What Matters Most on the Journey to College Success for First Generation College Students?

Dr. Toinette Gunn
Vice President of Programs
Chicago Scholars
ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

• We uniquely select, train, & mentor academically ambitious students from under-resourced communities to complete college & become the next generation of leaders who will transform their neighborhoods and our city.

Mission

• A vibrant Chicago powered by diverse leaders from every neighborhood.

Vision

• Mission Driven
• Collaboration
• Excellence
• Belief
• Innovation
• Data Driven

Core Values
WHY OUR MISSION MATTERS

30,000 ninth grade students enroll in Chicago Public Schools yearly

Approximately 22,000 (73%) will graduate

Only 4,200 (16%) of ninth graders will graduate college within 6 years


GOAL 2025
COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING™
OUR DIFFERENTIATOR

EDUCATION + MENTORSHIP + LEADERSHIP

TRANSFORMATION
CRITICAL TRANSITIONS

Our Seven Year Model

- College Access
- Match and Fit
- Mentorship
- College Success
- Community Building
- College to Careers

GOAL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING™
PROGRAM OUTCOMES

93% College Enrollment
58% of Chicago Public School high school graduates enroll in college

96% 2nd Year Persistence
61% of Chicago Public School college enrollees persist to second year

88% 6-Year Graduation
50% of CPS college enrollees earn a bachelor’s degree within 6 years

Sources:
University of Chicago Consortium on School Research
CPS Office of Accountability
What’s Chicago Scholars’ Secret Sauce?

Over 20 years of experience supporting thousands of first generation and under-resourced students

Identified 5 Key Things WE BELIEVE matter the most
#1: Selection
Academic & Non-Cognitive Skills

Guiding philosophy around Getting it Right!

Thousands of students apply

Extreme vetting & selection process that closely mirrors college admissions

Selection process focused on FIT!
Group Discussion

What student attributes make for a good fit in your program/institution?

If you aren’t sure, how might that impact your selection, matriculation, and program success?

What happens when you’ve selected a student who didn’t appear to be a good fit for your program?
#2: Counseling & Guidance

Match & Fit

Daunting & difficult process for EVERY student

National Student to Counselor Ratio 400:1 = less than one-hour of college counseling

Limited support, information, and guidance = Long-term adverse effects

College counseling that replicates that of well-resourced communities

Investment of time and parental involvement
The Chicago Scholars Five

1. Match
2. Safety
3. Reach
4. Out of State
5. Platinum Partner
Group Poll

What percentage of 2015 CPS high school graduates with a GPA of 3.0 or above DID NOT enroll in a 4-year college?

• A: 5%
• B: 25%
• C: 14%
• D: over 50%

**CPS 2015 District College Enrollment Summary**
Group Poll

What percentage of CPS high school graduates enroll in colleges with selectivity levels that DO NOT match their academic qualifications?

- A: 45%
- B: 60%
- C: 35%
- D: 75%

2009: Barriers to College Attainment: Lessons from Chicago; J. Nagaoka, M. Roderick, & V. Coca
WHY Though!?!?

Why does college selectivity even matter?

Why does a college’s graduation rate matter?

Won’t academically talented students do well in college no matter where they go?
#3: Relationships & Village
The People Matter!

- Revisiting philosophy of “Getting it Right”
- Relationships = Social Capital
- The Power of Mentoring at each critical transition
- Scholars College Success Team/Village
- Support & encouragement = Boost to Self-Confidence
The Effects of Student Coaching in College: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Mentoring

Dr. Eric P. Bettinger, Stanford University School of Education
Rachel Baker, Stanford University School of Education

March 7, 2011

Abstract:
College completion and college success often lag behind college attendance. One theory as to why students do not succeed in college is that they lack key information about how to be successful or fail to act on the information that they have. We present evidence from a randomized experiment which tests the effectiveness of individualized student coaching. Over the course of two separate school years, InsideTrack, a student coaching service, provided coaching to students from public, private, and proprietary universities. Most of the participating students were non-traditional college students enrolled in degree programs. The participating universities and InsideTrack randomly assigned students to be coached. The coach contacted students regularly to develop a clear vision of their goals, to guide them in connecting their daily activities to their long term goals, and to support them in building skills, including time management, self advocacy, and study skills. Students who were randomly assigned to a coach were more likely to persist during the treatment period, and were more likely to be attending the university one year after the coaching had ended. Coaching also proved a more cost-effective method of achieving retention and completion gains when compared to previously studied interventions such as increased financial aid.
70% of all undergraduate students in the U.S. receive some form of financial aid...

• True
• False
#4: Finances

Affordability

DIVERSIFIED ways to support student financial needs

- FAFSA
- College Financial Resources & Support
- Corporate Support
- Individual Donors
- Chicago Scholars, Community &/or Scholarship Organizations
Group Discussion/Food for Thought

Financial Challenges Won’t Go Away… So, what ways does your organization support students financially or to address these challenges?

If you don’t have a sustainable strategy and/or processes, what impact can that have on student success and outcomes?
#5: Attitude/Belief

Belief in Self

Belief that Graduation is Achievable

Team/Village Belief in Students
Student Belief in Self

Do I belong?

Add value to the college’s culture & campus

Do I deserve to be here?

Earned a seat at the table

Trailblazing advantages & disadvantages

GOAL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING
Belief: Graduation is Achievable

- Graduation is the only outcome
- Barriers exist, prepare for them
- Propels perseverance, repels quitting, provides suit of armor
- Embrace the double negative... Not Completing College is NOT an Option!
Belief in Students

Strong sense of belief in students

Parents can contribute most

Encourage, motivate, uplift, listen

Say NO!

Reiterate the double negative.... Not finishing is NOT an option

Stay connected and engaged with students... this is a constant reminder of your belief and the support that they have
Group Discussion

How does your BELIEF show up in your work?

How does the BELIEF in Self show up in your students?

If this sense of BELIEF doesn’t exist or is lost in any of these categories, what have you experienced with students?
College Success

Top 5

- Selection
- Counseling & Guidance
- Relationships & Village
- Finances
- Attitude/Belief
Contact Me/Us!

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