

**FISCAL YEAR 2013 ILLINOIS COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE SYSTEM  
SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR  
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS**

**FOCUS AREA:**

**RETENTION  
AND  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

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**DECEMBER 2014**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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

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## INTRODUCTION

Underrepresented college students have been traditionally excluded from full participation in our society and its institutions. Illinois statute defines underrepresented students in higher education as “citizens or resident aliens who are minorities, including African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and American Indian or Alaskan Native, women, and persons with disabilities. On January 1, 2012 the definition was expanded to include first generation students, described as the first in their immediate family to attend an institution of higher education (Public Act 97-588)” (<http://www.ibhe.state.il.us>). Through the Underrepresented Groups Report, community colleges have an opportunity to report on initiatives and strategies aimed at increasing participation and achievement among minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and first generation students. Underrepresented Groups Report production is an important annual statutory responsibility (Public Act 85-283) for community colleges and universities. Each community college provides a report detailing current activities and programs aimed at strengthening participation and progress among traditionally underrepresented student populations. Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) staff members summarize the information provided by the individual colleges and forward it to officials from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) who combine it with responses from the public universities and forward it to the Governor and General Assembly.

This year’s report begins with an overview of the demographic characteristics of community college students, completers, and faculty. External comparative information is referenced where available. The next portion of the report explores the current year’s focus topic: institutional practices that increase retention and educational attainment of underrepresented students. Summaries of high impact Underrepresented Group promising programs, services, and initiatives related to student retention and educational attainment at selected community colleges are also featured.

National Center for Education Statistics defines retention rate as a measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage. For community colleges, it is the percentage of first-time degree/certificate-seeking students from the previous fall who either re-enrolled or successfully completed their program by the current fall. (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/glossary/index.asp?id=772>)

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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

**Disability Status** – During fiscal year 2013, Illinois community colleges served 13,551 students with disabilities (2.0 percent of all credit enrollments). This figure represents the number of individuals (unduplicated) who self-identified their disability status through the Annual Students with Disabilities (SD) Submission and who used supportive services offered by colleges. In addition, there were 1,881 students with disabilities who did not use supportive services during fiscal year 2013.

Based on the unduplicated count of Students with Disabilities who self-reported and used supportive services, specific disabilities listed were **Learning** including ADHD (58.5 percent of reported disabilities); **Auditory** (3.8 percent); **Medical** including Acquired Brain Injury disability and Systemic/Chronic Health Problems (9.1 percent); **Mobility** (4.7 percent); **Psychological** (16.8 percent); **Visual** (2.9 percent) and **Other** including Speech/Language Impairment and Deaf-Blind and Developmental disabilities (4.1 percent). There are also students with disabilities who self-identify, but do not actually use the extra services colleges can provide. Based on a duplicated count of student usage, services were provided for 88.0 percent of reported disabilities. Of those services used, based on unduplicated count, more than one-half (58.5 percent) were used by students with Learning Disabilities including ADHD (2013 Student Disability Table).

Census figures show a substantial number of Illinoisans with disabilities. In the 2013 Illinois census estimate, 8.9 percent of all Illinois civilian non-institutionalized population between the ages of 18 and 64 years of age had a disability. Approximately, one fourth of Illinois population age 16 and over with disabilities were employed. (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> Select Illinois→Economic Characteristics→Advanced Search and enter Disability)

**Gender** – The overall Male/Female distribution of students in the Illinois Community College System typically fluctuates little from year to year. Females comprised 53.8 percent of the student population in fiscal year 2013. The percentage of Male students has averaged 45.5 percent over the past five years. Census data show little change in the proportion of Females in Illinois with 50.9 percent estimated in 2013 versus 51.0 percent in 2010 and 2000. (<http://www.census.gov/census2000/states/il.html>, <http://www.census.gov/2010census>) From 2009 to 2013, the number of Female students completing degree programs increased 28.5 percent while the number of Female students enrolled in Illinois community college courses decreased 3.2 percent. (ICCB 2009 and 2013 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report and <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> Select Illinois→Demographics)

**Age** – The average age of Illinois community college credit students was 30.0 in fiscal year 2013 showing a slight decrease from fiscal year 2012 (30.3). The median age was 24.8 in fiscal year 2013, showing a slight decrease from the previous year as well (25.1). According to the 2013 American Community Survey, the median age of all Illinoisans was estimated to be 37.2 years. The latest census estimates also show that over three-quarters (9.8 million) of all Illinoisans were 18 years of age or above. (ICCB 2013 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report and <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> Select Illinois→Demographics)

**State of Illinois' Racial/Ethnic Distribution** – State census data show that Illinois' population grew over 12.88 million in 2013 compared to 12.83 million in 2010, and 12.42 million in 2000. (<http://www.census.gov/census2000/states/il.html>, <http://www.census.gov/2010census> Select Illinois, and 2012 Index of Need, Table 1 [http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables\\_2013.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2013.pdf)) These detailed Illinois census data indicate that the state's population grew 3.7 percent between 2000 and 2013. Illinois' 2013 census data show that Whites/Caucasians remained the largest racial/ethnic group. However, minority populations were responsible for Illinois' overall population growth from 2000 to 2012, as the percent of Caucasians decreased from 73.5 percent to 71.1 percent of the population. (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/>

*Minority populations were responsible for Illinois' overall population growth from 2000 to 2013.*

[c2kprof00-il.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2013.pdf) and 2013 Index of Need, Table 1 [http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables\\_2013.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2013.pdf) )

The racial/ethnic data collection methodology changed for the 2000 census and continued in the 2013 census data. The 2013 census data showed that 1.8 percent of all Illinoisans identified themselves as two or more races. These individuals are included in the “Some Other Race\*\*\*” column in Table 1. The question on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity was asked independently from an individual’s race beginning in 2000 and is reflected in the 2013 data in the table. These duplicated Latino population counts show substantial growth, from 1,530,262 in 2000 to 2,117,028 in 2013 (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-il.pdf> and 2013 Index of Need, Table 1 [http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables\\_2013.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2013.pdf) ).

Illinois’ largest minority group in 2000 was African American and in 2013 was Latino. Compared to 2000, American counts in 2013 decreased from 15.1 percent to 14.7 percent, whereas Asian American counts increased from 3.4 percent to 5.1 percent, Native American from 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent, and Latino from 12.3 percent to 16.4 percent.

<i>Table 1 State of Illinois Racial/Ethnic Distribution (Census)</i>						
	<i>White/ Caucasian</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Asian* American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Some Other Race**</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino*** (Duplicated)</i>
<b>2000</b>	73.5%	15.1%	3.4%	0.2%	7.7%	12.3%
<b>2010</b>	71.5%	14.5%	4.6%	0.3%	9.0%	15.8%
<b>2013</b>	71.1%	14.7%	5.1%	0.6%	8.5%	16.4%

\*Includes Pacific Islander

\*\*Includes two or more races

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

SOURCE OF DATA: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 & 2013 Index of Need, Table 1.

**Racial/Ethnic Distribution in Community College**

**System Credit Programs** – Overall in fiscal year 2013, minority students accounted for four in ten (40.2 percent) of the individuals enrolled in credit coursework at Illinois community colleges whose ethnicity was known. Fiscal year 2013 data show that minority representation was similar to the prior year (FY 2012 = 39.3 percent). Fiscal year 2013 results are above the five-year average (38.2 percent). Latino students – 116,645 in fiscal year 2013 – accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments. In the previous year, African American students comprised the largest number of minority enrollments; they constitute the second largest minority group in the latest data (111,556). The fiscal year 2013 proportionate representation by Latino students was higher by about one percentage point in comparison to the prior year (17.6 percent in fiscal year 2013 versus 16.5 percent in fiscal year 2012). The African American student representation was slightly lower than the previous year (16.9 percent in fiscal year 2013 versus 17.2 percent in fiscal year 2012). Over the longer term – over the past five years – the Illinois Community College System’s enrollments have increased across most racial/ethnic groups. Non-Resident Alien (-75.2 percent) was the only minority group with a decrease compared to fiscal year 2009.

*Students identifying themselves as Latino – 116,645 in fiscal year 2013 – accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments in the Illinois Community College System this year.*

Student racial/ethnic representation varies across broad program areas (PCS). For example, Table 2 contains information about the racial/ethnic distribution of Adult Education (ABE/ASE) and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) enrollments. Minority students accounted for about three-fourths (75.5 percent) of the individuals enrolled in community college Adult Education coursework in fiscal year 2013. The latest figures show that Latino and African American students accounted for nearly three-fourth of the adult education enrollments (37.3 percent and 35.8 percent). Additionally, minority students accounted for more than eight out of every ten (84.2 percent) individuals enrolled in community college ESL coursework during fiscal year 2013. Latino students accounted for over two-thirds (68.6 percent) of the community college ESL students.

<b>Table 2</b> <b>Fiscal Year 2013 Minority Students Enrolled in Adult Education (ABE/ASE) and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) Programs</b>							
<b>Program</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Nonresident Alien</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Minority Subtotal</b>
<b>ABE/ASE %</b>	<b>35.8%</b>	<b>37.3%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>75.4%</b>
Number	15,795	16,456	750	21	197	61	33,280
<b>ESL %</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>68.6%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>84.2%</b>
Number	1,826	28,234	4,399	127	42	65	34,693

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1)**

Table 3 provides the distribution of minority students enrolled in Baccalaureate/Transfer and Career/Technical programs. During fiscal year 2013, minorities comprised about three out of every ten (31.9 percent) Baccalaureate/Transfer enrollees. An examination of each minority racial/ethnic group's representation across the Baccalaureate/Transfer program area indicates that African American students accounted for the largest minority group enrollments (13.7 percent), followed by Latino students (12.0 percent), Asian students (5.0 percent), Native American students (0.5 percent), Pacific Islander students (0.5 percent), and Nonresident Alien students (0.3 percent). Table 3 also shows that about three out of every ten students enrolled in career and technical programs were members of a minority group (30.5 percent). African American students had the highest representation among minorities in Career/Technical programs and accounted for 14.5 percent of the population. Latino students had the second largest Career/Technical program enrollment (11.1 percent), followed by Asian students (3.9 percent), Native American students (0.5 percent), Pacific Islander students (0.4 percent), and Nonresident Alien students (0.2 percent).

<b>Table 3</b> <b>Fiscal Year 2012 Minority Students Enrolled in Baccalaureate Transfer and Career and Technical Programs</b>							
<b>Program</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Nonresident Alien</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Minority Subtotal</b>
<b>Bacc./Transfer %</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>
Number	38,504	33,516	13,917	823	1,391	1,281	89,432
<b>Career/Tech. %</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>30.5%</b>
Number	27,110	20,779	7,333	311	950	786	57,269

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1)**

**First Generation College Students** – Students whose parents did not attend college are at a disadvantage when it comes to postsecondary access. First generation college students who managed to overcome barriers to access and enroll in postsecondary education, remain at a disadvantage with respect to staying enrolled and attaining a degree (Choy, 2001). In 2012, Illinois statute recognized the category of first generation students as an underrepresented group needing inclusion in the Underrepresented Groups annual report. Table 4 contains comparative data (fiscal year 2010 through fiscal year 2013) on the first generation college student enrollments. Fiscal year 2013 first generation college student enrollment decreased by nearly 10 percent compared to last year and increased by 6 percent compared to fiscal year 2010. The overall enrollments continue to decline. About every other student in the Illinois Community College System is a first generation college student.

<i>Table 4</i>							
<i>Fiscal Years 2009-2013 First Generation College Student Enrollment in the Illinois Community College System</i>							
	FY09*	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	One-Year % Change	Four-Year % Change
First Gen. College Student Enrollment	DNA	302,903	323,605	355,941	321,006	-9.8%	6.0%
Annual Enrollment	700,072	730,335	716,797	713,396	691,536	-3.1%	-5.3%
Enrollment Rate of First Generation College Students	DNA	41.5%	45.1%	49.9%	46.4%		

\*DNA – Data Not Available. ICCB began collecting First Generation College Student-level data in FY10.

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1)**

The following section of the report supplies information about the racial/ethnic characteristics of students who graduated in fiscal year 2013. Table 5a provides a point in time or cross cutting count of the number of degrees and certificates awarded to minority students within the Illinois Community College System during fiscal year 2013.

**Credential Attainment** – Across all minority groups in 2013, Career/Technical program graduates outnumbered Baccalaureate/ Transfer program graduates. Table 4a shows that during fiscal year 2013, nearly three times as many minorities completed Career/Technical programs (N = 14,994) as completed Baccalaureate/Transfer programs (N = 5,199). Minority students accounted for 31.7 percent of all Career/Technical graduates, compared to 27.4 percent of Baccalaureate/Transfer graduates. The largest minority group of Career/Technical program completers was African American (14.0 percent), followed by Latino (11.6 percent), Asian (5.2 percent), Native American (0.4 percent), Pacific Islander (0.4 percent), and Nonresident Alien (0.2 percent). African American students represented a smaller proportion of the Baccalaureate/Transfer graduates (9.6 percent) in comparison to the proportion of the African American Career/Technical graduates (14.0 percent). Latino students accounted for the largest group of

*During fiscal year 2013, nearly three times as many minorities completed Career/Technical programs as completed Baccalaureate/ Transfer programs.*



Baccalaureate/Transfer minority graduates (12.7 percent), followed by African American students (9.6 percent), Asian students (4.1 percent), Native American students (0.4 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.4 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.3 percent).

**Table 5a**  
**Fiscal Year 2013 Minority Student Completers in**  
**Baccalaureate Transfer and Career and Technical Programs**

<i>Program</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
<b>Bacc./Transfer %</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>
Number	1,822	2,405	769	68	71	64	5,199
<b>Career/Tech. %</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>
Number	6,608	5,501	2,465	79	172	169	14,994

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1)**

Table 5b provides a comparison of fiscal year 2009 through fiscal year 2013 completions in the Illinois Community College System by race/ethnicity. The number of collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded to Illinois community college students in fiscal year 2013 totaled 69,036. Nearly one-third (31.1 percent) of all degrees and certificates in fiscal year 2013 were awarded to minority students (nonwhite) whose race/ethnicity was known. Table 4b contains comparative completion data for the last five years. Compared to last year, there has been a large increase in minority completions among Pacific Islanders (44.2 percent). Increases in completions were also noted for Latino students (13.6 percent), African American students (9.3 percent), and Asian American students (8.4 percent). There has been a small decrease in minority completions among Native American students (-1.5 percent) and Nonresident Alien students (-8.5 percent) since last year. Compared to fiscal year 2009, the total number of minority completers increased 30.7 percent.

**Table 5b**  
**Fiscal Years 2009-2013 Student Completers in**  
**the Illinois Community College System by Race/Ethnicity**

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>FY09</i>	<i>FY10</i>	<i>FY11</i>	<i>FY12</i>	<i>FY13</i>	<i>One-Year % Change</i>	<i>Five-Year % Change</i>
<b>White</b>	36,043	38,015	41,316	42,439	45,010	6.1%	24.9%
<b>African American</b>	7,836	8,427	8,381	8,380	9,156	9.3%	16.8%
<b>Latino</b>	5,026	5,633	6,121	7,274	8,260	13.6%	64.3%
<b>Asian</b>	2,918	2,942	2,844	3,116	3,378	8.4%	15.8%
<b>Nonresident Alien</b>	432	207	148	164	150	-8.5%	-65.3%
<b>Native American</b>	190	170	241	259	255	-1.5%	34.2%
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	--	--	211	165	238	44.2%	--
<b>Unknown</b>	608	1,490	2,276	2,449	2,589	5.7%	325.8%
<b>Minority Subtotal</b>	<b>16,402</b>	<b>17,379</b>	<b>17,946</b>	<b>19,358</b>	<b>21,437</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>30.7%</b>

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1)**

Table 6 contains trend data (fiscal year 2009 through fiscal year 2013) on student completers by gender. During fiscal year 2013, nearly six out of ten degrees or certificates were earned by females (55.5 percent). The number of female completers increased 6.3 percent and male completers 9.0 percent compared to the previous fiscal year. When compared to fiscal year 2009, the number of both female and male completers increased by about 30 percent (28.5 percent and 32.2 percent, respectively).

<p align="center"><b>Table 6</b> <b>Fiscal Years 2009-2013 Student Completers in</b> <b>the Illinois Community College System by Gender</b></p>							
<b>Gender</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>One-Year % Change</b>	<b>Five-Year % Change</b>
<b>Male</b>	23,224	24,620	26,625	28,184	30,711	9.0%	32.2%
<b>Female</b>	29,829	32,264	34,913	36,062	38,325	6.3%	28.5%

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1)**

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

*In fiscal year 2013, minority faculty and staff accounted for 17.8 percent of tenured faculty/officials and managers, 15.0 percent of non-tenured faculty, 23.9 percent of professional staff/protective service workers, 28.5 percent of office and clerical/para-professionals, and 40.5 percent of service maintenance employees.*

Table 7 shows that in fiscal year 2013, minority faculty and staff accounted for 17.8 percent of tenured faculty/officials and managers, 15.0 percent of non-tenured faculty, 23.9 percent of professional staff/protective service workers, 28.5 percent of office and clerical/para-professionals, and 40.5 percent of service maintenance employees.

Compared to previous fiscal year, in fiscal year 2013 minority representation among tenured faculty/officials and managers increased 0.7 percent, among non-tenured faculty increased 0.1 percent, among professional staff/protective service workers increased 0.2 percent, among office and clerical/para-professionals increased 1.2 percent and was up 0.9 percent among service maintenance.

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

**Table 7**  
**Fiscal Year 2013 Minority Faculty and Staff in Illinois Community Colleges**

	Tenured Faculty/ Officials & Managers	Non-tenured Faculty	Professional Staff/ Protective Service Workers	Office and Clerical/ Paraprofessionals	Service Maintenance	Other
African American %	10.2%	8.0%	13.9%	15.0%	23.9%	3.4%
Number	628	1,467	1,378*	761*	723	1
Latino %	3.6%	3.1%	6.4%	10.3%	14.9%	0.0%
Number	222	569	630*	519*	449	0
Asian %	3.5%	3.4%	3.1%	2.7%	1.1%	0.0%
Number	217	616	310*	138*	33	0
Native American %	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Number	17	55	30	17	12	0
Non-Resident Alien %	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Number	5	28	4	2	2	0
Pacific Islander %	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Number	3	13	19	5	4	0
Minority Subtotal %	17.8%	15.0%	23.9%	28.5%	40.5%	3.4%
Number	1,092	2,748	2,371*	1,442*	1,223	1

\*includes revised college figures

**SOURCE OF DATA: Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Submissions**

### BEST PRACTICES

The following section provides information about student retention and educational attainment best practices from the Illinois Community College System in fiscal year 2013. The initiatives provide helpful information about project components and outcomes in the following areas: Retention Strategies Targeting Minority Students, Retention Strategies Targeting At-Risk Students, Retention Strategies Targeting Developmental Education Students, Retention Strategies Targeting Students with Disabilities, Retention Strategies Targeting Adult Education Students, Workforce Development Initiatives, Improving College Readiness of High School Students, and Other Initiatives for Retention and Educational Attainment.

#### **Retention Strategies Targeting Minority Students**

The Parkland Academy Team (PAT) was created to help Latino students succeed at **Parkland College** through individualized mentoring, developing a connection to Latino culture on campus, and providing outreach to Latino students in secondary schools throughout the district. The group's founding motto "Together We Achieve" represents its dedication to work with students in promoting excellence in academics, community building, and leadership development among the Latino population in District 505. The four major goals of the PAT are to improve persistence rates and degree completion for Latino students at Parkland, make a strong connection with Latino students during their first year on campus, improve the GPA of mentors and mentees, and promote a diverse and welcoming campus. The PAT was piloted starting in August 2010 and has been updated, improved, and expanded each year. The original pilot program was made up of eight male Latino students who ended the year with a 75 percent persistence rate. In its most

recent year the PAT expanded to 36 participants whose persistence rate from fall 2012 to fall 2013 was 55.6 percent.

The objective of the Intentional Retention initiative at **Black Hawk College** is to manage, centralize, and systematize retention efforts. Since 2008, the college has been strategic in its efforts to develop process improvement initiatives impacting minority persistence to completion. These initiatives specifically target African American males, African American females, and Hispanic students. A position for the first Retention Coordinator at the college was created in 2012. The goal of the Retention Coordinator is to provide oversight of the Early Alert System, facilitate the minority persistence to completion rate initiatives and activities, and develop a systematic and strategic approach to assisting minority and all students with identifying and reducing barriers to course completion, including a Study Table Program for student-athletes.

The Level UP program at **Malcolm X College** (MXC) is a quick start program funded by the Department of Education Predominately Black Institutions (PBI) Grant and designed to prepare incoming City Colleges of Chicago students for college level course work. Over 94 percent of MXC students place at the remedial level (results of the COMPASS Placement Tool). The goal of this program, which was implemented during the winter 2014, is to increase educational attainment levels of African American students. Some of the strategies that make Level UP a success include low student to teacher ratio, mandatory orientation session, and teachers selected based on recommendation from Department Chairs and Deans at the college. Twenty-seven out of thirty-two students completed the Level UP 2013/2014 winter session at Malcolm X College (84 percent retention). Out of those completers, 89 percent of students leveled up into one or more credit level courses.

*The Level UP program at **Malcolm X College** (MXC) is a quick start program designed to prepare incoming City Colleges of Chicago students for college level course work. Twenty-seven out of thirty-two students completed the Level UP 2013/2014 winter session at Malcolm X College (84 percent retention). Out of those completers, 89 percent of students leveled up into one or more credit level courses.*

The Emerging Leaders Project at **Illinois Central College** is an initiative designed to increase the college retention and graduation of African American students within career-tech, certificate, and associate degree programs. The project also supports student transitions from college to work. The initiative that was implemented in December, 2012 is tied to empirical data reflecting a significant gap in the course success, retention, and graduation rates of African American students compared to other students enrolled at Illinois Central College. Diversity Retention and Transition Advisors work closely with students and their families, faculty, and staff to provide an extensive level of wrap-around services (advisement, assessment, transition assistance, career counseling, intervention services, life skills, and financial advisement) to support student success. Intervention support is provided on a 24/7 schedule. Instructors provide preparatory workshops in support of academic achievement, motivation, life skills, and job skills preparation. An Academic Support Coordinator makes tutoring available for students requiring extended subject matter support. A College Transitions Coordinator assists program graduates with employment opportunities. As the result, there has been a three percent increase in African American student course success and a documented increase in advisor-student contact, in student use of learning labs, and in service referrals and intervention activities.

The primary objective of the Association for Nourishing the Development and Advancement of Latinos in Education (¡ANDA!) at **Oakton Community College** is to provide a support network for the college's

Latino students. Although Latinos are going to college in greater numbers than ever, they still underperform when compared to their peers in other ethnic and racial groups along several performance measures. Studies have shown that when students feel alienated from an institution, they are more likely to be at risk of dropping out. Students who are connected are apt to think twice before leaving a network of friends and resources. '¡ANDA!E!' first began in the 2012-2013 academic year. The components of the program include providing mentoring to Latino students, mentorship training, educational workshops, parent/family seminars, an annual Latino summit, and a visit of the US Hispanic Leadership Institute in Chicago.

Hispanic Outreach seeks to enhance Hispanic student recruitment, enrollment, and retention at **Prairie State College**. Through community outreach and visibility on campus, the Hispanic Outreach Specialist/Enrollment Advisor identifies and assists Hispanic students with college enrollment, academic/career planning, course scheduling, and the financial aid process. Recognizing that many of these students are low income and/or first generation, the Hispanic Outreach Specialist connects students to resources on- and off-campus that support their transition to college and academic success. In 2013, the position of Hispanic Outreach Specialist role was re-envisioned and a greater focus was placed on outreach and bilingual assistance to parents of prospective and current students as well as on supporting student academic success. An active Latino club was also restructured and meets now regularly.

### **Retention Strategies Targeting At-Risk Students**

#### Early alert programs

GradesFirst Early Alert System is an initiative at **Harold Washington College** used to identify students who need outreach by tracking their attendance. This early intervention tool was launched in September 2012, and the use for attendance on a wide-scale basis was piloted in the spring 2014. GradesFirst enables the colleges to flag and track students, send early alert messages, and communicate directly with students. Faculty members can quickly and easily flag students who are struggling in class or are otherwise academically at risk, and alert Advisors and others to take immediate action to provide advising support, tutoring, or referrals. The initiative seems to be successful because between the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters, retention rates of continuing students were up by eight percent.

*Harold Washington College's GradesFirst Early Alert System is an initiative used to identify students who need outreach by tracking their attendance. Results indicate retention rates of continuing students up by eight percent.*

One of the several responsibilities of the retention coordinator implemented at **Frontier Community College** in the summer 2013 is to improve the Early Alert Process strategies within the 'Students First!' institutional assessment initiative. The Early Alert Process was adopted as the 'Students First!' advisement department goal to keep students from dropping classes and helping students complete in a timely manner. The retention coordinator is now in charge of contacting the student directly. The retention coordinator has a variety of resources available, such as a budget for tutoring, to help the student get back on track. Another responsibility of the retention coordinator is to develop the First Year Student Experience, a semester long mandatory freshman orientation course that will help students develop skills necessary for their college success. The First year Student Experience will also change the culture of faculty, staff and administration as well as shift the quality of students and student preparedness. During the fall 2014 semester the First

Year Student Experience will be implemented for all incoming freshmen.

Project Success is an early alert program that was implemented at **Harper College** as a part of the college's strategy to decrease student achievement gaps of developmental, young male and black non-Hispanic students, while increasing academic achievement for all. Project Success was piloted in fall 2011, fall 2012, and spring 2013. The pilots proved to be so successful that it was institutionalized as a college program in fall 2013. The program targets first-year students who are recent high school graduates and who place and enroll in two or more developmental courses or levels of developmental courses. The objectives of Project Success are to move the targeted students successfully through the developmental sequence, provide them with specific support and strategies, and improve their retention and graduation rate. Participating students are assigned a student development counselor and are targeted for intervention if instructors detect signs of academic difficulty. Poorly performing students are electronically flagged by the Starfish Early Alert software system. The counselor and the student collaborate to develop an individualized success plan designed to increase the student's ability to reach academic goals. Students who were flagged for concern and who met with their counselor had significantly higher course completion rates than those who were flagged and failed to meet with their counselor.

**Shawnee Community College's** early alert program is a web-based system designed to assist faculty in communicating with retention staff regarding students who have been identified as academically at risk. The program was implemented in 2003 and it has played an important role in the retention of underrepresented students. A counselor monitors incoming referrals on a daily basis and contacts each individual student to discuss the referral.

*Seventy-three percent of the 418 students referred through **Shawnee Community College's** early alert program completed their classes.*

Results and recommendations from the counseling contact are automatically forwarded to the referring faculty member. Students who would benefit from tutoring services are referred to the Student Success Center. Students who have issues that are not academically related are referred to the student counseling services on campus. Early identification and intervention into academic as well as non-academic concerns increase the likelihood that students will be successful in completing their classes. In fall 2012, 418 students were referred. Seventy-eight percent of these students successfully passed their classes. In spring 2013, 415 students were referred. Seventy-three percent of the students passed their classes.

The Midterm Retention Outreach Plan, which was initially launched in spring 2012 at **Olive-Harvey College**, uses the midterm grade period as a primary predictor of course success at the end of the semester. Students who are successful at the end the semester, defined as earning a grade of A-C, are more likely to continue in subsequent semesters. The major objective of this initiative is to identify the total percentage of students who have earned less than a C at midterm. For the past two semesters, that number has averaged out to be about 58 percent. Generally, minority males, student athletes, students with disabilities, Latino students and students who have been identified as coming from Adult Education programs who have completed an ESL Class are performing far below the 58 percent benchmark. The plan includes hiring an additional advisor, a minority male coordinator, a veteran's services coordinator and a developmental education coordinator. Outreach efforts to students across all populations have resulted in more visits to tutors, more visits to faculty during office hours, increase visits to academic advising etc. More than 75 percent of at-risk students who had participated in the remediation plan went on to successfully complete their class.

Retention strategies for at-risk athletes

The goal of the Student Athlete Success Program at **McHenry County College** (MCC) is to increase the educational attainment of underrepresented student athletes at the college. To increase the chances for success among student athletes, the college administration has centralized student success functions within the Department of Athletics. The Coordinator of Student Athlete Success was designated in July, 2012 to lead, facilitate, and strategically implement a system to help student athletes seamlessly matriculate and persist to complete a credential at MCC. In an attempt to better identify at risk student-athletes, the academic background information, which includes High School Grade Point Average, ACT Score, Class Rank and HS attended, is obtained along with having the student-athletes self-report which subjects they feel are their strongest and weakest. Other features of the student athlete success program include a designated academic advisor, freshman experience classes, academic progress checks, retention reports, and tracking of at-risk students by the coordinator of student athlete success. GPA and retention data charts confirm the academic success and retention of student-athletes.

Student-athletes often have issues with completing a degree program. Throughout the years, the Academic Advisement Center at **Rend Lake College** has initiated several models to increase student-athlete retention through advisement. During the summer of 2013, a full-time staff member was assigned to advise all student-athletes. This particular staff member also serves a coach and receives a stipend. He was trained in advisement and academic planning. The advisor meets with each incoming student and develops an academic plan including college preparatory courses if needed. He thoroughly explains the consequences of failing courses, withdrawing from courses, and not following the academic plan. Furthermore, Rend Lake College requires student-athletes to participate in the Learning Enhancement Center, which is a study center, for three hours during their first semester. The number of hours after the first semester depends on grade point average.

In order to improve the GPA and retention of student-athletes, an attendance tracker policy and progress report procedures have been developed at **Illinois Valley Community College**. These mandatory processes of the Athletic Success initiative put an increased emphasis on daily attendance and academic performance that has produced improved grade point averages for student-athletes, many of whom are minority or first-generation college students. In the fall 2013 semester, the athletic department had an overall GPA of 2.99.

Other retention strategies for at-risk students

The goal of the Students on Academic Probation (SOAP) Program at **Waubonsee Community College** is to better identify students that experience academic difficulties, to track their academic progress, and to implement appropriate interventions based on their individual student needs. The program consists of three main primary stages (Academic Caution, Academic Warning and Academic Restriction) and three sub-stages (Continued Caution, Continued Warning and Continued Restriction). They indicate how many consecutive terms students have earned a term grade point average (GPA) below a 2.0. Registration holds are placed on student accounts at each stage to prevent registration activity. Since implementing the staged model in August 2012, the college has been able to utilize the term GPA to identify probationary students that are demonstrating academic

*The goal of the Students on Academic Probation (SOAP) Program at **Waubonsee Community College** is to better identify students that experience academic difficulties, to track their academic progress, and to implement appropriate interventions based on their individual student needs.*

improvement. This is helpful in executing more intentional and targeted outreach to the students that are consecutively experiencing academic difficulties.

In order to increase success of students with academic issues that affect their grant award, **Southeastern Illinois College** designed a special advising appointment that helps students stay in good standing to receive financial aid and complete a degree by providing an academic plan to students who have already been placed on probation or suspension that requires an appeal. After a formal academic plan whose goal is to improve current standing as a student (GPA, completion rate, timeline toward completion) is established, the Financial Aid Director reviews the appeal. With a proper overview of what students need to do to complete a degree and a discussion of the seriousness of the issue, this system has resulted in higher numbers of students attaining their educational goal in a timely fashion. Consequently, students can avoid financial aid suspension, progress through their academic plan, and attain completion.

*Prairie State College's Main Action Plan (MAP) increased the retention rate for Nursing 102 students by 29 percent in fall 2013.*

When the nursing program at **Prairie State College**, a predominately black institution, noted a decrease in student retention, the Main Action Plan (MAP) was developed and implemented in spring 2013 for Nursing 102 to increase retention and assist students in the navigation of non-cognitive barriers. Students that were identified as high

risk were notified by the department chair that they would participate in the MAP program. The program elements included workshops that were offered throughout the semester. Topics included organization of class, lab and clinical themes, test taking and study tips, test autopsy, stress management, and practice tests with autopsies. An intentional advising framework was used as a template for one on one student meetings. For the Nursing 102 spring 2013 students, retention rate increased by 29 percent. All students surveyed stated that the MAP program made them feel like the college was committed to their success and felt that the nursing program cared about them as a person and understood all the barriers they face.

The Student Opportunity for Success course has been offered at **Spoon River College** since fall 2005. The course is required for all students who have been placed on academic probation and is optional for transfer students and returning students in good standing. The course is designed to assist students in their transition into the college environment, to encourage their success and attainment of goals, and to foster relationships that will help to facilitate this success. Students enrolled in the Student Opportunity for Success course learn ways to create a successful and satisfying experience in college, become familiar with college resources, services, policies, and organizations, and build a network of support to enhance academic success. They also acquire skills to increase ability to succeed, develop an academic plan, and become aware of career opportunities. From fall 2011 to spring 2013, nearly 75 percent of the students who enrolled in the Student Opportunity for Success course improved their overall grade point average.

Over the last five years, **Danville Area Community College** (DACC) has concentrated on closing the performance gap for underrepresented students. Initial strategies for improving gatekeeper courses and services were implemented in fall 2010 and efforts to increase students' success rates continue through today. The Achieving the Dream initiative has refocused the college's resources and efforts on strategies dedicated to helping more students, particularly low-income and/or minority students, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Evidence-based, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, the initiative is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success by transforming DACC practices, policy change, and generating knowledge with disaggregated data. The strategies include African American focus groups, early warning system through retention and student engagement coordinator, an in-service training on the under-resourced student for all faculty and staff, and a



registration deadline for students who have earned 18 hours or less.

## **Retention Strategies Targeting Developmental Education Students**

### *Strategies for improving student progression through developmental education*

At **Kennedy-King College (KKC)**, approximately 99 percent of students need remediation and enroll in developmental courses. To increase educational attainment, KKC implemented the Level Up program that reduces the amount of time students spend in remediation/developmental education, increases long-term retention and completion rates of students who placed into remediation, orients students to the college and its resources, and fosters supportive relationships by building student cohorts. The Level Up program was first launched during the summer 2012 term. The program operates during the summer and winter break throughout the academic calendar year and lasts four weeks. It helps students boost their placement test scores through personalized instruction, which targets the students' unique learning needs. Students take the college placement test prior to the start of the program and at the end in order to assess the effectiveness of the program and to determine 'level gains.' While enrolled in the program, students take college course that they may use towards a certificate or degree. Twenty two underrepresented students in the fiscal year 2014 who completed the program enrolled in KKC or another one of the City Colleges of Chicago. Additionally, 53 percent of fiscal year 2014 underrepresented students who participated in the program, but did not complete the entire program, also enrolled in college.

Developmental Education Initiative (DEI) was developed to assist students needing remediation preparation for college level classes through a process of mandatory, supplemental instruction and socialization that helps students better prepare for and integrate into college. The DEI program aims to help students relearn prior instruction, reinforce basic skill concepts, produce level and knowledge gains and, increase student retention and student success. The design creates a focus on the integration of knowledge and skills across reading, writing, and mathematics; the development of social capital, and the provision of intrusive advising that will assist students in making decisions about their future academic and career goals. Through tutoring sessions of three to seven students, participants develop essential skills such as collaborative decision making and team building skills, as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills. DEI was launched at **Richard J. Daley College** in spring 2011. The 7th cohort of DEI began in spring 2013. Success rates for students who complete DEI surpass significantly those for students who do not complete the program across all developmental education courses.

*Full implementation of Math Literacy, a six credit hour, one semester sequence with algebra content that provides appropriate preparation for general education math classes, began at **Parkland College** in the fall of 2013 with an enrollment of 312 students.*

One of the primary roadblocks to completion of degree for many students has been the requirement of intermediate algebra as a prerequisite for general education math classes. To mitigate this impediment while maintaining high academic standards, the Parkland College Mathematics Department has redesigned its developmental math sequence in order to better prepare students for general education math classes, increase retention and completion rates in developmental math classes, and improve student skills in teamwork and problem solving. Full implementation of Math Literacy, a six credit hour, one semester

sequence with algebra content that provides appropriate preparation for general education math classes began at **Parkland College** in the fall of 2013 with an enrollment of 312 students. Central to the new course

is a collaborative, problem solving based pedagogy intended to improve students' ability to work as part of a team and to solve problems they have not encountered before. Time management, study skills, and personal responsibility are also incorporated in lessons in an effort to help students, especially first generation students, successfully make the transition from high school to college. Of those students who have completed Math Literacy, over seventy-five percent have succeeded in a General Education math class.

Co-Requisite Learning Communities (LC) was implemented at **Wilbur Wright College** in spring 2013 to transition students who require some developmental support in reading or writing but show potential for success in college-level coursework by pairing English 101 with a developmental reading or writing course to form a learning community. Co-Requisite LC courses are built from strong collaborations between the paired faculty members. They create a classroom community with fluidity between subjects, long contact hours, and a culture of mutual support that has proven to increase students' confidence and success. Co-Requisite LC instructors work closely with placement test readers, the testing office, and advisors, to ensure appropriate placement and ongoing support for students enrolled in these courses. Reading 125, ESL Writing 100, and English 100 all lend themselves to skill-based practice, contextualized learning, introduction to academic discourse, and tips on how to navigate college, providing a framework that supports the students' work in English 101.

The Fast Track Math course is a two-week intensive algebra refresher class that was first conducted at **Illinois Valley Community College** in fall 2013 with 17 students. The goal of the Fast Track Math course is to address time to completion by allowing students placed into developmental math at the intermediate Algebra level who earn placement scores that fall at the top end of the developmental education placement range to "brush up" on algebra skills and re-test at no cost at the end of the class, allowing those who then meet the appropriate threshold at or above the 75 percent level on the MyMath Test post-test to enroll in a later-start college algebra or statistics course. Therefore, this practice expedites placement into the college level math course for those qualifying students. Students requiring extended remediation will continue in the developmental math course, building upon the skills learned in the Fast Track Math course. No tuition is charged for this two-week class. Out of 17 students that qualified for the Fast Track option in fall 2013, all 17 moved into the college level math. Again in the spring 2014, all 18 students that enrolled in the Fast Track Math course successfully advanced into the college level math courses.

One of **South Suburban College**'s course objectives is to encourage students to view reading not as a chore but rather as an important life skills' function that can be both pleasurable and enjoyable. It is believed that the use of an electronic medium for in-class readings will assist the college in increasing motivation, thereby leading to an increase in comprehension skills. Apple IPAD Integration is a program at South Suburban College, funded through grants, that utilizes this electronic medium for in-class readings and coursework in RDG 082. It enables students in this developmental course, with reading grade levels of 7.0-8.9, to utilize Apple IPADs to enhance their comprehension and vocabulary skills while using the latest technology to earn better grades, increase motivation, and view reading as pleasurable and enjoyable. South Suburban College implemented this program in spring, 2013. In spring 2013, the RDG

*Apple IPAD Integration is a program at **South Suburban College**, funded through grants, that utilizes this electronic medium for in-class readings and coursework in RDG 082 developmental course. An overwhelming majority (95%) of students enrolled in RDG 082 utilizing the Apple IPAD noted an increase in positive improvement for their attitudes toward reading via the pre and post "Reading Attitude Survey.*

082 course with the experimental (IPAD) group had a one hundred percent retention rate, in comparing with the RDG 082 control (no IPAD) group which had an eighty percent retention rate. Additionally, an overwhelming majority (95%) of students enrolled in RDG 082 utilizing the Apple IPAD noted an increase in positive improvement for their attitudes toward reading via the pre and post “Reading Attitude Survey.

Since August 2012, Learning Communities at **Kennedy-King College** (KKC) have offered a richer learning experience through a variety of curricular approaches that cluster two or more courses with an interdisciplinary theme and/or or developmental education. Through the paired structure of classes and the co-enrollment of students, who complete the classes as a small cohort, faculty members are able to collaborate with one another in order to create shared assignments, activities, and approaches across disciplines. This structure of teaching and learning allows students to apply immediate use of the skills and strategies they have learned from another class. The paired classes also allow students to create a network of social relationships with peers and instructors as well as embedded tutors. Research shows that through this rigorous integrated design, learning communities can help improve students’ college experience, improve educational outcomes, and help students move more quickly through courses’ developmental sequences. In spring 2014 KKC enhanced its learning communities to include curricular integration, embedded tutoring, and increased academic advising. Revisions were made to INTDSP 101 – College Success Seminar. The seminar provides an introduction to academic skills that foster success such as critical thinking, study skills, time management, and stress management.

**Highland Community College** implemented a five-week Fast Forward summer bridge program in 2011, with the goal of increasing the math placement scores for participating students. The project aligned with the college’s strategic goal of having more students enroll in college-level courses. The potential benefits for students increasing their scores on the COMPASS placement test include saving time, speeding up program completion, and saving on tuition and textbook costs. Recently, a full-time English instructor developed a writing component for Fast Forward. Students with a COMPASS score of 7 were given the opportunity to improve skills, with the goal of retesting with direct placement into ENGL 121 Rhetoric and Composition. The college ran the writing component of the program with five participants in the summer 2013. All five students participating in the writing component qualified for college-level writing according to the post-test COMPASS exam following Fast Forward.

Students taking developmental reading, English and math classes that wait to enroll within two weeks of the beginning of a semester have been found to have only a 53 percent chance of succeeding in their developmental courses at **Lewis & Clark Community College** (LCCC). The late enrolment option has been offered at LCCC since spring 2013 in order to provide these students with extra time for obtaining course materials and financial aid. The start time for their developmental courses has been pushed back to the fifth week of the semester. The results from fall 2013 show higher than 53 percent success rates for students taking developmental English, reading, or study skills with the late option.

#### Mentoring and tutoring

The Math Center at **Harry S Truman College** was opened in September 2012 to address the consistently low success and retention rates of students in developmental math courses. Fall testing data for the last five years reveals that over 80 percent of incoming Truman students consistently test into developmental level math courses. The Math Center consists of a walk-in center, computer lab, and study space. Students can come to the Math

*The Math Center at **Harry S Truman College** served approximately 40 percent of all students enrolled in math at Truman College. Math Center students had success and retention rates of 65 percent and 85 percent, respectively.*

Center to work on their homework, study for exams, and get clarification on topics from Math Center tutoring staff. Since its inception, the math center has grown to include 28 staff members; one coordinator, 13 professional tutors and adjunct professors, 7 student workers, 6 work study students, and one liaison to the Truman mathematics department. During the fall 2013 semester, the Math Center served approximately 40 percent of all students enrolled in math at Truman College. Math Center students had success and retention rates of 65 percent and 85 percent, respectively. Students who did not attend the Math Center had success and retention rates of 52 percent and 75 percent, respectively.

The Triton Employees as Mentors Program (TEAM) is a faculty and staff to student mentoring program that was implemented in fall 2012 with the goal to assist all interested **Triton College** students and especially first time students who enrolled at a full-time status and placed into two or more developmental courses after taking the COMPASS Placement Exam. The TEAM Program matches each participant with a Triton College faculty or staff member to help promote student retention as well as develop respective students educational, personal and career goals. Mentors are encouraged to meet, or make contact by e-mail or phone, with their students at least twice monthly, and they are given resources to support their mentoring relationship. Multiple workshops are held throughout the academic year to supplement the mentoring experience. The majority of 76 students that participated in the program during the initial implementation academic year were identified as an underrepresented group (61percent). Eighty-four percent of the students initially enrolled in the TEAM Project remained in the program the entire year. Initial findings demonstrate that active participation between mentor and mentee may lead to higher persistence, retention, and GPA.

### **Retention Strategies Targeting Students with Disabilities**

Access and Disability Services (ADS) at **Harper College** has been providing coaching to students with disabilities for the last three years through its Academic Coaches Empowering Student (ACES) program. The program assists students with their transition from high school to college and guides them to become independent learners responsible for their own learning. Coaching involves a comprehensive assessment and routine follow-up with goal setting that promotes academic skills, teaches and reinforces self-advocacy, improves communication skills, and develops executive functioning abilities and thus promotes student persistence and success. A two-semester hour First Year Experience course (FYE 101) serves as the primary vehicle and structure for the ACES' case management system. The course is taught by specialists within ADS who then also serve as the students' academic coaches outside of the class. They monitor students' academic progress in their other courses through the Starfish Early Alert software system. Research conducted on the 66 ACES students in the fall of 2012 found that 98.5 percent of them completed the fall semester and 90.0 percent of them enrolled again in the spring.

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The purpose of developing a systematized process for previewing software accessibility at **Heartland Community College** is to help the college make decisions about software commitments with accessibility in mind to better serve students and employees with disabilities. The process has been initiated in January

2013 and is still being developed. The main program elements include increasing the presence of staff from Disability Support Services on college-wide committees and task teams so that accessibility is more frequently and consistently part of the conversation as decisions are being made, rather than after decisions are made when those considerations then need to be made in a reactionary way. Current students with visual impairments have been hired to evaluate the accessibility of some of the college's software including learning platforms and e-text options to help identify areas of concern in anticipation of student need.

In an effort to improve services to documented disability students under the rules and regulations of ADA, **Southeastern Illinois College** (SIC) realigned its organizational structure to serve these students, combining the position of adviser with ADA coordinator, to ensure that proper advisement and early intervention is possible for these students. Such efforts have provided students with a point person within student services who can help them navigate admission, financial aid, tutoring, relationships with faculty, and other accommodations that will help them succeed at Southeastern. Through proper advisement and guidance from the ADA coordinator and collaboration with faculty, students develop an academic plan that facilitates achieving goals and pursuing student development. The implementation of this strategy has been ongoing since fall 2010, but has recently seen significant improvements in retention and college credential attainment. From fall 2012 to spring 2013, SIC was able to retain 86 percent of documented disability students.

## Retention Strategies Targeting Adult Education Students

### Adult education bridge programs

*Through **Black Hawk College's** Accelerating Opportunity (AO) program, seven students were recruited from the English as a Second Language (ESL) program and completed a "pre-bridge" math course in preparation for the technical math course that is part of CNC Manufacturing Certificate I. Each student successfully completed the first semester of courses earning the CNC Manufacturing Certificate I and are enrolled in the second semester of courses to earn the CNC Manufacturing Certificate.*

The objective of Accelerating Opportunities Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (AO I-CAPS) is the realignment of Adult Education and Career/Technical Education programs for the purpose of transitioning low-skilled adults to postsecondary education and thus facilitating the completion of certificates or degrees leading to employment in family-sustaining wage jobs. The AO I-CAPS model is based on the I-BEST program in Washington State. The AO I-CAPS model requires programs to be developed in career pathways of high need, based on information from employers and local labor market data. In fall 2012, **Black Hawk College** (BHC) was chosen by Illinois Community College Board as one of four community colleges to develop a program utilizing the I-CAPS model. Over the course of several months a team of faculty and staff from BHC's Adult Education and Career/Technical Education departments worked to develop a bridge program based on the AO I-CAPS model. Through the use of local labor market data and information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Computer Numeric Control (CNC) was identified as

the career pathway that would be the focus of the AO project. Two stackable certificates totaling 29 credit hours were developed; a 15 credit hour CNC Manufacturing certificate I, which is the prerequisite for a 14 credit hour CNC Manufacturing Certificate II. Seven students were recruited from the English as a Second Language (ESL) program and completed a "pre-bridge" math course in preparation for the

technical math course that is part of CNC Manufacturing Certificate I. All seven entered the AO I-CAPS program in the fall semester. All seven of the AO I-CAPS students have successfully completed the first semester of courses earning the CNC Manufacturing Certificate I and are enrolled in the second semester of courses to earn the CNC Manufacturing Certificate.

Since fall 2013, the Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) Program at **John A. Logan College** has offered a Healthcare Bridge course designed to prepare adults who lack the necessary basic academic skills to enter post-secondary education training for health-related employment beginning at the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) level. Students are provided guidance in preparing for continued post-secondary education and encouraged to pursue further career advancement. The Healthcare Bridge course, which is offered at no cost to the student, includes a contextualized curriculum within the healthcare career pathway, career development which includes career exploration and planning within the healthcare area, and transition services providing assistance navigating the movement from adult education into post-secondary education.

In fiscal year 2014, **Rock Valley College (RVC)** expanded its Adult Education Bridge Program. Bridge to Manufacturing is now offered at the college next to TDL (Transportation, Distribution & Logistics) Career Express and two sections of Bridge to Healthcare. These bridges assist students in increasing skills in preparation for completion of the GED. They also provide knowledge of the respective fields while exploring various career options within, as well as employer and industry expectations. The bridges partner with community employers to provide students with hands-on experiences within the field. The credit side of RVC also supports the bridges through faculty speakers and transition of bridge graduates to college credit programs. Approximately 50 percent of students enrolled then complete the Bridge program and receive their certificate of completion. These students, if they have not yet completed their GED, are transferred into regular GED classes.

Student services for adult learners

The Gateway to the City Colleges of Chicago program, which was implemented at **Malcolm X College** in fall 2012, provides Adult Education students a special opportunity to continue their studies at the City Colleges of Chicago by taking college credit courses at a reduced cost while receiving additional support to select an academic program of study. Depending on the length of time in the program, students will be able to earn credits toward the completion of a basic certificate or advanced certificate, while working toward an Associate's degree. The program includes expansion of recruitment and outreach activities, establishment of pipelines for recruitment in ASE/ESL classes, involving former Gateway students in recruitment and mentorship activities, and utilization of Transition Specialists to coordinate recruitment and program activities. Participants in the program have earned their GED diploma at an average rate of 59 percent.

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The purpose of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program at **Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC)** is to serve a diverse population of adults that are marginalized due to their low literacy and few academic attainments. The General Educational Development (GED) program provides instruction and services to

assist individuals reach the goals of a secondary completion and transition to college or the workplace. The GED program is successful due to the quality of its content, transition services, and institutional support including the Career Center, Financial Aid department, instructional divisions, and the Disability and Access Center. The ABE department at SWIC is the largest single producer of GED completers in the State of Illinois. Since 1981, 12,611 students have completed a GED through our department and of those, 5,067 (40 percent) have transferred into the institution and completed at least one credit-bearing course.

*The Adult Education department at Wabash Valley College (WVC) strives to not only assist adult learners in gaining the knowledge necessary to successfully obtain their GED, but also to increase their chances of earning a family sustaining wage by helping them smoothly transition into post-secondary education, certification programs, and/or the work environment through the use of advisors, computer based learning environments, financial assistance with testing, and scholarship opportunities.*

The Adult Education department at **Wabash Valley College (WVC)** strives to not only assist adult learners in gaining the knowledge necessary to successfully obtain their GED, but also to increase their chances of earning a family sustaining wage by helping them smoothly transition into post-secondary education, certification programs, and/or the work environment through the use of advisors, computer based learning environments, financial assistance with testing, and scholarship opportunities. Computer based testing began at WVC in November 2013 with the administration of the first computer based GED exam. The Pearson Vue testing center was fully operational at that time offering all computer based tests available by Pearson Vue including other certification tests such as CISCO Systems and CompTIA certification tests. In

January 2014, WVC began offering computer based learning environments to its adult education students. To further assist WVC adult education students in attaining post-secondary credentials, WVC now offers scholarships to offset the financial burden of college classes to those who qualify. Out of 39 adult education students enrolled at WVC in FY14, 34 percent of students successfully completed their GED exam by December of 2013 and 25 percent of students have returned for the spring semester to continue working of their GED exam completion.

**Lincoln Trail College** offers services that assist students of all ages and backgrounds with a successful transition into their next level of their education. These services have been offered to a varying degree through the history of Lincoln Trail College and they are continually revisited and evaluated. The result of the 2013-2014 evaluations is the creation of new/additional methods of assisting transitioning adults reentering education and completing a postsecondary credential to secure success in the workforce. It was recognized that transitioning adults reentering into academic endeavors have a variety of established factors, such as family obligations, learning adaptation factors, and a general apprehension about reentering education, not found with traditional student and additional advising methods and student services were designed to assist these transitioning adults including review of financial obligations and options, industry specific training, employment skills development, and a learning style analysis at the Learning Skill Center.

#### Adult education program improvement

In fiscal year 2013, **Richland Community College** designed an improvement plan to its Adult Education program in order to improve the National Reporting System (NRS) level completion rate at the college. The NRS level completion rate is the primary measure of both program performance and student learning for Adult Education. The changes included restructuring of administrative services to allow for increased course offerings, increasing the intensity and duration of instructional services, implementing mandatory

orientations to administer assessments, register students, discuss program requirements, and address possible barriers prior to enrollment, and introducing fixed enrollment for all ABE and ASE on-campus courses.

## Workforce Development Initiatives

### Career training programs

**Lake Land College** (LLC) and North American Lighting (NAL) have partnered to create the NAL Fast-Track Tech Program, an eight-week training course that guarantees employment at NAL upon completion of the program. The program is designed to train potential employees in the basic, entry-level skills required of maintenance technicians at NAL. The first session of the NAL training began on October 7, 2013. The program provides students with a variety of industrial technology skills including shop safety, applied mathematics, and robotics and automation control. This program focuses on subjects such as quality control, motor drives, hydraulics, pneumatics, robotics, programmable logic controllers, measuring, safety, and soft skills necessary to be successful in a fast-paced manufacturing environment as an entry-level technician. The college has maintained coordination with NAL tracking the success of the program graduates. All of the first 15 students completed the fast track program and all 15 are currently employed at NAL.

*Lake Land College (LLC) and North American Lighting (NAL) have partnered to create the NAL Fast-Track Tech Program, an eight-week training course that guarantees employment at NAL upon completion of the program. All of the first 15 students completed the fast track program and all 15 are currently employed at NAL.*

In 2012, as a member of the Illinois Network for Advanced Manufacturing (INAM) consortium of 21 Illinois community colleges, **Kankakee Community College** (KCC) began to plan and implement a new Manufacturing Technology Program to prepare students for the modern manufacturing environment. The program enrolls KCC students in certificate and degree programs, supports students' retention and completion, and prepares them for employment in companies with team-oriented design, production, quality, and maintenance systems using high-tech equipment that involves multiple, integrated systems. The program's first classes were offered in spring 2014 and KCC has been successful in recruiting underrepresented and low-income students for enrollment in it. Intensive strategic planning, community partnerships, as well as the purchase of a new facility, the Manufacturing Technology Program Center, which was open in January, 2014, are associated with the program's success.

Health Careers: Skilled Workers & Strong Earnings Project is an academic and career bridge program at **Joliet Junior College** (JJC) to help motivated individuals begin a career as a certified nurse's assistant or pharmacy technician. This is a collaborative effort between JJC departments: Workforce Development, Corporate & Community Services, Division of Adult & Family Services, and Allied Health/Nursing to meet growing employer demand for skilled healthcare workers and to expand and improve labor market opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals to obtain healthcare jobs. Program participants increase basic skills, complete an occupational training program in the healthcare industry, and gain employment upon completion. The healthcare bridge program is funded by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and administered by the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago via the Health Professional Opportunity Grant (HPOG) program. The total enrollment into the HPOG program from January 2011 to September 2015 is estimated to be 106



participants. To date, 70 participants have completed the program, with an additional 36 participants anticipated for the remaining year 4 and 5. Of the 70 program completers, 100 percent gained employment. Providing the bridge component training prior to entering occupational training, increased the participant's ability to successfully complete occupational training and enter into employment. Providing case management, career readiness and engagement with local businesses, supported the economically disadvantaged individuals to obtain a position in the healthcare industry.

*The goal of the Workforce Development Highway Construction Careers Training Program at Lincoln Land Community College is to transition women, minorities, ex-offenders, and hard to serve populations, such as long term unemployed into the highway construction employment. In 2013, 70 percent of enrolled students completed the training and 81 percent of those students are employed in the field.*

The goal of the Workforce Development Highway Construction Careers Training Program at **Lincoln Land Community College** is to transition women, minorities, ex-offenders, and hard to serve populations, such as long term unemployed into the highway construction employment. Working with fifteen local unions, this program is set up to allow students to complete 450 hours of training in a four month period and prepare them for union apprenticeship admission, testing, and interview. Program Coordinator works with students to overcome barriers that would impede success including learning disabilities, transportation, childcare and housing issues. Students receive stipends to assist with costs during training, and are provided tools and boots as well as reimbursement of union application fees. After graduation from the program students are contacted monthly through mail, e-mail, or a phone call to keep them up to date on new employment opportunities. Upon completion of the program and after a 30 day

follow-up students who have successfully completed all phases of the program receive a \$250 completion bonus. In 2013, 70 percent of enrolled students completed the training and 81 percent of those students are employed in the field.

In the spring 2013, **Highland Community College** offered a short-term technical skills training program that was funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program dollars. Aligning well with the educational attainment goal in the Illinois Public Agenda, this program was designed to increase the number of young adults reentering education and obtaining employment with regional manufacturers. The program expanded the college's partnership with WIA and provided a new entryway for young adults. The college worked with an area faith based organization, the "Dream Center," run by multiple churches in Freeport, Illinois. WIA and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) also assisted in identifying potential participants from underrepresented groups and provided applications for the program. The skills training portion of the program centered on welding. The additional activities included two sessions of print reading, two sessions of shop math, the complete OSHA-10 course, Work Keys assessment, and soft skills/resume development sessions. Participants also visited a fabrication facility to observe the working environment of someone in the welding profession. The program ended with a focused job fair that featured staffing agencies and area businesses looking for skills trade candidates.

#### Career readiness initiatives

The purpose of the Career Readiness Center that opened in August 2013 at **John Wood Community College (JWCC)** is to provide a place where students and community members can explore careers and educational opportunities that more closely match their interests and skills. The center provides assessments for education and work experience, assistance with resumes and interviewing skills,

employment search assistance, and a virtual internship experience. The Career Cruising software allows students to identify possible career matches then takes them through a virtual internship so the students can see descriptions of tasks, job descriptions and employment opportunities. The center representatives visit the area unemployment office, the vocational-technical centers, and district high schools to provide information about careers and opportunities. Additionally, the center works with the Great River Economic Development Foundation, local industries, and other business owners to coordinate JWCC's career and technical programs with the needs of the community.

The **College of Lake County** (CLC) Career and Placement Services office, in addition to hosting career fairs and other employment assistance, works in conjunction with the Job Center of Lake County to provide basic skills training and other coursework for individuals who are in need of assistance in preparing for the workforce. Specific groups who may need assistance include displaced workers, new entrants to the workforce, youth, veterans, and persons with disabilities. Job retraining funds through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) assist eligible students to finish their program of study and earn a college credential. There are currently over 75 WIA approved programs of study at CLC. The Career and Placement Services/ Job Center of Lake County program provides individual and group assistance in career assessment and exploration, job search techniques, resume writing and interviewing skills. The program makes available a wide variety of print, video and multimedia resources as well as information sessions about qualifying for WIA funding. Students who receive WIA funding receive academic support to complete their coursework and earn a degree or certificate. A follow-up survey of the 2013 WIA graduates revealed that 60 percent were employed, and 83 percent of those who reported that they were employed indicated that they were employed in their CLC field of study.

*The College of Lake County (CLC) Career and Placement Services office, in addition to hosting career fairs and other employment assistance, works in conjunction with the Job Center of Lake County to provide basic skills training and other coursework for individuals who are in need of assistance in preparing for the workforce. Specific groups who may need assistance include displaced workers, new entrants to the workforce, youth, veterans, and persons with disabilities.*

The Plus 50 Workforce Center at **Joliet Junior College** was established to promote mentoring, volunteering, ageless learning, and re-careering programs for individuals age 50 and up. Programs and workshops, as well as access to a comprehensive resource area, are customized to meet the needs of the mature job seeker. The center assists in resume writing and providing job search workshops, offers computer classes as well as retirement planning courses to help individuals learn how to avoid retirement planning mistakes and instruct participants on ways of protecting assets, preserving lifestyles throughout retirement, and planning for retirement.

The Employability Skills Academy was created at **Carl Sandburg College** to prepare the graduates for the interview process when they are entering the job market. The Academy began in the fall 2012. There are a variety of seminars to choose from, including Communicating at Work, Customer Service, Person to Person Etiquette, Time Management, Workplace Ethics and several more. Building a strong resume, cover letter and developing successful interview techniques provides the cornerstone of what the academy is providing as the graduates head into the workforce. Any student completing an Associate of Applied Science degree is required to complete 16 hours of the Employability Skills Academy throughout their academic career. The academy also communicates to prospective employers that Sandburg has employable graduates to serve the communities in which they were educated.

*The Accelerated Business Transfer (ABT) degree program at **Rock Valley College (RVC)** addresses the unique needs of students over the age of 25 and has resulted in positive outcomes for adult student participants.*

The Accelerated Business Transfer (ABT) degree program at **Rock Valley College (RVC)** addresses the unique needs of students over the age of 25 and has resulted in positive outcomes for adult student participants. The ABT program began in the spring 2013 academic term and combines face-to-face, fully online and classes. A one night per week format was selected to attract working adult students and provide them a clear pathway to earn an Associate of Arts

transfer degree. Students complete a transferable Associate of Arts degree with a business major focus in 2.5 years. Each student cohort has a dedicated academic advisor who acts as the liaison between the students and any function of the college. Cohort students are surveyed regularly and they often point out their dedicated advisor, the pre-determined schedule, locked-in tuition/fees, and having their books delivered to them as the main reasons that they appreciate RVC's approach to this program.

### **Improving College Readiness of High School Students**

#### High school dual credit/dual enrollment programs

The purpose of the Dual Credit program offered by **Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC)** is to provide educational opportunities for high school students in the college's district and thus prepare them for work and improve their transition from high school to college. Courses are tuition-free for students taking a dual credit course taught during the high school day by a high school instructor as part of the regular teaching load. Dual credit has been in place in a limited fashion for more than a decade. In the past four years, a more focused, centralized effort with standardized procedures has developed. The focus on providing more opportunities for Career and Technical Education (CTE) students has improved dual credit opportunities for a wider range of students. A dual credit program called "First Semester has recently been developed for senior students who had completed their high school graduation requirements by December and met course requirements for this program the spring semester of their senior year. More than one-fourth (28.2 percent) of our fiscal year 2013 dual credit students have continued their education at LLCC, while 27.4 percent have transferred to another institution.

*Over 80 percent of the students served through **Morton College's** dual credit program are from ethnic minorities.*

The purpose of the dual credit program between **Morton College** and J. Sterling Morton (JSM) High School District 201, which includes two Morton East and Morton West High Schools, is to provide dual credit courses that are accessible to high school students who register as a dual credit student at the JSM. Dual credit courses expand student access to affordable higher

education, provide challenging academic and occupational experiences to qualified high school students during their junior and senior years, and reduce the cost associated with a college education for students and their families. Dual credit courses are important transitional links for students moving from secondary to postsecondary education. Successful completion of dual credit courses allow students to simultaneously earn college credit while satisfying high school graduation requirements. The program was reinitiated in fall 2012 and since then, on average, about nine dual credit courses have been offered at both local feeder high schools every term. Over 80 percent of students in dual enrollment are from ethnic minorities.

Through its Dual Credit Program (DCP), **Lake Land College (LLC)** extends access to affordable higher

education to a larger percentage of district residents, stimulates and challenges students in their junior and senior years of high school, and allows students to build a college transcript before graduating from high school. LLC believes that these courses are important links in the transition from secondary school to college or careers. LLC began offering dual credit courses in 1998 as part of the Accelerated College Enrollment Program. The DCP maintains compliance with LLC Board Policy, Illinois Community College Board Administrative Rules, the Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act, and Higher Learning Commission Guidelines pertaining specifically to dual credit programs. As a result of rapid growth in dual credit offerings and demand from partner institutions, the DCP evolved to include two full-time positions—Director of Dual Credit and Dual Credit Specialist—and one shared, part-time position—Dual Credit Student Support Specialist. These positions allow for efficient oversight of policies and procedures and ample support to students and dual credit faculty.

**Frontier Community College**, one of the Illinois Eastern Colleges, offers over 90 Dual Credit courses each semester to the surrounding high schools. Students are taking advantage of the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school. In addition to dual credit, Frontier also offers over 80 night classes at surrounding off campus locations. Every semester the Illinois Eastern Community College District offers over 100 online courses. These courses can be used for over 60 programs offered at all four campuses located in southeastern Illinois. The purpose of dual credit and distance education is to improve access to college education for students who live in remote areas and thus to eliminate long commutes to the campus.

*Building pathways to post secondary education for high school students*

The Illinois Green Economy Network is working with the Illinois State University Center for Renewable Energy Program to develop and manage a statewide pilot known as the Solar for Schools Training Program for middle and high school teachers in rural areas. **Kankakee Community College (KCC)** is one of four community colleges participating in this pilot. The pilot teams postsecondary schools with rural schools to achieve the program's objectives that are to provide instructional materials to teachers such as solar energy laboratory kits for hands-on experimentation, and lesson plans, provide teachers with professional development in renewable energy, provide technical assistance, if desired, to install a 1 kW solar photovoltaic system on the school grounds, and strengthen relationships with middle and high schools and their population of potential community college students. KCC's leadership of this program is a promising opportunity to create a pipeline for minority students residing in Pembroke Township, the most impoverished township in KCC's district, to postsecondary education, and potentially to KCC's renewable energy certificate and degree programs.

***Kankakee Community College's (KCC) participation in the Solar for Schools Training Program is a promising opportunity to create a pipeline for minority students residing in the most impoverished township in its district, to postsecondary education, and potentially to KCC's renewable energy certificate and degree programs.***

In fiscal year 2013 **Olney Central College** and other Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) received an Illinois Community College Board grant with a purpose of conducting the Pathways to Results (PTR) process for the Associated Degree Nursing program. The PTR process is a continuous improvement process developed specifically for programs of study. The goal of the project was to develop a Health Science Partnership Team to look at all relevant program data and make recommendations for improvement based on that data. Nineteen Team members representing IECC colleges, nursing staff, adult education, Workforce Investment Act, Perkins, Eastern Illinois University, Regional High School Delivery Systems, Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support, Health Care Organizations including hospitals and

nursing homes and area high schools met and developed a partnership charter. Five years of student enrollment and completion data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, special populations, disadvantaged student status and county of residence were reviewed by the Health Science Partnership Team. Both similarities and differences to the general college population were noted. Attrition levels in four core nursing courses were tracked. Based on the data and the input from all partners, one process they chose to target for improvement was pre-nursing advisement to make sure all interested students are well-informed about program and application requirements.

The Computer Information Systems (CIS) Pathways to Results (PTR) Program is the result of the cooperation between **Morton College** and J. Sterling Morton High School District. In the fall of 2012, Morton College CIS faculty, student services staff and CTE administrators started meeting with business/computing faculty, staff and administrators from J. Sterling Morton High School District's 201. Their goal was to align curricula, increase dual credit offerings, and reduce the time it takes students to earn their associates of applied science degree in computer information systems at Morton College. As the result, all CIS curricula at the college were redesigned. The four separate specialization tracks and core of courses were replaced with three separate CIS degrees each structured to show what classes should be taken each semester: a CIS degree for students planning to transfer to a four-year institution, a computer support specialist (CSS) degree for students planning to immediately seek employment in data centers upon graduation, and a Web Design (WEB) degree for students looking to work as Web designers. All career certificates were examined and two were eliminated. The course work required for career certificates was realigned so students earning a career certificate could more seamlessly transition to an A.A.S. degree.

#### Curriculum alignment between high school and college

The purpose of the STEM Career and College Readiness (CCR) Bridge Program at **Olney Central College** (OCC) is to reduce remediation by improving college readiness of high school juniors and seniors through targeted interventions, curricular alignment between secondary and postsecondary education, and strengthening partnerships between the community college and the participating high schools. The first high school developmental math bridge was held during summer 2013 at OCC. The STEM CCR grant paid for the cost of instruction and books. The course was taught by OCC Developmental Math faculty. This format allowed high school students to complete remediation before beginning their college program and to enroll more quickly in college level mathematics. Crucial to the success of the initiative was the hiring of a Director for the STEM CCR Grant who is responsible for placement testing, pre and post testing, and providing ongoing support to faculty and students in the classroom. One hundred percent of the students enrolled in the summer developmental math bridge completed their course and their post-COMPASS test successfully. Seventy-seven percent of those students enrolled at OCC or one of her sister schools in August 2013. In fall semester 2013, seventy percent of the summer bridge students were successful in their college math class.

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The purpose of the College Readiness Curriculum Alignment project, which was implemented in May 2013 at **Richland Community College** (RCC), is to enhance P-20 partnerships through the alignment of the

curricula in the content areas of mathematics and English. Initially, RCC offered college faculty and high school math and English teachers professional development opportunities which allowed any of RCC's fifteen feeder schools to align their content areas horizontally and vertically for a proposed seamless student transition from high school to college. After the teachers/faculty worked to align curricula through the sharing of syllabi, textbooks, rubrics, exit and entry level projects, etc., the content leaders planned professional development workshops to align the Common Core Standards with a commonly used high school math unit or a commonly used high school English language art unit. Concluding the event, every participant left the professional development workshops with materials aligned with the Common Core Standards. High school teachers were invited to spend time working with RCC faculty to align curriculum and the Common Core State Standards. The content leadership teams collaboratively selected the materials to include for a grade level specific teaching unit. One of the many results of this work has allowed RCC to partner with Cerro Gordo High School (CGHS) to offer Math 098 to CGHS seniors with a goal of college readiness.

The Math Curriculum Alignment Committee (MCAC), which was formed in January 2011, is a joint committee comprised of faculty and staff representatives from thirteen district high schools and **College of DuPage** (COD) whose primary intent is to identify and implement initiatives focused on improving college math readiness for underprepared high school students before they enter college. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the College launched two college math readiness initiatives proposed by the MCAC: Offering of a COD MATH 0482, a developmental math course for select high schools; and the administering of the COMPASS math placement exam to high school juniors and seniors with select district high schools on a pilot basis. The junior year COMPASS testing is designed to enable high schools to identify students whose Math skills are deficient in time to advise them to take appropriate Math courses in their senior year that should increase their chances to be college-ready upon graduation. Providing high school seniors the opportunity to take the COMPASS test for COD late in their high school career also should enhance their chance of placing into a higher level Math class at COD. Six District 502 high schools and 272 students participated in the 2011-2012 pilot of having high school juniors and seniors take the COD COMPASS Math Placement test. Participating students were identified by their high school counselors and math instructors as having deficient math skills and who would benefit from the placement testing. Feedback from the initial pilot initiative was very positive and two additional high schools and 598 students participated in 2012-2013 academic year. Other initiatives the MCAC are currently working on include data sharing with the high schools and having faculty from the high schools and COD observe each other's classes to get a better understanding of the challenges that each faculty group faces.

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*Other initiatives for improving college readiness of high school students*

Jump Start is a summer bridge program at **College of Lake County** (CLC) associated with the dual credit program. The objectives of the Jump Start program, which was implemented at CLC in 2007, are to improve student skills needed to do college level work, improve students' confidence in their ability to be successful, shorten the amount of time required to complete a degree, and increase students' access to CLC resources and services. The program provides free remedial English and mathematics coursework, peer mentoring, tutoring and other support services to the previous year's graduates of selected CLC high schools during summer terms. Students qualify based upon test scores and other criteria. Jump Start classes are designed to follow the same syllabus as the regular remedial courses offered for all CLC students. The instructors work closely with CLC staff to make sure that students adhere to the same rigorous standards of achievement. Students who pass their courses are awarded full college credit, and a CLC transcript is generated. Of the 54 summer 2013 Jump Start English students, 78 percent were retained to fall 2013. Of the 15 summer 2013 Jump Start remedial math students, 87 percent were retained to fall 2013.

The Developmental Education "Dev ED" awareness campaign, which was implemented in June 2013 at **Olive-Harvey College**, is a program designed to work with Chicago public high school students who are attempting to enroll in the college before they take the Compass Placement Exam. The goal of the program is to help the college improve outcomes for high school students requiring remediation. The program is consisted of two hour sessions that include Compass test preparation, discussions about why the test is important, and how not doing well on the test adversely impacts cost and time to completion. Additionally, for students who are placed in the developmental education sequence, The Developmental Education Director visits every class in the developmental education sequence to make students aware of tutoring and other support services. During the spring 2014 semester the college is introducing embedded tutoring in 25 percent of all developmental education classes as an additional support service to drive course success and improving the likelihood that developmental education students will progress to college credit courses in a timely manner.

*The purpose of the Guided Path to Success (GPS) workshops series in **Heartland Community College's** district high schools is to increase college readiness and support students by exposing them to dual credit options in a flexible way. Almost 400 students were introduced to topics and concepts that will ease their transition to college and/or the workforce and assist them in being successful on their chosen paths and 171 students earned at least one free college credit hour by completing a workshop series.*

The purpose of the Guided Path to Success (GPS) workshops series in **Heartland Community College's** district high schools is to increase college readiness and support students by exposing them to dual credit options in a flexible way. These workshops were first implemented in August 2013. The participating high schools offered students the option of simply attending the GPS workshops for the learning experience, or completing the after-assignments required to earn credit. Almost 400 students were introduced to topics and concepts that will ease their transition to college and/or the workforce and assist them in being successful on their chosen paths and 171 students earned at least one free college credit hour by completing a workshop series.

Through **Elgin Community College's** Alliance for College Readiness partnership, a new fourth year high school math course, *Expanding Mathematics Through Applications*, was developed by a team of twelve mathematics faculty members, eight high school faculty, three faculty from Elgin Community College (ECC), and a representative from Northern Illinois University's Math Department, during the summer 2012 to increase the number of

college-ready students who graduate from high school. The resulting course is aligned to the Common Core

State Standards, to ECC's highest developmental mathematics course, and to college-ready math expectations at Northern Illinois University. In addition, the course emphasizes project-based, real-world mathematics applications and developing effective study strategies among students. It aims to reach students who would not normally enroll in mathematics during their senior year in high school. The success of the program will be assessed in multiple ways, which include qualitative parent, student, and faculty input and pre- and post-course assessments using the COMPASS placement test. The pretest was administered August, 2013 and the posttest will be administered April 2014.

As part of its Alliance for College Readiness, **Elgin Community College** (ECC) recently implemented Transition Academy, a program targeting at-risk high school students to improve college readiness in District 509. The program works to help students build emotional intelligence and self-efficacy and targets increasing science and math readiness. The strategy is to increase the number of high school students who take a fourth-year high school math course. Students are grouped by grade and each class is team taught employing both a high school/college faculty member. The summer program contextualizes math and science learning with real-life industry problems and worked with local area industries to bring the students into the industries to perform math and science experiments. Each student is also paired with an adult mentor from the ECC community or college family. The second pilot year of the program also includes a parent component which includes communication about the Transition Academy coursework to parents and parent informational workshops about planning and paying for college, and career preparation.

**Moraine Valley Community College** offers several initiatives that expand college educational attainment, including two initiatives by Admissions office: "Non-traditional Career Day" and "Shepherd High School Program – When I Start College, What Should I Know?" Both programs were implemented in 2012. The purpose of Non-traditional Career Day is to educate underserved high school populations about the benefits, challenges and opportunities available in non-traditional careers for their gender. A total of 30 students, 22 female and 8 male participated in the event and also completed an evaluation form. As a result of attending this event, 86 percent reported that they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to enroll in a nontraditional career program at the postsecondary institution. The purpose of the Shepherd High School Program is to support and encourage smoother transition from high school to college. Initiative was piloted at a high school with high minority enrollment and underrepresented population with a goal of increasing high school graduate enrollment at a postsecondary institution. This effort also focuses on pre-college placement testing. Data Collected/ Evidence of Success: Results indicate that students enrolled in one remedial class shifted from 54 percent in 2011 to 49 percent in 2012.

*Moraine Valley Community College's Admissions office offers "Non-traditional Career Day". The purpose of Non-traditional Career Day is to educate underserved high school populations about the benefits, challenges and opportunities available in non-traditional careers for their gender. A total of 30 students, 22 female and 8 male participated in the event and also completed an evaluation form. As a result of attending this event, 86 percent reported that they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to enroll in a nontraditional career program at the postsecondary institution.*

'Siguele!' is an event for Latino high school juniors and seniors offered at **Oakton Community College** in March each year. The program's goal is to engage these students in the college search process by showcasing different types of colleges and degrees, and by exposing the Latino high school students to successful college students and graduates. College admission professionals assist them through their college search/application process and introduce them to successful Latino college students who can serve



as role models to these young Latino students. ‘Siguele!’ commenced at Oakton Community College in 2009 as “La Via- Your way to Success”. It changed its name in 2013 to ‘Siguele’ and has continued as an annual event since. In 2013 twelve colleges participated including: Chicago State University, Columbia College, DePaul University, Elmhurst College, Illinois institute of Technology, Loyola University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Roosevelt University, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and University of Saint Francis.

**Spoon River College** (SRC) implemented Disability Services & IEP/Transition meetings in the fall 2003 to better prepare students for the transition from high school to college and to inform students, parents, and high school staff how the laws and responsibilities of the disabled student and the school differ between the secondary and post-secondary levels. The disability services advisor’s attendance at the IEP/Transition meeting allows the student to meet the individual they will be working with at the college while in the more familiar environment of their high school. Since its implementation, the SCR disability services advisors are contacted by 5-6 district high schools each academic year, and are invited to attend multiple IEP meetings in both the fall and spring semesters. Attendance at the IEP meetings has increased communication between high school special education staff and the disability services advisors, and has helped to improve the quality of disability documentation that is received from the high schools. It has also increased communication with local Department of Rehabilitation offices, as caseworkers from that office also attend the IEP meetings. The lines of communication that have been opened between students, parents, high school staff, college advisors, and social services agencies as a result of participation in the IEP/Transition meetings allow for improved services for students with disabilities through the cooperation and knowledge gained by all in attendance.

*Annual Fall Latino Empowerment Conference and Spring Outreach Initiative at pre-selected schools are two events hosted by **McHenry County College** (MCC) that target local Latino high school students. The percentage of racially ethnic students who complete a credential increased by 107 percent from 2009-2013.*

Annual Fall Latino Empowerment Conference and Spring Outreach Initiative at pre-selected schools are two events hosted by **McHenry County College** (MCC) that target local Latino high school students. These events provide resources, guidance and support to a growing number of minority students. Even though the conference is targeted to Latino students all minority groups are welcomed to attend. These events instill the importance of education and are designed to address a student’s transition from high school to college or career and to encourage students to commit to their college success. All students received a folder full of resources about MCC student services, financial aid tips, degree and college types, career paths and tools, and scholarship resources. Efforts through partnership like the Latino

Empowerment Conference and Outreach initiative has contributed to increases in the number of completers of our minority students. The percentage of racially ethnic students who complete a credential increased by 107 percent from 2009-2013.

### **Other Initiatives for Retention and educational Attainment**

#### *Providing student support services*

The TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) grant encourages academic preparation and increased minority student retention and learning at **Shawnee Community College**. The program services low income, first generation, academically underprepared and disabled students. Forty-one percent of students at Shawnee

Community College are considered low income. The SSS program thus promotes the college's goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse student population and fostering student-centered learning. Approximately 160 at-risk students are identified at the beginning of each semester. Orientation sessions are presented by the Student Support Services staff offering information regarding SSS eligibility, activities, and support. Students, who are required to maintain good academic standing, have their own individual advisors. The Retention Specialist monitors student grades, checks instructor progress reports, and facilitates cultural activities. The Learning Skills Specialist monitors tutor reports and facilitates study skills/technology workshops. The SSS professional staff develops financial workshops and activities and assist students with FASFA, Pell, and Grant Aid documents. Students are also exposed to career exploration workshops and career advising. The entire 160 students enrolled in the program in 2012-13 successfully completed the program. Retention rates have increased at the college as well as minority enrollment.

The goal of TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) at **Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC)** is to increase student retention and graduation rates of first-generation, low-income, and/or college students with documented disabilities. All services are provided free to the SSS students. SSS students have access to personalized academic, career, and personal advising performed by designated SSS advisors. SSS students also receive other forms of academic support throughout their time at SVCC including free tutoring, access to free success skills workshops, and free use of laptops, textbooks, and other resource materials. If SSS student wish to transfer to a 4-year institution, they will receive additional transfer advisement from the SSS designated advisors. If there is sufficient student interest, students will also be provided the resources for a campus visit to a 4-year academic institution. In fiscal year 2013, the graduation rate for SSS students was 34.2 percent, which is 14.3 percent higher than the graduation rate for the general population of students at SVCC.

*The goal of TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) at **Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC)** is to increase student retention and graduation rates of first-generation, low-income, and/or college students with documented disabilities. In fiscal year 2013, the graduation rate for SSS students was 34.2 percent, which is 14.3 percent higher than the graduation rate for the general population of students at SVCC.*

The purpose of Student Services at **Lincoln Trail College** is to help students from various underrepresented population backgrounds gain the optimum educational experience. These services have been offered to a varying degree through the history of Lincoln Trail College but throughout the academic years, these services are continually revisited and evaluated. The result of these 2013-2014 evaluations is the creation of new methods of retention through offering a varied array of pre-college student services as well as services for students who are attending Lincoln Trail College. In designing the new methods for student services, it was identified that additional services could be provided at the GED and ABE level to guide these students into additional educational endeavors such as transfer as well as career and technical degrees and certificates. With this criteria and goal in mind, several elements were created such as hiring a Retention Specialist Coordinator to further extend the students services offered by various departments as well as continuing with the proven practices of a GED orientation day, Freshmen Orientation and program club mentoring activities. Since the inception of these services, GED and ABE completions have been increasing and the students have been successfully transitioning from these areas into the career and technical educational programs offered at Lincoln Trail College.

The purpose of the Adult Student Connections (ASC) Retention and Success Program at **Kishwaukee College** is to provide support services for special population students pursuing Career Technical Education

(CTE) certificates and degrees. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 defines special populations as single parents, single pregnant women, displaced homemakers, individuals with limited English proficiency, men and women pursuing training for nontraditional careers, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from economically disadvantaged families. The goal is to remove barriers that can cause a student to not complete their education. For example, the Adult Student Connections Program provides special population students with two free textbooks each semester through a Textbook Loan Program, monthly mileage reimbursement, a bus pass, and monthly childcare stipends. In addition, students meet regularly with the ASC Coordinator for counseling and goal setting. The objective of the program is to retain students to college completion. There is evidence of a growing number of special population students being served through the Adult Student Connections Program during fiscal year 2010 through 2013, particularly female single parents. Female single parents comprised of approximately 50 percent of the special population students who received services through the program during fiscal year 2010 through 2013.

*The new Belleville Success Center at Southwestern Illinois College provides students a very high-tech/high-touch environment for learning. Between fiscal years 2012 and 2013, there was a 51 percent increase in the unduplicated number of student veterans visiting the Success Center, a 30 percent increase in visits for all services, and a 33 percent increase in visits for academic assistance.*

The mission of the Success Centers is to supplement and enhance classroom instruction by assisting students in developing the skills and strategies they need to become confident, independent, and active learners. The Success Centers provide the academic support many students need to be successful in their classes, retained to the next semester and ultimately to complete a degree and/or certificate. **Southwestern Illinois College** opened the first two Success Centers in fall 2000. Due to their high usage and overwhelming success, these two centers were moved into a new facility in January 2013. This new facility is fifty percent larger than the combined

size of the original two centers. The new Belleville Success Center provides students a very high-tech/high-touch environment for learning. The center is divided into five academic zones: biology, English/liberal arts, business, math, and physical science. Each area houses one or two specialists, tutoring tables, and computers. The components of the Success Center include tutoring (both face-to face and web-based), computer access, online writing lab, and Project Success early alert system. The data show that the expanded Success Center is a resource that underrepresented groups, including minorities, females, students with disabilities, and veterans, are utilizing for academic support. For example, the number of veterans utilizing the Success Center services increased significantly between fiscal years 2012 and 2013. Specifically, there was a 51 percent increase in the unduplicated number of student veterans visiting the Success Center, a 30 percent increase in visits for all services, and a 33 percent increase in visits for academic assistance.

Through the Higher Learning Center, which opened in September 2013 in Hoopston, Illinois, **Danville Area Community College** provides greater access to higher education. The Center is designed to reduce geographic disparities in educational attainment, instill the need for higher education in the surrounding communities, and provide prescriptive resources to the high number of under-resourced students including Hispanic and female populations. Educational opportunities such as GED classes, English-as-a-Second-Language instruction, general education credit, dual credit, community education classes, and comprehensive student services are conveniently available through the center. Hiring a full-time director for the center and a part-time office assistant has allowed the center to be a one-stop shop for area residents. The comprehensive services provided include course/program information; registration; connecting students to advising, career services, and financial aid experts from campus; online

course assistance; and general student support and encouragement.

In September 2013, **Wabash Valley College** (WVC) opened the Learning Lab, a tutoring division of the Academic Assistance Center (AAC). The AAC has always offered free student tutoring by individual appointment; however, The Learning Lab was created to increase retention and completion by being available Monday-Friday all day and early evening offering tutoring to students on a walk-in basis. Students need no appointment to visit The Learning Lab and can have instant assistance with any content area. The Learning Lab seeks to provide students with supplemental instruction across the content areas in a convenient easily accessible way. The Learning Lab provides 30-60 minute course specific one-on-one or group tutoring sessions by appointment or walk-in, walk-in sessions for quick assistance, a writing lab for assistance with revision and editing of academic essays, MLA/APA/CMS assistance, skill building sessions for assistance with remedial coursework, COMPASS/TEAS test review sessions, and classroom tutors for assistance inside the actual remedial classroom. Dual credit and non-dual credit high school students are also assisted in WVC's Learning Lab. These students visit the lab to seek assistance with various high school and/or college dual credit level coursework in the late afternoon and early evening hours. These students are introduced and become comfortable with the WVC campus and learning environment each time they visit the lab. Since the opening of the lab, eighty percent of the students who received tutoring completed the course in which they were seeking tutoring in the fall of 2013.

The Goal of the **Harry S. Truman College** Transfer Center, which opened in the fall 2012, is to enhance student success by providing comprehensive transfer services to empower students to achieve their transfer goals and eventual career objectives by identifying, contacting, and providing transfer support services to student populations with emphasis placed on serving underrepresented students. The Transfer Center aims at building partnerships and collaborations with other colleges and universities to help students explore transfer opportunities. The Transfer Center provides resources and advising services including one-on-one student appointments dedicated to filling out and editing applications for admission, transfer advising and exploration, helping students obtain and send transcripts, working on application securing student application fee waivers, organizing college tours, organizing and planning for transfer fairs, building partnerships with four year institutions, providing student workshops on the transfer process, and visiting classrooms to encourage students to visit the Transfer Center and to begin thinking about and planning for the transfer process. The Transfer Center reaches out to students using GradesFirst, Truman College's student outreach and tracking program.

The Agree to Degree Campaign, Priority Advising, and Check in for Success are initiatives at **Moraine Valley Community College** (MVCC) that have enhanced student services and improved the college's graduation and retention rates. The Campus-wide Agree to Degree Campaign, which was implemented in spring 2011, informs students of the values of degree completion. The campaign was implemented in every college level course to actively engage learners to commit to complete their college degree or certificate by signing an individualized commitment pledge. All college staff members also signed an Agree to Degree banner that committed them to assist in the educational efforts of students by providing support and mentorship. Priority advising, which was implemented in fall 2012 by the Academic Advising Office, assists MVCC's students with course enrollment so they meet degree and certification requirements and

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assists MVCC's students with course enrollment so they meet degree and certification requirements and

avoid last minute planning and long registration waiting times. Check in for Success, which was implemented in fall 2012 by the Center for Disability Services, serves students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access for students and to promote student independence and academic success. Students in the Check in for Success program met weekly with an educational case manager to review current academic performance and to troubleshoot academic challenges.

*Orientation courses for entering freshmen*

*The purpose of the First Year Seminars (FYS) at Carl Sandburg College is to help the student understand the expectations of college courses, facilitate a successful transition for first time students, and teach valuable study skills needed to be successful in college course.. In the fall of 2012, the students that completed the FYS sessions were retained at 4.5 percent higher rate than the student who did not take the FYS session. In the spring of 2013, the rate was 15 percent higher.*

The purpose of the First Year Seminars (FYS) implemented for fall 2012 and spring 2013 semesters at **Carl Sandburg College** is to help the student understand the expectations of college courses, facilitate a successful transition for first time students, and teach valuable study skills needed to be successful in college courses. Topics for the sessions include academic success, personal growth and self-management and campus/community resources and involvement. All first-time full-time students who enroll in the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Fine Arts degrees are required to attend the FYS sessions. The FYS sessions meet for one hour per week for 16 weeks with approximately 20 students per section. There is no tuition charged to the student for the First Year Seminar. The First Year Seminars are conducted as a pass/fail. The student must attend at minimum of 60 percent of the sessions (10 out of 16 sessions) to be

considered as passing. If the student does not attend 60 percent of the sessions, the student will be required to repeat the FYS the following semester. In the fall of 2012, the students that completed the FYS sessions were retained at 4.5 percent higher rate than the student who did not take the FYS session. In the spring of 2013, the rate was 15 percent higher.

The purpose of the Counseling and Student Development (CSD) 100 college experience course offered at **Kishwaukee College** is to assist students in making a successful transition into the college experience. Students are exposed to key academic terms, policies, and resources that foster student engagement and promote academic success. Topics include: exposure to college culture and expectations, setting goals, career and college planning, time management, study strategies, utilizing campus resources, diversity, self-reflection, and motivation. Of the 52 students who enrolled in the CSD 100 course during the fall of 2013, 28 students (54 percent) identified as African-American. Overall, African-American students who enrolled in the CSD 100 course had a higher rate of success [earning at least a C or better in a class], a higher retention rate [abstain from withdrawing from a class], and a lower failure rate in their classes in comparison to both a control group of African-Americans students and the overall number of African-American students who enrolled in classes for credit during the fall of 2013. African-American students enrolled in the CSD 100 had one of the highest persistence rates of all ethnicity categories in both the control group and overall total population of students enrolled in the fall of 2013.

In order to increase the retention of all degree seeking students, **Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC)** instituted a mandatory orientation and First Year Experience (FYE) class for all new degree seeking students in 2013. With 60 percent of SVCC's current students being female, 12 percent being Hispanic or African American, and about 3 percent of students reporting disabilities, these programs will dramatically affect these underrepresented groups. The first orientation session was held in June, 2013 and the first FYE

*Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC) instituted a mandatory orientation and First Year Experience (FYE) class for all new degree seeking students in 2013.*

class was taught in August, 2013. Retention experts have indicated that orientation and FYE would only be effective if it were made mandatory. The orientation sessions last four hours and introduce students to the campus and key college personnel. The First Year Experience course exposes students, in their first semester at SVCC, to a number of important topics that would help them persist at the college including academic and career planning, study skills, appreciating diversity, time management, and note taking skills. The classes run the entire length of a

semester. A strong emphasis was placed on the recruitment of instructional faculty to purposely strengthen relationships between students and faculty.

OCS 121, Overview of College Success, is a college level course for students taught by counseling faculty at **South Suburban College** that covers the skills for college success, career development assessment, and includes extensive help in academic course planning. The student's master academic plan is completed as a requirement. Career and personality assessments are used to assist the student in the career planning/decision making process. A pre-test and post-test, assessing students' knowledge of general education requirements and the college's academic student policies are given to students during the course. Beginning in the spring 2011, counseling faculty engaged in the development of online sections of the OCS 121 course to provide additional options for students who benefit from this expanded option of online instruction. In 2013, the Student Development division has engaged in renovations of the college's OCS 121 classrooms to provide improved technology access and comfort to students. Smart board technology was added along with the addition of eighteen new computer stations, an instructional computer technology station, carpeting, and furniture.

#### Scholarships, Financial aid, and financial counseling

The Peoria Promise initiative launched in the fall semester of 2008 is a community based initiative modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise, which pledges to pay up to 100 percent of tuition at any of Michigan's state colleges or universities for graduates of the public high schools of Kalamazoo, Michigan. The Peoria Promise is very similar whereas graduates of public high schools within the city of Peoria, Illinois may have up to 100 percent of their tuition paid at **Illinois Central College** (ICC).

*The Peoria Promise initiative at Illinois Central College pledges to pay up to 100 percent of tuition for graduates of public high schools within the city of Peoria.*

The mission of Peoria Promise is to "support economic development by increasing the number of high school graduates who live in the city of Peoria and complete a college or vocational program, thereby delivering a more skilled workforce" (<http://peoriapromise.org/thepromise.html>). Minorities represented the largest demographic of students served by the initiative.

Since August 2003, **Kaskaskia College** has offered assistance to economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a Career and Technical program through Perkins grant. In order to qualify for the assistance, students must first successfully complete the Federal Application for Student Financial Assistance (FASFA) in the financial aid office at Kaskaskia College. The assistance for economically disadvantaged Career and Technical education students is implemented only if their Pell Award is exhausted. The assistance varies from transportation allowances, bus passes, textbook reimbursement, and day care assistance to numerous other financial needs that a student may need assistance for. Students must achieve a 2.0 or higher GPA and complete at least seventy-five percent of the coursework to be able to receive

additional assistance. Over the past three years, the economic assistance for the economically disadvantaged at Kaskaskia College has provided an additional \$30,000 in financial assistance to students who had financial obligations that were not fully covered by the Pell grant.

Student surveys to determine the factors prohibiting completion of educational goals often cite financial constraints as a key factor. The purpose of the Individualized Financial Aid Counseling Appointments initiative at **Triton College** is to promote knowledge of the financial aid process, encourage students to better understand and take responsibility for their educational funding, and increase the number of financial aid files completed prior to the start of the semester. This initiative, which was conducted in April through June of 2013, provided students with proactive one-on-one counseling with their financial aid advisors well in advance of the start of the semester. Students who participated in the counseling sessions were contacted to complete a survey in order to assess the value of the activity and inform potential revisions. Forty-three students completed the survey. All 43 students who completed the survey found the counseling session with their financial aid advisor helpful.

#### Collaborative efforts

The purpose of the InVOLVe project, which was implemented in fiscal year 2013, is to identify potential methods in which **John A. Logan College** (JALC) can utilize collaborative efforts among various professional departments and academic departments in the successful implementation of student-retention strategies. The following actions that were designed for student success have also an impact on student enrollment: Enforcing the JALC's academic progress policy, reducing the number of late registration days to only the first and second days of the semester, and implementing a new payment plan requiring students to make payment arrangements at the beginning of the semester instead of the college carrying their debt through the entire semester. This has resulted in the reduction of students manipulating the financial aid system. JALC's initial fall 2012 cohort of students had a one-year retention rate of 47.7 percent. This was an increase from the fall 2011 rate of 45.1 percent.

*Academic and Transfer Advising Case Management Model was implemented at **Wilbur Wright College** in fall 2012 to foster degree or certificate completion by providing students with a single point of contact who is knowledgeable of the students' academic program and history. Degree and certificate completion in fiscal year 2013 was the highest the college has seen in recent years.*

Academic and Transfer Advising Case Management Model was implemented at **Wilbur Wright College** in fall 2012 to foster degree or certificate completion by providing students with a single point of contact who is knowledgeable of the students' academic program and history. The case management model is comprised of several components intended to stress the importance of advising and program completion. These include new student orientation and campus-wide completion campaign, assignments of students to a respective advisor and GradesFirst communication tool, education/transfer plan/degree audits, close monitoring toward completion, and campus-wide graduation campaign. In the first year of the project, the college witnessed a 17.1 percent increase in the number of degrees awarded. In fiscal year 2013 the college awarded 861 degrees compared to 735 in fiscal year 2012. The college also saw increased certificate completion during the same time period. Between fiscal years 2012 and 2013 the number of advanced and basic certificates awarded increased from 1,497 to 1,631 (9.0 percent). Degree and certificate completion in fiscal year 2013 was the highest the college has seen in recent years.

The purpose of the Senate Committee on Associate Faculty at **John Wood Community College (JWCC)** is to provide an avenue for associate faculty to share their knowledge with full-time faculty and have full-time faculty share theirs with associate faculty. The Senate Committee on Associate Faculty officially began to meet in February 2013. The associate faculty members of JWCC play a vital role in the education of students. Since it is not financially feasible to have the number of full-time faculty necessary to teach all of the classes provided at JWCC, dozens of associate faculty are employed to teach classes and subjects for which full-time faculty are unavailable. Associate faculty members bring experience and knowledge from their work outside of JWCC; experience and knowledge that are beneficial to students. Topics discussed at the regular meetings of the standing committee have included student engagement, associate faculty orientation, academic dishonesty, safety and security, professional development, encouraging associate faculty involvement in faculty and campus activities, and communication. Continued discussion will occur to keep communication ongoing between full-time and associate faculty, which in turn will benefit student learning and success.

A new Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan has been implemented at **Rend Lake College** to help assist and direct retention efforts within the institution. A cross-section of six college professionals from Career Technical Education, Applied Science Education and Liberal Arts, as well as staff from Marketing, Admissions and Upward Bound (TRiO) advisement formed an Enrollment Planning Committee (EPC). This committee reports directly to the college president and is chaired by the Dean of Admissions and Enrollment Management. The EPC is in charge of developing and implementation of effective strategies for expanding opportunities for non-traditional students, leveraging student financial aid and scholarships, establishing a service standard that will meet or exceed student's expectations, and acting as a conduit to the President's Cabinet that students can use for expression of concerns or ideas. In order to accomplish these tasks the committee holds monthly meetings to discuss opportunities to best serve the students of the college. Ultimately, the creation of the SEM plan and the accompanying committee will ensure that SEM becomes a part of the overall strategic planning process of Rend Lake College. This effort will centralize the feedback and information obtained through the process, and will ensure that SEM is a major part of the college's path forward.

**Harold Washington College** implemented the Program Pathways and Focus Areas initiative, which is used by advisors and students to schedule courses in a block to prevent students from taking any additional courses that are not necessary for transfer or degree conferral. Students of various backgrounds, for example Mathematics, English, Psychology and Student Success, are coupled together in a learning community cohort. This cohort module provides students with a sense of community so that they can develop study groups. It also provides a sense of belonging to Harold Washington College. Also, students are asked to select an area of focus on their degree plan so they can be targeted with scholarships, internships, and specialized communications that meet their career goals. The preliminary data shows that students are retained at higher level in the learning community. From the fall 2013 semester to the spring 2014 semester, retention of continuing students at Harold Washington College was up by eight percent.

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Degree audits

The purpose of the Completion initiative, which was implemented in spring 2012 at **Richard J. Daley College**, is to track and monitor the completion of all students, particularly the IPEDS cohorts, via case management, complete degree audits for students with 45 or more college credits, reach out to students near completion who have not registered for class, regardless of their last date of enrollment, and increase the number of certificate offerings. As a result of the completion initiative, between 2009 and 2013, there has been a 59 percent increase in students earning credentials of economic value.

In 2011, the **College of DuPage** (COD) upgraded the student data base system to include certificate audit capability. This procedure not only identifies potential certificate and degree program completers or near completers, but automatically awards the credential to the students even if they had not officially declared the certificate as their academic program. Because of its success, COD further enhanced the audit program to include the identification of associate degrees as well. Consequently, in fiscal year 2013, the college implemented the degree and certificate audit against most of its programs and identified potential graduates. Students who were identified were then verified by the Records and Grades staff as meeting the completion requirements, awarded the specific credential and then notified through the mail through a letter of congratulations on their degree or certificate completion. The elimination of the graduation petition process has resulted in the awarding of certificates and degrees to students who may not have received them otherwise because they were unaware of their completions. With the full institutional implementation in fiscal year 2013, the College increased the number of credentials by 43 percent with a good distribution against all racial groups and an increase in Hispanic representation.

Requiring a minimum GPA to enroll in an online course

To address the gap between online and face-to-face course success rates, **Lewis & Clark Community College** charged the Technology Enhanced Learning Committee (TELC) to investigate policy-based strategies, as opposed to instructional-based strategies, for increasing the success rate of students taking online courses. In January 2011, the TELC recommended that any student enrolling in an online course must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.7 to enroll in an online course. New students without a college GPA will not be allowed to enroll in an online course until they have established a cumulative GPA of 2.7 or better after their first semester of enrollment. In academic year 2012, the online success rate actually exceeded the face-to-face success rate by one percent. In 2013, online and face-to-face success rates were both 76 percent.

Online course for incarcerated students

**Kaskaskia College** implemented the Distance Learning Program at the Centralia Correctional Center in July 2012. The Distance Learning Program allows for inmates to earn college credit that is in addition to their vocational program offered by the college and can be applied toward their pursuit of an associate's degree. Coursework and lectures are broadcast live via interactive television from Kaskaskia's main campus or education centers. The courses that have been offered through the distance learning program include Math 101, Technical Math 119, Spanish 101 and 102, and Sociology 101. Due to the lack of state

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funding, the college funds the purchase of the textbooks for each course, as well as employs a ‘course facilitator’ who acts as the in class liaison between the students and the instructor on main campus. So far, each program has achieved one hundred percent maximum enrollment since the inception. The completion rate of each class is approximately ninety percent. Students who complete these general electives have expressed interested in taking more distance learning classes, with the overall goal of completing enough general electives to earn an Associate’s Degree from Kaskaskia College. Students now have the opportunity to earn general elective coursework that can be coupled with the vocational credit they have earned and applied towards a degree.

*Reverse transfer credit procedure*

In 2012, **Waubonsee Community College** (WCC) signed a reverse transfer agreement with Northern Illinois University (NIU) in which students who transferred to NIU from WCC without receiving their associate degree may qualify to complete this degree while attending NIU by transferring credits back to WCC. The program was implemented in spring 2013 and is related to the Project Graduation initiative, which is designed to increase the number of WCC graduates. During that semester twelve students submitted the agreement form and through their participation four students received associate degrees. Of the remaining eight students, all but one needed one more additional class at NIU to receive their WCC degree. Subsequent semesters have seen an increase in these numbers. In 2013, administrators from both WCC and NIU presented at the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Officers and Scaling Up Conferences on “Implementing a Successful Reverse Transfer Credit Procedure,” highlighting the importance of the reverse transfer agreement as students who complete an associate degree are more likely to complete a bachelor’s degree

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