney, W.G., Colyar, J.E., & Corwin, Z.B. (2003). *Preparing for college: Building expectations, changing realities.*

The two federally based college-preparation programs (TRIO and GEAR UP) which focus on academic and social capital related preparation for college are poorly funded. Spending totals for these programs are a combined \$1 billion dollars in comparison to the \$11 billion dollars that are allotted for Pell Grant spending.

Source: Kahlenberg, R. (2004). *America's untapped resource: Low-income students in higher education.* New York, NY: Century Foundation Press.

Cabrera and La Nasa found that only 65.5 percent of low-SES academically prepared high school students completed a college application. This application rate is 22 percent lower for SES students. When low-SES students do apply, their probability of enrolling mirrors that of the national average, regardless of SES.

Source: Cabrera, A.F. & La Nasa, S. (2001). *On the path to college: Three critical tasks facing America's disadvantaged.*

Research on price response suggests that low-income students would be more likely to apply and enroll in postsecondary education based on financial aid notification in the eleventh grade rather than twelfth grade.

Source: Heller, D.E. (2002). *The condition of access: Higher education for lower income students.*

College guidance counselors are often overburdened with high student-to-counselor ratios and responsibilities for tasks that extend beyond college counseling.

Sources: Corwin, Z.B., Venegas, K.M., Oliverez, P.M. & Colyar, J.E. (2004). *School counsel: How appropriate guidance affects college-going.*

McDonough, P.M. & Calderone, S. (2006). *The meaning of money: Perceptual differences between college counselors and low-income families about college costs and financial aid.*

Research has shown that increased spending per pupil as the result of an updated education finance equalization formula improved fourth-grade test scores.

Source: Guryan, J. (2001). *Does money matter? Regression-discontinuity estimates from education finance reform in Massachusetts.*

While there have been increases in access to computers in school and at home, there are gaps in knowledge and support needed to navigate financial aid and college-going resources online. These important processes include completing admissions and financial aid applications.

Source: Venegas, K.M. (2006). *Internet inequities: Financial aid, the Internet, and low-income students*.

Inadequate health care, including lack of health insurance affects student concentration in class, attendance, and performance on exams.

Source: Levin, H.M. & Belfield, C.R. (2002). *Families as contractual partners in education*.

Low-income SES students are more likely to have health problems and have fewer academically oriented preschool experiences.

Source: Young, B. & Smith, T.M. (1997). *Findings from the condition of education 1997: The social context of education*.

Public school funding per student continues to be litigated in the courts, even in our post-Brown era. Urban and rural schools in areas where low-SES and students of color are most frequently represented.

Source: Verstegen, D. A., Venegas, K., & Knoepfel, R. (2006). *Savage inequalities revisited: Adequacy, equity, and state high court decisions*.

Information and Encouragement to Help Fulfill Aspirations

Strategies to Overcome Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

What K-12/Outreach Can Do

- Begin early (sixth to eighth grade) with providing information and social support related to nurturing college aspirations. Facilitate parents' awareness and use of support services and college planning resources in schools, the community, and on college campuses.
- Infuse classrooms with experiences that affirm students' backgrounds, using their language, culture, and experiences as positive instructional tools.
- Embrace families' cultural and social values and community values that support student achievement and college aspirations.
- Create school structures that facilitate supportive relationships for students with caring adults, mentors, and peers.
- Empower parents to advocate for their children by providing tools that parents can use to make schools more accommodating to their children's needs.
- Develop partnerships between schools and colleges, faith-based organizations, and community organizations to provide early and ongoing college awareness activities and planning assistance. Establish or expand outreach programs that complement schools' college guidance efforts and provide students with campus experiences.

What Higher Ed Can Do

- Incorporate college-planning information and skills into counselor and teacher credentialing programs.
- Develop partnerships between schools and colleges, faith-based organizations, and community organizations to provide early and ongoing college awareness activities and planning assistance. Establish or expand outreach programs that complement schools' college guidance efforts and provide students with campus experiences.

What the College Board Can Do

- Begin early (sixth to eighth grade) with providing information and social support related to nurturing college aspirations.

What the Government/Others Can Do

- Empower parents to advocate for their children by providing tools that parents can use to make schools more accommodating to their children's needs.

Academic Preparation

Major Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Many schools that low-SES students attend don't offer rigorous college-prep courses or curricula:

- There are few advanced math, science, or AP® courses.
- Many teachers, especially in math and science, are less well prepared and are not qualified in the content area they teach.
- AP, Honors, and Dual Enrollment courses are often restricted to students who meet high achievement criteria.
- ACT/SAT® test prep is not offered.
- Algebra is not offered in the middle school level.

Students enter high school not prepared for a rigorous college-prep curriculum.

- Many students have reading skills below the ninth-grade level and limited English language fluency.
- Schools do not provide academic support to accelerate students' learning.

Academic Preparation

Research Findings: Predictors of College-Going and College Success

Students of color and low-SES students are less likely to be scheduled into academic tracks. Instead, they are more likely to be scheduled into vocational tracks than their more affluent white counterparts.

Source: Gamoran, A., Porter, A.C., Smithson, J., & White, P.A. (1997). *Upgrading high school mathematics instruction: Improving learning opportunities for low-achieving, low-income youth.*

Schools do not assign all students to college-prep curricula—28 percent low-income compared with 49 percent middle and 65 percent high income.

Source: Gates Foundation Education Policy Paper. (2003) *Closing the graduation gap: Toward high schools that prepare all students for college, work, and citizenship.*

A study of low-income high schools in urban Los Angeles areas found that some schools claimed to be unable to offer academically rigorous courses because there are not enough students who have been appropriately prepared to take them.

Source: Oakes, J., Rogers, J., Lipton, M. & Morrell, E. (2002). *The social construction of college access: Confronting the technical, cultural and political barriers to low-income students of color.*

Low-SES students continue to be underrepresented in highly selective and/or elite colleges and universities because they have not completed the appropriate academic course work.

Source: Carnevale, S. & Rose, S.J. (2004). *Socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and selective college admissions.*

A study based on NCES data found that high school contexts and academic preparation are more likely to affect a consistent college-going pattern for low-SES students than for their more affluent counterparts.

Source: Goldrick-Rab, S. (2006). *Following their every move: An investigation of social class differences in college pathways.*

Students who take advanced level course work in high school, including honors and Advanced Placement Program® (AP) courses, are more likely to perform well in college, regardless of high school grade point average or performance on standardized tests.

Source: Adelman, C. (1999). *Answers in the toolbox: Academic intensity, attendance patterns, and bachelor's degree attainment.*

Teachers in low-SES schools are less likely to be certified in or have majored in the academic subjects they teach.

Source: Haycock, K. (1998). *Good teaching matters: How well-qualified teachers can close the gap.*

Small class sizes in elementary school (grades 1–3) increase minority students' performance on standardized tests and increase the likelihood of these students taking college entrance exams.

Source: Kruger, A. & Whitmore, D. (2001). *The effect of attending a small class in the early grades on college test-taking and middle school test results.*

The current structures of middle and high schools does not prepare minority, low-income, and first-generation students to attend college.

Sources: Kirst, M. & Venezia, A. (2004). *From high school to college: Improving opportunities for success in postsecondary education*.

Martinez, M. & Klopott, S. (2004). *Improving college access for minority low-income and first-generation students*.

Course taking patterns and placement, particularly math placement in the eighth grade, are related to later academic performance and career aspirations; mistakes in course placement lead to fewer postsecondary opportunities.

Source: Stevenson, D.L., Schiller, K.S., & Schneider, B. (1994). *Sequences of opportunities for learning*.

Academic Preparation

Strategies to Overcome Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

What K-12/Outreach Can Do

- Align middle school math and English language arts standards with ninth-grade college-prep courses, and align high school graduation standards with first-year college course expectations.
- Make college-prep program the default curriculum required for high school graduation unless families opt students out.
- Open AP, Honors, IB, and Dual Enrollment courses to all students.
- Align high school graduation requirements with four-year public college admissions standards.
- Partner with higher education institutions to improve teachers' content knowledge (especially in math and English language arts), understanding, and skills with using culturally relevant pedagogies.
- Develop systems to identify underperforming students early and monitor their progress over time. Have all students take the PSAT/NMSQT and/or PLAN in ninth and tenth grades in order to assess progress toward college readiness.
- Provide support to accelerate students' learning in college-prep courses, using high education partners to supplement school resources. Focus outreach program activities on supporting students' learning in rigorous courses.
- Collect and use data to track student performance in college-prep courses. Disaggregate data to assure that all students are progressing. Incorporate data on students' college achievement into high school planning and high school achievement into middle school planning.
- Partner with city/county/private health-care providers to offer health-care services on high school campuses.
- Provide every school the resources necessary to produce college-ready students.

What the Government/Others Can Do

- Align middle school math and English language arts standards with ninth-grade college-prep courses, and align high school graduation standards with first-year college course expectations.
- Make college-prep program the default curriculum required for high school graduation unless families opt students out.
- Align high school graduation requirements with four-year public college admissions standards.
- Provide resources for all students to take the PSAT/NMSQT and/or PLAN in the ninth and tenth grades in order to assess progress toward college readiness.
- Provide support to accelerate students' learning in college-prep courses, using higher education partners to supplement school resources.
- Provide every school district the resources necessary to produce college-ready students.

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College Board Low-Income Task Force

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS: ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID*

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College Board Low-Income Task Force: Admissions and Financial Aid

Recruitment/Admissions

Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Insufficiently high aim; leaving friends and family; fear of social isolation and not being accepted.

No clear pathway from two-year to four-year institutions.

College recruitment processes and communications do not fully take into account the needs of low-income students and their parents.

Focusing on quantitative measurements in the recruitment and admissions processes reduces opportunities for low-income students.

Low-income students are at greater risk of missing admissions and financial aid deadlines because of lack of informed support.

Limited access to the Internet.

Family and work responsibilities leave little time to complete the admissions and financial aid process.

Recruitment/Admissions

Research Findings

Low-income students are much more likely than those from higher-income backgrounds to enroll in two-year public colleges. They are less likely than others to enroll in four-year private colleges, especially highly selective private institutions.

Sources: Congressional Budget Office. (January, 2004). *Private and Public Contributions to Financing College Education*.

Winston, G.C. & Hill, C.B. (2005). *Access to the most selective private college by high-ability, low-income students: Are they out there?*

Middle and high school counselors who provide information on college preparation, admission testing, and financial aid have been shown to positively impact students' motivation and aspirations.

Source: Fallon, M.V. (1997). *The school counselor's role in first generation students' college plans*.

Students attending well-resourced high schools establish a college-choice set that includes elite institutions. Those from low-SES schools have relatively low expectations for where they might attend even when they are well-qualified academically.

Source: McDonough, P.M., Ed. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*.

Students facing the college decision are bounded by their environment and the perceptions they have, which are limited by geography and social circles. The high school context plays a very significant role in informing students' ideas about postsecondary options.

Source: McDonough, P.M., Ed. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*.

In 2003, 80 percent of students from families with incomes in the upper 20 percent, 65 percent of those from the second highest quintile, and 61 percent of those from the middle quintile enrolled in college immediately after high school. Only 49 percent of high school graduates from the lowest 40 percent of the family income distribution enrolled in college immediately. (The college enrollment rates cited here are based only on individuals who have graduated from high school. Students from low-income families are significantly less likely than those from more affluent families to reach this point. In the year ending in October 2001, 11 percent of tenth- to twelfth-graders from the 20 percent of families with the lowest incomes left high school without a diploma, compared to 5 percent of middle-income students and 2 percent from the highest income quintile.)

Source: The College Board. *Education Pays 2005*.

Parental encouragement is important to the development of college aspirations. Proactive encouragement may include parental involvement in school activities, parental saving for college, and parent-student discussions about college and education-related topics.

Source: Cabrera, A.F. & LaNasa, S.M. (2000). *Understanding the college-choice process*.

Early intervention programs are designed to provide low-income youth with the chance to increase knowledge, skills, confidence, and college aspirations. The key ingredients of such programs are: 1) student has goal of college attendance; 2) college tours, visits, fairs; 3) student has goal to complete rigorous academic course in preparation; 4) parental involvement; 5) reach students in eighth grade. Less than 25 percent of early intervention programs contain all of the critical components.

Source: Perna, L.W. (2002). *Pre-college outreach programs: Characteristics of programs serving historically underrepresented groups of students*.

Talent Search participants in Florida, Indiana, and Texas were more likely than comparison students to apply for federal student aid and enroll in public postsecondary institutions in all three states. These findings suggest that assisting low-income students who have college aspirations to overcome information barriers—an important objective of the Talent Search program—may be effective in helping these students achieve their aspirations.

Source: Constantine, J.M., et al. (2006). *Study of the effect of the talent search program on secondary and postsecondary outcomes in Florida, Indiana, and Texas: Final report from phase II of the national evaluation*.

Kao and Tienda use the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1998 (NELS:88) to analyze how educational aspirations are formed and maintained from eighth to twelfth grades. They find that family socioeconomic status (SES) is the single most important factor, not only in establishing high aspirations in the eighth grade but also in maintaining these aspirations throughout high school. Kao and Tienda conclude that “because black and Hispanic students are less likely to maintain their high aspirations throughout high school, owing to their lower family SES background...their early aspirations are less concrete than those of white and especially of Asian students.” Kao and Tienda supplement their quantitative analysis with focus-group discussions with students. In these discussions Kao and Tienda discover that Hispanic and black students tend to be less informed about funding options for college and have less concrete occupational goals than their Asian and white counterparts.

Source: Kao, G. & Tienda, M. (1998). *Educational aspirations of minority youth*.

Limiting the analyses to students enrolled at high-minority enrollment and low-income schools, the study found that the only measures that were directly related to college predisposition among African Americans pertained to parents: their expectations and educational attainment.

Source: Hamrick, F.A., & Stage, F.K. (2004). *College predisposition at high-minority enrollment, low-income schools*.

Parental encouragement is the best predictor of aspirations of high school students but SES predicts probabilities of enacting aspirations.

Source: Hossler, D., Schmit, J., & Vesper, N. (1999). *Going to college: How social, economic, and educational factors influence the decisions students make*.

Low-SES students were less likely than other students to be “successful” academically, socially, and psychologically, because their neighborhoods offered fewer opportunities and more threats, and because their parents possessed fewer resources needed to promote their children’s success.

Source: Furstenberg, F., et al. (1999). *Managing to make it: Urban families in high-risk neighborhoods*.

Nearly half of all undergraduate students are enrolled in community colleges—and that percentage is on the rise. Among them are millions of full-time students, many from low-income families, and most of traditional college age. For these students, community college can open doors to opportunity, including serving as a gateway to a four-year degree.

Yet many doors remain closed to even the most talented low-income community college students. Nowhere are these limitations more apparent than in the limited opportunity community college students are granted to transfer to the country’s most selective four-year institutions. Top community college students struggle against the mistaken perception by some college administrators and others that community college transfer students cannot succeed at elite institutions. They also face cultural and economic barriers to completing their bachelor’s degrees.

Source: Dowd, A.C., et al. (2006). *Transfer access to elite colleges and universities in the United States: Threading the needle of the American dream*.

88 percent of the students who participated in the 2004 CCSSE survey rated academic advising and planning as very important; only 59 percent reported actually using the service.

Source: Anderson, M.E. (August 2007). *Solutions: Adjuncts as academic advisors*.

Low-income and minority students are met with unfamiliar cultural norms upon entering the collegiate environment, which causes an early disruption to the already delicate pipeline from two-year schools to four-year schools.

Source: Green, D. (2006). *Historically Underserved Students: What we know, what we still need to know*.

Fewer than 1 percent of entering students at elite private colleges and about 8 percent of those at elite public colleges started at community colleges; more than 40 percent of undergraduates study at community colleges.

Source: Dowd, A.C., et al. (2006). *Transfer access to elite colleges and universities in the United States: Threading the needle of the American dream*.

GPA's and SAT® scores are highly correlated with family income levels. Of 2005 college-bound seniors with GPA of A- or higher:

- 33 percent come from families with incomes less than \$35,000
- If parents graduated from high school, but did not achieve a postsecondary degree, mean verbal SAT score was 471; mean math SAT score was 479.
- If parents' income was between \$10,000 and \$20,000, mean verbal SAT score was 443; mean math SAT score was 463.

Source: The College Board. *College-Bound Seniors 2005*.

“[T]he admissions process must take account of many factors vital to the health and effectiveness of the college...it is hard to argue either for practical or idealistic reasons that admissions should rest exclusively on academic considerations....It seems particularly important to look for ways in which institutions can emphasize a broad view of excellence in the way they select freshmen, design programs, and place demands on students.”

Source: Willingham, W.W. & Breland, H.M. (1982). *Personal qualities and college admissions*.

The author challenges the use of the SAT and other standardized tests as a sole assessment tool for college and university admissions...and presents a noncognitive assessment method that can be used in concert with standardized tests. In this and other writings, the author puts forth a number of variables that he recommends be included in admissions because they predict success in higher education (e.g., positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, successful leadership experience, demonstrated community service, knowledge acquired in or about a field, etc.).

Source: Sedlacek, W.E. (2004). *Beyond the Big Test: Noncognitive Assessment in Higher Education*.

A biographical data (biodata) measure and situational judgment inventory (SJI) have been useful as predictors of broadly defined college student performance outcomes. They provided incremental validity when considered in combination with standardized college-entrance tests (i.e., SAT/ACT) and a measure of Big Five personality constructs. Racial subgroup mean differences were much smaller on the biodata and SJI measures than on the standardized tests and college grade point average. Female students tended to outperform male students on most predictors and outcomes with the exception of the SAT/ACT.

Source: Oswald, F.L., et al. (2004). *Developing a biodata measure and situational judgment inventory as predictors of college student performance*.

“Most admissions decisions are made using tools that have been around for 50 years or more.... Teachers’ grades...are criticized for reflecting behavior...and for being too tightly bunched... admissions tests are criticized as being too narrow....Significant attention is [being] given to finding new variables that may have less disparate impact on poor or racial/ethnic students, as well as reliably measuring a broader range of talents and skills related to college success.” Research by those cited above, as well as Sternberg and others, point to numerous explorations into broadening the measures used to assess potential for college success.

Source: Camara, W. J. & Kimmel, E.W. (2005). *Choosing students: Higher education admission for the 21st century*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, 2005.

Receiving admission and financial aid support is challenging for students with questions or a lack of know-how, as high school counseling offices and financial aid offices are often overwhelmed.

Source: Burdman, P. (2005). *The student debt dilemma: Debt aversion as a barrier to college access*.

For information about college, African American, Hispanic, and low-income students and parents depend largely on school personnel. However, schools typically attended by these students are not adequately equipped to provide needed information and services.

Source: Perna, L.W. (2002). Pre-college outreach programs: Characteristics of programs serving historically underrepresented groups of students.

While a portion of students lack knowledge of how to access financial aid, this problem is exacerbated when students do not enroll or complete college because of a lack of family financial resources.

Source: Furstenberg, F., et al. (1999). *Managing to make it: Urban families in high-risk neighborhoods*.

The complexity of the financial aid process disproportionately affects low-income families, who can benefit most from federal aid programs but lack the know-how to complete the FAFSA form, which takes an average of 10 hours to complete.

Source: Dynarski, S. & Scott-Clayton, J. (2007). *College grants on a postcard: A proposal for simple and predictable federal student aid*.

There is a lack of research indicating what kinds of financial aid information are most helpful to students, so that when financial aid information is in the hands of students and parents, the extent to which the information is helpful remains unclear. Future research must aim to understand what financial aid information is most useful; how it is best disseminated; and to which age groups it is appropriate.

Source: Perna, L.W. & Titus, M.A. (2004). *Understanding differences in the choice of college attended: The role of state public policies*.

According to a Pew national survey of people 18 and older, completed in February 2006, 74 percent of whites go online, 61 percent of African Americans do, and 80 percent of English-speaking Hispanic Americans report using the Internet. In a similar survey in 1998, 42 percent of white American adults said they used the Internet, while only 23 percent of African American adults did so. Forty percent of English-speaking Hispanic Americans said they used the Internet.

Source: Marriott, M. (2006). *Digital divide closing as blacks turn to Internet*.

Almost 9 out of 10 of 21 million Americans ages 12 to 17 use the Internet. Of them, 87 percent of white teenagers, 77 percent of black teenagers, and 89 percent of Hispanic teenagers say they use the Internet.

Source: Lenhart, A., Madden, M., & Hitlin, P. (2005). *Teens and technology: Youth are leading the transition to a fully wired and mobile nation.*

In the Class of 2005: 70 percent registered for the SAT via the Web [28 percent said they were nonwhite, 22 percent indicated family incomes <\$60,000, 13 percent <\$40,000], 30 percent registered via paper [36 percent said they were nonwhite, 38 percent indicated family incomes <\$60,000, 27 percent <\$40,000].

Very few students in a study of students in low-income schools discussed a concern with access to a computer needed to complete financial aid searches or applications. However, they lacked access to the knowledge needed to effectively navigate the financial aid process.

Source: Venegas, K. (2006). *Internet inequalities: Financial aid, the internet, and low-income students.*

Recruitment/Admissions

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

What K-12/Outreach Can Do:

- Encourage students to stretch reasonably in choice of schools to which they apply.
- Teach students about careers and the level of education required to be successful in each.
- Encourage students to apply for a wide range of institutions, considering published price and financial aid.
- Encourage parents and other significant adults in children's lives to be engaged in children's education and the college-planning process.
- Make college planning a non-negotiable activity in every high school.
- Establish peer mentoring programs of high school alumni who have been successful in college.
- Establish "parent-to-parent" programs to help them understand the process and support their children's aspirations.
- Collaborate with and advise local higher education institutions about the effectiveness of their communications.
- Conduct focus groups with students and parents from low-income backgrounds to better understand their information needs.
- Identify what role teachers and counselors can play in bringing to the attention of colleges students who might otherwise fall through the cracks in the admissions process.
- Educate students and parents about the importance of college planning and of accessing available information.
- Provide links to a small number of quality Web sites that provide understandable information about admissions and aid, and offer easy-to-use tools.
- Develop multiple strategies for communicating information about application processes and deadlines to students and parents, and monitor student progress.

- Collaborate with community colleges to provide an advising/planning bridge for rising sophomores.
- Engage in dual enrollment partnerships with community colleges to support lower dropout rates and increase college readiness.
- Teach students and counselors to navigate college planning sites and to complete online applications, check status, etc.
- Assist students with the college application process, including essay writing.

What Higher Ed can do:

- Establish peer-mentoring programs of high school alumni who have been successful in college.
- Form partnerships with middle schools and high schools to raise students' awareness of a wide range of postsecondary opportunities.
- Establish "parent-to-parent" programs to help them understand the process and support their children's aspirations.
- Engage alumni in the effort to work with students in schools with significant numbers of low-income students.
- Provide an advising/planning bridge for rising sophomores to facilitate transfer to four-year institutions.
- Develop and clearly communicate transfer articulation policies and procedures.
- Community colleges can collaborate with the local four-year colleges to establish dual-enrollment programs that introduce students to the values, traditions, and behaviors of four-year colleges.
- Develop financial aid awarding policies that support the transfer of students from two-year to four-year colleges.
- Provide targeted support services for transfer students.
- Provide information in languages other than English when appropriate.
- Conduct focus groups with students and parents from low-income backgrounds to better understand their information needs.
- Communicate regularly with low-income students during the recruitment process.
- Add questions to admissions applications to better inform admissions staff about barriers low-income students have faced.
- Selective institutions can refine admissions policy, giving special consideration to students who come from low-income backgrounds.
- Encourage "rankers" to incorporate recruiting and graduating low-income students into the rankings.
- Form partnerships with middle schools and high schools to raise students' awareness of processes, deadlines, and aid possibilities.
- Develop communication strategies to ensure applicants meet deadlines and monitor applicant progress.
- Staff a college admissions help desk in the evening and on weekends to make information more accessible to low-income students and their parents.
- Encourage more institutions to use common applications.
- Sponsor college admissions "boot camps" to help students with the admissions and financial aid application processes.

What the College Board Can Do:

- Make College Board data available to help colleges enroll increased numbers of low-income students.
- Provide professional development for counselors and teachers at low-SES schools to increase their knowledge of the admissions and financial aid processes as well as College Board tools for getting students ready for the transition from high school to college.
- Develop model guidance calendar and activities for each year in high school.
- Encourage and support state efforts to improve college counselor effectiveness.
- Make information on the benefits of higher education available to low-income students and their parents.
- Develop mechanisms to identify community college students interested in transferring to four-year institutions.
- Help two- and four-year colleges reach agreement on transfer articulation policies.
- Provide tips or advice to colleges about how to reach low-income students and parents with effective publications, Web sites, and other types of outreach.
- Provide information in languages other than English in print and Web publications.
- Develop tools to help colleges identify characteristics, other than numbers, that correlate with success.
- Partner with Association of Governing Boards to help institutional trustees to move beyond the rankings.
- Work with influential college presidents to demand a change in the rankings to include criteria about enrolling and graduating students from low-income backgrounds.
- Develop case studies on effective admissions practices.
- Inventory successful early intervention programs and broadly communicate success factors.
- Provide professional development opportunities focused on broadening assessment of student potential for admissions professionals, presidents, and trustees.
- Push information about deadlines to students who register at collegeboard.com.
- Develop a simple publication to help students, parents, and counselors navigate the College Board's Web site, and complete tasks at the site.
- Encourage College Board members to embrace a single admissions application.
- Convene a working group to investigate development of a common application.
- Convene a working group to consider creation of a central collection point for letters of recommendation and transcripts.
- Encourage higher ed members to waive application fees for all students who meet the task force definition of "low income."

What the Government/Others Should Do:

- States should legislate and fund a counselor/student ratio of no more than 1:250.
- Federal government should design and fund a "National Counselor Corps" to ensure that schools with large numbers of low-SES students are adequately staffed.
- States can encourage dual enrollment programs between community colleges and four-year universities.
- States should support the development of articulation policies that facilitate transfer.

- States should mandate outcomes for counselor preservice training, defining the knowledge and skills required.
- Federal government should establish and fund a new federal program, contributing to college-savings plans for low-income families.
- Continue to fund and strengthen existing preparation and outreach programs, such as TRIO and Upward Bound.
- Sponsor information and outreach programs in low-SES schools.
- Partner with K–12 and higher education to develop college access marketing campaigns.
- Fund in-home access to computers and the Internet for low-income families.
- Give tax incentives to companies donating computer and technical training to low-income students and families.
- Fund public service messages regarding the importance and accessibility of college.
- State agencies should support common applications for public institutions within each state.

Financial Aid Eligibility/Process

Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Many institutions do not meet full need:

- Insufficient funds to meet full need.
- Inaccurate estimates of cost of education result in artificially low need.
- Diversion of aid resources to merit aid.

Parent/student misperceptions of affordability and lack of knowledge about financial aid.

Complexity of aid eligibility system makes it difficult to communicate specific information about aid eligibility early.

Complex aid application and aid offer notification process can be overwhelming to low-income students.

- Aid application doesn't reflect the family circumstances of many students from low-income backgrounds.
- Insufficient hands-on assistance to students and families completing aid forms.
- Low-income, first-generation students needing the most help often attend urban and rural schools with insufficient numbers of school counselors.
- Low-income students and their families don't understand the "code" for negotiating institutional processes.
- Financial aid offices lack adequate and well-trained staff to help students with special circumstances.

Aid is less available for community college transfer students than for students enrolling as freshmen.

Failure to qualify for financial aid because of not meeting state testing requirements for high school graduation.

Financial Aid Eligibility/Process

Research Findings

Families of low-income, college-qualified high school graduates face annual unmet need of \$3,800—college expenses not covered by student aid, including work-study and loans. The shortage in grant aid requires these families to cover \$7,500—two-thirds of college expenses at public four-year colleges and one-third of family income—through work and borrowing. These financial barriers prevent 48 percent of college-qualified, low-income high school graduates from attending a four-year college and 22 percent from attending any college at all, within two years of graduation.

Source: Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2002). *Empty Promises: The myth of college access in America*.

Between 1990 and 2004, some undergraduates have shifted their enrollment to less costly institutions: decline at public four-year institutions by 1 percent; decline at private four-year institutions by 3.3 percent; increase at community colleges by 5 percent.

Source: Mortenson, T. (2005). *College affordability trends by parental income levels and institutional type 1990 to 2004*.

Unmet financial need averages about \$5,500 for students in the bottom parental income quartile and \$3,400 for students in the second quartile in 2004. Between 1990 and 2004 unmet financial need increased in inflation-adjusted dollars from \$3,100 in 1990 to \$5,500 by 2004 for students from the bottom parental income quartile, and from \$322 to \$3,391 for students from the second parental income quartile.

Source: Mortenson, T. (2005). *College affordability trends by parental income levels and institutional type 1990 to 2004*.

The share of state financial aid based on merit has grown from 10 percent of all state aid in 1993-94 to 28 percent in 2005-06. Over the same time period the amount of state merit-based aid has grown nearly 500 percent compared to need-based aid which has grown by just above 60 percent after adjusting for inflation. Collectively, in 2005-06, states spent \$1.9 billion on non-need merit aid programs, but 12 years ago states devoted less than \$250,000 to merit aid.

Source: National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs. (2004, 2006). *37th and 35th Annual Survey Report on State-Sponsored Financial Aid*.

In the 1990s colleges and universities, like states, began to increase the proportion of scholarships awarded on the basis of merit. The funding for these awards originates from endowed scholarship funds and/or tuition revenue.

Source: Heller, D.E. & Marin, P. Eds. (2004). *State merit scholarship programs and racial inequality*.

Non-need, merit-based scholarship programs are enhancing access for students who would probably attend college anyway. White students, even if they are from urban and high-poverty areas, have a greater opportunity to receive a no-need, merit scholarship than black and Hispanic students.

Source: Farrell, P.L. (2004). *Who are the students receiving merit scholarships? State merit scholarship programs and racial inequality*.

Federal education tax credits and deductions for tuition and fees paid now constitute 6 percent of the total student aid and 9 percent of the federal aid received by undergraduate and graduate students. Pell Grants represent only 10 percent of total student aid. The proportion of state grants not based on financial need increased from 9 percent in 1983-84 to 26 percent in 2003-04. Nevertheless, need-based state grant aid grew by 53 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars between 1993-94 and 2003-04.

Source: The College Board. *Trends in student aid 2005*.

In 1999–2000, about half of all full-time dependent undergraduates had some amount of unmet financial need, regardless of the type of institution attended. Amounts of unmet need averaged \$5,600 at private four-year colleges, \$9,700 at four-year private universities, \$3,600 at public four-year colleges, and \$4,700 at four-year public universities. These data describe the amount of unmet need only for students who enrolled, and assume students and families borrowed the maximum amount of federal loans for which they were eligible.

Source: Choy, S.P. & Berker, A.M. (2003). *How families of low- and middle-income undergraduates pay for college: Full-time dependent students in 1999–2000*.

In Florida, Michigan, and New Mexico, students attending high-poverty high schools are less likely than students attending more affluent high schools to receive state merit awards.

Source: Farrell, P.L. (2004). *Who are the students receiving merit scholarships? State merit scholarship programs and racial inequality*.

Media attention on rising college costs combined with inaccurate perceptions about the affordability of colleges discourages some students and their parents from preparing for and applying to college.

Many middle and high school students and many of their parents do not have an accurate idea of what it costs to attend college. The gap in knowledge was most pronounced between low- and high-income families, and families in which one or both parents had not attended college compared to families with college educated parents. However, regardless of parent education levels and household income, students who were involved in family decisions regarding their future were inclined to get information about college academic requirements and financial aid from discussion with parents and teachers/counselors.

Source: Horn, L.J., Chen, X., & Chapman, C. (2003). *Getting ready to pay for college: What students and their parents know about the cost of college tuition and what they are doing to find out*.

Counselors in high schools serving large numbers of low-income students tend to be the least informed about college costs and financial aid.

Source: McDonough, P.M. (2004). *The impact of advice on price: Evidence from research*.

Most adults, parents, and students in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s were uninformed or poorly informed about college prices and financial aid. The tendency of parents to overestimate tuition and fees appears to hold regardless of household income.

Sources: Grodsky, E., & Jones, M.T. (2004). *Real and imagined barriers to college entry: Perceptions of cost*.

Ikenberry, S.O. & Hartle, T.W. (2000). *Where we have been and where we are going: American higher education and public policy*.

Controlling for other characteristics, students who were knowledgeable about financial aid were more likely than other students to enroll in college, enroll in a four-year rather than a two-year college, and enroll full-time rather than part-time.

Source: Ekstrom, R.B. (1991). *Attitudes toward borrowing and participation in postsecondary education*.

Seventy percent of Latino parents of college-age children and 69 percent of Latino 18- to 24-year-olds who are currently attending, or recently graduated from college, report receiving information about financial aid prior to high school. Graduation was “very important” to their college enrollment. Nearly half of Latino parents and youth who did not attend college reported that receiving “better” information about financial aid would have increased the likelihood of college enrollment.

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. (2004). *Latino students and parents hampered by lack of financial aid awareness*.

The net price for full-time students at community colleges (taking into account only tuition and fees) decreased in inflation-adjusted dollars from \$900 in 1994-95 to \$400 in 2005-06. The published price (average tuition and fees) in 2005-06 was \$2,191.

Source: The College Board. (2005). *Trends in college pricing*.

Because of language barriers, many parents rely on their children to inform them about college-related information. One survey showed that 51 percent of Latino parents and 38 percent of Latino youth would prefer information in Spanish rather than English.

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. (2004). *Latino students and parents hampered by lack of financial aid awareness*.

After controlling for parents’ education, family income, student achievement, and other variables, African American, Hispanic, and Spanish-speaking parents of sixth- through twelfth-graders are less likely than other parents to give an estimate of tuition and fees at the type of institution that the child will likely attend. Parents of sixth- through twelfth-graders who had low educational attainment and low incomes were less likely than other parents to have any knowledge of college costs.

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. (2004). *Latino students and parents hampered by lack of financial aid awareness*.

Students and families are battered by a series of complexities in student aid. They must overcome ambiguous and uncertain information about financial aid, likely awards, and college costs, as well as intimidating and burdensome application questions, forms, and processes. In addition, they confront inadequate application of advanced technology, and a lack of coordination among federal, state, college, and private funding sources.

Source: Advisory committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2005). *The student aid gauntlet: Making access to college simple and certain*.

The Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, implemented with the class of 2009, eliminated the requirement for parents with incomes of less than \$40,000 to contribute to the cost of education, thus providing a simple message about eligibility and affordability. Early results show that the increase in applications for Harvard’s class of 2009 was disproportionately from students from low-income backgrounds. The first-year effects, though significant, understate the likely long-run effects of the initiative.

Source: Avery, C., et al. (2006). *Cost should be no barrier: An evaluation of the first year of Harvard’s financial aid initiative*.

Simplifying the federal financial aid application process and eligibility determination may be a more effective and less expensive strategy for raising the college enrollment rates of low-income students than increasing the availability of financial aid dollars.

Source: Kane, T.J. (1999). *The price of admission: Rethinking how Americans pay for college*.

The number of students who would have been likely to receive a Pell Grant if they had completed a FAFSA grew from 850,000 in 1999–2000 to 1.5 million in 2003–04. Fully 22 percent of dependent students with family incomes less than \$20,000 and 28 percent of independent students with incomes less than \$10,000 did not complete a FAFSA in 2003–04.

Source: King, J.E. (2006). *Missed opportunities revisited: New information on students who do not apply for financial aid*.

Low-income students generally lack familiarity with the financial aid application process, a challenge exacerbated by sometimes chaotic home lives and non-English-speaking parents.

Source: Avery, C., et al. (2006). *Cost should be no barrier: An evaluation of the first year of Harvard's financial aid initiative*.

The students most in need of guidance about financial aid opportunities are often least proactive about seeking help.

Source: Olivérez, P.M. & Tierney, W.G. (2005). *Show us the money: Low-income students, families, and financial aid*.

Latino parents and youth prefer to obtain financial aid information from a knowledgeable individual rather than from such sources as the Internet and printed documents. The three most preferred sources of information for Latino parents and students were high school counselors, teachers, and college financial aid offices.

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. (2004). *Latino students and parents hampered by lack of financial aid awareness*.

Most of the minority students in the nation are served by school districts with 10,000 or more students. A district's racial composition is strongly associated with its socioeconomic status.

Source: Sable, J. & Hoffman, L.M. (2005). *Characteristics of the 100 largest public elementary and secondary school districts in the United States: 2002-03*.

Student enrollment in the 100 largest public school districts in the nation:

- 23 percent of all public school students
- 69 percent of these student are minorities
- 53 percent of these students are eligible for the free and reduced-priced lunch program
- 25 of the top 100 districts have student enrollments of over 100,000 students—the three largest being New York (1 million plus), Los Angeles Unified (700,000+), and Chicago (400,000+). Student/counselor ratios in these three states: CA (1/966), NY (1/445), IL (1/689)

Source: Sable, J. & Hoffman, L.M. *Public elementary and secondary students, staff, schools, and school districts: school year 2003-04*.

Because of little training of college counselors and students, many students engage in financial aid processes online without a clear understanding of how to be a proactive advocate for one's own financial aid process.

Source: Venegas, K. (2006). *Internet inequalities: Financial aid, the Internet, and low-income students*.

Students found that receiving financial aid was much more challenging at the university level while increased school work from the typical community college workload increased financial need.

Source: Davies, T.G. & Casey, K. (1999). *Transfer student experiences: Comparing their academic and social lives at the community college and university.*

The Michigan Merit Award Scholarship Act, as created by Public Act 94 of 1999, establishes the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship Program to provide college scholarships for high school juniors as well as seventh- and eighth-grade students who received qualifying results on an assessment test. The Act defines “assessment test” as the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) subject area assessments, or a successor assessment test.

Source: Arasim, L. (2007). *The Michigan merit award scholarship and MEAP.*

Financial Aid Eligibility/Process

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

What K-12/Outreach Can Do:

- Provide information about financial aid to students and parents in the language spoken at home.
- Establish peer mentoring programs of high school alumni who have received financial aid in college.
- Use College Board Web tool to help students and parents compare financial aid offers.
- Develop programs to teach high school students and families to be self-advocates.
- Promote College Board “20 Questions” tool to help students know what questions to ask of the financial aid office.
- Train small cadres of Internet-savvy eleventh- and twelfth-graders to help their peers use financial aid sites, search for scholarships, access FAFSA on the Web, etc.
- Sponsor financial aid workshops to help students and parents complete the FAFSA; involve local financial aid administrators.
- The CollegeEd curriculum could communicate simple information about eligibility in the middle school years.
- Get the message re: financial aid eligibility to parents in the middle school years.
- Communicate auto-zero eligibility criteria for federal and state aid in middle school.
- Adjust counselors’ working hours so they can work with parents in the community when parents are available.

What Higher Ed Can Do:

- Strive to meet full need with grant aid after awarding a reasonable amount of work and loan, based on the anticipated starting salary.
- Establish “parent-to-parent” programs to help them understand the financial aid process and support their children’s aspirations.

- Increase institutional commitment to investing in need-based aid as a top priority.
- Develop credit-based internships funded by private industry.
- Develop creative fund-raising strategies for increasing need-based grant aid.
- Develop realistic student expense budgets, supporting full participation in campus life for all students.
- Adjust budgets for additional expenses for economically disadvantaged students.
- Disclose total cost-of-attendance to students and parents when producing award offers.
- Ensure that low-income students have adequate funding to purchase needed tools for success (laptop, etc.).
- Develop awarding policies that do not hurt transfer students.
- Develop new programs to provide personal attention to the special needs of transfer students.
- Ensure that financial aid staff is trained in ability to benefit regulations.
- Partner with middle schools to provide information to parents about financial aid eligibility.
- Establish peer mentoring programs of high school alumni who have received financial aid in college.
- Form partnerships with middle schools and high schools to provide “on-the-ground” coaches to raise students’ awareness of financial aid programs and processes.
- Communicate to prospects, in easily understandable terms, information about affordability, including net price (total cost of education minus grant and scholarship aid).
- Increase the comfort level of low-income students about borrowing as a means of financing college costs.
- Develop policies to exempt students whose families can’t afford to contribute (those with 0 EFC) from applying each year to renew eligibility.
- Provide training on how to handle students’ unique circumstances to less experienced financial aid staff.
- Use College Board’s “20 Questions” to help students understand the financial aid appeal process.
- Train college students to work as coaches with students in nearby low SES schools to help with FAFSA completion, award letter comparison, etc.
- Support financial aid nights at schools with large numbers of students from low-income families.
- Implement intensive programs that support first generation students designed to combat the lack of parental knowledge/guidance regarding college admissions and financial aid.
- Improve training and preparation of admissions and financial aid counselors to make them more aware of cultural differences.

What the College Board Can Do:

- Continue to invest in the Rethinking Student Aid project to make the student aid system more efficient and effective.
- Find funding for early commitment financial aid programs at every College Board School. Program would guarantee financial aid for postsecondary education if low-income students meet graduation requirements.

- Address public policy issues at federal and state levels to identify changes, beyond just more money, to ensure full needs are met.
- Address public policy issues at Federal and state levels related to the shift to non-need-based aid.
- Develop template to help member delegates make the case for additional need-based aid and provide needed training to financial aid professionals to strengthen their skills.
- Develop tools to help institutions develop realistic student expense budgets.
- Develop a simple information piece on net price that can be shared with families.
- Ensure that FCWs focus on changes to federal eligibility and application processes.
- Provide free publications describing the financial aid process to students in targeted high schools.
- Ensure that the Counselor's Sourcebook reflects changes to federal eligibility and application processes.
- Use the *Trends* media event to promote a national mandate to improve college access.
- Develop video and/or PSAs with the appropriate cultural context and language for the audience and place them on TV and radio during shows that students access.
- Expand use of CollegeEd® in targeted schools; identify funding partners.
- Provide free publications describing the financial aid process to students in targeted high schools.
- Address public policy issues at federal level that make aid eligibility determination simpler and more predictable so that outcomes can be communicated clearly early in the student's preparation stage.
- Work to simplify federal eligibility for low-income students so that data collection can be simplified.
- Take the lead in getting higher education institutions to agree on a common set of data elements transmitted on financial aid offers, as well as full disclosure of costs and unmet need.
- Train school counselors to interpret financial aid offer letters, using the Web tools.
- Continue to offer training to financial aid professionals on how to handle students' unique circumstances.
- Partner with college and high school members and other organizations such as NASFAA in comprehensive nationwide aid application workshops.
- Develop support networks in low-income urban and rural areas to assist students with the admission and financial aid application. (Perhaps a "finaid-mobile" that travels from place to place—similar to "book-mobiles" sponsored by libraries.)
- Welcome retirees to College Board membership, creating a database of professionals who could serve as the foundation of a national "Peace Corps" to work in low-income schools, helping students with the college application processes.
- Work to gain acceptance of all College Board assessments as Ability to Benefit measures.

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- Partner with college and high school members and other organizations such as NASFAA in comprehensive nationwide aid application workshops.
- Develop support networks in low-income urban and rural areas to assist students with the admission and financial aid application. (Perhaps a "finaid-mobile" that travels from place to place—similar to "book-mobiles" sponsored by libraries.)
- Welcome retirees to College Board membership, creating a database of professionals who could serve as the foundation of a national "Peace Corps" to work in low-income schools, helping students with the college application processes.
- Work to gain acceptance of all College Board assessments as Ability to Benefit measures.

What the Government/Others Should Do:

- Federal and/or state government could fund contributions to college savings plans for students from low-income backgrounds.
- Federal and state governments should set priorities for student aid funding increases, ensuring that increasing access for needy low- and middle-income students is a top priority.
- Fund Pell Grants to the authorized maximum to increase purchasing power.
- States should support financing need-based student aid at a level that ensures that public institutions can meet the full needs of in-state students.
- States with merit aid programs should be encouraged to add a need component (e.g., Cal Grant A).
- Increase federal funding for LEAP to encourage greater investment in need-based state aid.
- Fund research to answer the question of whether there is a link between growth in merit aid and higher unmet need.
- Change law and/or regulations to exempt low-income students (those with 0 EFC) from the requirement to renew federal and state aid eligibility annually.
- Establish and fund a “national Peace Corps” that would place retired admissions and financial aid professionals in low-income schools to assist students with the college application processes.
- Implement college access marketing to persuade students to take certain actions, such as completing the FAFSA by state deadline.
- Improve the FM to address issues faced by low-income students with the goal of simplifying the process.
- Make the online FAFSA smarter—simplify the application significantly for students from low-income backgrounds. Customize the instructions to the student’s circumstances.
- Sponsor research to determine the extent to which aid is less available for community college transfer students than for students enrolling as freshmen.
- Market federal financial aid programs to ensure that students and their parents are aware of the procedures for applying.
- Develop materials in languages other than English and Spanish.
- Sponsor research to understand better how awareness and understanding of college prices and financial aid influence college aspirations, plans, and the environment.
- Sponsor research to understand better the relative receptivity of students and parents to information about college prices and financial aid.
- Support ad campaigns that college is affordable and financial aid is available.
- Fund early awareness messaging programs/ ad campaigns that are as effective as the military recruitment campaigns.
- Fund Pell as entitlement program, increasing maximum awards to authorized level.

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College Board Low-Income Task Force

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS: COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS*

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College Board Low-Income Task Force: College Achievement and Success

Academic

Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Low-SES students often have low first-year GPAs.

- More likely to come from less well-resourced schools that underprepare students for college course work.
- Insufficient science and math preparation, particularly for students attending more selective institutions.
- College-prep programs are often ineffective in overcoming deficiencies in math and reading.
- Often have lower SAT® scores.

Poor quality preparation often results in required remedial college course work, which is linked to low persistence.

- Students in remedial courses use less collaborative study habits, associated with poor academic performance.
- Time to degree is longer because of remedial courses, undermining confidence and motivation.

Low or unclear motivation to persist or complete college.

- Limited parental involvement affects motivation.

Failure to achieve academic eligibility (GPA or number of credits) required to continue.

Inadequate instructional resources at college or university.

Discomfort in questioning information in classroom.

Lack of good study habits and time-management skills.

Transfer students may face additional barriers.

- Inadequate prematriculation guidance.
- Complexity of course work may vary between two- and four-year institutions.
- Lack of consistency in evaluations between two- and four-year institutions.

Academic

Research Findings

Strong faculty/student interaction in a “supportive” campus environment associated with improved student academic performance. Relationship strongest for students with low SATs.

Source: Carini, R.M., Kuh, G.D., & Klein, S.P. (2006). *Student engagement and earning: Testing the linkages*.

Students who take first-year seminars (i.e., University 101 courses) report improved study skills, academic engagement, and health education, which were associated with intent to return after first year.

Source: Porter, S.R. & Swing, R.L. (2006). *Understanding how first-year seminars affect persistence*.

Learning communities for primarily historically underrepresented, first-generation minorities increase retention and GPA.

Source: Lardner, E.D. (2003). *Approaching diversity through learning communities*.

Learning communities had a significant positive impact on persistence into the second year for students at a commuter college.

Source: Tinto, V. (1997). *Classrooms as communities: Exploring the educational character of student persistence*.

Time management and study habits, academic self-confidence, and academic goals were the three strongest factors in full-time student retention at four-year colleges.

Source: Lotkowsky, V.A., Robbins, S.B., & Noeth, R.J. (2004). *The role of academic and non-academic factors in improving college retention*.

Researcher examines the relationship between background variables, motivation, and persistence, measuring motivation on the first day of fall registration. Findings include: high school rank has an indirect effect on Hispanic and white persistence; parent education level has an indirect effect on white persistence; motivation has a direct effect on minority persistence.

Source: Allen, D. (1999). *Desire to finish college: An empirical link between motivation and persistence*.

GEAR-UP programs have no effect on math preparedness and negligible effect on reading preparedness.

Source: Cabrera, A.F., et al. (2006). *Increasing the college preparedness of at-risk students*.

Compared to second-generation college students, nearly twice as many first-generation college students take remedial courses, earn fewer credits in the first year, have lower GPAs in the first year, and are less likely to earn a four-year degree, even after controlling for background variables.

Source: Chen, X. & Carrol, C.D. (2005). *First-generation students in postsecondary education: A look at their college transcripts*. (2005171). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2005.

Service learning increases GPA, writing and critical thinking skills, and leadership; professor’s interaction and encouragement of discussion is critically linked to these positive effects.

Source: Astin, A.W., et al. (2000). *How service learning affects students*.

Remedial course work in English and math has positive impact on degree completion in five years. Math remedial work had a positive effect on degree completion in a major that required math. English remedial work had a strong negative effect on choosing English as a major.

Source: Bettinger, E.P. & Long, B.T. (2005). *Addressing the needs of underprepared students in higher education: Does college remediation work?*

At “higher graduation rate” institutions, the researchers observed intrusive academic advising, first-year courses, first-year monitoring of academic progress, small classes, academic support services, faculty dedicated to teaching, supplemental instruction, and tutoring, as well as remedial courses.

Source: Muraskin, L. & Lee, J. (2004). *Raising the graduation rates of low-income college students.*

Transfer students have lower graduation rates: 58 percent of students who begin at four-year institutions graduate in six years versus 10 percent who transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution.

Source: Tinto, V. (2004). *Student retention and graduation: Facing the truth, living with the consequences.*

Students who transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution have lower persistence rates.

Source: Choy, S.P. (2002). *Access and persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on students.*

26 percent of students from low-income backgrounds graduate in six years versus 65 percent of students from high-income backgrounds.

Source: Tinto, V. (2004). *Student retention and graduation: Facing the truth, living with the consequences.*

Students from low-SES families are enrolled in larger numbers in remedial math courses. More women and minority students are enrolled in remedial courses. These students have less collaborative study habits than nonremedial students.

Source: Hagedorn, L.S., et al. (1999). *Success in college mathematics: Comparisons between remedial and nonremedial first-year college students.*

Attrition in science/math/engineering among underrepresented minorities is due to underpreparedness from high school and college selectivity (higher attrition at higher ranked institutions).

Source: Smyth, F.L. & McArdle, J.J. (2004). *Ethnic and gender differences in science graduation at selective colleges with implications for admission policy and college choice.*

Low-SES students persist at lower rates. More begin college at two-year institutions, which means longer time to degree.

Source: Muraskin, L. & Lee, J. (2004). *Raising the graduation rates of low-income college students.*

First-generation students are less academically prepared than others and persist at lower rates.

Source: Warburton, E.E., et al. (2001). *Bridging the gap: Academic preparation and postsecondary success of first-generation students.*

First-year courses instructing in the college experience have a strong positive effect on retention.

Source: Murtaugh, P.A., Burns, L.D., & Schuster, J. (2005). *Predicting the retention of university students*.

First-year courses that instruct on the nature of knowledge and learning facilitate inquiry and persistence.

Source: Paulsen, M.B. & Feldman, K.A. (2005). *The conditional and interaction effects of epistemological beliefs on the self-regulated learning of college students: motivational strategies*.

Early completion of college gateway courses (precalculus, philosophy, world civilization, economics) is positively associated with timely college completion.

Source: Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*.

Academic performance is linked to student/faculty interaction, “supportive” campus environment, “quality” of institutional relationships with students. The effect is strongest for students with low SATs.

Source: Carini, R.M., Kuh, G.D., & Klein, S.P. (2006). *Student engagement and earning: Testing the linkages*.

Completion of fewer than 20 credits in the first year and course drop without penalty correlates with low completion.

Source: Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*.

Early warning systems to identify students who are performing poorly in first year can be successful.

Source: Cook, B. & King, J.E. (2005). *Improving lives through higher education: Campus programs and policies for low-income adults*.

Rigorous high school programs are positively associated with persistence. Rigorous high school math course work partially mitigates effect of parents’ educational level.

Source: Choy, S.P. (2002). *Access and persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on students*.

Degree completion correlates with high school curriculum, especially math through Algebra II. Also, with enrolling in college directly from high school, class rank and GPA are important factors.

Source: Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*.

Greater persistence of African American/low SES than white/low SES students is likely attributable to “cultural capital” of HBCUs.

Source: Paulsen, M.B. & St. John, E.P. (2002). *Social class and college costs: examining the financial nexus between college costs and persistence*.

Academic

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

What K-12/Outreach Can Do

- Prepare high school students for college so they can begin at the introductory college level rather than at remedial levels.
- Clearly articulate college entrance requirements.
- Encourage broader participation in AP® courses.
- Incorporate good study skills and time-management skills into the high school curriculum.
- Ensure that rigor of course work prepares students adequately for college work, particularly in math and science.
- Encourage all students to complete math through Algebra II.

What Higher Ed Can Do

- Develop mechanisms to identify and support students when they first encounter academic difficulty (intrusive academic advising).
- Offer first-year courses on the college experience.
- Provide access to well-trained and well-supported staff who can mentor and advise students.
- Identify students who require additional assistance in developing appropriate time-management and organization skills for studying.
- Ensure that all students demonstrate minimum academic proficiencies in the first year.

For students who place into remedial courses in college, provide an academic environment that inspires and instills college-level learning practices.
- Allocate adequate institutional resources to student academic and support services.
- Invest in hiring and developing faculty who are adept at teaching remedial courses, especially to nontraditional students.
- Create a learning environment that stimulates a sense of community and connectedness among peers and faculty with a goal of improving student academic performance.
- Provide remedial course work in English and math with the goal of positive impact on degree completion in five years.
- Structure learning communities to increase retention, GPA, and involvement.
- Encourage service learning opportunities, incorporating faculty interaction and encouragement.
- Involve faculty in strong comprehensive career, academic, and personal advising.
- Create working groups of faculty and high school teachers to align curriculum.
- Design short (two-week) programs on campus immediately after high school graduation focusing on intense instruction, tutoring, survival skills, and placement.
- Develop incentive programs to reward students for better preparation in high school (less remedial needs, extra math class in high school, etc.).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer first-year courses that instruct on the nature of knowledge and learning and that stimulate curiosity and self-discovery. • Early in the college years, provide smaller learning formats with increased student participation, such as seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with high schools to offer online courses and other means to assist schools that cannot provide the required preparation.
What the College Board Can Do	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for members to collaborate on issues related to retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in public policy discussions about retention issues.

Financial

Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

- Insufficient need-based financial aid resulting in unmet need.
- Perceived or real fear of borrowing.
- Overreliance on loans.
- Inadequate grant or scholarship assistance.
- Working too many hours during periods of enrollment.
 - Limits study time.
 - Limits participation in cocurricular activities and hence, student engagement.
 - Working off-campus.
- Different financial aid awarding policies applied to transfer students than to students who enroll as freshmen.
- Obligation to continue to financially support family members at home.
- Students who fail to make “satisfactory academic progress” lose financial aid eligibility.

Financial

Research Findings

- Students who work fewer hours are more likely to persist.

Source: Choy, S.P. (2002). *Access and persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on students.*
- Grant aid has a greater effect on African American enrollment and persistence than on white students.

Source: St. John, E.P., Paulsen, M.B., & Carter, D.F. (2005). *Diversity, college costs, and postsecondary opportunity: An examination of the financial nexus between college choice and persistence for African Americans and whites.*

Financial aid in Indiana creates equal opportunity in persistence across ethnic groups. When background variables are controlled for, nonaided students are less likely to persist than aided students.

Source: Hu, S. & St. John, E.P. (2001). *Student persistence in a public higher education system: Understanding racial and ethnic differences.*

Low-SES students spend less time in cocurricular activities, more time working off-campus (and longer hours), take out more loans, and persist at lower rates.

Source: Tenerzini, P.T., Cabrera, A.F., & Bernam, E.M. (2001). *Swimming against the tide: The poor in American higher education.*

Independent students are less likely to graduate; key risk factors are work and family.

Source: American Council on Education. (2003). *Student success: Understanding graduation and persistence rates.*

Financial

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

What Higher Ed Can Do

- Provide clear information regarding financial aid processes and procedures.
- Provide realistic expectations regarding student financial contributions, especially for low-SES students.
- Increase institutional commitment to need-based grant aid.
- Establish policies that set realistic expectations for student and family loan debt upon graduation.
- Help low-SES students understand the benefits of reasonable borrowing.
- Ensure that student expense budgets allow students to participate fully in campus life.
- Examine awarding policies to ensure that transfer students are treated equitably.
- Expand on-campus job opportunities to encourage students to work on-campus rather than off.
- Develop research-based student aid packaging constructs that facilitate persistence (e.g., manageable work expectation, etc.).
- Develop collaborative arrangements among community colleges and universities where joint admission is possible and students can move back and forth to use facilities, programming, and housing, but pay lower tuition and fees until transitioning beyond the associate degree.
- Provide creative paths to degree completion by offering discounted courses during off-peak times and incentives for taking heavier course loads.

What the College Board Can Do

- Advocate for need-based aid and increases to grant programs targeted at low-income students.
- Assume leadership in simplifying the financial aid process for low-income students.
- Develop policies that will simplify forbearance procedures for students who are unable to repay their loans because of financial difficulties.
- Develop consumer information about the benefits of reasonable borrowing.

- Develop clear and understandable information about the personal benefits of a college degree that can be shared with students and their parents.
- Offer training programs to help financial aid administrators develop reasonable student expense budgets.

What the Government/Others Can Do

- Provide clear information regarding financial aid processes and procedures.
- Examine the possibility of four-year federal eligibility determination for students from low-income backgrounds.
- Simplify the application for students from low-income backgrounds.

Emotional/Social

Barriers Faced by Low-Income Students

Inadequate parent involvement in children’s educational aspirations.

Perceived or actual guilt about withdrawal from family unit.

Lower levels of social capital among low-SES and first-generation students.

Discomfort with campus culture.

Inability to “fit in.”

Students with dependent children don’t find needed support (child care, etc.).

Living off-campus limits student engagement.

Emotional/Social

Research Findings

Strong faculty/student interaction, particularly in areas of comprehensive career, academic, and personal involvement, facilitate helpful mentoring relationships. African American students identify these qualities more frequently in African American faculty.

Source: Guiffrida, D. (2005). *Othermothering as a framework for understanding African American students’ definitions of student-centered faculty.*

Learning communities increase persistence for students who face challenges in “involvement” at commuter/nonresidential colleges.

Source: Tinto, V. (1997). *Classrooms as communities: Exploring the educational character of student persistence.*

Positive peer effect partially mitigates effect of parents’ educational level.

Source: Choy, S.P. (2002). *Access and persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on students.*

Compared to second-generation college students, first-generation college students have lower engagement as an indirect effect of living off-campus and low postgraduate aspirations.

Source: Pike, G.R. & Kuh, G.D. (2005). *First and second generation college students: A comparison of their engagement and intellectual development.*

Institutional commitment, social support, institutional selectivity, social involvement, and finances are moderately associated with retention of full-time students at four-year colleges.

Source: Lotkowski, V.A., Robbins, S.B., & Noeth, R.J. (2004). *The role of academic and nonacademic factors in improving college retention.*

Emotional/Social

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

What Higher Ed Can Do

- Structure programs intended to develop students' social and interpersonal skills.
- Develop programs of faculty engagement and peer mentoring to compensate for a lack of parental involvement.
- Ensure active referral to campus support services, including personal counseling.
- Create a campus "home" for students living off-campus.
- Structure social activities with faculty and peers for students living off-campus.
- Ensure adequate public transportation to campus from local communities.
- Invest in greater support for child-care services.
- Learn best practices that have been effective at HBCUs.
- Establish a culture of identification and belonging for historically underserved minorities.
- Create a campus climate that serves students of different economic backgrounds.
- Encourage college community integration via increased non-lecture interaction among faculty and students.
- Encourage involvement and interaction among student peers with opportunities for social engagement and support.
- Assist students with children in comprehensive time management, incorporating all aspects of college and family life.

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