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STRENGTHENING FEDERAL ACCESS PROGRAMS TO MEET 21ST CENTURY NEEDS: A LOOK AT TRIO AND GEAR UP

HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

EXAMINING STRENGTHENING FEDERAL ACCESS PROGRAMS TO MEET 21ST CENTURY NEEDS, FOCUSING ON TRIO AND THE GLOBAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RESEARCH UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM (GEAR UP)

JANUARY 16, 2014

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STRENGTHENING FEDERAL ACCESS PROGRAMS TO MEET 21ST CENTURY NEEDS: A LOOK AT TRIO AND GEAR UP

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room SD–106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom Harkin, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Harkin, Alexander, Murray, Franken, Baldwin, Murphy, Warren, and Burr.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HARKIN

The CHAIRMAN. This session of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will come to order. Today's roundtable will focus on our main Federal college access programs, TRIO and GEAR UP, and how they're performing in helping low-income students access and persist throughout post-secondary education. This roundtable marks our fifth event in a series to examine issues that we plan to address in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

These Federal programs that we're discussing today have a rich history. Through the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress created the TRIO programs to ensure that low-income students have the preparation needed to attend post-secondary education. GEAR UP came later—I remember when. I was here at that time—and shares the same goal.

Our review of this work couldn't come at a better time. Last week, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of President Johnson's War on Poverty and the beginning of the Great Society's address to Congress. There are some who claim the Great Society was a great failure, and I fundamentally disagree with that view. Thanks to these programs, millions of students have been able to aspire to a post-secondary education and to achieve that dream.

However, it is crucial that we take the time to reflect on the intent and history of these programs so we can continue to build on their strengths to improve them for the future. Obviously, things are changing in higher education. So we'll have opportunity to do so today and in the upcoming reauthorization.

We all know that many low-income students need critical supports when it comes to college preparation. We all know that there is far more work to be done if we're going to meet President

Obama's goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. The question becomes: What should the Federal role be to encourage this? How can we best utilize the limited Federal dollars we have to promote college preparation?

As I've stated in past hearings, the need for shared responsibility regarding higher education funding couldn't be greater. How can all stakeholders work together to enhance and leverage these Federal higher education dollars? How can we ensure that the work being done by these grants is most effective?

Today, we will hear from key stakeholders in the college access community: advocates, researchers, program operators, and a former student. I am eager to hear from each of them on how we can strengthen our efforts to equip low-income students with the tools they need to attain a quality post-secondary degree.

I expect our roundtable participants will provide their perspectives on these programs as well as recommendations for how they could be improved. The goal today is to have an open discussion that informs the ongoing debate on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. I thank all of our participants for being with us today.

This kind of a setting—this roundtable discussion was, I think, first started by Senator Enzi when he was chair of this committee. It proved to be valuable in terms of having more of an open discussion than just kind of a formal type hearing. So we can get more engaged in just sort of a back-and-forth, and I'll go into the limited rules we have on that after, of course, I turn to Senator Alexander for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ALEXANDER

Senator ALEXANDER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I was trying to get a total number of Federal dollars spent on higher education, and I may or may not have it.

The CHAIRMAN. Good luck.

Senator ALEXANDER. I look forward to this. I thank the witnesses for coming. This is an important effort, and I have complimented Chairman Harkin both here and on other occasions for the way he has conducted these hearings on higher education. We've had terrific witnesses. We've learned from them, and we look forward to reauthorizing the Higher Education Act.

My own view is that since we've reauthorized it eight times since 1965 that this would be a good time to start from scratch, at least for part of the Higher Education Act, and here's the reason why. What happens here is that every time we do this, we have well-intentioned ideas. So we pass a law with some new well-intentioned ideas, and over the next few years, here comes more well-intentioned regulations to help implement the well-intentioned ideas.

And then the next time around, the same and the same and the same, and we have a stack of regulations now that's twice as tall as I am. It's nobody's fault, really. We just haven't weeded the garden before we started over. So I'm trying to be very basic in my questions, and I think the way to do that with these six programs is to ask the question—we spend about $1.1 billion on these six programs. I'm told that the total amount of funding for higher edu-

cation is about $37 billion. That doesn't count the $110 billion or so that we loan every year.

So $1.1 billion of $37 billion, if that's the right figure, is a significant amount of money. It's enough money to create a couple of hundred thousand new Pell grants. That would permit us to double the number of Pell grants in a State like Tennessee. So are we spending that $1.1 billion most effectively as a way to help low-income students whose parents haven't gone to college to have an opportunity to go to college?

We heard testimony at an earlier hearing here that if we just simplified the student aid program, a lot more students would go to college. Should we take this $1.1 billion and turn it into 180,000 or 200,000 Pell grants for students? That would be one option.

The world has changed a lot since 1965. Then, we had 6 million students enrolled in post-secondary education. Today, it's 21 million students. Then, 51 percent of high school students went to college. Now, 66 percent do. Students didn't receive Pell grants until 1973, and 176,000 received Pell grants that year. Now, 9.1 million students do. And we're in an age when it's easier to communicate with students.

So we should ask the question: If we took the advice of those who testified, Senator Harkin, before our committee—they said we should change the student aid program and let juniors in high school know then the amount of money they were able to get, and then they could shop around for college, rather than do it in the reverse way. Now, we can communicate with eighth graders through the social media. We couldn't do that in 1965 or some time ago. So are we spending this money in the most effective way?

I look forward to your advice and suggestions, and I appreciate the kind of hearing that the chairman has called, which permits more of a conversation than a formal hearing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Alexander. As you said, are we spending the money in the most effective way, and what changes do we need to make? That is the right question.

Let me just briefly introduce our witnesses here today. I'll go from left to right. Ms. Maureen Hoyler is president of the Council for Opportunity in Education, a nonprofit organization that provides professional development program improvement and advocacy for nearly 2,800 federally funded college opportunity programs at more than 1,000 colleges and universities nationwide.

Next is Mr. Scott Giles, board member of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships and president and CEO of Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, which houses the State's GEAR UP and TRIO grants. I'm told that you worked here some time ago when Senator Jeffords was chair of this very committee. Welcome back.

Next is Mr. Cornelius Griggs, a former Talent Search student, as well as a McNair Program scholar. He currently serves as senior project manager and lead estimator for the Walsh Group, a construction company based in Chicago. He received his bachelor's degree from Chicago State University and a master's from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Next we have Ms. Tallie Sertich, a native Iowan and the TRIO Upward Bound director at Hibbing Community College in Minnesota, working with low-income and rural communities. She is president-elect of the Minnesota TRIO Board, and earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Iowa. Thank you for being here.

Next would be Weiya Liang, director of the Washington State GEAR UP at the Washington Student Achievement Council. He has worked in the college access and student support field for over 20 years and has been a leader in GEAR UP since Congress created the program.

Next we have Dr. Douglas Harris. Dr. Harris is an associate professor of economics, University Endowed Chair in Public Education, and founder and director of the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University. With a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences, Dr. Harris is leading a large randomized trial of, "a Promise College Scholarship" in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Our final panelist is Dr. Ron Haskins. Dr. Haskins is a senior fellow in the Economics Studies Program and co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution, as well as a Senior Consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore.

He has served in the White House as Senior Advisor to the President for Welfare Policy, and, I guess, also served in the Congress on the House Ways and Means Committee. Is that what my notes say—in the House Ways and Means Committee. So we welcome him back. He holds a degree in history and a master's degree and a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Thank you all for being here today and sharing your expertise. Before we start, I'll explain a little bit of this format. I'm going to ask each of you to give 1 or 2 minutes—just a very short opening remark. After that, I'll start the discussion by asking a question of one of the panelists. That person will answer, and if one of the panelists wants to respond to that question as well or to something that another panelist has said, take your name tag and turn it up. I'll have my staff keep track of who turned theirs up first, and we'll work it that way.

If someone says something and you want to respond, we'll try to get some kind of a dialog going that way. Let me just say that we'll work to keep the discussion flowing while being respectful of one another, and I hope we'll have a good in-depth conversation on this issue. You all have statements which I went over just last evening, and they'll all be made a part of the record in their entirety.

With that, what I'd like to do is start with Ms. Hoyler and then work down. And like I said, I can't give everybody 5 minutes. So if you'd just give us your basic one shot on what you think we ought to be looking at on this—in say, 3 minutes or so.

Ms. Hoyler.

STATEMENT OF MAUREEN HOYLER, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. HOYLER. Thank you, Senator Harkin. Chairman Harkin, Senator Alexander, and members of the committee, I deeply appre-

ciate this opportunity to participate in this roundtable. The Council for Opportunity in Education's 900 member colleges and community agencies are committed to increasing college access and success for low-income students, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.

We view the Federal support for TRIO and GEAR UP as a necessary component of our efforts. More than 9,000 TRIO and GEAR UP educators are on the front lines of our country's continuing efforts to expand college access and success and are particularly appreciative of your willingness to consider our views as you prepare for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

We recognize that as a country, we are far from realizing the goals of the Act, and we are deeply committed to improving TRIO and GEAR UP so that we as a nation can come closer to realizing these goals. Over the past year, each of our State and regional associations, all of those associations that are affiliated with COE, have sought input from our members regarding our recommendations.

In general, these recommendations fall into six categories. Reinforce the historic connection between student financial assistance and college access and success. In 1965, Congress recognized that students faced two sets of obstacles to succeeding in college. One set is financial. The other set is nonfinancial—lack of information, lack of engagement in the academic progress, lack of appropriate academic preparation, lack of peer and family support. Those two sets of obstacles continue to plague students today, and those two sets of obstacles continue to need to be addressed.

Foster collaboration with State, institutional, and privately funded college access and success programs. The Federal Government can't do it alone. It is a multifaceted, complex process.

Continue the authorization of evaluations within the TRIO chapter and maintain their focus on program improvement; protect congressional intent in the TRIO funding process; reduce regulatory burden where it detracts from an institution's ability to serve students; and, finally, strengthen efforts to serve special populations in TRIO such as homeless students or students who are in the foster care system or aged out of the foster care system. But we could also look at students who are preparing for the STEM disciplines or other disciplines, that it is hard to prepare for coming from particular schools.

Thank you very much for considering this.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hoyler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAUREEN HOYLER

Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Alexander, and members of the HELP Committee, I deeply appreciate this opportunity to participate in today's roundtable. The Council for Opportunity in Education's (COE's) 900-member colleges and community agencies are committed to increasing college access and success for low-income students, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities. They view the Federal support for TRIO and GEAR UP as a necessary component of their efforts. More than 9,000 TRIO and GEAR UP educators are on the front lines of our country's continuing efforts to expand college access and success, and they are particularly appreciative of your willingness to consider their views as you prepare for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. They recognize that as a country we are far from realizing the very ambitious goals of the Act, and are deeply committed to improving TRIO and GEAR UP so that we as a nation can come closer to realizing those goals.

Over the past year, each of the State and regional associations affiliated with COE has sought input from its members regarding our recommendations. In general, these recommendations fall into six categories, which I will discuss in succession.

• *Reinforce the historic connection between student financial assistance and college access and success programs.* As early as 1965, Congress recognized that low-income students faced two sets of obstacles in successfully preparing for, enrolling in and graduating from college. The first set of obstacles is financial. Today, the Federal Government invests well over $140 billion annually in higher education grants, loans, work-study programs, and tax credits so that students and families are able to address these financial obstacles. But for many students and families, the non-financial obstacles—lack of information, limitations in academic preparation, lack of peer and family support, and other factors—present equally troubling barriers. The Federal TRIO and GEAR UP programs assist students and families in recognizing and overcoming these obstacles and in a very real sense constitute an insurance policy for the much-larger investment in student financial aid.

• *Foster collaboration with State, institutional and privately funded college access and success efforts.* Just as student financial assistance for low-income students requires a package made up of grants, loans and work-study support most often from Federal, State and institutional sources, State, institutional and private support for college access and success programming should be encouraged. Privately funded college access and success partners are working collaboratively with TRIO in many cities and States including Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. COE has introduced one such model with support from the GE Foundation. Any barriers to collaboration among such programs should be removed, and where possible vehicles should be made available to introduce more broadly in institutions, agencies and schools the practices first utilized in TRIO and GEAR UP. However, there is a fundamental error in the temptation to view programs such as TRIO and GEAR UP as demonstration programs. The Federal role in assuring equal opportunity in higher education is critical; the need for Federal support and leadership in this area remains as great today as it was in 1965.

• *Continue the authorization of evaluations within the TRIO subpart and maintain their focus on program improvement.* The TRIO community understands the very real obstacles that low-income students, first-generation students and students with disabilities face in preparing for and graduating from college. We want to improve our efforts—but we also want to build on our successes.

• *Protect congressional intent in the TRIO funding process.* The current TRIO legislation mandates that TRIO applications be funded in rank order based on scores on the application and the institution's success in meeting previously-agreed-upon outcomes defined by Congress. In several of the last competitions, the Administration has introduced competitive preference priorities, which had the effect of giving institutions and agencies in individual States or regions preference over in institutions and agencies in other States or regions. COE recommends restricting the Administration's ability to introduce such priorities without congressional consent.

• *Reduce regulatory burden where it detracts from an institution's ability to serve students.* Current legislation requires that institutions and agencies sponsoring TRIO programs track students for as many as 10 to 12 years following the last provision of service. In some TRIO programs, such tracking is definitely cost-effective. In others, particularly programs such as Talent Search, where the cost per student is less than $450 and the imposition of this requirement can involve tracking thousands of students, it may interfere with service delivery. We would ask the committee to revisit these requirements.

• *Strengthen efforts to serve special populations in TRIO.* A number of members of this committee have introduced legislation that speaks to TRIO's effectiveness in serving students in foster care or aging out of the foster care system, as well as students who are homeless. Our members are particularly concerned that the language included in the legislation promotes the provision of long-term, continuing services to students from these groups, and we look forward to working with the committee on this issue.

Thank you very much for considering these concerns.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Hoyler. Thanks for being so succinct.

Mr. Giles.

STATEMENT OF SCOTT GILES, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF VERMONT STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION AND MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS, SHELBURNE, VT

Mr. GILES. Thank you, Chairman Harkin, Senator Alexander, and members of the committee for taking the time out of what I know from experience are significantly demanding schedules to devote your time to this critically important issue. I'd like to also take this moment to thank my own home State Senator, Senator Sanders, who has been a very, very strong advocate for the disadvantaged in the United States and in Vermont, in particular, and for our programs.

Today, I'm wearing two or maybe even three hats. I am representing Vermont, where we house both a Talent Search and an EOC program and a GEAR UP program. I am also speaking as a board member of NCCEP, the national association that represents all of the many GEAR UP grantees across the country.

To set the table for a couple of points that I'd like to make, I'd like to just say something briefly about the State agency that I work for, because I think it gives us a unique and distinctive view on the question that's in front of you. We actually have a research arm. We conduct research on access in Vermont.

And as I indicated before, we administer the Talent Search program. We've had Talent Search since 1969, EOC since the early 1980s, and then one of the first GEAR UP grants. We administer all of the State financial aid programs, the State grant programs, the scholarship programs.

We are nationally recognized for the outcomes that we've produced with those programs. And one of the really important things that we try to do is we use data to drive program improvement, which is something that I think is critically important to this process.

In reflecting on the question that Senator Alexander raised—if we were to start from scratch, what is the right investment that we ought to make—when my organization was created in 1965, we were given two charges. One was to ensure that all Vermonters had access to the information that they needed to make good, solid education and training choices after high school. The second piece was to make sure that they had all of the financial aid that they needed in order to be able to achieve those goals.

As we have taken a look at the work that we have done over the last 30 years, we have come to more fully appreciate the critical role that the information and counseling side of that equation plays. In fact, I will say from an organizational perspective that we've begun to believe, based on the data that we're seeing, the results that we're seeing for our low-income students, that we have perhaps kind of created an imbalance where we focus most of our efforts on the financial aid side and too little of our resources on the career and education counseling.

To put this in context, I'd like to just pose a thought experiment for you, and that is to think back on your own experiences and ask yourself when and why you decided that you were going to pursue post-secondary education yourself. What I will tell you is that if

your parents had a post-secondary education, you'll answer—and we survey every high school senior in Vermont every 2 years on aspirations. They will tell you some version of they always knew.

Why did they always know? It's because those parents had embedded in the conversations at home expectations regarding education that included some education or training after high school. When we talked to students that didn't have the benefit of a parent with that educational background, invariably, those that succeed had an adult that took a particular interest in them and sparked their interest or curiosity.

One of the really troubling things that we also discover is that most of them made their decision not to pursue where they consciously—or I should reverse it and say they made the decision that they wanted to pursue education somewhere around their junior year in high school. One of the challenges that that poses—because we also know from the research that the math that you took your freshman and sophomore years is one of the strongest indicators as to whether or not you will be able to pursue and succeed in post-secondary education.

Those students that have made those decisions late have also largely made academic choices in the early part of their high school career that create additional challenges for them. So part of what I want to suggest is that no amount of aid or the consumer information that we all think is critically important to enable students and parents to become good consumers of education will succeed unless we are able to provide counseling and support to those first-generation low-income students who need it, in part because they don't know how to access it.

I think the second thing I'd like to say as part of this thought experiment, really quickly, is that we——

The CHAIRMAN. Please sum up.

Mr. GILES. What I'll do is just simply stop and say that we have a series of recommendations with regard to improvements in the program. Very quickly, No. 1, continue to work on improved program assessment; No. 2, for all the programs across the country, strengthen the training so that the grant recipients in both GEAR UP and TRIO have the skills that they need to use data to drive program improvement within their programs; reduce the obstacles to data sharing across the K–12 and higher education area and strengthen dissemination.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Giles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SCOTT GILES

Good morning. I want to thank the committee, Chairman Harkin and Senator Alexander for the opportunity to discuss this pressing need for access to post-secondary education for low- and middle-income students.

I also want to thank the Honorable Senator Bernie Sanders, of my home State of Vermont, for his continuing focus and heartfelt dedication to Vermonters as they pursue their educational and training goals after high school. Senator Sanders has been especially helpful and supportive of our mission at the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Senator is a staunch advocate of making sure all Vermonters have equal access to education and other essential services. I am grateful for his leadership and support.

We in Vermont proudly consider ourselves to be the "education state" and take great pride in both our innovations and our national leadership. From Senator Morrill of the 1st and 2d Land Grant Acts, to Senator Stafford whose name is attached

to Federal student loans, we have elected leaders who have brought our passion for equal access to education to the Nation's Capital.

Vermont was one of the handful of pioneers of the National Early Intervention Scholarship Program (NEISP) that in 1998 became the GEAR UP program under the leadership of then Chairman Jim Jeffords and Representative Chaka Fattah.

My name is Scott Giles and I am president and CEO of VSAC. Even before joining VSAC in 2003, I spent much of my career in public service, primarily focused on Federal finance and higher education policy. I have served as chairman of the Federal Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance and currently am on the board of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships, the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to increase access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students.

Additionally, I have served as Deputy Chief of Staff of the House Committee on Science. In that role I advised the chairman on education, space and research policy and managed the Subcommittees on Research and Space and Aeronautics.

Here in the Senate, I served on the staff of this committee—Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions—where I was honored to advise the Chairman on budget, education and research policy. It's nice to be back.

Briefly, let me tell you about VSAC. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation is a public, nonprofit corporation created by the Vermont Legislature in 1965 to help Vermonters plan and pay for education or training beyond high school.

VSAC is unique among State-based agencies because we provide, under one roof, a full range of services aimed at helping Vermonters navigate the complexity of educational choices and how to finance those plans. VSAC has a rich history of providing career and education planning to Vermont students and their families, particularly those who are low-income or the first in their family to continue on to postsecondary education.

In fact, VSAC has been administering the Talent Search program since 1969 and we have the only statewide program in the Nation. We began the Educational Opportunity Center program for adults in 1976. Both programs, as you know, are made possible because of TRiO funding.

GEAR UP in Vermont began in 1999 and we're celebrating 15 years in 2014.

As steadfast advocates for Vermont students and families, VSAC is always evolving and adapting to serve Vermonters' needs for education and training after high school. We are proud of the role we play in changing lives during changing times.

Most of the focus lately about pursuing education beyond high school has been about money. But financial resources are only half the challenge that students and families face.

To try to understand this, think back on your own personal journey. When did you decide you were going to pursue education after high school? Who guided you?

Our research shows that students of parents with education after high school will report that they "always knew." Students of parents without education after high school report phases—some decide before eighth grade. Many, however, don't seriously aspire until their junior year—long after ninth- and tenth-grade course choices have put them in an academic hole.

We know that a high school diploma is necessary but not sufficient to enter and remain in the middle class. Our education system, however, is still structured around an old agrarian model.

I would like to invite you to engage in a thought experiment. What would our policies look like if we truly believed in a PK–16 education model and the transition between high school and post-high school education or training programs had the purpose and certainty of the transition from middle school to high school?

Too many students and families do not know how to select an education or training program, apply for admission, or apply for financial aid.

We are all aware that the United States needs an educated workforce to remain competitive in the global economy. And Vermont students—just like those in the rest of the Nation—need to acquire education or training after high school in order to thrive and succeed.

You may be familiar with the research from Anthony Carnevale at Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. As he succinctly points out, the data is clear.

Having a robust generation of postsecondary-educated workers is the key to reversing and stopping the growth of income inequality.

In Vermont, I believe the evidence is positive: TRiO and GEAR UP programs are working. But I also will share some suggestions for enhancing the delivery of TRiO and GEAR UP services.

So, how are Vermont GEAR UP students doing? Quite well.

• In the last year, we assisted more than 2,500 students in 54 schools. Out of this priority group, the high school graduation rate exceeded the U.S. rate by 20 percent. And, this GEAR UP group also exceeded the statewide graduation rate by 10 percent.

• This same group also went on to post-secondary enrollment at a rate that exceeds the Nation by 17 percent and by more than 23 percent in Vermont.

But we didn't stop there. We have been following GEAR UP's progress in post-secondary education for the past 7 years with GUIDE, or "Giving Undergraduates Important Direction in their Education" program. GUIDE scholars receive on-campus and online services to help them successfully make the transition.

The program is relatively new, but 75 percent of survey respondents re-enrolled for sophomore year.

Turning to Talent Search, we reached more than 1,000 middle- and high-school students, offering individual and group meetings to address academic skills, course planning, college exploration and planning for future education and financial needs.

Of these Talent Search students, 99 percent graduated from high school and 81 percent enrolled in post-secondary programs.

To conclude, these efforts make a difference in Vermonters' lives, but I do believe there are ways we can improve.

While the TRiO and GEAR UP programs have unique strengths, they could benefit from enhanced collaboration of programmatic elements. At VSAC, we house the programs with overlapping staff, which improves cooperation.

The goals are similar, the desired outcomes are complimentary but both could benefit from strengthening certain aspects:

• Improved program assessment;

• Provide training to program participants to enable them to use data to drive improvement in their programs;

• Reduce the legal and regulatory obstacles to sharing data between high schools, GEAR UP and Talent Search programs, and post-secondary education and training programs in order to support students and build more effective programs;

• Strengthen the dissemination model so that successful projects and programs can easily be replicated across the country and in both programs;

• GEAR UP's cohort model is experimenting with ways to build college-going cultures within middle school and high schools. Embed it in both higher education policy and elementary and secondary education policy.

I want to turn back to the thought experiment I asked you to engage earlier in my testimony. I believe that every student needs education or training after high school. I believe that no student should graduate from high school without a career and education plan that includes a resume, a completed FAFSA, and an application to the education or training program that will enable them to achieve their personal goals.

Thank you for your time today and I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Giles.

Mr. Griggs, welcome and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF CORNELIUS D. GRIGGS, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER AND LEAD ESTIMATOR OF THE WALSH GROUP, CHICAGO, IL

Mr. GRIGGS. Good morning, Chairman Harkin, members of the committee. Thank you for having me this morning.

Growing up as a ward of the State, my introduction to the TRIO programs occurred during my sophomore year of high school on the northwest side of Chicago. I was introduced to Mr. Bernard Clay and Talent Search during an afterschool learning summit. From that point, my relationship with the organization would grow, and Mr. Clay would take me under his wing as he did with many other youth. He lectured me on the educational opportunities that were at my disposal and began to steer me in the direction of colleges and universities. Mr. Clay was the first individual to tell me that I had to take the ACT or SAT to get into college, unfortunate but true.

Through Talent Search, I was afforded the opportunity to visit colleges and universities across the State, participate in summer youth programs, and gain an understanding of what college is all about before stepping foot on the campus. But like many others who grew up in the gang-infested neighborhoods of Chicago, going to college was a far stretch of the imagination. As a young African-American male in this environment, simply surviving was a celebration within itself.

TRIO programs like Talent Search and McNair, which I joined at Chicago State University, have made it possible for me and many other alumni to be successful in ways we never saw possible. It's been 15 years since I graduated from high school and 9 years since I completed my undergraduate studies at Chicago State University.

In that timeframe, I've served 10 years in the U.S. Army Reserve, including a tour in Afghanistan where I was awarded the Army Accommodation Medal for service during a foreign conflict. I've completed a master's at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and I'm pursuing my second master's at Northwestern University. I've assisted in the development of the City College of Chicago's first construction management program, an associate of science degree, primarily serving minority and disadvantaged students across the city of Chicago.

In my primary role, I work as a senior project manager and lead estimator for the 14th largest general contractor in the United States. But my most rewarding duty is fulfilling my responsibility as a single parent to my 9-year-old daughter.

For nearly 50 years, TRIO programs have changed the lives of countless individuals across this great country. My accomplishments thus far would not be possible if TRIO programs didn't exist. Please understand that our work cannot stop, because there are others who need the same inspiration, guidance, and access that I was afforded.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Griggs follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CORNELIUS D. GRIGGS

My journey to this podium has been one filled with obstacles and challenges, but in the great words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Challenge and Controversy was a normal part of my life at an early age. At the age of 9, my mother had a very difficult decision to place me under the care of the department of children and family services. I spent 9 years of my life, from the age of 9 until the age of 18, bouncing between 3 different foster homes from Cabrini Green Housing Projects to Robert Taylor Homes with a brief stint at a local group home on the Westside of Chicago.

Growing up as a ward of the State, my first introduction to the Trio programs occurred during my sophomore year of high school at Steinmetz Academic Centre located on the northwest side of Chicago. I was introduced to Mr. Bernard Clay and Introspect Youth Services during an afterschool learning summit. From that point, my relationship with the organization would grow and Mr. Clay would take me under his wing as he did with many of the youth that walked through his door. He began to lecture me on the educational opportunities that were at my disposal and began to steer me in the direction of colleges and universities. Mr. Clay was the first individual to inform me that you had to take the ACT or SAT to get into college, unfortunate but true.

Through Introspect, I was afforded the opportunity to visit colleges and universities across the State, participate in summer youth programs and gain an understanding of what college was all about before ever stepping foot on a campus as a student. But like many others who grew up in the gang-infested neighborhoods of Chicago, going to college was a far stretch of the imagination. As a young African-American male, simply surviving was a celebration within itself.

After choosing college over the Marine Corps in the fall of 1999, I enrolled into Chicago State University to pursue a dual degree in Criminal Justice and Computer Science. It was during my time at Chicago State University that I was introduced to another Trio program called McNair. The McNair Program afforded me the opportunity to participate in educational and career-focused conferences across the country. The program would later prepare me for my graduate studies at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Trio programs and organizations like McNair and Introspect have made it possible for me and many other Alumni to be successful. It's been 15 years since I graduated from high school and 9 years since I completed my undergraduate's studies. In that timeframe,

- I served 10 years in the U.S. Army Reserves including a tour in Afghanistan where I was awarded the Army Accommodation Medal for my service during a foreign conflict.
- Completed a Bachelors of Science from Chicago State University and a Masters from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Industrial Technology with a concentration in Construction Management.
- Working toward my 2d Master's degree at Northwestern University in Real Estate Development.
- Assisted in the chartering of the city colleges of Chicago's first Construction Management Program in 2009, primarily serving minority and disadvantage students across the city of Chicago (In the Spring of 2013, we graduated our first class of 6 students, 5 of which have went on to 4-year institutions on full scholarships).
- And working as a Project Manager for the 12 largest General Contractors in the United States. I have had the opportunity to lead teams that have built such projects as The Tides, a 52-Story $112MM high-rise in downtown Chicago, the historic Dunbar High School, a $10MM renovation in the Bronzeville area of Chicago and Altgeld Gardens, a $35MM, 440 unit renovation for the Chicago Housing Authority.

But, my most rewarding duty is fulfilling my responsibilities as a single parent to my 9-year-old daughter Kyla Kamora Griggs.

For nearly 50 years, Trio programs have changed the lives of countless individuals across our great country. My accomplishments, thus far, would not be possible if it were not for the opportunities that the Trio Programs provided. I understand that our work cannot stop because there are others who need the same inspiration, guidance, and access that I was afforded.

I close with a quote from LTC Washington, my commander during operation enduring freedom, moments before our plane landed at Bagram Air force Base in Bagram, Afghanistan in February 2003. He looked into the eyes of his troops and stated, "If you wait until you can do everything for everybody, instead of one-thing for somebody, you'll end up doing nothing for nobody." The words have inspired me to no longer be ashamed of my early challenges but use them as the vehicle to initiate change.

Thank you and God Bless.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Griggs.

Ms. Sertich.

STATEMENT OF TALLIE SERTICH, DIRECTOR OF CLIMB UPWARD BOUND, HIBBING COMMUNITY COLLEGE, HIBBING, MN

Ms. SERTICH. Thank you, Senator Harkin. It's an honor to be here. As the Hibbing Community College TRIO Upward Bound director and the Minnesota TRIO Association president-elect, I'm proud to speak for the low-income, first-generation TRIO students in my State, and I'm happy to share the ways in which TRIO programs impact students in rural areas such as the Minnesota Iron Range.

Advances in technology now demand higher degrees. TRIO programs provide participants with the vision and the tools to pursue college degrees that meet new employment standards and allow students to be competitive in the job market. One Iron Range Upward Bound student who exemplifies the ripple effect that TRIO programs have is Tony Ellis, who joined the Itasca Community College Upward Bound program in high school and went on to earn an engineering degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth.

He is now Lead Engineer at Essar Steel, a new mining company on the Iron Range. His younger brother also joined Upward Bound and earned his BA at Mankato State University. Their mother also followed suit and is now working on her BA. Generations of this family and thousands of other TRIO alumni families will now earn higher wages, provide stable homes, and become productive, contributing citizens to the regional economy thanks to TRIO programs.

Our TRIO students encounter challenges unique to living in a rural low-income region. Students often do not have access to technology at home or even transportation. Access to colleges in rural areas is a massive barrier for students. On the Iron Range, the closest universities are 75 to 200 miles away. These students may never dream of attaining a bachelor's degree because they've never set foot on a university campus, let alone know how to prepare for and apply to such an institution.

TRIO programs provide critical services such as tutoring, academic advising, financial literacy, college visits, college entrance exam preparation, supplemental instruction, assistance in filling out college and financial aid applications, and career exploration. But, possibly, the most impactful skills that TRIO programs teach students are how to identify their resources, advocate for themselves, and take advantage of every possible opportunity in their education.

TRIO personnel can educate college administration, faculty, and student services staff to the specific needs of our students. They are critical advocates for low-income, first-generation students and are essential resources to colleges as these institutions learn how to better recruit for and successfully serve low-income, first-generation students.

Ultimately, TRIO programs make tremendous strides in providing equal college access to low-income, first-generation students. Providing equal college access to rural students betters the whole community.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sertich follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TALLIE SERTICH

As the Hibbing Community College TRIO Upward Bound Director, and as the MN TRIO Association President-Elect, I am proud to have the opportunity to speak for the low-income, first-generation TRIO students in Minnesota. In particular, I am happy to discuss the ways in which TRIO programs impact students in rural areas such as the Minnesota Iron Range, where Hibbing Community College is located.

The Iron Range region of Minnesota is blessed with natural resources that once traditionally afforded well-paying, yet low-skill jobs in the mining industry that only required a high school diploma. Advances in technology now demand higher educational requirements for regional job opportunities. TRIO programs provide participants with the vision and tools to pursue post-secondary education levels that meet

new employment standards in the region and allow students to be competitive in today's global job market.

The TRIO programs in the region provide critical services to students such as tutoring, academic advising, financial literacy, college visits, college entrance exam preparation, supplemental instruction, assistance in filling out college and scholarship applications as well as the FAFSA, and career exploration including job shadowing and mentors.

I'd like to tell you about one northeastern Minnesota Upward Bound student who exemplifies the ripple effect that TRIO programs have. Tony Ellis joined the Itasca Community College Upward Bound program in high school and went on to earn an engineering degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth. He is now Lead Engineer at Essar Steel, a new mining company on the Iron Range. His younger brother also joined Upward Bound and earned his BA at Mankato State University. Their mother also followed suit and is now working on her BA. Generations of this family and hundreds of other TRIO alumni families will now earn higher wages, provide stable homes, and become productive, contributing citizens to the regional economy thanks to rural TRIO programs in northeastern Minnesota.

Northeastern Minnesota TRIO students encounter challenges unique to living in a rural, low-income region. Students often do not have reliable personal transportation and public transportation is nearly non-existent. Students in rural areas also face obstacles with the lack of access to technology. Many low income, rural students do not have Internet access or even computers at home.

Not only do TRIO programs provide the academic services I discussed earlier, but TRIO programs also transport students to important academic activities and provide computer availability. But possibly the most impactful skills that TRIO programs teach students are how to identify their resources, advocate for themselves, and take advantage of every possible opportunity in their education. These skills help students problem-solve when they cannot find a ride to an ACT exam or when their dial-up Internet connection doesn't work at their rural home.

Access to post-secondary institutions in rural areas is a massive barrier for students to pursue degrees higher than an Associate's. On the Iron Range, for example, the closest universities are 75 to 200 miles away. TRIO families do not have the time or resources to visit distant colleges. Without TRIO programs these students may never dream of attaining a Bachelor's degree because they have never had the opportunity to step foot on a university campus, let alone know how to prepare for and apply to such an institution.

TRIO programs are critical advocates for low-income, first-generation students on college campuses. TRIO personnel can educate and alert college administration, faculty, and student services staff to the specific needs of these students. Ultimately, TRIO programs are essential resources to colleges as these institutions learn how to better recruit for and successfully serve low-income, first-generation students.

Simply put, TRIO programs make truly tremendous strides in providing equal post-secondary educational opportunities to low-income, first-generation students. Providing equal college access to rural students betters the whole community.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Sertich.

Mr. Liang.

STATEMENT OF WEIYA LIANG, DIRECTOR OF GEAR UP, WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL, OLYMPIA, WA

Mr. LIANG. Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Alexander, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to participate in this roundtable to discuss the roles of Federal access programs, in particular, GEAR UP, in my case, in improving low-income student access to and success in post-secondary education. I want to express my gratitude especially to Senator Patty Murray, my home State Senator from Washington, for her role in improving the lives of Washingtonians and especially for low-income students in the State. It is no coincidence that she received the Champions for Student Success award this year from NCCEP.

Federal access programs play a critical role in important student outcomes in higher education by providing academic, social, and financial support. GEAR UP, TRIO, and Federal student financial

aid programs provide support in these areas through a variety of services. To provide effective and targeted services, we need innovation in research and evaluation to identify services and interventions that have the greatest impact for post-secondary education.

Washington State's GEAR UP, together with 14 other States—many of the States' senators are here—formed a College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium to study from a longitudinal perspective over 150,000 students in their progress. Research has shown that students, especially those from low-income families, face particular challenges at critical transition points, from middle school to high school and from high school to post-secondary.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 has given GEAR UP a unique perspective, because this is the only Federal access program that, across education sectors, break the silos from seventh grade to the first year of post-secondary education. No other Federal access programs that I know have crossed that span.

So the flexibility provided by GEAR UP and HEOA allows us to create programs that are responsive to the culture and needs of the community of students. With a high degree of intentionality and engagement, programs solicit strong support from schools, from institutions of higher education, and from parents and States. All of these have proven to be effective in helping target populations, access, and success in post-secondary education.

A study by the Washington State University's Social and Economic Science Research Center concludes that:

> "Contrasting GEAR UP participants with a comparison group of other low-income students, GEAR UP students had more positive outcomes on virtually all measures of enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment."

I look forward to participating in the conversation.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Liang follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WEIYA LIANG

Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Alexander and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to participate in the roundtable on "Strengthening Federal Access Programs to Meet 21st Century Needs", and to discuss the roles of Federal access programs, in particular, GEAR UP, in improving low-income students access to, and success in, higher education. I represent Washington State GEAR UP at the Washington Student Achievement Council. Washington State is home to one State GEAR UP program and nine partnership programs.

Federal access programs play a critical role in improving student outcomes in higher education by providing academic, social, and financial support. Both the National College Access Network and the Lumina Education Foundation have identified the same three areas of support and services as being key to improving student outcomes. GEAR UP, TRIO and Federal student financial aid programs provide support in these areas through a variety of services that include tutoring, mentoring/advising, financial literacy, family engagement, financial aid and scholarships.

To provide effective and targeted services, we need innovation in research and evaluation to identify services and interventions that have the greatest impact on post-secondary education. Washington State GEAR UP, and 14 State programs formed a College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium. This longitudinal, self-initiated project will study over 150,000 students, to identify which interventions have the greatest impact on college going aspirations, academic preparation, high school success and post-secondary enrollment, persistence and completion. The Consortium is working in partnership with ACT, the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center and the U.S. Department of Education.

Research has shown that students, especially those from low-income families, face particular challenges at the critical transition points of middle to high school and high school to college. The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 has positioned GEAR UP to address this issue because it is the only Federal access program to provide comprehensive services from the middle school to post-secondary education—starting in the seventh grade through the first year of post-secondary education.

GEAR UP's success lies in the collaboration among program administrators, school districts, higher education partners, community-based organizations, and the State. We find that coordinated intervention efforts, a healthy learning community, and regular information sharing among State and partnership programs has created more opportunities for GEAR UP students and their families. Complementary and supplemental services ensure students and families have access to comprehensive intervention services over a 6- to 7-year period.

The flexibility provided for GEAR UP in the HEOA allows us to create programs that are responsive to the culture and needs of the community of students. With a high degree of intentionality and engagement, programs solicit strong support from school district leadership, educate and engage families as partners, and provide rigorous and relevant curriculum. All these have proven to be effective in helping the target population access and succeed in post-secondary education. A study by the Washington State University's Social and Economic Science Research Center concludes:

> "Contrasting GEAR UP participants with a comparison group of other low-income students, GEAR UP students had more positive outcomes on virtually all measures of enrollment, persistence and degree attainment."—(Mann, 2012)

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Liang.

Dr. Harris.

STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS N. HARRIS, Ph.D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AND UNIVERSITY ENDOWED CHAIR IN PUBLIC EDUCATION, TULANE UNIVERSITY, NEW ORLEANS, LA

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Chairman Harkin, Senator Alexander, and members of the committee. Thanks for including me in this conversation.

I want to emphasize three points. The first is that the college access landscape has shifted dramatically since these programs were put in place. I was just in a high school yesterday in New Orleans where almost all the students were from low-income families. In the hallways were college banners from all over the country. The freshman class was gone because they were all visiting colleges around New Orleans.

This is becoming increasingly common, not just in New Orleans, but around the country. There's much greater focus in the schools on college access than there was decades ago when these programs were put in place.

Second, a Federal role in college access services is still needed. As a basic principle, the Federal Government should provide resources and services that are critical for the least advantaged among us, especially when those services won't be provided otherwise.

Students need connections to adults who can encourage them and walk them through the social, academic, and financial demands for college and do so early in their lives. They need someone who can turn college from a vague notion into a concrete reality.

Third, while a Federal role is needed, research suggests that the current role is outdated. So I want to focus especially on the Up-

ward Bound experiment, because it's really the study that gets the most attention with regard to TRIO.

There were problems with the national Upward Bound experiment that make it difficult to interpret the main findings from that study. But one thing is clear, that the students in the experiment who had significant behavioral and academic problems early in high school, students who would normally be disqualified from Upward Bound, benefited greatly from this. The benefits exceeded the cost by a ratio of 10 to 1 for those students. This suggests that TRIO and GEAR UP need to be better targeted.

The Federal role should also be changed to allow greater flexibility and individualization. The current law mandates that all TRIO programs provide a single set of mandatory services. But with the proliferation of nonFederal programs and the fact that students have different needs, it is increasingly difficult to justify a rigid approach like that.

Finally, the various college access programs need to be better coordinated and more efficient. I know of many high schools that have students in four or five different Upward Bound programs in the same school, providing the same services, on top of the other college access programs that the schools are providing.

The college access landscape has really shifted, and I think TRIO and GEAR UP need to change along with it. I think we need to target, individualize, and coordinate these programs in a way that make them a better investment in the future.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Harris follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS N. HARRIS, PH.D.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE IN COLLEGE ACCESS

The landscape of college access has shifted dramatically since TRIO was first passed in the 1960s, and even since more recent developments such as GEAR UP. Students attend college at higher rates and schoolteachers and principals set college as the goal even for students who never would have attended a generation ago. "College-for-all" and "college- and career-ready" standards are increasingly giving disadvantaged students an opportunity to prepare for the college track.

With high average rates of college entry, it is tempting to think that the college access problem has been solved, but that is far from reality. Low-income students continue to enter college at much lower rates.[1] Only 65 percent of minority students graduate from high school[2] and, of those, only a little over half go right on to some type of college.[3]

Nevertheless, the problems that TRIO and GEAR UP were designed for have evolved. Students want to attend college and most schools offer the required academic basics, but many students remain under-prepared for the academic, social, and financial demands of post-secondary education. Scholars have documented the issues—students who are motivated but directionless, enrolled in college track courses while studying only rarely, conducting consequential but ill-informed college searches, selecting colleges that are poor matches, and floundering through higher

[1] Kirst, M.W. (2004). The high school/college disconnect. *Educational Leadership*, 62(3). p.51–55. Bailey, M.J. & Dynarski, S.M. (2011). *Gains and gaps: Changing inequality in U.S. college entry and completion* (NBER Working Paper 17633). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.)

[2] Heckman, J.J. & LaFontaine, P.A. (2007). *The American high school graduation rate: Trends and levels* (NBER Working Paper No. 13670). Retrieved from National Bureau of Economic Research Web site: *http://www.nber.org/papers/w13670*.

[3] Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Tahan, K. (2011). *The condition of education 2011* (NCES 2011–033). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office.

education propelled by a compelling but vague goal of getting a "college degree."[4] Given how easily we can predict who will not graduate from college, it is clear that something still has to be done before students finish high school if they are going to succeed in college. The landscape has shifted, but real college access remains a fundamental problem.

My comments below are based on a re-analysis of the federally funded Upward Bound experiment I conducted with Dr. Alan Nathan, as well as two ongoing field experiments in Milwaukee and published research on cost-effectiveness of college access and success strategies.[5] After discussing Upward Bound, I recommend some general guidelines for altering Federal access programs and a more aggressive Federal agenda for research to understand how these programs work.

UPWARD BOUND: REVISITED

Upward Bound (UB) is the only Federal access program for which we have anything approaching rigorous evidence, so naturally the results of this single, large experiment have received considerable attention. The federally sponsored experiment, first launched in the early 1990s and lasting almost two decades, was intended to estimate effects on a nationally representative sample of 67 UB sites. Students were offered UB at random so that the results estimates would reflect only the offer to participate in UB and not other differences in student characteristics.

The original evaluator concluded that UB had "no detectable effect" on college entry or completion,[6] a conclusion that has since been widely cited as an argument for defunding or revamping the program.[7] An advocacy group, the Council on Opportunity in Education (COE) has been critical of the study,[8] although there have been no prior attempts to objectively address their concerns. My analysis with Dr. Alan Nathan considers the COE and other critiques based on typical research standards.[9]

Our conclusions differ from both the original evaluator, as well as COE. Due partly to the design of the experiment, the conclusions are very sensitive to seemingly small changes in the way the estimates are made. In particular, in the sampling design, one of the 67 sites contributed only 3 percent of the student observations but was given 26 percent of the weight when estimating impacts. Put differently, the students in this one site counted more than eight times as much as most of the others. Some individual students in some estimates were given 80 times as much weight as others. This is highly unusual and opens the possibility that this one site could drive the results of the entire study. It also makes it less likely that any estimate will reach typical standards of statistical confidence.

The site in question also appears to have been placed in the wrong category or "stratum," so that it was given more weight than it should have been. This compounded the earlier problem, further calling into question whether the large weight attached to this one site could be justified. The contractor team recognized these problems and, at the request of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriately carried out additional analyses with alternative sampling weights. The results became noticeably more positive when the sampling weights were handled in different reasonable ways.

While driven partly by the above issues with the design of the experiment, it is not unusual for results to be sensitive in this way. In such cases, it is generally con-

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[4] Bowen, W.G., Chingos, M.M., & McPherson, M. (2009). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America's public universities.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J. Coca, V., & Moeller, E. (2009). *From high school to the future: Making hard work pay off: The road to college for students in CPS's academically advanced programs.* Chicago, IL: Consortium for Chicago Schools Research. Rosenbaum, J. (2001). *Beyond college for all: Career paths for the forgotten half.* New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. Schneider, B., & Stevenson, D. (1999). *The ambitious generation: America's teenagers, motivated but directionless.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

[5] Harris, D.N. (2013). Applying cost-effectiveness analysis in higher education. In A. Kelly and K. Carey (eds.). *Stretching the Higher Education Dollar.* (pp. 45–66). Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

[6] Seftor, N.S., Mamun, A., and Schirm, A. (2009). *The Impacts of Regular Upward Bound on Post-Secondary Outcomes Seven to Nine Years After Scheduled High School Graduation. Final report.* U.S. Department of Education.

[7] Field, K. (2007). Are the Right Students "Upward Bound?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* 53(50), 16–16. Haskins, R. & Rouse, C. (2013). Time for Change: A New Federal Strategy to Prepare Disadvantaged Students for College. *The Future of Children*, 2, 1–6.

[8] Cahalan, M.W. (2009). *Addressing Study Error in the Random Assignment National Evaluation of Upward Bound: Do the Conclusions Change?* Council for Opportunity in Education: Washington, DC.

[9] Harris, D.N. & Nathan, A. (2013). *The Effects, Benefits, and Costs of the Upward Bound College Access Program: Evidence from a National Randomized Trial.* Presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Washington, DC.

sidered good practice to be cautious in drawing conclusions. Yet, the contractor's final report concluded, in bold letters, that UB had "no detectable effects" on high school graduation, college enrollment, or college graduation.[10] Given that the conclusion is nearly the opposite when other reasonable methods are used, I believe a more appropriate conclusion is that the results are indeterminate; that is, it is not possible to determine whether the program worked on average based on the usual standards of significance.

But there is still much to learn from this experiment about targeting, costs, and benefits. Based on what UB site administrators say about the eligibility criteria, it appears that hundreds of students participated in the experiment who would typically have been screened out for having too many behavioral and academic challenges. For example, a national survey of UB site directors conducted in the 1990s reported 62 percent of respondents disqualified applicants with a history of behavioral problems or a record of disciplinary actions, while 47 percent of responding administrators disqualified students who had no specific interest in college. Since students enter UB early in high school, when students know little about college, there is little reason to expect that these would be good indicators of whether students would benefit from UB.

The fact that these additional students were included is useful because it presents an opportunity to learn which types of students benefit most from UB. While almost none of the students in UB would ever be considered "advantaged," there is great variety in the needs of low-income and first-generation students and some of them are already doing relatively well by the time they get to high school. Our results suggest that students with more challenges in fact *benefit much more* than students typically allowed into UB (the precise amount depends on exactly how the students are placed in the typically eligible group). Unlike the earlier discussion of average effects and sampling weights, the larger effects for typically disqualified students are insensitive to methodological choices. This yields convincing evidence that UB, at least as it was designed at the time of the experiment, is poorly targeted.

Finally, we conducted a series of cost-benefit analyses, quantifying the economic benefits of the various high school and college credentials and comparing these with the program costs. Such a comparison is important given that UB is widely considered an expensive program.[11] Are these costs justifiable? The answer seems to be clearly "yes." Unlike the estimates of the average program effects, the benefits easily exceed the costs of the program under almost any set of assumptions, including the most pessimistic estimates of program effects. Importantly, the only condition under which UB may not pass a cost-benefit test is when we limit estimates to students who are typically served. This reinforces the importance of better targeting to students most likely to benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My re-analysis of UB with Dr. Nathan leads to recommendations that are consistent with other trends in observations in my college access research.

Targeting. Current college access programs should be targeted to students who are more disadvantaged. This is not only consistent with the effects of UB, but also with the logic that college access programs are more widely available today, especially in schools serving the socioeconomically disadvantaged students. (We see this especially in Milwaukee Public Schools where most college access programs are not federally funded.) Targeting these programs to first-generation and low-income college students is a good start, but, as our UB analysis shows, many of these students are apparently on track for college without additional Federal access programs.

Individualization. In addition to better targeting, services might be more effective if they were more flexible and individualized. Different students have different needs, yet Federal college access programs provide a fixed set of services, many of which are mandated by Federal rules. If program administrators could diagnose the needs of each student and individualize service delivery, the programs would likely be more effective. The fact that many services are federally required compounds the problem because site administrators are forced to provide specific services, giving administrators little reason to diagnose individual student needs.

Efficiency. A better return on investment might be achieved by simply finding cheaper ways to address students' needs. UB costs more than $5,000 per participant per year, while other recent research suggests that similar gains can be had at a

[10] Seftor et al. (2009), Ibid.
[11] Harris, D. (2013). Ibid.

fraction of the cost.[12] The traditional services being provided by Federal programs may still be warranted for some students, especially those who face the greatest barriers, but if there are more cost-effective ways to help these students, we should pursue them.

Avoiding the Unintended Consequences with Performance Standards. Given the desire for targeting, individualization, and efficiency, it seems reasonable to set goals for programs, provide funding based on results, and let program operators use resources to reach those goals as they see fit. As recent efforts in school and college accountability have shown, however, performance requirements are fraught with challenges and the potentially perverse incentives. For example, one reason UB sites might be screening out the most disadvantaged students is that Federal funding is partly contingent on their getting a high percentage of students to succeed in college. Paradoxically, these Federal incentives may induce program operators to select the students who do not need their services—students who will likely make it to college regardless of whether they are in college access programs. One way to avoid the unintended consequences of performance standards is to send a clearer message to program administrators that they should be targeting not just low-income and first-generation students, but also those with more severe academic and behavioral challenges.

The Need for More Research. I make these recommendations with some caution because the research basis for decisions on Federal college access programs is wholly inadequate. Upward Bound is the only Federal access program for which we have rigorous evidence and even that, as I have shown, is misunderstood. Perhaps the most important step is to fund additional studies so that these decisions can be better informed.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the changing landscape, and recent research on Upward Bound, there can be little doubt that TRIO and GEAR UP are ready for redesign. While the current research base is far from adequate, it appears that targeting existing programs to students with greater disadvantages, diagnosing and individualizing services, looking to more efficient service options, and avoiding the unintended consequences of performance incentives would all help to maintain these programs as core components of the Nation's efforts to increase college access and success.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Harris.

Dr. Haskins.

STATEMENT OF RON HASKINS, Ph.D., SENIOR FELLOW AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND BUDGETING FOR NATIONAL PRIORITIES PROJECT, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. HASKINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a privilege to be able to testify before the committee today and to discuss these issues with you. I want to make five points that will average 24 seconds apiece.

The first thing is we're all aware that a 4-year degree has great value for a low-income child. But I want to give you one figure that I think will be helpful in realizing how important it is. Among all the kids from the bottom 20 percent of parental income, the probability, if they don't get a 4-year degree, that they will wind up in the bottom themselves is 45 percent, twice as great as other children.

If they get a 4-year degree, the probability that they'll wind up in the bottom is 16 percent. Similarly, to get all the way to the top,

[12] Castleman, B.L., & Page, L.C. (2013). *Summer Nudging: Can Text Messages and Peer Mentor Outreach Increase College Going Among Low-Income High School Graduates?* Paper presented at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness Spring Conference. Washington, DC. Bettinger, E. & Baker, R. (2011). *The Effects of Student Coaching: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Advising.* Unpublished manuscript. Stanford University School of Education, Palo, Alto, CA. Hoxby, C. & Turner, S. (2013). *Expanding College Opportunities for High-Achieving, Low Income Students.* Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Palo Alto, CA.

the probability is 5 percent if they don't get a degree and almost 20 percent if they do. There is no other intervention that I'm aware of that produces this kind of impact. So this is a crucial issue.

The second point is, nonetheless, despite that advantage of getting a 4-year degree, 53 percent of the kids from the top 20 percent of income get a 4-year degree, 11 percent of the kids from the bottom, and the dropout rate is enormous, both at 4-year schools and at community colleges.

The third point is, obviously, it makes sense, given these numbers, to have better college preparation programs, and Congress realized that in the 1960s. From the beginning of the War on Poverty issue that was pointed out, and as Congress so often does, they created a lot of programs. So we now have a bunch of programs. I completely agree with the comment about coordination. And we spend maybe $1.2 billion or so on these programs.

The fourth point is—and there's a lot of room for controversy here—the evaluations of these programs—I would call them discouraging. I don't think these programs are producing major impacts—some perhaps more than others. I'm sure there are fabulous individual programs. There's the exact same situation with Head Start, which I'm sure members of the committee know.

There are lots of crummy programs out there, and even though there are some good ones, on average, the results are not too impressive. So we need to do something. I have several recommendations that I mention in my testimony. I subscribe to all the things that Dr. Harris said.

But I think the most important thing is that we do not evaluate individual programs very well. This administration has done a better job of evaluating programs at the local level than any administration before. They have great skill in doing this.

If you look at i3, you will see a huge increase in evaluations, including rigorous, high-quality evaluations. That is the key to improve these programs. If the individual programs do not do well, then they should lose their money.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Haskins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RON HASKINS, PH.D.

A college education offers substantial benefits, especially for children from poor and low-income families. Since the 1980s, the median family income of adults in their prime earning years has increased only for those with a 4-year college or advanced degree. Equally important, young adults from families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution who achieve a 4-year college degree are nearly 80 percent less likely to wind up in the bottom fifth themselves than are their peers who do not achieve a 4-year degree.

A primary reason that disadvantaged students have trouble both getting into college and completing a degree is that they are not academically prepared to do college work. One scholar's careful analysis of data from 19 nationally representative studies shows that the achievement gap between students from high-income and low-income families has grown in recent years and is now much larger than the gap between white and black students. This rising inequality in K–12 achievement based on family-income parallels growing disparities in college enrollment and completion between students from high-income and low-income families. The Panel Study of Income Dynamics shows that only 11 percent of students from the bottom fifth graduate from college, compared with 53 percent and 38 percent of students from the top two fifths.

There are four major Federal programs that attempt to better prepare disadvantaged students for success in college. These include Upward Bound, Upward Bound

Math-Science, Talent Search, and Gear Up. All of these programs have been evaluated, although the quality of the evaluations varies. The best evaluation is that of the oldest program, Upward Bound. Most of these evaluations have shown that the program has modest or no impact on college enrollment or college graduation. The best evaluation which meets the Institute of Education Sciences standards for top-tier evidence shows no major effects on college enrollment or completion.

Half a century and billions of dollars after these Federal college-preparation programs were initiated, we are left with mostly unsuccessful programs interspersed with modest successes. Preparing disadvantaged students for college is a major challenge, with no well-tested solutions in sight. That said, there are hints in some of the programs about what could make a difference: summer programs, mentoring, tutoring, parent involvement, and similar activities have sometimes been associated with higher college enrollment. These may be the threads from which we can begin to weave together a new kind of intervention program.

The Obama administration has been funding and expanding social programs that have good evidence of success and reforming or terminating programs that have proven unsuccessful—a major strand of innovative social policy. The administration has formulated evidence-based social initiatives to prevent teen pregnancy, boost parenting skills, enhance employment and training, encourage community-based social innovation, and reform education. We need intense evidence-based solutions to the problem of preparing disadvantaged students for college as well. Thus we recommend a dramatic change in the way Federal college preparation programs are funded, using an approach similar to that of the Obama administration's other evidence-based initiatives.

We propose a five-step reform. First, we propose that the $1 billion the Federal Government spends annually on college preparation programs be consolidated into a single grant program. In this sense, the change we propose is similar to the Obama administration's reform of Head Start, in which every Head Start grantee in the country risks losing its money if it does not perform at a high level. Similarly, in order to keep their Federal funding, current grantees would need to show, based on rigorous analysis of their performance, that they are helping disadvantaged students enroll in and graduate from college.

Second, the U.S. Department of Education should publish a funding announcement which states that any 2-year or 4-year college, any local education authority, or any nonprofit or for-profit agency with a record of conducting education interventions is qualified to compete for grants from the college preparation funds. Sites with existing programs could apply for funds, but their applications would be considered on a competitive basis like everyone else's.

Third, the Department would make clear that evidence supporting the proposed intervention would be a crucial factor in determining the awards. Applicants would have to: demonstrate that they were using evidence-based interventions; demonstrate that their organization has a history of conducting programs that improve some measure or measures of college preparation, for example, by raising high school achievement scores or boosting performance on college readiness tests; present a detailed plan for evaluating their program, including how they would use data as feedback to improve it.

Fourth, the Department would be able to decide how to distribute the money among various approaches to helping disadvantaged students prepare for college. It would have the flexibility to use up to some maximum percentage of the funds (perhaps 20 percent) to support approaches, such as the current Student Support Services program, that help disadvantaged students once they arrive at college.

Fifth, the Department would use up to 2 percent of its annual funds ($20 million) to plan a coordinated program of research and demonstration, featuring large-scale random-assignment studies, that would determine whether well-defined interventions or specific activities (such as mentoring, tutoring, etc.) actually increase college enrollment and completion. All entities that received funds under the grant program would have to agree to participate in the Department's demonstration and research programs.

Social policy should be based, at least in part, on evidence, and everything we know leads to the view that many, if not most, social programs produce modest or no effects. The Obama administration's reform of Head Start shows that a major ingredient of evidence-based policy is to reform or terminate ineffective programs. We should apply the same tough-minded approach to college preparation programs.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that was a good way to sum up. We're trying to look at this, and all of you have said in one way or another that the landscape has changed since the 1960s, even since GEAR UP came up in the 1990s. Again, I think Senator Alexander posed

the question: Is this the most effective means of using—what is it—$1.1 billion, something like that, every year?

Senator ALEXANDER. Yes, for the six programs.

The CHAIRMAN. I first became acquainted with the TRIO program when I first came to Congress as a House member. I had never heard of it before. And I've sort of followed it in a couple of schools in my State since that time.

You know, we always tend to look at the great success stories, Mr. Griggs' being one, and I know a lot of others who have been through the TRIO program and were very successful. But I don't know about what happened to the others that didn't make it, that dropped out. We know that in the past, I think the figure was about 50 percent of low-income students who drop out their first year of college, something like that, somewhere near that, I think. We wonder about the support services.

But here's what I'm getting at. I've become aware that the college campus today is not like it was when I went to college. Today, over half of the college students are not campus-based, and they're over age 25. So what's happening with these low-income students who—their parents never went to college, and they live in maybe bad areas, like Mr. Griggs mentioned, where he was raised.

And yet they're presented with this idea that college is someplace you go, and you live on a campus, and you're there. But that's not what's happening today. More and more students are opting for a different way of getting their higher education.

So should we look upon the TRIO program and GEAR UP as somehow providing the kind of support services and mentoring to a student that maybe doesn't go to a traditional college? He goes to a community college, maybe, or does a lot of online work. Low-income kids know how to use those computers.

But I don't see that TRIO and GEAR UP is focusing on that student. It seems to me—and maybe I'm wrong—that they're still focused on that student going to some campus somewhere, and that's different.

Ms. Hoyler, you put yours up first.

Ms. HOYLER. I think that, oftentimes, when people think about TRIO, they focus on the college access component. But about half of our programs are retention programs. They are focused on keeping the students who start college, the low-income, first-generation students who start college, in college and helping them graduate.

They're particularly focused on persistence and graduation. That's what they're measured on, whether they graduate students. And about half of those programs are in community colleges. So while the image may be of programs focused on the baccalaureate—and our organization, particularly, is committed to assuring that all students, low-income and first-generation students, have access to all categories of institutions. We don't have a dual system where poorest students go to one set of campuses and my children go to another set of campuses.

TRIO programs and GEAR UP programs focus on all categories and institutions. So I think that's really important to understand. And it is those retention services that are equally key to the access services.

As we were coming over today, Mr. Griggs was mentioning that because of the counseling he received, he didn't work in his first year of college. He decided that he really had to focus on succeeding in college. And even though he didn't have the strongest academic record in high school, he blew it out of the water when he got to college. He did it because he didn't work 35 hours a week.

Many of our lowest-income students are trying to work too many hours to avoid high loan burden. They're not getting good counseling. So they're not only not staying in school, but they're not making the best use of Pell, they're not making the best use of financial aid, and so these services are necessary, not just at the precollege level, but at the retention and access level or success level as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Giles.

Mr. GILES. I think you raise a wonderful point, and I think it's important for us to remember, at least with the GEAR UP programs, that we are focused on education and training for these students after high school. So for some students, it's appropriate to pursue a degree, a 4-year degree. It could be a 2-year degree. It could be a certificate or an apprenticeship.

But the changes that have taken place in higher education—I think we all recognize that not every online program is of equal quality, and not every proprietary school is of equal quality. Not every traditional institution is of equal quality. And this is an area that these students really struggle with, and it's a critical role that our programs need to play in helping them make good choices that will really allow them to achieve their goals.

The second really brief point that I wanted to make touches on what you said about how they perform once they're in school, whatever that institution is. GEAR UP now has a seventh-year program, which is allowing several of the programs across the country to really serve as that bridge from their high school experience to whatever post-secondary education choice they've made, where we can work with a cohort of students, almost like a posse system, during that first year to try and change those continuation rates. And I think that that's really one of the areas that holds particular promise.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Now, Ms. Sertich. We'll do that, and I'm inviting Senators now to just weigh in and start asking questions.

Ms. SERTICH. Yes. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Go ahead and respond to that, and then I'll go to Senator Alexander.

Ms. SERTICH. I'd certainly like to echo what Ms. Hoyler said. Coming from a community college level, we certainly have students that are traditional students going to 4-year institutions. But we have many students who do online and who do community colleges first and then transfer.

But I wanted to speak about the online piece. Students are doing more online now. And it's not a given that they know how to use the technology. The students I work with—we actually build the online format that our college uses into our Upward Bound program so that students are familiar with it by the time they get to college, because we know they will take online classes.

In our Summer Bridge program, which is right after high school graduation, our Upward Bound students can take a class, that Upward Bound piece or at the institution. And it really helps bridge and have them learn the expectations that the college professors and instructors are going to have of them as a student.

But in our small community college, we have few classes, actual in-person classes, face to face, during the summertime. So when we do those bridge classes, it's typically online. We really have to be there with our students and have daily contact with them and support through that online class to really teach them how to successfully be an online student, which has many different challenges and things to learn than being a college student in the classroom.

The CHAIRMAN. Is what Ms. Sertich said true? I mean, do you all do that in your States, in Vermont and—this is kind of news to me.

Mr. LIANG. Yes, we do.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Harris, do you want to weigh in on that?

Mr. HARRIS. I have a different point.

Mr. LIANG. Yes, we do. Actually, we provide services, and Washington has a very strong community college system. It has been leading the country in getting students in and graduating them. One of the things we do is we work with community colleges to provide services, support services, through financial aid, through other access programs, through wrap-around services with the institutions. So we do see that students do get individualized services and help them at least get through the first year of college experience.

Mr. HARRIS. I was just going to add that I think—and your question and your sentiment about how things have changed and that students aren't on campuses anymore and more often at 2-year colleges and so on. I think part of what that suggests is this coordination issue, that having these bridges between the high school and colleges years is important.

But I also want to emphasize that part of what these access programs are doing is getting students on the right path to start with, getting them into the right colleges and the right place, because the students all have very different needs, different goals, and if you don't get them on the right path at the beginning, it's hard to get them back on that path later. So I think that's why targeting these services earlier is important.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Haskins.

Mr. HASKINS. I just want to add a quick point. The most fundamental purpose of these programs, at least in my view, is to prepare the kids academically for college. That is the reason the dropout rates are so enormous. These kids are not ready for college. Most 4-year and 2-year colleges in the country have remedial programs. They fail utterly. So without good preparation in high school, in the K through 12 system, we'll continue to have high dropout rates, and these kids will not graduate, and they won't get the benefits that I referred to in my opening comments.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Alexander.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

All of you are experts on college access. So let me ask you about testimony we heard at another hearing. We had a group of witnesses who came from different directions and all said the same

thing. This is fundamentally what they said. They said, first, that the Pell grant, which is most of our Federal grant scholarships—if we only ask questions about the size of the family and what income was 2 years before, that we could put the application on a post card and simplify it.

Second, that we could tell students in their junior year how much money they were eligible to get rather than have them pick a college, go to the college, and go through a very confusing process of finding out how much money they were eligible to have. And, third, because of social media, that, unlike 1965 or even 1973 or other years, we can let students know a lot in their seventh and eighth grade years.

The fourth thing was that we should have a single grant, a single loan, and maybe a single tax credit. The testimony was that if we simplified Federal aid in that way, that there would be a large number of low-income students who would go to college who now don't. And, second, that we'd save a lot of money, which would permit us to provide scholarships to those students.

So my question is do you agree with that? Do you think that if we simplified the Federal grant and aid system and made it possible for an application to be on a post card, answering two questions, and then told students in their junior year how much money would be available to them at any of the 6,000 institutions we have and used social media aggressively in the middle school years and simplified the programs we have to one grant, one loan, and one tax credit, do you agree that would save a lot of money and encourage a lot more low-income students to go to college?

Mr. HARRIS. I'll jump in. This relates actually to what we're doing in Milwaukee, where we're looking at the Promise scholarship. The idea of the Promise scholarship is to make a commitment to students much earlier, in this case, the ninth grade. I think the logic is kind of what you were suggesting and probably what the testimony focused on, which is that students get somewhat discouraged early on because they have misperceptions about cost. They worry about cost, and then that leads them to disengage from high school and get off on the wrong track at a pretty early stage.

So the logic is if we can tell them they're going to have a certain amount of money well in advance, they might be on not just a better financial track, but a better academic one as well. I think it's a good idea. I think it's a great idea. And I think if you simplified the financial aid system, that would help facilitate that, because then it would be a lot easier.

These forms are complicated enough. Trying to get people to fill out complicated forms in ninth grade for college is going to be difficult. So it would have to be a much simpler process. I don't think it's going to change the world. I think, really, the way to think about college access programs is that we need a bunch of different strategies to make a big dent.

Every one of those things by itself will matter a little bit. The results we're seeing so far suggest it could matter a little bit. But none of these things individually is going to change—I think that they're good investments. I mean, they get a good return——

Senator ALEXANDER. Well, the testimony was that it would save up to $100 billion.

Mr. HARRIS. I'm not sure I agree with that. I mean, you're still giving the money to the students. So for a given amount of money that you decide to give to the students, giving it to them earlier doesn't save money, necessarily.

Senator ALEXANDER. Well, the argument was that now, you go to college, and then you find out what your financial aid will be. This way, you'd be told in your junior year.

Dr. Haskins.

Mr. HASKINS. I completely agree. I think it's a great idea. It's been a great idea for years, and every administration says they're going to do it, and they don't. So there must be some reason. If I was a member of the committee, I would say,

> "I want to do this, but let's get the folks from the Department of Education and other people here and ask them, 'Why haven't you done this, and what are the disadvantages?' "

There must be some disadvantages, or we would have done this, because it makes such great sense.

I can tell you—I hang out with economists at Brookings Institution, and there's a new part of economics called behavioral economics, and it's a simple principle that has an enormous application in government. If you want people to do something, make it as simple as possible. We would have more students applying to college earlier, arranging their financing, all the things you just said, if we made the process simpler. So we certainly can make it simpler than the FAFSA that we have now.

Ms. SERTICH. I also think early notification and simplification of the financial aid process is an important tool. It would be wonderfully helpful. But my students that I work with still need that one-on-one help on how to get through that financial aid process.

Just knowing the amount of money they would get for a Pell grant early on wouldn't do everything. They don't understand what the Pell grant is or merit scholarships or things like that. So they still need that. And, in addition, even if they got the Pell grant and went to college, they still need the academic prep that the TRIO programs provide on the front end. Otherwise, they're not going to be successful college students.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Hoyler.

Ms. HOYLER. I'd like to pick up on that. You only save the money if they graduate from college. So we have to focus not just on getting them into college, but making sure that the colleges have the capacity to serve them and to educate these low-income, first-generation students. It's a good idea, but we have to focus on keeping the focus on graduation.

We also have to understand that many of these students get constant messages that they're not college material, that they are not welcome at these institutions, that it is for somebody else. And just making it easier to get something that they don't really understand is not—as one of the other panelists said, it is a good idea, but it is a multifaceted problem, and we have to approach it from many different directions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Liang.

Mr. LIANG. Two points. One is, Senator Alexander, early commitment to financial aid is definitely a tool to help students recognize that they have a chance, they have financial aid there, so—and not

only just the junior year. I know there are three or four States that have early commitment scholarship programs from 21st Century, Scholars from Indiana, College Bound Scholarship from Washington, Oklahoma Promise from Oklahoma, and Wisconsin has a similar program.

These programs offer financial aid information earlier, when students are in the seventh and eighth grade. So they get that package. They get the promise from the States, in conjunction with the Pell grant and low-income. So that's one piece.

The second piece is to simplify not just the financial aid, but simplifying messaging is more important to me, from my perspective, because there is some reason behind the complexity of the FAFSA form, if you ask the financial aid officers at institutions. But simplifying messaging is more important, especially to our low-income students. And we know through social media—and low-income families actually have cell phones more than having computers at home. So using social media definitely would be a wonderful tool to help them.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Giles.

Mr. GILES. Just two quick points. I think complexity right now is a barrier. So if we can eliminate a barrier to access, that's a positive thing. I think the second thing on early promise is that within the GEAR UP program, there is a scholarship component to it, and many of the GEAR UP programs across the State are now in the process of experimenting with early notification.

We have schools where we're serving the whole school, and we can tell every student in that school that they're eligible for a $1,000 scholarship when they graduate if they go on to college. The data is not in for our program yet, but I think it's something that we're all hoping will have a positive impact on the college-going culture in the schools.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Giles.

I have listed in order of appearance Senator Franken, Senator Burr, Senator Baldwin, Senator Murphy, Senator Murray.

Senator Franken.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR FRANKEN

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Sertich, thank you for being here from the Range. During this last recess, I re-read Paul Tough's book, How Children Succeed, Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character. Dr. Haskins just said that the reason that kids don't succeed in college is they're not academically prepared. And I think there's no question about that.

But Tough says in his book—and he relies on a tremendous amount of research—that character—and character can be a loaded term. To liberals, it can mean indoctrination, religious indoctrination, or something like that, and to conservatives, it can mean a political correctness or something. But non-cognitive traits like resilience and perseverance and curiosity and conscientiousness and optimism and self-control are more determinative of a child's ability to succeed.

I'm wondering to what extent you provide program support services that can help students develop these types of skills, in addition

to academic skills. And to what extent do we think that these non-cognitive skills can be developed, and where in a kid's development are we able to do that?

He goes into adverse childhood experiences the kids have, which can include extreme poverty, not enough to eat, parents that are divorced, or domestic violence, drug addiction, all of these different adverse things that can happen that can affect a child's—literally their brain chemistry. I was wondering if you provide support services—and this is open to everybody. To what extent are you focused on that, and does that reflect the ability of these kids to succeed in college?

Ms. SERTICH. Yes. Thank you, Senator Franken. Thanks for having me here. Absolutely, it affects their ability to be successful after high school and college and in their lives. I recently did a webinar about a month ago about an organization who did research on resiliency and the effect of resiliency on students in their education.

One thing that I found that was wonderful news was that the research showed that we can effect change with students. Even at the high school level, even if things have been difficult up until high school, and they haven't had some of those skills and qualities, we can make changes with that student.

So a few examples of what my program does—we absolutely work in this realm. We set up professional mentorships so our students can work with professionals in the community in careers that they're interested in. These mentorships also, obviously, can have a huge impact on those students' lives, both in long-term networking and in just learning what it is to be in a professional field.

Also, we work with long and short-term goal setting and how students reach goals. That's something we work with students on literally on a weekly basis. So that's certainly within that resiliency piece. And we do assertiveness training for our students so they learn how to advocate for themselves. Those are just a few examples of some of the services we provide within our TRIO program.

Senator FRANKEN. Mr. Griggs.

Mr. GRIGGS. Thank you, Senator. To speak to Ms. Sertich's point, I can't speak from the research-based perspective, but I can speak from a personal perspective.

I do remember distinctly as a 14-year-old when I was in high school the first time, I encountered my TRIO professional at that particular point in time. And Mr. Clay told me—he said, "Listen, I would rather have someone with AQ over IQ." That was that ambition quota that he spoke to. I wasn't always the brightest kid in the classroom. I was surely smart, but I definitely wasn't the brightest. But I had a lot of ambition.

He told me that ambition would take you further in your career in a lot of occasions than the intelligence piece because you can learn as you go. But you have to be willing to learn. So I think that the ambition portion of that is very important, and the TRIO programs have done a magnificent job in ensuring that they motivate their students and motivate the individuals that are in that program to go on and do bigger and better things.

Senator FRANKEN. I wasn't here for your testimony, but I read it last night. You have demonstrated incredible grit and determina-

tion and resilience, and that seems to be your story. I just was very moved by what you have done.

Mr. GRIGGS. Thank you. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Hoyler.

Ms. HOYLER. Senator Franken, I think one of the things that TRIO programs and GEAR UP programs do is they create peer groups where students who are all facing huge obstacles to their success can support one another. It is often peers that have more influence on each other than adults do. Or we can talk about adults who are striving to get out of a situation and achieve mobility.

So often in the situations that our students face, most of their peers are trying to pull them down. So creating supportive peer situations is one of those things that gives them resilience and is an element of almost every TRIO and GEAR UP program.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Burr.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURR

Senator BURR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I welcome all of you and thank you for what you do. I am a fan of TRIO and GEAR UP. I'm a member somewhat confused right now because I heard the Chair and the Ranking Member attempt to try to suggest things that we've been told that make the problem better, or at least sort it out in a way that you're able to handle it on your end, the challenges that are out there, in a simpler way.

When Senator Alexander talked about notification to a student, that they've got the resources, the resources are available, and that at an earlier age, students incorporate in their mind, "I can go to college" versus "I've been told I can't," that sort of makes sense, that you'd have a student that engaged longer, that was probably a little more academically skilled wouldn't need remediation.

But then I've heard selectively as we've gone around that remediation—Dr. Haskins, you hit on it. We've heard it in other hearings that we've had, the retention problems that exist—Ms. Sertich, the continued need for counseling and mentoring. It maybe sounds like everything that's sort of been thrown out doesn't change the landscape at all.

So let me try to ask a simple question from a group not directly involved, but you're the recipients of it—K through 12. What do we need to fix in K through 12 that might change what you receive in your program, and that's the students?

Mr. Liang.

Mr. LIANG. Thank you for that question, Senator Burr. K–12 is an environment where, I think, people are caged, if you will, to the K–12. So what it means is because of our political system, because of the decisionmaking process, the accountability is for graduation in most K–12 systems. It's not beyond the graduation numbers.

When we look at that—and post-secondary education is not overtly stated in many of the missions of schools and districts. And we have noticed some schools, for instance, in eastern Washington—when they change that dynamic, when they change that mission statement, they actually see a jump in students' performance and students getting into post-secondary education. So I think that's a mindset that needs to be dealt with.

Senator BURR. Let me say that I think Senator Harkin has been one of the most outspoken individuals about the counseling services that we need to provide in the high schools to guide students. I heard almost across the board that there's a failure there, I think, with one exception, and I couldn't distinguish whether that was the college recruitment of the students or whether that was actually implemented within the high school to bring colleges in.

So help me as you go through this. If you can share with me—do we do a successful job in the school system at directing these students to higher education and what the requirements are?

Mr. Griggs, it really troubles me that there could be a school that didn't share with a high school student that you needed an SAT or ACT to actually apply and to be considered. But I do know that's the reality. Hopefully, that's a failure of one school.

Dr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. I think there's a lot changing in what I see in the schools right now in that regard. Schools are very much focusing on college-going much more than they ever were before. Again, I'll take the Milwaukee example because that's one I know really well. Just in the last 5 or 6 years, partly as a result of some of the other Federal push—President Obama's push—they're really taking college-going as a goal and then trailing back to other things they need to get students ready for that.

They increased the standards in Milwaukee recently to make them more in line with college-going standards. And some of the other examples I gave about having these other college access programs—they're inviting us in to do this work on the Promise scholarship. So I see big changes. In New Orleans, I see the same thing. I think in the past it's absolutely right that there has been a failure there. But I do see important improvements going on.

Senator BURR. Dr. Haskins.

Mr. HASKINS. Based on the research, here's what I think the situation is. Kids from low-income families come to the K–12 system already seriously behind. The K–12 system makes them further behind. They don't fix the problem. So this is very discouraging, but I think that's roughly the situation we have now.

We've had a lot of recent research, especially from Sean Reardon at Stanford, showing that even though we have closed the black-white achievement gap, the achievement gap between kids from low-income families and upper-income families has increased at exactly the time when education is really the answer to how you earn more money, and it's the answer to the so-called disappearing middle class and more opportunity in America and so forth.

So we have a big problem. The direct answer to the question is we need to increase literacy as well as the non-cognitive skills that Senator Franken mentioned in order to prepare these kids for college. If we can't do that, we will not be as successful as we could be and we'll continue to have the problems we're having now with increased inequality and a lack of opportunity.

Senator BURR. Ms. Hoyler.

Ms. HOYLER. I just want to point out that so much of college preparation for middle-income families is not provided by the school but is provided by out-of-school experiences, provided by the family. And I think our business community really recognizes that

for low-income students—for example, General Electric, has been very supportive of our efforts to have communities and the business community very much involved in this, because the out-of-school time, the summers, the work experiences these students have, are very critical to their preparation for college and their understanding of college.

So it's not just the K–12 system. I'm not saying the K–12 system isn't a huge partner in this and isn't hugely responsible. But we can't make it the sole responsibility of the K–12 system.

Senator BURR. Mr. Giles.

Mr. GILES. This may be a little controversial, but I think that at some point we need to stop thinking about a K through 12 system and start thinking of a K through 16 system, or some version of that, because a high school diploma is no longer sufficient to support a family. There are States that are experimenting with that.

Vermont is one right now. We just passed a law that requires individualized learning plans for every student, starting in middle school, that includes career and education planning and guarantees every student access to dual enrollment with a post-secondary institution starting their junior and senior year. That's going to be our big experiment.

Part of the value is that we will try and provide feedback to the schools regarding how their students are performing when they're in post-secondary environments so that we can have kind of a self-correcting model, where if students are inadequately prepared to succeed at the community college or the 4-year program, we can take a look at what's happening in the middle school and high school.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Sertich.

Ms. SERTICH. In our rural area, one of the major challenges in our K–12 system that our students experience on a regular basis is lack of rigorous course options. We don't have AP courses. We don't have international baccalaureate courses. Only one of the four high schools I serve has honors courses. And beyond that, sometimes these schools can't even offer physics every year. They don't have pre-calculus classes.

There is an initiative happening in my area, a partnership between the colleges—and TRIO programs have been a part of this process—and the schools districts as well as an economic development agency. It's called Education Innovation Partners. One of the three things that they're trying to do is to have technology across all of the schools in our area so that if Hibbing High School can offer physics every year, then a student in Chisholm High School 5 miles away, who normally wouldn't be able to take a physics class in high school, can take that class via online Web—that interactive classroom with a school down the road. That's one of the really important things.

At one of my target schools that I work with, a couple of years ago there was a cohort that graduated, and I tracked what classes they took and how many students actually got that sort of rigorous course curriculum. Only 39 percent of our target school students graduated with a rigorous course curriculum. And in one of those years, zero low-income students from that school graduated with that, because it is not offered, and they don't know those are the

classes they need to be taking. So that's certainly an issue we see in our K–12 system.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Giles, you said something about going to K through 16. I look upon it differently. It ought to be zero to 12, not K to 12. We must understand that learning begins at birth. The vast formation of both cognitive—and I think I'm speaking correctly here—both cognitive and non-cognitive reasoning begins much earlier in life than kindergarten.

We know that low-income kids without being in any kind of early learning program start as much as 2 years behind, both in literacy and language skills, than those who went to preschool—as they say, preschool. I call it early learning. I would think that if we had universal early learning for all kids, regardless of income, a lot of these problems would be taken care of. Now, that's just one.

Why do rich families stand in line to get their kids in preschool? I can tell you my own experience. My kids went to preschool. We lived in a neighborhood that was mixed. Kids who had money, like my kids, went to preschool. Low-income kids, Hispanics, blacks—they didn't go.

When they went to public school later on, they were ahead. They weren't necessarily any smarter than these kids that didn't go. But they had that—excuse my phrase—head start. So I think we've got to start focusing on that early learning aspect for low-income kids.

The second thing I'll just say is that we're trying to change the K through 12 system from the No Child Left Behind punitive aspects to a college- and career-ready system. Now, what does that mean? That means—what do you need to know, what do you need to have at your senior year in high school in order to go to college without remedial help? And what do you need in your junior year to get to that? What do you need in your sophomore year to get to that? You just keep backing that up all the way.

That's the whole idea behind college- and career-readiness in elementary and secondary education. That's what's in our ESEA bill that we reported out of our committee last year to try to change that dynamic, so at the earliest time, the goal is what do you need at that point in time to be college- and career-ready.

Senator Murray—I'm sorry—has to go to the floor.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MURRAY

Senator MURRAY. Mr. Chairman, I won't take time to ask questions. I'll just say amen to what you just said, and I really appreciate your focus on that and couldn't agree more.

I do have to get over to the floor, but I wanted to thank Mr. Liang from the State of Washington, who has just been a real leader in our State in helping us get the collection data and evaluations so that these programs work. I recognize the tremendous work that he has done.

I really appreciate the focus of this hearing. I think that the more we work in this committee to focus on making sure kids get what they need—I think we have to not just focus on a 4-year degree, but what path it is they need past high school to get those jobs that we all want them to have. It's really important, so I appreciate it very much. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Murray.

Senator Baldwin.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BALDWIN

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity for this dialog and this roundtable. And as Senator Murray leaves, I'm going to let her know that I'm going to ask at least one question relating to your leadership role with the higher education access and success for homeless and foster youth in a moment.

But before I get there, I note that a couple of witnesses have mentioned my home State of Wisconsin. Our State has a long history of participation in TRIO. Marquette University, where Ms. Hoyler spent some time, started participating with the Student Support Services Program in 1969. And the University of Wisconsin Madison is celebrating its 20th year in TRIO programs. Many other institutions have participated. They have produced some really impressive TRIO success stories.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, I'm going to submit a number of those stories for the record, because I think, like Mr. Griggs' testimony, hearing about the experience, what helped and perhaps some constructive criticism and suggestions, is helpful to our committee. They're both moving and informative.

There are two, though, that I would like to share while we're here. One is a member of my own staff, who was a McNair scholar and part of the Educational Opportunity Program at Marquette University. He has shared with me and his colleagues on staff that TRIO truly leveled the playing field for him as a first-generation, low-income college student. He is an integral part of my Senate staff, and that is thanks in no small part to the education he received at Marquette and the support that was provided through the TRIO programs.

Perhaps, though, the best known TRIO success story is Wisconsin's own Congresswoman, Gwen Moore. Gwen started college at Marquette as a single expectant mother on welfare, who could only complete her education with the help of TRIO. She went on to serve in the Wisconsin State Assembly, the Wisconsin State Senate, before her years of service in the U.S. Congress.

[The information referred to follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BALDWIN

Thank you, Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander. Colleges and universities in my State have produced so many TRIO and GEAR UP success stories from Wisconsin, I could literally spend hours sharing their experiences and how these programs changed these students' lives. In this longer statement, I'd like to submit a handful of these Wisconsin success stories for the record:

Tommy C. Walls, Jr.—Marquette University

The TRIO Program have helped me tremendously throughout my high school and college experience. I first became a member of the Upward Bound pre-college programs to help me with academics and life skills and college preparation. I then became accepted at Marquette University's Educational Program. Overall, with out the

TRIO Program I would have not had access to endless opportunity that has helped me grow today! I had the opportunity to participate in the McNair Program research disparities in Urban communities involving crimes of youth and non-violence strategies. I completed an internship with Senator Kohl and also spent 2 weeks in Ghana, Africa, where the Council for Opportunity In Education helped sponsor my trip. I studied Ghana's Government, Democracy and Public Policy. Furthermore, TRIO has helped me so much in my preparation for graduate school, where I have currently been accepted to Saint Louis University and Loyola University's Master of Social Work Programs! I look to eventually earn my Masters and Ph.D. to become a CEO/President of a Non-Profit Youth Development Agency. I would have not had such opportunities if it had not been for the support, professionalism and dedication of my TRIO programs. It had not only made my vision possible, but also any other scholars around the Nation.

Xiong Her—Marquette University

Marquette University's Upward Bound gave me the opportunity to explore colleges and universities around the United States, and it opened my eyes to great opportunities which will help me achieve my dream.

English is my third language, and education is a difficult path, but UB challenged me to move beyond my comfort zone and prepared me to face and experience all the difficulties that are ahead of me. They provided me with extra classes as well as tutors to keep me on track and prepare for my college path.

UB helped me look for my passions, gave me the chance to graduate high school and attend my dream university. The program also taught me how to be an influential leader in my community as well as in the future. UB is my family, and not only have they improved my academic talents but as a whole person with qualities like responsibility and respectful manners.

It's my first year of college, and it is tough and difficult to adjust into college life, but SSS provides me with useful resources which help me to feel less stressed about the college workloads. SSS has given me personal tutors to guide me through my challenging courses. Both SSS and UB staff are willing to stay after their work times to help us, the students, study and to finish class work.

Christian Villanueva—Marquette University

Thanks to McNair I have been presented a wonderful opportunity to be able to attend graduate school and make life decisions that I believed was not realistic prior to the program. Through the program I have gained two nursing mentors that have been essential in my growth as a researcher and future Ph.D. recipient.

EOP has been a blessing to me while being at Marquette. I have the assistance and guidance of wonderful staff that has been supportive and willing to assist me whenever I have been confronted with a dilemma in my personal and educational life. The EOP staffs at Marquette University are amazing people that are a necessity for us to continue to combat the educational disparities in our country.

Monica Purifoy—Marquette University

For every year that I have been enrolled as a student at Marquette University, I have been able to build and develop both my skills and confidence as a student. Every year, my academic success has shown me that, regardless of the culture or demographics of any given institution or community, I can maintain and shine in that environment. The staff of Marquette's Trio programs is responsible for a great deal of this development.

The academic support that I have received from EOP-SSS has been essential to my success at Marquette. Without it, I would not have survived.

Working with Upward Bound and EOP's summer programs as a student counselor has helped me in discovering my passion for working with inner city youth in a school environment. My undergraduate experience has unveiled the potential I have to successfully achieve my aspirations and to go beyond what I thought was my reality.

While working with the EOP-SSS summer program, I was introduced to a staff member of Marquette's graduate school, Dr. Kevin Tate. Through my participation in the McNair Scholars program, we will be working together this summer on a research topic. Dr. Tate is also helping me apply to graduate programs in school counseling.

Toua Thao—University of Wisconsin-Madison

My family escaped from Laos during the Vietnam War to a refugee camp in Thailand. I spent 10 years in the refugee camp without a chance to have a formal education. Life in the camp was hopeless and stressful, not much different from life in a prison. With no other options, I decided to come to the United States with the hope for a better life. I arrived in Madison, Wisconsin, in the winter and had a chance to attend a formal education at Madison West High School. I started to realize that my parents' dream of me being a teacher or doctor could come true as education was accessible here. Although learning a new language and adapting to a new culture at the age of 19 was extremely difficult for me, I knew that education was the key for a better life and an opportunity for future success. I finally graduated from Madison West High School and was admitted to UW-Madison. I was the first person in my family out of 11 children to have the chance and honor to walk during a high school commencement.

I would not have come to nor graduated from UW-Madison if it had not been for TRIO SSS. I graduated from UW-Madison with an Undergraduate degree in International Relations and went on to complete my Graduate degree in Counseling Psychology. As a low-income, academically underprepared, and first generation college student, my academic experience at a large university like UW-Madison was extremely difficult. The campus and class size were big for me. I got lost, cried, and gave up so many times, but TRIO SSS was always there to help and motivate me. My TRIO advisor always checked with me to ensure that my academics were going as well as my physical and emotional health. I had great difficulty with my readings, lectures, assignments, essays, and note taking. Fortunately, with the support and services provided by

TRIO, such as tutoring, mentoring, note taking tactics, advising, courses selection, and study skills, I was able to do well in my classes. One very special and unique quality of TRIO was that the program created and provided a warm and welcoming environment for students. Although the campus is huge, TRIO was a place where I had a sense of belonging. I felt comfortable and welcomed. The accessibility and flexibility of my TRIO advisor and other staff members made a great difference in my academic success. TRIO was like a second home for me. There were staff members, advisors, and students who came from different cultures and backgrounds and that made me feel comfortable. With the help of my TRIO advisor, I also discovered the advantages of the study aboard programs and spent 2 months in China and a year in Thailand. I even returned to Thailand as a graduate student to research how the Thai educational system affects Hmong and other hill—tribes. In addition, I obtained my doctoral degree at Edgewood College. I will always be grateful and appreciative that TRIO has made a huge difference in and provided the opportunity for the success in my life. Therefore, I feel it's a great honor to be able to help others and make a difference in their lives. I once was searching for an accessible educational opportunity and finally found one, it was a long journey.

Consequently, I'd like to see educational opportunities be accessible and available to others as it was to me. TRIO SSS is a significant part of my successes.

Deiadra Gardner—University of Wisconsin-Madison

CeO has provided advocacy for me, a shoulder to cry on and another set of brains to help me figure life out when things get rough. It has been a place for me to go between classes and never get ill—vibes. It's been a place that I can call my own, stretch out my wings, and show my personality 100 percent. It has been the support system I think everyone needs when coming to college.

CeO really brought into focus how important education is and how there are resources out there for your college career to go more smoothly. If students have any questions, concerns, or need clarification on things, they are welcome to come in and ask, and any staff member will ensure the issue gets the attention it deserves. The dedication of the program is remarkable and ensures the ability to assist or get assistance for any of the CeO students.

CeO is like a club or family that you're a member of. Depending on how much you use it, that determines the depth of your connection to the program. If you ever need a place to go, need to study, need to chat with someone, or just need some kind of nourishment (LOL), come to the CeO office and the people there will help, and genuinely care. CeO promotes excelling in one's schoolwork, so the mission and everything that is done is designed around improving students' environments so they can be competitive students.

Africa Lozano—University of Wisconsin-Madison

"Go and get your Educations Worth" no matter what your circumstances are!!! I am originally from Montebello, Cal but moved to Madison, WI when I was 13 years old. I had a very drastic change in weather, climate and most of all, PEOPLE. I went from a predominantly Mexican community in Montebello to an all-white

school in Madison. I attended Edgewood High School, a community that was totally the opposite of my upbringing. Students with high income, parents driving Lexus, Mercedes and much more to offer than my parents who did not have a bachelor's degree but offered me the best support that I could have because without them, I would have not made it as far as I did.

My academics and athletic performance were my tickets into UW-Madison until I met Mr. Kirk Malnor at Edgewood's Edgefest. He was very supportive and eager for me to learn about TRIO Student Support Services (known as CeO). Once I got to learn and hear more about the program, I knew that the program was going to help me with my transition into college and succeed as a doctor. Upon matriculation into UW-Madison, I knew that I wanted to play softball at the collegiate level because it was always a dream of mine to play at a top ten university while pursuing a degree in medicine.

Once I attended UW-Madison, I became very familiar with campus and organizations, and started my social network as an undergrad but, unfortunately I could not be as involved as I wanted to because I was a full-time athlete and student. I had my share of ups and downs while being a woman of color on the softball team but that did not push me away because I was determined to stay and overcome my obstacle as I have all my life growing up. While pursuing my goals and overcoming the many obstacles, I found many outlets like the TRIO program that helped my whole college transition be a more pleasant one. With the many experiences that I had, I soon realized that my passion was working with students who had similar life experiences as myself. I graduated with my bachelors in Human Development Family Studies and Women Studies Certificate.

Due to the student support services program and my determination, I later pursued a degree in Educational Leadership Policy Analysis in Higher Education at UW-Madison because I too wanted to show my appreciation to my parents and community. And most importantly, I wanted to demonstrate that no matter how rough an individual's life is, there is always a way out and people who are willing to help if you make the time. "Hard Work pays off!"

Sarah Axtell—University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Upward Bound

Upward Bound completely changed my life! Without it I never would have had the opportunity to see so many colleges and never would have dreamed of applying to some of the colleges that I did. I was very lucky to have the opportunity to be part of such a great organization.

Amanda Flannery—Ripon College

In 2006 Amanda Flannery entered Ripon College following participation in the USDE TRIO Talent Search-Upward Bound program sponsored through the Crandon, Wisconsin public high school system. Upward Bound identifies and prepares talented but relatively underexposed first generation-low income students for college entry. On one of Amanda's Upward Bound visits to Ripon College, she learned about the next level of TRIO programs operating at the Ripon called, Student Support Services, which guides and supports similar students through college to graduation, offering a

wide variety of academic and cultural information and services. Amanda was an extremely motivated individual and took full advantage of the SSS program and achieved Dean's List honors in every semester during her Ripon undergraduate career. During Amanda's sophomore year at Ripon, Student Support Services applied for and received a 5-year TRIO McNair Scholar's graduate school preparation grant from the United States Department of Education and Amanda, with a degree in anthropology and history, was accepted in to the program following her application and interview. One of the major components of McNair is giving scholars the opportunity to undertake research with a faculty mentor, which Amanda completed as she researched how collaborative efforts between students and the community was the most valuable way to educate both groups about archeological investigation. In the summer following graduation from Ripon College with honors, Amanda participated in archeological work for the State of Wisconsin and also participated in archeological field work at the University of Southern Illinois before being accepted for graduate study under a fellowship at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Anthropology, with an emphasis in historical archeology leading also toward a certification in museum studies. Amanda graduated from UW-Milwaukee in December 2013 and is currently employed in a public library inventorying their local history collections and facilitating public programming.

Senator BALDWIN. The stories are powerful. The statistics are also very, very powerful. And not to keep on picking on Marquette, but the Student Support Services Program's average 6-year graduation rate is 67 percent compared with a national graduation rate for first-generation, low-income students of 11 percent.

The University of Wisconsin McNair scholars are similarly remarkable. In the past few years, 100 percent of the McNair scholars completed a bachelor's degree, and 85 percent have been accepted into graduate programs, which is really encouraging and impressive.

I wanted to say just a couple of things about GEAR UP. In preparation for this hearing, we asked some of our stakeholders across the State of Wisconsin for feedback, not only on the successes, but also where there is room for improvement. Along with the success stories, we heard numerous—and I'll submit them for the record for the committee, also—ideas like providing greater support for advanced placement test preparation and increasing minority teacher recruitment.

I'd love to hear—and if you want to submit ideas in followup—ways in which we might improve GEAR UP successes and opportunities to grow the program's impact. Does anyone want to jump in now?

[No response.]

Well, then, let me jump on to the other topic I indicated that I wanted to address.

Mr. Griggs, you talked in your testimony about the unique barriers you faced, and, certainly, we know that homeless youth and youth in foster care encounter an incredible set of unique barriers to accessing higher education. I am proud to be a supporter and cosponsor with my colleague from Washington State, Senator Mur-

ray, of legislation that will help remove some of the barriers that homeless and foster youth have and help provide what they need to succeed.

I do have questions, however, about how well our current college access programs are serving homeless and foster youth and other people who might be the most disadvantaged among those that we're serving with TRIO programs. So I guess I'd like to hear your perspective on how we're doing there and certainly from others on the panel on what we need to do to ramp up services, particularly to homeless youth and foster care students.

Mr. GRIGGS. Well, from my own personal perspective, growing up as a ward of the State in Illinois—my birth mom lives in Wisconsin. She's in Milwaukee. Being a ward of the State from the age of 9 until I was 21 was a challenging process. And TRIO programs in themselves allowed me the opportunity to have someone that I could communicate with that could give me not only just guidance from an educational perspective, but also guidance on life and where I needed to go and how I needed to get there.

When you're going through the system, as I like to call it, as a 9-year-old living in a shelter for a few years, bouncing from a group home, and then living with multiple different families, you get a lot of different advice. All of it isn't good, because a lot of times, you get placed in homes that only want you there because a stipend comes with you, and they're not providing you with the access that you need to be successful, because a lot of times, they can't see past the next day.

TRIO professionals were there to give me that guidance past the next day, to say, "Look at your future and see where you could be. What do you want to be when you grow up? Where do you see yourself?" And without that type of mentoring and guidance, I definitely would not be able to sit here and have this conversation with you intelligently because I would not have gained the necessary skills at a younger age to be able to have a dialog like this.

Ms. HOYLER. Our concern as the organization that represents TRIO programs is that services provided to students in foster care or aging out of the foster care system be continuing. Our experience is that students in foster care get a lot of stop-and-go services, and that when we are successful in TRIO in serving students in foster care, it is because of the long-term relationship.

A program like Talent Search, which Mr. Griggs was in, is a low-intensity program. It costs, on average, less than $450 per student. And in order to make that effective broadly, we have to think about it. We can't just say, "Well, let's require all Talent Search programs to serve students in foster care."

In terms of homeless youth, many times our programs learn that students are homeless after they are serving them, because high school students and college students move from friend to friend or uncle to aunt to neighbor. We are serving many, many homeless students, and we definitely want to serve this population, but we want to make sure that the regulatory requirements that we serve particular schools or particular areas don't limit our ability to do that, and that everything possible is done to make sure that we can have long-term relationships with these young people.

Another thing that I think is an important distinction to make is that many young people in foster care are not in what we kind of conceive are in foster homes. They're oftentimes in group homes. They're in an institutionalized setting. The numbers in terms of transition to adult life are really awful, and so we have to have people that are really able to work those systems, with the expertise to work those systems. It takes a lot of expertise, as Mr. Griggs said. It is complex. It is not just good will, so we want to do it right.

Mr. GILES. I want to echo what Mr. Griggs and Ms. Hoyler said. I think that there are just two concrete things that I'd like to suggest. One of the advantages of the GEAR UP program—and we administer both GEAR UP and Talent Search in my agency—is that the cohort model allows us to serve a broader range of students.

One of the challenges that we faced—we actually took over administration of the Chafee ETV Grant just because the silos between human services and education and college access were so great that we felt this was our responsibility to start administering that program. So very concretely, the ETV program, the Chafee program, doesn't have enough college access counseling, but it has some money.

Folks in human services are not trained or prepared to provide the support that the TRIO and GEAR UP programs provide. So I think that's one area where we could actually make some concrete changes that would make the money that we're already investing significantly more valuable.

The other thing that we started doing is working with caseworkers to actually train them, at least in rudimentary career and college planning services, so that they can also start to reach some of the students that we're not getting.

Mr. HARRIS. I want to talk a little bit about some findings from the Upward Bound experiment that I think pertain to what you're saying. One of the things we did is we looked at what the program operators in Upward Bound report about who they would screen out of the program. And they are statutorily required to serve low-income, first-generation students.

But it looked like in the surveys that they would say that students who have high rates of absences and who don't have high college expectations and have more behavioral difficulties are likely to be screened out and not included in the program. I think a lot of the students you're talking about, homeless students and foster care students, are going to be the kinds of students who get screened out in that process.

My guess is the perception from the program operator's standpoint is that they see students in that situation who don't end up making it to college at very high rates. But I think that's missing the point. The point of these programs should be for whom are they likely to increase the odds most? How can we help these students the most?

It might be that only 20 percent of those students who are in the homeless category end up making it to college. But that's going to be higher than it is without the program. So I think when we start thinking about it that way, and if we can do more in the way the

rules are set to encourage the programs to include those students, that would be a big help.

They're also under the gun from the regulations to make sure they meet performance standards, to make sure a certain percentage of their students served are making it on to college. So it implicitly discourages them from bringing in students who have a very low probability of getting in. Something would have to be done in the regulations to encourage that on a widespread basis. And given the results we're finding, it suggests that those are the students who will benefit the most.

Mr. LIANG. In Washington, we recognize that the foster children are really an integral part of our services. We work with children's services to get messages—the early awareness and also other support for the foster care children. We have a summit annually to work together as partners with nonprofit organizations and with children's services to provide services.

Some of the services are delivered through what Scott mentioned, the cohort model of GEAR UP, so students in the GEAR UP cohort would receive services, in particular. Because of some restrictions, we sometimes cannot identify who they are, but we're able to provide a more blanket service to the cohorts or through the cohort service.

This is one of the three support areas that we're thinking about—academic services, social support services, and financial aid services. And especially for foster children, the social support services is most important.

The other thing—I want to go back, just for your information, to Wisconsin GEAR UP. Wisconsin State GEAR UP is one of the members of the 15-State consortium for college- and career-readiness evaluation. So Bonnie Dockery is a leader in that area. She just retired, unfortunately. We will miss her. But Wisconsin is one of the members.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm going to call on Senator Franken who wants to have an intervention.

Senator FRANKEN. I just want to make a short comment about foster kids. We had some testimony from a young woman named Kayla from Minnesota that actually—I remember how struck you were by her testimony, Mr. Chairman. These foster kids very often are changing foster homes very frequently. It's very common that they'll have 9, 10, 11 foster homes throughout their childhood.

It's important to keep them in the same school, or give them that option, because, very often, the one constant in their lives is the school. So in some of our reauthorization bills that have passed through this committee are provisions to make sure that kids who are in foster care, even if they change school districts—well, when they change school districts with a new foster parent, that they're able to stay at the school they're in.

I think that continuity—especially when it might be a teacher or a counselor or someone else who is the one adult who is being constant in their life. That is just so important.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Sertich.

Ms. SERTICH. Yes, thank you.

Senator Franken, I'd like to respond to you briefly, and then I'd love to come back to Senator Baldwin's question about the proposed language regarding homeless and foster youth.

The TRIO programs are a constant in our students' lives, and even if they change to another district, oftentimes, it's within the geographic region that they live in. So we work as hard as possible to continue serving those students. Even if they go to a high school that's 25 miles away, we find ways to serve them and to help them so that they have that continuity. Thank you for bringing that up.

And, Senator Baldwin, I've seen at least a version of the proposed language regarding homeless and foster youth. I'd like to speak a little bit to the financial aid piece of it. I've seen some language that says that TRIO programs can designate students as homeless. Otherwise, there are other hoops to jump through on a FAFSA to be able to be eligible for certain things because of your homeless status.

If TRIO programs were allowed to have that power because of our relationships with the students and knowledge of their situation, that would certainly remove barriers for those students to get their FAFSA filled out correctly and in a timely manner.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Murphy.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MURPHY

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all of you. This has been really wonderful to hear. I just want to make two very quick comments and then a question. First, I just want to underscore how important this program is, especially for families where English is not the primary language. I've been long involved with our TRIO and GEAR UP programs in Connecticut, and like Senator Baldwin, I got a lot of input in preparation for this hearing.

A lot of the testimonials were very similar to this one from Jessica Coraizaca, who said,

> "As a first-generation student going to college, I did not know anything about the process. My parents did not know about the college process, and their English skills were not too advanced. That's why I will always thank my advisors at Upward Bound for helping me develop the skills that were needed to survive in college and for helping me with an application process."

The second thing I just wanted to mention is that one of our panelists repeated what I believe to be some mythology that has developed around the effectiveness of Head Start. I am, along with Senator Franken, a member of the Paul Tough caucus, who reminds us in that book that though there is a study that says that on certain academic skills, the advancement that happens in Head Start can disappear by third grade, most or all of the long-term longitudinal studies of kids who participate in Head Start show that on a host of long-term measures, whether it be how many of them go to college, measures of their physical health, do they end up in trouble with the law, all tell you that because Head Start is build-

ing character as well as actually helping kids with academic skills, there are tremendous long-term benefits.

My question, though, is off of Senator Burr's question. He asked a great simple question, which is what can K through 12 do better. My question, at its essence, is pretty simple. What can colleges do better to help at-risk kids once they walk in the door?

What we know is that there is a really wide divergence of retention rates from college to college. Some schools get it, and they identify kids who need a little bit of help early on, wrap their arms around them, and help them. And other schools, frankly, are not doing the work necessary to help those kids. And there's all sorts of new innovative technological tools that can help schools identify kids who in that first 6 months just aren't measuring up.

So I guess my question to you all is twofold. What, in your experience, can colleges and institutions of higher education do better to help your students once they come in the door? And, second, are we doing enough within GEAR UP and Upward Bound and TRIO to help students who are applying to schools identify those schools that are actually going to provide the support services and identify the schools that have pretty low retention rates and might not be the best place for kids to end up?

Ms. Sertich.

Ms. SERTICH. Yes, thank you. When we are looking with our Upward Bound students at college choices, one of the first things that we do—and, obviously, we know off the top of our head in Minnesota which colleges have them. But does the college they're looking at have a student support services program, because the TRIO SSS programs do the intensive advising. They provide tutoring. They, at the community college level, help with looking at transfer options for students who are seeking a bachelor's degree.

So they're really critical programs in helping the students you're talking about, who gets there, but then what?

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Giles.

Mr. GILES. I think that, really, there are kind of two things going on right now that I think are interesting. Within the GEAR UP program, there are two different kinds of grants. There are partnership grants and State grants. The partnership grants are really housed at institutions of higher education, and they're doing some really interesting things to work back into the high schools and middle schools in their communities and work with those students from middle school through high school, and then continue to support them once they enter their particular campuses.

The second thing I would say—I just want to echo what Ms. Sertich said. One of the challenges for these students is that we have provided them a great deal of support, and they may have been part of a group that has gone through this process together.

There's some experiments that we're engaged in right now. It's called the Seventh Year Program in GEAR UP, where we're continuing to follow that group of students for that extra year. And I think part of the power of this is that if we can have a group of students that have been together in some context with common experiences—this is all new to them in the same ways—and we can wrap some of the support services around them, we expect that we're going to see much higher continuation rates.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Hoyler.

Ms. HOYLER. There are a lot of factors in higher education right now that work against institutions wanting low-income students and wanting those students to succeed. The whole ranking system, the financing systems—there's many factors that are large factors.

This committee's leadership on the importance of low-income students being successful in all categories of higher education is really, really important, because, ultimately, it is a matter of will. If college presidents and Governors and Senators want low-income students to graduate from our institutions of higher education, they will graduate. And if it is not a priority for the country, they won't.

Senator MURPHY. Dr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. I have a few observations on this. I think there's another effort going on right now to change the performance measures for colleges that I think would change the incentives a bit to encourage the colleges more. But in terms of specific programs, I've come across a few that I think make a lot of sense.

I think one general theme is that there needs to be more kind of active involvement of the colleges in tracking students who are having difficulties rather than passive. So you could have services available, but students are generally not going to avail themselves of those. They're not going to seek it out.

The problem with the way colleges are set up, unlike K–12 schools, is that they don't have an attendance system, per se. That's the professor's responsibility. So you don't necessarily see right away when a student stops showing up unless the professor reaches out to somebody at the university. Tulane actually has a program like that where they actively remind the faculty to let them know if there's a problem so that they can intervene.

There's an interesting program at a community college in Iowa, actually, Des Moines Community College, where they have a call center, and if somebody starts off in classes and stops showing up, they call them and ask, "What's going on that we can help you with?" And if they started, and they're attending, and then they don't enroll the next semester, they call them and ask, "What's going on? Is there anything we can help you with?"

So I think it's really cheap. It doesn't cost a lot to do something like that, and I think it's more a matter of the change in perspective at the college level. But in having a more active engagement, I think part of the perception is that these are adults now. They're 18. They're on their own. They have to figure it out. And I think for a lot of these students, that's not going to work.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Warren.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR WARREN

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask another question about the GEAR UP and TRIO programs. As I understand it, these are really the only significant programs that really aim toward completion and access issues. And if these programs were running perfectly, and you were all the way out at the edges of what you were able to accomplish—you get about 800,000 kids through in a year—I have a scale question.

By the year 2020, we know that about 65 percent of all jobs are going to require some kind of post-secondary education. If we stay on our current trend line, we're going to be about 5 million young people short of meeting that goal. We also know our current college completion rates. We've got about 55 percent completing within 6 years.

So this tells me we've got to get more people into school, post-secondary. We've got to get more of them out, that is, all the way through. And I'll just make the note off to the side that it has a powerful impact on things like whether or not they can pay their student loans. So all these pieces intersect.

The question I have is a scale question. The direction that we're headed says we're going to fall short in getting the kind of results that you are working toward. So what ideas do you have for how we can scale up? And we have to think about this in a cost-effective way. Are there specific things that you can identify where it's something we can scale up cheaply? Are there other approaches we should be using? That's really where I'd like to start this.

Ms. HOYLER. TRIO programs have two components, access programs and completion retention programs. If you take the completion and retention, however, as they've been administered, the grant sizes are equal regardless of setting, based on historical issues. However, if you take institutions that are serving tens of thousands of low-income students, they may have the same size of a grant and the same capacity as an institution that is serving or enrolling 600 low-income, first-generation students. That issue of institutional capacity needs to be looked at if you want to scale up.

The same thing is true at the pre-college level. If you're serving schools where 90 percent of the students are low-income, first-generation students, there's issues of scale where we could serve the whole school at a lower cost per student than we—and now we're not serving the whole school.

I would defer to some of my GEAR UP colleagues. But one of the problems I have with GEAR UP is—and I think the TRIO community does—because of the cohort model, you might serve a class of ninth graders, but then the next class of ninth graders doesn't get served. And in our view, you need a continuing Federal commitment. If you're going to be in a school, you should have that continuing Federal commitment. So that would be a question that I think needs to be explored.

Senator WARREN. Very interesting.

Ms. Sertich.

Ms. SERTICH. Just to speak to that scale and to speak to who we serve, how many we serve, in my area—and I'm in rural northern Minnesota—I serve four schools, and 48 percent of the school population that I serve are eligible for free and reduced lunch. So they are TRIO eligible students at these high schools, and that doesn't even take into consideration whether they have first-generation status or not. So it's a larger number than that. My grant serves 15 percent of the students in my target schools, and more than half of them qualify for TRIO programs.

Senator WARREN. So I'm hearing two things. I'm hearing allocate the grant dollars differently or at least look into whether we want

to allocate differently. And the second one is you've got to put more dollars into it. Fair enough?

Ms. SERTICH. Yes. And within the programs themselves, we need money to match the services that are in legislation for us to provide and that we agree that we need to provide. But we're not able to fulfill all of those to the limits, as you said, which we would like to do, and those, obviously, would get better results if we were able to do to the limits—what we have written into legislation.

Ms. HOYLER. Can I clarify what I said? I'm not saying that we should take money from somebody and give it to somebody else. I'm just saying that where you have a huge number of unserved individuals, you need to look at how to expand your ability to serve those unserved individuals at colleges, particularly in terms of retention services, and in high schools, particularly when you're serving only a small percentage of the students that you're serving. But to take it from a high school so that no—I'm not saying you take it from somebody else.

Senator WARREN. I understand your point. But we do have both questions on the table. I fully understand the notion just to say let's put more money into the program. But we're also going to have to find some scale here. It's not just going to be about pumping more dollars—I mean, it's just not going to happen. We may get some—willing to fight for it. But there are allocation questions that we're going to have to address.

Mr. Giles, you wanted to add?

Mr. GILES. Yes. I just wanted to add a piece to that, because I support both points that were made with an additional one. I think that there's something we need to explore further.

One of the things that GEAR UP allows us to do is work with that cohort model, where we can adopt a whole school. And I think that to your scale point, in addition to allocating the resources, the question is how you embed the work that we all do in the education system so that we're able to amplify the expertise that we have by training teachers, training school counselors, training everybody within that institution from the leadership on down to support our work.

Senator WARREN. Mr. Liang.

Mr. LIANG. In terms of scaling up, definitely, there's a dollar issue. In the 2011 GEAR UP competition, there is about a million students that are not served because of the reduction of the funding.

But in Washington, what we're doing now is we have just—by the request of the Governor and the legislature, our agency led the study of a roadmap for the next 10 years. And we find that our goal matches what you described in 2020, and we're saying in 2023, we're going to have 70 percent of students with credentials.

So we're aiming high, and in order to scale it up—Washington State is the only State that I know of to put actual money into GEAR UP, and that could be a partnership in that way. Institutions could be a partnership if they recognize the value of the GEAR UP and TRIO services. So those are all potential ways to scale it up.

Senator WARREN. That's an interesting point.

Dr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. A few observations. At a fairly general level, you're talking about scale, and you're talking about getting millions of students to graduate. I think the only way to reach a goal like that is really through the community colleges.

The community colleges are important for several reasons. One is they are less expensive than the 4-year colleges. Second, the kinds of jobs that are available are the ones that are more targeted toward 2-year graduates right now. And that's where the students are in vast numbers.

You're not going to move large numbers of students from being high school graduates to 4-year college graduates. But you can move students from being high school graduates to 2-year college graduates much more readily. So I think having a focus on the 2-year colleges is important.

I had a paper, actually, that the Brookings Institution published a few years ago on this, on things we might do at the community college level to encourage greater success there. This included things like just simply basic stuff, like reporting the persistence rates, you know, publicly reporting those things and having some sort of a report card to put a little bit more pressure on getting students through those programs.

Senator WARREN. Thank you.

Dr. Haskins.

Mr. HASKINS. If we think that we're going to have a shortage of people with degrees to meet the needs of our economy, the first place to look, I think, is low-income kids. Because they're less likely to go to school, and they're much more likely to drop out, the drop-out rate is more like two-thirds from 4-year institutions for kids from low-income families.

And I think the most effective way to make sure that those kids don't drop out at that rate, thereby increasing the number of people with degrees and increasing the efficiency of our investments, is to improve their performance during the K–12 years. That's the main reason they drop out. They're not prepared. The remedial programs don't work.

So we lose a lot of money that we invest in those kids. If we can improve that by improving the K–12 education and preschool as well, we'll do better, and we'll meet the need and do it more efficiently.

Senator WARREN. All right. Good. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Warren.

This has been a good discussion. Mr. Liang brought up something that I wanted to kind of close on, and that is ways in which maybe TRIO and GEAR UP can partner with other entities. These have always been essentially Federal programs. My staff has informed me that Washington State is the first State to actually partner on the GEAR UP program.

But we haven't seen that in TRIO—even with institutions. I mean, the institutions that TRIO students go to benefit, obviously, from this program. I'm wondering if institutions shouldn't be somehow folded in to partner with some of these TRIO programs.

Ms. HOYLER. I think at the college level—the retention programs and student support services—about 40 percent of the institutions that host student support services programs contribute funding.

The CHAIRMAN. They do?

Ms. HOYLER. They do. However, I think that the recommendation that you are considering is a very important one that we should look into. How do we incentivize both States and institutions to better support college access and success programs?

The CHAIRMAN. Did you say to me that 40 percent of the institutions provide some funding for support services?

Ms. HOYLER. That's correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Why don't all of them?

Ms. HOYLER. That's an excellent question.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm going to ask my staff to find out which institutions make up that 40 percent, and why they are doing it, and how much they provide, and what about some of the other institutions. I don't understand that. I should find out about that. Maybe we can figure out some way of also incentivizing—maybe in our reauthorization incentivizing States to come up and support these TRIO programs.

It's been my experience here that if you get States involved with the Federal Government, you usually get more than just one and one equals two. You get one and one equals three. You just have a good multiplier effect when you get the institutions more involved in that.

Did you have anything else you wanted to add?

Senator ALEXANDER. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there anything else anybody wanted to add to this before we adjourn?

[No response.]

Again, I thank you all very much for being here. Thank you for this discussion. I hope that we can continue to be in touch with you as we develop our Higher Education reauthorization bill, and that my staff can continue to be in touch with each of you for suggestions, advice, things like that.

With that, again, I thank you all very much for being here and providing some good insight into these programs.

Thank you. The committee will stand adjourned.

[Additional material follows.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREA VENEZIA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER ED. LEADERSHIP & POLICY, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO, CA

It is an honor to be asked to provide testimony regarding the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. I will focus my comments on pre-college outreach programs. When these Federal pre-college outreach programs started, they were focused on access to college, not on *success* in college. Now we are asking them to ensure that students will succeed in college.

Based on current knowledge, we do not know how to replace the programs in ways I am confident will be more successful. The Brookings/Princeton proposal lists the following strategies as having some evidence of success: mentoring, summer programs, tutoring, help with financial aid, help with academic preparation, involving parents, and so forth. Those are the strategies that the current programs employ, so I am unclear about what new programs would be asked to do differently in terms of the heart of their work with students.

There is evidence that current programs are succeeding; such data are even cited in the Brookings/Princeton proposal. For example, Upward Bound students who did not expect to complete a 4-year degree in their middle school years enrolled in college and finished their degrees more often than did similar students who did not participate in Upward Bound. That is precisely what we want.

It's hard to compile useful evidence when we're comparing apples and oranges. We need greater clarity about:

1. ***Outcomes.*** The field has not clearly defined which outcomes it is trying to achieve. The proposal suggests college enrollment and completion. There are also well-documented predictive milestones regarding college graduation, such as non-delayed entry into college, earning 20 credits in the first year, entering college without needing remediation, passing certain gatekeeper classes, and continuous and full-time enrollment. Monitoring student progress on such measures could help programs do course corrections and would help with evaluations.

2. ***Students.*** Do we want to serve the students who can fairly easily tip over into a "success zone" with some additional supports, do we want to help the Nation's most underserved students, or do we strive for a middle ground? Those require different strategies and a different kind of intensity regarding the interventions.

3. ***Strategies.*** While there are common terms being used—mentoring, tutoring, etc.—there is little consistency in how they are implemented, and there is little information about the basic principles that underlie sound practice. For example, is tutoring once a week for an hour sufficient? Or should programs embed tutoring into courses so that students receive daily supports? It is impossible to evaluate the effect of tutoring if the implementation of that practice varies across sites. Finally, ensuring that these programs offer interventions *through* college seems critical, if college completion is the goal.

There are two other important issues I'd like to mention. The proposal focuses just on academic preparation. We know that academic preparation is the #1 indicator regarding college success. But we are learning that many students are not able to learn academics at high levels because they do not have the skills to be able to calm down, focus, bounce back in the face of adversity, organize effectively, and so forth. We're starting to see that leading with academics might not succeed until students are ready to learn academics at the levels required for post-secondary readiness.

Second, the proposal appears to take a programmatic approach. There is evidence that students need a systemic/comprehensive approach—not just a program-based/siloed approach, especially for the big lift required to help students get ready to succeed after high school. How would the new program be integrated into existing structures (schools, communities)?

Let's support existing networks and leverage knowledge from those networks; allow for new networks to be created; support experimentation within clear parameters; research and send crystal clear messages about who to serve, what works when serving them, for how long and at what level of intensity, and which metrics should be used; employ the best **qualitative** and quantitative methods at our disposal so that we not only know "what" is happening, but we also know "why" and "how"; and help these programs succeed at new levels.

Thank you.

HON. ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.,
U.S. SENATE,
WASHINGTON, DC 20510,
January 16, 2014.

Hon. TOM HARKIN, *Chairman,*
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

CHAIRMAN HARKIN: Thank you for holding today's important hearing, "Strengthening Federal Access Programs to Meet 21st Century Needs: A Look at TRIO and GEAR UP." Please accept this letter from Congressman Fattah as part of my statement for record.

Sincerely,

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.,
U.S. Senator.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, DC 20515,
January 16, 2014.

Hon. TOM HARKIN, *Chairman,*
Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER, *Ranking Member,*
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
428 Dirksen Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

CHAIRMAN HARKIN AND RANKING MEMBER ALEXANDER: I write in continued support of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). Signed into law by President Clinton in October 1998, GEAR UP has positively impacted the lives of students of all ethnic and racial backgrounds throughout 49 States and the U.S. territories. To date, the program has served approximately 12 million students, with an average of 700,000 low-income students a year.

The proven model starts early in high-poverty middle schools and follows students through high school and into their first year of college. Incorporating scholarship funds, Advanced Placement classes, financial literacy, and college visits, GEAR UP builds college-going cultures in schools where even high school graduation cannot be taken for granted. A distinguishing characteristic of the program, GEAR UP serves all students in a grade (or cohort) understanding that all students possess the potential to succeed academically.

Recognizing the benefits of this program, the New America Foundation, in their *Rebalancing Resources and Incentives in Federal Student Aid* report last year, called GEAR UP the "most promising" program "aimed at raising the college aspirations and improving the academic preparation of disadvantaged students" and called for "triple funding for GEAR UP." Although short of triple funding, the program will receive a $15.2 million increase in funding for fiscal year 2014.

I wish to thank you for your support of this vital HEA program over the years, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss ways in which to make it better. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jared Bass in my office at 202–225–4001 or jared.bass@mail.house.gov.

Very truly yours,

CHAKA FATTAH,
Member of Congress.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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