ACT®

POLICY PLATFORM

HIGHER EDUCATION

2018 EDITION

ACT's Policy Platform

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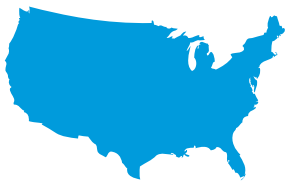


This Higher Education Policy Platform offers a wide range of recommendations seeking to ensure that all students are able to ***navigate the college-going and financial aid processes to complete a postsecondary credential.***

In 2014, ACT released its first-ever policy platform focused on higher education, which contained research-based recommendations that sought to improve college readiness, reduce informational barriers, and increase degree completion rates.

While these issues remain important, other challenges have risen to the collective attention of policymakers and the general public: college affordability (or the lack thereof) and the continued inequity surrounding student outcomes. This updated Higher Education Policy Platform (whose previous version was labeled more broadly as a "postsecondary" platform) upholds many of the recommendations from 2014 and offers new ones to address these newer challenges.[1]

National data demonstrate that greater percentages of recent high school graduates are attending higher education than ever before.[2] However, the growth has been uneven,[3] as the level of college readiness among students[4] and lack of truly affordable postsecondary options[5] are causing some students—especially those from low-income, first-generation, or certain racial/ethnic groups—to reconsider their post–high school plans.[6]

Although national degree completion rates have ticked up over the last few years,[7] they have not improved as much as anticipated or as necessary, especially among the most economically vulnerable students.[8] Less than 10 percent of children born in the bottom quartile of household incomes attain a bachelor's degree by age 25, compared to more than 50 percent in the top quartile.[9] This gap must be reduced, and now is the time to think more comprehensively about what enhances student success in higher education and how institutions, intermediary organizations, and community leaders can remove obstacles to this success.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE ATTAINMENT AT AGE 25 BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Born in **bottom quartile** of household incomes

10%

Born in **top quartile** of household incomes

50%

Further compounding the need to resolve these issues is the long-overdue reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA), a more than 50-year-old policy vehicle that has not been revisited in nearly a decade. HEA is the principal federal law that can reset institutional priorities and reshape individual college-going behaviors. But even under the best circumstances, HEA cannot address all the challenges facing higher education and the students who are its lifeblood.

ACT challenges the conventional wisdom about *who* is a college student, *where* instruction can take place, and *how* to make a college education more affordable. New ways of thinking must be explored, and resulting solutions must be continually tested and improved.

The 2018 edition of the Higher Education Policy Platform is organized around **three themes:**

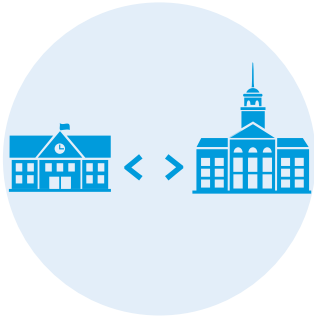
1 **Scale up existing efforts to increase students' access to and success in higher education.**

2 **Find innovative solutions and partnerships that reduce the financial burden to students and families, especially those least able to pay.**

3 **Develop, improve, and scale up interventions that are effective at advancing the completion rates of underrepresented students.**

The following sections present detailed recommendations for each of the themes.

1 SCALE UP EXISTING EFFORTS TO INCREASE STUDENTS' ACCESS TO AND SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.



1st RECOMMENDATION

EXPLORE WAYS TO OFFER MORE COLLEGE COURSES TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EARLIER AND WITH LITTLE TO NO OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS.

An increasingly popular and effective way to expand student access to higher education is through early college high school, dual credit, and concurrent enrollment programs, which ACT includes in the broader term "dual enrollment." These programs expose students to actual college courses and allow them to earn college credits while still in high school.

According to a rigorous meta-analysis conducted by the What Works Clearinghouse, dual enrollment courses have "positive effects on students' degree attainment (college), college access and enrollment, credit accumulation, completing high school, and general academic achievement (high school)."[10] Dual enrollment programs can also shorten the time students take to earn a credential,[11] which can reduce their total college costs and student loan debt—both highly desirable to students, their parents, and policymakers.

Only 11 percent of 2009 ninth graders from a high-poverty background took at least one dual enrollment course at some point during their time in high school.[12] For these students, the benefits of dual enrollment may be mitigated by the expectation that they pay for full tuition, fees, and textbooks. Even if such costs are reimbursed upon completion of the course, the upfront costs impose a significant barrier. Quite simply, requiring students to pay for dual enrollment restricts participation among those who could reap the most benefits from such programs.

To address the cost constraint, states have turned to need-based scholarships to defray some or all of the costs of participation. These scholarships, however, are often subject to other budgetary pressures. In other words, their discretionary nature make them an unpredictable solution for students to rely upon. States should either identify stable sources of funding for such scholarships or take the further step of making dual enrollment courses free to all interested and eligible high school students.

2nd RECOMMENDATION

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Developmental education courses, also known as remedial education, are intended to prepare students who do not have the knowledge and abilities necessary to succeed in college-level work and persist to a degree. Despite attention and efforts by higher education research centers, prominent foundations, and advocacy organizations, the current system continues to struggle to fulfill this goal.

In the 2011–12 academic year, 29 percent of first- and second-year students at public four-year institutions, and 41 percent of those at public two-year institutions, reported having taken developmental courses.[13] As these courses are most often not credit bearing, they do not count toward a degree; hence, they increase both the time and money students must spend in pursuit of a diploma. Also, students enrolled in developmental education are much less likely to eventually graduate than their peers: a student taking a developmental education course in the first year of higher education is 74 percent more likely to drop out of college than other first-year full-time students taking only credit-bearing courses.[14]

In an effort to reimagine how and where developmental instruction takes place, Tennessee has designed a pre-college intervention, Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support (SAILS), which identifies high school students who are falling behind academically in mathematics and uses local college faculty to "pre-remediate" them using the college's developmental mathematics education curriculum. Upon completion, students can choose to earn college credit via dual enrollment while still in high school, and can seamlessly matriculate into the same college or system without having to take a placement test. State-led initiatives such as SAILS offer promising models for other states and postsecondary institutions to adopt and adapt.

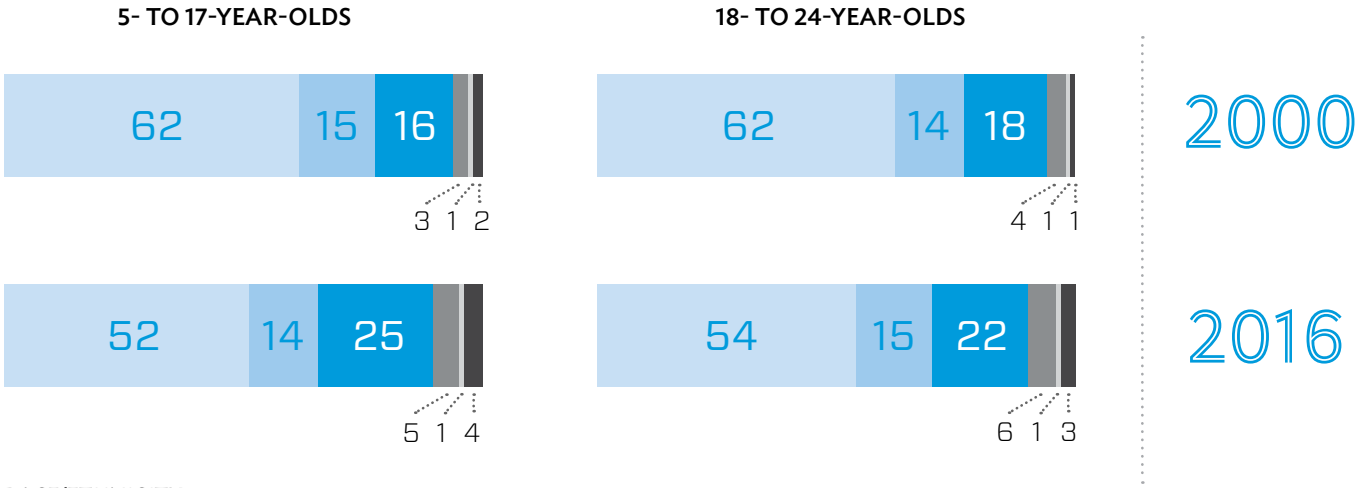
3rd RECOMMENDATION

BROADEN THE DEFINITION OF COLLEGE READINESS SO THAT ADDITIONAL—AND INCREASINGLY NECESSARY—SUPPORT SERVICES CAN BE DELIVERED BY EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURES.

Too often, "college readiness" is defined solely by academic achievement—which, while essential, is not enough to guarantee success, especially for those students who do not have the same level of familial experience with the higher education system. Readiness also encompasses social-emotional skills, such as perseverance and the ability to work with others; financial knowledge, including understanding of student-loan borrowing and repayment plans; and the navigational skills needed to help find the most effective path to and through college.

The federally-funded GEAR UP and TRIO programs produce results, year after year, for low-income and first-generation students through extensive mentoring, tutoring, counseling, college readiness assessments, application assistance, credit-based transition programs, and financial counseling. These programs reflect and support a chief social goal: to help underserved students earn a postsecondary credential. Without a federal commitment to fully fund and support programs that enhance students' academic and non-academic readiness, we jeopardize many students' opportunity to succeed in and beyond college.

The changing demographics of the future US college student



RACE/ETHNICITY

White | Black | Hispanic | Asian/Pacific Islander | American Indian/Alaska Native | **Two or more races**

The population of the United States is becoming more ethnically diverse, and nowhere is this more evident than in the nation's education system. The demographic makeup of the school-aged population (age 5 to 17) has changed significantly over the past 16 years, providing a glimpse of the future student of higher education over the next decade.[15] Specifically, the white student population, though still a slight majority, is much smaller in proportion to the Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial populations, which have increased, while the African American and American Indian/Alaska Native populations are holding relatively steady.

Since 2013, low-income students represent a majority (51 percent) of public school students, and students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches now represent a majority in 21 states.[16] Nationwide in 2015, more than 30 million children (or 43 percent of those 18 years old and younger) were living in poverty.[17] Thus, besides being more ethnically diverse, the future college student will be less affluent than ever before. Therefore, it is essential for higher education to experiment with and implement ways to make higher education more affordable for students and their families. It is not enough to "open the door" for low-income students if the cost to continuing is too steep.

At present, there are some encouraging signs that the doors to higher education remain open. For example, the percentage of recent high school graduates from low-income backgrounds who immediately enrolled in college jumped from 50 percent in 2012 to 63 percent in 2015.[18] Less promising are the degree completion rates by family income level. As noted earlier, less than 10 percent of children born in the bottom quartile of household incomes attain a bachelor's degree by age 25, compared to over 50 percent in the top quartile.[19] Postsecondary institutions need to reduce these attainment gaps and policy must adjust to the needs of the next wave of college students.

Source: Lauren Musu-Gillette, Cristobal de Brey, Joel McFarland, William Hussar, William Sonnenberg, and Sidney Wilkinson-Flicker, *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2017* (NCES 2017-051), (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), *https://nces.ed.gov/*.

2 FIND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT REDUCE THE FINANCIAL BURDEN TO STUDENTS.

1st RECOMMENDATION

STREAMLINE THE FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY PROCESS TO HELP ENABLE MORE STUDENTS TO AFFORD COLLEGE.

By now, the story is all too familiar: the price of a public four-year college, even after accounting for grant aid, continues to grow beyond the reach of a typical family.[20] On average, for the 2017-18 academic year, a public four-year education cost nearly $15,000 per year, including room and board and after deducting grants, scholarships, and tax credits. The "net price" of attending a private four-year institution (i.e., what the student and/or family must cover after grant aid and savings from tax credits and deductions are subtracted) topped $26,700 per year.[21] Both of these amounts represent a two to three percent increase from the previous year. This is far greater than the less than one percent growth in median family income over the same period.[22]

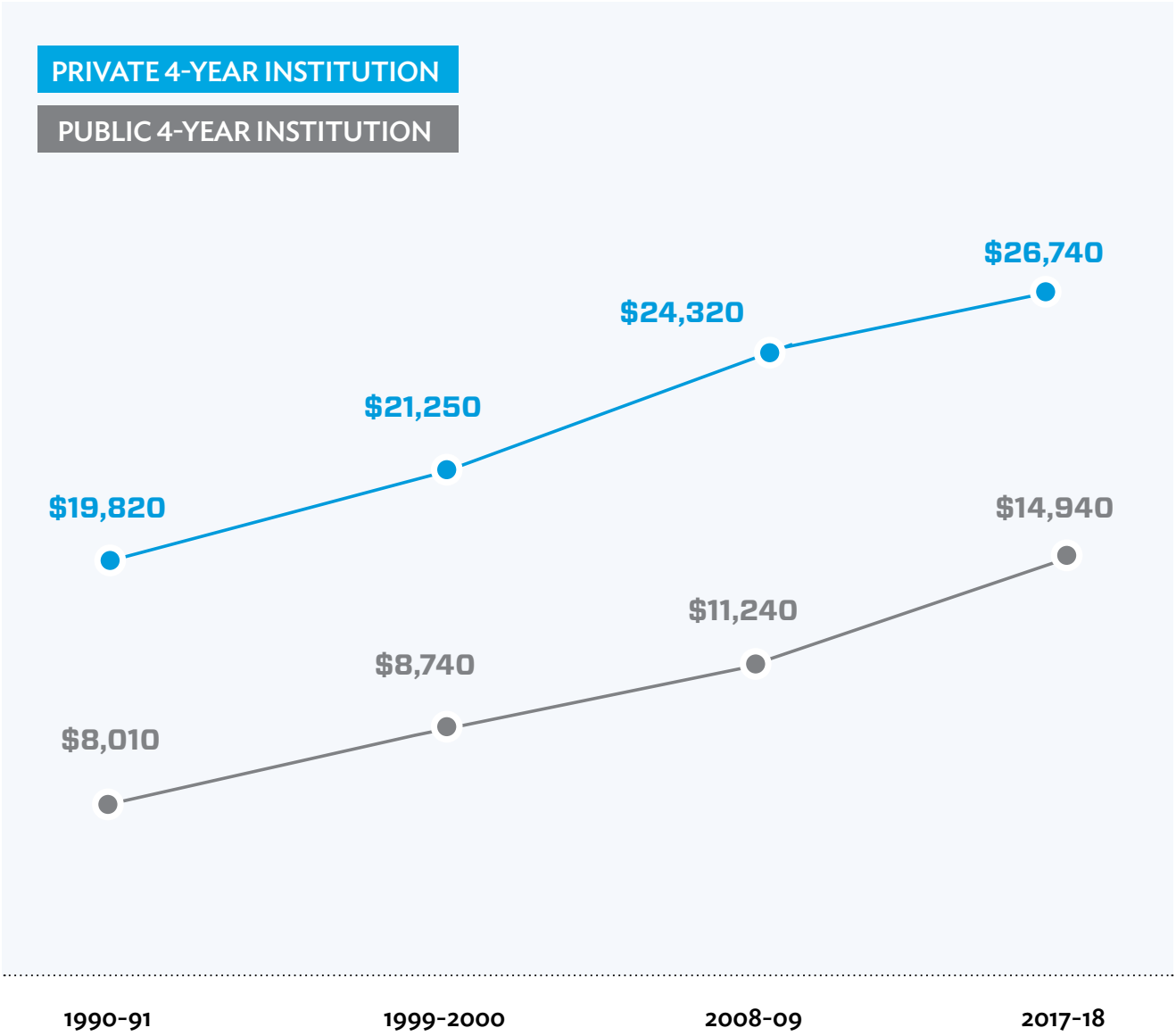
An important way to help enable students to afford college is to remove roadblocks to completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This is critical because, in most cases, the results of the FAFSA are the only information students receive about their financial aid eligibility. When informed about the amount of financial aid available to them, many students who had assumed that they could not afford college ended up applying to and enrolling in college.[23] Further, college enrollment rates for low- and middle-income high school students increased when their families received detailed information about eligibility for financial aid.[24]

> The U.S. Department of Education continues to update the College Scorecard and the Net Price Calculator, which are mandated by the Higher Education Opportunity Act for all postsecondary institutions receiving Title IV federal student aid funding. Both provide useful information about the cost for students to attend particular postsecondary institutions, but these online resources can also be improved. Making the FAFSA, the College Scorecard, and the Net Price Calculator more accessible will provide students with a more complete and accurate picture regarding their postsecondary options.

While 61 percent of high school graduates nationwide completed the FAFSA in academic year 2017–18—an increase of more than 20 percentage points from a decade ago[25]—ACT supports continuing efforts to simplify the FAFSA, as well as ways to automatically and routinely enable the transfer of information directly and securely from tax returns to increase students' access to federal, state, and institutional financial aid.

AVERAGE ANNUAL NET PRICE FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS AT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES
1990-91 THROUGH 2017-18 (IN 2017 DOLLARS)

Includes room and board minus grants, scholarships, and tax credits.



NOTES: Because information on grant aid for 2017-18 is not yet available, the net price for 2017-18 is estimated based on 2016-17 financial aid. Total grant aid includes federal Pell Grants, federal SEOG, state grants, institutional grants, private and employer grants. Room and board in the public two-year sector refers to housing and food costs for commuter students since few community colleges provide on-campus housing. Prices and grant aid are rounded to the nearest $10. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Trends in Student Aid 2017 (New York: The College Board, 2017), *https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-student-aid_0.pdf.*

2nd RECOMMENDATION

MITIGATE UNEXPECTED YET CONSEQUENTIAL COSTS THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT STUDENT SUCCESS.

Largely lost in the discussion of rising college tuition is how unanticipated events and expenses can derail certain college students. For example, if parents, partners, or the students themselves lose a job, required textbooks may not be purchased, meals may be skipped, and finding alternative sources of income (e.g., part-time work, reliance on other family members or friends, private loans) may take precedence over enrollment.[26]

In a recent study, 48 percent of community college students reported food insecurity in the previous month and 13 percent experienced homelessness. Students (and not only those at community colleges) who are food or housing insecure are less able to meet their basic needs, even though a majority of students work and/or receive federal financial aid.[27] In response, a handful of postsecondary institutions have established daycare centers, food banks, and emergency aid programs. These institutional efforts to assist students—and sometimes their families—in times of crisis are laudable, but postsecondary institutions should also re-examine how they calculate their costs in order to prevent budgetary shortfalls among students in the first place.

The U.S. Department of Education requires postsecondary institutions to estimate students' "cost of attendance," which includes tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation, and personal expenses.[28] However, in a recent study, 40 percent of four-year colleges reported a cost of attendance at least 20 percent above or below the estimates produced by a model that factored in students' ages, living situations, and regional costs for food, housing, health care, child care, and miscellaneous items.[29] The current lack of clarity also means colleges can manipulate their estimates to affect their apparent cost when it comes to financial aid. Thus, requiring clearer guidelines for colleges when generating cost-of-living estimates and providing more access to supportive services for students, especially nontraditional students, is an important next step.

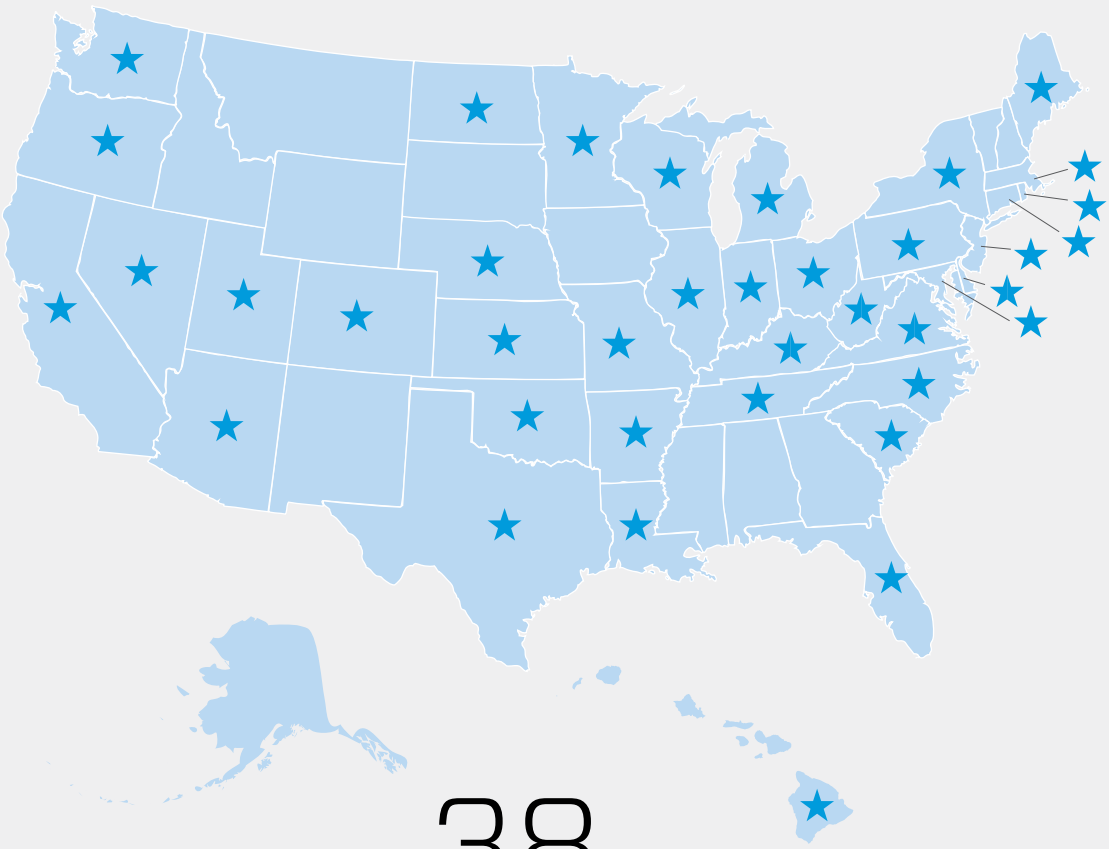
3rd RECOMMENDATION

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE COST OF COLLEGE FOR ALL STUDENTS.

For a growing number of local communities, the approaches reflected in the two previous recommendations (aimed at federal policymakers and postsecondary institutions, respectively) are still insufficient to encourage a wide swath of students to enroll in college. That is why local and state policymakers from across the country, in partnership with private foundations, local businesses, and postsecondary institutions, are establishing community-based scholarship programs.[30] These programs typically offer "free" college or partial scholarships for a set number of years at local public two- and four-year colleges.

A number of these programs target students who are from low-income backgrounds, have satisfied certain academic requirements, or have expressed interest in high-demand majors such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Moreover, some of these scholarship programs require recipients to live and work in the state for as many years as they received the award, otherwise the scholarship must be repaid. There may be practical and/or budgetary reasons for establishing these eligibility and post-receipt criteria, but a more open and universal approach would be more effective.[3]

Local and state policymakers from across the country, in partnership with private foundations, local businesses, and postsecondary institutions, are ***establishing community-based scholarship programs***. These programs typically offer "free" college or partial scholarships for a set number of years at local public two- and four-year colleges.



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STATES HAVE ACTIVE STATE- OR COMMUNITY-BASED COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAMS.

3 DEVELOP, IMPROVE, AND SCALE UP INTERVENTIONS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE AT ADVANCING THE COMPLETION RATES OF UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS.

1st RECOMMENDATION

TEST DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID TO INCREASE AFFORDABILITY AND IMPROVE DEGREE ATTAINMENT.

Although federal financial aid funds are typically disbursed according to longstanding procedures and formulae, innovative approaches are often proposed that their proponents argue will better serve low-income students and their families. For example, some organizations have advocated that the federal government offer low-income families an "upfront affordability guarantee" that they will not have to pay more than 10 percent of discretionary income to finance a college education.[32]

One of the policy levers available to the U.S. Secretary of Education is Experimental Sites authority, which permits the U.S. Department of Education to offer postsecondary institutions and other providers flexibility around certain federal student financial aid eligibility rules.[33] By invoking this authority, the Secretary can waive existing financial aid eligibility rules that, for example, prohibit certain students from accessing federal Pell Grants. As of 2017, there were seven active experiments in this program.[34]

Among these programs, the Dual Enrollment–Pell Grants Experimental Sites initiative will almost certainly have the greatest impact on low-income high school students. The experiment enables 43 two- and four-year institutions in 23 states to award Pell Grants to up to 10,000 low-income high school students annually who are enrolled in an eligible dual enrollment program. Through this experiment and accompanying rigorous evaluation, the Department hopes to learn about the impact of providing earlier access to financial aid on low-income students' college access, participation, and success.

As part of its review of innovative approaches to federal aid programs, the Department should conduct rigorous evaluations of all Experimental Sites programs in order to determine their efficacy, fidelity, and scalability; adopt new experiments as research-based innovations emerge; and work with Congress to fund and implement the most effective programs on a national basis.

2nd RECOMMENDATION

ENSURE THAT HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY AND OTHER STAFF COMMUNICATE THE ACADEMIC AND NONACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS OF COLLEGE AND THE WORKFORCE.

In addition to its benefits discussed above, dual enrollment helps high school students adjust to the academic and nonacademic aspects of postsecondary education so that they are better prepared for success in college and beyond.[35] Conveying the nonacademic aspects of higher education (such as time management, study skills, and recognizing when help is needed) is especially important for students who are the first in their family to attend college. Given their significance, this type of expectation-setting should not happen only within dual enrollment courses. Postsecondary institutions should test how receptive high school students are to apprehending these collegiate expectations and norms in different environments.

For example, in Indiana, two pilot College Readiness Centers have recently been established to provide high school students with mentoring and tutoring, career exploration activities, and social skills development to help them become "college ready" in reading, writing, and mathematics. Although the centers are part of Indianapolis Public Schools, the self-paced curriculum is designed and instruction led by Ivy Tech Community College staff.[36] While the intended purpose of these centers is to eliminate the need for developmental coursework in college, the introduction of college personnel into the high school enables a more direct and authentic transference of these "softer" skills to students. The Indiana Commission of Higher Education is conducting an evaluation of the centers to determine whether student outcomes have improved.

Another example prime for replication is College Success Skills, a popular dual enrollment course offered by many public two- and four-year institutions in Florida.[37] This credit-bearing course, led by college faculty, helps high school students adapt to new instructional styles, manage their time more effectively, and strengthen their critical thinking and comprehension skills. It also covers nonacademic topics such as health and wellness, interpersonal relationships, career planning and employability skills, and financial management. Models that expose high school students, via a formal course or center, to collegiate expectations—academic and nonacademic—led by college personnel support a successful transition between the two worlds.

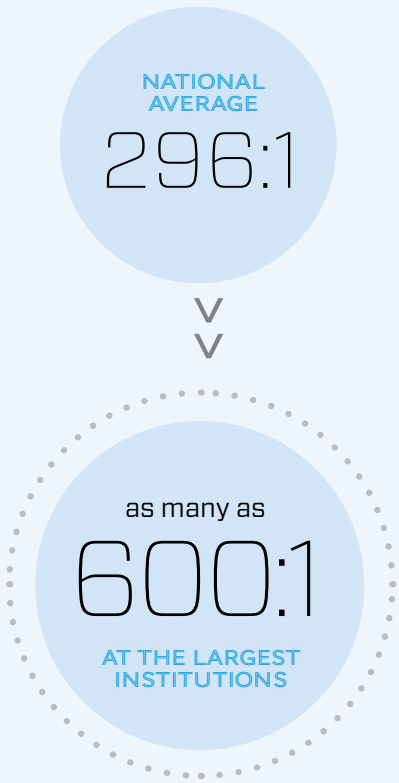
3rd RECOMMENDATION

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY IN COLLEGE ADVISING TO BETTER SUPPORT UNDERSERVED STUDENTS.

Scholars have advanced, and research supports, the idea that academic advising in college is positively related to program completion, but college students consistently express dissatisfaction with the advising process.[38] At a time when the demands on advisors' time are already high (with a median load of 296 students per advisor in 2011—and as many as 600 per advisor at the largest institutions),[39] it seems unreasonable to expect that colleges will suddenly hire enough additional professional advisors to immediately lower unsatisfactory student-to-advisor ratios.

A simple and innovative, though of course not comprehensive, solution is for student advising offices to engage students through technology such as their smartphones (or even landlines) in order to provide basic deadline reminders and "nudge" students to complete certain necessary tasks.[40] Institutions already have students' contact information and use it to transmit messages in emergency or weather-related situations, and some have student support programs that transmit messages to accepted high school graduates during the summer in an attempt to prevent "melt" (the failure of these students to follow through and enroll in the fall after high school graduation).[41] Students will still need time to speak with advisors about decisions regarding complex subjects such as choosing a major or the benefits of taking certain courses, but especially for traditionally underserved students who may be the first in their families to attend college, this use of technology may help them better navigate an unfamiliar routine.

MEDIAN STUDENT-TO-ADVISOR RATIO, 2011



The recommendations offered in this platform continue a framework that acknowledges the importance of ***aligning the education and workforce sectors*** to help fulfill ACT's mission of helping people achieve education and workplace success.

ACT's mission is to help people achieve education and workplace success.

At a time when college affordability (or the lack thereof) and the continued inequity surrounding student outcomes are garnering significant attention, this updated Higher Education Policy Platform offers a wide range of recommendations seeking to ensure that all students are able to navigate the college-going and financial aid processes to complete a postsecondary credential. The recommendations offered in this and ACT's three other 2018 policy platforms continue a framework, established more than three years ago, that acknowledges the importance of engaging the education and workforce sectors to help fulfill ACT's mission.

ALL OF ACT'S POLICY PLATFORMS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE:
www.act.org/policyplatforms

Notes

1. While the issues discussed in this platform do not cover the entire spectrum of challenges faced by higher education, they represent areas in which ACT's research on and experience with these issues provide relevant and compelling evidence to inform policy decisions.
2. "Table 302.20. Percentage of Recent High School Completers Enrolled in 2- and 4-year Colleges, by Race/Ethnicity: 1960 through 2015," *Digest of Education Statistics, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_302.20.asp*.
3. Lauren Musu-Gillette, Cristobal de Brey, Joel McFarland, William Hussar, and William Sonnenberg, *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2017* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), *https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017051.pdf*.
4. *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017: National* (Iowa City: ACT, 2017), *http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/cccr2017/CCCR_National_2017.pdf*.
5. The extent of the college affordability challenge was recently documented by the Institute for Higher Education Policy, which analyzed net price data for more than 2,000 colleges and universities. According to their calculations, nearly half of the institutions studied were affordable to students from families with annual incomes above $160,000. Only one in five low-income students could afford the same colleges. See Alain Poutre, Jamey Rorison, and Mamie Voight, *Limited Means, Limited Options: College Remains Unaffordable for Many Americans* (Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2017), *http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/limited_means_limited_options_report_final.pdf*.
6. "Where Have All the Low-Income Students Gone?," *Higher Education Today,* November 25, 2015, *https://www.higheredtoday.org/2015/11/25/where-have-all-the-low-income-students-gone/*.
7. "Tracking America's Progress Toward 2025," A Stronger Nation, *http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2017/#nation*.
8. Anthony J. Carnevale, Stephen J. Rose, and Andrew R. Hanson, *Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce, 2012), *https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Certificates.FullReport.061812.pdf*.
9. Martha J. Bailey and Susan M. Dynarski, *Gains and Gaps: Changing Inequality in U.S. College Entry and Completion* (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011), *www.nber.org/~dynarski/Bailey_Dynarski_Final.pdf*.
10. *Dual Enrollment Programs* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2017), *https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_dual_enrollment_022817.pdf*.
11. *Redesigning Dual Enrollment to Promote College Completion* (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 2012), *http://publications.sreb.org/2012/12E01_E_Dual_Enr_Policy_Brief.pdf*; *Integrating Earning College Credit in High School into Accountability Systems* (Washington, DC, and Boston: Achieve and Jobs for the Future, 2015), *https://www.achieve.org/files/EarningCollegeCreditAchieveJFF.pdf.*
12. Estimates generated from the Education Data Analysis Tool using public release data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09). "High poverty background" refers to families at or below the 2011 poverty threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau. Both family income and household size are considered when calculating a family's standing with respect to the threshold. More information is available at *https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html.*
13. Xianglei Chen and Sean Simone, *Remedial Coursetaking at U.S. Public 2- and 4-Year Institutions: Scope, Experiences, and Outcomes* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), *https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016405.pdf.*
14. Oliver Schak, Ivan Metzger, Jared Bass, Clare McCann, and John English, *Developmental Education: Challenges and Strategies for Reform* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2017), *https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/education-strategies.pdf.*
15. Lauren Musu-Gillette, Cristobal de Brey, Joel McFarland, William Hussar, William Sonnenberg, and Sidney Wilkinson-Flicker, *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2017* (NCES 2017-051), (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), *https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017051.pdf.*
16. *A New Majority: Low Income Students Now a Majority in the Nation's Public Schools* (Southern Education Foundation, 2015), *http://www.southerneducation.org/getattachment/4ac62e27-5260-47a5-9d02-14896ec3a531/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now.aspx*.
17. Yang Jiang, Maribel R. Granja, and Heather Koball, *Basic Facts about Low-Income Children: Children under 18 Years, 2015* (New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, 2017), *http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_1170.pdf.*
18. "Table 302.30. Percentage of Recent High School Completers Enrolled in 2- and 4-year Colleges, by Income Level: 1975 through 2015," *Digest of Education Statistics*, *https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_302.30.asp*.
19. Bailey and Dynarski, *Gains and Gaps.*
20. An excellent resource on college costs, financial aid, and post-college earnings is The Urban Institute's Understanding College Affordability website (*http://collegeaffordability.urban.org/*).
21. *Trends in College Pricing 2017* (New York: The College Board, 2017), *https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-in-college-pricing_1.pdf*
22. *Trends in College Pricing 2017*.

23. Philip Oreopoulos and Ryan Dunn, "Information and College Access: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment," *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 115, no. 1 (2013): 3–26, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9442.2012.01742.x.

24. Eric P. Bettinger, Bridget Terry Long, Philip Oreopoulos, and Lisa Sanbonmatsu, *The Role of Simplification and Information in College Decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA Experiment* (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2009), *http://www.nber.org/papers/w15361.pdf*.

25. FAFSA completion rates for the high school class of 2017 were calculated based on students' expected graduation year. This produces more accurate estimates than earlier calculations that used age—in this case, FAFSA completers who were 18 years old—as a proxy for high school grade level. See *http://www.collegeaccess.org/FAFSAcompletionrate* for additional details about how the estimates were calculated, as well as historical trends in FAFSA completion.

26. James Dubick, Brandon Mathews, and Clare Cady, *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students* (Boston: National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness, 2016), *http://studentsagainsthunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Hunger_On_Campus.pdf.*

27. Dubick, Mathews, and Cady, *Hunger on Campus*

28. See FAFSA.ed.gov for a more detailed definition.

29. Robert Kelchen, Sara Goldrick-Rab, and Braden Hosch, "The Costs of College Attendance: Examining Variation and Consistency in Institutional Living Cost Allowances," 947–971, doi: 10.1080/00221546.2016.1272092.

30. For a fuller description of these programs, see *https://collegepromise.org/*.

31. Targeted versus universal interventions have been studied in the health and early education fields. When resources are limited, it makes sense to prioritize or limit eligibility to those who are at highest risk. The goal, though, should be universal access.

32. *Beyond Pell: A Next-Generation Design for Federal Financial Aid* (Washington, DC: The Reimagining Aid Design and Delivery Consortium for Higher Education Grants and Work-Study Reform, 2014), *http://1k9gl1yevnfp2lpq1dhrqe17-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/BeyondPell_FINAL.pdf*.

33. Higher Education Act of 1965, § 487A(b) (2013).

34. Active experiments as of the date accessed can be found at *https://experimentalsites.ed.gov/exp/approved.html*.

35. *Using Dual Enrollment to Improve the Educational Outcomes of High School Students* (Iowa City: ACT, 2015), *https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/UsingDualEnrollment_2015.pdf*.

36. "Ivy Tech Receives Grant to Launch New Program at Two Area High Schools," Ivy Tech Community College, April 30, 2010, *https://news.ivytech.edu/2010/04/30/ivy-tech-receives-grant-to-launch-new-program-at-two-area-high-schools/*.

37. Examples of these colleges include the University of Florida, Florida State University, Seminole State College of Florida, Pasco-Hernando State College, Florida Southwestern State College, and Tallahassee Community College.

38. Krista M. Sona, "Advising Satisfaction: Implications for First-Year Students' Sense of Belonging and Student Retention," *The Mentor*, October 31, 2012, *https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2012/10/advising-satisfaction/*.

39. "2011 NACADA Survey," NACADA Clearinghouse, *http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/2011-NACADA-National-Survey.aspx*.

40. The term "nudge" is borrowed from Benjamin C. Castleman and Lindsay C. Page; see, for example, "Freshman Year Financial Aid Nudges: An Experiment to Increase FAFSA Renewal and College Persistence," *Journal of Human Resources* 51, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 389–415, doi: 10.3368/jhr.51.2.0614-6458R. For a recent example of such an initiative, see "Up Next," Better Make Room, *https://www.bettermakeroom.org/up-next/*.

41. Benjamin C. Castleman and Lindsay C. Page, *Summer Melt: Supporting Low-Income Students through the Transition to College* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY PLATFORM