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The **College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program** is a federal formula grant designed to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and philanthropic entities to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Created by the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, the CACG program provided \$66 million per year for two years to agencies or organizations designated by each state's governor. The passage of the Healthcare and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 expanded the program for an additional five years and raised funding to \$150 million per year.

## Introduction

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) launched the College Access Challenge Grant Network in 2008, soon after the federal government provided initial grant funding to the states. WICHE designed the network to give Western states the opportunity to collaborate and improve their grant programs by sharing ideas and promising practices with colleagues in other states, learning from college access and success experts, and addressing common challenges as a group. During the first two years of the grant, **Alaska, Nevada, North Dakota, and Washington** participated in the CACG Network. In 2010 **Idaho, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming** joined the effort, while North Dakota opted out (the state rejoined the network in 2011).

While the state projects in the CACG Network vary in size and scope and seek to boost access and success for low-income students using a variety of methods, there are several common approaches that show promise in multiple states. This issue of *Exchanges* highlights four strategies that states in the CACG Network have employed: developing college access partnerships, peer mentoring, increasing the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and enhancing financial aid programs. The brief discusses promising new ideas and methods for implementing these strategies, the states' early results, and challenges they have faced. It generally focuses on the August 14, 2010 – August 13, 2011 grant year, although many of the programs discussed have been developed over several years.

In discussing state CACG programs, it is important to note that even though Congress has authorized and appropriated funds through 2014, the continuation of the program is not guaranteed. The U.S House of Representatives' budget resolution for FY 2012 suggests eliminating funding for the program. In addition, some have raised concerns that the federal college access funding landscape has become duplicative, with multiple programs – such as the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and TRIO – working toward the same general end as the CACG Program. It is possible that Congress could act in upcoming appropriation legislation to reorganize programs targeting low-income students or eliminate one or more altogether.

If Congress maintains funding, the CACG Program will continue to give states the necessary flexibility to use funds to best meet their unique needs and serve their specific contexts. As such, it provides valuable support to enhance and supplement other state college access programs, but it can only begin to show a positive impact as the programs mature. The lessons learned and promising state-level practices presented here can have long-term impacts on improving access and success for low-income students. But for this to happen, states must be able to rely on the commitments made by the federal government to provide funding through 2014. If funding is terminated, they will be forced to abandon their efforts before they have had a chance to fully develop into sustainable and impactful services that can help close the college attainment gap for low-income students.

### Promoting Partnerships

One key principle of the CACG statute is that states receiving grants should coordinate their activities with other grants promoting similar aims and with other organizations providing similar activities. While this call for collaboration is common throughout the grant landscape, the current uncertainty around CACG funding makes this a key concept for successful state programs. Additionally, state agencies may not have the grassroots capacity to effectively deliver services directly to the students who most need them in all areas of the state, so it makes sense to actively cultivate partnerships. Effective partners that are more closely aligned with the target population can also help states secure buy-in from key stakeholders and provide crucial energy and capacity as states work to scale up their initial efforts.

There are many government agencies and nongovernmental programs working to increase college access and success for low-income students. They include other federal grant programs, such as GEAR UP and TRIO, state and local initiatives, and nonprofit organizations. This creates plenty of opportunities to build partnerships, as well as a need to coordinate activities to avoid duplication.

Although all states in the CACG Network have pursued partnerships to some degree, **Washington, Utah, Nevada,** and **Texas** have been particularly active in building relationships that will improve their grant activities. Their successful partnerships have generally taken on two forms: providing subgrants to other organizations and working to build statewide networks of stakeholders to guide grant activities.

In issuing subgrants and developing partnerships, states have developed several successful strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of their awards and meeting the needs of the target population.

**Focus on sustainability.** Even before the recent uncertainty surrounding federal funding, the CACG Program had what appeared to be a two-year lifespan. With its expansion and extension, this changed, but states still are approaching it as a limited source of funds (and maybe rightfully so). To successfully implement subgrants, states in the CACG Network have worked to ensure that subgrantees do not see them as a never-ending supply of resources for ongoing activities but rather as a source of start-up money.

In **Washington**, for example, the state funded a limited number of subgrants to organizations working with K-12 school districts to sign students up for the College Bound Scholarship program, which guarantees college tuition scholarships for low-income students, provided they meet minimum academic standards and do not commit any crimes. The organizations pursued a variety of strategies in this effort and evaluated the different approaches, with the understanding that school districts would adopt proven strategies into their missions and essentially take over the work. Other subgrants were given to organizations seeking to increase financial literacy and college awareness in rural school districts and among Spanish-speaking families, in addition to increasing FAFSA completion and college participation across the state.

Similarly, **Texas** and **Utah**, in their process for issuing requests for proposals, required applying organizations to submit a sustainability plan detailing how they would use the funds to develop a college access program that can survive once the subgrant ends. As such, their initial subgrantees have institutionalized activities that received start-up funding from the federal grant.

Although this is not a new or novel procedure in grant management, due to the potentially unstable future of CACG Program funding, it is crucial for long-term success in increasing access and success for low-income students.

**Statewide college access and success coordination.** In every state many different programs and organizations are working to promote college access and success, particularly for low-income students. Establishing meaningful statewide coordination and cooperation among these different

actors – a difficult and complex task – requires that institutional and bureaucratic structures be put in place.

**Utah** and **Washington**, which both lacked a means of coordinating access and success programs on a statewide basis, have sought to use the CACG Program as an opportunity to create vibrant, cooperative statewide networks. **Washington** is concentrating on coordinating its CACG efforts with other federal grants, including grants from the GEAR UP and TRIO programs, and is using CACG funds to do so. In **Utah**, the Board of Regents has become the central focus for developing coordination among access programs. The board has created a steering committee, with different working groups made up of college access partners, in order to increase awareness, encourage statewide collaboration and partnership development, and leverage resources to strengthen and support college access and success throughout the state. **Texas** also developed an advising council that includes representatives from the state's GEAR UP and TRIO programs.

**Nevada** has followed a slightly different path. The state's P-16 Advisory Council initially received the grant, but after two years, the governor redirected the funds to the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), which had greater capacity to implement grant activities. NSHE began developing partnerships and issuing subgrants to higher education institutions to start college access programs for low-income students. NSHE's work has been guided by a newly created advisory council, made up of access stakeholders.

**Rely on proven and effective partners.** The CACG statute requires that any organization receiving a subgrant must have been in existence before the enactment of the law. Many organizations are already implementing access activities at the grassroots level, and this provision aims to use their experience to enhance new efforts.

States that have used subgrants well have relied on proven and effective partners. **Texas** is in the second year of its peer mentoring program (see below for more details) and will be able to reach 120 high schools, in part because it chose a tested model for implementing this activity. Similarly, **Washington's** success in signing up students for the College Bound scholarship is due in great part to choosing partner organizations that had proven track records in working with these students.

### Peer mentoring

Increasingly, states are using their CACG funds to develop and implement "near-peer" mentoring

programs, in which recent college graduates provide high school students with services ranging from individualized college and career advising to providing information about financial aid and college entrance exams. Based on the National College Advising Corps (NCAC) model, originally established in 2007, the ultimate goal of all CACG peer and near-peer mentoring programs is to increase the number of low-income high school students ready to enter and succeed at the postsecondary level.

**Alaska** created a highly successful near-peer mentoring program during the first two years of its CACG initiative – one that other states have attempted to replicate. In year three the state began expanding the Alaska College and Career Advising Corps (ACAC) into remote areas of the state, while simultaneously creating new content to ensure long-term program sustainability. After successfully providing direct services to students at two high schools in the Anchorage School District during the second year of the grant, Alaska identified a new location in the Lower Kuskokwim School District for rural expansion. It also added ACAC program staff positions to better address access and completion issues for both high school and college students across the state.

Following the lead of **Alaska** and other states with firmly established programs, **Idaho** and **Wyoming** developed and began implementing their own peer mentoring programs in 2011. After devising an ambitious agenda that built on outreach efforts developed over the past two years – including dual credit scholarships and FAFSA completion events – **Idaho** expanded CACG-related services to low-income and first-generation students through the creation of its own near-peer mentoring program. With the assistance of WICHE, **Idaho's** Office of the State Board of Higher Education (OSBE) developed a list of preferred school characteristics and a school "capacity assessment." The assessment was designed to ensure the program's pilot locations met the goal of serving a predominantly low-income student body and possessed the leadership capacity and infrastructure to allow for the integration of the "college guides" into ongoing counseling activities. OSBE staff chose two rural locations for the pilot. Services to students at Weiser High School and Payette High School began during the 2010 fall semester. Careful planning allowed **Idaho** to create a solid program foundation and structure. OSBE can now turn its attention to future expansion sites and long-term sustainability.

**Wyoming** similarly created and implemented the Wyoming College Advising Corps (WyCAC). Unlike

**Idaho** and **Alaska, Wyoming** pursued an aggressive strategy, piloting the program in three high schools and adding a community college component to its peer mentoring program. **Wyoming's** peer-mentoring program attempts to deal with both the low college attainment rates in the state and the geographical isolation of most communities. Following intensive training conducted in December 2010, three recent University of Wyoming graduates were placed in high schools with low graduation and college-going rates. Similar to the locations chosen for Idaho's pilot program, all of the high schools selected for Wyoming's pilot – Evanston, Rawlins, and Rock Springs – are located in small towns with populations of fewer than 20,000 residents. Since the beginning of the 2011 spring semester, "college advisors" have worked with students and parents to increase college awareness, assist with FAFSA completion, complete scholarship applications, and engage in other college preparatory activities. A fourth advisor traveled across the state and visited Wyoming's seven community colleges, in an attempt to help students seeking to transfer from a two-year to a four-year college. Wyoming plans to expand to three additional high schools during the upcoming grant year and enlist a college advisor to coordinate statewide mentoring activities, including services provided to community college students.

**Nevada**, which also has a near-peer mentoring program as part of its GoToCollegeNevada.org campaign, recruited both current college students and recent college graduates through AmeriCorps to become "GoToCollege Ambassadors." Nevada's near-peer mentors are assigned to high schools to cultivate relationships with teachers, counselors, students, and families to encourage a college-going culture. They are virtually available to students across the state through a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Ambassadors distribute GoToCollegeNevada literature, provide GoToCollege Club toolkits, and present the benefits of a higher education to low-income, underrepresented and underserved students and their families. There are currently six GoToCollege Ambassadors serving students in southern Nevada, with more to follow as the program continues to grow in other parts of the state. While most CACG Network peer-mentoring programs are in their infancy – **Alaska** is the only state with a program entering its fourth year – important strategies and lessons have been identified that can lead to success.

**Finding the right fit is a must for early program success.** Capacity assessments, which were originally developed by **Alaska's** program as a tool by which staff researched possible expansion sites, allow programs to ensure a successful fit for both the state and the partner school districts. Determining core environmental characteristics (e.g., student demographics, ongoing access efforts, counseling staff commitment, and ability to track student data) and the organizational background and structure of the school (e.g., per-pupil spending, staff-to-student-ratio, counseling staff resources, and current targeted interventions) ensures a school's readiness and capacity to benefit from participation in a peer-mentoring program. Input from a statewide college access advisory team or network – like those in **Alaska** and **Idaho** – can also help in the identification of low-income schools that can support a peer mentor.

**Data collection is essential to measuring program impact.** As part of **Idaho's** planning process, the state identified several ways to track the effectiveness of its pilot peer-mentoring program. **Idaho's** peer mentors, similar to those in **Alaska**, develop their own individualized student surveys and use those responses in conjunction with data collected through the Universal Encouragement Program and the National Student Clearinghouse.<sup>1</sup> **Alaska's** use of these different data sources has allowed the program to report yearly increases in the number of students enrolling in college, taking college entrance exams, and filing a FAFSA. **Wyoming** surveyed the leadership of the three high schools that house the WyCAC and has so far received positive feedback.

**Too many initiatives can dilute the impact and effectiveness of peer-mentoring programs.** One reason **Alaska's** ACAC program has been so successful over the past three years is that it is the state's only CACG activity. This has allowed the program to focus on finding the right schools, the right staff, and the right services to increase college awareness and change attitudes towards postsecondary education in the districts it serves. While it may be unrealistic to expect states to limit the scope of their programs to a single activity, streamlining efforts and making sure they tie in to the goals of peer mentoring programs can help in the creation of a college-going culture and sustainability of the college access efforts.

### Financial Aid/Grant Programs

Some CACG Network states have used funds to provide direct financial aid to low-income students. This assistance supplements Pell Grant funding and can help boost access and success for low-income students, a concept supported by recent research on supplemental need-based funding.<sup>2</sup> **Wyoming** and **Texas** have significant CACG-funded need-based grant programs, while **Washington** has used CACG funding to help low-income students access other state-based aid. These efforts face common challenges, and they have also identified several key lessons for successful implementation of such programs.

In 2011 **Wyoming** issued its first College Access Grants to Pell-eligible graduating high school seniors. Twelve percent of the total high school graduating class received these awards. Due to the federal grant requirement that students must be able to use financial aid awards at any accredited institution, **Wyoming**, like other states, faced a challenge in setting up a system for students attending school out-of-state. To address this **Wyoming** established an electronic verification system: the student indicates which institution he or she will attend, and the institution subsequently verifies that student's attendance, so he or she can receive the funds at the beginning of the academic year. **Wyoming** has also faced a challenge in the timing of the federal grant cycle. Because federal awards are not officially made until August of each year, the state is not able to commit the funds to students until the following academic year, delaying the actual funding of student. The state has also set up a plan for collecting data on student matriculation into postsecondary institutions; it will gather these results in fall 2011 as the academic year commences.

**Texas** has focused its need-based aid program on helping low-income students finish their degrees through its Final Stretch grant. Under this program the state awards need-based grants to juniors and seniors to help them complete degrees. Fifty percent of Final Stretch grants were specifically awarded to students in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields in order to address state shortages in those career sectors.

Although **Washington** did not use CACG funds to directly provide need-based financial aid, it has used its grant to publicize its College Bound Scholarship program, which guarantees sufficient financial aid for low-income students (based on tuition rates at public institutions) to attend college if they maintain a 2.0 GPA through high school, complete the FAFSA, and enroll in a postsecondary institution. The CACG funds

greatly increased College Bound Scholarship program sign-up rates among **Washington** students, who must pledge by 8th grade to follow through on these three commitments. The first cohort of College Bound students will begin attending college this fall, and the state expects to conduct a detailed analysis of results in the coming years.

These efforts to boost college access and success for low-income students demonstrate several important lessons.

**Grant infrastructure and accessibility are important.** **Wyoming** made a special effort to ensure that its grant process was easily accessible to the students and the institutions they will be attending. These efforts will help enhance the effectiveness of the grants.

**Need-based aid should incent completion.** **Texas's** provision of need-based financial aid to students nearing their degrees delivers an extra incentive to help them complete. This incentive recognizes that access to postsecondary education is not enough and that completion is the ultimate goal.

**Financial aid opportunities need to be effectively publicized.** The college application process can be intimidating, especially for low-income families. **Washington's** efforts show that even though the state had a well-designed scholarship opportunity, dedicating resources to publicizing and demystifying the program were crucial to reaching the targeted students.

### FAFSA Completion

Since one of the primary goals and requirements of the CACG Program is increased completion of the FAFSA, many states have created events and activities designed to raise the number of low-income students filling out the application.

Using the expertise of postsecondary financial aid professionals, along with community and organizational volunteers, **Idaho's** OSBE has, through its CACG program, helped students and their families to complete the FAFSA throughout the duration of the grant. Held at 21 locations across the state and reaching both urban and rural students, **Idaho's** FAFSA completion events have become increasingly successful in getting students to finish and file the form. Last year's event saw 87 percent of participants complete a FAFSA – up from the previous year's 79

percent. In addition to careful planning and promoting, the continued success of **Idaho's** FAFSA completion component can be attributed to the partnerships the state has developed over the past three years, including those with postsecondary institutions, all public and alternative high schools, the state GEAR UP and TRIO programs, and the J.A. & Kathryn Albertson Foundation. These statewide partners helped coordinate event staffing and marketing, using a variety of media, including radio, print, billboards, Internet, and text messages sent directly to students.

This past grant year, **Idaho** also sponsored a new FAFSA Video Contest for secondary and postsecondary students to further publicize the event. The three winning submissions received prize money ranging from \$100 to \$500; the videos were shown on local **Idaho** television stations and posted on YouTube. The state hopes to continue expanding the number of sites hosting the FAFSA completion events, while offering additional FAFSA preparation and professional training to more financial aid professionals in the upcoming year.

**Wyoming's** FAFSA Frenzy completion efforts were expanded during year three of the grant and included a two-pronged approach. The first was supplying every Wyoming high school and postsecondary institution with a kit containing promotional buttons, stickers, postcards, and posters with the tag line "Got FAFSA?" The campaign also included prewritten newspaper articles describing the benefits of applying for financial aid and schedules of all FAFSA workshops students could attend. The state also provided support to high schools seeking to hold a FAFSA completion night and offered funding to community colleges and the University of Wyoming to further promote FAFSA Frenzy events and materials.

Similar to **Idaho's** FAFSA completion events, **Wyoming's** CACG program developed, promoted, and hosted 63 FAFSA Frenzy events at high schools, college campuses, and community centers across the state, drawing a large number of students. Wyoming designated February 2011 as FAFSA Frenzy Month and arranged virtual FAFSA workshops for students in remote areas of the state.

**Utah** has been actively promoting the importance of completing the FAFSA and has trained nearly 9,000 **Utah** students, parents, and educators through 67 outreach training events across the state. **Utah's** program is actively engaged in creating social media streams on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; and the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority blog

outlines how individuals can effectively prepare to complete the FAFSA. Utah has also created a financial aid question and answer forum, where people may pose their FAFSA-related questions. This messaging is supported by a FAFSA tutorial, an interactive tool designed to guide an applicant through the entire FAFSA completion process.

FAFSA completion numbers were also up in **Alaska's** CACG program locations. According to data collected over the past year, seven percent more students at schools served by the ACAC completed a FAFSA compared to the previous year. The hosting of several financial aid nights and workshops throughout the school year, in addition to the individualized advising of students, played a major role in this increase.

The U.S. Department of Education expects every state that provides direct CACG services to students to increase FAFSA completion rates. Many CACG Network programs devised important approaches that can be utilized by other states.

**Partnerships allow for a coordinated approach to FAFSA completion efforts.** Because both **Idaho** and **Wyoming** partnered with numerous state and institutional entities, they avoided duplication of efforts and fostered greater awareness regarding the importance of FAFSA completion for a broad array of students and their families. Partners were also able to assist in publicizing the events in their particular region and offered insight into what kinds of messages students in their part of the state would best respond to. **Idaho**, for example, is broken up into six "education regions," and officials in those areas coordinated with OSBE and worked with local communities to boost event attendance.

**Innovative marketing using a variety of media can increase awareness and attendance.** The FAFSA Frenzy kits, articles, and other promotional materials produced by **Wyoming's** program allowed for greater exposure and raised awareness of financial aid options for students and families across the state. New approaches like **Idaho's** video contest also encouraged more students to attend events or complete the application on their own.

**Thoughtful preplanning leads to future success.** Attempting to organize statewide events involving multiple partners requires a great deal of preparation and coordination; and the sooner a state starts the process of planning FAFSA completion projects, the greater the chance of success. For instance, **Idaho's**

planning process is ongoing, with OSBE and its partners working on next year's event as soon as the current event ends.

### Common Challenges

One of the benefits of CACG Network participation is the opportunity for states to collectively address common challenges, such as the following:

**Maintenance of effort.** A more recent concern affecting many states, including **Idaho, Nevada, and Washington**, is the challenge of meeting maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements. As originally outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act, states must maintain funding for public institutions at a level equal to the average of the five previous years, and similarly maintain state funding for financial aid at private institutions. If states do not meet these requirements, they are ineligible to receive CACG funds without receiving an MOE waiver from the U.S. Department of Education.

Because of the ongoing economic downturn and its impact on state budgets, 22 states requested an MOE waiver because of cuts to higher education in the 2010 legislative session. This number was up from five states the previous year and is expected to grow during the 2011-2012 grant cycle. The department elected to grant waivers to states if their cuts to higher education were not proportionally greater than cuts to overall state appropriations. In denying waivers to states that did not meet this benchmark (the majority of those requesting waivers), the department stated that it would restore a state's funding if its governor offered a "letter of assurance" that the state would restore funding to the higher education budget in 2011 to meet the waiver requirement. While states technically receive their year four CACG award under this scenario, they are not allowed to draw down any funds until the money is appropriated during 2012 legislative sessions, which often do not conclude until the spring or summer. Because they would not have access to CACG funds for several months, many state programs would cease to exist. To forestall this, the Department has worked closely with states to fully account for all higher education spending (including federal stimulus funds when appropriate) to ensure that they receive grant funding to which they are entitled.

Even though **Idaho** and **Washington** were able to use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to meet MOE for the 2011-2012 grant cycle, the requirement is now in many ways the biggest hurdle

to overcome for a majority of state CACG programs. In fact, states that were forced to use ARRA funds to fill the funding gap created by cuts to higher education the previous year will face an even greater funding disparity next year. While the goal of preventing states from disproportionately making cuts to postsecondary education is admirable, it is not particularly realistic to expect a state to restore \$40 million in cuts to the higher education budget so that it may receive a \$1.5 million grant from the federal government. Further, because some states have constitutional provisions that require K-12 funding to remain at certain levels and federal mandates prevent the cutting of programs like Medicare, some states have no other alternative but to cut higher education. Despite modest economic growth over the past two years and expectations that this growth will continue, the increased demands for federally mandated services and those required by state constitutions have created significant budget deficits for many, if not most states in 2011-2012 and are expected to do so again in 2012-2013. As a result, we already know that cuts to higher education in most states were more substantial than cuts to other state services, on average, further exacerbating the problem of meeting the Maintenance of Effort requirement.

Statute allows the Secretary of Education to waive the MOE requirement for states that experience "a precipitous and unforeseen decline in the financial resources" due to "exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances."<sup>3</sup> CACG Network states might consider working together and with other states to develop strategies addressing MOE issues with the Secretary well in advance of year four's annual progress report.

**Difficulty of multiyear planning.** Due to the formal structure of the CACG Program, states only receive a grant for a single year at a time. While this is a requirement under the grant legislation, it inhibits states from making multiyear investments and engaging in longer-term planning. In some cases states have had to eliminate potential grant activities or significantly alter their proposals because of this structure. With the increasing uncertainty surrounding the program and the difficult budgetary situations states face, it is unlikely that this challenge will disappear.

**Coordination with other federal, state, and local college access programs.** As noted earlier there are other major federal grant programs to increase college access and success for low-income students. States, cities, institutions of higher education, and nongovernmental organizations also have programs

that target this population. With so many different actors, there is potential for significant duplication and overlap, leading to calls from some to drastically revamp federal funding in this area.

Some states have used CACG funds to try to coordinate all of the different programs and stakeholders involved in college access work, which may ultimately be more effective than significant federal changes. Building this type of coordination is time- and labor-intensive, but states that have developed successful models (usually in the form of a statewide college access network) have seen benefits to building relationships and modes of communication to ensure the efficient use of resources by all of the different actors involved.

### Conclusion

While the CACG Program faces significant fiscal challenges, many of the programs and services that states have implemented are showing promise in improving college access and success for low-income students. With the flexibility of the CACG Program, states with diverse situations have been able to start new efforts or build on existing ones to best meet the particular needs of their citizens. In many cases exchanges and collaboration between state programs through the CACG Network have led to improvements and better programs being offered to students.

It is important to keep in mind that the practices outlined in this brief are relatively new in each state and will require careful evaluation and monitoring over the coming years to measure their impact and refine them further. Data gathered from students about peer mentoring programs, for example, can help states better serve students and better outcomes.

States will continue to be eligible for CACG funding in the immediate future, even though the longer-term picture is less certain. This places greater importance on ensuring the sustainability of programs and working to institutionalize new efforts. The CACG Network will continue to share promising ideas and innovations from partnering states as they look to reduce the college success gap between high- and low-income students and ensure the sustainability of their programs.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Universal Encouragement Program (UEP) is an assessment designed by the Career and Postsecondary Encouragement Network (CAPE) to help counselors and other education professionals document and respond to students' career and education interests and experiences. For more information visit: [www.capenetwork.org](http://www.capenetwork.org). The National Student Clearinghouse collects data regarding college enrollment and completion on behalf of secondary and postsecondary institutions. For more information visit: [www.studentclearinghouse.org/default.asp](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/default.asp).

<sup>2</sup> Sara Goldrick-Rab, Douglas Harris, James Benson, and Robert Kelchen, "Conditional Cash Transfers and College Persistence: Evidence from a Randomized Need-Based Grant Program," accessed 7 November 2011 at <[www.finaidstudy.org/documents/Goldrick-Rab%20Harris%20Benson%20Kelchen.pdf](http://www.finaidstudy.org/documents/Goldrick-Rab%20Harris%20Benson%20Kelchen.pdf)>

<sup>3</sup> P.L. 110-315, accessed 18 October 2011 at <[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ315.110.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ315.110.pdf)>.

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