

**FISCAL YEAR 2012 ILLINOIS COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE SYSTEM  
SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR  
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS**

**FOCUS AREA:**

**GRADUATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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

**Disability Status** – During fiscal year 2012, Illinois community colleges served 12,342 students with disabilities (1.7 percent of all credit enrollments). This figure represents the number of individuals (unduplicated) who self-identified their disability status through the Annual Students with Disabilities (SD) Submission and who used supportive services offered by colleges. In addition, there were 2,505 students with disabilities who did not use supportive services during fiscal year 2012.

Based on the unduplicated count of Students with Disabilities who self-reported and used supportive services, specific disabilities listed were **Learning** including ADHD (58.4 percent of reported disabilities); **Auditory** (3.7 percent); **Medical** including Acquired Brain Injury disability and Systemic/Chronic Health Problems (9.6 percent); **Mobility** (4.7 percent); **Psychological** (16.9 percent); **Visual** (2.6 percent) and **Other** including Speech/Language Impairment and Deaf-Blind and Developmental disabilities (4.1 percent). There are also students with disabilities who self-identify, but do not actually use the extra

services colleges can provide. Based on a duplicated count of student usage, services were provided for 85.4 percent of reported disabilities. Of those services used, based on unduplicated count, more than one-half (58.4 percent) were used by students with Learning Disabilities including ADHD (2012 Student Disability Table).

Census figures show a substantial number of Illinoisans with disabilities. In the 2012 Illinois census estimate, 8.4 percent of all Illinois civilian non-institutionalized population between the ages of 18 and 64 years of age had a disability. Approximately, one fourth of Illinois population age 16 and over with disabilities were employed. (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> Select Illinois→Economic Characteristics→Advanced Search and enter Disability))

**Gender** – The overall Male/Female distribution of students in the Illinois Community College System typically fluctuates little from year to year. Females comprised 54.2 percent of the student population in fiscal year 2012. The percentage of Male students has averaged 45.2 percent over the past five years. Census data show little change in the proportion of Females in Illinois with 50.9 percent estimated in 2012 versus 51.0 percent in 2010 and 2000. (<http://www.census.gov/census2000/states/il.html>, <http://www.census.gov/2010census>) From 2008 to 2012, the number of Female students completing degree programs increased 25.3 percent while the number of Female students enrolled in Illinois community college courses increased 2.9 percent. (2008 and 2012 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report and <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> Select Illinois→Demographics)

**Age** – The average age of Illinois community college credit students was 30.3 in fiscal year 2012 showing no change from fiscal year 2011 (30.3). The median age was 25.1 in fiscal year 2012, similar as in the previous year (25.2). According to the 2012 American Community Survey, the median age of all Illinoisans was estimated to be 37.0 years. The latest census estimates also show that over three-quarters (9.8 million) of all Illinoisans were 18 years of age or above. (2012 Annual Student Enrollment and Completion Report and <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> Select Illinois→Demographics)

*Minority populations were responsible for Illinois' overall population growth from 2000 to 2012.*

**State of Illinois' Racial/Ethnic Distribution** – State census data show that Illinois' population grew over 12.87 million in 2012 compared to 12.83 million in 2010, and 12.42 million in 2000. (<http://www.census.gov/census2000/states/il.html>, <http://www.census.gov/2010census> Select Illinois, and 2012 Index of Need, Table 1 [http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables\\_2012.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2012.pdf)) These detailed Illinois census data indicate that the state's population grew 3.7 percent between 2000 and 2012. Illinois' 2012 census data show that Whites/Caucasians remained the largest racial/ethnic group. However, minority populations were responsible for Illinois' overall population growth from 2000 to 2012, as the percent of Caucasians decreased from 73.5 percent to 71.2 percent of the population. (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-il.pdf> and 2012 Index of Need, Table 1 [http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables\\_2012.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2012.pdf) )

The racial/ethnic data collection methodology changed for the 2000 census and continued in the 2012 census data. The 2012 census data showed that 1.7 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 2012 data in the table. These duplicated Latino population counts show substantial growth, from 1,530,262 in 2000 to 2,101,208 in 2012 (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-il.pdf> and 2012 Index of Need, Table 1 [http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables\\_2012.pdf](http://www.iccb.org/pdf/reports/IndexOfNeedTables_2012.pdf)).

Illinois' largest minority group in 2000 was African American and in 2012 was Latino. Compared to 2000, African American counts in 2012 decreased from 15.1 percent to 14.8 percent, whereas Asian American counts increased from 3.4 percent to 5.0 percent, Native American from 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent, and Latino from 12.3 percent to 16.3 percent.

	<i>White/ Caucasian</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Asian* American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Some Other Race**</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino*** (Duplicated)</i>
<b>2000</b>	73.5%	15.1%	3.4%	0.2%	7.7%	12.3%
<b>2010</b>	71.5%	14.5%	4.6%	0.3%	9.0%	15.8%
<b>2012</b>	71.2%	14.8%	5.0%	0.6%	8.5%	16.3%

\*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 & 2012 Index of Need, Table 1.

**Racial/Ethnic Distribution Community College System Credit Programs**

– Overall in fiscal year 2012, minority students accounted for over one-third (39.3 percent) of the individuals enrolled in credit coursework at Illinois community colleges whose ethnicity was known. Fiscal year 2012 data show that minority representation was similar to the prior year (FY 2011 = 38.4 percent). Fiscal year 2012 results are above the five-year average (37.2 percent). African American students – 117,227 in fiscal year 2012 – accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments for the first time since fiscal year 1999. Students identifying themselves as Latino – 112,746 in fiscal year 2012 – constitute the second largest minority group in the latest data. The fiscal year 2012 proportionate representation by African-American students was higher by almost one percentage point in comparison to the prior year (17.2 percent in fiscal year 2012 versus 16.3 percent in fiscal year 2011). The Latino student representation was slightly higher than the previous year (16.5 percent in fiscal year 2012 versus 16.4 percent in fiscal year 2011). Over the longer term – over the past five years – the Illinois Community College System’s enrollments have increased across most racial/ethnic groups. Non-Resident Alien (-51.6 percent) was the only minority group with a decrease compared to fiscal year 2008.

*Students identifying themselves as African-American – 117,227 in fiscal year 2012 – accounted for the largest number of minority enrollments in the Illinois Community College System this year for the first time since fiscal year 1999.*

Student racial/ethnic representation varies across broad program areas (PCS). For example, Table 2 contains information about the racial/ethnic distribution of Adult Education (ABE/ASE) and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) enrollments. Minority students accounted for almost three-fourths (71.2 percent) of the individuals enrolled in community college Adult Education coursework. In fiscal year 2012, African American students accounted for more than one-third (36.9 percent) of the adult education enrollments. The latest figures show that Latino students accounted for almost one-third (31.9

percent) of the individuals enrolled in Adult Education coursework. Additionally, minority students accounted for more than eight out of every ten (83.5 percent) individuals enrolled in community college ESL coursework during fiscal year 2012. Latino students accounted for over two-thirds (68.3 percent) of the community college ESL students.

**Table 2**  
**Fiscal Year 2012 Minority Students Enrolled in Adult Education (ABE/ASE) and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) Programs**

<i>Program</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
<b>ABE/ASE %</b>	<b>36.9%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>
Number	15,827	13,703	750	12	229	73	30,594
<b>ESL %</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>83.5%</b>
Number	1,945	30,694	4,646	59	85	66	37,495

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

Table 3 provides the distribution of minority students enrolled in Baccalaureate/Transfer and Career/Technical programs. During fiscal year 2012, minorities comprised three out of every ten (30.9 percent) Baccalaureate/Transfer enrollees. An examination of each minority racial/ethnic group's representation across the Baccalaureate/Transfer program area indicates that African American students accounted for the largest minority group enrollments (14.0 percent), followed by Latino students (10.9 percent), Asian students (4.9 percent), Native American students (0.4 percent), Pacific Islander students (0.4 percent), and Nonresident Alien students (0.3 percent). Table 3 also shows that about three out of every ten students enrolled in career and technical programs were members of a minority group (30.4 percent). African American students had the highest representation among minorities in Career/Technical programs and accounted for 15.3 percent of the population. Latino students had the second largest Career/Technical program enrollment (10.3 percent), followed by Asian students (3.8 percent), Native American students (0.4 percent), Pacific Islander students (0.3 percent), and Nonresident Alien students (0.2 percent).

**Table 3**  
**Fiscal Year 2012 Minority Students Enrolled in Baccalaureate Transfer and Career and Technical Programs**

<i>Program</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Minority Subtotal</i>
<b>Bacc./Transfer %</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>30.9%</b>
Number	39,412	30,728	13,820	921	1,170	1,088	87,139
<b>Career/Tech. %</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>
Number	30,158	20,292	7,383	313	857	669	59,672

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

The following section of the report supplies information about the racial/ethnic characteristics of students who graduated in fiscal year 2012. Table 4a provides a point in time or cross cutting count of the number

of degrees and certificates awarded to minority students within the Illinois Community College System during fiscal year 2012.

Across all minority groups in 2012, Career/Technical program graduates outnumbered Baccalaureate/ Transfer program graduates. Table 4a shows that during fiscal year 2012, almost three times as many minorities completed Career/Technical programs (N = 13,721) as completed Baccalaureate/Transfer programs (N = 4,724). Minority students accounted for 31.2 percent of all Career/Technical graduates, compared to 26.2 percent of Baccalaureate/Transfer graduates. About 14 percent of Career/Technical program completers were African American (13.9 percent), followed by Latino (11.2 percent), Asian (5.3 percent), Native American (0.4 percent), Pacific Islander (0.3 percent), and Nonresident Alien (0.2 percent). African American students represented a smaller proportion of the Baccalaureate/Transfer graduates (9.5 percent) in comparison to the proportion of the African American Career/Technical graduates (13.9 percent). Latino students accounted for the largest group of Baccalaureate/Transfer minority graduates (11.7 percent), followed by African American students (9.5 percent), Asian students (3.9 percent), Nonresident Alien students (0.5 percent), Native American students (0.4 percent), and Pacific Islander students (0.3 percent).

*During fiscal year 2012, almost three times as many minorities completed Career/ Technical programs as completed Baccalaureate/ Transfer programs.*

<b>Table 4a</b>							
<b>Fiscal Year 2012 Minority Student Completers in Baccalaureate Transfer and Career and Technical Programs</b>							
<b>Program</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Nonresident Alien</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Minority Subtotal</b>
<b>Bacc./Transfer %</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>
Number	1,716	2,109	702	82	68	47	4,724
<b>Career/Tech. %</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>31.2%</b>
Number	6,113	4,908	2,335	77	177	111	13,721

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

Table 4b provides a comparison of fiscal year 2008 through fiscal year 2012 completions in the Illinois Community College System by race/ethnicity. The number of collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded to Illinois community college students in fiscal year 2012 totaled 64,246. Nearly one-third (30.1 percent) of all degrees and certificates in fiscal year 2012 were awarded to minority students (nonwhite) whose race/ethnicity was known. Table 4b contains comparative completion data for the last five years. Compared to last year, there has been a large increase in minority completions among Latinos (18.8 percent). Increases in completions were also noted for Nonresident Alien students (10.8 percent), Asian (9.6 percent), and Native American students (7.5 percent) while the completion count stayed about the same for African American students. There has been a decrease in minority completions among Pacific Islanders (-21.8 percent) since last year. Compared to fiscal year 2008, the total number of minority completers increased 27.7 percent.

<i>Table 4b</i>							
<i>Fiscal Years 2008-2012 Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Race/Ethnicity</i>							
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
<i>White</i>	35,735	36,043	38,015	41,316	42,439	2.7%	18.8%
<i>African American</i>	7,515	7,836	8,427	8,381	8,380	0.0%	11.5%
<i>Latino</i>	4,538	5,026	5,633	6,121	7,274	18.8%	60.3%
<i>Asian</i>	2,713	2,918	2,942	2,844	3,116	9.6%	14.9%
<i>Nonresident Alien</i>	218	432	207	148	164	10.8%	-24.8%
<i>Native American</i>	180	190	170	241	259	7.5%	43.9%
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	--	--	--	211	165	-21.8%	--
<i>Unknown</i>	416	608	1,490	2,276	2,449	7.6%	488.7%
<b><i>Minority Subtotal</i></b>	<b>15,164</b>	<b>16,402</b>	<b>17,379</b>	<b>17,946</b>	<b>19,358</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>

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

Table 5 contains over time data (fiscal year 2008 through fiscal year 2012) on student completers by gender. During fiscal year 2012, nearly six out of ten degrees or certificates were earned by females (56.1 percent). The number of female completers increased 3.3 percent and male completers 5.9 percent compared to the previous fiscal year. When compared to fiscal year 2008, the number of both female and male completers increased by about 25 percent (25.3 percent and 25.1 percent, respectively).

<i>Table 5</i>							
<i>Fiscal Years 2008-2012 Student Completers in the Illinois Community College System by Gender</i>							
<i>Gender</i>	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	One-Year % Change	Five-Year % Change
<i>Male</i>	22,537	23,224	24,620	26,625	28,184	5.9%	25.1%
<i>Female</i>	28,778	29,829	32,264	34,913	36,062	3.3%	25.3%

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

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.

Table 6 shows that in fiscal year 2012, minority faculty and staff accounted for 17.1 percent of tenured faculty/officials and managers, 14.9 percent of non-tenured faculty, 23.7 percent of professional staff/protective service workers, 27.3 percent of office and clerical/para-professionals, and 39.6 percent of service maintenance employees.

Compared to previous fiscal year, in fiscal year 2012 minority representation among tenured faculty/officials and managers increased 3.1 percent, among non-tenured faculty increased 2.5 percent,

among professional staff/protective service workers increased 2.4 percent, among office and clerical/para-professionals increased 1.8 percent and was up 12.2 percent among service maintenance.

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

**Table 6**  
**Fiscal Year 2012 Minority Faculty and Staff in Illinois Community Colleges**

	Tenured Faculty/ Officials & Managers	Non-tenured Faculty	Professional Staff/ Protective Service Workers	Office and Clerical/ Para-professionals	Service Maintenance	Other
African American %	9.8%	7.8%	13.7%	14.4%	23.4%	4.2%
Number	581*	1,420*	1,332	720	707	1
Latino %	3.5%	3.3%	6.4%	9.8%	14.6%	0.0%
Number	206	597*	619	490	441	0
Asian %	3.4%	3.4%	3.1%	2.6%	1.0%	4.2%
Number	205*	614*	297	129	29	1
Native American %	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%
Number	15	56	34	19	14	0
Non-Resident Alien %	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Number	4	18	2	0	1	0
Pacific Islander %	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Number	3	16	16	6	3	0
Minority Subtotal %	17.1%	14.9%	23.7%	27.3%	39.6%	8.3%
Number	1,014*	2,721*	2,300	1,364	1,195	2

\*includes revised college figures

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

### **BEST PRACTICES**

The following section provides information about best practices, which each college from the Illinois Community College system reported in fiscal year 2012, aimed at increasing the number of graduates and educational attainment. These representative initiatives provide helpful information about project components and outcomes around initiatives in the following areas: Secondary-Postsecondary College and Career Readiness/Articulation; Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment; Early Alert; Transfer Centers/Transition Services; Contextualized Instruction; Student Success Centers; Advising; Tutoring; Bridge Programs; Degree Monitoring/Degree Audits; New Student Orientation; and Other Select Initiatives.

### ***Secondary-Postsecondary College and Career Readiness/Articulation***

*Program Articulation is a planned process linking educational institutions to assist students in making a smooth transition from one level of education to another.*

To become college or career ready, students must develop knowledge, skills, and habits to succeed in postsecondary education or training that leads to a career. Program Articulation is a planned process that prepares students to succeed beyond high school by linking educational institutions to assist students in making a smooth transition from one level of education to another.

Students' lack of college readiness/placement into developmental math is more prevalent than in other disciplines. Through **Elgin Community College's** (ECC) Alliance for College Readiness partnership, a new fourth-year high school math course was developed and aimed to reach students who would not normally enroll in mathematics during their senior year in high school. These students are at high risk for placing into remedial mathematics upon enrollment in college. The overarching goal of this project is to improve college readiness in mathematics in Community College District 509 by increasing the number of high school students who take a fourth-year math course and by disseminating best practices through the establishment of a regional learning community of high school and college math faculty who teach this new course. The fourth-year high school math course was developed by faculty at Elgin Community College during the summer 2012, and the school districts' adoption processes started in fall 2012. Student enrollment began in fall 2013. The resulting course is aligned to the Common Core State Standards; aligned to ECC's highest developmental mathematics course; and aligned to college-ready math expectations at Northern Illinois University.

In spring 2013 **Southwestern Illinois College** (SWIC) will complete five years of the Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP), a program aimed at preparing minorities and females for entry-level work in highway construction. Funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and operating under an agreement with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), HCCTP targets the educationally and economically disadvantaged persons from East St. Louis and the surrounding communities. HCCTP is a joint project between Southwestern Illinois College's Technical Education division and Adult Basic Education department. Adult Basic Education provides recruitment, intake, case management, record-keeping and instructors for the reading, math and job skills. Technical Education provides instructors for the construction-related coursework and field experiences. It also links participants with the college's network of district construction professionals. SWIC's HCCTP program became a model for other Illinois construction programs. It remains the most successful of the programs now operating at various campuses throughout the state.

The Plus 50 Completion Strategy at **Spoon River College** aims to help workers who are still struggling to recover from the economic recession, which sparked record unemployment about half a decade ago, earn non-credit credentials in high demand fields, obtain certificates and degrees, and upgrade computer skills so that they may get back into the workforce as soon as possible. The initiative's support services assist the Plus 50 adults with re-cultivating study habits, navigating an admissions system, and deciding on a path of study that will lead to a completed degree or credential for a new career. The Plus 50 Completion Strategy, which is funded with a four-year grant from Lumina Foundation, began in 2010-2011 and is part of a national effort. The overall goal of the four-year project is to serve 9,000 students nationwide with a 40 percent completion rate. Spoon River College has been selected to serve as a mentor college and as a part of American Association of Community College's Speakers' Bureau this year.

Since the fall semester 2003, **Kaskaskia College's** delivery of their practical nursing program to East St. Louis Community College Center (ESLCCC) has consistently improved access for underrepresented

students seeking postsecondary short-term certificate training within the East St. Louis community and thus increased their educational attainment. Attending college courses in their home community taught by faculty who live in the community has removed barriers and led to success for many students in the surrounding area. Students attending the ESLCCC have reflected the characteristics of the community over the past nine fiscal years: 79 percent of the students completing the practical nursing program there are African American. In contrast, only 3 percent of African American students are enrolled at Kaskaskia College. Many of the ESLCCC practical nursing graduates have continued their education after acceptance as an advanced placement student in the registered nursing program at Kaskaskia College. After becoming a licensed practical nurse and being accepted into the program a student can advance past the first semester of the registered nursing program and complete his or her Associate in Applied Science in Registered Nursing or Associate Degree in Nursing. Each August, twenty students are admitted to the ESLCCC program. Graduate surveys indicate that 89 percent of practical nursing students secured employment after completion (with 94 percent in a field related to their training) at an average annual salary of \$26,138.

The Jobs & Innovation Accelerator Challenge Engineering Program is a targeted grant initiative within the Rockford Area Aerospace Cluster. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration. The goal of this grant initiative is to train new and current workers with the skills needed for current and projected growth in the aerospace industry, with a focus on bringing underrepresented and disadvantaged populations into this sector. The program is a partnership activity of **Rock Valley College** (RVC) and Northern Illinois University (NIU) with the support from the local Workforce Connection Office. The grant was implemented in October 2011 and will end in September 2015. There are currently 6 minority students, 5 women, 3 veterans, and 1 disabled student enrolled in the program. Seventy-two percent of the students are either unemployed or under-employed. Students are provided funding for nearly 75 percent of their Associate in Engineering Science degree. This completes their first two years of pre-engineering curriculum prior to transfer to NIU. Business partners from industry via the Joint Institute of Engineering & Technology Aerospace are an instrumental element in providing the internship, mentoring, and industry conduit between the educational partners (RVC & NIU) and the students.

For the past 30 years, **Kaskaskia College** has partnered with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to help combat recidivism, educate inmates and increase the amount of college graduates within the prison populations. Over the past four years, Kaskaskia College has modernized the programs for inmates. At present, several vocational programs and one preparatory program are conducted at the Kaskaskia College Vocation School at Centralia Correctional Center. Inmates can achieve college certificates through a variety of career tracks: Electronics, Construction Occupations, Commercial Cooking, Commercial Custodial Program, Career Technologies Program, and Distance Learning Program. The Kaskaskia College partnership with IDOC has been successful as the recidivism rates of inmates who participated in correctional center programs are much lower in comparison to the State of Illinois average of 51.1 percent. For example, of those who completed the Electronics program, only 6 percent have returned to prison within three years after their release back to society (Based on data from years 2008-2010 retrieved from IDOC and the Judici Court Docket Website).

The purpose of the partnership between **Highland Community College** (HCC) and the Freeport Housing Authority (FHA) is to reach out to underserved and diverse community members and offer them on-site educational programs at Housing Authority. The college strategic plan identifies three key goals that are served by this partnership including the following: proactively identifying emerging programmatic opportunities; meeting program delivery needs of current and prospective students; and increasing college-level enrollment. The courses offered include Keyboarding, Word, PowerPoint, Welding, and Food

Sanitation. Next to courses at the FHA facility, HCC provides information on financial aid, testing and registration services as well as soft skills training necessary for successful hiring.

**Kishwaukee College** has a long history of collaboration with all local area secondary school districts. Together they attempt to develop a streamline approach to assist students with their transition from high school to postsecondary education. The Illinois High School to College Success Report yielded data to facilitate discussions between local high schools and postsecondary education institutions (Illinois Board of Higher Education 2010). It was agreed that specific coursework in each high school needed to be analyzed to determine how it affected college placement and performance. Students were analyzed based on which high school courses they were able to successfully complete with a grade of “C or higher” and progress through their high school curriculum. Individual comprehensive reports were designed to illustrate each high school’s educational path and how they affected placement and performance at Kishwaukee College. For example, successful completion of an advanced English class versus a standard one in senior year increased college-level placement by as much as 10 percent.

### ***Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment***

Dual credit/dual enrollment classes ease the transition from high school to postsecondary education by preparing high school students for college-level coursework and giving them a sense of what enrollment in college entails. On top of that, dual credit courses enable high school students to earn both high school and college credit before high school graduation. Therefore, by reducing the cost of college education, shortening the period of time to complete a certificate or degree program, and decreasing the need for remediation, dual credit/dual enrollment classes contribute to the goal of increasing the graduation rates.

*Dual credit courses enable high school students to take college-level courses, earning them both high school and college credit before high school graduation.*

The Dual Credit Program at **Rend Lake College** was initiated in the fall semester of fiscal year 2001 with the purpose to better fulfill the college mission and serve its diverse student population. The Dual Credit Program offers the advantage of completing multiple college courses prior to high school graduation to district high school students. Sequential dual credit math and English courses provide time savings for the students, and allow better articulation between high school and college courses. A mentoring system was established to ensure that the dual credit course maintains the same level of instruction as the college course. A Rend Lake College instructor serves as a mentor to the new high school dual credit instructor during the first semester the new dual credit course is taught. The mentor is required to observe and evaluate the dual credit course. A strong dual credit mentoring system ensures quality delivery of academic and career and technical courses. Equally important, the mentoring system facilitates the development of working relationships between Rend Lake College instructors and their high school counterparts, improving smoother transition between high school and college-level classes.

**Lake Land College** (LLC) offers transfer and career and technical courses to qualified high school students in order to extend access to affordable higher education to a larger percentage of district residents, stimulate and challenge students in their junior and senior years of high school, and give students advanced college placement upon entrance. Students who participate in dual credit courses improve their college-learning skills including rigorous learning in the senior year, development of realistic expectations of college work, understanding of academic skills, increase of in-depth knowledge of subject area, and development of time management and effective study skills. In 1998, Lake Land College began offering Accelerated College Enrollment (ACE) courses, also known as dual credit courses today. ACE courses were different than

traditional dual enrollment courses as they were offered at various high school locations, during the regular high school day, and taught by high school faculty meeting the same qualifications as those of full-time and adjunct LLC faculty. Since the inception of the program, LLC has consistently offered dual credit courses across its district in both fall and spring semesters. Lake Land College offers seventy-nine different courses across its district to 33 high schools (29 public, 2 private, 1 vocational, and 1 alternative). The LLC Dual Credit Program adheres to the Illinois Community College Board Administrative Rules, the Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act, and the college's board policy. During the 2010-11 academic years, LLC served 1,272 dual credit students, earning a total 9,567.5 credits (7.5 credits per student). These credits equate to a savings of \$887,864 in tuition and fees from LLC (an average of \$698.01 per student). The average LLC GPA of dual credit students was 3.37 (on a 4.00 scale).

When high school students are engaged in college-level learning that leads to the development of solid career goals, they are more likely to transition in postsecondary education immediately after their graduation from high school. Dual credit not only accelerates completion opportunities but also makes these opportunities possible at a reduced cost to students. Consequently, **Richland Community College** aims to increase enrollment in dual credit. The activities offered at RCC that promote the achievement of the goal include College 101, Dual Credit Night, and the Transfer Academy. The progress of dual credit students will be tracked to monitor continuation in college and time to degree completion.

**Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC)** offers dual credit courses in its district to provide educational opportunities for high school students. Tuition-free courses are taught during the high school day by a high school instructor as part of the regular teaching load. LLCC's dual credit initiative has been in place in a limited fashion for more than a decade. In the past four years, a more focused and centralized effort with standardized procedures has developed. The focus on providing more opportunities for Career and technical education students have improved dual credit opportunities for a wider range of students. High schools are realizing the benefit to the students of the dual credit program and are contacting LLCC about participating in the program or developing programs to meet the needs of their students. Nearly half (48.6 percent) of the college district's fiscal year 2011 dual credit students have continued their education at LLCC, while one-quarter (25.8 percent) have transferred to another institution.

**Spoon River College (SRC)** has partnered with all in-district high schools to offer the Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment Program which allows eligible high school juniors or seniors to take college-level courses and earn college credits, giving them a head start on their college career. Furthermore, the program offers opportunities for improving educational attainment for underserved student populations. The college commitment to dual credit is seen through reduced tuition and fees for these courses as well as a specific scholarship fund through the college foundation for dual credit students. The number of students participating in dual credit/dual enrollment continues to increase at SRC each year. For the spring 2013 semester, 291 high school students are registered for 1,291 dual credit hours at Spoon River College. This represents an increase of nearly 16 percent in credit hours and 10 percent in headcount compared to 2012. The term Dual Credit pertains to students who wish to receive both high school and college credit simultaneously. The college class can be taken at the high school facility with an SRC qualified instructor, at an SRC campus location, or online as approved by high school administration. The term Dual Enrollment pertains to students who do not need the college class to count toward high school graduation requirements or the class is considered a remedial level course and does not qualify as a dual credit course.

The Advanced Manufacturing Technology program at **Wabash Valley College (WVC)** began offering dual credit courses to the local senior level high school students in the spring semester of 2012. During fall 2012 through spring 2013, dual credit courses were offered as a one year, two semester program. These courses give high school students entry-level Manufacturing/Engineering training while allowing them to explore a variety of manufacturing career opportunities. The program integrates academic and

application-oriented curricula and includes supervised lab experiences. In fall 2014, the program is scheduled to be offered to junior and senior high school students as a one- or two-year program. With full implementation of the program, the number of students in the Advanced Manufacturing Technology program is expected to rise significantly. Full implementation will also allow high school juniors to participate, allowing more students to experience different career pathways sooner. Seventy percent of students who completed the program pilot in spring 2012 enrolled in WVC Career and Technical Education. A direct correlation in attending the Dual Credit program classes and the program enrollees' selection of Wabash Valley College as their preferred supplier of postsecondary education is apparent. Familiarity with the program, faculty, and institution creates a strong bridge between secondary and post-secondary transition for these students.

### ***Early Alert***

*Early alert is an intervention system designed to identify, reach out, and provide support to students experiencing difficulties in the classroom with a collaborative effort among faculty, staff, and administrators, in order to increase student retention and success.*

Early alert is an intervention system designed to identify, reach out, and provide support to students experiencing difficulties in the classroom with a collaborative effort among faculty, staff, and administrators, in order to increase student retention and success. **Joliet Junior College** (JJC) uses the Academic Intervention Tool, software powered by Starfish Retention Solutions, which is designed to boost student retention rates as it improves communication between faculty and students regarding

individual course progress, provides early academic intervention and support to increase student intervention and responsiveness with resources, and encourages student behaviors (i.e. attending classes, seeking tutoring, or counseling services). Through the Academic Intervention Tool, implemented in fall 2010 and refined in fall 2011, academic intervention flags are raised by instructors at mid-semester and late in the semester. Faculty use of the system (raising 9,417 intervention flags over the 2011-12 academic year) and special population flag responders attempting to follow up on identified flags and increasing intervention communication serve as evidence of success. Management of the system is going to increase as the college has committed funding to further develop academic intervention support for the 2012-13 academic year.

As a complementary action to the Academic Intervention Tool, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) at JJC took a proactive step in order to retain underrepresented students by connecting with African American and Latino students with below a 2.0 cumulative GPA through the Academic Intervention Initiative. The total of 726 students was asked through email to schedule an appointment with an OMSA outreach and retention specialist. The students who responded to the academic intervention email received phone and email advising. Over a dozen students attended face-to-face appointments with an OMSA retention specialist. They were tracked for continued persistence and improvement in their GPA's. At the end of the spring 2012 semester, 69 percent of students that met with an OMSA advisor showed an increase in their cumulative GPA, and 62 percent of the students now have over a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

**Wabash Valley College** uses the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as an early alert system with the purpose of assisting students who would otherwise have difficulty persisting and ultimately completing their college education. It starts with identifying students' innate personality strengths and their personal preferences as they relate to career preferences when they take the MBTI Career Report. The goal of this indicator test is to create a counseling method which will align the students' strengths with their career path. This is to avoid many of the issues which arise from students' natural preferences being vastly different

from what is required in a certain career path. The MBTI has been utilized for career counseling since the fall of 2009. Data gathered has shown that taking the MBTI Career Report has increased students' confidence in their major and career selections as well as their confidence that they will finish college.

In fall 2011, **College of DuPage** (COD) implemented the Early Alert Program with the purpose to increase retention and decrease the number of students in academic probation and/or suspension by identifying and effectively intervening with students who are exhibiting at-risk behaviors and establishing a referral process available to faculty. The early alert system at COD is a collaborative effort between full-time and part-time faculty, student success counselors, program advisors and academic support services. The system is based on working together as a team in an involved, proactive and supportive approach to increase students' academic success. Classroom faculty play a key role in identifying struggling students early in a course and counselors/advisors play a key role in providing outreach, support and direction to those identified students in a prescribed and timely fashion. During the first year of implementation 451 students were referred, and 395 students were referred in the following term. The student case files were tracked through the end of the respective term. Through the preliminary review and analysis of the student case file statuses at the end of the term, efforts were made to address the concern of the high number of students not responding at all to the early alert outreach efforts. The college has seen some improvements in this measure with an 8 percent decrease in the percentage of students not responding in fall 2011 compared to the rate not responding in fall 2012. The college will continue to monitor and analyze the effectiveness of this initiative and will engage in strategies to improve its effectiveness for student success.

'Students First!' is an Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) institutional assessment initiative created as a result of participation in the Higher Learning Commission Academy for Student Learning. The initiative is a continuous improvement process used by faculty, staff, and administration to measure the overall effectiveness in all areas which have impact on student success. Different 'Students First!' projects have been implemented by each IECC district department. Since spring 2012, the Early Alert Process was implemented at **Frontier Community College** to increase the number of students retained in classes. The Early Alert Process begins when a progress report is sent to both students and their advisors, who then contact students by phone to discuss the issues listed on the progress report. These issues include attendance, current grade, incomplete work, the need to speak to the instructor, and the possible need for services such as tutoring and/or accommodations. The instructor use of progress reports is being promoted to all faculty members as both an effective way to help students understand their current course progress and to provide them with other services that will help them be successful in their classes. Data shows an increase in overall progress reports. Spring 2012 recorded 42 progress reports and fall 2012 recorded 62 progress reports. Twenty-six percent of students receiving progress reports in spring 2012 enrolled in 2012 classes and 70 percent did not enroll. Fall 2012 reports 53 percent of students enrolling for spring 2013 and 47 percent not enrolling. Results are very encouraging for improving persistence and retention. Data is continually being gathered for the Early Alert Process but immediate results seem promising.

GradesFirst, a new Early Alert System, implemented in September, 2012, at City Colleges of Chicago, provides an opportunity for faculty members to alert a student that they perceive is in danger of failing a course or needs additional support. This alert not only notifies the student, but also the student's caseload academic advisor. When the student responds to the alert through visiting the advisor or using tutors, this information is logged in the system for all of the stakeholders to see. In addition, GradesFirst stores all communications to a student (via phone, email or texting) so that an integrated record

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is available for faculty, staff and administrators to view. In addition, there is a place to upload documents for the students (including degree plans). The tool provides “wraparound” services for students to increase student success and also provides many reports to track the outreach efforts and the impact on student success. Preliminary end-of-fall 2012 term data on GradesFirst usage are promising. For example, **Harold Washington College** had a 44 percent faculty response rate with 15 percent of students marked at-risk. Academic advisors reached out to the students at risk to provide support and education about resources including tutoring, the Writing lab, etc. More research is underway to analyze the impact of this outreach on student success.

The No Show Report was implemented in fall 1997 at **Frontier Community College**. On the first day of the semester, instructors are required to submit an electronic roster. Students who do not show up on the first day of classes receive a No Show or “NS”. Next, advisors review report to check the rosters for any “NS”. Any student reported as a no show is contacted. By contacting the student, assessments are made on why they did not show up. In some cases the students were confused by the start date, out of town, ill or had personal conflicts. Once the issue is identified the goal is to help them remedy the situation. This keeps students from being dropped or falling too far behind to be successful in the class. This effort assists with student retention and persistence. Data going back to January 2012 suggest that this process is working. Within this time, 203 students were contacted. Of those students, 142 (70 percent) that were absent on the first day of class remained in class. 36 (45 percent) students absent on the first day of class withdrew from class. Some reasons for the withdrawals were identified as work conflict, family conflict, personal conflict or no financial aid.

The purpose of the Stop-out/Drop-out Campaign at **John Wood Community College (JWCC)** is to investigate why students have dropped out or stopped attending classes and determine if there is a workable solution for their return to school. Returning students who successfully complete their desired degrees or certificates will thus contribute to the JWCC’s goal of increasing retention and graduation rates. The tactics of the campaign, implemented in the summer of 2012, include sending postcards to drop-out students that motivate them to return to postsecondary education or contacting them through a phone survey to find out the reasons for quitting the college in order to improve remediation of potential drop-out students. Surveyed students who have expressed an interest in returning to JWCC have been given information on re-enrollment and financial aid.

### ***Transfer Centers/Transition Services***

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**Lincoln Trail College** offers pre-college student services to interested students who are starting with varying backgrounds such as the GED® test, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and dislocated worker programs for transitioning adults. These services have been offered to a varying degree through the history of Lincoln Trail College, but throughout the academic years these

services are continually revisited and evaluated. For the fiscal/academic year 2012-2013, new methods were designed and implemented such as the GED® orientation day and high school campus visit days. Since the inception of these services, GED® and ABE completions have been increasing and the students

have been successfully transitioning from these areas into the career and technical educational programs offered at Lincoln Trail College.

As part of its Alliance for College Readiness, **Elgin Community College (ECC)** recently implemented Transition Academy, a program targeting at-risk high school students in grades 10 through 12 in Community College District 509 in which 10 high schools agreed to nominate students for this Transitions Academy. The planning for this program took place during the fall 2012 semester. Deployment began in the spring 2013 semester. Students meet at ECC every second Saturday of the month during the school year and will meet again for two weeks in the summer. The goal of Transition Academy is to improve college readiness in District 509. The program works to help students build emotional intelligence and self-efficacy and targets increasing science and math readiness. The summer program will contextualize math and science learning with real life industry problems and will work with local area industries to bring the students into the industries to perform math and science experiments. Each student is also paired with an adult mentor from the ECC community or college family.

TRIO Educational Talent Search program is a federally funded program that identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds with the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and to continue on and complete their postsecondary education. The program, which was implemented at **Prairie State College** between September 1, 2011, and August 31, 2012, targets students in grades six through twelve for early intervention to enhance their educational experiences and career vision. For students from low-income families or who may be the first generation in their family to attend college, the program complements education through counseling, college admission education, and orientation on financial aid and scholarships. Seventy percent of seniors served during the project year graduated with a regular diploma within the standard number of years.

Destination College, a TRIO Talent Search project, identifies and assists individuals in targeted middle and high schools who have potential to succeed in higher education. The program also serves veterans, high school dropouts and adults who want to continue their education. Destination College provides cultural experiences as well as academic, career, and financial aid advisement to its participants, encouraging them to overcome class, social and cultural barriers to realize their dream of a college education. **Lake Land College** received the TRIO Destination College grant in September of 2006 and was awarded their second five-year grant cycle in 2011. The program serves 600 qualified applicants in 9 school districts and 17 schools per year. Since the implementation of the TRIO Talent Search project, it has continued development to increase services to its participants. Destination College continues to meet all of the annual performance goals as identified through the grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Education. During the 2011-12 academic year, 79 percent of Destination College participants enrolled in an institution of higher education by the fall term immediately following graduation.

GED® Recipients' Success in College is an initiative with the goal of increasing the number of graduates at **Olney Central College (OCC)**. During fiscal year 2012, OCC began offering transition classes to all GED® students. Beginning fiscal year 2013, a GED® recipient tuition waiver for two semesters of college credit was made available to OCC GED® students who met the criteria for the award. This waiver is in addition to any financial aid for which the student is eligible. In October 2012, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges hired a full-time Transition/DAISI Technician who meets with GED® students who have transitioned to college and helps them find solutions to any problem areas they may encounter. In fiscal year 2012, eight GED® students transitioned to college. In fiscal year 2013, eighteen students transitioned to college for a 125 percent increase in the number of GED® students transitioning to college. Ninety percent of the scholarship students who started college in fall 2012 completed their course work and persisted to the current semester.

The Title V Adult Education Transition Program at **Waubensee Community College** was developed to pilot proven strategies to encourage and support successful college transitions of underprepared adult learners. The pilot features include revisions to current General Educational Development (GED®) courses, the development of new college transition courses, the implementation of transition advising, and the development of transition workshops. The new and enhanced courses and services implemented in August 2012 are designed to prepare Hispanic and other underprepared students to complete their GED® tests and enroll in credit-bearing coursework at the community college and begin working toward earning a degree or certificate. This fully integrated program model is designed to increase placement test scores of college transition course completers to reduce the number of developmental education requirements upon transition to college, improve students' understanding of college vocabulary and processes, better prepare students for the rigor and independence of college-level courses, encourage immediate enrollment in college-level courses after GED® completion, and facilitate career awareness and exploration in connection with educational planning - ultimately preparing underprepared adult learners with what they need to enter and succeed in college. Exit surveys indicated that 100 percent of participants felt they learned something new during each session and that they would recommend the presentation to other students.

**Morton College** is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with an 88 percent minority student population in fiscal year 2012. As part of its student success agenda and in conjunction with the *Achieving the Dream* initiative, the college piloted a College Study Seminar course (CSS 100), targeted to all students, but particularly to those needing support in navigating the college experience. The CSS course was initially launched in fall 2010, and its goal is to familiarize traditional students and continuing education students with academic and personal skills necessary to make their college experience successful and rewarding. These include personal management, interpersonal communication, fundamental research techniques and critical thinking. The course is continually being assessed and modified based on student pre- and post-tests and target populations.

*Southwestern Illinois College uses the PALS (Personal Advocate Linking Services) Program, which is designed to promote successful transition to college, increase retention, encourage completion of academic programs and promote gainful employment by offering direct services and providing referrals to college and community resources to at-risk students.*

**Southwestern Illinois College** uses the PALS (Personal Advocate Linking Services) Program, which is designed to promote successful transition to college, increase retention, encourage completion of academic programs and promote gainful employment by offering direct services and providing referrals to college and community resources to at-risk students. The PALS program was implemented in the fall of 1996 with the advent of the Welfare to Work program. It was created with the intent of collaboration and support with Workforce Investment Act, career services, adult

education, and the financial aid office to oversee the educational success of our students with resources to obtain degree completion and in an effort to make college more accessible and affordable. PALS office personnel assist in the completion of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) forms and foster career development and employment by assisting with resume preparation, on-line job opportunities, career assessments, internships, nontraditional career opportunities, and career mentoring in collaboration with the career center.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Services Advisory Committee at **Highland Community College** (HCC) was born out of a need for building a more effective and far-reaching bridge of communication between the office of ADA Services and members of the surrounding counties. While still in its early implementation, the committee has great potential to help HCC reach more audiences and spread the word on what assistance and services are available at HCC and in the community for students with

disabilities. The mission of the committee is to “create an accessible college community where individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of the educational environment. Services are to promote independence and offer appropriate accommodations.” (<http://www.highland.edu/students/resources.asp>) In order to accomplish this goal, ADA Services Advisory Committee has facilitated an Improved Transitions initiative, which includes building sustainable relationships with community members to assist in better understanding the environmental barriers in education; educating faculty/staff in current practices and changes in the disability services field; forging ahead and advocating for the students who do not yet know how to use their voices to secure services; and providing a safe harbor for all to share their concerns with ADA Services.

Illinois Public Agenda calls for the increase in the number of adults, including GED® recipients, reentering education and completing a postsecondary credential. The Division of Adult Education & Transition Programs (AETP) at **Kishwaukee College (KC)** has increased the number of adults entering the postsecondary pipeline by identifying on-track indicators for retention and using strategies described in the Complete College America model and the Adult College Completion Tool Kit. To increase the enrollment in adult basic skills, GED® Preparation, and ESL classes, AETP has enhanced its recruitment plan by establishing new relationships with food pantries and community kitchens, and identified community-based human service organizations to develop a monthly schedule for face-to-face outreach at these sites. AETP also targets the returning adult learners through Adults Explore College event in which the income benefits from postsecondary credential, the employment outlook in the workforce district, and the financial aid process are discussed, as well as GED® course options, the testing process, and college transition services among others. For adults with high skill levels beginning the GED® process, a two-week accelerated classroom and testing sequence is available to expedite the completion of GED® test. This concentrated programming reduces the cost barrier associated with childcare, transportation, or personal scheduling.

The mission of the Admissions/Recruitment Office at **Moraine Valley Community College** is to provide a welcoming and accessible environment to potential and current students on the campus and at the college’s extension sites. It provides necessary and accurate information to students in an effort to facilitate fundamental educational choices, and thus it promotes increased educational attainment for underrepresented groups. Several outreach programs were either started or revised in fall 2011. The Admissions/Recruitment Office conducts Career Paths and Coffee/Adult Information Sessions, Career Paths and Coffee-Speaker Series, GED® Orientations, Non-traditional Career Day, and the Shepherd High School Program – ‘When I Start College What Should I Know?’ These programs provide information for adults interested in learning about returning to or starting college and for high school students transitioning to college. They also offer additional resources for underrepresented groups related to career development such as information on employment trends by invited industry experts, hiring practices, job search skills, and career preparation to enroll in a nontraditional career program at the postsecondary level. Participants also learn about filling out an application, assessment testing, orientation, how to register for classes, financial aid, free services and programs, advising and other available support services. Data collected between 2011 and 2012 show that the outreach programs were a success.

The staff and faculty at **Lincoln Trail College** are dedicated to provide services that assist students of all ages and backgrounds with improving their educational attainment. These services have been offered to a varying degree through the history of Lincoln Trail College but they are continually revisited and reevaluated to maintain optimum transitional services. The result of the 2012-2013 evaluations is the creation of new/additional methods, such as extensive advising including assessment testing, review of financial obligations and options, industry specific training, development of employment skills, cooperative working agreements with outside entities such as CEFS Economic Opportunity Corporation,

unemployment, military benefits, etc., as well as tutoring, job placement opportunities and additional student services to assist transitioning adults reentering education and completing a postsecondary credential to secure success in the workforce. The evidence of this success in fiscal year 2013 is the graduation and successful program completion of numerous transitioning adults within programs such as healthcare, process technology, welding, telecommunication, and horticulture.

At **Shawnee Community College (SCC)**, the Adult Education program offers adult basic education (ABE), pre-GED®, vocational and adult secondary education (ASE) classes to adults who lack a high school diploma or secondary certificate. The program has helped adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency. The SCC Adult Education Program helps low-income and low-skilled adults, individuals with disabilities, single parents, TANF recipients, displaced homemakers, unemployed, underemployed, those not in the labor force who demonstrate a deficiency in basic skills, and individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency. The program continuously assesses the needs of the students in order to effectively evaluate instructional offerings. Tracking students' mastery through competencies gives the program the ability to effectively evaluate instruction and student success. Also using the Illinois Content Standards and Benchmarks for ABE/ASE as a basis for measuring the attainment of skills and knowledge in each subject area provides an excellent framework for student assessment. The SCC Adult Education program has been very successful in transitioning a high percentage of adults to postsecondary education.

Adult Basic Education programs are designed to provide opportunities to adults who have not completed high school. Through General Equivalency Diploma (GED®) classes, students earn a high school equivalency degree that can assist them with the transition to college level courses and/or employment. Therefore it is important to achieve significant increases in the number of people who have access to the test throughout the service area. In order to help bridge educational and economic barriers and further facilitate educational attainment, **Kennedy-King College (KKC)** increased the number of GED® off-site locations by nine in fiscal year 2012. These nine sites provide services in underrepresented areas of the geographic area assigned to the college. Students who earn their high school equivalency degree are making a key step to preparing to enter college level courses, earn a degree, and improve the area's economy. According to the American Council on Education, there is a positive relationship where educational attainment leads to direct employment and higher earned income. Annual earnings of GED® recipients range from 5 – 30 percent higher than individuals without a GED® certificate or high school diploma. In 2012, 267 students enrolled at KKC's GED® off-site locations. In 2014, the method of GED® testing will change from a paper-based test to a computerized testing model. KKC has responded to this challenge by establishing computer based labs dedicated to adult basic education. . By establishing the necessary computer labs now, KKC will be prepared for the next generation of GED® assessment system.

In order to improve graduation rates, the Office of Disability Services at **Parkland College** works intensively with students to help them reach their full potential. The office designed a new intake summary form in November of 2011, revised in February 2012 that better serves high school students with disabilities to transition to college. Once the semester begins, students are scheduled for at least three follow-up meetings to discuss the effectiveness of their academic accommodations and to possibly identify additional campus resources. Students felt the meetings gave them a chance to talk more about advocating for their disability, rights and accommodations; all areas key to successfully transitioning to college. The Office of Disability Services continues to exam best practices geared for success and persistence, and look forward to reporting additional results next year.

### ***Contextualized Instruction***

*The goal of contextualized instruction is to teach a skill within a specific or functional context with the purpose to increase the likelihood that what is taught in the classroom setting will be used in future applicable settings.*

The goal of contextualized instruction is to teach a skill within a specific or functional context with the purpose to increase the likelihood that what is taught in the classroom setting will be used in future applicable settings. **Harper College** implemented Contextualized Instruction and Interdepartmental Collaboration beginning fall 2008 to increase collaboration between departments and incorporate contextualized instruction within the Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) program in order to support high-risk, low socioeconomic

students who represent a significant portion of the residents in Harper's district. In following years, the faculty has continued to refine the curriculum to better meet the needs of students. More bilingual instructors, an open computer lab, and community outreach were incorporated. In 2010-11, Hispanic/Latino students composed 17.6 percent of the total number of HVAC graduates and in 2011-12, they composed 29.3 percent of the total number of HVAC graduates. This percentage increase of 11.7 percent marks the largest increase in completions for any ethnic group as a percentage of total HVAC completions.

In August 2010, a pilot that contextualized developmental reading (READ 125) and developmental English (ENGL 125) with an introductory, college-level general psychology course (PSYC 131) was implemented at **Lewis & Clark Community College**. Three semesters of data collected to assess the pilot show that contextualizing developmental reading and English courses with a college-level course helps underprepared students succeed in both the college-level course and developmental reading and writing. Students who enrolled in a contextualized section of READ 125 (pilot) exceeded the success rate (final grade of A, B, or C) of non-contextualized (cohort) sections of READ 125 in all three semesters. Contextualized ENGL 125 students exceeded the success rate of non-contextualized ENGL 125 sections in two semesters. Students enrolled in a contextualized section of PSYC 131 exceeded the success rate of non-contextualized sections of PSYC 131 for all three semesters.

InTRUduction Sessions and Admissions Advising activities prepare prospective students at **Harry S. Truman College** for enrollment in the institution and provide the tools necessary for a student to be successful from their earliest point of contact. First offered in fall 2012, this initiative includes outreach and recruitment, admissions assistance, placement testing preparation and selection of appropriate first-term courses. In addition, a special focus has been placed on preparing students for the placement test by highlighting the importance of accurate placement and supporting the City Colleges of Chicago Reinvention Goal of improving outcomes for students needing remediation. Attending an inTRUduction Session is mandatory for all new students, unless they have already obtained a Bachelor's Degree. The new admissions advising process puts orientation at the very start of the process which allows students to learn about the registration, enrollment, and placement-testing process in advance.

### ***Student Success Centers***

The federally funded TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program is designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. At **Southeastern Illinois College** (SIC) the program began September 1, 1993, and it provides all qualifying students with mentoring, motivation and academic assistance that

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will result in successful completion of their postsecondary education. The vast majority of those who qualify also meet the criteria for an underrepresented student, including first generation college student, low socioeconomic status, student with a disability, or minority. The mission for TRIO/SSS at SIC is to provide support and services that will result in an increase in retention and associate degree completion rates, helping qualifying students make the transition to the next level of higher education. Three FAFSA Fridays events were offered for the first time by TRIO/SSS at SIC in winter 2012. Their goal was to introduce students to the process of financial aid and online procedures associated with it, create a better understanding of higher education funding, help eliminate financial constraints on students that depend on financial assistance to attend college, and encourage students to apply early for financial aid in order to have as many grant opportunities as possible.

**Triton College** implemented the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program in September 2010 with the goal to increase student retention and graduation rates, facilitate transfer to a four-year college, and foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income, first generation students and/or students with disabilities at Triton College. Program elements include advising, mentoring, tutoring, transfer guidance, academic, career, and financial workshops; financial aid advisement, and cultural and educational activities. The Triton College Student Support Services program is funded to serve 160 students annually with the goal of achieving the following objectives: 85 percent of all participants serviced by the SSS project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate and/or transfer from Triton to a four-year institution during the academic year; 85 percent of all enrolled participants served by the SSS project will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at Triton; 60 percent of new participants served each year will graduate with an associate degree or certification within four years; 60 percent of new participants served each year will transfer with an associate degree or certificate within four years. In the first two years of implementation, the Triton College TRIO Student Support Services program has met or exceeded all applicable program objectives and is on track to meet the graduation and transfer objective in 2014.

Other Illinois community colleges also offering the TRIO Support Services Program include **Illinois Central College** where the program serves 250 students per year and, throughout its history, has met or exceeded its retention, graduation and transfer goals; **Shawnee Community College** which is located in a chronically poor district in which the majority of the students are educationally and economically disadvantaged and underprepared to enter college and which offers a variety of services such as professional tutoring, peer-tutoring, assessment testing, free online e-tutoring, computer assisted instruction, word processing facilities, as well as a writing lab; and **Carl Sandburg College** where the program consists of no less than two-thirds participants who are first-generation college students and, at the same time, are also classified as low income or disabled (the other one-third participants may only meet one of these classifications).

Teaching and Learning Support Services have been recently modified into Learning Support and College Readiness at **Richland Community College** to improve focus on completion agenda initiatives and results. The primary focus of the division is direct service to students both in and out of the classroom. It addresses developmental education and education progress completion goals. The integration of tutoring, online learning, accommodations, and testing continues the “universal design” model for academic student support. One of the modifications is the upgrade of Success.net, an online early alert system, to encourage early intervention by faculty in cases where students are at risk of withdrawing or being dropped due to underperformance. Furthermore, the Student Support Services/TRIO programs were included to serve first time, low-income, and/or students with disabilities. Online learning was also included as a key alternative delivery strategy since out of classroom learning and development were recognized as equal partners in learning success. Other changes include co-location of all student judicial processes under Enrollment

Services and co-location of the Mathematics Enrichment Center under the Academic Success Center as a key developmental education completion component. A new dean of Learning Support and College Readiness was hired in February 2013 to provide leadership to the realigned academic support services of Richland Community College.

**Rend Lake College** (RLC) staff has identified several factors that put students at high risk for failure. Being a low-income, first generation, and/or disabled student makes attending college a struggle for most students. Other factors include rural isolation, inadequate support from family or peers, single parent family responsibilities and a lack of belonging or connectedness. The low-income students often have no idea how to take advantage of the services offered by the college for their benefit. The student population at RLC is 55 percent low-income, 71 percent first generation, and 3 percent disabled students. The RLC Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) and Disability Access Support program along with the TRIO Student Support Services program work to provide assistance and information to RLC's high risk and underrepresented population. The LEC provides tutoring in core classes for any college student seeking those support services. In addition to flyers throughout the campus promoting the services available, academic advisors, TRIO staff, support staff and instructors are aware of the services offered and make student referrals to the LEC. In addition to tutoring services the LEC houses the Disability Access Services program. This program provides a variety of services for students with disabilities which include, but are not limited to, extended test time, testing in a distraction reduced environment, note takers, modified attendance policy, electronic version of text books, test readers and scribes. TRIO advisors provide academic advising, financial aid assistance, and referrals to both on campus and outside resources, workshops, early alert and mid-term progress and attendance checks. Additionally, TRIO advisors endeavor to maintain a close relationship with students throughout their educational careers and help them to address and overcome any barriers that might prevent them from achieving their goals.

The Right Place to Start program at **Rock Valley College** is a cohort-based student support program aimed at serving first-time, full-time students of color to increase student success measures. The objectives are to 1) reduce the achievement gap between students of color and white students and 2) increase persistence and retention rates of students of color. The program was implemented in fall 2012 and is funded by a state grant from one of the district representatives. Currently, the program serves 77 students who are participating in one of 6 cohorts. The most significant success strategy is the cohort-based approach to having students form a support group that is led by one person (life coach). Students form positive relationships with their peers and at least one paid professional who help them sort through and navigate various college programs, services, and protocols. Group courses are offered as well as workshops and trainings to help meet their financial, learning, and support needs.

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Project RISE (Resources to Increase Student Excellence), a student support services program, is one of six federally funded TRIO programs created under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. These programs are designed to promote academic success, retention, graduation and transfer to four-year institutions. At **Heartland Community College**, up to 170 students who are challenged by educational and economic disadvantages get enrolled in Project RISE each year. They receive academic, personal, and career counseling services; intrusive advisement; academic progress monitoring; initial and supplemental needs assessments; and assistance with developing individualized academic plans. Project RISE integrates the above support services under two program umbrellas: 1) the First-Year Experience Program and 2) the Second-Year Transition Program. Student persistence among Project RISE participants is defined as the percentage of each fiscal year's fall cohort of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who have

graduated, transferred or are still enrolled after three full academic years. The most recent cohort persistence rate – for the fiscal year 2009 Project RISE cohort – was 57 percent, an increase over the prior cohort year persistence rate of 44 percent. The fiscal year 2009 cohort saw an increase of six students graduate within the three-year timeframe as well as an increase of two students who transferred to a four-year college or university.

The objective of the THRIVE Program at **College of Lake County (CLC)** is to assist students in completing a program of study at the college. Since 2007, when the program was implemented at CLC, students have been provided with academic coaching and other services such as peer mentoring and a monthly newsletter designed to improve motivation and academic success. Since the program's launch in 2007, approximately 15 to 20 students per term have been trained as mentors. In each fall or spring term, the number of students receiving services has ranged from approximately 50 to 150 mentees. Evaluation of students who participated in the first pilot group receiving services showed that their next term retention was higher than that of the overall college level population and considerably higher than the three-year average persistence rate for African American and Hispanic students with GPAs in the 1.5 to 2.2 range. Subsequent follow-up evaluations have shown that term-to-term retention of students who received services is at least as high as of minority/low income comparison groups. Evaluation of other components of the program is planned and will include satisfaction surveys of event participants and tracking of participants to determine outcomes such as course success rates and graduation rates.

The Multicultural Student Center (MSC) is another effective institutional practice at **College of Lake County** intended to increase educational attainment among underrepresented groups. It informs students, faculty, staff, and the public about the cultural heritage of diverse ethnic and cultural groups that may exist within the community and thus it raises awareness and appreciation for the diversity among people as well as it promotes pride and acceptance of all cultural heritage groups. The MSC, started in 2007, provides services for students which include encouragement of educational, personal, social and cultural growth, promotion of diversity on campus, enhancement of multicultural awareness, efforts to encourage retention of underrepresented students and students of color, recreational and cultural activities throughout the year, leadership opportunities to improve career readiness, personal and academic support in collaboration with the THRIVE academic coaching by MSC staff. As the result, the MSC contributes to the educational success of students from underrepresented groups.

F.U.S.E. (Families United for a Strong Education) is a bilingual program offered to Hispanic/Latino English Language Learners' families with children from fourth grade to high school seniors. **Sauk Valley Community College's** Cross-Cultural Services, the U of I Extension, and the YWCA of the Sauk Valley's Immigrant Family Resource Program collaborate to assist families in setting higher educational goals and improving their quality of life. The long term goal of this project is to improve the educational outcomes for Latino students so they can advance from ESL and GED® classes to college-level courses and inspire their children to set higher educational goals. These special population students have the desire to be successful but need extra support to achieve their goals. F.U.S.E. benefits participants by enhancing their higher education knowledge, improving communication within the family, and connecting them to community resources. The program was originally implemented in 2004. During the 2012 spring semester, fourteen families and 52 people of various ages participated in the F.U.S.E. workshops and presentations. Out of these 52 people, eight adult participants enrolled in ESL classes and three students (who recently graduated high school) enrolled in college level classes during the fall semester at Sauk Valley Community College.

**Heartland Community College's** Academy for Learning Opportunities (HALO) provides access to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities who are interested in continuing their education in a supportive, yet challenging, learning environment and thus it effectively increases educational attainment. The HALO program elements include course of study planning meetings, career experiences, and portfolio

based evaluation. A personalized course of study is developed for all HALO students when admitted to the program. They are able to select courses that are of interest to them and necessary supports are identified to help them be successful. Job shadowing, work experience and a culminating paid work experience are elements of each student's program. These experiences are based on the student's career interests and designed to help the student learn about various careers and develop readiness skills for employment. Competencies have been developed for each HALO course. Students are evaluated based on mastery of these competencies. The HALO program first began accepting applications in January, 2009 and started with 12 students in the fall semester of 2009. The HALO program currently has 17 students enrolled for the spring 2013 semester. Thirty-seven students have started the program since the fall 2009 semester, with 18 earning a Level 1 certificate and 12 earning their Level 2 certificate.

**South Suburban College (SSC)** applied for and was granted standing as a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) by the U. S. Department of Education. SSC met the criteria by supplying data that demonstrated at least 50 percent of SSC's unduplicated headcount of undergraduate degree students received financial aid as Federal Pell Grant recipients, were low-income, were first generation college students, and were Black Americans. This allowed SSC to share in funding provided to PBI institutions to assist these students in matriculating and achieving academic success. The purpose of the PBI BLAST (Blacks Learning Academic Survival Tools) program is to assist low- and middle-income Black American students in preparation and adaptation to the college learning environment, encourage student persistence in both secondary and postsecondary education by stressing the importance of higher education, and create strategies to promote success in college and throughout the community. The program began to offer services to students in spring 2012. In January 2012, out of 86 students that joined PBI BLAST, 92 percent met the requirement for registered course completion.

The intent of the Black Student SUCCESS Project at **Parkland College** is to provide African American students with added social and academic support and opportunities in order to increase their education attainment, as this group has been underprepared and underserved in higher education. The Black Student SUCCESS Project seeks to establish high academic expectations, increase positive outlook toward school and promote positive self-esteem, provide creative learning opportunities, and establish key personal connections. The premise, in part, is based on Dr. Vincent Tinto's Student Departure Theory. ([http://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/Tinto\\_Pusser\\_Report.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/Tinto_Pusser_Report.pdf)) This theory states that academic integration (the student's academic performance) and societal integration (participation in college life) are keys to persistence of college students and the more students are academically and socially involved, the more likely they are to persist and graduate. The project began in the fall of 2008 and has continuously served students through spring 2012. Satisfaction with the program has consistently been rated as good or excellent. Plans for fall 2013 are underway.

The African American Student Success Initiative was launched in fall 2007 at **Illinois Central College (ICC)** in response to a significant course success gap identified between African American and other student populations at the college. The rate for African American course success in fiscal year 2007 was 54.23 percent while the course success rate for other groups was substantially higher: Asians 77.01 percent; Whites 75.02 percent; Hispanics 70.23 percent; and Native Americans 69.07 percent. The rate for all students was 71.56 percent. The ICC Six Sigma Team on Minority Student Success studied the processes of orienting students for success, assessment, advisement, mentoring, and best practices of existing populations at ICC (Athletics, TRIO Student Support Services, QUEST, etc.). They found that the most significant disparities in course success were reflected within Remedial Education and Baccalaureate Transfer Education course categories. Consequently, various actions have been taken to improve enrollment and educational attainment of African Americans including the implementation of the *Minority Student Success Dashboard*, a system for tracking minority student success according to

cumulative grade point average (GPA) and the *Role Model Mentoring Project* which matches African American students with local African American professionals of various career fields. Between fiscal years 2007 and 2010, there was 4.32 percent increase in African– American student course success.

**Danville Area Community College (DACC)** became an Achieving the Dream (AtD) college in 2009, and since that time has worked very hard to improve the success of its students and increase the number of graduates. This effort has made the college look at data differently than in the past, and has allowed for better data-driven decisions. Much of the data is now disaggregated by race and ethnicity, gender, age, income, and enrollment status. By using the disaggregated data and following trend data, DACC can now see the performance gap of 26 percent between the Black Non-Hispanic student population and the White Non-Hispanic population. As the result, there has been an effort to help more African American students graduate college by keeping them engaged in college to eliminate the gap. In fall 2011, the Success in College task force was created that designed a pilot project comprising of the A-MALE (African American Males Addressing Life Effectively) and WISE (Women Inspiring Success Effectively) course sections for the following semester focusing on topics both students and faculty found necessary for student success. Ten of the thirteen students enrolled in the course completed it (76 percent). Seven of the ten (70 percent) were retained the next fall, with six of those seven students retained the following spring (86 percent). Since the pilot project was only initiated in spring 2012, the College is still in the process of adjusting the course and gathering the data. More student focus groups are needed to gather feedback from the stakeholders. If this continues to be a success, there are other groups on campus that would like to incorporate the cohort-based Success in College sections into their division.

*The Student Veteran Center at Prairie State College provides a new model of customer service that is sensitive to the unique situation faced by service members and family members of active duty, National Guard and reserve components of the United States Military.*

Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are at risk. They have undergone multiple geographic and cultural dislocations as well as economic and psychological hardship. In the face of real challenges in their interpersonal and professional lives, veterans are coming to college in record numbers. President Obama issued Executive Order 13607 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=100707>)

late last year, challenging colleges to develop best practices in dealing with returning veterans. **Prairie State College (PSC)** offers in-district tuition to all veterans regardless of residency as well as veteran priority registration to allot for additional processing time at the Veterans Administration. The Student Veteran Center, established in November 2011, provides a new model of customer service that is sensitive to the unique situation faced by service members and family members of active duty, National Guard and reserve components of the United States Military. In this one-stop model, the veteran coordinator is tasked with a wide range of duties. The coordinator provides academic counseling, financial aid counseling, and referral services for Veteran’s Administration services and other state and federal benefits, depending upon the situational need of the student veteran. The student veteran center increases matriculation rates and lays the groundwork for academic success for student veterans.

The goal of the Student Athlete Success Program at **McHenry County College (MCC)** is to increase the educational attainment of underrepresented student athletes at the College. In July 2012 a new full time position of Coordinator of Student Athlete Success was created and the Student Athlete Success Program was launched in August 2012. Coordinator of Student Athlete Success works directly with MCC student athletes by connecting with them during New Student Orientation, one on one meetings for class selection and degree planning, and during team advising, as well as assists with organizing meetings between the student athlete and the advisor. Moreover, two sections of the MCC 101 freshman experience classes have been initiated and devoted solely to the new student athletes on campus. The college's freshman

experience course has been a valuable success practice for student athletes as it is designed to review the rigors of being a collegiate student athlete as well as work on time management, study skills, and other attributes needed for college success. The MCC Student Athlete Success Program activities have helped to increase persistence among underrepresented student athletes at MCC by 3 percent from fall 2011 through fall of 2012. Furthermore, student athlete credit hour enrollments have increased. Student athletes have enrolled in 19 percent more credit hours in fall of 2012 than they did in fall 2011.

The athletic program at **Moraine Valley Community College** has been offered since August 2011. The initiative's objective is to help student-athletes maintain eligibility to compete by retaining them academically. Consequently, this institutional effective practice increases the number of graduates in the end. Athletes are required to meet with their advisor on a consistent basis. When a negative report is received, students are urged to speak with their instructor immediately to determine how to improve their grades. The instructor is also asked to follow up with the Athletic Advisor to share the plan of action. During the Fall 2012 semester, the Athletics Director and Advisor collaborated with the Dean of Enrichment Programs to develop specialized tutoring for the male basketball team, a majority of whom are young black males, representing 73 percent or fifteen team members. With a structured and mandatory tutoring program in place, the Athletic Department tracked the total hours these athletes spent in tutoring. All seven of the students who attended on a consistent basis passed their developmental math courses. At the end of the fall 2012 semester, the student-athletes course completion rate was 87.55 percent with an aggregate 2.73 GPA. Of those students, 43 percent (65 students) were females, with an average course completion rate of 89.15 percent. Ninety-four percent of the entire Student-Athlete population was retained for the spring semester as full-time students while two student athletes successfully graduated with an associate degree.

### ***Advising***

Community colleges are under increasing pressure to produce more graduates. Yet, many students leave community colleges without earning a credential. City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) undertook a thorough review of advising, including the ratio of students to advisors in early 2010 in an effort to improve student retention. Teams from Reinvention (a core group of strategy employees from the CCC District Office) and Student Affairs undertook the review.

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Its purpose was to improve advising accessibility and outcomes. In summer 2012, **Harold Washington College** launched a graduation initiative with the goal to improve advising accessibility and outcomes. The outcome of the initiative is a comprehensive and organized program for academic advising. In 2009, Harold Washington College had an advisor to student ratio of 1:1258. In fall 2012, the ratio was 1:460. This improved ratio facilitated the move to caseload advising, where advisors were assigned a specific group of students who they would serve. In addition, a small cluster of advisors (two or three out of the total of 19 advisors) would be assigned special underrepresented groups. Advisors assist students who are struggling with current classes, need assistance with career goals and options and would like to set up an academic plan. Students are able to logon to myccc.edu and obtain the name and contact information of their academic advisor. They have a "specific" contact to reach out to for academic issues and concerns. Academic advisors are available to help students pick a career path and also to create "degree audits" for their advisees. The initiative seems to be successful because in fiscal year 2013, the college projects it will produce 522 associate degrees for an increase of 23 percent from the previous year.

**Olive-Harvey College**, one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago, serves the far south and southeast sides of Chicago. In 2010, more than 375,000 people lived in the college's service area, where 94 percent of the population was minority (National Community College Benchmark Project Report: Olive Harvey College, 2010). This demographic makeup is reflected in Olive-Harvey's student population, which is predominantly African American. Olive-Harvey College has made a strong push to increase the number of graduates over the past several years. This has been a multi-pronged effort with contributions from all departments within the College. One of the most effective practices implemented in fiscal year 2013 is the Educational Plans initiative started by the academic advising offices within the Department of Student Services. Educational plans were constructed by advisors working with individual students in order to map out course selections in a way that will lead to timely graduation. This initiative is designed to help students by developing a comprehensive graduation plan, reducing the uncertainty that is often prevalent during the class registration period to avoid enrollment in unnecessary courses, and providing academic advisors with detailed information on students' educational goals. As of the 15<sup>th</sup> week of the fall 2012 semester, 1,732 students had filed educational plans with the advising office. Of those 1,732 students, 315 had 45 credit hours or more and 1,417 had less than 45 credit hours. This total represents 90.7 percent of the goal set for the advising office prior to the semester. All in all, 59 percent of the student population had completed educational plans by the end of the fall 2012 semester. While the goal of 65 percent was not met in full, the number of students with educational plans on file is significant enough to make a difference.

In an effort to improve services to underrepresented groups, including disability, first generation, and other at-risk students, as well as the student body at large, **Southeastern Illinois College** developed an advising syllabus to clarify registration, academic progress, and educational planning. The advising syllabus, which was implemented in August 2012, includes information about office hours, mission, advisement definitions, outcomes and expectations, advisor responsibilities, student responsibilities, student preparations before advisement sessions, advising policies, and an overview of the grading system. Collectively, this information provides a checklist for consistency for advisors and emphasizes the importance of academic planning for underrepresented students.

In order to address the low number of female graduates majoring in law enforcement, a non-traditional occupation for women, **Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC)** implemented the Women in Criminal Justice Mentoring Program in January 2012 for the length of one semester. This support program was designed to increase the persistence, retention (semester to semester), graduation rates, and employability in the field of this student population. Mentors, after undergoing a training program, provided direction and feedback to students as well as shared professional experiences and expectations. Each mentor was matched with a student mentee during professional development workshops that also enhanced the students' knowledge of professional skills necessary to become an effective law enforcement professional. Ten students attended the first mentoring sessions in January 2012. Seven of them completed the mentoring program. Of these seven students, one graduated with a degree from SVCC, one transferred to a four-year university, and five re-enrolled in the fall 2012 semester at SVCC. One student has already attained a job in the criminal justice field.

### ***Tutoring***

Statistics show that many students enrolled in developmental courses never complete their course and/or their intended degree program. Specifically connecting tutoring services to first generation and under-prepared students is

*Embedded tutoring is an initiative that encourages faculty and tutoring staff to work in a concerted effort to enhance supplementary learning activities for students enrolled in developmental courses.*

one way to increase the number of graduates by increasing the success rate in developmental courses. Embedded tutoring is an initiative that encourages faculty and tutoring staff to work in a concerted effort to enhance supplementary learning activities for students enrolled in developmental courses. Embedded tutors have close connectivity to the classroom, students, and faculty. **Kennedy-King College (KKC)**, one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago, implemented the embedded tutoring initiative in June 2012 to increase success rates of students enrolled in Developmental English, Reading, and Mathematics. The student body at KKC is primarily composed of African American (85 percent), Hispanic (5 percent), Asian (3 percent), Native American (0.2 percent), and Caucasian (5 percent) students. Keeping with the mission of providing high quality, affordable courses and services to prepare students for success in a technologically advanced and increasingly global society, KKC has focused on initiatives that will increase its number of graduates and increase educational attainment. KKC currently has nineteen embedded tutors in English, Reading, and Mathematics courses; all certified by the National Tutor Association. A longitudinal study is necessary to determine the extent to which embedding tutors in lower level classes and using differentiating instruction makes a difference. An initial indicator of success after the Summer 2012 semester is 80 percent of students that enrolled in summer courses with embedded tutors and successfully completed their courses with grades of A, B, or C.

**Carl Sandburg College (CSC)** strives to increase student completion of core classes by providing tutoring in primarily math, writing, and sciences in the Tutoring Center. Tutoring is focused on developing the skills of students, so that their overall class performance and understanding of the material is enhanced. In 2012, CSC tutoring underwent a significant set of changes. The separate Math and Writing labs were combined and rebranded as the Tutoring Center. This new unified service was moved to a location with higher visibility than the previous location. Sciences and were added to tutoring services. Furthermore, more students can access the services (37.5 percent increase between fiscal years 2011 and 2012) due to a stricter time limit, a more efficient scheduling system, and an abolishment of the “no children allowed in the Tutoring Center” policy.

Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) is a program at **South Suburban College (SSC)** funded through the Perkins Grant. It provides weekly class tutoring for career and technical education students in selected high-risk courses. Its goal is to improve their grade performance and thus their educational attainment by enhancing their knowledge of the course material. SSC implemented SLA in spring 2003 and continues the program every fall and spring semester. The SLA facilitators are trained professionals who have demonstrated competence in these courses. They are present during course lectures, insuring consistency between instructor and facilitator. Students attend SLA sessions immediately after a course lecture session and review the coursework—this provides for consistent feedback and resolves subject matter inquiries that are barriers to learning. Statistical data shows that SLA students consistently receive more A, B, and C grades and less D, F, I and W grades than non-SLA students. This translates into higher grade point averages (GPA's) which in turn assists SSC students with satisfactory completion of coursework so that they may matriculate.

The intent of the Academic Navigations Workshop at **Triton College** was to prepare ESL students who have completed all levels of their ESL program for their transition to credit-bearing courses, particularly for disciplines that are reading and writing-heavy as in social sciences and the humanities. The first Academic Navigations was implemented in summer 2012 and the second one in fall 2012. The third Academic Navigations will start in February 2013. An embedded tutor worked with the workshop facilitator to assist students in their reading and writing assignments. Library instruction was incorporated to teach students how to do research, citations, and documentation and expose them to the rigor of academic work. Nineteen students participated in the first Academic Navigations. Based on their pre-workshop COMPASS scores, 26 percent increased their reading and writing scores, 47 percent remained stable, while 27 percent had a

decrease in their scores. Twenty-four students participated in the Fall Navigations. Thirteen percent of the 24 participants had increased their scores after re-taking the COMPASS test. The scores do not necessarily reflect the actual skills of the students as they were administered the COMPASS test intended for the native English-speaking population. To get more accurate reading of the students' skills, the Testing Center of the college in tandem with Adult Education will be shifting over to the COMPASS-ESL version as soon as score ranges are established.

### ***Bridge Programs***

*Bridge programs aim to move low-skilled adults more seamlessly from pre-college to postsecondary coursework.*

The development of bridge programs in Illinois began several years ago under the Shifting Gears Initiative. Bridge programs aim to move low-skilled adults more seamlessly from pre-college to postsecondary coursework. Three key components of bridge programs include: contextualized instruction, career development, and transition services. Contextualized instruction integrates basic reading, math & language skills with industry/occupational knowledge. Career development includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work (depending on the level of the bridge program & whether participants are already incumbent workers in specific field). Transition services provide students with needed assistance to successfully navigate the process of moving from developmental coursework to credit or career and technical education programs. Services may include academic advising, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services (e.g., transportation and child care).

**Lincoln Land Community College** (LLCC) offers the opportunity for adults who lack basic skills in reading, math, and/or writing to complete 12 credit hours and earn at least one certificate or degree through Adult Career Pathways (ACP). Funded by the Accelerating Opportunity College Grant, the program utilizes team-teaching, support classes, student support services and transition services. LLCC is in year two of this three year grant. Forty-one students have enrolled in ACP in fiscal year 2013 to date. Eleven students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education pathway, and thirty in the Healthcare pathway. Additionally, there are three roll-over students in the Automotive Technician pathway. Twelve students have earned at least 12 college credits as of December, 2012. Additional credits will be awarded in the spring term. Thirty-one industry-recognized certificates have been awarded in fiscal year 2013 to date. Additional certificates will be awarded in the spring term.

In fiscal year 2012, Adult Education Department at **McHenry County College** (MCC) was awarded the Accelerating Opportunity Grant through the Illinois Community College Board. The design phase of the grant began in July of 2011 and was completed in November of the same year. The implementation phase of the grant began in January of 2012 and will continue through to December of 2014. The purpose of the Accelerating Opportunity Grant is to transition Adult Education (AE) students into postsecondary education that leads to a stackable credential in an approved career pathway. The career pathways that were chosen at MCC are administrative office skills (AOM), automotive (AMT), and manufacturing (IMT). AE is recruiting students who have a 6.0 grade level equivalent (GLE) or higher in English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) into these career pathways. The grant is based upon I-BEST, an approved teaching model in Washington that incorporates a 50 percent shared instruction—e.g., instruction between a content area and an adult education specialist in a career pathway course. In Illinois, the model is called, “Integrated Career and Academic Prep System (I-CAPS).” The Accelerating Opportunity grant has allowed MCC to hire a full-time I-CAPS Navigator who meets with individual students in an advisory capacity and who coordinates the grant. Through a

McCormick Foundation grant, MCC was able to offset tuition costs for each I-CAPS student during fall 2012. Funds were also used from the Accelerating Opportunities grant to help defray textbook and school supply purchases. Further, I-CAPS students received funds to counterpoise transportation expenses to travel back and forth to the college. Overall, AE students are becoming more engaged and successful in the Accelerating Opportunity program through better classroom attendance, class completions, and transitioning into career pathway where they can receive a credential.

The overall goal of Adult Education bridge courses is to better prepare and assist Adult Education students in the successful transition to post-secondary education and employment. In fiscal year 2010, the Adult Education department at **Black Hawk College** was awarded an ICCB Bridge Development Project grant. Health Science career area was selected due to the high demand and availability of employment in the area. In fiscal year 2011, the Adult Education department was awarded an ICCB Bridge Implementation Project grant to offer a pilot bridge project. In fiscal year 2012, a second bridge course was offered. Bridge course elements of contextualized instruction, career exploration and transition services provide an in-depth and up-close look at health career areas. In fiscal year 2011, there were 16 ESL students enrolled in the Pre-Health Care Bridge course and all of them completed. In fiscal year 2012, the same number of students participated.

Campaign Success Learning Communities is an initiative implemented in spring 2012 at **Harry S Truman College** to better serve our in-coming student body, and especially those who place into Developmental Education. Currently, a significant majority of students score below college level (62.2 percent in reading, 89.5 percent in writing, and 84.8 percent in math). More concerning is the fact that 60 percent of students who enroll at Truman fail to complete their first 15 credit hours. The Learning Communities program is a concerted, campus-wide effort to address this substantial problem of student retention while directly working towards the primary goals of the Reinvention of the City Colleges of Chicago. By bolstering the developmental education program and by bringing faculty, staff, and administration together for the purposes of student success, Truman College is retaining more students and is, with time, enabling more of them to persist through their programs-of-study all the way to graduation and/or transfer. The Learning Communities program takes two or more courses and pairs them together into a block of classes, as the first-semester developmental education pairings, thereby creating a single cohort of students taught by a collaborative team of instructors. The benefits of these basic pairings are many. Pedagogically speaking, these learning community combinations turn what is often isolated skills-based instruction into a collaborative and intentional cross-course learning experience, with each paired course complimenting and supporting the other(s). Beginning spring 2013, more transitional/bridge learning communities were created that straddle a developmental course with a college credit. From the start, the Learning Communities program has yielded increasingly positive results in terms of both student success and student retention. In spring 2012, the Learning Communities program had a success rate of 48.4 percent (3 percent higher than stand-alone remedial courses) and a final retention rate of 68.3 percent. In fall 2012, owing to some of the substantial program improvements, students in the Learning Community demonstrated a 61.93 percent success rate against the Truman average of 51.36 percent. The retention data is even more compelling, with 89.34 percent of students staying in class compared to 76.23 percent, which in turn increases the likelihood of increased student retention and graduation rates within four semesters.

**Malcolm X College's** (MXC) West Side Learning Center (WSLC) began the third Healthcare Bridge to Success session during the spring 2013 term. The Adult Education (AE) program started offering this program during fall 2012. The goal is to provide a comprehensive health program to students enrolled in AE. In addition to the healthcare bridge class, six tutors were hired to provide direct assistance to adult learners at the main campus and West Side Learning Center's ABE/ASE and Healthcare Bridge Clinical Groups. Twenty students registered for the third spring 2013 Healthcare Bridge session. One of the

successes of the program is that it has been able to reach out to a male audience. The healthcare bridge started this new session with six male students. The six males also participated in the male-mentoring program at WSLC.

The Bridge to Health Sciences is a program designed to “bridge” students to a college credential. The program offers career developmental courses specific to health sciences. In addition, this program includes reading, writing and math instruction to prepare students for coursework in one of the health sciences programs offered by **Lewis and Clark Community College**. In 2012, enrollment in the Bridge to Health Sciences was 85 percent female. This innovative program began with the funding of Shifting Gears initiative by Joyce Foundation in fiscal year 2007 as an answer to an abysmal number of students moving from adult education to college. The very first bridge program created at Lewis & Clark was Bridge to Manufacturing. Four semesters of data were collected to assess the success of Bridge to Health Sciences. Of the 26 students enrolled in the first three Bridge cohorts, 50 percent completed. Of the 13 students who completed, 9 received their GED® certificates (69 percent) and additional three students who did not complete the bridge did pass their GED® exams. Ten of the thirteen students went on to enroll in college courses (77 percent). Although the numbers are small, preliminary results indicate the bridge program is a promising practice that needs to be replicated and scaled up to determine its effectiveness on a broad scale.

*The Bridge to Health Sciences offers career developmental courses specific to health sciences including reading, writing and math instruction to prepare students for coursework in one of the health sciences programs offered by Lewis and Clark Community College.*

The Adult Education Developmental (AED) Bridge to Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) at **William Rainey Harper College** (WRHC) was designed to model a growing trend in adult education nationwide; providing a mechanism for assisting students enrolled in basic skills programs to make a transition to college-level coursework that would lead to occupational or academic certification and better employment opportunities. There were two open house events held at WRHC campus in fall semester 2008 to recruit students from the Adult Educational Development Department, as well as members from the community. Students enrolled in the two-week bridge course were provided with materials that would assist them in their future academic success. Successful bridge completers also received the textbook and DVD’s required for RAC103 Heating Principles, the first college course for these bridge students. Students who completed the two-week bridge course were required to complete an exit interview with faculty in AED and HVAC. Successful interviewees were provided with tuition and fee assistance for RAC 103. In terms of student success, 89 percent of the bridge students successfully transitioned to RAC 103, their first college level course. Of this group, 63 percent of these students successfully completed RAC 103.

In August of 2012, **John A. Logan College** implemented a dual enrollment pilot that has provided the opportunity for adult education students to enroll in one credit-bearing class associated with the career pathway chosen by the student while still being enrolled in adult education classes. Tuition and fees are waived for the credit-bearing class and books are also supplied. This pilot is designed to increase students’ transition skills, provide continued instructional support from adult education instructors while students are dually enrolled in adult education and credit-bearing classes, increase the number of adult education students who enroll in postsecondary education and obtain family-sustaining jobs, and increase retention and completion rates for adult education students who enroll in certificate or two-year college programs.

Adult Education classes provide a pathway to postsecondary education. At **Oakton Community College**, a pilot program for GED® students developed in January 2012, offers courses and workshops designed to assist students in taking the next step towards achieving their academic goals. The program is designed for a cohort of 15 – 20 students who are completing final coursework in preparation for their GED® tests and

have expressed an interest in furthering their educational careers. Four Bridges to Academic Reading classes are available during the day and evening at the Ray Hartstein campus to provide students with special academic tools and reading skills needed to make the transition from ESL programs to GED® preparation or college level classes. Two Bridges to Academic Writing classes are also provided to assist students in acquiring the writing skills that are needed for academic success. As a result of the Adult Education GED® program, the pass rate of those taking the GED® tests has increased to approximately 50 percent.

### ***Degree Monitoring/Degree Audits***

Degree monitoring at institutions tracks student course progression toward a credential. A degree audit is a valuable tool based on a computer-generated analysis that assesses students' academic progress and thus identifies potential graduates in the Illinois community college system. Colleges use degree audit software to identify students who have met the requirement of a certificate or degree but have not formally applied for graduation. Individuals who are approaching the completion of their program can also be identified and notified about their progress toward graduation and, if needed be, invited back to finish the few remaining requirements for graduation.

*A degree audit is a valuable tool based on a computer-generated analysis that assesses students' academic progress and thus identifies potential graduates in the Illinois community college system.*

**Malcolm X College** (MXC), one of the City Colleges of Chicago, has identified metrics for student success. If students have a degree plan, they are more probable to graduate. With the implementation of Grades First system in fall 2012, MXC currently has over 40 percent of their student population with degree plans. The system's purpose is to identify and increase the number of potential degree completers (based on having 45+ graduation hours completed). Long term, this new practice provides real time data of students and how they are progressing towards degree completion. Short term, it allows the college to develop pre-selected qualifiers (tags) that can be associated with the students for tracking, reporting, and continuous follow-up and outreach to students. Advisors complete degree audits and upload to Grades First – these plans are the student's pathway to completion and can change as the student's goals change. Over 400 students have been individually tagged as potential completers for the spring 2013 term – a number that was projected based on trend data in the past, can be now projected based upon the number of actual students that are close to graduating. Currently almost 2,000 MXC students have degree plans.

The purpose of Completion Initiative is to track and monitor the completion of all students, and particularly the IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) cohorts, via case management, complete degree audits for students with 45 or more college credits, and contact students near completion who have not registered for class, regardless of their last date of enrollment. It was implemented at **Richard J. Daley College** (RJDC) in spring 2012 to increase the number of certificate and degree completers. Early Alert and the GradesFirst software are used to monitor the progress of potential graduates. As a result of the graduation initiative, degree completion at RJDC increased from 294 to 464 between fiscal years 2011 and 2012. This represents 170 additional student awards in fiscal year 2012, or a 57.8 percent increase.

The goal of the Graduation Project implemented in fall 2012 at **Wilbur Wright College** is to ensure that every potential graduate/completer is carefully monitored by his/her assigned advisor to the point of graduation/completion. College advisors manage their potential completers through their respective student caseloads, utilizing GradesFirst as the main communication tool and the PeopleSoft system to conduct the degree audits. Educational plans are create or modified during the fall semester for students who have earned 45 hours or more toward graduation. In the spring semester, a degree audit is generated for each

prospective graduate/completer. Once a student is deemed eligible for graduation, a comprehensive outreach is conducted, including a personal phone call to the student, emails, and letters to ensure student applies for graduation. In addition, closely monitoring students through the Early Alert/Progress Campaign conducted by the faculty helps to support and provide academic and nonacademic support services for academic success for all students, and in particular for those who may be experiencing academic difficulties. As part of the Graduation Project, a campus-wide Graduation Campaign has been launched, including advisor-sponsored events with the support of faculty and student organizations. This effort is linked to other campaigns related to completion/graduation such as Phi Theta Kappa's Commit to Complete and the One Million Degrees Program. With the new graduation program in place, the college is projecting that it will award 1,500 degrees and certificates more in fiscal year 2013.

The purpose of Automatic Graduation, implemented at **Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC)** in July 2011, is to award program certificate(s) and IAI (Illinois Articulation Initiative) certification for any current and future students who meet the graduation requirement while completing coursework relating to their respective Associate in Applied Science, Associate in Arts, or Associate in Science program. The IVCC Records Analyst and Records Office staff members work with the Office of Institutional Research and the Department of Information Technology Services to thoroughly check and evaluate each graduation application that lists an AAS Degree with a built-in Certificate Program and each AA or AS applicant for IAI completion. In spring 2012, IVCC awarded 45 percent more certificates than the year preceding the implementation of Automatic Graduation.

### ***New Student Orientation***

*The goal of 'Panther Palooza!', a student orientation at Morton College, is to improve the transition of new students into college life and thus increase retention rates in the long run.*

'Panther Palooza!' is a student orientation at **Morton College**, first conducted in the summer of 2011 and offered again twice in summer 2012, with the goal to improve new students' transition into college life and thus increase retention rates in the long run. Informational and transitional activities during the orientation include a gathering with faculty, administrators, new and returning students; a Q and A session with a faculty/student-alumni panel; presentations by Student Activities and Financial Aid; a performance by the Broadway Club; and an introduction by the college president. Students break into smaller groups to tour the campus and to receive more detailed information about placement testing, advising, registering for classes, and hands-on training on the Panther Portal. The sessions also include an ice breaker, short video, prize drawings, and other activities to set a 'fun' tone. In summer 2012, a total of 93 students attended 'Panther Palooza!' event. Participants completed a questionnaire evaluating the usefulness of the presentations, as well as identifying areas that were lacking. The results revealed that 96 percent of respondents, which included new and returning students, felt that due to the orientation they would feel more comfortable when they started their classes. Out of 25 full-time students attending in fall 2012, 25 registered again in spring 2013 (100 percent persistence). The orientation will continue to be offered in summer 2013.

In order for students to become familiar with **Carl Sandburg College's** services and facilities, a New Student Orientation initiative was created. The elements that make the initiative successful include utilizing staff to welcome students and build a connecting point with them on campus, ice breakers to meet fellow new students, interactive campus tour to show students how to utilize campus services, and "mySANDBURG", the college's web portal, that offers useful tips to navigating the campus and overall campus experience.

**Danville Area Community College** (DACC) with Achieving the Dream, INC, a non-profit national organization, introduced the concept “students don’t do voluntary.” Based on attrition data, student feedback, and growing performance gaps, DACC administrators, departmental teams, and service providers revised a registration deadline policy. The college applied a registration deadline starting with the fall 2011 term. To reinforce the reason for the deadline, it is referred to as the Registration “Success-Line.” Students with less than 19 credit hours are required to register ten days prior to the start of the term, or course start date if late-start classes are being taken. Previous data showed that a high percentage of students who registered during the last ten days dropped or withdrew due to the lack of time available to adequately prepare themselves for the start of the term (such as with securing funding and obtaining transcripts, etc.) and the demands of academics (such as with purchasing textbooks, and selecting appropriate courses). Furthermore, DACC decided to require all students to attend a new student orientation. Realizing the fact that every student may not be able to attend the new student orientation, the college added additional orientation formats including the orientation online with interactive quizzes at the end of each section and Saturday orientations. The college also continues to offer a specialized orientation for recent high school graduates who are tested and registered for their upcoming freshman year while they are still attending high school.

Increasing the number of students earning college credentials of economic value is the first goal of City Colleges of Chicago’s Reinvention initiative. To accomplish this overarching goal, **Olive-Harvey College** (OHC) needs to see marked improvement in course success (earning a grade between A and C) and term to term retention of students. Concerns over course success rate and retention are even more pressing in the area of developmental education. OHC has committed itself to improving course success rate by building a sense of community among its students, faculty and staff. Students should feel welcome, develop a sense of belonging, and feel supported in their commitment to achieve their educational goals. In this spirit, Dean of Student Services hosted OHC’s first New Student Convocation at the onset of the fall 2012 semester. Another one was held for the spring 2013 semester. These events were designed to introduce new students to key faculty and staff who are crucial resources for students at OHC, as they provide information on student services. The New Student Convocation, open to students in Baccalaureate/Transfer courses, Adult Education, Developmental Education, and OHC’s College to Careers program, is both instructive and motivational. By formally welcoming students into the college, OHC hopes to increase student retention, course success and, eventually, graduation rates. For those who participated in the fall convocation and enrolled again in the spring, the average fall GPA was 2.70. Out of these 37 students, 81 percent earned a 2.00 GPA or better. Seventy percent of those who completed the fall 2012 semester enrolled in the spring 2013 semester. This matches the college’s term to term retention goal for fall 2012.

### ***Other Select Initiatives***

Other select initiatives include workshops, scholarships, data outcome/metric/benchmark utilization, as well as an improved access to faculty and various remediation initiatives.

The Center for Access and Accommodation in collaboration with the Career Services at **College of DuPage** conducted four career workshops during the 2011-2012 academic year that prepare individuals with disabilities for the workplace. The goal of the first workshop was to help students with disabilities understand their rights and responsibilities in the workforce. The second workshop taught self-advocacy skills for students with disabilities. The third workshop was to assist students with disabilities with the job search process and

*Workshops, scholarships, data outcome/metric/benchmark utilization, as well as an improved access to faculty and various remediation and other initiatives have contributed to increased graduation rates.*

the fourth one informed them how to prepare a resume and a cover letter. Participating students obtained tools to better prepare themselves in the job search process. Due to the success of these workshops, additional workshops are planned.

**Waubensee Community College** was awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant of \$598,397 for sixty months to establish a minimum of twenty scholarships per year for academically talented new and returning students with financial need who are interested in pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. NSF S-STEM Scholarship Program was launched in the fall 2011 semester with eighteen students including twelve students with documented financial needs. Eleven students are Caucasian, three are Hispanic/Latino, two are Asian, one is Native American, and one is Middle Eastern. Eight students are older than 23. Several students have overcome such challenges as physical disability, addictions, and severe economic deprivation. At least four students are the first in their families to attend college, and at least two students were not born in the United States. At least two students are single parents.

**Shawnee Community College** uses the Perkins Grant to help improve graduation rates. The Carl Perkins Grant encourages academic preparation, increased student retention, and completion for disadvantaged students in technical and career education programs. The grant, which was first authorized in 1984 and reauthorized in 1998, serves disabled students, single parents, displaced homemakers, economically disadvantaged, non-traditional and/or limited English proficient students. Services provided by the grant include tutors, note-takers, lab fees, supplies, daycare, and equipment loans. The number of students enrolling in career and technical education programs continues to increase.

The Minority Persistence to Completion is an initiative at **Black Hawk College** (BHC) that includes minority faculty, staff, and students in strategic and intentional dialogue designed to develop a plan by which to increase retention and completion rates among minority students by providing both academic and non-academic resources and support. This proactive approach to increasing completion and graduation rates began in 2009 when the Community College Student Satisfaction Inventory indicated that BHC students, and especially the minority students, wanted more “out of the classroom” access to faculty. Due to the heterogeneous nature of minority populations, the following three minority cohorts were determined for the initiative: African American Males, African American Females and Hispanic Males and Females. The initiative has been a positive experience for the involved students as it has built their self-esteem and sense of leadership.

One of City College's Reinvention goals is to dramatically increase outcomes for students in need of remediation. As a result, **Richard J. Daley College's** President and Vice-President co-founded the Comprehensive Academic Support and Help to Return on Investment, (C.A.S.H. to R.O.I.) program that assists students requiring developmental education courses to successfully reach and complete college-level courses. This is done through a process of mandatory, supplemental instruction and socialization that helps students better prepare for and integrate into college. Any student who tests into a remedial discipline, math, reading, or writing, must complete CASH-to-ROI in order to receive 15 percent of their final grade in the developmental education course(s) they are enrolled. The C.A.S.H. to R.O.I. program was launched in spring 2011. C.A.S.H. to R.O.I. has been offered every semester thereafter. Currently, spring 2013 begins the 7th cohort of C.A.S.H. to R.O.I. The C.A.S.H. to R.O.I. program encourages student success through the integration of knowledge and skills across reading, writing, and mathematics and the development of social capital and intrusive advising that will assist students in making decisions about their future academic and career goals. Data analysis indicated that CASH-to-ROI completers pass their developmental courses at higher rates than non-completers. Also, CASH-to-ROI completers persist from term to term and complete the first college-level course (in math, reading, and writing) at higher rates than their non-completer counterparts.

**Olney Central College** (OCC) has implemented a number of initiatives that shorten the amount of time in remediation and increase remedial course completion. In fiscal year 2012, OCC implemented Intermediate Algebra hybrid classes. In addition, a Tutor Club was instituted last year for the purpose of providing regular ongoing training to all tutors. In fall semester 2012, the flexible-option format classes and the basic mathematics on-line class began allowing students to accelerate course completion. In January 2012, a Composition I class was added to the schedule at mid-term, allowing students to finish their remediation and first level college class during the same semester. Again in January 2012, OCC began using the Career and Academic Success System (CARS), offered by ICCB, as a study tool in reading, writing, and mathematics, for students who test within a few points of college level courses on their placement test. Future plans for accelerating developmental education at OCC include creating different sequences of developmental math courses based on programs of study by fall semester 2013 and creating an orientation class for all students scoring into two developmental courses. As the result of the initiatives, the remedial course completion increased and more students are electing to finish their remedial reading and English by mid-term.

The Math On-Demand (MOD) program at **Wilbur Wright College** seeks to boost student outcomes and better prepare developmental education students to succeed in college-level math courses. As part of the innovations that are unique to the MOD program, the program seeks to embed an advising module within the curriculum where students will be asked to select their academic and career tracks early on during their academic journeys. The MOD program is a comprehensive project implemented in summer 2010 that forges collaboration among many departments and offices and aligns their efforts into the common goal of boosting student success. It offers an alternative delivery approach for developmental math courses. It employs teacher led instruction, adaptive software and online individualized math exercises that are tailored to the specific needs of each student. About 1000 developmental math students are served every semester. The program seeks to leverage technologies and individualize each student's math learning by focusing on his/her unique content weaknesses and strengths. After completion of MOD Foundational Studies (FS) courses, approximately 29 percent of FS MOD students were able to skip one level of developmental education math, while 3 percent were able to skip two levels and place directly into credit math courses. Early indications suggest a correlation between the implementation of MOD and the increased rates of course success.

The developmental education mathematics program revision has been made at **John Wood Community College** to provide students with an opportunity to expedite their completion of needed developmental education math, allowing them faster access to college-level courses and completion of certificates and degrees. The revision to the beginning level classes began in fall 2011, with the remaining classes following the next semester. Developmental education assists students with the improvement of their basic academic skills so they may more successfully complete college level courses. The math department had begun using ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces), a web-based adaptive questioning system that targets what students know and what the next step for learning will be. ALEKS, together with the classroom instructor, provides students with the knowledge they need to more quickly get to the next step in the developmental education math series. The developmental education math program revision included combining the courses of math, arithmetic and pre-algebra into a single arithmetic and pre-algebra course (MAT 010). The remaining courses of elementary and intermediate

*The math department at John Wood Community College had begun using ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces), a web-based adaptive questioning system that targets what students know and what the next step for learning will be. This tool, together with the classroom instructor, provides students with the knowledge they need to more quickly get to the next step in the developmental education math series.*

algebra were combined into a single course (MAT 020.) This can potentially reduce five semesters of developmental education math into two. By assisting students with the needed education in a quicker timeframe, students are more likely to transition to the college-level math courses. While data is only available for the 2012 year, it appears that students completing the new MAT 010 course had a higher progression rate than when they completed MAT 008.

Every five years, **Kankakee Community College (KCC)** conducts an environmental scan to project demographic, educational attainment, and workforce trends. The purpose of the scan is to collect data to improve KCC's strategic planning process. In summer 2012, KCC launched a year-long strategic planning process in which the college prioritized the inclusion of projections of educational attainment by race and gender in the data report due to the need to discuss quality improvements in outreach, retention, and completion initiatives for minority and women students as part of strategic planning.

InVOLve project, implemented at **John A. Logan College** in 2013, attempts to identify potential methods in which collaborative efforts among various professional and academic departments can be utilized in order to successfully implement student retention strategies. Concretely, the goals are to achieve a 92 percent retention rate within the term by the end of spring 2015, a 75 percent retention rate between fall and spring semesters by spring 2016, and a 55 percent retention rate from fall to fall by fall 2016. The project includes a wide range of strategies for retaining students such as the mandatory New Student Orientation, email reminders to register for classes on time, or contacting students whose status moves from full-time to part-time during the course of a semester.

The ASSIST office at **Oakton Community College** has implemented an Assistive Technology (AT) Program with the goals of improving curricular access and increasing student success for all Oakton students, and especially students with disabilities. The ASSIST office provides appropriate assistive technology such as voice to text software, screen reading software and hardware, magnifiers, CCTVs, reading and study skills software, magnification software and hardware, recording devices, scanning and reading software and portable scan and read devices to students who have difficulties with their reading or writing skills, hearing, sight, physical dexterity, concentration, memory, or visual or auditory processing skills. The AT program consists of individual student assessments and trainings, small group trainings, faculty and staff trainings, classroom visits, equipment loans, and AT in the classroom. Since the program's implementation in academic year 2011-2012, the graduation rate for students with documented disabilities has increased from 3.45 percent in 2010-2011 to 5.58 percent in 2011-2012.

*The ASSIST office at Oakton Community College has implemented an Assistive Technology Program with the goals of improving curricular access and increasing student success for all Oakton students, and especially students with disabilities.*

Waitlisting is an initiative implemented at **Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC)** in January 2011 that increases educational attainment by improving student access to courses. From a course management and planning perspective, this effective practice serves a dual purpose: to appropriately manage course offerings and to gain an understanding of the demand for certain sections of courses. If an ample amount of demand is present, additional course sections can be created. From a student service perspective, waitlisting allows students the opportunity to place themselves on a standby list once the enrollment in a specific course has reached capacity. This is convenient because the Student User Interface will manage the waitlist process for the student, instead of forcing the student to manage the process manually. Because of waitlisting, IVCC is able to respond quicker and more accurately to student need and more students are given access to courses that would not have happened in the past.

Recently, financial aid staff members at **Kankakee Community College (KCC)** have studied trends

among financial aid recipients. One observation they made had to do with students' debt – each semester approximately 100 students withdraw from the college with some, or all, of their financial aid award unearned. In these cases, students (all with low socioeconomic eligibility) must repay the unearned portion of their awards. Additional review of institutional data revealed that each year, students had to return approximately \$100,000 of their unused award. As the result, financial aid staff created the Student Debt Relief Initiative in fall 2012. Consequently, students can withdraw with less debt as the distribution of financial aid awards is delayed by one month in order to give students adequate time to do more diligent financial planning. This information was communicated through KCC's social media and signage at the college. Furthermore, financial aid staff decided that financial aid funds can be applied for academic-related expenses other than tuition as it is expected that student retention rates among financial aid recipients may increase. During the fall 2012 term, the Student Debt Relief Initiative has been successful in reducing the payback amount students who withdrew from KCC had to pay. Instead of the approximate \$100,000 payback amount usually incurred by students per semester, during the fall 2012 term, the payback amount was cut in half to approximately \$50,000.

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