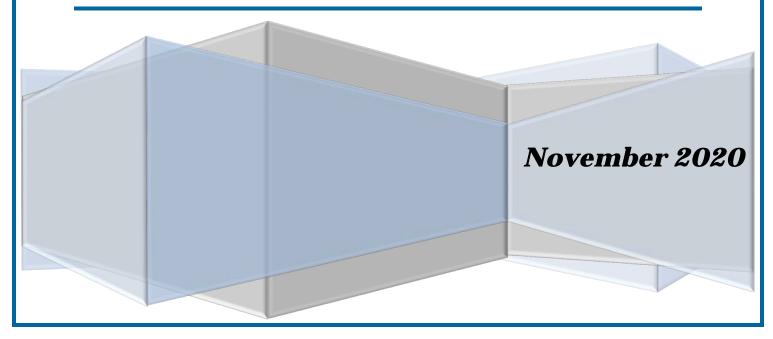# FISCAL YEAR 2019
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

FOCUS AREA:
INCREASING GRADUATION RATES
AND
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

November 2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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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 permanent resident aliens who are minorities, including African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaskan Native, women, and persons with disabilities. On January 1, 2012, the definition was expanded to include first-generation college students, described as the first in their immediate family to attend an institution of higher education (Public Act 097-0588). Through the Underrepresented Groups Report, community colleges have an opportunity to report on initiatives and strategies aimed at increasing participation and achievement among minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and first-generation students. Underrepresented Groups Report production is an important annual statutory responsibility (Public Act 099-0143) for community colleges and universities. Each community college provides a report detailing current activities and programs aimed at strengthening participation and progress among traditionally underrepresented student populations. Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) staff members summarize the information provided by the individual colleges and forward it to officials from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) who combine it with responses from the public universities and forward it to the Governor and General Assembly.

This year's report begins with an overview of the demographic characteristics of community college students, completers, and faculty. External comparative information is referenced where available. The next portion of the report explores the current year's focus topic: *Increasing Graduation Rates and Closing the Achievement Gap.*

Illinois community colleges are open-access and multi-purpose institutions that seek to prepare both traditional college-age students and nontraditional students for further education and the workforce. A number of student success measures can be applied to community college students. Graduation rates, for example, is a success measure that informs how colleges are performing in their efforts to graduate individuals who begin their studies pursuing a traditional full-time enrollment pattern. The consequence of using the federal formula of calculating graduation rates, which only includes first-time, full-time students who graduate within 150 percent of catalog program time, is that many community college students are excluded from this calculation. As a result, students who continue their studies on a part-time basis, those who transfer to four-year colleges before receiving an associate degree, and those that received courses to directly compete in the workforce before graduation, are not included in the rate. Furthermore, many high school graduates who come from low-income families or are first-generation college goers may encounter life circumstances, such as financial constraints, transportation and child care needs, that can hinder their goal to graduate within a traditional timeframe. Therefore, incorporated are other student success measures, including advancement rates and adjusted retention rates that more accurately reflect the overall quality of student learning and intellectual involvement; how well integrated students are in campus life; and how effectively a campus delivers what students expect and need based on their specific education goals. Measures of success within this report reflect graduation, transfer, and retention. Summaries of strategies for increasing graduation rates and closing the achievement gap through services, programs, or initiatives that positively impact

student performance at selected community colleges are featured in the second half of this year's report.

Illinois Community College System demographic data on credit students are gathered through the Annual Enrollment and Completion Data (A1 & A2) submissions. These data illustrate that Illinois community colleges serve a broad cross-section of the general population. Census data are provided when possible to offer an external reference point for reviewing the enrollment, completion, and staffing data. Additional analyses about the race/ethnicity distribution of community college credit students for selected broad program areas (PCS) are included. Additional sources of data for this report come from Fall Student Enrollment (E1) Data (Tables 8 & 9) and Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data (Tables 10 & 11).

Disability Status

During fiscal year 2019, Illinois community colleges served 17,950 students with disabilities (3.6 percent of all credit enrollments). This figure represents the number of individuals (unduplicated) who self-identified their disability status through the Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Submission. The majority of students with disabilities (N = 16,277) used supportive services offered by colleges. Only one out of ten students with disabilities (N = 1,673) did not use supportive services during fiscal year 2019.

Based on the underlined count of students with disabilities who self-reported and used supportive services, specific disabilities identified were learning, including ADHD, (56.5 percent of reported disabilities); auditory (2.6 percent); medical, including acquired brain injury and systemic/chronic health problems, (9.7 percent); mobility (3.1 percent); psychological (23.7 percent); visual (2.0 percent); and other, including speech/language impairment, deaf-blind, and developmental, (2.4 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 90.8 percent of reported disabilities. Of those services used, based on unduplicated count, more than one-half (56.5 percent) were used by students with learning disabilities, including ADHD (2019 Student Disability Table).

Census figures show a substantial number of Illinoisans with disabilities. In the 2019 Illinois census estimate, among Illinois' civilian non-institutionalized population, 5.8 percent between 18 and 34 years of age and 11.0 percent between 35 and 64 years of age had a disability. Nearly one fourth (24.5 percent) of the Illinois population age 16 and over with disabilities was employed (2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Table S1810 and S1811).

Gender

The overall Male/Female distribution of students in the Illinois Community College System typically fluctuates little from year to year. Females comprised 54.0 percent of the student

population in fiscal year 2019. The percentage of Male students has averaged 46.6 percent over the past five years. Census data show little change in the proportion of Females in Illinois with 50.9 percent estimated in 2019 versus 51.0 percent in 2010 and 2000 (ICCB FY 2019 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report, U.S. Census 2000 Illinois, U.S. Census 2010, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Table S0101). From 2015 to 2019, the number of Female students completing degree programs decreased 14.2 percent, while the number of Female students enrolled in Illinois community college credit courses decreased 17.6 percent (ICCB FY 2015 and FY 2019 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report).

Age

The average age of Illinois community college credit students was 27.9 years in fiscal year 2019, which is a slight decrease from fiscal year 2018 (28.2). The median age was 22.7 years in fiscal year 2019, which is also lower than the previous year (23.0). According to the 2019 population estimates, the median age of all Illinoisans was estimated to be 38.6 years. The latest census estimates also show that over three-quarters (77.8 percent) of all Illinoisans were 18 years of age or above (ICCB FY 2019 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report and 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Table S0101).

State of Illinois' Race/Ethnicity Distribution

State census data show that Illinois' population was 12.67 million in 2019 compared to 12.83 million in 2010, and 12.42 million in 2000 (U.S. Census 2000 Illinois, U.S. Census 2010, enter Illinois, and 2020 Index of Need Table 1). These detailed Illinois census data indicate that the state's population grew 2.0 percent between 2000 and 2019. The state population, however, decreased 1.2 percent between 2010 and 2019. Illinois' 2019 census estimate shows that Whites/Caucasians remained the largest race/ethnicity group. However, minority populations were responsible for Illinois' overall population growth from 2000 to 2019, as the percent of Caucasians decreased from 73.5 percent to 70.9 percent of the population (U.S. Census 2000 Illinois and 2020 Index of Need Table 1).

The race/ethnicity data collection methodology changed for the 2000 census and continued in the 2019 census data. The 2019 census data showed that 2.1 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 2019 data in the table. These duplicated Hispanic/Latino population counts show substantial growth, from 1,530,262 in 2000 to 2,219,882 in 2019 (U.S. Census 2000 Illinois and 2020 Index of Need Table 1).

Illinois' largest minority group in 2000 was African American and in 2019 was Hispanic/Latino. Compared to 2000, African American counts in 2019 decreased from 15.1 percent to 14.6 percent, whereas Asian American counts increased from 3.4 percent to 6.0 percent, Native American from 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent, and Hispanic/Latino from 12.3 percent to 17.5 percent.

Table 1
State of Illinois Race/Ethnicity Distribution (Census)

	White/ Caucasian	African American	Asian* American	Native American	Some Other Race**	Hispanic/Latino*** (Duplicated)
2000	73.5%	15.1%	3.4%	0.2%	7.7%	12.3%
2010	71.5%	14.5%	4.6%	0.3%	9.0%	15.8%
2019	70.9%	14.6%	6.0%	0.6%	8.0%	17.5%

*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 & 2020 Index of Need, Table 1.

Race/Ethnicity Distribution in Community College System Credit Programs

Overall in fiscal year 2019, minority students accounted for 46.7 percent of the individuals enrolled in credit coursework at Illinois community colleges whose ethnicity was known. Race/ethnicity classifications are aligned with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards. Fiscal year 2019 data show that minority representation was

Students identifying themselves as Hispanic/Latino—117,542 in fiscal year 2019—accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments in the Illinois Community College System.

similar to the prior year (fiscal year 2018 = 45.4 percent). Fiscal year 2019 results are above the five-year average (44.2 percent). Students identifying themselves as Hispanic/Latino students—117,542 in fiscal year 2019—became the largest minority group in 2000, but became the second largest minority group in fiscal year 2012 behind African American students. In fiscal years 2013 through 2019, Hispanic/Latino students were again the largest minority group. African American students—64,178 in fiscal year 2019—constitute the second largest minority group in the latest data. The fiscal year 2019 proportionate representation by Hispanic/Latino students was higher by about one percentage point in comparison to the prior year (24.5 percent in fiscal year 2019 versus 23.4 percent in fiscal year 2018), while the proportional representation by African American students was slightly lower in comparison to the prior year (13.4 percent in fiscal year 2019 versus 13.5 percent in fiscal year 2018). Over the longer term—over the past five years—a decrease in the Illinois Community College System's minority enrollments was noted among students identifying themselves as Pacific Islander (-74.0 percent), Native American (-61.5 percent), African American (-30.9 percent), and Asian American (-13.7 percent), while an increase was noted among students identifying themselves as Nonresident Alien (55.9 percent) and Hispanic/Latino (1.5 percent).

Student race/ethnicity representation varies across broad program areas (PCS). For example, Table 2 contains information about the distribution of Adult Education [Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE)] and English as a Second Language (ESL) enrollments. Minority students accounted for nearly three-fourths (71.8 percent) of the individuals enrolled in community college Adult Education coursework. In fiscal year 2019, Hispanic/Latino students accounted for nearly forty percent of Adult Education enrollments and African American students for over one-fourth of those enrollments (39.9 percent and 26.4 percent, respectively). Additionally, minority students accounted for about eight out of every ten (80.8 percent) individuals enrolled in community college ESL coursework during fiscal year 2019.

Hispanic/Latino students accounted for nearly two-thirds (62.3 percent) of the community college ESL students, followed by Asian American students (10.9 percent) and African American students (5.5 percent).

Table 2
Fiscal Year 2019 Minority Students Enrolled in Adult Education
and English as a Second Language Programs

Program	African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian American	Nonresident Alien	Native American	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Minority Subtotal
ABE/ASE %	26.4%	39.9%	3.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	1.0%	71.8%
Number	5,734	8,670	792	87	69	32	216	15,600
ESL %	5.5%	62.3%	10.9%	1.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	80.8%
Number	1,632	18,468	3,239	515	17	31	50	23,952

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

Table 3 provides the distribution of minority students enrolled in the two largest program areas, Transfer and Career and Technical Education (CTE). During fiscal year 2019, minorities comprised nearly one-half (45.3 percent) Transfer enrollees. An examination of each minority group's race/ethnicity representation across the Transfer program area indicates that Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest minority group enrollments (22.6 percent), followed by African American students (12.7 percent), Asian American students (5.4 percent), students of Two or More Races (3.2 percent), Nonresident Alien students (1.0 percent), Native American students (0.2 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). Table 3 also shows that more than one-third of students enrolled in CTE programs were members of a minority group (36.7 percent). Hispanic/Latino students also had the highest representation among minorities in CTE programs and accounted for 17.9 percent of the population. African American students had the second largest CTE program enrollment (11.7 percent), followed by Asian American students (4.0 percent), students of Two or More Races (2.1 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.6 percent), Native American students (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent).

Table 3
Fiscal Year 2019 Minority Students Enrolled in Transfer
and Career and Technical Education Programs

Program	African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian American	Nonresident Alien	Native American	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Minority Subtotal
Transfer %	12.7%	22.6%	5.4%	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%	3.2%	45.3%
Number	32,526	57,769	13,902	2,511	569	214	8,173	115,664
CTE %	11.7%	17.9%	4.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	2.1%	36.7%
Number	15,024	22,911	5,120	716	332	119	2,732	46,954

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

First-Generation College Students

Students whose parents did not attend college are at a disadvantage when it comes to postsecondary access. First-generation college students who managed to

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

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 2015 through fiscal year 2019) on first-generation college student enrollments. Fiscal year 2019 first-generation college student enrollment decreased by 3.5 percent compared to last year and decreased by 18.2 percent compared to fiscal year 2015. The overall enrollments continue to decline. Four out of ten students (40.1 percent) in the Illinois Community College System were first-generation college students in fiscal year 2019.

Table 4
First-Generation College Student Enrollment in the Illinois Community College System
Fiscal Years 2015-2019

	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
First-Generation College Student Enrollment	245,088	213,101	217,873	207,794	200,555	-3.5%	-18.2%
Annual Enrollment	620,191	597,290	553,174	519,387	500,477	-3.6%	-19.3%
Enrollment Rate of First-Gen. College Students	**39.5%**	**35.7%**	**39.4%**	**40.0%**	**40.1%**		

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

Credential Attainment

The following section of the report supplies information about the race/ethnicity characteristics of students who graduated in fiscal year 2019. Table 5 provides a point-in-time or cross-cutting count of the <u>number</u> of degrees and certificates awarded to minority students within the Illinois Community College System during fiscal year 2019. Table 6 provides a comparison of fiscal year 2015 through fiscal year 2019 completions in the Illinois Community College System by race/ethnicity.

Across all minority groups in 2019, CTE program graduates far outnumbered Transfer program graduates. Table 5 shows that during fiscal year 2019, nearly twice as many CTE degrees and certificates (N = 14,289) were completed than Transfer degrees (N = 8,280) by minority students. However, minority students accounted for 41.0

> *Nearly twice as many CTE degrees and certificates were completed than Transfer degrees by minority students during fiscal year 2019.*

percent of all Transfer graduates, compared to 36.5 percent of CTE graduates. Hispanic/Latino students accounted for the largest minority group for completions in CTE programs (17.7 percent), followed by African American students (11.7 percent), Asian American students (3.9 percent), students of Two or More Races (2.1 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.7 percent), Native American students (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). The fiscal year 2019 proportional representation of the Hispanic/Latino CTE program graduates (17.7 percent) was higher by 0.8 percentage points from fiscal year 2018 (16.9 percent). Hispanic/Latino students also accounted for the largest group of Transfer minority graduates (22.9 percent) followed by African

American students (9.4 percent), Asian American students (4.6 percent), students of Two or More Races (2.7 percent), Nonresident Alien students (1.1 percent), Native American students (0.2 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.1 percent). The fiscal year 2019 proportional representation of the Hispanic/Latino Transfer graduates (22.9 percent) was higher by 1.1 percentage points from the prior year (21.8 percent).

Table 5
Fiscal Year 2019 Minority Student Completers in
Transfer and Career and Technical Education Programs

Program	African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian American	Nonresident Alien	Native American	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Minority Subtotal
Transfer %	9.4%	22.9%	4.6%	1.1%	0.2%	0.1%	2.7%	41.0%
Number	1,901	4,623	923	216	50	16	551	8,280
CTE %	11.7%	17.7%	3.9%	0.7%	0.3%	0.1%	2.1%	36.5%
Number	4,592	6,917	1,536	263	107	39	835	14,289

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

The number of collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded to Illinois community college students in fiscal year 2019 totaled 62,242. More than one-third (38.4 percent) of all degrees and certificates in fiscal year 2019 were awarded to minority students (nonwhite) whose race/ethnicity was known. Compared to last year, there was an increase in minority completions among Nonresident Alien students (11.0 percent), students of Two or More Races (10.1 percent), Asian American students (2.7 percent), and Hispanic/Latino students (0.3 percent). Decreases in completions were noted for Native American students (-16.2 percent), Pacific Islander students (-9.7 percent), and African American students (-2.0 percent) since last year. Compared to fiscal year 2015, the total number of minority completers decreased 2.6 percent.

Table 6
Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Race/Ethnicity
Fiscal Years 2015-2019

Race/Ethnicity	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
African American	10,283	9,218	7,728	7,093	6,951	-2.0%	-32.4%
Hispanic/Latino	10,036	11,209	11,506	12,145	12,181	0.3%	21.4%
Asian American	3,278	2,795	2,538	2,521	2,589	2.7%	-21.0%
Nonresident Alien	384	372	477	462	513	11.0%	33.6%
Native American	362	187	157	197	165	-16.2%	-54.4%
Pacific Islander	202	112	72	62	56	-9.7%	-72.3%
Two or More Races	--	1,237	1,350	1,330	1,464	10.1%	--
Minority Subtotal	24,545	25,130	23,828	23,810	23,919	0.5%	-2.6%
Unknown	2,688	2,477	1,843	1,811	1,626	-10.2%	-39.5%
White	44,554	42,852	40,472	39,050	36,697	-6.0%	-17.6%

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

Table 7 contains trend data (fiscal year 2015 through fiscal year 2019) on student completers by gender. During fiscal year 2019, just more than half of degrees and certificates were earned by females (53.4 percent). The number of male completers decreased 3.9 percent, and the number of female completers decreased 3.6 percent compared to the previous fiscal year. When compared to fiscal year 2015, the number of male completers decreased 12.3 percent, and the number of female completers decreased 14.2 percent.

Table 7
Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Gender
Fiscal Years 2015-2019

Gender	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
Male	33,077	32,911	30,590	30,188	29,014	-3.9%	-12.3%
Female	38,710	37,548	35,553	34,483	33,228	-3.6%	-14.2%

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

Advancement Rate (Graduation/Transfer/Retention) by Race/Ethnicity
Community colleges urge students to complete their associate degrees prior to transferring to a four-year institution. Nationally, research suggests a higher completion rate for those that receive their credential from a two-year college (Baccalaureate Attainment: A National View of the Postsecondary Outcomes of Students Who Transfer from Two-Year to Four-Year Institutions). Still a substantial number of community college students generate a considerable number of credit hours but then transfer to a four-year institution prior to receiving the associate degree. The federal formula of calculating graduation rates does not include these transfer-outs prior to credential attainment, and thus negatively impacts community college outcomes. The student advancement rate provides a more comprehensive picture of the range of academic outcomes sought by community college students than the graduation rate, as it tracks community college students who either graduated, transferred to other higher education institutions, or were still enrolled at the end of the observation period.

Table 8 contains information on number and percent of first-time, full-time students at Illinois community colleges who graduated, transferred out, or were still enrolled within three years of entry by race/ethnicity. About every other minority student from the Fall 2016 cohort graduated, transferred out, or were still enrolled by Summer 2019 (56.1 percent) compared to about two in three White students (69.1 percent). Asian American students accounted for the highest advancement rate among minority students entering in Fall 2016 (75.4 percent), followed by Pacific Islander students (70.6 percent), students of Two or More Races (58.8 percent), Hispanic/Latino students (57.6 percent), Native American students (56.7 percent), Nonresident Alien students (48.0 percent), and African American students (46.8 percent).

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Table 8

First-Time, Full-Time Students Enrolling in Fall and Graduating, Transferring, or Still Enrolled within Three Years of Entry at Illinois Community Colleges

Fiscal Years 2014-2017

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Race/Ethnicity*	Fall 2013 Summer 2016	Fall 2014 Summer 2017	Fall 2015 Summer 2018	Fall 2016 Summer 2019
African American	2,049/ 4,603 44.5%	1,789/ 4,051 44.2%	1,634/ 3,496 46.7%	1,616/ 3,456 46.8%
Hispanic/Latino	3,201/ 5,571 57.5%	3,283/ 5,780 56.8%	3,555/ 6,180 57.5%	3,754/ 6,520 57.6%
Asian	697/ 919 75.8%	747/ 966 77.3%	782/ 1,040 75.2%	808/ 1,072 75.4%
Nonresident Alien	65/ 133 48.9%	75/ 157 47.8%	86/ 172 50.0%	85/ 177 48.0%
Native American	41/ 78 52.6%	32/ 64 50.0%	44/ 80 55.0%	38/ 67 56.7%
Pacific Islander	32/ 41 78.0%	26/ 44 59.1%	20/ 32 62.5%	24/ 34 70.6%
Two or More Races	418/ 708 59.0%	418/ 752 55.6%	502/ 847 59.3%	509/ 866 58.8%
Minority Subtotal	6,503/ 12,053 **54.0%**	6,370/ 11,814 **53.9%**	6,623/ 11,847 **55.9%**	6,834/ 12,192 **56.1%**
White	11,198/ 16,642 67.3%	10,610/ 15,536 68.3%	10,385/ 15,183 68.4%	10,231/ 14,803 69.1%

*Race/ethnicity classifications align with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards.
SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data, Fall Enrollment (E1) Data, and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)
Note: Table 8 of the FY 2019 Underrepresented Groups Report aligns with federal reporting for IPEDS. Prior reports used methodology developed by Complete College America (CCA).

Adjusted Retention Rate (Fall-to-Fall Retention or Graduation) by Race/Ethnicity

The adjusted retention rate metric tracks the number and percentage of entering degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who are retained from fall to fall or graduate within one year of entry. This metric reflects a more comprehensive perspective, since a variety of community college certificate programs can be completed within one year. First-year retention is particularly important since new students–especially recent high school graduates–need to successfully transition to college and the accompanying elevated academic and personal responsibility expectations.

Table 9 shows adjusted retention rates at Illinois community colleges within one year of entry. Three out of five minority first-time, full-time students enrolling in Fall 2018 at Illinois community colleges were retained or graduated in Fall 2019 (62.1 percent) compared to about five out of seven White students (70.1 percent). Pacific Islander students accounted for the highest fall-to-fall adjusted retention rate among minority students enrolling in Fall 2018 (78.3 percent), followed by Asian American students (77.8 percent), Hispanic/Latino students (67.0 percent), Nonresident

Alien students (66.5 percent), students of Two or More Races (61.7 percent), Native American students (57.4 percent), and African American students (46.2 percent).

Table 9
First-Time, Full-Time Students Enrolling in Fall and Being Retained or Graduating within One Year of Entry at Illinois Community Colleges
Fiscal Years 2015-2019

Race/ethnicity*	Fall 2014 Fall 2015	Fall 2015 Fall 2016	Fall 2016 Fall 2017	Fall 2017 Fall 2018	Fall 2018 Fall 2019
African American	1,585/ 4,050 39.1%	1,535/ 3,493 43.9%	1,574/ 3,456 45.5%	1,560/ 3,424 45.6%	1,482/ 3,209 46.2%
Hispanic/Latino	3,765/ 5,797 64.9%	4,097/ 6,180 66.3%	4,484/ 6,514 68.8%	4,673/ 6,898 67.7%	4,535/ 6,764 67.0
Asian	759/ 965 78.7%	810/ 1,042 77.7%	846/ 1,072 78.9%	820/ 1,004 81.7%	853/ 1,096 77.8%
Nonresident Alien	96/ 157 61.1%	100/ 172 58.1%	110/ 177 62.1%	147/ 224 65.6%	141/ 212 66.5%
Native American	42/ 64 65.6%	47/ 80 58.8%	33/ 67 49.3%	35/ 58 60.3%	27/ 47 57.4%
Pacific Islander	32/ 44 72.7%	21/ 32 65.6%	22/ 34 64.7%	14/ 22 63.6%	18/ 23 78.3%
Two or More Races	426/ 751 56.7%	519/ 847 61.3%	553/ 866 63.9%	532/ 885 60.1%	584/ 946 61.7%
Minority Subtotal	6,705/ 11,828 **56.7%**	7,129/ 11,846 **60.2%**	7,622/ 12,186 **62.5%**	7,781/ 12,515 **62.2%**	7,640/ 12,297 **62.1%**
White	10,548/ 15,535 67.9%	10,577/ 15,185 69.7%	10,323/ 14,798 69.8%	10,284/ 14,592 70.5%	9,754/ 13,920 70.1%

* Race/ethnicity classifications align with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards.
SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data, Fall Enrollment (E1) Data, and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)
Note: Table 9 of the FY 2019 Underrepresented Groups Report aligns with federal reporting for IPEDS. Prior reports used methodology developed by Complete College America (CCA).

Employee Diversity

Faculty, staff, administrators, and board members at each community college accept the responsibility of meeting the needs and demands of the area community and their constituents. To thrive in the competitive higher education marketplace, community colleges adopt a strong customer and community focus. Hence, 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.

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

Table 10
Fiscal Year 2019 Minority Faculty and Staff in Illinois Community Colleges

	Tenured Faculty/ Officials and Managers	Non-tenured Faculty	Professional Staff/ Protective Service Workers	Office and Clerical/Para-professionals	Service Maintenance
African American %	10.2%	8.0%	15.6%	15.6%	23.3%
Number	621	1,219	1,441*	637	618
Hispanic/Latino %	4.7%	4.4%	10.9%	12.1%	15.1%
Number	288	678	1,013*	496	401
Asian American %	3.6%	4.0%	3.7%	2.6%	1.1%
Number	217	609	338	106	28
Nonresident Alien %	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.9%
Number	19	55	48	12	25
Native American %	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Number	16	29	18	8	7
Pacific Islander %	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Number	3	16	12	1	4
Two or More Races %	1.1%	0.7%	1.5%	1.0%	0.8%
Number	66	112	136	39	22
Minority Subtotal %	20.1%	17.8%	32.5%	31.7%	41.6%
Number	1,230	2,718	3,006	1,299	1,105

*Includes revised college figures
SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data and African American/Asian American/Hispanic Employment Plan Reports

Table 10 shows that in fiscal year 2019, minority faculty and staff accounted for 20.1 percent of tenured faculty/officials and managers, 17.8 percent of non-tenured faculty, 32.5 percent of professional staff/protective service workers, 31.7 percent of office and clerical/paraprofessionals, and 41.6 percent of service maintenance employees. Compared to fiscal year 2018, the number of minority faculty and staff increased by 0.8 percent in fiscal year 2019. The largest increase in the minority employee count from the previous year was noted for tenured faculty/officials and managers (4.3 percent), followed by non-tenured faculty (2.9 percent). The largest decrease in the minority employee count from the previous year was noted for office and clerical/paraprofessionals (2.1 percent), followed by service maintenance (-1.3 percent) and professional staff/protective service workers (-0.4 percent).

Nationwide, community college faculty members are disproportionately White, and thus students of color are less likely to have the opportunity to engage with faculty members of their own race/ethnicity [Center for Community College Student Engagement (2014)]. In Illinois community colleges, Hispanic/Latino faculty members are the most underrepresented minority group in comparison to the student population of the same race/ethnicity (Table 11).

Table 11
Proportion of Minority Students and Faculty at Illinois Community Colleges
Fiscal Year 2015 and 2019

2015	Percentage of Student Representation	Percentage of Faculty Representation*	Percentage Point Difference
African American	15.1%	8.8%	**-6.2**
Hispanic/Latino	20.2%	4.1%	**-16.1**
Asian American	4.4%	3.6%	**-0.8**
Nonresident Alien	0.7%	0.4%	**-0.3**
Native American	0.3%	0.2%	**0.0**
Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.1%	**-0.1**
*Two or More Races***	1.8%	0.8%	**-1.0**
White	57.4%	82.0%	**24.5**
2019	Percentage of Student Representation	Percentage of Faculty Representation*	Percentage Point Difference
African American	13.4%	9.1%	**-4.2**
Hispanic/Latino	24.5%	4.8%	**-19.7**
Asian American	5.1%	4.1%	**-1.0**
Nonresident Alien	0.9%	0.4%	**-0.5**
Native American	0.2%	0.2%	**0.0**
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	**0.0**
*Two or More Races***	2.6%	0.9%	**-1.7**
White	53.3%	80.4%	**27.1**

Includes only students and faculty whose ethnicity was known.
*Includes Tenured Faculty/Officials and Managers and Non-tenured Faculty
**Race/ethnicity classifications align with U.S. Department of Education collection and reporting standards.
SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data, Annual Faculty, Staff, and Salary (C3) Data, and African American/Asian American/Hispanic Employment Plan Reports

Across a five-year period, Hispanic/Latino faculty representation increased slightly (4.1 percent in fiscal year 2015 vs. 4.8 percent in fiscal year 2019), but did not increase enough in comparison to the increase in the Hispanic/Latino student representation (20.2 percent in fiscal year 2015 vs. 24.5 percent in fiscal year 2019). Across the same time frame, African American faculty representation increased slightly (8.8 percent in fiscal year 2015 vs. 9.1 percent in fiscal year 2019), while the African American student representation experienced a sharper decrease (15.1 percent in fiscal year 2015 vs. 13.4 percent in fiscal year 2019). Asian American faculty and student representation both increased over the period of five years, but the increase was slightly smaller for Asian American faculty (3.6 percent in fiscal year 2015 vs. 4.1 percent in fiscal year 2019) than the increase for Asian American students (4.4 percent in fiscal year 2015 vs. 5.1 percent in fiscal year 2019).

BEST PRACTICES

The following section provides information about best practices for increasing graduation rates and closing the achievement gap from the Illinois Community College System in fiscal year 2019. Best practices address factors woven into students' experiences that may impact their success and completion, such as coming from a low-income, first-generation, or minority background or having a disability, and provide helpful information about project components and outcomes.

INCREASING GRADUATION RATES AND CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Student Support Initiatives

Student support initiatives aim to develop effective approaches for improving graduation rates, equity, and access for all students. They provide opportunities for academic development, help students stay in school, and motivate them towards the successful completion of their postsecondary education. Illinois public community colleges offer a number of different student support programs and services to assist students at all stages of their educational journey.

A group of faculty members at **Prairie State College** (PSC) began researching inclusive teaching strategies in 2018 they could employ to increase student success. After several meetings, the faculty group decided their pilot project would apply promising research done at Oakton Community College to discover whether PSC

> *Prairie State College implemented inclusive teaching strategies modeled after Oakton Community College to increase student success.*

faculty members in a variety of disciplines can increase student success and retention by integrating specific community- and relationship-building activities into their courses. Sixteen faculty members volunteered to participate in this student success pilot project. The lead faculty member on the project provided participating faculty with a summary of Oakton's research, which revealed that students enrolled in at least one course section of a voluntary faculty-led persistence project were around 25 percent more likely to persist than their peers. Faculty members were asked to incorporate any of the following strategies during the first four weeks of class: set clear, high academic standards but not policies that doom students; learn students' names and have students learn one another's names; give feedback on an assignment or quiz; and hold 10-15 minute, one-to-one "get-to-know-you" conferences with each student. Data collection thus far has been through faculty surveys and one-on-one interviews with participants. PSC will continue to gather data through faculty surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews with students, and research effective methods to support student learning and share it with project participants.

Elgin Community College (ECC) offers academic support labs to assist students. The Write Place provides support in academic writing and research; the Math Lab provides support in qualitative literacy. In each lab, tutors offer support in two ways–by modeling skills and techniques through examples shared with students, and by assisting students with their homework–primarily papers and problem sets–but also with out-of-class requirements, such as placement tests and transfer essays. The format for lab sessions is one-on-one or small groups, and short courses/workshops are also provided. The Write Place offers a noncredit "Writing with Integrity" course focused on proper use of cited resources; the Math Lab offers tutorials on various topics, such as how to use

graphing calculators. In 2018, these labs moved organizationally from their respective disciplines, English and math, to a common Tutoring Center–a move that provided greater clarity in achieving common goals. For example, new tutors in the Write Place now come from not only the English Department but increasingly from the English as a Second Language Department. Tutors in the Math Lab come not only from math but also from engineering and sciences. In addition, joint faculty research projects have emerged as a result of having these labs housed under a common umbrella. Across both types of labs–writing or math–visiting supplemental labs has an overall positive impact on course success for all subpopulations.

Many college students take several or all of their classes online. Therefore, having the ability to access a computer or tablet with Internet capabilities is essential for students to do well. **Wabash Valley College** (WVC) opened an additional computer lab for the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters. In the afternoons when most of the classes were done, a

> *Wabash Valley College opened an additional computer lab to all students for the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters.*

classroom was converted to both serve as a classroom and computer lab. Whether to complete homework assignments, print off material to study, or complete quizzes and tests, it was available in the afternoons and some mornings when class was not in session. Printing in this room was also available at an affordable cost to the student, thus allowing students to print and complete other assignments that were not strictly for online classes. At least 30 students used the additional computer lab between the fall and spring semester. The computer lab was open to all students.

The Math Center was opened at **Harry S Truman College** in September 2012 to address the consistently low success and retention rates of students in developmental math courses. Over the last few years, the mission of the Center has evolved to support students in all math courses at the college. The expectation is that by providing additional supplemental instruction and support, the college will increase transitions from developmental education to college-level education, support course success, encourage retention, and increase student success. The Math Center is composed of a walk-in center, computer lab, and study space. Students can take advantage of the space to work on their homework, study for exams, and get clarification on various topics from the Math Center staff. The Center also offers pre-semester workshops to prepare students for their upcoming classes. Additionally, it offers regular contests throughout the term with prizes to build student confidence and interest in mathematics and to give students a chance to test their skills. Recent data has suggested that students utilizing the Math Center have higher course success (earning a grade of 'C' or better) and course retention.

South Suburban College's Academic Assistance Center (AAC) seeks to be a central resource for providing academic support to students. The AAC is committed to ensuring quality service through its participation in the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) certifications for Regular/Level 1 and Advanced/Level 2. CRLA is a member of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. The AAC provides certified peer tutoring for individual or group sessions, online professional tutoring available 24/7 through Brainfuse services, and Structured Learning Assistance, which is embedded tutoring to support classroom instruction and review sessions. Academic Survival Skills sessions focus on specific academic topics such as study tips and stress or time management. Computer Lab offers a variety of accommodations to support students with disabilities, including adjustable workstations, a voice activated program (JAWS)

for blind and visually impaired, Kurzweil 3000 to read and record any written document or book, and ZoomText Magnifier. Students who received services earned higher GPAs than students who did not receive services. African American students' GPAs consistently increased over three semesters. Specifically, the GPA of African American male students who utilized tutoring services increased from 1.68 to 1.96. African American female students used the services more than all other populations.

John Wood Community College (JWCC) offers tutoring services in various academic areas free of charge to students who need assistance with their coursework. Instructional services provides walk-in tutoring in various general education subjects, such as biology, mathematics, psychology, and chemistry. A writing center is available by walk-in or appointment for students who need help with

> *John Wood Community College offers online tutoring services with 24/7 help on a wide variety of subjects, including math, writing, science, and nursing.*

essays, research papers, and other college writing assignments. Student Support Services provides tutoring to students who qualify for the TRIO program. Online tutoring is available for drop-in tutoring or appointments through Smarthinking. Students are able to get 24/7 help on a wide variety of subjects. There is also an online writing center. Tutoring services began at various levels in the past several years, with online tutoring being the most recent. By having a variety of tutoring services, many students who were not able to access tutoring in the past, now have clearer paths to get assistance in a variety of subjects. In general, student success is up in the general education courses.

One Million Degrees (OMD) Chicago is a nonprofit organization that empowers low-income, highly motivated community college students to succeed in school, in work, and in life. OMD's purpose is to help its students to persist, complete, and transition to a four-year institution or career related program. The organization has recruited and continues to recruit Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) residents who enroll full time at **South Suburban College** (SSC). Students ("scholars") enrolled in the OMD Program receive access to the organization's comprehensive on-campus supports, including free tutoring, monthly mentoring from a volunteer professional, career development services, and up to $1,000 annually in cash stipends. To work with the expanded student populations at SSC, OMD recruited volunteer mentors ("coaches") to provide monthly in-person professional guidance and supports. In the summer of 2018, there were six students enrolled in the OMD program, and that number has grown to 26 in the spring of 2019. The students who participated in the OMD program persisted and more than 50 percent of those students finished the year with an improvement in their grades from midterm (October 2018) to end of term (May 2019). Additionally, SSC OMD hosted its first speed networking event so scholars had a chance to practice their elevator pitches and sharpen their communication skills in a realistic but low-pressure environment. The program was meant to mirror standard networking events.

Academic Advising

Harper College launched a case management approach to advising in the fall of 2017, in which all credential-seeking students are assigned to an advising point person from the time they begin taking classes until they complete a program of study. The case managed advising model provides students with a point person who provides critical academic advising that ensures persistence and completion. This

Harper College's case management approach to advising helps to ensure students stay on track to complete a credential, without wasting resources on credits that will not count towards their credential.

approach helps to ensure students stay on track to complete a credential, without wasting resources on credits that will not count towards their credential. Setting up a meeting with the academic advisor is also embedded within students' first year seminar courses. The case management model provides a more personalized and proactive approach to potentially at-risk students. During the scale-up process, students who met with their assigned advisor in their first semester to review career and educational goals and develop a personalized educational plan for the future had higher fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall persistence rates when compared to students who did not. Notably, African American and Hispanic/Latino students who met with an advisor and created a plan had fall-to-spring persistence rates of 90 percent and above, while overall college persistence rates for all students averaged 80 percent. Fall-to-fall persistence rates also exceeded college averages. In fiscal year 2019, Harper students earned 4,117 credentials, compared to 3,607 in fiscal year 2017. This represents a 14 percent increase. While credentials earned by African American students have remained flat, the number of credentials earned by Hispanic/Latino students increased by 23 percent.

Olive-Harvey College implemented several strategies in the past several years to address low completion rates. The institution has been intentional in its efforts to develop Comprehensive Support Services designed to improve student success and increase the graduation rate for students completing within 150 percent of normal time. This suite of services is rooted in Olive-Harvey's commitment to equity-based practices and closing the achievement gap. The implemented strategies include intrusive advising (students receive "high touch" contact from academic advisors via email, phone, and face-to-face meetings throughout the semester), expanded tutoring, (professional tutors as well as some adjunct faculty who serve as tutors work closely with faculty members to ensure alignment with course materials and student need), and GradesFirst early alert monitoring (faculty and advisors utilize a 100 percent web-based system to enhance the early alert experience). Olive-Harvey has experienced an increase in its graduation rate of first-time, full-time students, growing from 16 percent in fiscal year 2017 to 24 percent in fiscal year 2018. As a Predominately Black Institution (PBI), a large majority of IPEDS graduation cohorts are minority and mostly Pell grant recipients. Consequently, the vast majority of strategy decisions are designed with these student groups in mind. Furthermore, the comprehensive nature of the outlined strategies will serve to continue moving the needle to increase graduation rates.

Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC) created the Sauk Holistic Advising and Retention Program (SHARP) as part of a Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative in 2017. SHARP is designed to offer support services to students who are first generation, low income, have a documented disability, or are at risk academically. The program seeks to provide academic

monitoring, transfer support, career services support, and assistance with understanding financial aid and the FAFSA. Additionally, SHARP seeks to help students improve academically through continuous academic monitoring and referrals to online and in-person tutoring services provided at SVCC. Advisors have a maximum caseload of 100 students. Participants are required to meet with a designated program advisor throughout the term. They receive individualized coaching and can borrow laptops. They can also attend various academic in-person or online workshops. The program formally launched in 2018 and has seen measurable success in retention efforts. For example, the fiscal year 2018 fall-to-spring retention for SHARP students was 85.0 percent versus 73.2 percent for the general SVCC population.

Since the summer of 2014, **Kennedy-King College** (KKC) has assigned dedicated advisors to a specific caseload of first-time, full-time students from IPEDS cohorts each fall. The goal of KKC's IPEDS Advising Model is to provide students with dedicated support and advising to ensure they complete their program of study within 150 percent of the program timeframe. This model requires the advisors to have intentional, proactive, high touch points with students. Two advisors conduct weekly outreach to students. Communication may include providing students with a list of events and activities, important campus deadlines, or responding to early alert notifications from faculty. Students meet with their advisor twice a semester. One of the two meetings is strictly for degree and success planning. The IPEDS advisors, Associate Dean of Advising, and the college's Director of Strategic Initiatives meet monthly to track the progress and success of each student. During these meetings, individual student issues and barriers to success are discussed and strategies are developed to address those issues and barriers. KKC is designated as a Predominately Black Institution, with 77.3 percent of the student populating being African American. Between fiscal years 2018 and 2020, 73 percent of IPEDS graduates were African American and 17 percent were Hispanic. KKC has experienced steady improvement in graduation outcomes from 20 percent in fiscal year 2017 to 26.6 percent in fiscal year 2019.

KKC has assigned dedicated college advisors to support students enrolled in its two Centers of Excellence (Dawson Technical Institute and Washburne Culinary and Hospitality Institute). Both programs typically enroll high percentages of first-generation students. Both Centers have exhibited success in enrolling and supporting first-generation students towards completion. During fiscal year 2019, approximately 59 percent of Washburne and 43 percent of Dawson students self-identified as first-generation. The integrated advising model equips advisors with knowledge of both program and industry requirements to best assist students. Dedicated advisors directly monitor student progress by ensuring students are enrolled in courses according to established program pathways. Additionally, advisors participate in industry partner Advisory Council meetings and work directly with faculty to prepare new, program-specific student orientations. Advisors also provide dedicated support to first-generation students seeking additional financial assistance through scholarship funds earmarked specifically for students enrolled in programs at Washburne Culinary and Hospitality Institute, as well as Dawson Technical Institute. Given the short-term orientation of the programs, with basic certificates able to be earned in the first semester, each student at Dawson and Washburne has earned a credential to date.

Emergency Financial Assistance/Scholarships/Micro-grants

The foundation office at **Carl Sandburg College** offers up to $500 in crisis grants and loans for non-academic needs that impede student success. Students may only apply for one crisis grant/loan per academic year. The initiative, which was implemented in Fall 2018, has helped students at Sandburg achieve their goals by removing barriers that are non-educational (food insecurity, transportation issue, healthcare costs, etc.). The Foundation office staff also acts as a conduit to community resources, connecting to resources beyond the capacity and scope of the foundation, and has a close relationship with the Knox County Unmet Needs Committee (assistance with heat, rent, etc.), Salvation Army (homelessness and food insecurity), Galesburg Community Foundation (grants and private funding), and the Knox County Health Department (access to health care).

Borne out of the desire of the **Elgin Community College** (ECC) Foundation to want to do more for students, the purpose of the Complete to Compete Grant is to give support to financially disadvantaged students close to completing their 60 hours for a degree who are most at risk of not completing their degrees compared to their peers. Money from the Complete to Compete Grant is allowed to be spent on

The purpose of the Complete to Compete Grant is to give support to financially disadvantaged students close to completing their 60 hours for a degree who are most at risk of not completing compared to their peers.

ancillary costs (e.g., bills, day care, etc.). It is "no strings attached" as long as it is going to help the student finish school. ECC is currently accepting applications for the grant and expects finish receiving them in May 2020. Awards will be made in Summer 2020, and the first cohort of recipients will receive their awards in Fall 2020. These students are expected to complete their degrees and graduate as early as Spring 2021. The inaugural grant is expected to be awarded to 20 students. As the award period unfolds, awardees will be required to meet with an advisor at least twice per semester, develop an educational plan, check in with faculty on a regular basis, and maintain good standing (2.0 GPA or above). The first year, $120,000 is projected to be spent, giving each student approximately $6,000. In the second and third years, the goal will be to scale the project up even more. Eventually, a $3,000,000 endowment will enable the ECC Foundation to provide funding to more students. Both the ECC Foundation and the college have set this ambitious goal into their 2021 operating plans.

There are many financial challenges affecting students' time to completion, such as housing expenses, food, time away from work, supporting families, managing illness, etc. Colleges nationwide are providing micro grants to support student completion and have found positive results. The University Innovation Alliance found that the use of completion grants of up to $1,000 helped students pay down their account balance, register and persist. The proposal to offer mini grants, referred to as Finish Line Micro Grants, to encourage credential-seeking students who need extra funding to complete their degrees or certificates, was developed at **Harper College** in Fall 2019. The proposal was approved and funds were allocated from a budget surplus. The application and communication outreach plan were subsequently developed for implementation in Spring 2020. To qualify, students must be 75 percent towards completion of their academic programs, must have a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA, must not have been awarded a degree previously, and must have been enrolled in one or more of the last three terms. An award committee, consisting of the registrar, financial assistance director, and academic advisors, review applications and can

award up to $1,000 per student if qualifications are met. Thus far, of those receiving Finish Line Micro Grants, 74 percent are first-generation college students. In addition, 12 percent are African American, and 35 percent are Hispanic. Thus, this program is serving more students in these underrepresented populations than they represent at the college (African American students represent 4 percent and Hispanic students represent 29 percent of the student population).

The Friends of **McHenry County College** Foundation established the Student Success Fund in August 2017, to help students experiencing financial emergencies. Emergencies include an accident, illness, death of a family member, fire damage, or need for temporary housing. The fund can provide them with up to $500 per student to help them stay in school. All applications are considered on a case-by-case basis. There are some expenses that the Foundation will not cover such as tuition and fees, parking tickets, and entertainment costs. The application process is simple: the student must fill out a paper application, and they must meet in-person with one of the Student Success Fund team members to review the application. If a student is not eligible for the Student Success Fund, the team members will work to identify other on- and off-campus resources available. To be eligible, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, have no current or unresolved Student Code of Conduct violations, have no overdue debt to the college (a payment plan is not considered debt), and demonstrate that they have financial emergency. In fiscal year 2019, a total of $10,130 was awarded to 27 recipients. Recipients requested funds for vehicle-related expenses (32 percent); books (25 percent); multiple expenses, including vehicle registration, medical, books, and supplies (18 percent); medical/dental expenses (11 percent); utility bills (7 percent)**;** health or car insurance (4 percent); and rent (3 percent).

Lake Land College is committed to improving college completion by addressing educational and financial barriers that prevent students from completing their degrees. The purpose of the micro-grant program was to identify and assist students with past due tuition and fee balances from the Fall 2019 semester that prevented enrollment in the Spring 2020 term. The primary focus was on students within

> *The purpose of the micro-grant program at Lake Land College was to identify and assist students with past due tuition and fee balances from the Fall 2019 semester that prevented enrollment in the Spring 2020 term.*

just one semester of completing their academic programs. Each of these students had some type of financial barrier preventing them from paying their past due balances and enrolling in their final semester before graduation. The financial aid office pulled data for all current students, which were categorized by completed program hours, academic standing, financial aid status, tuition, and fee balance. The office then worked with academic counselors to run degree audits for all students on the list to determine if they were within one semester of graduation. After identifying 30 students who met the targeted criteria, the financial aid office began outreach efforts via telephone, text message, email, and/or the college's online portal messaging system to contact students and invite them to meet with a financial aid advisor to discuss the micro-grant program. Nineteen students came in to meet with the advisor and signed an agreement acknowledging their responsibilities, which included enrolling in the spring term, completing their courses, applying for graduation, and seeking assistance throughout the semester, if necessary. Each student received intensive one-on-one support to ensure their success in the Spring 2020 term. The micro-grant program was able to assist 17 students with past-due balances by utilizing $14,875 of grant funds approved for the program. These students are now continuing on their path to graduation and future success.

Nearly ninety percent of the **Olive-Harvey College** (OHC) credit student population receives some form of financial assistance. These varying forms of aid are more than supplemental; each are critical to the students' academic persistence. To that end, any unexpected decrease or loss in wages, medical expenses, or housing hardships could quickly derail a student's academic progress. Understanding this reality, OHC instituted the Emergency Aid Program in 2018. The Emergency Aid Program serves as an immediate financial solution for students, enabling them to continue pursuing their academic goals without interruption. The OHC Wellness Center offers a number of supportive services designed to target the non-academic impediments experienced by students. The Emergency Aid Program is a part of these services and is promoted via referrals by staff, faculty, or student peers. As a part of the process, students meet with Wellness staff to discuss impending need, allocation of assistance, other available resources, as well as financial literacy education. Students who received assistance through this program met one or more of the following benchmarks: were retained and able to complete the semester, persisted to the subsequent term, or graduated with a degree or certificate within the academic year.

Shawnee Community College (SCC) strives to provide funding for students in the service area, in the form of scholarships, to assist those that may not otherwise have the ability to attend college. This year the target area was Cairo, which is the southernmost city in the state of Illinois. With the decline in river trade, Cairo has suffered a marked decline in its economy and population. A recent

> *Cairo Horizons Scholarship, which is based on financial need, enables five graduating seniors from Cairo High School to attend Shawnee Community College.*

recommendation by SCC and its Board of Trustees allowed for the opening of a new location for the college in Cairo in 2018 to provide educational access to underrepresented groups of students (minority, disabled, or first-generation alike) from Cairo High School. In January 2020, the Cairo Horizons Scholarship was established by the Saints Foundation, SCC's foundation for gifts and other charitable donations. The scholarship, which is based on financial need, enables five graduating seniors to attend SCC. Applicants must submit an essay describing their plans of achieving their educational goals and how the award would help them through that journey. Scholarships will be awarded for the fall of 2020.

Food Pantries

A number of recent research studies have shown food insecurity is one of the most common challenges that low-income students face. This issue has gained considerable national attention. According to the [Achieving the Dream National Network](#) "community colleges across the country are seeking ways

> *Research shows that food insecurity is one of the most common challenges that low-income students face. One in three community college students experience hunger, 50 percent lack secure housing, and 14 percent are homeless.*

to address this challenge as a necessary part of supporting student in their effort to stay in college." A survey created by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, assesses basic needs security among college students, and the results are published annually in [College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report](#). In the survey from the fall of 2018, in which nearly 86,000 students participated, 45 percent of respondents experienced food

insecurity in the past 30 days. Also the report finds that the rates of basic needs insecurity are higher for two-year college students compared to four-year college students. A number of colleges have addressed food insecurity by creating food pantries on their campuses. Hungry and Homeless in College is a national study prepared by Wisconsin HOPE Lab, in collaboration with the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), that showed that one in three community college students experience hunger, 50 percent lack secure housing, and 14 percent are homeless. The report summarized these numbers from a survey of over 33,000 students in 24 states.

Shawnee Community College (SCC) held student focus groups to hear directly from them about their needs. After learning how pressing the issue was for the students, an ad hoc committee was formed to investigate the viability of starting a food pantry on the campus. By partnering with the Saints Foundation, SCC's foundation for gifts and other charitable donations, the Cupboard Food Pantry became a reality in September 2019. The Foundation also created an opportunity for employees to donate to the food pantry through payroll deduction. The committee then reached out to the Tri-State Food Bank as a way to sustain adequate food for the pantry. The institution began marketing to groups such as Pell-grant eligible and TRIO students. Preliminary data collected through interviews with students indicated a positive impact on students' ability to focus in class; students reported improved mindsets and less anxiety regarding anticipated meals. As this is the first semester of implementation, completion data is forthcoming.

Richard J. Daley College established a partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to provide healthy food and nutrition information to students at no cost in order to allow them to focus on learning, encourage them to stay in school by helping them to meet a basic need, and ensure that no student goes hungry. Daley's food pantry is supported by two work-study students who work closely with the Wellness Center and Associate Dean of Student Services. In the inaugural year of this partnership, from September 2017 to May 2018, with a limited schedule, there were 1,739 student visits to Daley's Healthy Market. On average 175 students per month received food through this program. In the second year, from September 2018 to June 2019, a permanent, on campus food panty was established. Refrigeration equipment was purchased, which allowed the pantry to safely store perishable food and thus establish a consistent and accessible schedule. With an expanded schedule, the number of visits to the on-site, permanent food pantry increased to 3,154.

Kaskaskia College provides students who struggle with food insecurity a means of obtaining food, toiletries, and health products in a caring non-judgmental environment. The KC Snack Station was introduced in April of 2019. A food drive was held during that time that provided an initial inventory of 25 packages of food and $166 in funds. A number of items were donated.

A Basic Needs survey conducted at **Oakton Community College** in 2018 revealed 31 percent of students reported low or very low food security. In response to this data, Oakton's Caring Closet was established in Spring 2018 with a purpose to address food insecurities of Oakton students. The initiative emphasizes an equity-based solution to food insecurity on campus, and aligns with Oakton's strategic plan and values. The Caring Closet is a collaborative effort between the Office of Student Life, the Center for Campus Inclusion & Diversity, the Sustainability Center, and the Wellness Center. The Caring Closet is a physical space on Oakton's Des Plaines and Skokie campuses where students can access nonperishable food and self-care

items, such as soap and deodorant, at no cost. Students fill out a "shopping sheet" in person or through Oakton's web portal, and an employee fills the order. Students then pick up their items at a designated time and location. Students must have an Oakton ID to utilize the Caring Closet. During the first semester of operating the Caring Closet in the fall of 2018, there were 49 requests and orders filled from August through December.

Access to Transportation/Child Care Services/Textbooks

The Office of Student Life at **Carl Sandburg College** and the Galesburg Transit Bus Service established a partnership in August 2017 to offer Sandburg students free rides on the city bus routes throughout the year simply by showing their current Sandburg ID. Having a secure means for free

> *Through a partnership with the Galesburg Transit Bus Service, Carl Sandburg College arranged free rides on the city bus routes for its students.*

transportation allows students to better serve themselves and their families and ultimately be more successful in their education. Students with a fixed income are now able to save on transportation costs by utilizing their Sandburg student ID to travel not only to class but also to work and around town for other goods and services. International students have guaranteed transportation to campus and can use their bus access to explore and navigate around the city of Galesburg. The dollars saved on transportation each year allow students to redirect their finances to other necessities for their education either directly towards things such as books, school supplies, or tuition, or indirectly to support their home life and families. Either way, the ripple effect of saving money and having a reliable mode of transportation impacts student success in a positive way, helping them achieve their educational goals and reach graduation.

Highland Community College is comprised of 71 percent first-generation college students and serves a predominantly rural district. Attending classes can require significant travel time that, when added to the challenges of accessing child care, can create barriers for parenting students. Consequently, increasing access to child care for students while they attend class, study, connect with college services, or take a test was identified as a strategic objective for Highland in its current strategic plan. In May 2019, Highland applied for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant through the U.S. Department of Education. Through an existing partnership with the YMCA Child Care Center located on campus, the partners began offering discounted child care during the Spring 2020 semester. Highland students pay a small hourly fee ranging from $0 to $6 per hour based on their Federal PELL Expected Family Contribution (EFC) with the CCAMPIS grant funds paying the remaining balance. Currently, there are five first-generation female students enrolled and seven children. While the college is in its first semester of offering the service, there is a plan for tracking participating student persistence.

The Low Cost/No Cost Textbook Alternatives initiative at **Triton College**, which was implemented between August 2016 and May 2019, strives to improve student and instructor access to high- quality, affordable learning materials. The Low Cost/No Cost Textbook Alternatives committee researches and identifies no-cost or low-cost textbook options, raising awareness of these options among Triton faculty, develops best practices for implementation, and assesses their pedagogical impact. Co-chaired by a librarian and English faculty member, the committee hosted

workshops for faculty to educate them on open educational resources (OER), curated OER for academic disciplines across the college, and supported faculty who wished to adopt open textbooks for their courses. In addition, the committee surveyed students taking a course with low-cost or no-cost learning materials each semester to assess the impact of this initiative on students. Through the faculty's efforts to lower or eliminate the cost of learning materials in their courses, Triton students have saved over one million dollars since August 2016.

TRIO Student Support Services

The goal of the [TRIO Student Support Services Program](#) (SSS) is to "increase the number of disadvantaged, low-income college students, first-generation college students, and college students with disabilities in the United States who successfully complete a program of study at postsecondary level." The TRIO program helps these underrepresented groups thrive, graduate, and transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Program participants receive

> *The goal of the TRIO Student Support Services Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education is to increase the persistence, academic standing, and graduation or transfer of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.*

supports through advising, tutoring, transfer assistance, financial aid assistance, and social and cultural programming. TRIO connects students who often struggle to successfully complete college with the learning skills and financial resources to achieve a college degree. The program helps students build social networks, provides mentoring, facilitates successful transfer to four-year universities, and empowers students to succeed in college and beyond. To be eligible for the program, students must be citizens or nationals of the United States or meet the residency requirement for federal student financial assistance, be enrolled at a college or accepted for enrollment for the next academic semester, have a need for academic support in order to successfully pursue a postsecondary educational program, and be either low-income, a first-generation college student, or a student with disabilities. All SSS grants are funded for five-year grant award cycles.

TRIO at **Black Hawk College** (BHC) implemented focused intentional strategies in Fall 2018 to increase persistence, graduation, and transfer rates for first-generation, and/or low-income students and/or students with a documented disability. TRIO altered the student application for ease of completion and worked directly with new student orientation session leaders to recruit potential students at the onset of entering BHC. This allowed potential students to work with their TRIO academic advisor as their go-to person with their first academic meeting. The process established rapport building with their TRIO advisor and streamlined student understanding of BHC processes/resources. TRIO held a summer bridge TRIO-only section of CES100 College Experience and Success course in July of 2019. All but one student successfully completed the course and moved on into their Fall 2019 term. TRIO made midterm progress reports digital for ease of use in disseminating and collecting feedback of student progress from instructors, faculty, and advisors who now receive information regarding their students more quickly, allowing coaching conversations to happen more quickly. TRIO offered college/university transfer visits in the month of June. Transfer visits allowed students to best visualize being at the four-year college/university, helping them to lock in transfer plans. According to the 2018-19 Annual

Performance Report, TRIO efforts in supporting persistence to graduation, and also transferring, are making positive impacts.

The **Malcolm X College** (MXC) TRIO SSS program addresses four objectives (approved by the Department of Education) that assess key measures of success and achievement from SSS participant performance. MXC SSS exceeded three of its four objectives during fiscal year 2019. The persistence rate of SSS participants was 76 percent, which was 16 percentage points higher than its objective of 60 percent. The rate of SSS students who were in good academic standing was 88 percent, which was 23 percentage points higher than its objective of 65 percent. The graduation rate of SSS students was 35 percent, which was 5 percentage points higher than its objective of 30 percent. Lastly, the transfer rate objective of SSS students was met at its target of 10 percent.

The Student Support Services (SSS) program at **John A. Logan College** is incorporating a strategy into its plan of operation that is designed to influence the development of non-cognitive skills and behaviors, including perseverance, academic behaviors and approaches toward learning strategies, and to enhance student motivation and engagement in learning. This activity will be added to the semi-annual SSS Orientation that is held prior to the beginning of each semester for SSS students entering the project. A diverse student panel composed of project peers that are in their second or third year of attendance at the college will engage in a discussion that will be moderated by two additional SSS peers meeting the same qualities as the panel participants regarding diversity. During the panel discussion, attendees will have the opportunity to see how peers with similar backgrounds to themselves have used their situation to develop strategies for success. Students will recognize how their personal backgrounds can be used as a source of strength instead of being a barrier to their educational progress. Non-cognitive skills such as academic mindsets can be positively altered by this experience as beliefs are fostered that academic achievement can improve with effort. Additionally, the experience itself can contribute to a sense of being a part of the community within the college.

While community college students come from all walks of life, all ages and varying personal circumstances, those who are first generation, low income, or disabled compromise the majority of **Lake Land College**'s (LLC) study body at almost 70 percent. Thus, LLC recognizes it is imperative to close the achievement gap for these students. The college has provided an institutional commitment for the TRIO SSS grant to improve student retention and graduation, increase the transfer rate from LLC to four-year colleges, and foster an institutional climate that promotes the success of these disadvantaged students. The program is currently in its third grant cycle, and the current academic year is the 15th year of operation at the college. TRIO SSS is funded to serve 160 first-generation, income eligible, or disabled students. The current cycle is funded from August 2015 through August 2020, and LLC has submitted a grant proposal to continue funding from August 2020 through August 2025. The established Plan of Operation for the program includes providing five required services that include: academic tutoring, advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection, information on financial aid and assistance in completing applications for aid, education designed to improve student financial aid and economic literacy, and assistance in applying for admission to and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in a 4-year program of postsecondary education. Additional services include: individualized, intensive counseling; career exploration; and cultural enrichment opportunities. Each year, the program prepares and submits an Annual Performance Report (APR) to the

Department of Education that illustrates the effectiveness of TRIO SSS. The report shows the persistence of students in the program at 94 percent; 100 percent of the students in the program are in good academic standing; based off of the 2015-16 cohort, 64 percent of students completed an associate degree or certificate, 26 percent of which transferred to a 4-year institution.

The TRIO/Student Support Services (SSS) program helps 180 students at **Parkland College** persist, excel, and graduate within four years of entry into the program. Free services offered to TRIO SSS participants include intrusive academic advising, graduation audits and planning, transfer assistance and college visits, tutoring, FAFSA completion assistance, mid-term grade checks and retention interventions, goal setting, financial literacy education, and workshops to enhance academic skills. The TRIO SSS grant originated at Parkland College in 1997. Seventy-one percent of all participants served by the 2018-19 TRIO SSS

Free services offered to TRIO SSS participants at Parkland College include intrusive academic advising, graduation audits and planning, transfer assistance and college visits, tutoring, FAFSA completion assistance, mid-term grade checks and retention interventions, goal setting, financial literacy education, and workshops to enhance academic skills.

program persisted from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year, earned an associate degree or certificate at Parkland College, or transferred to a four-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year. Eighty-one percent of the participants serviced by the TRIO SSS project met the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at Parkland College. Thirty-eight percent of new participants served in the 2012-13 academic year graduated from Parkland College with an associate degree or certificate within four years. Seventeen percent of new participants served in the 2012-13 academic year graduated from Parkland College with an associate degree or certificate within four years and transferred to a four-year institution by the following fall semester.

Rock Valley College (RVC) houses two SSS programs, and these programs have been in existence since 2015. The services include intrusive advising, individualized advising, and tutoring to ensure underrepresented populations are successful. This success is also accomplished through collaborations between campus clubs, such as RVC Student of Services (RVC SOS) that assists students who face financial barriers, which could impede their success, and departments, such as financial aid to ensure students understand, complete and effectively manage their financial aid. The program is required to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) each year, and points are awarded based on how well the program met its objectives: 70 percent of the participants will persist from fall to fall, 72 percent of the participants will be in good academic standing from semester to semester, 31 percent of participants will graduate with a two-year degree and transfer to a four-year institution, and 22 percent of the new participants will complete a degree or certificate and transfer to a four-year university. Each year the SSS program meets and sometimes exceeds these objectives.

The TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program at **Southwestern Illinois College** (SWIC) serves 160 students per year using a robust intrusive advising model and implements research-based intervention strategies targeting the achievement gap for these underrepresented student groups. SSS students receive the "Difference-Education" intervention as part of the SSS

orientation. Students in the program began receiving this intervention during SSS orientations in the fall of 2015. This intervention technique is used to subtly change negative student mindsets by addressing the very circumstances that, as perceived by students, make them different from their peers. Instead of ignoring those factors as perceived deficits, Difference-Education acknowledges that these life circumstances impact how students feel and how they behave once they arrive at college. SSS students learn how other students with similar

> *Southwestern Illinois College uses a "Difference-Education" intervention as part of the TRIO SSS Orientation. This intervention technique is used to subtly change negative student mindsets by addressing the very circumstances that, as perceived by students, make them different from their peers.*

backgrounds successfully navigated higher education. To date, 148 students have received the intervention. In the academic year 2016, the year the Difference- Education technique was introduced, the graduation rate rose to 38 percent from 30 percent in the academic year 2015 and has remained consistently higher. The SSS Difference-Education intervention implemented with the SWIC SSS students is based on the research published by Stephens, Hamedani, and Destin (2014), titled *Closing the Social-Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First-Generation Students' Academic Performance and All Students' College Transition.* This research was vetted by the U.S. Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse and is rated as providing moderate evidence (one of the higher ratings available) of effectiveness. The first-generation students in the study who received the Difference-Education intervention had a 63 percent reduction in the achievement gap between themselves and their continuing education (non-first-generation) peers. Research reveals that exposure to this intervention technique has a lasting effect on students, even after a comparatively brief intervention.

Prairie State College (PSC) has a student body that is more than 57 percent African American, 16 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 19 percent Caucasian. Of the 20 communities served within the district, 80 percent of the communities are experiencing poverty rates between 11.2-28 percent, well above the state's rate of 10 percent, and Chicago's rate of 10.8 percent. The problems faced by the students in this region are varied and confounding. The PSC TRIO SSS program project addresses student needs through a comprehensive series of wrap-around support services and strong academic scaffolding, and aims to retain 50 percent of TRIO participants, assist 65 percent of participants in maintaining good academic standing with a GPA of 2.0 or higher, enable 41 percent of students to earn an associate degree or certificate, and facilitate 37 percent of students in the program to earn an associate degree or certificate and continue onto a four-year institution. The program has had notable success in accomplishing its participant performance objectives, some by wide margins. For the 2017-2019 academic years, an average of 75 percent of students have persisted from one academic year to the next, 82 percent of student participants have maintained good academic standing, 42 percent have earned associate degrees/certificates, and 35 percent have earned degrees and/or certificates while also continuing on to pursue a degree at a four-year institution and beyond.

Project RISE is a federally-funded TRIO program that serves approximately 180 degree-seeking students per year at **Heartland Community College**. Participants in Project RISE must meet one or more of the eligibility criteria–low income, first generation, or documented disability. Students

who meet these criteria typically enter the college with lower test scores and higher need for remedial instruction. Without support, students with these characteristics tend to earn lower grades, lower retention rates, and lower graduation and transfer rates. Project RISE provides a peer mentor for program participants and offers approximately 40 workshops a semester, cultural events, college visits, socials, and volunteer experiences. Students are expected to have weekly contact with the peer mentor and monthly meetings with their assigned professional staff. Extra math support is also available to those enrolled in developmental math courses. Progress monitoring occurs with each student at five weeks, midterm, and final grades. Progress toward graduation is checked regularly for sophomores. Among 38 students who graduated from the program in the 2018-19 academic year, there were 32 first-generation students, 16 minority students, 28 female students, and 8 students with a disability. In contrast to a peer comparison group of students with similar characteristics, students enrolled in the Project RISE program outperformed on a variety of success measures, such as good academic standing (87.6 percent versus 84.2 percent), fall-to-fall persistence (50.3 percent vs. 38.4 percent), or graduation or transfer within four years (46.2 percent vs. 34.9 percent).

The purpose of Project Success is to provide support to low-income, disabled, and first-generation college students in conjunction with the criteria established by the federal program funding the TRIO program. The current grant cycle began in fiscal year 2015. Project Success submits annual reports to the federal government in compliance with the grant that funds the program. The elements of the report consist of participant persistence, good academic standing, completion of associate degrees or certificates, and completions with a transfer to a four-year institution. Project Success at **Illinois Valley Community College** (IVCC) is funded to support 165 participants. IVCC supported 183 participants during the most recent reporting cycle. TRIO offers academic and non-academic supports to students to better prepare them for the college experience. Such supports include a jumpstart experience, academic tutoring, one-on-one academic counseling, and visits to four-year institutions. Of the 183 participants served, 137 (42 percent) persisted, and 158 (92 percent) were in good academic standing. Of the 62 participants served from the 2015-2016 cohort, 32 (52 percent) completed a degree or certificate, and 23 (37 percent) completed a degree or certificate and transferred to a 4-year institution.

The goal of the **Illinois Central College** (ICC) TRIO Upward Bound Program is to improve the academic performance, motivation, and skills of participating students and put them on a pathway to earning a bachelor's degree. The ICC program is slated to serve 60 high school students per year, but currently it serves 73 high school students that intend to go to college. The program was restarted during the 2017-2018 academic year and offers individualized and group tutoring, academic advising, educational workshops, cultural enrichment activities, career and college exploration, college visits, six-week summer programs, college transition assistance, and student stipends.

Support Services and Initiatives for Students with Disabilities

Frontier Community College purchased a Smart Reader with enhanced vision, a text-to-speech device that reads any document placed under the HD camera, to assist students with low vision or a reading deficit. It became available for student use in the summer of 2018. Any student or

community member interested in using the Smart Reader may check into Frontier's Learning Resource Center and request access. The Smart Reader is set up in its own location at a privacy table in the study area of the library. The Smart Reader uses audio to read the text to the individual and headphones are provided. Students may pause, rewind or fast forward the reading. There is also an option to slow or speed up the rate at which the text is read back. The Smart Reader may also be plugged into a monitor to enlarge the document being scanned for visual reference. The Learning Resource staff reported three students that used the Smart Reader on multiple occasions during the 2018-2019 school year.

The purpose of the Accommodate software is to minimize the barriers that students with disabilities may run into. By minimizing barriers, **Heartland Community College** (HCC) is attempting to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities. Implementation of Accommodate, which was purchased in April 2019, allows Heartland's Student Access and Accommodation Services

> *Heartland Community College purchased the Accommodate software in April 2019 to minimize barriers for students with disabilities.*

(SAAS) to minimize the amount of paperwork that students are required to submit. It also allows SAAS to streamline processes without the student having to come into the office to request specific accommodations each semester. Instead, students are able to log into the online system to request the specific accommodations they would like for each class. In addition, students are able to schedule appointments and book exam rooms from home, register course-specific accommodations, and remain anonymous if they would like to utilize some accommodations–all of which reduce barriers for the student by making all of their services available to them in one location and specifically in an online format. Specific pieces of Accommodate that benefit the student include an automated case management system where both student and staff member can interact, accessible equipment and assistive devices checkout, note-taker network, and online test room booking for student convenience.

The Disability Support office (DSO) provides support services for students with disabilities in their educational and career pursuits while attending **Sauk Valley Community College** (SVCC). The DSO has existed at SVCC for many years. The program strives to create an environment that is accessible and welcoming to all students, and it also engages in an interactive process with students to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations that effectively meet their needs. The program director acts as a liaison with faculty, staff and referral agencies to support students' academic goals. In order to receive academic accommodations, students must meet with the program director each semester**.** The DSO, in addition to providing academic support to students, also provides input throughout the college in order to make the college more accessible for all students. The DSO is at the forefront of all efforts related to ADA compliance and accessibility.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, Disability Services at **Southeastern Illinois College** made a specific effort to increase the GPA and completion rate of students who have a documented disability on file. This effort was made in part to assess if an increased communication via phone and email would result in fewer drops and withdrawals for non-attendance. To improve services to documented disability students under the rules and regulations of ADA, Southeastern realigned its communication efforts, edging towards a new trend in advisement, intrusive advisement (also

known as proactive advisement). Intrusive advisement is based on the philosophy that the counselor and the student share responsibility for student academic success or failure (Connell, 2003). This requires responsible, pro-active behavior on the Disability Coordinator/Disability Advisor. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Disability Coordinator both called and emailed each disability student, checked on accommodations, asked about their progress in each class, and encouraged them to seek out tutoring and other Southeastern options for help during challenging times. While the new communication efforts did not show any change in the GPA and completion rates for ADA students, it did raise awareness of the new strategies that needed to be implemented on the Southeastern campus for underrepresented and other student populations.

Richland Community College has implemented two new measures that focus on supporting students who need accommodation services, (1) College and Career Competencies and (2) One Button Studio. The first provides additional transitional support, and the second promotes accessibility. College and Career Competencies, a summer readiness program

Richland Community College offers College and Career Competencies, a free summer readiness program for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college.

for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college, was implemented in 2019. The accommodations specialist works with area high school special education professionals and the Department of Rehabilitation Services to invite eligible students to participate in this free program. Topics include study skills and time management, self-advocacy strategies, appropriate and meaningful interactions, parents and support systems, and how to utilize resources. Fun activities and speakers are incorporated to facilitate social interaction and forming peer relationships. One Button Studio was launched by the Academic Success Center in September 2019, to be used in multiple ways that support closing the achievement gap for individuals with disabilities. It promotes captioning of all videos to meet the needs of students with disabilities and can be used by students, faculty, and staff to practice, make, and save high-quality video presentations and projects.

Support Services and Initiatives for Minority Students

The mission of the Éxito student success program, which was implemented in 2018 at the **College of Lake County**, is to help recent high school graduates of Hispanic/Latino origin persist from semester to semester with the goal of graduation and/or transferring to a university. The program staff connect students to college resources and workshops through a culturally relevant lens with the support of professional mentors. Éxito services provide personal development and give students the opportunity to network with other Éxito program students and professionals. Efforts to recruit students into the Éxito program from area high schools have included calling students, emailing, texting, sending out reminders to the students to register for classes, and sending out post cards. An Instagram account (@ Success.exito) has been instituted, and there are a growing number of active followers. Éxito active participants from the Fall 2018 IPEDS cohort performed favorably in comparison with Non-Éxito Hispanic/Latino cohort students. The percentage of attempted courses successfully completed in Fall 2018 was higher, the course withdrawal rate was lower, and the percentage retained to the Spring 2019 semester was slightly higher for the Éxito students. In addition, the percentage of Spring 2019 courses successfully completed by the Éxito

students was higher than for the Non-Éxito students, and the Éxito students' Spring 2019 course withdrawal rate was lower.

Pipeline to Careers in Healthcare is a Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) program at **Malcolm X College** (MXC) that promotes, prepares, and strengthens African American pre-college and college students. Due to the severe lack of representation of African Americans in the medical field, the

> *Pipeline to Careers in Healthcare is a Predominantly Black Institutions program at Malcolm X College that promotes, prepares, and strengthens African American pre-college and college students.*

program's ultimate goal is to solidify these students' ability to matriculate into higher levels of education, and ultimately healthcare professions. During the 2019 reporting year, the MXC PBI was able to serve over 600 African American males, develop relationships with 15 low-income minority-serving public schools in the City of Chicago, and provide a STEM program for approximately 250 5th-8th grade students. The PBI Pipeline to Careers in Healthcare also encouraged MXC students who are facing homelessness, interpersonal and/or neighborhood violence, poverty, sexual assault, deficient prior educational services, and experience with prior social service agencies to seek support through the Wellness Center. Along with these activities, the PBI Pipeline to Careers in Healthcare Program also hosted several SAT preparation workshops to local high school students. Students who participated in the SAT workshops focused on sharpening their skills in the areas of mathematics, reading, writing, and testing strategies.

The purpose of the 2017 Cohort initiative at the **College of DuPage** is to target those Hispanic/Latino students that started in Fall 2017 and have persisted, but not completed or transferred. The targeted students should have over 30 credits of college credit and a GPA above a 2.0. In September 2019, an email was sent to all these students. The email was generic and simply instructed students that needed assistance to contact the Manager of the Hispanic/Latino Outreach Center for assistance. As of the start of the January 2020 term, out of the 993 Hispanic/Latino students that have not completed a degree or certificate and have been enrolled since Fall 2017, 574 students enrolled for Spring 2020 and 418 students did not enroll for Spring 2020. Out of those students, 60 students completed a degree/certificate. For those students that did not enroll for Spring 2020, a survey will be created and/or phone calls made to see why they did not enroll or complete a certificate or degree. The idea is to see what the college can do to assist them with re-entry and persistence and how to connect better with future students.

After an initial program, A-MALE (African Males Addressing Life Effectively), **Danville Area Community College**'s special focus on African American male students was struggling to see decreases in performance gaps between African American students and white students and increases in retention and graduation. Data from the college's key performance indicators, Operation Graduation, and IPEDS completion data all supported the need for a program revision. With the leadership and assistance of the Achieving the Dream (AtD) equity and inclusion team, a new initiative, M-SWIFT, was implemented in the Fall 2018 term to further address the equity gaps by focusing on first-time, full-time African American males with key areas: Mentoring (M), Social engagement (S), Wrap–around services (W), Intrusive Intervention (I), Financial aid (F), and Tracking (T). These areas are key "best practice" focal points that have found success in closing success gaps of minority males and their majority counterparts. With group activities and

individual, mentor/mentee interactions, the program provided the foundation for the students to be successful with timely interventions and resources.

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) provides outreach, academic advising, personal support, cultural resources, and leadership opportunities to enhance the educational experience and facilitate the academic and personal growth of underrepresented students. Implemented in October 2018 at **Joliet Junior College** (JJC), OMSA builds rapport with undocumented, English language learners, Spanish speakers and ethnic minority students, and provides academic intervention and

> *The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs provides outreach, academic advising, personal support, cultural resources, and leadership opportunities to enhance the educational experience and facilitate the academic and personal growth of underrepresented students at Joliet Junior College.*

referral services to other vital resources with the goal of continual term-to-term persistence and fall-to-fall retention. JJC tracks student engagement through the feature known as Grades 1st "On the Go." This practice is successful because once JJC captures the student data, an outreach is possible to this population regarding services, continual enrollment, advocacy and support. The OMSA Fall-to-Spring cohort student persistence rate stands at 72 percent, exceeding the college's general student persistence rate of 60 percent.

To proactively identify and engage student cohorts that have lower retention rates than the average retention rate for all degree-seeking students, **Lewis and Clark Community College** (L&C) implemented targeted student support service outreach to African American male students in January 2018. The impetus for this initiative was a suggestion by the Higher Learning Commission for L&C to create a process of clearly defined goals for student retention. To address this recommendation, L&C identified African American males who have historically low retention rates at L&C for academic support outreach. These efforts have included increased marketing of tutoring services through student clubs and activities, athletic teams, Faculty Diversity Council, and social media through L&C's media services department. A minority study group has also been created in response to this effort. The Fall 2018 fall-to-fall retention rates for degree-seeking African American males increased to 54.7 percent from 44.7 percent in Fall 2014.

The Collegiate Leadership Development Program (CLDP) was a co-sponsorship between the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute and **McHenry County College** (MCC) for the 2018-2019 academic year with the goal to engage and motivate students to become future leaders. The opportunity to engage with campus leaders through this program is a way for MCC students to learn about the organizational decision making process. Students can network, ask questions, and share their thoughts and feedback with the leaders impacting change on campus. The CLDP is led by MCC Student Success Center staff and is focused on promoting and facilitating constructive dialogue and interaction workshops between Hispanic/Latino students and key administrators, faculty, and staff at MCC. Program participants met with 90 percent of MCC administration who offered their knowledge and support throughout the program. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 10 students participated in the program. Each student participated in a minimum of 6 sessions, and all students met the program requirements.

In order to make minority groups on campus more socially accepted, **Rend Lake College** (RLC) held Diversity Week, an annual event aimed at helping students, faculty, and staff explore other cultures and backgrounds, in the fall of 2019. RLC invited students to be part of a focus group to better define diversity and discussed topics such as LGBT and women's rights or slavery and its long-lasting impact on the African American population. RLC hopes that if students feel more accepted in the RLC culture, it will increase their likelihood to persist all the way to graduation. The college also uses "Hate has no home here" flyers that make minority groups feel like RLC is aware and consciously making an effort to address their needs.

The purpose of the TRIUMPH Program at **Waubonsee Community College** is to connect males of color with male college staff and community member mentors to guide them through their college life. The TRIUMPH Program was created in 2018 at Triton College. Waubonsee and Elgin Community College were a part of the expansion initiative, and Waubonsee is in its second year of the program. A program manager was hired in 2019. Currently the program has 19 inducted scholars and nine prospective scholars. The program helps students develop a sense of trust and encouragement through enrichments and workshops. The objective is to increase retention and certificate/degree completion and/or transfer rates of minority male scholars at community colleges. Each student has a professional mentor (either from the community or a Waubonsee staff member) and a peer mentor. Students meet with their mentors monthly and receive other networking opportunities with their mentor outside of campus. TRIUMPH workshops include: emotional management, time management, conflict resolution, and financial literacy. Students are also required to complete a minimum of 10 community service hours. TRIUMPH scholars attend conferences and summits to network and meet other like-minded males of color.

Support Services and Initiatives for CTE Students

Learning Commons West (LWC) opened in February 2018 in the Technical Education Center at **College of DuPage** to provide tutoring and academic assistance outside the classroom for students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework. It serves as an auxiliary learning space to the original and primary Learning Commons area in the center of campus.

> *Learning Commons West opened in February 2018 in the Technical Education Center at College of DuPage to provide tutoring and academic assistance for students enrolled in career and technical education.*

The LWC serves underrepresented and nontraditional CTE students. A large percentage of these students are 20 years of age or older, and many are returning to school after military service or after raising their families. Others have been employed for a number of years and have come back to school to update their skills. Because they are either still working or have families to care for, they often attend classes around their other work commitments and personal responsibilities. Tutoring assistance and the LCW hours are adjusted to accommodate those who have other responsibilities during the day. The LCW offers Blackboard support for students unaccustomed to registering for classes and/or accessing their classwork and grades online. Academic assistance is offered in varying formats (via email, Skype and Google Hangouts) to accommodate students with nontraditional schedules and availability. A learning disabilities specialist is in the LCW at least once a week to observe, provide referrals for students needing accommodations, and advise tutors

on best practices for working with students with special needs. Outreach activities, including Popcorn Days, Coffee/Cocoa event, TEC Spotlight, and Welcome Tables, are scheduled throughout the semester, and tutors also visit classrooms at the beginning of each term to introduce and familiarize students across all subject areas with the services available in the LCW.

Per Perkins requirements, **Illinois Valley Community College** (IVCC) is conducting a comprehensive local needs assessment of its stakeholders in order to determine how to better serve the district's career and technical interests. This includes determining how to increase graduation rates and close any achievement gaps for underrepresented populations. The development of the needs assessment is currently in progress, and the success of the survey is seen through the cooperation and response from area stakeholders in contributing to this process.

Support Services and Initiatives for Student Veterans and Student Athletes

Rend Lake College (RLC) named a Veterans Coordinator to act as a liaison between the college and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. This coordinator helps student veterans submit applications for military benefits and other financial aid, and officially certifies their

> *Rend Lake College implemented a Veterans Club on campus in the fall of 2019 to promote student engagement among the college's veteran population.*

enrollment to ensure they get timely payments. RLC also implemented a Veterans Club on campus in the fall of 2019 to promote student engagement among RLC's student veteran population. Some activities of the Veterans Club include highlighting a "Veteran of the Month." The Veterans Club also sponsored a t-shirt sale to assist with purchasing special recognition cords for student veterans to wear at graduation. A recognition ceremony was held, and lunch was provided for student veterans. Veterans who belong to the club are on track for graduation.

Lincoln Trail College (LTC) developed and implemented an orientation specifically for student athletes to help ease their transition to college, reinforce their roles as student athletes, and to encourage personal organization and time management skills. LTC implemented its first Athlete Orientation in August 2018, coinciding with the start of the Fall 2018 semester. For many years, LTC has offered New Student Orientation prior to the start of each Fall semester. However, faculty and staff recognized that a subgroup of the student population struggled with challenges that local, commuter students do not face. Many of LTC's student athletes are from out-of-district or even out-of-state. These students may be living away from home/living on their own for the first time, lack transportation, and may be first-generation college students. While the New Student Orientation helps all students make the transition to college, the Athlete Orientation provides additional information to student athletes. Topics covered include understanding their apartment contracts and building rules, introduction to local law enforcement and state- and local-specific laws, local resources (healthcare, social services, grocery shopping), NJCAA rules, Title IX and sexual assault, concussion testing, conflict resolution, stress relief and management, and time management. In Fall 2018, 111 students attended Athlete Orientation. Of these students, 27 (24 percent) were racial minorities, 45 (41 percent) were female, and 48 (43 percent) were first-generation college students.

Student athletes often times struggle with a full-time college coursework and time management. Under the direction of the athletic director, the Athletic Department at **Spoon River College** (SRC) implemented a number of strategies in Fall 2015 to increase grade point averages and completion rates for student athletes. In order to emphasize the importance of being successful in the classroom, an attendance tracker and course grade checks process were implemented. Throughout a 16-week semester, every four weeks faculty members complete grade checks on student athletes. These checks also include student attendance records. Student athletes reported as receiving D or F grades in any of their courses are immediately referred to the student success coach who has an office within the Learning Resource Center. The student success coach works with student athletes to identify issues they may be having while also brainstorming potential solutions to help them reach their goals. Furthermore, as part of the student athlete success program, SRC requires student athletes to participate in a minimum of four hours of study tables per week in the Learning Resource Center. In the Spring 2016 semester, the semester average GPA for a student athlete was 2.48. In Spring 2019, SRC saw the semester average student athlete GPA rise to 2.70. The number of credit hours earned saw a significant increase from 378 hours in Spring 2016 to 554 credit hours in Spring 2019.

Initiatives in Developmental Education and Co-requisite Remediation

Since 2007, the Jump Start Program has given eligible recent high school graduates the opportunity to start their experience at the **College of Lake County** (CLC). Jump Start provides free remedial mathematics or English coursework, peer mentoring, tutoring, and other support services to the recent high school 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. Students who are having difficulty with the coursework are provided individual assistance. Of the 51 English 109 (Strategic Reading and Writing II) students enrolled in Jump Start sections in Summer 2019, 76 percent were successful (grade A, B, or C), compared with the non-Jump Start English 109 students (61 percent). Furthermore, a higher percentage of Jump Start students persisted to enroll in Fall 2019 (86 percent) than the non-Jump Start group who persisted (70 percent). The percentage of Jump Start Math 105 (Preparatory Mathematics for General Education) students who persisted to the Fall 2019 term (87 percent) was slightly higher than the percentage of MTH 105 non-Jump Start group students who persisted (86 percent).

Since Fall 2018 **Frontier Community College** has offered eight-week gateway courses in English as an alternative to semester-long remedial courses. This allows Frontier's students who are not overly confident with their composition skills, or who slightly missed the cutoff scores with the placement tests, to choose the eight-week long Introduction to Composition which refreshes English skills and prepares students for the eight-week long college-level Composition 1. In addition, Introduction to Composition counts as transferable credit in contrast to a traditional remedial course, which does not. In total, 20 students took advantage of the new structuring in the Fall 2018 semester. All of those students successfully transitioned into Frontier's college-level Composition 1 course. Of those 20, 17 students successfully completed Composition 1. The Spring

2019 semester saw nine students enrolled in Introduction to Composition. All of those students successfully transitioned into the college-level Composition 1 course. Of those nine students, eight successfully completed Composition 1.

In August 2016, **Lewis and Clark Community College** began enrolling students that would have otherwise been placed in a developmental English course, into a college-level English course with a built-in co-requisite support course. The purpose of co-requisite support as described by [Complete College America (CCA)](#) is to,

> *Co-requisite developmental education places students into remedial and college-level courses in the same subject at the same time, which allows students to receive targeted support to help boost their understanding and learning of the college-level course material.*

"Increase gateway course completion within the first year by enrolling entering students into the college-level math and English courses, providing those who need additional help with a concurrent course or lab that offers just-in-time academic support." A total of 43 African-American students enrolled in 15 CCA co-requisite sections of First-Year English (ENGL 131) in academic year 2019, with 86 percent (N = 37) receiving a grade of A, B, or C for both fall and spring semesters. When factoring the need under the previous developmental English sequence of having to complete one to two developmental English courses before enrolling in a college-level English course, it is estimated—using historical success rates—that only 20 of these 43 African American students would have completed a college-level English course within the academic year 2019. The 37 African American students completing a CCA English course within academic year 2019 represents an estimated 85 percent increase in college-level English completion for African American students.

As a Hispanic Serving Institution, **Richard J. Daley College** serves a diverse student body which is 75 percent Hispanic/Latino, 12 percent African American, 9 percent White, and 9 percent Other. To address challenges associated with remedial education and gap in students' consequent success in taking and passing college-level English in the first year, Daley College piloted English 101/97 in the spring of 2019. English 101/97 is a six-credit-course sequence that concurrently enrolls students in college-level English with a co-requisite that allows them to improve their reading and writing skills. This sequence is designed for students who need extra support to achieve college-level proficiency and academic literacy in order to start a program of their choosing and to reach their long-term academic or career goals. Seventy-five percent of students that enrolled in English 101/97 successfully completed this class in fiscal year 2019 versus 44 percent of students that enrolled in English 101.

Initiatives for First-Year/First-Generation College Students

In Fall 2018 **Joliet Junior College** implemented math supplemental instruction for first-generation students in Veterinary Technology (VET 119) because math skills have long been a barrier to success for students in this program. Early in 2018, the new adjunct instructor with guidance from the CTE Dean requested the establishment of a bridge math program where the adjunct instructor, a certified veterinary technician, would co-teach technical math components of VET 119 with a math specialist. Approximately 30 hours were spent by each faculty member for initial planning

which included meetings about content, course organization and grading, and educating the math faculty on uses in Pharmacology specifically. Time was also spent identifying six key points that would be emphasized during the fall bridge session: whole number operations, decimals/fractions, percentages/proportions, metric conversions, scientific notation, solutions/dilutions, and their applications. After the fall semester, 27 students successfully completed pharmacology and 13 students were unsuccessful. Additionally, three students passed pharmacology, but could not show proficiency in math. For these three students, incompletes were assigned, and the students were asked to come back to the spring semester with an Incomplete (I) grade until proficiency was proven. For six weeks at the beginning of the Spring 2019 semester, instructors worked intensely with the three students, pinpointing weaknesses for focus prior to another assessment. The instructors offered tailored skills worksheets, class time and one-on-one tutoring, and all three were able to pass the second math assessment on week seven, dismissing their I grade. For the duration of the semester, the instructors continued to work with students who had failed and repeated Pharmacology. At the end of the semester, six additional students demonstrated proficiency in Pharmacology but not math. Although these six students had failed an integral part of VET 119 twice, they were afforded the same opportunity as their peers from the previous semester and granted I grades with the opportunity to complete a summer session of six classes (i.e., three weeks) in order to prove proficiency through class time and another comprehensive exam.

The fiscal year 2020-2023 Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) was created at **John A. Logan College** (JALC) by the college's Recruitment and Retention Committee during 2018. The SEMP acts as a tool to guide enrollment decisions involving recruitment, retention, and degree or certificate completion. As a part of the SEMP, a new course, ORI 100– College 101, was implemented in the summer of 2019. The course is one credit hour and meets for two hours weekly. It is

> *As part of 2020-2023 Strategic Enrollment Plan, John A. Logan implemented a new course, ORI 100– College 101, to help students in their transition to college.*

designed to help students in their transition to college. Students learn about the resources and services available at JALC, as well as the expectations of being a college student. A total of 324 first-time students were enrolled in ORI 100 during the summer semester and made a grade of A or B. Of those making an A or B, 308 (95 percent) were enrolled the following spring semester. Of the first-time students not enrolled in ORI 100 during the summer semester, the percentage of students enrolled the following spring semester was 80 percent.

Launch Your Success, formerly College Technology and Success Strategies, was initiated in the fall of 2018 at **Southwestern Illinois College** (SWIC) to help students begin college prepared for the academic rigors of higher education. Gaps in students' technology and study skills foundation, as identified by faculty and Success Center staff, spurred the creation of the program. During the first two weeks of each semester, students walk into any Success Center location during operating hours to participate in the program. Using a quick self-assessment, students identify their comfort level with SWIC technology and other college academic technology/software. Success Center staff work individually with students helping them log on, troubleshoot, and navigate through technology such as eSTORM, Blackboard, SWIC email, etc. Students take the online Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), a self-assessment of their study skills across 10 scales indicative of college success and receive a free SWIC planner and assistance with time

management. Success Center specialists meet individually with students to discuss their LASSI results, identify potential barriers to college success, and connect them with resources such as tutoring or referral to Disability and Access, Academic Advising, or the Wellness Advocate. Out of 1,363 Launch Your Success participants in academic year 2019, 68 percent of participants persisted to the subsequent semester (excluding graduates). Due to the excellent student response and persistence results along with the positive faculty feedback, Launch Your Success has been fully institutionalized at each Success Center location.

Cav Days is an on-campus orientation and registration experience available to all new students at **Kankakee Community College** (KCC), commencing April 2019. The goal is to provide information necessary to aid in a successful transition to KCC and increase retention rates. During the event, students tour campus, learn about campus support services, visit various academic areas, meet individually with an academic advisor, and complete their course registration. Presentations on financial literacy and opportunities for financially supporting a college education are provided by Financial Aid, Accounting, and the Hammes Bookstore. Early results from the assessment of Cav Days look quite promising. Overall the rates of students persisting past census date that very first term increased from 47 percent to 85 percent in the fall of 2019. Not only did KCC see an increase in persistence from application into the first term, but also saw students that started in the spring of 2020 persist at a rate of 76 percent into their second term. KCC has also begun to analyze disaggregated data from Fall 2019 Cav Day participants and are seeing positive returns for students that identified as members of a racially marginalized population. Of the initial students who attended Cav Days in Fall 2019 for Spring 2020 attendance, 40 percent identified as members of a racially marginalized population. Out of those students, 73 percent persisted past census day.

In an effort to increase placement accuracy, increase equity, and reduce barriers to success for students at **Oakton Community College,** the Multiple Measures Pilot Program was introduced in the fall of 2018, to provide an additional method of placing into college-level writing coursework and out of developmental reading and writing

To increase placement accuracy, Oakton Community College introduced the Multiple Measure Pilot Program that uses hierarchical measures, including GPA, which is the single best predictor of success in college-level English and math courses.

coursework. The program uses hierarchical measures, including high school Grade Point Average (GPA) because prior academic performance, as measured GPA, is the single best predictor of success in college-level English and math courses (Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Scott-Clayton, 2012). Instead of relying solely on test scores (placement test or ACT English/SAT Evidence Based Reading and Writing), incoming students could place into EGL 101 with a 2.75 high school GPA. Oakton's analysis showed that students who placed into English 101 based on their high school GPA successfully completed the course at a higher rate (82 percent) than students who were placed in Composition I and did not use high school GPA for placement (77 percent). The data above suggest that there is evidence that placement through high school GPA provides access to college-level English coursework, particularly for African American and Hispanic/Latino students.

Lunch and Learn sessions were created at **Wabash Valley College** in order to allow students to utilize their time efficiently by eating lunch while learning skills for success. The students were

able to meet other students who were striving to get more organized, set smart goals, and utilize their time wisely. Lunch and Learn sessions were one hour sessions advertised through email, flyers with session topics listed, and at fall registration for incoming students. Session topics included: smart goal setting, differences between high school and college, learning styles and preferences, disability strengths and challenges, accommodations, and self-advocacy and self-determination. During each session students were encouraged to ask questions and were given tools to help them succeed in the classroom as well as in social situations during their time on campus. Students were given handouts with guides on goal setting, learning styles and how to best utilize their learning style, disability success stories, how to best use their accommodations, and how to advocate for themselves. Upon completion of the final session, students stated that they felt more prepared to take on the challenges they would face on the path to graduation. Six sessions were held during the fall of 2018.

Kankakee Community College (KCC) implemented a streamlined application process in January 2019. The process is easy to navigate, ADA accessible, and can be completed fully online. Prior to the implementation of the streamlined online application, students were not always able to fully complete the application process online as further documentation was necessary in some situations. The online application has also allowed KCC to eliminate barriers for students with disabilities, who may require an ADA format, and other underrepresented populations. A social security number is no longer required on the application. Furthermore, the noncredit GED®/ESL/adult education students now complete the same application as credit-seeking students, which in turn, upon obtaining their credential, they have a seamless transition to the credit programs at KCC. These individuals can also be more seamlessly enrolled in bridge programs that offer enrollment in credit and noncredit classes simultaneously. Since deploying the new application, KCC has seen an increase in not only the number of applications that have been completed but also in the application to enrollment conversion rates. In the fall of 2019, 1,733 applications were submitted, which was an increase from the previous fall applications of 1,498. Spring 2020 applications took an even more significant uptick to 630 new students as compared to the previous spring with 329 applications, a 52 percent increase. Conversion of the applications to enrollees also increased in both Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, from 30 percent to 39 percent and 33 percent to 42 percent, respectively.

Initiatives Targeting At-risk Students

The purpose of the Comprehensive Retention Initiative at **John Wood Community College** (JWCC) is to increase retention rates, which in turn increases attainment of certificates and degrees. The Comprehensive Retention Initiative has been in process for some parts for a few years as retention software was employed, but only recently has seen the streamlined services between admissions and advising, and the improvements of the use of the software. JWCC uses Starfish Retention software. It connects faculty, advising, and support services personnel to communicate concerns that may become obstacles for student success. Faculty members are able to note within Starfish students who have attendance, learning, or other issues that may impact their academic achievement. Staff members then work with faculty to assist in moving the student forward on a path of success. Admissions and advising personnel now share office space and have enhanced key processes to streamline services. A full-time counselor is available to support students'

emotional needs and a "Rescue Center" is in operation during the first two weeks of each semester to provide extra assistance. During the first 10 days of the Fall 2019 semester, JWCC retained 96 percent of all credit hours in which students enrolled. The percentage is the highest JWCC has achieved in the last four years. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from 2018 shows that JWCC retained 66 percent of first-time, full-time students and 53 percent of first-time, part-time students from the fall of 2016 to the fall of 2017. The same report indicates that JWCC outperformed 28 other similar-sized community colleges from across the country that average 61 percent full-time and 36 percent part-time retention rates during the same period. The college will continue to monitor retention rates and adjust services accordingly to ensure optimal student success.

Richland Community College implemented Thrive Powered by Starfish, a retention management system, in the spring and summer of 2019 to identify students who are at risk of underperforming academically and withdrawing from college, as well as to provide targeted support services through the use of faculty feedback and student coaching. Richland Thrive Powered by Starfish connects struggling students to appropriate support staff before they fail courses, allows faculty to raise both manual flags and progress survey flags for students, and encourages a change in student behavior as a result of the flags being raised. Both the student and the student's success coach receive a notification. The student's success coach reaches out to the student and makes comments on the flag, adds notes or support finding a resolution to the concern. Richland Thrive Powered by Starfish also allows for faculty to send encouraging notes to students, Kudos. So far, Richland Thrive sent 933 surveys to faculty, and 76 percent were completed and returned to students. There was a total of 1,695 unique students with a Flag or Kudos, and the average number of flags per student was 1.88. The average number of Kudos per student was 2.28.

As part of **Southeastern Illinois College**'s Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Quality Initiative (QI) Project**,** the institution has been working on improving the usage of Starfish, a retention software program aimed at facilitating academic progress and completion for all types of student populations. School demographics strongly suggest a need for such an effort: sixty-three percent of Southeastern's students are first-generation college students, and over 60 percent of the students taking the institutional placement test

> *Southeastern Illinois College has been working on improving the usage of Starfish, a retention software program aimed at facilitating academic progress and completion for all types of student populations.*

for enrollment in Fall 2019 tested into at least one developmental class. Further, Southeastern is situated in a sparsely populated, economically depressed area. In 2014, a team of Southeastern professionals gathered baseline data for the project to create a pilot program that was fully implemented in Fall 2015. Improvements and adjustments have been made to provide more efficient, accurate data and to help students succeed in the 2018-2019 academic year. Goals for improvement are as follows: student retention rates in courses from beginning to end of semester, student retention from semester to semester, student retention from year to year, and student retention graduation rates at the institutional level. The HLC QI project was reviewed in 2019 and received an A+ from the commission.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) at **Spoon River College** (SRC) utilizes a software tool called TutorTrac that allows for several methods of tracking, but is most widely used as a student

referral system (early alert). This tool serves as a retention effort that allows faculty to alert Student Success Coaches when a student is struggling. The ultimate goal of the early alert system is to intervene at the first sign of distress and to continue intervening as necessary. Contacting students early greatly increases their chances for success in class and college as a whole. Success coaches strive to take a holistic approach by working with students to identify any academic and/or personal barriers they may be facing, such as time management, study habits, housing, transportation, and food insecurity. SRC has been using TutorTrac since it was purchased via a Title III grant in 2008. The early alert system has always been a component that was utilized within TutorTrac, but the process and strategy have been revised and refined over the years. Two different data projects were conducted during the Spring 2019 semester, that provided more insight as to the effectiveness of the student referral process. The first project focused on the group of students receiving a final grade of D, F, FA, or W in the fall of 2018, and how many of those students had been referred. SRC found that only 23 percent of these students were referred to the LRC. Of those referred students, 34 percent were recommended to withdraw, and of that group, 86 percent were first-time referrals. It suggests that SRC needs to increase faculty participation so that fewer students are receiving a D, F, FA or W. The focus of the second data project was retention, if students who were not retained by the institution from Fall 2018 to Spring 2019 were referred to Student Success Coaches. Data indicated that a total of 30 percent of students were not retained. Of the students not retained, only 16 percent of students were referred to coaches. This data also showed that out of the total number of referred students, 64 percent were retained. It suggests that students who are referred are more likely to be retained, and that early intervention ultimately increases graduation rates.

Advances in behavioral science with relevant applications to higher education have led to exciting results. Nudge is a concept in behavioral science, political theory, psychology, and behavioral economics that proposes positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions as ways to influence the behavior and decision making of individuals. Combining theories in behavioral economics, *Triton College implemented TRUDY, which stands for "Your Triton College Study Buddy," a behavioral nudge retention program to enhance long-term persistence rates of students who are first generation or older adults.*

artificial intelligence, and mobile technology, **Triton College** pursued a private-public partnership with Persistence Plus and implemented a Behavioral Nudge Retention Program to enhance long-term persistence rates of students who are first generation or older adults. Named TRUDY, which stands for "Your Triton College Study Buddy," the program was launched in Fall 2019. In addition to leveraging the advances in behavioral science, the team utilized many relevant theories that pertain to the unique populations, such as first-generation students and older adults. For instance, the scientifically calibrated text messages aimed to develop the student growth mindsets, influence their help-seeking behaviors, strengthen their sense of social belonging, and remove irrational choices in their academic journey. Naming the A.I. chatbot TRUDY also helped to personalize its messages and enhance its approachability. The team conducted a quasi-experimental research study with 500 older adult students and 500 first-generation students in the control group, as well as another 500 first-generation and 500 older adult students in the intervention groups. The intervention group received nudges in their cell phones in Fall 2019, while the control group did not. The intervention group's fall-to-spring persistence rate was four percent higher than the

control group. Such a study was needed in order to assess the effectiveness of the program and the return-on-investment.

Adult Education/ESL Initiatives

To meet an increasing demand for a job-driven adult education system that teaches adults the skills needed for work in "good jobs," **Black Hawk College** introduced the Patient Care Assistant Certificate in Fall 2017. Prior to that, the college offered an eight-week Basic Nurse Assistant Program (NA) that was not eligible for financial aid. By combining the NA course with additional postsecondary coursework in phlebotomy, first aid, and medical terminology, the program now requires 24 credit hours. Furthermore, eligible students may receive funding through the Pell grant. This program is focused on those individuals who wish to pursue a short-term, industry recognized credential in health care. The successful completion of the Patient Care Assistant Certificate awards students with Advanced First Aid and Emergency Red Cross Certification as well as Phlebotomy Certification. Upon successful completion of the Patient Care Assistant Certificate, students are eligible to take the State of Illinois Nurse Assistant Certificate exam. While taking the career and technical postsecondary coursework, students receive support via adult education ensuring successful completion. The program coordinator reaches out to high school equivalency, English language acquisition, and bridge to careers students from the adult education office. Over the last five years, this student population has grown to be largely minority students (70 percent). The Patient Care Assistant Certificate has a high percentage of females vs. males. Additionally, the program has a high completion rate and a high minority student completion.

The Transitional Bilingual Learning Community (TBLC) provides coordinated instruction, advising, and academic support to Hispanic/Latino students who place into English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in their first semester at **Harry S Truman College**. The program is designed to transition students to credit courses taught entirely in English after two semesters. The program also provides a support system that benefits TBLC students throughout their time at Truman College. TBLC classes include ESL instruction and

> *The Transitional Bilingual Learning Community Program at Harry S Truman College is designed to transition students to credit courses taught entirely in English after two semesters.*

other credit courses with bilingual instructors. TBLC instructors work together to provide an interdisciplinary curriculum that covers math, social science, reading, and writing. Additionally, the students meet regularly with a bilingual academic advisor. As a cohort, TBLC students participate in field trips, service learning opportunities, and other community-building activities. Students form close relationships with faculty mentors, their advisor, and each other, providing a support system that remains in place for the duration of their time at Truman College. The TBLC first launched in 2002. A new cohort of 25 to 30 credit students is admitted each academic year. A recent analysis demonstrates that TBLC students have higher retention rates and significantly higher degree completion rates compared to the overall Hispanic/Latino credit population. For example, when reviewing credential completion data of the new-to-credit Fall 2015 cohort, the 4-year credential completion for full-time TBLC students was 40.2 percent compared to the overall full-time Hispanic/Latino 4-year credential completion rate of 35.2 percent.

Morton College, a Hispanic Serving Institution with an 85 percent Hispanic/Latino population, served 1,260 students in the adult education programs (18 percent of the College's total population) in fiscal year 2019. The college provides adult education students (those without a high school diploma and English language learners) the opportunity to enroll in the Automotive

> *The Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) is the implementation of the Integrated Education and Training (IET) model in Illinois. Through the ICAPS program, Morton College provides adult education students the opportunity to enroll in the Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair Certificate course concurrent to their adult education classes.*

Maintenance and Light Repair (MLR) Certificate course concurrent to their adult education classes. This program, Integrated Career Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), allows students who have traditionally had a difficult time transitioning into postsecondary education and training to do so with wrap-around support services. The MLR Certificate is a Ford Motor Company recognized credential. The courses contain components from the Ford training program, and students earn individual certificates in various automotive areas as they progress toward the MLR. The MLR Certificate itself is made up of five automotive courses for a total of 16 college credits. The relationship with Ford has allowed the program to successfully place students into employment after completing their certificates. Each semester, the automotive program hosts a Ford Dealership Career Day. As a part of this event, both ICAPS and regular MLR students are able to interact with employers and in some cases have even landed jobs. The ICAPS program began in 2016, and has served ten students over the past four years, eight of whom were enrolled in the last two years. In fiscal year 2019, the adult education program enrolled four students into their ICAPS program. Of these four students two students will complete their MLR Certificate in the spring of 2020. In fiscal year 2020, four more students enrolled in the ICAPS program. Outside of the ICAPS cohort, the MLR Certificate had 40 completers in the last four fiscal years.

Kaskaskia College provides students in the district that did not earn a high school diploma with the ability to earn a GED®. The college introduced a revamped GED® program beginning in fiscal year 2018, reaching full implementation in fiscal year 2019, to offset a reduction in staff in fiscal year 2017 due to budgetary constraints. Kaskaskia College's GED® department was restructured and, along with one full-time administrator, the number of GED® instructors increased to 13 in fiscal year 2018, and to 18 in fiscal year 2019. Kaskaskia College offered 141 GED® classes in fiscal year 2016, with a duplicated headcount of 423 students. This fell off to 93 classes and a duplicated headcount of 217 in fiscal year 2017, due to a reduction in staffing. The increase in instructors for fiscal year 2018 saw an increase in GED® enrollment to 158 classes and a duplicated headcount of 361. The further expansion for fiscal year 2019 brought the number of classes to 183 with a duplicated headcount of 389. In fiscal year 2017, 25 students obtained their GED®. That number increased to 42 in fiscal year 2018, and 53 in fiscal year 2019. These students went on to earn eight certificates and four degrees from Kaskaskia College.

Credit Connect (CC) is an important component of **Morton College**'s transition programming. It is an opportunity for adult education students to take a for-credit course free of charge concurrently with their English as a Second Language (ESL) or High School Equivalency (HSE) courses. The Credit Connect was piloted in fiscal year 2019. Students who qualify for CC choose a credit course from a select list developed in collaboration with the career and technical education unit. To

qualify, students must meet the test score qualifications, write a short application essay, and interview with a transition coach. Currently, tutoring and regular meetings with the transition coach provide student support. In fiscal year 2019, CC served 30 ESL and HSE students, with six students (20 percent) taking CC courses in multiple semesters. Students completed courses in Business, Computer Aided Design, Office Management Technology, Early Childhood Education, Automotive Technology, and the Health Sciences, with a collective GPA of 3.2. Twelve students went on to take at least one more credit course in fiscal year 2020. Nine of the 15 HSE students (60 percent) graduated with their High School Equivalency Certificates and enrolled in college courses at Morton. CC students reported that their success in the program gave them confidence in their ability to complete college courses. Given this success, Morton plans to expand this program into other career pathways, including Law Enforcement, Computer Information Systems, and Welding.

Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) has been offering the Adult Career Pathway to Healthcare Careers since 2012. The Adult Career Pathway to Healthcare Careers provides an entry point on a pathway to healthcare careers for eligible students. The pathway culminates in 12.5 credit hours and industry recognized certificates, including CPR for

> *The Adult Career Pathway to Healthcare Careers provides an entry point on a pathway to healthcare careers for eligible students at Lincoln Land Community College.*

healthcare, a Basic Nurse Assistant (BNA) Certificate of Completion, and the Illinois State BNA certification. This pathway program, which improves transition of students from adult education to college, utilizes contextualized curriculum, a team-teaching approach, student support services, and transition services. Seventy percent of enrolled students in this pathway from 2012 to 2019 successfully completed the program, earning college credit and industry recognized credentials. In fiscal year 2019, all 10 students who enrolled in the pathway completed successfully, earning 12.5 college credits and three credentials. The coursework included Pre-Healthcare Adult Education, First Year Experience, Health in Today's Society, and Basic Nurse Assistant courses. Additionally, students were required to attend an academic support class for two hours per week.

English Communication for Nursing Assistants (ECNA) is an adult education bridge program at **Parkland College** that provides a pathway into an academic credit program. Non-native English speakers acquire a foundational core of English language healthcare knowledge and oral communication skills that enable them to succeed in the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) program. Success in ECNA is a door opener for immigrant students, allowing them to enter the healthcare career pathway through the CNA program. It provides an alternative path to the TOEFL test. ECNA was launched in the Fall 2018 Semester. ECNA is a semester-long free class offered through adult education. The first cohort met for six hours a week. The two main components of the class are the CNA textbook and the essential 21 CNA language skills. Each set of language skills is learned and practiced through demonstration videos, role plays, and brainstorming. The data from the first academic year indicates that the initiative effectively helps non-native speakers acquire sufficient English language fluency to function in a skilled workplace environment. Lessons learned from the ECNA initiative are being used to build a CTE bridge for non-native speakers so that they can take CTE classes in pneumatics, hydraulics, residential wiring installation, and welding.

Initiatives for High School Students

The purpose of the dual credit program at **Kishwaukee College** (KC) is to enable district students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously and to create a seamless transfer to career and transfer programs. The three main objectives for 2018-2019 were to create the *2 Degrees in 3 Years* plan with area high schools and Northern Illinois University, internally centralize dual credit at KC, and create a dual credit scholarship. The *2 Degrees in 3 Years* initiative, which was implemented in

> *The purpose of the dual credit program at **Kishwaukee College** is to enable district students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously and to create a seamless transfer to career and transfer programs.*

the fall of 2018, is a collaboration of all the superintendents, principals, and counselors of KC's district high schools, administrators from Northern Illinois University, and administrators and academic advisors from KC. The College created a plan for each district high school for their students to complete one year of credit hours toward an associate degree at KC, while still in high school. Furthermore, by internally centralizing dual credit at KC, the Director of Curriculum and Program Development, the Director of Student Outreach and Educational Partnerships, and the newly hired part-time Dual Credit and Curriculum Specialist have been able to create seamless internal and external procedures and processes for course requests, student registration, new Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and instructor credentialing. Success of both the *2 Degrees in 3 Years* program and the creation of an internally centralized dual credit team is evidenced in the growing number of students who enrolled in dual credit courses from 2018-2020. From July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, the dual credit team was able to create 23 new MOUs between Kishwaukee College and various district high schools. Lastly, the fall semester of 2019 was the first semester that the dual credit scholarships were awarded. Eighty-nine former dual credit students who enrolled as full time at KC received this scholarship.

The goals of the Building Bridges into Engineering and Computer Science Project at **Wilbur Wright College**, a Hispanic Serving Institution, are to increase the number of underrepresented students pursuing and completing an associate degree in Engineering or Computer Science, to increase transfer to a 4-year institution within two to three years, and to decrease time-to-degree completion after students transfer to a 4-year institution. The project aims to improve students' math and science skills and provides help to transition from secondary school to college. The program also provides students an opportunity to possibly skip a semester (or semesters) of developmental education, which decreases time to degree. The Engineering Summer Bridge Camp, which took place in the summer of 2019, provided near-STEM-ready students immediate access to very selective engineering programs at Wright College such as the UIUC Engineering Pathways. The inaugural group of camp participants came from 24 high schools across Chicago and consisted of the following: 74 percent of the thirty-one successful camp participants were Hispanic/Latino, 26 percent were women, and 77 percent were first-generation, and nearly all participants were low income. All participants improved their math skills, and a majority eliminated at least one year of Pre-Engineering Math, which easily translates to decreasing time to degree. If the initial cohort is an indication, the Building Bridges into Engineering and Computer Science project is positioned to increase student success in engineering and computer science. The program has also created a possible pathway to prosperity for 30 low-income students.

Olney Central College attempts to reduce remedial coursework by providing additional academic and emotional/social support. In working with high school students taking their first college-level coursework, placement tests were administered to each student in fiscal year 2019. All students were put into courses regardless of placement score levels. Academic coaches were assigned to each student. Through the entire course, students and coaches met to monitor their progress within the courses. Support was both academic and emotional/social in that students were guided through the beginning of the course activities, such as obtaining a textbook and reading the syllabi, as well as preparing for tests and quizzes throughout the course. In the summer programs for year 2018 and year 2019, approximately 143 high school students enrolled in one course at the college level. These courses were Sociology or Speech and were taught on two campuses. Of the 143 students, 46 percent scored above the cut off, and 54 percent scored below the cut-off scores, which would have excluded them from coursework. Of the 143 that took the courses, 100 percent passed with a grade of C or above. These students benefited from academic coaching as well as emotional coaching to move through their initial course at the college level.

Diversity Training/Equity Initiatives

To meet the needs of its diverse students, **Danville Area Community College** created a position of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) in August 2018. The CDO works collaboratively with offices across campus to promote inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially in areas of serving underrepresented groups. The CDO is a senior member of the college's administration team, reporting directly to the President, and is a leader with a strong foundation in nationally recognized best practices and the faith of senior administrators, faculty, students, staff, and external community stakeholders. Under the CDO's leadership, the diversity-oriented committees on campus have been working together toward increasing student retention and completion rates of the underrepresented groups. The COPE (Cost of Poverty Experience) training was provided to all faculty and staff at the Fall 2018 In-Service. Results from the training include recognizing stereotypes of low-income individuals and how faculty and staff can positively relate and change their mindsets. Survey results after the exercise showed that the experience was eye-opening and impactful to the majority of participants. Student Services staff were trained on implicit bias and how to recognize and adjust their thought processes, actions, and procedures when needed. Echoes & Reflections training educated faculty, staff, and community participants on contemporary antisemitism. Ruffalo Noel Levitz's Student Satisfaction Inventory results showed that Fall 2019 students reported that their satisfaction with campus climate had improved since Fall 2017.

The purpose of the Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) initiative is to examine equity gaps and implement strategies that help to close these gaps. **Moraine Valley Community College** became a founding member institution of ILEA in 2018. The team leading ILEA efforts recognizes that Moraine

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Valley benefits from multiple discussions on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics, and has utilized several important opportunities to engage the entire campus in these efforts. The next

phase of this work is implementation of a series of large-scale strategies aimed at helping close the achievement and equity gaps experienced by the college's diverse and low-income students. Moraine Valley is preparing to submit an equity plan with strategies that will help close these gaps from 2020-2025. Although the college is still early in the equity work, these efforts dovetail upon the successful efforts of Moraine Valley's broad retention and completion efforts over the past several years. These strategies have included campus retention conferences, campus-wide retention and completion campaigns, improvements in the quality of online instruction, enhanced tutoring both in the classroom and through the new Academic Skill Center space, efforts to reduce the number of unnecessary withdrawals in high withdrawal courses, increased wrap-around services, and significant faculty and staff professional development. Some of the equity-focused efforts include growing the college's mentoring program for students from minority backgrounds, enhancing early alert through case management of at-risk low-income students, enhancements in the financial aid process designed to improve access for low-income students, using equity-based data for planning, faculty and staff professional development, and revising policies and procedures through an equity-based lens.

The Partnership for College Completion (PCC) is a nonprofit organization founded to catalyze and champion policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students graduate from college. ILEA is the signature initiative of the PCC. **Kishwaukee College** joined the PCC/ILEA in the spring of 2019 in order to address achievement gaps that exist at the college for African American and Hispanic/Latino students and for students who receive Pell grant funding. Between the spring of 2019 and December 2019, the Kishwaukee College PCC team met and developed an equity statement for the college. On December 15, 2019, the college submitted its first equity plan which included a study of the current state of equity at the college, achievement data for all students, and the development of strategies to eliminate the achievement gap for underserved populations. The PCC committee with input for stakeholders across the college identified and recognized the equity gap. The college has committed over $200,000 to new, high priority initiatives which will be implemented in the upcoming year. These initiatives include: the development of an intercultural center, college-wide cultural competency training, revised hiring practices to increase the diversity of the faculty and staff, development of a math success center with a dedicated math success advisor, faculty-led retention strategies, and wrap-around services, including non-academic funding, a student success advisor, and the opening of an on-campus food pantry.

Workforce Development Initiatives

To serve the needs of the diverse student population and learners, **Harold Washington College** (HWC) developed the first nontraditional apprenticeship program in collaboration with Aon, a corporation that specializes in risk management, insurance and reinsurance brokerage, human resources solutions, and outsourcing services globally. Through this

> *Through a partnership with Aon, Harold Washington College offers a two-year apprenticeship program in the areas of human resources, information technology, and insurance.*

partnership, implemented in January 2017, HWC offers a two-year apprenticeship program in the areas of human resources, information technology, and insurance. HWC students gain on-the-job-training experience in the workplace and complete academic coursework that lead to an associate

of applied science (A.A.S.) degree with a concentration in Marketing/Management. The HWC team has developed a strategy that provides wrap-around support, such as professional/career mentors, academic advising, and workforce success coaching. Apprenticeships and work-based learning programs are key pillars to closing the achievement gap. A significant number of African American (38 percent) and Hispanic/Latino (47 percent) students participate in this program. Since its inception, the Aon Apprentice Program has seen tremendous growth in student interest and successful completion. The number of HWC students that earned full-time job placements at Aon after completing their degree grew by 14 percent in one year. In addition, through the collaboration and partnership with DePaul University, HWC developed at 2+2 articulation model. Aon apprentices will complete their two-year A.A.S. degree at HW (paid 100 percent by Aon), then have the option to transition to DePaul to complete their remaining two years to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies with a Business Administration major, including tuition assistance by Aon. A schedule was developed that would allow the apprentices to work full time during the day and take DePaul classes at night.

The **Illinois Central College** (ICC) Workforce Equity Initiative will prepare 184 African American and other adults residing in disproportionately impacted areas within College District 514 with a work credential and a living wage job. This includes zip code 61605, which has a high concentration of African Americans and is rated by the Economic Innovation Group as the most distressed zip code in the state of Illinois with a distress score of 99.9 (2012-2016). Several of the census tracts within the target areas have poverty rates of 50 percent or higher. The project, which was implemented in September 2019, trains participants in the high demand occupations of CNC Operator, Welder, CDL Truck Driver, Local Area Network (LAN) Technician, CISCO Certified Network Administrator, A+ IT Basics Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Emergency Medical Technician, and Paramedic. All participants will enter employment or be placed on a career pathway leading to a job paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage. The project will train at least 184 participants, award 191+ postsecondary certificates and industry credentials, place at least 64 participants into employment, and place at least 55 participants on a pathway to a family sustaining wage.

Olney Central College (OCC) created an additional exit point for students entering the Collision Repair Program in fiscal year 2019. As a result, students are able to receive an industry recognized credential after they complete 30 credit hours in the program. In the beginning of this process, OCC looked to the labor market data to provide some guidance. After reviewing this

> *Olney Central College created an additional exit point for students entering the Collision Repair Program, so they are able to receive an industry recognized credential after they complete 30 credit hours in the program.*

information, the college began the process of creating the program certificate, and stakeholders determined decisions regarding course sequencing and levels of mastery. Employers often hire Collision Repair students with the basic skills and then use on-the-job training to train specific sets of skills and/or needs. Employers in this field have the option of creating an apprenticeship or internship program. While working with the employer, the student is provided the opportunity to enter the workforce more quickly and with quality training. The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners provide additional options to create apprenticeships with the first year of certificate completion and the second year as the apprenticeship stage. An

apprenticeship within this field will include five characteristics necessary for a Department of Labor apprenticeship: business involvement, structured on-the-job training, related instruction, rewards for skill gains, and industry recognized credential(s).

Lincoln Trail College (LTC) developed and implemented two changes to its existing Broadband Telecom Program during fiscal year 2019 to prevent student attrition prior to degree completion. At the recommendation of the Broadband Telecom Advisory Council, industry partners, and the LTC Curriculum Committee, the college created a stackable certificate within its existing Broadband Telecom associate in applied science (A.A.S.) degree. Students accepting employment between their first and second year in the program may now complete the certificate and are positioned to finish the A.A.S. degree at a later time. In addition to creating the stackable credential, the college began exploring apprenticeship models for students to finish their A.A.S. degrees. College personnel met with various industry partners to develop, modify, and finally approve a feasible and appropriate apprenticeship model. In this model, students learn theory and interact with their on-campus counterparts through the college's learning management system (Canvas) and distance-learning media. Employers provide a diversity of experiences for participating students that ensure learning outcomes, topical outlines, and minimum seat time requirements are met for each student. LTC faculty members meet with students and supervisors to document the learning experience. Apprenticeship planning activities coincided with an Illinois CTE Program Improvement Grant. To date, five Broadband Telecom students are expected to earn the new certificate. Of those students, two are first-generation college students. In the spring of 2020, seven Broadband Telecom students participated in the apprenticeship model. Of these students, three are first-generation college students.

Working with fifteen local unions, Highway Construction Careers Training Program at **Lincoln Land Community College** (LLCC) provides a much-needed avenue into a union apprenticeship. The target population for this program includes women, minorities, ex-offenders, and hard to serve populations, such as long-term unemployed. The program, which was implemented in September 2007, is set up to allow students to complete 450 hours of training in a four-month period, address skill deficiencies for the targeted populations, and transition to the highway construction career area. The program also prepares students for union apprenticeship admission, testing, and interview processes; as well as providing skills for decision making, dealing with conflict, budgeting issues, and interviewing. The Program Coordinator works with students to overcome barriers that would impede success, including learning disabilities, transportation, child care, and housing issues. All students receive National Certifications in CPR/First Aid; Forklift, Flagger, and Aerial/Scissor Lift Certification; OSHA 10 Certification; and National Career Readiness Certificate. Students receive stipends to assist with costs during training and are provided tools and boots as well as reimbursement of union application fees. Out of 46 students that started the program, 42 students completed the program (91 percent). The total of 80 percent of students were underrepresented, and 19 students had a felony background. Forty students are employed in a training related industry (87 percent), and 30 of those students are in a union/union apprenticeship program (65 percent).

The purpose of **Rock Valley College**'s Workforce Equity Initiative (RVC-WEI) Grant is to support underrepresented, underserved, and underemployed students to break down barriers such as cost of tuition, transportation, and child care services. This program, which was implemented

in 2019, allows students to complete short-term certificates, which result in post-completion employment. The program has served 30 students with a goal of serving 150 by September 2020. Success in the WEI program is achieved through program elements and strategies sub-contracting with Goodwill Industries to provide wrap-around services. These services include case management/life coaching, transportation, and child care services to participants in RVC-WEI. The life coaches also assist the participants with resume building, interview skills, soft-skills, and hard skills at their weekly meetings. Program success is also achieved through partnerships with community organizations such as NAACP, Eliminate Racism, Boys and Girls Club, and the Rockford Park District. Additionally, WEI partners with the Winnebago County States Attorney's Office. Since its implementation, five students have completed the Computer Numerical Control Program (CNC) certificate, seven students have completed the Cold-Forming program, and two students have completed the Truck Driving Training (TDT) program. The students have either received one or more job offers, have one or more interviews lined up, or received a paid internship. Additionally, a total of 16 students are currently enrolled in one of these three programs and are on track to completion.

The part-time nursing program option at **Highland Community College** (HCC) appeals to students in high-risk categories, such as single parents, women, and first-generation students because it provides an alternative to the full-time, daytime student schedule. Students have more flexibility to take nursing courses in the evening and one day a week, which allows them to work enough hours to maintain health insurance and other benefits to support a family. Students in the part-time program are identified to be currently working in health care. While this is not an admission requirement, it has proven to be a successful way to help students retain knowledge between class days. The part-time program is scheduled over seven academic semesters including summers. Working together with the TRIO Student Support Services program, faculty members introduce students to tutoring and study group supports at nursing orientations. The first cohort of part-time nursing students enrolled in Spring 2016 with 17 admitted students. Eleven of these students graduated on time in 2018, and two more students from the cohort graduated in 2019, achieving a 76 percent completion rate. The Spring 2020 semester had 117 nursing students enrolled in courses, and 64 percent of HCC students were classified as part-time.

Completion initiatives

Wilbur Wright College pilot tested co-curricular Math 118, Math 125, and Math 140 classes in the fall of 2015. Their objective is to enable eligible students to go through the curriculum faster: instead of spending two semesters in regular format courses, they can learn the same topics in one semester in co-curricular math courses. Students in

> *Wilbur Wright College offers co-curricular math courses that enable eligible students to go through the curriculum faster.*

these courses meet four days a week. Classes have a capped enrollment of twenty students. In addition to covering math topics, the students are taught study skills and work on reducing math anxiety. The instructors of co-curricular courses attended professional development workshops designed for teaching these courses. The initial results were promising with the co-curricular math courses outperforming their traditional counterparts in most cases. Unfortunately, the Math 140 co-curricular was discontinued due to declining overall success rates in the course and lower

success rates of students in subsequent math courses. Overall, the college continues to see higher course success rates among the math co-curriculars than in traditional Math 118 and 125 sections. The college has also noted higher success rates in the co-curriculars than in its Math 99 (developmental math) courses. When data is disaggregated at the course level, the college has found a narrower achievement gap among African American students enrolled in co-curricular math courses compared to those enrolled in traditional course sections.

Moraine Valley Community College began implementing retention and completion-focused efforts over a decade ago. Some of this work has been led by a committee known as the Completion Commitment. Faculty and staff serving on the Completion Commitment develop innovative strategies aimed at improving retention and completion of Moraine Valley students. One of the largest early initiatives is the "Agree to Degree" campaign, which asks new students to make a personal commitment to finishing the academic goal they are just starting. Because of the success of the campaign in helping students become more aware of how to achieve their goals, the college realized the need for even broader work by faculty and staff to address retention. In 2015, the college hosted the first campus-wide Retention Conference. Two additional Retention Conferences have been held since, with the goal of continuously adding new strategies and supports that result in increased retention and completion. Building upon the success of these retention initiatives, the Completion Commitment also started a Retention Academy. In the Retention Academy, faculty and staff scholars utilized data-driven action research to address problems impacting retention and student success. Multiple retention and completion metrics are showing promising results due to this hard work. The fall-to-spring across-term retention rates from 2013 versus 2017 show increases of four percent for both Hispanic/Latino students and Pell recipients. The fall-to-fall across-year retention rates show during this same time period a 10 percent increase for African American students, a three percent increase for students with disabilities, and a four percent increase for Pell recipients.

The QuickPath Accelerated Degree Program, formally the Dunham Quick Path program, was created in 2016 at **Waubonsee Community College** through a grant from the Dunham Fund. The purpose of the program is to help underserved students, such as low-income and first-generation students who need additional support, and assist them in completing their associate degrees in half the time. Students entering the program receive individualized coaching, monthly workshops consisting of financial literacy, time management, study skills, and mental health awareness. Courses are given through several modes. Students receive a combination of 8-week face-to-face, online and/or hybrid classes. The program also has a comprehensive one-year schedule, which includes five credit hours for the first summer semester, 25 hours in the fall semester, 24 in the spring semester, and additional six hours in the last summer semester. In the first year of the program, 80 percent of students completed their degrees in one year, and 85 percent completed in one year and a half. In 2019, 80 percent of students completed their degrees in one year.

Harold Washington College (HWC) has the highest student transfer rate within the City Colleges of Chicago. In fiscal year 2019, 55.2 percent of HWC students who completed an associate degree transferred to a four-year college or university within two years of completing their credential. The Transfer Leadership Class (TLC) program was implemented in Fall 2015 to prepare more students for graduation, as well as provide tools and resources to help them transfer into a 4-year institution. The noncredit bearing classes are offered in five-week sessions, with two sections offered each

semester, giving students ample opportunities to participate. The class guides students through the transfer process, giving them the individualized support necessary to achieve their goals. Students in the class learn about the colleges and universities that provide up to full-funding, how to read a financial aid award letter, how to prepare for a successful admissions interview, and how to identify scholarships for which they are qualified. The TLC is free to all City Colleges of Chicago students. Many students who have attended the TLC program have been awarded full-tuition funding, including housing and meal plans for their transfer schools. Approximately 249 students have taken the noncredit Transfer Leadership Class since the spring of 2019. Reflective of Harold Washington College's student population, the majority of students in the class are students of color. High-achieving students in the class are encouraged to apply for the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship, a national scholarship that awards students up to $40,000 a year for up to three years at their transfer school. In fiscal year 2019, Harold Washington College had three Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship winners, and two of those winners were members of the TLC.

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