

# PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

*Accelerating action to close the graduation gap*

## **How the Partnership for College Completion's Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative is Catalyzing Action in the State**

The Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative (ILEA) is the Partnership for College Completion's signature effort to catalyze urgent action on campuses across the state to eliminate racial and socioeconomic graduation disparities on their campuses and significantly increase completion rates for African-American, Latino, and low-income students. Launched in October 2018, the PCC is providing support to a diverse group of colleges and universities that have made a public commitment to eliminate their graduation gaps.

ILEA currently includes 27 public and private nonprofit postsecondary institutions that represent the diversity of higher education options in our state. These institutions are large and small, community colleges and bachelor's degree granting, open enrollment and highly selective. They are institutions whose efforts are just beginning and those whose work has evolved over time. Collectively, these institutions enroll 34% of all undergraduates in our state, 61% of all Latino undergraduates, and 41% of all African-American undergraduates.

The Initiative targets the eradication of degree completion gaps that are the largest and most significant in Illinois – between African-American and White students, between Latino and White students, and between Pell recipients and non-Pell students. These gaps have always existed within our institutions, and in some cases, have grown over time.

In joining ILEA, these colleges and universities have not only pledged to eliminate their institutional degree completion gaps, but have also dedicated a senior team to guide this work, are sharing disaggregated data to measure success and drive action, and are developing a campus-specific equity plan with interim benchmarks in service of this goal. Additionally, these postsecondary institutions have agreed to the following principles to guide their work:

- Colleges are responsible for graduating all of their degree-seeking students efficiently, and consistent with supporting students' short and long-term goals
- All college students can graduate with the right information, tools, and supports
- Racial and socioeconomic completion gaps are unacceptable and should be eliminated with urgency
- Solutions and resources exist to eliminate completion inequities between groups in higher education
- The actions that colleges take or fail to take as it relates to student persistence and completion matters to a students' overall trajectory in college

ILEA's theory of change is based upon the belief that equity gaps can be eliminated in colleges and universities through: (1) deliberate, committed and coordinated action; (2) sustained focus over time; (3) the establishment of interim benchmarks in service of the ultimate goal; and (4) the regular use and sharing of disaggregated data. The PCC regularly convenes the full group and engages with institutions one-on-one and in smaller groups to lift up successful evidence-based practices and provide tools, resources and professional development.

Elements of this work will be made public and the PCC will issue regular reports detailing efforts and progress of the cohort beginning in 2020.

***For more information on ILEA, please contact Lisa Castillo Richmond at [lcastillo@partnershipfcc.org](mailto:lcastillo@partnershipfcc.org).***

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## ILEA Colleges & Universities



**The Partnership for College Completion (PCC)** is a nonprofit organization launched in 2016 dedicated to increasing college completion rates in and around Chicago, particularly for low-income students, first generation college goers, African-American and Latino students. PCC seeks to champion policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students in Illinois graduate from college.