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IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION FOR LOW-INCOME AND FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION FOR LOW–INCOME AND FIRST–GENERATION STUDENTS

Thursday, April 30, 2015
U.S. House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training,
Committee on Education and the Workforce,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Virginia Foxx [chairwoman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Foxx, Curbelo, Allen, Hinojosa, Jeffries, Adams, DeSaulnier, and Polis.

Also present: Representative Scott.

Staff present: Lauren Aronson, Press Secretary; Alex Azer, Intern; Janelle Belland, Coalitions and Members Services Coordinator; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Nancy Locke, Chief Clerk; Brian Melnyk, Professional Staff Member; Daniel Murner, Deputy Press Secretary; Brian Newell, Communications Director; Jenny Prescott, Legislative Assistant; Alex Ricci, Legislative Assistant; Mandy Schaumburg, Education Deputy Director and Senior Counsel; Emily Slack, Professional Staff Member; Alissa Strawcutter, Deputy Clerk; Tylease Alli, Minority Clerk/Intern and Fellow Coordinator; Austin Barbera, Minority Staff Assistant; Eamonn Collins, Minority Education Policy Advisor; Denise Forte, Minority Staff Director; Tina Hone, Minority Education Policy Director and Associate General Counsel; Tracie Sanchez, Minority Education Policy Fellow.

Chairwoman FOXX. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training will come to order.

Good morning, and welcome to today's subcommittee hearing.

I would like to thank our witnesses for joining us to discuss strategies for improving postsecondary access and completion for low-income and first-generation students. We appreciate the opportunity to learn from you as Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act.

This is a very personal issue for me. As someone who grew up in extreme poverty, I know firsthand what it takes to earn a degree

in difficult circumstances as well as what that degree means for one's opportunity for advancement.

Some of the most rewarding experiences I have had as an educator involved helping disadvantaged students overcome obstacles to reach their goals and achieve success. Fortunately, I have lots of stories like that.

The Education and Workforce Committee has held more than a dozen hearings about how to strengthen America's higher education system for all those who choose to pursue a degree or credential, regardless of age, background, or circumstances.

Research shows students who attain advanced levels of education are more likely to succeed in today's economy. For example, students who earn an associate's degree are expected to earn 27 percent more than their peers with a high school diploma over the course of a lifetime.

For many students, however, the idea of graduating feels like a distant dream. Higher cost, confusing financial aid system, and insufficient academic preparation disproportionately deter low-income and first-generation students from accessing and completing a higher education.

Recognizing the challenges facing these students, the federal government invests in numerous programs geared toward identifying and supporting disadvantaged students and the institutions that serve them. In addition to providing students need-based financial assistance such as Pell Grants, the federal government also provides early outreach and support services to help students progress from middle school through college.

Programs such as GEAR UP and Upward Bound receive more than $1 billion of taxpayer dollars to support tutoring, family financial counseling, internships, research opportunities, and other preparatory and motivational services, all with the goal of improving access for low-income and first-generation students.

And our efforts don't stop there. Because improving the education outcomes for disadvantaged students is an important priority, the federal government directly supports institutions that focus on serving underrepresented students in an effort to help them complete a higher education.

While these efforts are well intentioned, there is a growing concern they are not reaching their goals. For example, according to a study published earlier this year by one of our witnesses, Dr. Laura Perna, the percentage of low-income students who have attained a bachelor's degree has increased by just 3 percent since 1970. By comparison, the percentage of the wealthiest students who attained a bachelor's degree has increased by 40 percent.

In other words, despite the federal government's growing investment in access and completion programs over the last 5 decades, graduation rates for the most disadvantaged students have barely budged. We have a responsibility to students, families, and taxpayers to ensure all of our spending in higher education deliver the intended results. Understanding how to strengthen these efforts for low-income and first-generation students is why our witnesses are here today.

As we work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, we want to learn about your efforts to pioneer new strategies and study the

effectiveness of existing strategies so that more disadvantaged students can achieve the dream of a higher education.

With that, I now recognize my ranking member, Congressman Hinojosa, for his opening remarks.

[The statement of Chairwoman Foxx follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training

I'd like to thank our witnesses for joining us to discuss strategies for improving postsecondary access and completion for low-income and first-generation students. We appreciate the opportunity to learn from you as Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act.

This is a very personal issue for me. As someone who grew up in extreme poverty, I know firsthand what it takes to earn a degree in difficult circumstances as well as what that degree means for one's opportunity for advancement. Some of the most rewarding experiences I have had as an educator involved helping disadvantaged students overcome obstacles to reach their goals and achieve success.

The Education and the Workforce Committee has held more than a dozen hearings about how to strengthen America's higher education system for all those who choose to pursue a degree or credential – regardless of age, background, or circumstances.

Research shows students who attain advanced levels of education are more likely to succeed in today's economy. For example, students who earn an associate's degree are expected to earn 27 percent more than their peers with a high school diploma over the course of a lifetime.

For many students, however, the idea of graduating feels like a distant dream. Higher costs, a confusing financial aid system, and insufficient academic preparation disproportionately deter low-income and first-generation students from accessing and completing a higher education.

Recognizing the challenges facing these students, the federal government invests in numerous programs geared toward identifying and supporting disadvantaged students and the institutions that serve them. In addition to providing students need-based financial assistance, such as Pell Grants, the federal government also provides early outreach and support services to help students progress from middle school through college.

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We have a responsibility to students, families, and taxpayers to ensure all of our investments in higher education deliver the intended results. Understanding how to strengthen these efforts for low-income and first-generation students is why our witnesses are here today. As we work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, we want to learn about your efforts to pioneer new strategies and study the effectiveness of existing strategies so that more disadvantaged students can achieve the dream of a higher education.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx.

Today's hearing will focus on how our nation can improve college access and completion for low-income and first-generation college students. I want to join the chairwoman in welcoming our wit-

nesses, Dr. Michelle Cooper, Dr. Charles Alexander, Dr. Laura Perna, and Dr. Joe May—and I am proud to say, from my home state of Texas.

Preparing all students for good, family-sustaining jobs and careers and a bright future must be a guiding principle for HEA reauthorization. A highly skilled 21st century workforce is key to strengthening our nation's economy and to reducing income inequality and poverty.

The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce found that 63 percent of all jobs will require workers with at least some postsecondary education by 2018. If our nation is going to compete in the global economy we must be sure that all these students are reaching their full potential and obtaining postsecondary education.

Low-income and first-generation students face substantial hurdles in applying to college and receiving financial aid they need. Too often, they enter unprepared and they struggle to persist in their studies and ultimately graduate.

Meanwhile, college costs have continued to rise while student debt now tops $1.2 trillion.

First-generation students like myself are older, more likely to be independent students and to have families of their own. They are more likely to be enrolled part-time and to withdraw and reenroll over and over again the course of their education.

First-generation students are most likely to be enrolled in associate degree programs, and many transfer between community colleges and 4-year institutions over the course of their education. This process needs to be seamless so time and money are not wasted retaking coursework.

We also know that too many students enter postsecondary education unprepared for college-level coursework. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2011 through 2012, 36 percent of college students whose parents had a high school diploma or less reported needing to take remedial coursework, compared to only 28 percent of students whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Forty percent of Pell Grant recipients need to take remedial courses to improve their basic skills. Unfortunately, according to Complete College America, 70 percent of students who begin in remedial math never enroll in the next level college course.

While we need to bolster our K–12 system to ensure that students are entering college prepared, we should also encourage innovative practices to increase success rates. Instead of prerequisite remedial courses, some institutions are experimenting with co-requisites, where students enroll in college-level courses but also take an additional support class or stay for extra tutoring after class.

MSIs, which are minority-serving institutions, enroll and graduate significant proportions of minority students and play a vital role in higher education for low-income and first-generation students. Through innovative practices, many are boosting graduation rates.

Between the years of 2000 and 2012, University of Texas at El Paso, an HSI in my home state of Texas, increased the total number of undergraduate degrees awarded by 79 percent while enrollment only grew by 26 percent.

So what did they do? At U.T. Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research, and Planning created a data tool for deans to track students' term-to-term enrollment status, allowing advisors to contact students who do not reenroll and help them get back on track. We need to maintain strong funding levels for these institutions like El Paso's University of Texas.

Pell Grants are another critical tool to keep college in reach for these students. Just last week I introduced four bills—H.R. 1956, H.R. 1957, H.R. 1958, and H.R. 1959—with our former colleague, Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii. She introduced her legislation that mirrors mine last week, as I did.

That, ladies and gentlemen, will strengthen Pell and restore the summer Pell program, which has—which was key in helping students graduate on time and with much less debt. I hope this committee, members on both sides of the aisle, will approve these bills when they come before us.

Finally, federal investments in GEAR UP, HEP/CAMP, and TRIO programs are transforming the lives of millions of disadvantaged students by providing them with academic support and services they need to success in school. The GEAR UP program in my district—congressional district number 15 in Texas—has had great success by adding a financial literacy component, which is helping parents and students understand the financial resources available to help them finance their higher education.

I look forward to hearing from each one of you what other recommendations you as panelists may have to make a college education accessible and affordable to greater numbers of low-income, minority, and first-generation college students.

And with that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

[The testimony of Mr. Hinojosa follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rubén Hinojosa, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training

Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx. Today's hearing will focus on how our nation can improve college access and completion for low-income and first generation college students. I want to join the chairwoman in welcoming our witnesses, Dr. Michelle Cooper, Dr. Charles Alexander, Dr. Laura Perna and Dr. Joe may from my home state of Texas.

Preparing all students for good family sustaining jobs and careers and a bright future must be a guiding principle for h-e-a reauthorization.

A highly skilled 21st century workforce is key to strengthening our nation's economy and to reducing income inequality and poverty. The Georgetown Center on education and the workforce found that 63 percent of all jobs will require workers with at least some postsecondary education by 2018.

If our nation is going to compete in the global economy, we must make sure that all these students are reaching their full potential and obtaining postsecondary education.

Low-income and first generation students face substantial hurdles in applying to college and receiving the financial aid they need.

Too often they enter unprepared, and struggle to persist in their studies and ultimately graduate. Meanwhile, college costs have continued to rise, with student debt now topping 1.2 trillion dollars.

First generation students are older, more likely to be independent students and to have families of their own. They are more likely to be enrolled part time and to withdraw and re-enroll over the course of their education. First-generation students are most likely to be enrolled in associate's degree programs and many transfer between community colleges and four-year institutions over the course of their education. This process needs to be seamless so time and money are not wasted retaking coursework.

We also know that too many students enter postsecondary education unprepared for college-level coursework. According to the national center for education statistics, in 2011–2012, 36 percent of college students whose parents had a high school diploma or less reported needing to take remedial coursework, compared to 28 percent of students whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher. 40 percent of Pell grant recipients need to take remedial courses to improve their basic skills.

Unfortunately, according to complete college America, 70% of students who begin in remedial math never enroll in the next-level college course.

While we need to bolster our k-12 system to ensure that students are entering college prepared, we should also encourage innovative practices to increase success rates. Instead of "pre-requisite" remedial courses, some institutions are experimenting with "co-requisites" where students enroll in college-level courses, but also take an additional support class or stay for extra tutoring after class.

Msi's enroll and graduate significant proportions of minority students and play a vital role in higher education for low-income and first-generation students. Through innovative practices, many are boosting graduation rates.

Between 2000 and 2012, the University of Texas at El Paso, an hsi in my home state, increased the total number of undergraduate degrees awarded by 79 percent while enrollment only grew by 26 percent. Utep's center for institutional evaluation research and planning created a data tool for deans to track students term-to-term enrollment status, allowing advisors to contact students who do not re-enroll and help them get back on track. Pell grants are another critical tool to keep College in reach for these students.

Just last week, I introduced four bills, (H.R. 1956, H.R. 1957, H.R. 1958 and H.R. 1959) with our former colleague, Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, that will strengthen Pell and restore the summer Pell program which was key in helping students graduate on time with less debt. I hope this committee will approve these bills.

Finally, federal investments in gear-up, hep-camp, and trio programs are transforming the lives of millions of disadvantaged students by providing them with the academic support and services they need to succeed in school.

The gear-up program in my district has had great success by adding a financial literacy component which is helping parents and students understand the resources available to help finance higher education.

I look forward to hearing what other recommendations our panelists may have to make a college education accessible and affordable to greater numbers of low income, minority and first generation college students.

With that, I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Hinojosa.

Pursuant to committee rule 7(c), all members will be permitted to submit written statements to be included in the permanent hearing record. Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow such statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our distinguished witnesses.

Dr. Laura Perna is a James S. Riepe professor and founding executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is currently president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Dr. Perna's scholarship focuses on the way social structures, educational purposes, and public policies promote and limit college access and success and has been published in books, journals, and policy reports.

Dr. Charles Alexander is the associate vice provost for student diversity and director of the Academic Advancement Program, AAP, at UCLA in Los Angeles, California. He also serves as adjunct associate professor in the Division of Public Health and Community Dentistry at the UCLA School of Dentistry.

Prior to joining UCLA, he oversaw student admissions, outreach, and recruitment, academic support programs, and student services at U.C. San Francisco.

Dr. Michelle Asha Cooper is the president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy here in Washington, D.C. Dr. Cooper previously served as the deputy director for the advisory committee on student financial assistance at the Department of Education and has held various leadership positions at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Council for Independent Colleges, and King's College.

Dr. Joe May is chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District in Dallas, Texas. Prior to this, Dr. May served 7 years as president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, where enrollment increased from 71,000 to more than 160,000 students under his tenure. He is known nationally and internationally for his advocacy for the role of community colleges in solving today's pressing social issues.

I now ask our witnesses to stand and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Let the record reflect the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

You may take your seat.

Before I recognize you to provide your testimony, let me briefly explain our lighting system. You have 5 minutes to present your testimony.

When you begin, the light in front of you will turn green. When the—1 minute is left, the light will turn yellow. When your time is expired, the light will turn red. At that point, I will ask you to wrap up your remarks as best you are able.

Members will each have 5 minutes to ask questions.

Now, Dr. Perna, I recognize you for 5 minutes.

I am not sure your mike is on.

TESTIMONY OF DR. LAURA PERNA, JAMES S. RIEPE PROFESSOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALLIANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA, PA

Ms. PERNA. Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and members of the subcommittee, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on best practices for helping low-income and first-generation students access and complete college. I am honored to have the opportunity to speak with you today.

The federal government plays an important role in promoting higher education attainment through the financial aid programs that are authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Of particular importance is the federal Pell Grant. Research consistently demonstrates the negative implications for college enrollment when college prices increase and grant aid decreases.

The negative effects are particularly large for the enrollment of students from low-income families. Providing sufficient funding so as to at least maintain the purchasing power of the Pell Grant is important to preserving the affordability of higher education for students from low-income families.

Although essential, investment in need-based grant aid is insufficient. The federal TRIO programs and other college access and suc-

cess programs also contribute to the goal of raising higher education attainment for students from groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education.

As detailed further in my written testimony, I offer five recommendations to guide your committee's consideration of college access and success programs.

So first, target students with the greatest financial need. We must recognize and address the many ways that inequality is structured into the pathways into and through college. Students from low-income families have fewer financial resources to pay the direct cost of the college attendance and the many less visible costs of college access and completion.

Students from low-income families also typically attend high schools and postsecondary educational institutions that have fewer resources to invest in and support students' college-related outcomes. Targeting programs to low-income and first-generation students helps to level the playing field for higher education opportunity.

Second, assist students with navigating pathways into and through college with particular attention to financial aid processes. Although much information about college going and financial aid processes is available via the Internet and other sources, simply making information out there is insufficient.

Students and their families need to be able to determine which information is most useful and relevant, given their financial circumstances, academic preparation, their goals, and their interests. Low-income and first-generation students especially need guidance with the many steps that promote college entry, including preparing for and taking college admissions tests, searching for colleges that are well-suited to their goals and interests, visiting college campuses, submitting college applications, and more.

Low-income and first-generation students also need to understand the availability of financial aid and how to get the aid that is out there. They also often require assistance with completing financial aid application forms.

Third recommendation is to adapt programs to recognize the state, regional, and local context, as well as the characteristics of students served. To have a meaningful effect on students' college-related outcomes, college access and success programs need to adapt the delivery of services to recognize the context in which the programs are embedded.

Particularly important are the characteristics of state policies pertaining to high school graduation and assessment requirements and the higher education options that are available in the state, region, and locality.

Programs also need to recognize the differences in the needs of the students served. So middle and high school students, for example, require different types of support and assistance than veterans and unemployed adults who aspire to complete college.

Fourth, leverage federal spending to serve greater numbers of students. Although the federal government's investment in TRIO programs enables the provision of services to some students, many more low-income and first-generation students also require assistance. TRIO programs serve only a very small fraction, estimated

less than 5 percent, of the nation's total population of low-income and first-generation college students.

Given constraints on the availability of additional dollars, the federal government should consider ways to leverage its investment to encourage greater support for college access and success programming from other entities as well as partnerships among the many programs that are also sponsored by state governments, colleges and universities, philanthropic organizations, and other entities.

The fifth recommendation is to encourage research that improves our understanding of best practices for college access and success programs. To maximize the return on investment in college access and success programs, we need to know more about what components and services work, for which groups of students, and in which contexts.

With more and better research, we will ensure that finite resources are used to most effectively improve college-related outcomes for students from low-income families and first-generation college students.

Thank you for your attention.

[The testimony of Dr. Perna follows:]

Improving College Access and Completion
For Low-Income and First-Generation Students:
The Role of College Access and Success Programs

Testimony Provided to the
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training
Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives

Laura W. Perna
April 30, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on best practices for helping low-income and first-generation students access and complete college. As I have devoted my career to conducting research on related issues, I am honored to have the opportunity to speak with you today.[1]

Improving college access and completion for low-income and first-generation college students is one of the most important challenges facing our nation. In our global, technologically-driven economy, available jobs increasingly require some education beyond high school (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). Drawing on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and research about the continued "upskilling" of current jobs, Anthony Carnevale and his colleagues project that 65% of jobs will require education beyond high school by 2020, up from 28% in 1973. At the current rate of degree production, the demand for workers with at least an associate's degree will exceed the supply by 5 million by 2020 (Carnevale et al., 2013).

The U.S. cannot achieve the level of educational attainment that is required for workforce readiness or international competitiveness without closing the considerable gaps in higher education attainment that persist across demographic groups (Perna & Finney, 2014). Attention only to the nation's overall average attainment masks the considerably lower rates of attainment for students from low-income families, students who are first in their families to attend or complete college, and students from racial and ethnic minority groups. In 2012, college enrollment rates were about 30 percentage points lower for high school graduates from the lowest family income quintile than from the highest (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). When they do enroll, students from low-income families tend to attend less selective postsecondary educational institutions and complete degrees at lower rates (Cahalan & Perna, 2015). In 2013, 77% of dependent students from families in the highest-income quartile had attained a bachelor's degree, compared with just 9% of dependent students from the lowest family income quartile (Cahalan & Perna, 2015).

Closing gaps in higher education attainment across groups is important for reasons of national economic competitiveness as well as social mobility. Higher education produces countless benefits for individuals, including higher earnings, better working conditions,

[1] I am grateful for the comments and feedback that Roman Ruiz, Kata Orosz, and Lorelle Espinosa provided on an earlier draft of this testimony.

higher rates of employment, lower rates of unemployment and poverty, better health, and longer life expectancies (Baum et al., 2013; Carnevale et al., 2013). Our society also benefits, as with higher educational attainment comes greater economic productivity, less reliance on social welfare programs, greater civic engagement and charitable giving, and higher rates of voting (Baum et al., 2013).

Improving college access and success for low-income and first-generation students requires a multi-faceted, comprehensive approach, and commitment from multiple players (Perna & Jones, 2013). Only with a comprehensive approach and involvement of multiple stakeholders will we address the multiple forces that limit college enrollment especially for students from groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education. This comprehensive approach must ensure that: all students have the necessary financial resources to pay college costs; all students are adequately academically prepared for college-level requirements; and all students have the information and knowledge required to understand college-related requirements and processes, make appropriate college-related choices, and navigate the complicated pathways into, across, and through higher education institutions.

The federal government plays an important role in reducing the financial barriers to college attendance through the financial aid programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The importance of the Federal Pell Grant program for increasing college access and completion for students from low-income families cannot be understated. About 9.2 million undergraduates received a Federal Pell Grant in 2013-14 (College Board, 2014).

Over time, however, increases in the Federal Pell Grant award have not kept pace with the growing costs of attending college. At public four-year colleges and universities, the maximum Pell Grant covered 30% of the average published charges for tuition, fees, room and board in 2014-15, down from 35% in 1994-95. The average Pell Grant covers an even smaller share of costs, as the average award is considerably lower than the maximum allowable ($3,678 versus $5,645 in 2014-15, College Board, 2014). Providing sufficient funding so as to at least maintain the purchasing power of the Pell Grant is important to preserving the affordability of higher education for students from low-income families. Research consistently demonstrates the negative implications for college enrollment when college prices increase and grant aid decreases; the negative effects are particularly large for the enrollment of students from low-income families (Perna, 2010). As a form of financial aid that does not need to be repaid and that is specifically targeted to students from low-income families, the Federal Pell Grant is an essential lever for increasing college access and completion for students from low-income families.

Although essential, the federal government's investment in need-based grant aid is insufficient. The federal TRIO programs and other college access and success programs also make necessary contributions to the goal of improving higher education attainment for students from underrepresented groups. These programs cannot create the type of large-scale systemic and structural changes that are required to level the playing field in

our nation's K-12 and postsecondary education systems.[2] Yet these programs do provide the support and assistance that many students – especially low-income and first-generation students – require in the absence of these changes. Moreover, even if large-scale changes were to occur, these programs would continue to play an important role in supporting students who are not well served by the prevailing system.

Research demonstrates the positive effects of TRIO programs on students' college-related outcomes (Maynard et al., 2014). Methodologically rigorous research studies conducted by Westat and Mathematica Policy Research show that: Student Support Services promotes persistence in college, college credit accrual, and college grades; Talent Search increases applications for financial aid and postsecondary enrollment; and Upward Bound Math-Science has positive effects on enrollment in selective four-year institutions and completion of a bachelor's degree in a math or science discipline (The Pell Institute, 2009). In a meta-analysis of research that used experimental or quasi-experimental research designs, Maynard et al. (2014) found that, on average, the studied TRIO and other college access programs increased college enrollment by 12 percentage points.[3] Other research demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of Talent Search, especially relative to other dropout prevent programs, in promoting high school completion (Levin et al., 2012).

Understanding the particular programmatic features of TRIO and other programs that promote students' college-related outcomes is complicated by the many variations across programs. For instance, programs that fall under the TRIO umbrella collectively serve students from middle school into post-graduate study and offer varying services. Talent Search emphasizes the provision of information about college and financial aid to students in grades 6 through 12, whereas Upward Bound emphasizes academic preparation, mentoring, and assistance with college and financial aid processes for high school students. Veterans Upward Bound helps veterans improve academic readiness for college and obtain other services targeted to veterans. Educational Opportunity Centers assist displaced and underemployed adult workers from low-income families with college-going processes. The McNair program serves undergraduates who are preparing for doctoral studies and emphasizes undergraduate research experiences, mentoring, and preparation with graduate school admissions processes.

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[2] One area where large-scale structural change is required pertains to academic readiness for college. To improve college access and success and reduce gaps in higher education attainment we must ensure that all students – regardless of where they live or what high school they attend – are academically prepared to enroll and succeed in college (Perna, 2005; Perna & Finney, 2014). One indicator of the failure to ensure adequate academic readiness for all students is the high rate of participation in remedial or developmental coursework. In 2007-08, 24% of first-year undergraduates attending public two-year colleges and 21% of first- year undergraduates attending public four-year institutions took at least one remedial course (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

[3] This meta-analysis includes a controversial study that found that Upward Bound has "no detectable effect" on college enrollment (Seftor, Mamun, & Schirm, 2009). Reevaluations of data from this study show that, when design flaws of the Seftor et al. study are taken into account, Upward Bound has positive effects on college enrollment, college completion, and applications for financial aid (Cahalan & Goodwin, 2014; Harris, Nathan, & Marksteiner, 2014). Including the reevaluation of Upward Bound rather than the original Upward Bound study in the Maynard et al. meta-analysis increases the pooled effect of the studied programs on college enrollment from 11.9 percentage points to 12.2 percentage points.

Drawing from my understanding of available research, I offer five recommendations to guide the Committee's consideration of college access and success programs: 1) target students with the greatest financial need; 2) assist students with navigating pathways into and through college, with particular attention to financial aid processes; 3) adapt services to recognize the relevant context and characteristics of targeted students; 4) leverage spending on federal TRIO programs to serve greater numbers of students; and 5) encourage research and evaluation of college access and success programs to improve understanding of what works.

Target students with the greatest financial need. A strength of the federal TRIO programs is the targeting of services to students from low-income families and first-generation college students. Targeting services and resources to these groups is appropriate, given the continued positive relationship between family income and parents' educational attainment and a host of college-related outcomes.

To create meaningful improvements in college access and completion for students from underrepresented groups, we must recognize and address the many ways that inequality is structured into the pathways into and through college. Students from low-income families have fewer financial resources to pay both the direct costs of college attendance, and the many less-visible costs of college access and completion including costs of college admissions tests and college application fees. Research suggests that, in recent years, upper-middle and upper-income families have been increasing their investments in their children's academic readiness, a pattern that will only further widen the gap in higher education opportunity and outcomes across demographic groups (e.g., Reardon, 2012; Weis, Cipollone, & Jenkins, 2014). Students from low-income families also typically attend high schools and postsecondary educational institutions with fewer resources to invest in and support students' college-related outcomes.

Unlike their peers from higher-income families or whose parents have completed college, students from low-income families and first-generation college students generally do not have family members with direct relevant knowledge of how to traverse college-related processes and make optimal college-related decisions (Engle & Tinto, 2008). By targeting programs to low-income and first-generation students, college access and success programs help to level the playing field for higher education opportunity.

Assist students with navigating pathways into and through college, with particular attention to financial aid processes. Consistent with the economic theory of human capital, research demonstrates that students make college-related decisions based on a comparison of the benefits and costs (Perna, 2006). Human capital theory does not assume that students have complete or perfect information about all potential postsecondary educational choices but rather that students use the information that they have. But, many students – and especially students from low-income families or who are the first in their families to attend or complete college – have limited or incomplete information about the benefits and costs of different higher education options, the

availability of and processes for receiving financial aid, or the ways to successfully navigate pathways into and through college to degree completion.

Many assume that high school counselors are available to adequately provide this type of guidance and assistance. And research shows the positive relationship between the availability of high school counselors and four-year college enrollment rates (Hurwitz & Howell, 2013).

Yet at most high schools, and especially at high schools serving large shares of low-income and first-generation students, counselors are not available to provide the needed assistance. The number of students per counselor is high at most schools – averaging 553 at public elementary schools and 421 at public high schools nationwide in 2010-11 (Clinedist, Hurley, & Hawkins, 2013). The number of students per counselor increases, on average, with the number of students enrolled at the school, and varies considerably across states, ranging to a high of 1,016 students per counselor in California in 2010-11. The number of students per counselor has remained virtually unchanged over the past decade (Clinedist et al., 2013). In the face of budget shortfalls, some school districts have cut counseling staff (Hurwitz & Howell, 2013).

High school counselors report that "helping students plan for and prepare for postsecondary education" is a top priority (Clinedist et al., 2013). Other responsibilities, however, often limit the time that counselors have available to advance this goal. Even when available, high school counselors typically have many responsibilities other than, or in addition to, assisting students with the postsecondary enrollment process. On average, counselors report spending only a third of their time on postsecondary admission counseling, as they also are responsible for such tasks as high school course scheduling (21% of time, on average), personal needs counseling (19% of time), and academic testing (12% of time) (Clinedist et al., 2013).

Available data and research suggest that "counseling" is a particularly beneficial component of college access and success programs.[4] From their comprehensive review and synthesis of relevant rigorous research, Tierney and colleagues offered five recommendations for high school staff to improve college access. The two recommendations with the strongest support from research are: "engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry" and "increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid" (p. 6).[5]

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[4] Understanding whether a particular program component causes improvements in college-related outcomes is difficult, as college access programs vary in countless dimensions including the array of services offered. Of the 18 studies included in the rigorous examinations of the effects of college access programs on college enrollment by Maynard et al. (2014), 13 included "counseling" as well as assorted other components (e.g., academic enrichment, mentoring, parental involvement, social enrichment). Seven of the 13 studies of programs with counseling components found positive effects on college enrollment (Maynard et al., 2014); this number increases to 8 of 13 when Cahalan and Goodwin's (2014) reevaluation of Upward Bound is considered.

[5] The other three recommendations are: "Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade; Utilize assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for

The benefits of counseling to college-related outcomes are not surprising, given the complexity of college preparation, enrollment, and completion processes. As others (e.g., Tierney et al., 2009) have concluded, "Many students do not take the necessary steps during high school to prepare for and enter college because they are not aware of these steps or because they lack the guidance or support needed to complete them" (p. 5). Educational attainment is a longitudinal process with many important steps, including aspiring to attend college, gathering information about potential college choices and college application processes, taking college-preparatory courses and college entrance examinations, applying for admission, completing financial aid applications, deciphering financial aid award letters, weighing costs and benefits of different forms of financial support (especially loans and paid employment), identifying the best institutional "fit," determining the courses required to graduate from the first institution attended and/or will be granted academic credit by another institution, obtaining academic and other assistance when personal, academic, financial, social, and other challenges arise, etc.

Although much "information" about college-going and financial aid processes is available via the Internet and other sources, simply making information available is insufficient.[6] Students (and their families) need to be able to determine which information is most useful and relevant given their financial resources, academic preparation, goals, and interests (Perna, 2010). Low-income and first-generation students especially need guidance with the many steps that promote college entry, including preparing for and taking college admissions exams, searching for colleges and universities that are well-suited to their goals and interests, visiting college campuses, and submitting college admission applications (Tierney et al., 2009). Low-income and first-generation students also need to understand the availability of financial aid and the processes for obtaining aid, and often require assistance with completing financial aid application forms (Bettinger, Long, Oreopoulos, & Sanbonmatsu, 2009; Tierney et al., 2009).

In too many high schools, school staff are not able to provide the assistance that students – especially low-income and first-generation students – need to navigate the complex process of entering college and obtaining financial aid. College access and success programs are an important mechanism for helping to fill this void. College access and success programs also provide much needed assistance with these processes for adults who have no formal connections to a K-12 school.

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college, and assist them in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified; and Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations" (Tierney et al., 2009, p. 6).

[6] One of the clearest demonstrations of the need to do more than simply provide generic OR individualized information is the "H&R Block-FAFSA experiment" conducted by Bettinger and colleagues (2009). In this study, individuals with low- and moderate-incomes and with at least one family member between the ages of 17 and 30 without an undergraduate college degree were randomly assigned to receive: 1) personalized estimates of financial aid eligibility and assistance with completing the FAFSA; 2) personalized estimates of financial aid eligibility but no assistance; or 3) generic information about college costs and financial aid. The study found improved college-related outcomes only for individuals who received both assistance with completing the FAFSA and personalized information about financial aid eligibility; these individuals were more likely than individuals in the other two groups to submit a financial aid application, enroll in college, and receive need-based financial aid.

Adapt programs to recognize the state, regional, and local context and characteristics of students served. Students' college-related decisions and behaviors do not occur in a vacuum. Instead, college-related decisions occur within, and depend on, the contexts in which students are embedded (Perna, 2006; Perna & Jones, 2013). For instance, whether a student aspires to attend college is influenced by the college-going norms and behaviors of other individuals in the community in which the student lives and the school the student attends. A student's knowledge and beliefs about college-going processes are influenced by the college-going beliefs of the student's family members, teachers, and peers as well as the availability of college-related information in the school a student attends.

Whether an individual is academically prepared for college is influenced by the availability of and the opportunity to participate in academically rigorous courses at the high school a student attends.[7] Academic readiness is also influenced by the policies pertaining to academic readiness and high school graduation in the state in which a student lives. Whether a student persists in college to finish a degree program is influenced by the resources available to promote academic and social success at the higher education institution a student attends. Whether an individual has the financial resources to pay the costs of higher education depends on the student's family income and savings, the tuition charged by the higher education institution, and federal, state, and institutional policies pertaining to student financial aid.

To have a meaningful effect on students' college-related outcomes, college access or success programs need to adapt the delivery of services to recognize the state, regional, and local context in which the programs are embedded. Particularly important are characteristics of state policies pertaining to high school graduation and assessment requirements and the higher education options that are available in the state, region, and locality.

Programs also need to recognize and address the characteristics of the students served. TRIO programs collectively serve students across the educational pipeline. About half of TRIO participants are middle and high school students (49% of all TRIO participants), 26% are current college students, 24% are adults aspiring to enter higher education, and 1% are veterans. Clearly middle and high school students require different types of support and assistance than veterans and unemployed adults who aspire to complete college.

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[7] Differences in academic readiness for college-level work can be attributed to two forces: 1) differences in the availability of academically rigorous courses across high schools; and 2) differences in participation in available courses (Perna et al., 2015). Academically rigorous courses are not only less available in the schools attended by students from low-income families and racial/ethnic minority groups than in other schools, but even when rigorous courses are available, students from these groups are less likely to participate (Perna et al., 2015). This pattern of findings points to the structural barriers that limit academic preparation for college, and raise questions about the extent to which students are aware of the academic requirements for college-level work (Tierney et al., 2009) and are formally and informally discouraged from participating in academically rigorous coursework (Perna et al., 2015).

Leverage federal spending to serve greater numbers of students. Although the federal government's investment in TRIO programs enables the provision of services to some students, clearly many more low-income and first-generation college students also require assistance. TRIO programs serve only a very small fraction – less than 5% – of the nation's total population of low-income and first-generation college students (Mortenson, 2011). In FY 2014 there were about 785,000 students participating in 2,800 grant-funded TRIO programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Federal dollars invested in college access and success programs yield considerable returns, given the many economic and non-economic benefits of improving college access and completion to individual students and our nation as a whole. Although the annual federal appropriation for TRIO programs has fluctuated somewhat over the past decade, the $828.6 million allocated in 2014 was virtually unchanged (in current dollars) from the amount a decade earlier ($828.6 million in 2005 dollars) (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This pattern of federal funding represents a decline in funding after taking into account inflation (an 18% decrease in constant dollars between FY 2005 and FY 2014). With greater federal investment, the TRIO programs would be able to serve more students and, consequently, improve college access and completion for more students.

Given constraints on the availability of additional federal dollars, the federal government should consider ways to leverage its investment to encourage greater support for college and success programming from other entities, as well as partnerships among the many existing college and success programs that are sponsored not only by the federal government but also by state governments, colleges and universities, philanthropic organizations, and other entities.

With the goal of maximizing program impact, many TRIO programs are now engaged in different types of partnerships. For instance, Upward Bound programs can apply for grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to cover the costs of nutritious meals for their summer programs. Student Support Services programs partner with their home institution's academic support programs (e.g., tutoring, supplemental instruction) to maximize project funds. Some privately-funded scholarships (e.g., Dell Scholars Program) require recipients to have participated in a college readiness program, such as Upward Bound. The federal government should consider ways to encourage or incentivize partnerships that magnify the positive effects of federal TRIO funding on college access and completion.

Encourage research and evaluation to improve understanding of what works. To maximize the return on investment in college access and success programs, we need to know more about what components and services work, for which groups of students, in which contexts (Perna, 2002). In their comprehensive meta-analysis of research on the effects of college access programs on college readiness and/or college enrollment, Maynard and colleagues (2014) found only 34 studies that were published between 1990 and 2013 that used experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. Of the 34 studies, 18 provided sufficient information to conduct a cross-study review of effects of

targeted interventions on college readiness and/or enrollment (Maynard et al., 2014). This is a remarkably low number, given the large number of college access programs that are operating across the nation (Maynard et al., 2014). Even fewer studies have attempted to identify the effects on college-related outcomes of particular program components and services (Maynard et al., 2014).

The federal government should not only support the delivery of college access and success programs but also encourage research that improves understanding of best practices. More information is needed about best practices for promoting college-related outcomes for low-income and first-generation students along the college-going pipeline, from middle-school into post-graduate study, and for both traditional-age students and adults who aspire to attend and complete college. Such research will help ensure that finite resources are used to most effectively improve college-related outcomes for low-income and first-generation college students.

Conclusion

Higher education attainment is the result of a complex, cumulative and longitudinal process that begins at an early age – arguably at (or even) before birth (Perna, 2006). There is no silver bullet to raising overall attainment and closing gaps in attainment across groups, given the many systemic and structural forces that limit college access and completion, especially for low-income and first-generation students. To achieve this goal, we must ensure that all students have the ability to pay college costs, the academic preparation required for college-level work, and the knowledge and assistance required to navigate pathways into and through college (Perna, 2006; Perna & Jones, 2013).

The federal government recognizes the reality that "financial aid is not enough" by supporting college access and success programs. These programs should: target students with the most financial need; assist students with navigating pathways into and through college, with particular attention to financial aid processes; and adapt services to recognize the relevant context and characteristics of targeted students. The federal government should also consider ways to leverage spending on federal TRIO programs to serve greater numbers of students and encourage research and evaluation of college access and success programs to improve understanding of what works.

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Laura W. Perna

Laura W. Perna is James S. Riepe Professor and founding Executive Director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at the University of Pennsylvania. She is currently President of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and past-Vice President of the American Educational Research Association's Division J (Postsecondary Education). Dr. Perna's research examines the ways that social structures, educational practices, and public policies promote and limit college access and success, particularly for individuals from lower-income families and racial/ethnic minority groups. Her scholarship is published in a variety of outlets, including books, journal articles, and policy reports. Recent books include *The Attainment Agenda: State policy leadership for higher education* (with Joni Finney, 2014, Johns Hopkins University Press) and *The state of college access and completion: Improving college success for students from underrepresented groups* (with Anthony Jones, 2013, Routledge). Her research has been featured in the *New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, The Atlantic, Education Week,* and *Huffington Post,* as well as on National Public Radio programs and in other outlets. In 2003, Dr. Perna received the Promising Scholar/Early Career Achievement Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education. In 2010, Penn honored her with Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching. In 2011, she received the Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. In 2014, she was named a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association, a Penn Fellow, and the inaugural James S. Riepe Professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Chairwoman FOXX. Dr. Alexander, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF DR. CHARLES J. ALEXANDER, ASSOCIATE VICE PROVOST FOR STUDENT DIVERSITY, DIRECTOR, ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM, ASSOCIATE ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and all the members of the subcommittee, for inviting me to testify today.

I am a product of a single-parent household, and when I was young my mother aspired for me to attend college one day. As I came to the end of my senior year in high school, I thought I was prepared to enter college and compete with the rest of the students who were entering higher education institutions that year.

However, I soon learned that college was much more challenging than my high school was. I was fortunate, however, to be recruited by a college success program that provided me with a summer bridge experience, academic support services, and the guidance that I needed to succeed; 4 years later I completed my bachelor's degree and later went on to earn my master's and doctorate in the sociology of education.

So I can attest to the fact that if it were not for the support of these programs and the encouragement of my mother, of course, and extended family, I would not be here today sharing testimony with this committee.

Let me share with you a model student academic support program that I oversee at UCLA. The Academic Advancement Program, AAP, has been in existence since 1971. It is a multiracial, multiethnic academic program that advocates access, equity, and opportunity, and excellence in its students.

AAP students represent about 23 percent of the UCLA student body, which is about 24,000 undergraduates. It is a comprehensive support program that provides integrated services, setting the highest standards for them; promoting academic, personal, and programmatic excellence; and building communities of shared learning.

AAP is supported by a mixture of state, federal, and foundation funding. State funding represents the majority of our overall budget. Included in my written testimony you will see the funding sources and types.

A significant number of AAP students come from low-income families, are eligible for Pell Grants, and are in the first in their family to attend college; 63 percent are from historically underrepresented communities.

Each summer, AAP runs a rigorous, academic, 6-week, residential program for 400 entering freshmen and transfers. This is approximately 12 percent of the 34,000 students who are eligible for the program. Students take two to three university courses, and the summer bridge program could enroll more if additional funding were available.

AAP also provides peer-facilitated learning communities based on a dialogical pedagogy, collaborative learning workshops, academic

personal counseling, innovative science programs, and scholarships. AAP has a comprehensive mentoring program that encourages all students to prepare for graduate and professional schools, and provides resources to support this end.

AAP also oversees a federally funded TRIO program, the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. Twenty-three of the first 33 McNair scholars are enrolled in graduate programs.

Over the past 10 years, AAP has responded to a growing number of eligible transfer students. AAP's work with its transfer students has resulted in a dramatic increase in their 4-year graduation rates, from 61 percent 15 years ago to 83 percent today.

We push our students to use all the university resources. College Honors is a nationally renowned program that provides students the organization and environment within which to pursue individual excellence. The percentage of AAP students in Honors has increased from 4 percent in the early 1990s to 17 percent today.

Another campus partner that we work closely with is the Program for Excellence in Education and Research in the Sciences, otherwise known as PEERS. PEERS is a primary retention program for entering underrepresented life and physical science students. Since its inception in 2003, 340 students have completed the PEERS program and 84 percent have graduated with UCLA science degrees.

Engagement in PEERS clearly improves academic success and retention in science, eliminating the achievement gap for URM students in science. Many of our graduates go on and earn Ph.D.s, go to professional school.

We have exchanged ideas with a number of universities across the country, including the University of Michigan, Maryland, Cal Berkeley, Cal Irvine, University of Texas, and international universities, such as Vrije University in Amsterdam, the University of Rwanda, and the University of Johannesburg. We have been hosted by visitors from Australia, Great Britain, South Korea, the Netherlands, South Africa, and many other countries.

A tenet of our AAP's philosophy that has resulted in spectacular graduation rates is the belief that when students work in the program to promote the success of other students, they gain the self-confidence and self-respect that propels them to graduate. By employing AAP students as tutors and as peer counselors, we set up a model of academic achievement that promotes the values of giving back to the community.

Most AAP students employees are paid with work study and institutional funds, and 100 percent of these students graduate. A 100 percent graduate rate is AAP's goal for all of its students.

Let me close by thanking Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and the other members of the subcommittee today for the opportunity to appear before you. I am happy to answer any questions at any time.

Thank you.

[The testimony of Dr. Alexander follows:]

Testimony before The House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training
Hearing on Improving College Access and Completion for Low-Income and First-Generation Students

Statement of Charles J. Alexander
Associate Vice Provost for Student Diversity and Director, Academic Advancement Program
University of California at Los Angeles

April 30, 2015

Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and all the Members of the subcommittee for inviting me to testify today. My name is Charles J. Alexander and for the past nine years, I have served as the Associate Vice Provost for Student Diversity and Director of the Academic Advancement Program (AAP) at the University of California, Los Angeles.

I am a product of a single parent household and when I was young my mother aspired for me to attend college one day. As I came to the end of my senior year in high school, I felt I was prepared to enter college and compete with the rest of the students who were entering higher education institutions that year. However, I soon learned that college was much more challenging and rigorous than my high school. I was fortunate, however, to be recruited by a college success program that provided me with a summer bridge experience and the academic support services and guidance that I needed. Four years later, I completed my Bachelor's degree and later went on to earn my Masters and Doctorate in the Sociology of Education. I can attest to the fact that if it were not for the academic support and the encouragement of my mother and extended family, I would not be here today sharing testimony with this committee. Even after all these years, I still appreciate the support that my college academic support program gave me to succeed in my profession and life.

Let me share with you a model student academic support program that I oversee at UCLA. The Academic Advancement Program (AAP), in existence at UCLA since 1971, is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic academic program, that advocates access, equity, opportunity, and excellence. AAP has a threefold mission—to ensure the success and graduation of its more than 5,500 undergraduates; to prepare students to enter graduate and professional schools; and to develop the academic, political, scientific, economic, and community leadership necessary to transform and lead our society in the 21st century. AAP students represent approximately 23% of the UCLA undergraduate student body. AAP is an academic community that supports its students by providing them comprehensive, integrated services, setting the highest standards for them, promoting academic, personal, and programmatic excellence, and building communities of shared learning and learners. AAP staff foster in students a sense of belonging at the university, and inspire and challenge them to expand their personal and academic goals by building on the great wealth of resources and life experiences they bring to the university. AAP is supported by a mixture of state, federal and foundation funding. State funds represent the majority of AAP's overall budget. Included in my written testimony is a table highlighting the funding sources for the program.

2013- 14 AAP Funding Sources by Type

Funding Sources	Expenditures	% of Total	Comments
State Funds	$2,615,790*	54%	AAP Administration, Counseling, Peer Learning, Graduate Mentoring and Research, Communications and Evaluation, New Student Programs, and Center for Community Partnerships.
Sales and Services	$55,894	1%	From FSP and TSP IEI and computer lab printing fees.
Contracts & Grants	$490,899	10%	Federal and state grants to support McNair, High AIMS, Jack Kent Cooke, and other student programs.
Gifts and Endowments	$1,725,865	35%	Scholarships/stipends awarded to students from private donors and foundations.
Total	$4,888,448		

AAP pushes all its students to graduate with the broadest and most enriched education possible. Belief in the strengths of its students drives all AAP's programs. A significant number of AAP students come from low-income families (73%), and are eligible for Federal Pell grants; 97% are the first in their family to go to college; and, 63% are from historically underrepresented communities—African American, Latino, and Native American.

Each summer, AAP runs a rigorously academic 6-week residential program for 400 entering freshmen and transfers. This is approximately 12% of the approximately 3,400 students who are eligible for the program. Students take 2-3 university courses and complete 10-13 units toward UCLA degree

requirements. The summer bridge program could enroll more students if additional funding were available. The program is funded primarily by institutional and donor based scholarship dollars. AAP provides peer-facilitated learning communities (tutoring) based on a dialogical pedagogy, collaborative learning workshops, academic and personal counseling and peer counseling, research opportunities, innovative science programs, and scholarships. AAP has a comprehensive mentoring program that encourages all AAP students to prepare for graduate and professional schools, and provides resources and support to this end: students meet with faculty for roundtable discussions and intern for local, state, and national organizations. AAP also arranges for many of its students to engage in academic research under the direction of faculty and to publish their work in the university's academic and literary journals.

AAP also oversees a federally-funded TRIO program: The Ronald E. McNair Research Scholars Program for first-generation, low-income students, and historically underrepresented students who are on track to pursue their Ph.D.s. Twenty-three of the first thirty-three McNair Scholars are enrolled in graduate programs.

Over the past 10 years, AAP has responded to the growing number of AAP-eligible transfer students entering UCLA by providing a framework for transfer students to become part of an academic community, to take

ownership of their undergraduate experience, to engage the broader university, and to excel. AAP's work with its transfer students has resulted in a dramatic increase in their 4-year graduation rates—from 61% fifteen years ago to 83% today. In the same time period, African American rates rose from 45% to 83% and Latino rates rose from 66% to 83%.

One-Year Persistence / Four- and Six-Year Graduation Most Recent Rates at Fall 2013 for FRESHMAN COHORTS Entering UCLA by Gender, Declared Ethnicity, and Financial Aid (Pell/Stafford) Status

	Freshman Cohort Entering Fall 2012 1-Year Persistence Rate	Freshman Cohort Entering Fall 2009 4-Year Graduation Rate	Freshman Cohort Entering Fall 2007 6-Year Graduation Rate
All Freshmen	96	74	90
Women	97	79	92
Men	96	66	89
African American	96	58	85
American Indian	96	61	86
Chicano/Latino	96	64	84
Asian/Pacific Islander	99	77	93
White	96	78	91
Other/Unknown	92	73	93
International	93	63	85
Pell Grant Recipients	96	70	88
Subsidized Stafford Loan (no Pell Grant)	96	74	91

Neither Pell nor Subsidized Stafford Loan	96	61	89

Students in the cohort who received Pell Grant or Stafford assistance at any time.

Graduation rates are minimum values based on mid-October degree records; when degree records are complete these rates may increase by one or two percentage points.

One-Year Persistence/ Two- and Four-Year Graduation Most Recent Rates at Fall 2013 for TRANSFER COHORTS Entering UCLA by Gender, Declared Ethnicity, and Financial Aid (Pell/Stafford) Status

	Transfer Cohort Entering Fall 2012 1-Year Persistence Rate	Transfer Cohort Entering Fall 2011 2-Year Graduation Rate	Transfer Cohort Entering Fall 2009 4-Year Graduation Rate
All Transfers	95	63	89
Women	95	70	92
Men	94	56	86
African American	91	56	84
American Indian	100	65	78
Chicano/Latino	96	62	84
Asian/Pacific Islander	97	58	90
White	95	67	91
Other/Unknown	95	69	90
International	89	66	89
Pell Grant Recipients	96	58	89
Subsidized Stafford Loan (no Pell Grant)	96	69	88
Neither Pell nor Subsidized Stafford Loan	93	68	91

Students in the cohort who received Pell Grant or Stafford assistance at any time.

Graduation rates are minimum values based on mid-October degree records; when degree records are complete these rates may increase by one or two percentage points.

AAP pushes its students to use all of UCLA's resources. It strongly encourages its students to join the University's College Honors Program. College Honors at UCLA is a nationally renowned program that provides students the organization and environment within which to pursue individual excellence. Students attain College Honors by completing a diverse selection of honors course work and maintaining excellent grades. The percentage of AAP students in Honors has increased from 4% in the early 1990's to 17% today.

Another campus partner who AAP works closely with is the Program for Excellence in Education and Research in the Sciences (PEERS). PEER is the primary retention program for entering URM life and physical science students at UCLA. Each year PEERS welcomes approximately 100 entering underrepresented freshmen life and physical science majors. PEERS enhances the academic performance of first-year and second-year science students through a combination of personal counseling, collaborative learning workshops in mathematics, chemistry, and physics, research talks by UCLA faculty, and seminars designed to improve student retention and support student interest in research. Faculty, graduate student tutors/facilitators, and trained academic counselors guide the PEERS students through their first two academic years. Since its inception in 2003, 340 students have completed the PEERS program and 84% have graduated from UCLA with a degree in science. This rate is more than double the URM

average of 41% at UCLA and exceeds the overall campus average (67%) and average for non-URM students (72%). During the last 5 years (2011-2014), 84% of PEERS students graduated with science degrees. Notably for the students that graduated in 2014, 50 of 55 (91%) finished with a degree in a science major. Of the 340 graduates, 197 (58%) engaged in faculty mentored research experience and the primary outcome for PEERS graduates is to enter MD or PhD programs.

Our controlled study shows that PEERS has a significant impact on academic performance and persistence. We found that PEERS students take more science classes in their first two years (so are more likely to graduate on time – see below), earn better grades in those science classes, have a higher overall GPA and are more likely to be in a science major at the beginning of their third year. This benefit is seen whether PEERS students are compared to a control group of similarly prepared students, or incoming students with Math SAT scores of above 650 (High Math SAT). Even though the High Math SAT group of students is better prepared for college science classes than the PEERS group, PEERS students out perform this group in all four measures (science courses taken, class and overall GPA, and retention). Engagement in PEERS clearly improves academic success and retention in science, eliminating the achievement gap of URM science students.

Today, at UCLA, African Americans and Latinos graduate at the highest rate ever: the 6-year graduation rate for African American and Latino students who entered as freshmen is 84%.

Many AAP graduates continue their education by going into Ph.D. programs or professional degree programs. They become doctors, lawyers, educators, urban planners, and political leaders; and a large number of AAP graduates focus their work on serving the poor and the under-served.

AAP exchanges ideas and best practices with the University of Michigan, the University of Maryland, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Irvine, the University of Texas at Austin, the Vrije University of Amsterdam, the University of Rwanda, College of Education, and the University of Johannesburg.

We have also hosted and been visited by educators from Australia, Great Britain, South Korea, the Netherlands and South Africa who would like to replicate how we do what we do at their own institutions.

A tenet of AAP's philosophy that has resulted in spectacular graduation rates is the belief that when students work in the program to promote the success of other students, they gain the self-confidence and self-respect that propels them to graduate. By employing AAP students as tutors (over 160) and as

Peer Counselors (17), AAP sets up models of academic achievement and promotes the values of giving back to the community. Most AAP student employees are paid with work study and institutional funds. 100% of these students graduate. A 100% graduation rate is AAP's goal for all of its students.

Let me close by thanking Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and the other members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Dr. Alexander.

Dr. Cooper, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF DR. MICHELLE ASHA COOPER, PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. COOPER. Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and members of the subcommittee, good morning and thank you for this opportunity.

At IHEP we focus on issues related to college access and success for low-income and first-generation students. We recognize the important role of colleges and universities in serving these students.

Given that, I would like to discuss the role of minority-serving institutions, MSIs, which serve large numbers of first-generation and low-income students.

Most MSIs are public institutions. For example, the majority of the 409 Hispanic-serving institutions and 296 emerging HSIs are public, with 46 percent of HSIs being community colleges.

Almost half of all students at MSIs receive Pell Grants, with even greater numbers of Pell recipients attending HBCUs and tribal colleges. While the term "MSIs" refer to institutions with similar student profiles, these schools do have different histories and missions. Unlike other MSIs, the mission of tribal colleges and HBCUs have deep historical roots in the communities that they serve.

Many MSIs have strategies for educating low-income and first-generation students. I will mention a few, but before doing so, I want to stress the role of federal policymaking in supporting these students who can be found not only at MSIs but at other institutions, as well.

Therefore, for federal policymaking I offer four recommendations.

First, collect and provide more useful and usable data to students and their families. Students need clear and reliable data presented in user-friendly ways to inform their college choices and decisions. Likewise, policymakers need more comprehensive data to inform policy conversations and decision-making.

Second, increase the investment in the Pell Grant and simplify the financial aid process. Even though many MSIs try to hold tuition to levels that are relatively affordable, students still rely heavily on financial aid. To support these students, we must maintain and possibly even increase Pell Grant funding. We also need to simplify the financial aid process.

Third, we must increase support for TRIO and GEAR UP. Over a million students combined benefit from TRIO and GEAR UP. With a stronger investment, both programs could help so many more students, especially since the need is ever growing.

More details about these three recommendations can be found in the written testimony and I am happy to discuss.

My fourth recommendation brings me back to MSIs. I recommend that policymakers set high expectations for MSIs and support those that serve their students well. Many MSI leaders have already taken steps to improve student outcomes and institutional outcomes.

For example, the University of Texas at El Paso and St. Edward's University prioritize success for Hispanic students, which

is evident by their strong outcomes and high graduation rates. St. Edward's actually has the highest graduation rate of all HSIs, at 72 percent. U.T. El Paso also offers dual enrollment with the local high schools and the local community college, which helps to reduce cost and time to degree.

At HBCUs, like Fayetteville State University and Norfolk State University, faculty and student affairs collaborate on data-driven solutions to support students. Fayetteville State targeted efforts towards their men of color, and both institutions strengthened teaching and learning practices.

Also, there are MSIs like California State, Northridge, which intentionally increased the enrollment of their Pell Grant recipients and first-generation students even as the state cut its budget. And there is North Carolina Central University, which eliminated waste and inefficiencies in several program areas and then funneled those savings into student success efforts.

Institutional reforms like these examples are rarely discussed at the national level. Even when faced with chronic underfunding, these and other college leaders have simply decided to do more with less. While I recognize that this is an honorable strategy, doing more with less is not a sustainable strategy.

In conclusion, it is important for federal policymakers to enhance support for MSIs that are enrolling and, most importantly, graduating and preparing their students to lead productive lives.

Thank you.

[The testimony of Dr. Cooper follows:]

Improving College Access and Completion for Low-Income and First-Generation Students

Submitted by Michelle Asha Cooper, PhD
President
Institute for Higher Education Policy

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Education & the Workforce
Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee
Thursday, April 30, 2015

Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott, the leadership of the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee – Ms. Foxx and Mr. Hinojosa—and subcommittee members, I am appreciative of the opportunity to participate in this hearing discussing strategies for improving college access and completion for low-income and first-generation students.

My name is Michelle Asha Cooper, and I am president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). IHEP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to promoting access to and success in higher education for all students, with a focus on students who have been underserved by our postsecondary system. Based in Washington, DC, we believe that all people, regardless of background or circumstance, have the opportunity to reach their full potential by participating and succeeding in higher education.

In support of this goal, IHEP offers the following recommendations for consideration in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act:

1. *Collect and provide better information—more useful data presented in a useable format—to students, policymakers, and institutions to inform decision-making.*

2. *Increase investment in the Pell Grant and simplify the financial aid process.*

3. *Strengthen federal support for TRIO and GEAR UP programs to improve postsecondary education opportunities for low-income and first-generation college students.*

4. *Set high expectations for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and support MSIs that serve students well.*

I. Postsecondary Access and Success for Today's College Students[i]

First-generation college students—those whose parents did not attend postsecondary education[ii] — represent nearly a third of the nation's undergraduates,[iii] making them a critical population of focus if we are to meet our nation's educational attainment goals. Even before they arrive on a college campus, first-generation students must overcome many obstacles, principally due to their lack of familiarity with college processes. For the first-generation students who do manage to enroll in college, they are more likely than their peers to be racial/ethnic minorities, financially independent, have dependents, and come from low-income backgrounds.[iv] These students also tend to enroll part-time, work more than 40 hours a week, rely more heavily on federal Pell Grants, be less academically prepared, and attend public two-year or for-profit institutions (although first-generation students are represented within every institutional type).[v] All of these characteristics are shown to be negatively correlated with college enrollment and persistence. For instance, first-generation students are much less likely than their peers to have earned a four-year degree six years after entering college.[vi]

These trends, however, are not immutable. Through targeted policies and interventions at the federal, state, local, and institutional level, we can – in fact, we *must* – drive improvements in student success for first-generation college students. The students themselves are relying upon the opportunities that a college degree will afford them, and our society as a whole is relying upon the economic and societal benefits that will flow from increased educational attainment and social mobility.

II. The Role of Minority-Serving Institutions in First-Generation Student Success[vii]

Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) serve large proportions of first-generation students. These institutions, which comprise Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), and Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs) have a legacy of providing increased access to some of the nation's underserved students and often implement innovative practices and strategies to support stronger student success.[viii] Their work with first-generation students is an important component to achieve broader educational and societal goals.

In 2011–12, the 634 MSIs included in an IHEP analysis—HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and PBIs—comprised 14 percent of all degree-granting, undergraduate-serving institutions.[ix] They were concentrated primarily in cities (50 percent) or large suburbs (21 percent); the majority of HSIs were located in California, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas, while most HBCUs are in the South or Southeast.

The majority of MSIs are public institutions—21 percent are four-year institutions and 41 percent are community colleges—but about a third (31 percent) are four-year private nonprofit institutions and another 6 percent are private two-year colleges. Together, these MSIs enrolled about 5.3 million undergraduates in 2011–12, 22 percent of all undergraduate enrollment and 39 percent of all undergraduate students of color.[x] Each type of MSI also educates a significant proportion of its target population. For example:

- HBCUs comprise only 2 percent of all degree-granting, undergraduate-serving colleges and universities, but enroll 8 percent of all Black undergraduate students. PBIs make up 3 percent of institutions but enroll 11 percent of Black students.
- The small number of TCUs enroll approximately 10 percent of all American Indian students.
- HSIs represent about 8 percent of institutions, but 51 percent of Hispanic enrollment.

MSIs tend to serve students who have been historically disadvantaged in their access to and success in postsecondary education, including low-income and first-generation college students. For example, 44 percent of undergraduates at MSIs received a Pell Grant in 2011–12 compared with 38 percent of undergraduates in non-MSIs. Two-thirds of students at HBCUs receive Pell Grants. More than half of MSIs have an open admissions policy and as a result admit students who may require developmental education.[xi]

Due in part to these factors, students enrolled at MSIs often face barriers to graduating on a timely basis. On average, retention and graduation rates at four-year MSIs are lower than those of other four-year institutions. For example:

- The six-year graduation rate for bachelor's degree–seeking students is lower at four-year MSIs compared with non-MSIs: 38 percent versus 61 percent, respectively.[xii]
- The three-year graduation rate[xiii] at two-year MSIs is also lower compared with two-year non-MSIs: 21 percent versus 35 percent (although the higher rate at non-MSIs is partly driven by high certificate completion rates at two-year for-profits).

Despite these lower rates, MSIs are a key part of postsecondary degree production:

- HBCUs awarded 31,730 degrees and certificates to African American undergraduates, eight percent of the total awarded to African-American undergraduates by all institutions. PBIs awarded an additional 49,846 or 13 percent.
- TCUs awarded 2,092 credentials to American Indian students, eight percent of the total.
- HSIs made 159,369 awards to Hispanic students, 40 percent of the total.

The fact that MSIs both enroll and graduate large numbers of students of color underscores the importance of encouraging and supporting these institutions to help even more of their students complete degrees, which could have a substantial impact on higher education attainment in this country.

III. Promising Strategies for First-Generation Students: Examples from the MSI Community[xiv]

Recognizing the postsecondary access and completion barriers facing first-generation students, institutional leaders, federal and state governments, and others have tried to target various forms of assistance to help these students. In fact, resources available to first-generation students have broadened considerably over the years. Today, we recognize that no single strategy alone will increase access and success for first-generation students. Instead, a combination of targeted academic, social, and financial supports, integrated faculty-driven and classroom-based practices, and strong commitment from institutional leaders can increase the likelihood that first-generation students will succeed. Some examples of promising strategies from within the MSI community are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Examples of MSIs Working to Support First-Generation Student Success

INSTITUTION	SECTOR	STUDENT SUPPORT EFFORTS
South Seattle Community College (WA)	AANAPISI	South Seattle Community College (SSCC) is focused on developing programs, curriculum, and other resources that are **culturally relevant** to Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. Specifically, the college's AANAPISI program features four types of strategies that are designed to: 1) improve AAPI freshman experiences, through the use of **Clustered Learning Communities** and **peer navigators**; 2) improve AAPI **transitions to college coursework**, through transition workshops; 3) improve AAPI retention and outreach, through a combination of **family orientation workshops** and the **AAPI Higher Education Resource Center**, which shares promising practices among the higher education community that serve AAPI students well; and 4) increase AAPI graduation and transfer rates to four-year institutions, through the development of **new degree programs**, such as an Associate of Elementary Education degree that encourages more AAPI students to become teachers and role models in the broader community. While SSCC focuses on developing strategies that serve AAPI students diverse needs, these resources are available to all students.
Fayetteville State University (NC)	HBCU	Fayetteville State University (FSU) is committed to **high-impact access and success practices** that engage all students, but are targeted to improve outcomes for male students. Through the implementation of an **early alert system** and other **department- and institution-level assessment tools**, FSU is working to identify at-risk students earlier and is seeking to better target interventions to help them succeed, including **residential summer bridge programs** and **linked learning communities/first-year experience programs**, to name a few. Similarly, **male-centered initiatives**—Male Initiative on Leadership and Excellence, the Boosting Bronco Brothers Transition to FSU, and Captain of My Destiny—serve as models for advancing Black male achievement. As an early adopter of the **Collegiate Learning Assessment** (CLA), FSU has strengthened its commitment to improving student learning.
Norfolk State University (VA)	HBCU	Norfolk State University (NSU) has developed a Communities of Inquiry program, which leverages existing **faculty development** efforts and the expertise of NSU faculty to strengthen student success efforts. The program provides faculty with an established forum to work collaboratively to discuss, share, and **design innovative pedagogical and assessment practices**. Faculty members from across disciplines and departments develop research and tools on effective teaching and learning practices. For example, when NSU's institutional research office identified students' inability to manage their learning process as a significant barrier to the success of their first-generation students, faculty authored a series of reports on how "**self-regulated learning**" can help these students. Self-regulated learning is pedagogy focused on helping students take more **ownership** over and **responsibility for their own learning process**. By integrating self-regulation strategies into their teaching and learning practices, faculty advanced student achievement.

St. Edward's University (TX)	HSI	St. Edwards's University (SEU) has maintained its institutional commitment to underserved students while "growing" the institution – in size, academic quality, faculty caliber, and infrastructure. SEU has had a diverse student body: approximately 25 percent first-generation; 44 percent minority; and 36 percent Pell Grant recipients, on average, since 2000. All SEU students are exposed to a range of high-impact success strategies, such **as living-learning communities**, **peer mentoring and supplemental instruction**, **career preparation**, and **undergraduate research opportunities**, to name a few. Underserved students benefit tremendously from these active teaching and learning practices, as the college takes a targeted approach to tailor efforts to their needs. In addition, one of SEU's signature initiatives in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), which provides comprehensive support to **students from migrant and seasonal farm worker** families. Although federal support is limited to the freshman year, SEU has established an institutional endowment to provide full tuition and academic support for all CAMP students who maintain satisfactory academic progress. Also, SEU can boast the highest six-year graduation rate—72 percent—among all Hispanic-Serving Institutions.
The University of Texas at El Paso (TX)	HSI	The University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP) involvement with **Early College High Schools** (ECHS), a **partnership with El Paso Community College** and **El Paso Public High Schools**, is helping many students reduce time-to-degree and college costs. Because of the ECHS program, many students now graduate from high school with an associate's degree. To help these students continue on the pathway to the baccalaureate, UTEP has changed **transfer pathways**, **academic support services**, **scholarship programs**, and other critical campus programs and policies to ensure successful completion of a four-year degree program. Critical to UTEP's success is a campus-wide commitment to **using data** to better track students' progress and inform institutional decision making. In the past 10 years, UTEP has experienced growth in total undergraduate enrollment and degrees awarded. Also, UTEP is a leader in graduating Hispanic students and ranks seventh nationally as a top feeder school for Hispanic doctorates.
Salish Kootenai College (MT)	TCU	Salish Kootenai College (SKC) has developed **data-driven solutions** to increase participation and completion, particularly for American Indian students. With 70 percent of entering SKC students requiring developmental instruction, the college has placed significant attention on improving the academic success of these students. In particular, SKC offers **accelerated options for developmental education** and provides **wrap-around support services** designed to help students succeed. By using data to better understand the demographic characteristics and trajectories of their student body, SKC recognizes that effective strategies need to be institutionalized and embraced by the entire campus community. Therefore, at the heart of SKC's access and success efforts are the faculty members. Faculty members regularly engage in **professional development** that emphasizes teaching and learning. They have **revised their curricular and pedagogical practices**; and beyond the classroom, they **serve as mentors, career coaches, tutors, and trusted advisers**. SKC's intensive efforts to improve the success rates of all students, but particularly those enrolled in the developmental curriculum has led to an increased graduation rate.

IV. Recommendations to Better Serve First-Generation & Low-Income Students

While institutions have the most direct impact on individual students, federal policies also influence first-generation and low-income students and their chances of postsecondary success. The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is an opportunity to reassess college access and completion policies, with an eye toward addressing the needs and challenges of today's students. We offer the following federal policy recommendations for better supporting first-generation and low-income students, as well as the institutions serving them:

1. *Collect and provide better information — more useful data presented in a useable format — to students, policymakers, and institutions to inform decision-making.*

For first-generation and low-income students, having access to clear and reliable information is critical. These students need to know their chances of graduating, how much college will cost and how they can pay for it, their likely debt at graduation, and what employment outcomes they can expect. While existing data tools, like the U.S. Department of Education's College Navigator, the White House's College Scorecard, college net price calculators, and the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet provide data to inform students, many questions are left unanswered—and many first-generation students are left on their own to try to navigate these tools.

Additionally, students are not the only consumers of postsecondary data. Leaders at the federal and state level need access to reliable, comparable information on colleges and universities and student pathways into and through college. Such data will allow them to make informed policy decisions about where to focus public funds and attention and how to assist postsecondary reform efforts. Evidence shows that colleges and universities can greatly improve student success through an intentional focus on the use of quality data.[xv] When data are disaggregated, they can be especially useful in identifying barriers to success for low-income, first-generation students, and once those barriers are identified faculty, staff, and institutional leadership can begin addressing them.

To promote the use and availability of better data, IHEP has offered a series of policy recommendations, both individually and in collaboration with organizational partners, which include:

- Disaggregating graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients to understand how well institutions are serving low-income students, many of whom are first-generation.[xvi]

- Improving the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Outcome Measures to better capture completion and transfer outcomes for part-time and transfer students and disaggregate the data by student demographics.[xvii]

- Disaggregating cumulative debt data by completion status, instead of by combining completers and non-completers, which produces confusing results.[xviii]

- Creating a student unit record data system that incorporates protocols to protect student privacy and security. Such a system would provide the flexibility necessary to calculate measures and metrics to better inform decision-making.[xix]

- Making better use of administrative data systems within the Office of Federal Student Aid and linking to data held by other agencies, such as the Social Security Administration and Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.[xx]

Ultimately, a stronger data system will capture accurate, comprehensive, comparable, consistent, and secure data on college access, progression, completion, cost, and outcomes, disaggregated by key student demographics such as race/ethnicity and income.

2. Increase investment in the Pell Grant and simplify the financial aid process

College is becoming increasingly unaffordable for all students, especially those who are low-income or first-generation. Over the past 30 years, tuition has increased at nearly five times the rate of inflation, even faster than healthcare costs.[xxi] Given the populations that they serve, many MSIs try to hold tuition to levels that are relatively affordable. In 2012–13, for example, published tuition and fees were nearly twice as high at non-MSIs as they were at MSIs. Yet despite the lower price tag, students attending MSIs rely heavily on financial aid, including loans.[xxii] These realities highlight the need to target financial aid strategically, focusing our scarce resources on the students with the greatest need–low-income students–providing adequate levels of grant aid that will allow these students to successfully enroll in and complete college without considerable debt. To promote college access and success for low-income, first-generation students, Congress should maintain, and even *increase*, Pell Grant funding.

Alongside reducing prices for low-income students, we also must simplify the financial aid process so students and families can easily access the funds they need to cover college costs. This issue of financial aid simplification is deeper than debating the number of questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Rather, the entire financial aid process should evolve to meet the needs of the neediest students. We recommend three targeted simplifications that will ease students' interaction with the FAFSA:

- *Leverage Technology* – The FAFSA has evolved in recent years, allowing parents and students to electronically transfer their tax information into the form using the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Data Retrieval Tool (DRT). This change has enabled applicants to skip up to 20 FAFSA questions.[xxiii] The electronic form also includes skip logic to reduce the need for students to answer questions that are irrelevant to their circumstances. The Department of Education should continue to use technology to streamline the application process where possible.

- *Use Prior-Prior Year (PPY) Income Data* – In order to take advantage of the DRT, students are required to submit tax data for a calendar year that has not yet ended or is barely over when college applications are typically due. Recent Department of Education data

show that over 4 million student aid applicants are unable to use the DRT because they apply for aid before they have filed their taxes.[xxiv] Using prior-prior year tax data, which are already in the IRS system would eliminate this problem and make the FAFSA completion process much easier for many students and families.[xxv]

- *Restore Auto-Zero EFC Income Threshold to $30,000* – In the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, the income threshold for students to automatically qualify for a zero ($0) Expected Family Contribution (EFC) was set at $30,000.[xxvi] Budget cuts in 2012 reduced this income threshold to $23,000.[xxvii] It has since been raised to its current level of $24,000. Restoring this threshold to $30,000, however, will simplify the process for students who are very low-income and for whom little is gained by answering more questions on the FAFSA.

3. *Strengthen federal support for TRIO and GEAR UP programs to improve postsecondary education opportunities for low-income and first-generation college students.*

A key component to improving opportunities for low-income and first-generation students is the need to ensure that they are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. This means that we must strengthen federal support of assistance targeted to low-income individuals and first-generation college students as they progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postsecondary graduation.

On the federal level, several college outreach, early intervention, and preparation programs focus on helping to prepare students for postsecondary education success. The GEAR UP program provides early intervention services to middle and high school students designed to increase college attendance and success and raise the expectations of low-income students. Not only does GEAR UP help to increase students college aspirations, it also prepares them academically and offers guidance for navigating the college process. Although it serves over 550,000 students, with a stronger investment, it could help many more.

Similarly, the Federal TRIO programs (TRIO)—including Upward Bound, Student Support Services (SSS), and Talent Search—provide a variety of outreach and student support services to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds that have the goal of attending and graduating from postsecondary education. The SSS program, in particular, has an impact on college retention as evidenced by a recent study that showed SSS participants had a B.A. attainment rate of 38 percent, which was 24 percentage points higher than predicted if they had not received any supplemental services.[xxviii]

As the Subcommittee begins the HEA reauthorization process, there should be a continued commitment at the federal level to these programs as college outreach, early intervention, and preparation programs often can make the difference as to whether low-income and first-generation college students access, pursue, and complete postsecondary education.

4. *Set high expectations for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and support MSIs that serve students well.*

To support the role that MSIs play in helping low-income and first-generation college students enroll and complete postsecondary education, the federal government provides support for the HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, AANAPISIs, and PBIs and should maintain this support during this HEA reauthorization. To enhance this support, federal policy should set high expectations for all institutions of higher education—including MSIs—just as it should encourage high expectations for all students. As such, federal funds should be accompanied by expectations for institutional performance and improvement to target dollars toward institutions that are enrolling underrepresented students *and* serving them well.

Furthermore, the Department of Education should expedite efforts to support MSIs' use of data for improvement purposes. The Department should update data reporting requirements for Title III and Title V grants and create data feedback tools that would help institutions understand their performance and how they can improve it. As mentioned earlier, thoughtful use of data by educators can help increase student success, so we should work to put the best tools in the hands of practitioners at the institutions serving the most disadvantaged students.

V. Conclusion

In closing, I would like to thank you again for providing this opportunity to offer guidance on strategies for supporting college access and completion for low-income and first generation college students. The recommendations outlined are important for helping students to meet personal and career goals, but also for meeting the nation's economic competiveness goals.

As you move forward to reauthorize HEA, please know that I, along with my team at IHEP, are happy to serve as a resource and partners in this effort. Working together we can better serve students. By crafting a system that helps students meet their degree attainment and workforce-readiness goals, federal postsecondary policy becomes better positioned to serve its intended role—to help ensure that all students have a real chance to receive a quality, affordable education that not only transforms their lives, but also strengthens the fabric of society.

Notes

[i] See Cunningham, A., Cooper, M. A., Leegwater, L., and Smith, E. (2012). *Supporting First-Generation College Students Through Classroom-Based Practices*. Washington, DC.: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/issue_brief_walmart_msi_supporting_fgs_september_2012.pdf

[ii] The term "first-generation student" may also be used to refer to students whose parents did not earn a degree.

[iii] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. NPSAS: 08*. Data Analysis System. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009166.pdf

[iv] See Nunez, A., and Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998). *First-Generation Students: Undergraduates Whose Parents Never Enrolled in Higher Education. NCES 98–082*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98082.pdf; Inman, W. E., and Mayes, L. (1999). *The Importance of Being First: Unique Characteristics of First-Generation Community College Students*. Community College Review 26, no. 4: 3–22. Retrieved from: http://www.sagepub.com/frankfort-nachmiasstudy5/articles/Chapter11inmanandmayes.pdf; and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. NPSAS: 08*. Data Analysis System. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009166.pdf

[v] Nunez, A., and Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998) and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009); Choy, S. (2001). *Students Whose Parents Did Not Go to College: Postsecondary Access, Persistence, and Attainment, NCES 2001–126*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001072_Essay.pdf; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009); and Tym, C., McMillion, R., Barone, S. and Webster, J. (2004). *First-Generation College Students: A Literature Review*. Austin, TX: TG Research and Analytical Services. Retrieved from: https://www.tgslc.org/pdf/first_generation.pdf.

[vi] Among students beginning college in 2003–04, 15 percent of first-generation students earned a bachelor's degree after six years, compared to 45 percent of students whose parent(s) had a bachelor's degree; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS:04/09). Powerstats.

[vii] See Cunningham, A., Park, E., and Engle, J. (2014). *Minority-Serving Institutions: Doing More with Less*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/msis_doing_more_w-less_final_february_2014-v2.pdf

[viii] Harmon, N. (2012). *The Role of Minority-Serving Institutions in National College Completion Goals*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/the_role_of_msis_final_january_20121.pdf

[ix] Unless cited otherwise, data in this section come from IPEDS surveys in the 2011–12 academic year, the most recently available data at the time of analysis. For this section, we included 4,544 degree-granting, undergraduate-serving institutions (public, private, and for-profit), including 634 MSIs and 3,910 non-MSIs. AANAPISIs are excluded from the definition of MSIs for this analysis and are included as non-MSIs. Also, some MSIs have more than one designation (e.g., HSI and PBI). These institutions are unduplicated in analyses that aggregate MSIs, but are duplicated in analyses that disaggregate by MSI type.

[x] Based on 12-month unduplicated enrollment, in degree-granting, undergraduate-serving institutions.

[xi] Bustillos, L.T. (2012). *Rethinking Remedial Education: The Role of MSIs in Serving Under-Prepared Students in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/remedial_education_lumina_msis_final_november_2012.pdf

[xii] Using the bachelor's or equivalent sub-cohort (four-year institutions) and completers of bachelor's or equivalent degrees within 150 percent of normal time.

[xiii] Using degree/certificate-seeking students (two-year institutions) and completions within 150 percent of normal time.

[xiv] See Cooper, M., Leegwater, L., and Smith, E (2012). *Supporting First-Generation College Students Through Classroom-Based Practices*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/issue_brief_walmart_msi_supporting_fgs_september_2012.pdf

[xv] Yeado, J., Haycock, K., Johnstone, R., and Chaplot, P. (2014). *Learning from High-Performing and Fast-Gaining Institutions*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust. Retrieved from: http://1k9gl1yevnfp2lpq1dhrqe17.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PracticeGuide1.pdf.

[xvi] PostsecData Collaborative (2014). *Postsecondary Data Collaborative comments on IPEDS Outcome Measures*, Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/data-at-work/postsecdata_comments_on_ipeds_outcome_measures_trp_dec_2014.pdf; Voight, M., Long, A., Huelsman, M., and Engle, J. (2014). *Mapping the Postsecondary Data Domain: Problems and Possibilities*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/M-R/mapping_postsecondary_data_part_1_final_march_2014-v2.pdf

[xvii] PostsecData Collaborative (2014). *Postsecondary Data Collaborative Comments on IPEDS Outcome Measures*, Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/data-at-work/postsecdata_comments_on_ipeds_outcome_measures_trp_dec_2014.pdf.

[xviii] Voight, M., Long, A., Huelsman, M., and Engle, J. (2014). *Mapping the Postsecondary Data Domain: Problems and Possibilities*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/M-R/mapping_postsecondary_data_part_1_final_march_2014-v2.pdf; PostsecData Collaborative (2015). *Postsecondary Data Collaborative Comments on College Ratings System*, Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/data-at-work/postsecondary_data_collaborative_-_college_ratings_comments.pdf; PostsecData Collaborative (2014). *Postsecondary Data Collaborative Comments on Pay As You Earn Negotiated Rulemaking Agenda.* Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/resources/ihep_paye_negotiated_rulemaking_comments_-_final.pdf.

[xix] PostsecData Collaborative (2015). *Postsecondary Data Collaborative Letter in Response to Senate HELP Committee White Paper on Consumer Information*, Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/resources/postsecdata_collaborative_help_response.pdf.

[xx] Ibid.

[xxi] Reimherr, P., Harmon, T., Strawn, J., & Choitz, V. (2013). *Reforming Student Aid: How to Simplify Tax Aid and Use Performance Metrics to Improve College Choices and Completion*. Retrieved from: http://www.clasp.org/documents/Final-RADD-WhitePaper-Feb-2013.pdf

[xxii] Alisa F. Cunningham, Eunkyoung Park, and Jennifer Engle (2014). *Minority-Serving Institutions: Doing More with Less.* Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/msis_doing_more_w-less_final_february_2014-v2.pdf

[xxiii] The Institute for College Access and Success (2014). *The Institute for College Access and Success Letter to President Barack Obama Regarding Use of Prior Prior Year Income Data*. Retrieved from: http://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/PPY_coalition_letter.pdf.

[xxiv] Ibid.

[xxv] Ibid.

[xxvi] Dependent students and independent students with dependents other than a spouse are eligible for the auto-zero EFC, but independent students without dependents are not eligible.

[xxvii] Federal Student Aid (2012). *2012-2013 Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Formula Guide*. Retrieved from: http://www.ifap.ed.gov/efcformulaguide/010512EFCFormulaGuide1213.html.

[xxviii] Bradford W. Chaney, B.W. (2010). *National Evaluation of Student Support Services: Examination of Student Outcomes After Six Years*. Westat for U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, Apr. 2010. Retrieved from: http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/student-support/final-report.pdf .

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Dr. Cooper.

Dr. May, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF DR. JOE D. MAY, CHANCELLOR, DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, DALLAS, TEXAS

Mr. MAY. Thank you, Madam Chair, and Ranking Member Hinojosa, and members of the subcommittee.

The Dallas County Community College District comprises seven colleges and supports more than 100,000 students through our 7,000 employees. You described the problem so well in your opening comments, and we witness the same: Changing demographics among our students has prompted changes in how we help students and how we prepare them to enter the workforce and earn a living wage.

Every college in the Dallas County Community College District is a minority-serving institution, with diverse representation among Africa-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Latinos. Six of our seven colleges are Hispanic-serving institutions, and the seventh is predominantly African-American. As a predominantly HSI system, Dallas community colleges offer Latino students support through TRIO programs and other services, as well.

Since being designated as HSIs, the Dallas County Community College District colleges have closed the gaps in three key areas: District Hispanic enrollment reflects the demographics of Dallas County at 37.1 percent, and 39 percent in terms of completion of degrees; course performance with Hispanic students successfully completing attempted credit hours has gone up; and credentials with Hispanic students earning 31 percent of those awarded in our most recent year of 2014.

We emphasize completion and credentials so that students can be ready to earn a living wage and build a career. In our colleges that serve the most Hispanic students, student support service staff members use a case management approach to guide students through their academic pursuits, and we will provide the data in terms of the success of that approach.

As a result, 75 percent of the TRIO participants at Mountain View College are members of student associations, such as student government, Phi Theta Kappa, and athletic teams. Last year, almost 70 percent of Dallas County colleges' Hispanic students successfully completed their courses. Both TRIO and Title V services are not only important, they are essential to continue to grow our workforce and build the middle class.

We have engaged with Texas Completes, a statewide community college initiative to share data and strategies to improve student outcomes. Efforts through this partnership have led to an increase of 42 percent in certificates and an increase in 33 percent in associate degrees at—in Dallas from 2010 to 2014.

Our dual credit and early college high school programs offer additional options for at-risk students. Dual credit enables high school students to earn transferable college credits.

Dallas County colleges provide dual credit tuition free to our students. Dual credit students also earn more credits per semester than our traditional students, which places at-risk students in a much stronger position toward completion.

Our six early college high schools enroll 2,000 students, with Hispanics comprising 40 percent. They also account for 34.8 percent of the 700 early college high school students who graduate with both a high school diploma and a 2-year associate degree. Three of these schools have achieved National Blue Ribbon status.

Today everyone needs some education beyond high school. There are simply no jobs for those who do not have a credential that gives them the tools to earn a living wage.

And I believe in order to ensure that the middle class dreams of our students become a reality that Congress can affect positive change. I would like to leave you with four recommendations.

One, as the nation's demographics shift, an analysis should be conducted to ensure that TRIO funds are available to institutions that are early in the transition of serving minority and low-income students. Guidelines should be broadened to encourage partnerships with faith-based community organizations and others that are supporting the needs of similar populations.

Two, rather than keep TRIO programs separate from others within the institution, they should be integrated in a manner that ensures that the number of students served is not limited by federal dollars. The approach currently taken has the impact of capping who is served. This cap could easily be removed by requiring integration with existing services.

Increasingly, the fastest-growing HSI colleges are community colleges. As community colleges enroll over half of Hispanics in higher education, this designation is important to help them design successful strategies around student success and STEM. A continued emphasis should be placed on improving completion rates and student success.

Four, in addition to partnerships—partnerships should be broadened to encourage the development and implementation of early college high schools, as this approach has a proven record of improving high school graduation rates, college readiness, reducing time to degree, and improving GPAs, and improving college completion.

Thank you for your time and your attention today, and for your support of our students.

[The testimony of Dr. May follows:]

Dr. Joe May
Chancellor, Dallas County Community Colleges District

United States of America House of Representatives Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training – April 30, 2015

"Improving College Access and Completion for Low-Income and First-Generation Students"

Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and members of the Committee. I am honored to be with you today. My name is Joe May, chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District. On behalf of the great state of Texas, I want to thank you and members of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training for inviting me to participate in your important deliberations on Improving College Access and Completion for Low-Income and First-Generation Students. The Dallas County Community College District comprises seven colleges that support more than 100,000 students with our 7,000 employees.

Our district promotes student success and the removal of barriers that can prevent them from achieving success. As we have witnessed nationally and locally, changing demographics among our students have prompted changes in how we help them earn a credential, enter the workforce and obtain a living wage.

DCCCD is a Minority Serving Institution, with diverse representation among African and Asian Americans and Latinos. Six of our seven colleges are Hispanic Serving Institutions; the seventh is predominantly African-American. As a predominantly HSI system, DCCCD offers Latino students support measures through TRIO programs and Title V, in addition to early college high schools, STEM programs and dual credit.

In Dallas, the Hispanic population has grown 22 percent, while the number of Dallas residents living in poverty has more than doubled at 52 percent since 2000. While the number of new jobs has increased, people living in poverty cannot access those jobs because 63 percent of the new positions require a least an associate degree or certificate. In fact, 20,000 of our 100,000 students are living in poverty; and, of these, 58.6 percent are Hispanic.

Since being designated as HSIs, DCCCD colleges have closed the gaps in three key areas: 1) district Hispanic enrollment, reflecting the demographics of Dallas; 2) course completion, with Hispanic students completing at the same rate as other groups; and 3) credentials, with Hispanic students earning 31 percent of those awarded in 2014.

Talent Search is enabling us to work with high school students to prepare for college. Upward Bound is assisting our Latino students with the transition to college. Student Support Services is helping them complete the degree. We emphasize completion and credentials so that students can earn a living wage and build a career. Whether in high school or college, students served by TRIO programs have to juggle schools, jobs, and family. These circumstances follow them to college, and TRIO staff provide mentoring and monitoring. At our colleges that serve the most Hispanic students, Student Support Services staff members use case management keep students

engaged in school. As a result, 75 percent of the TRIO participants at Mountain View College are members of student associations, such as student government, Phi Theta Kappa and athletic teams. Last year, almost 70 percent of DCCCD's Hispanic students successfully completed their courses. Both TRIO and Title V services are essential to continue to grow our workforce and the middle class.

We have also engaged with Texas Completes, a statewide multi-college initiative to share data and strategies to improve student outcomes. Efforts through this partnership have led to an increase of 42 percent in certificates and an increase of 33 percent in associate degrees at DCCCD from 2010 to 2014.

Our dual credit and early college high school programs offer additional options for at-risk students. Dual credit enables high school students to earn transferable college credits. DCCCD provides dual credit tuition free to students. Dual credit students also earn more credits per semester than our traditional students, which places at-risk students on the path to completion.

Our six early college high schools enroll nearly 2,000 students; Hispanics comprise 40 percent. They also account for 34.8 percent of the 700 early college high school students who graduate with both a high school diploma and associate degree. Three of these schools have achieved National Blue Ribbon status.

Today, everyone needs education beyond high school. There are no jobs for those who do not have a credential that gives them the tools to earn a living wage.

I believe, in order to ensure that the middle-class dreams of our students become reality, that Congress can affect positive change.

I would like to leave you with four recommendations:

1. As the nation's demographics shift, an analysis should be conducted to ensure that TRIO funds are available to institutions that are early in the transition of serving minority and low income students. Guidelines should be broadened to encourage partnerships with other community organizations that are supporting the needs of similar populations.

2. Rather than keep TRIO programs separate from others within the institution, they should be integrated to ensure that the number of students served is not limited by Federal dollars. The approach currently taken has the impact of capping who is served. This cap could easily be removed by requiring integration with existing services.

3. Increasingly, the fastest growing HSI colleges are community colleges. As community colleges enroll over half of Hispanics in higher education, this designation helps them design successful strategies around student success and STEM. A continued emphasis should be placed on improving completion rates.

4. In addition, partnerships should be broadened to encourage the implementation of Early College High Schools as this approach has a proven record of improving

high school graduation rates, college readiness, reducing time to degree, improving GPAs, and improving college completion.

Because the largest-growing population in this nation is Latino AND because most HSIs are community colleges, which serve more than half of this nation's college-going Latinos, we believe that ensuring the support of these designated institutions helps our country achieve its goal to graduate more skilled individuals who can compete in the global marketplace and raise the living standards of their communities.

Thank for your time, your attention today, and your support for our students.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Dr. May.

I want to thank all of you for great presentations.

I would now like to recognize my colleague, Mr. Curbelo, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. CURBELO. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

And I thank the ranking member, as well, and the witnesses, for making some time for us this morning.

Dr. Alexander, you mentioned the Academic Advancement Program during your testimony that serves as a summer bridge program for entering freshmen and transfers. Florida International University, in the district I represent, also offers a summer bridge program that has helped students transition from high school to college.

FIU has also created programs intended to help low-income and first-generation students gain access and the proper preparation to be successful during their experience in higher ed. I am proud to report that FIU is one of the nation's largest, most diverse institutions in higher education, with over 54,000 students and 200,000 alumni. Nearly 53 percent of FIU's undergraduate student body will be the first generation in their families to attain a college degree.

To maximize access and completion, FIU has revolutionized student advising, created outside partnerships and initiatives, and leveraged Pell Grants and funding. And FIU has a strong partnership with Miami-Dade County public schools, focused on high school student success through dual enrollment and other programs.

They are hoping to incentivize a K–12 higher ed collaboration through their program called ACCESS, which is chaired by Superintendent Alberto Carvalho and President Mark Rosenberg. So far, the programs have been very successful promoting enrollment and graduation rates.

How do you think we can incentivize more of these types of partnerships between K–12 and higher ed to ease the transition for students and improve access for low-income, first-generation, and minority students?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you for that question.

One of the programs that we conduct at UCLA is called the Vice Provost Initiative for Pre-College Scholars. It is a cohort program that works with eight high schools, and basically what happens is students are recruited after their ninth grade year and they are part of a cohort that enters the university during the summers—2 weeks during—between their sophomore and junior year, 5 weeks, between their junior and senior year.

And the idea is to provide them this college readiness, this preparation, these workshops, in collaboration with their parents, so their parents partner in this pathway that we have created for these students to enter to the university. These students have been highly successful.

Many have gone to other schools besides UCLA, though we try to recruit them, but they have been highly successful to the extent that the program was funded by a huge foundation grant, but now we are seeking institutional funding for the program itself. The students also receive a scholarship from the university—those who

enroll in UCLA—a 4-year scholarship to help them with matriculating towards a degree.

Mr. CURBELO. Thank you.

And, Madam Chair, I want to ask an open question to anyone who will take it during my allotted time.

I was with President Dona Shalala of the University of Miami earlier this week and she tells me that one of the greatest burdens on higher ed today is compliance, and that they are constantly having to deviate resources from student services to compliance. Do you any of you have any ideas as to what we can do to perhaps relieve the regulatory burden on our universities and colleges so that they have, in turn, more resources to dedicate to students—specifically the students we are discussing here today, the ones that most need the help?

Ms. COOPER. I think that we definitely have to be mindful of the regulatory burden that institutions are certainly very vocal about and bringing to our attention. There are several things that I think could be done, and I think we need to first of all consider what are we asking them and whether or not it continues to be appropriate for the current context.

Many questions and many of the things required currently in these reporting requirements are outdated; we simply no longer need them. And I think we need to start and focus on what are the kinds of questions that we need to ask, and what are the types of metrics that we need to gather in order to be able to answer them effectively.

I would suggest looking at things like access, progression, cost, and post-college outcomes to start. I also note that there has recently been a regulatory task force that was convened by the American Council on Education that looked at this issue, and I think that they have some good recommendations, as well, that offer us a starting point.

Mr. CURBELO. Thank you very much.

My time is about to expire, but I want to thank all the witnesses.

And thank you, Madam Chair, for scheduling this important hearing.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you.

Mr. Hinojosa, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx.

Dr. May, I was very pleased to hear you discuss the role of early college high schools. I believe that in my congressional district down in South Texas, Region One Education Service Center, which represents students from Laredo, Texas to Brownsville, Texas, 200-mile geographic area, is leading the state of Texas with 33 of these early college high school programs.

Many students are coming out of high school with 2 years of college and their associate degree free of charge. In fact, we are working with one of our hospitals, Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, to implement a pilot program, first of its kind in the nation, which would graduate high school students with an R.N. degree.

How do you believe the federal government can help expand this exemplary model throughout the nation?

Mr. MAY. Well, one—and thank you very much. I am a early college high school enthusiast because it works. We see students often

enter in the ninth grade with only being 6 percent college-ready in mathematics graduate, and we have 100 percent of our students who graduate from high school college-ready in all areas, with well over a 90 percent completion rate; 40 percent of those are graduating with a high school diploma and an associate's degree.

So I think the encouragement here are a couple of things. One, right now, even through data collection and reporting, we don't collect and look at what is going on with dual enrollment programs between community colleges and schools or early college programs, either. That would be a—I think a goal worthy of tracking, because the results of these efforts are absolutely astounding when you look at the success of—

Mr. HINOJOSA. That information that you say that we are lacking is something that I have heard in Texas. Dr. Steve Murdock, I think he has an office at Rice University, a famous demographer, and he has a lot of data that when I heard Dr. Cooper give so much information on all the MSIs, it sounds like some of what he has used in some of his speeches.

And I think that you are right, we need to collect more information on each and every one of the MSIs, because that is the only way that we are going to be able to prescribe the right programs and methods so that we can increase those graduation rates.

Mr. MAY. I agree. If parents can make better decisions for their children while they are in high school they will do so, and simply assuming that they are going to figure it out on their own without some assistance with that is less likely to happen than if we can provide that information that clarifies the importance of programs like early college high schools and others that can lead to student success.

Mr. HINOJOSA. I want to share with you that I came to Congress in 1997 and I learned what HSI meant: Hispanic-serving institutions. And I saw that the funding by the appropriators was $10 million a year for what was listed as 100 HSIs, and once they doled out the money, which was crumbs, maybe 20 or 30 HSIs really got money.

So I worked on trying to do something about that, and I am the author of Title V of the Education Code. And obviously I believe that it is a vital component in helping low-income and first-generation students, as we are discussing here, to provide targeted assistance to all MSIs, which serve larger numbers of these students.

How did Title V HSI funds support your ability to improve completion rates for your students in Dallas?

Mr. MAY. Well, it is—they are critical. With Mountain View College and El Centro College, we have focused on moving our Hispanic students into STEM programs. We have given a great deal of not only individual support, but encouraged them to engage in student clubs and organizations so that they can be a part of a cohort that are moving forward with like interests.

Not only have we seen our student persistence increase as a result of that strategy; we have seen a growth of majors in STEM degrees. That has been a large part of our enrollment increase that has occurred as we have been able to make that happen.

And in fact, we were able to use the Title V funds as part of an overall initiative in order to put—

Mr. HINOJOSA. I wish I had another 5 minutes to keep talking with you.

Mr. MAY. Thank you very much.

Mr. HINOJOSA. But, Dr. Cooper, I compliment you on your facts. Your remarks are excellent, as all of your remarks are, but I was especially interested in seeing how HSIs has gone from 100 to over 400 HSIs. And thank goodness that Congress has sense enough to increase the investments in minority-serving institutions, because we have increased enrollment in community colleges and universities by over 30 percent in the last 4 years.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Hinojosa.

Mr. Allen, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And thank you, to our panel—distinguished panel, for joining us today. It is good to have you and good to learn more about the education process, and particularly higher education.

I am a new member of Congress and I come from the business community, so I understand a little bit about, you know, giving folks the opportunity to have a good-paying job. And one thing I have learned about education is the reason for education is preparing folks to get a good job.

The other thing that I learned in business was that, you know, folks are wired different ways. And if we can find out how—you know, where their passions are, they tend to really excel when they get—understand their passions and are allowed to pursue those passions.

And, you know, from an accountability standpoint, you know, I believe every young American should have the opportunity to explore paths after high school, and I think we need to do it after high school and before they spend 4 years on an undergraduate degree and then say, "Okay, what do I do now?"

And, you know, the issue that I see is that, you know, the traditional 4-year degree is a process, but it doesn't guarantee a good-paying job anymore. The traditional route is not the only path to a job, and many good-paying technical jobs go unfilled both in our district and all across the country. Businesses are practically waiting for young, hardworking Americans to step up to the plate.

You all mentioned high school programs. Do these programs inform students of technical-type jobs that may be available to them and how they may seek those? And what are some ways that we can promote vocational learning to the low-income students?

And I will just throw that out to anyone who would like to address that.

Mr. MAY. I would be glad to comment on that. I really think the—you are exactly right.

The earlier we can engage—higher education can engage with students while they are still in high school is very important to be a part of that communication. The rate of change is so fast that many students, parents, and teachers struggle to keep up with that.

That is why, I mentioned earlier, why I think programs like early college high schools, where we integrate the higher education

and the college while the student is still in school are very important programs. They are not for everyone, but they work.

Others, where we can engage in dual credit programs, where a student again can begin to earn high school credit. The important fact that we have learned from that is that our students in high school can actually take—are taking a little heavier—slightly heavier load than our full-time students who are coming in as freshman, meaning that we are actually accelerating not only time to degree, but the chance that they are going to be successful and be able to get—enter a career and get that great job.

Mr. ALLEN. Any other comments?

Yes?

Ms. PERNA. So there is some research that suggests the value of helping students to understand early in the educational pipeline the different types of employment possibilities. The research suggests that having that understanding about how—what types of opportunities are available helps—makes education more relevant, helps them understand the many different types of pathways that we have.

Part of the challenge that we have in our higher education system is that there are so many different types of postsecondary options. And you are right, the data suggests that not everyone needs a 4-year college degree. But the data also do suggest that most need some education beyond high school.

And so I think part of the challenge is for folks to be able to understand what that range of choices is, what the benefits and the costs of those different options are, and how we make sure that we really do have real choice for folks.

Mr. ALLEN. You know, when my parents grew up they went to work first and then went to college. And of course, they kind of found their path and then said, "Okay, now I am going to go to college." And once you get that 4-year degree, then it allows you to move on to the next level.

You know, the federal government has invested much time and resources into college access for low-income students. Despite this fact, these students still complete their degrees at lower rates. What can we do to improve the graduation rates for our low-income students?

And again, I would throw that out to whoever would like to take that question.

Ms. PERNA. So it is a really complex problem. There is no one answer to this.

So in order to improve college attainment we really have to focus on the academic readiness for success. We have to focus on the ability to pay. And we have to focus on making sure folks have the knowledge and information and support that they need to navigate these pathways.

Mr. ALLEN. Okay.

Ms. PERNA. Broad strokes—

Mr. ALLEN. All right.

Well, thank you again.

And I will yield back the—I have no time left.

Chairwoman FOXX. I now recognize the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Scott, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thank you and Representative Hinojosa for convening the hearing.

This hearing is actually fairly timely. Just this past Monday one of the largest for-profit college systems in the nation, Corinthian Incorporated, shut its doors, and that was after being hit with a $30 million fine by the Department of Agriculture and—excuse me, Department of Education—and being denied access to student financial assistance because of findings such as misrepresentation to accrediting agencies and students about their placement rates.

When you find such false advertising, it is appropriate for the Department of Education to take action. There were other institutions that may be doing the same things, and we need the Department of Education to take the appropriate action when there are specific findings of misconduct.

Now, we all know that a quality postsecondary education is a proven path to the middle class, and we have heard comments about the need for some education past the high school level in order to participate in today's economy. But the high cost of postsecondary education and the sharp reductions in student aid are making it very difficult for low-income and first-generation students to participate.

Many years ago, when the Pell Grant started, it covered about 75 percent of the cost of attending a 4-year public institution, and you heard people talk about working their way through college. Get a summer job and a part-time job during the year and you have got enough to close the gap and graduate with virtually no loans.

Now the Pell Grant covers about a third of that cost, and even less than that for a private college, and working your way through college, even at 40 hours a week, is problematic without coming out with a debt the size of their parents' mortgages.

So we have to protect the access to college, and also we have to protect the ability of those with financial strains to actually graduate.

Just start off with a couple of questions.

Dr. Perna, you mentioned the financial aid form. Are people actually not filling it out because of the complications?

Ms. PERNA. Yes. There is some evidence that suggests that low-income students who are eligible to receive a Pell Grant attend college but they haven't applied for the aid.

Mr. SCOTT. Is that because of the complication of the form?

Ms. PERNA. Well, that is what the—that is one hypothesis on this, and it seems to suggest, given the complexity of the form. And what we know through qualitative research, in terms of understanding how folks, especially low-income students and students for whom college is the—they are the first in their families to attend college, filling out the form is overwhelming, to some extent there is a distrust in the process.

Mr. SCOTT. What are your findings about the financial strain as a factor in completing college?

Ms. PERNA. Financial strain is certainly an important issue, and it plays out in several different respects. So as you discussed, there are only so many mechanisms that students have available to pay the cost of college. One is loans, and there is evidence that shows

that some students are averse to taking out loans, and so, you know, that is one source—

Mr. SCOTT. And so they drop out?

Ms. PERNA. Drop out or choose not to attend at all. Or they decide to work to try to pay the cost through paid employment, and that is also a tremendous source of strain for students.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

Dr. May, you mentioned the coalition works together to come up with ideas that work. What kind of ideas did they come up with?

Mr. MAY. Seven colleges within the state—mostly urban but also one rural institution—where we are really diving deep in the data to look at what is really working and what is not working. One of the initial—we really focused on what is going on with developmental education. As you know, the—many students get into developmental education and never get out, and never complete their degree.

So we have collectively begun a process of overhauling and redesigning developmental education. In our case we have reduced enrollment, as a result of the data that we have used for this, by 46 percent this coming year in dual enrollment classes, but providing additional support to help students as they are working through regular courses to be successful with that.

We have found that as we look at what gets in the way, that we need to help them speed up time. Time is not a friend to many students in completing the degree, so that is part—one example.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Dr. Perna, what specific gaps do you see in available research regarding the success of college access programs, and what do you see as the repercussions of these gaps in terms of best serving low-income and first-generation students?

Ms. PERNA. Thank you, Chairwoman.

So one of the important gaps in the research has to do with understanding what services work for which groups of students in which particular context. So we have a lot of variation in these programs, which is appropriate, given the number of different types of needs and places in which these programs are operating, and programs are doing a whole host of different types of things.

There is some research around whether programs work, yes or no, and that research generally shows on average that college access programs, for example, do increase college enrollment. But we know less about what it is within those programs that is making the biggest difference.

Chairwoman FOXX. Dr. May, can you tell us a little bit more about the Texas Completes initiatives? Have you worked with other community colleges around Texas to share the best practices for serving low-income and first-generation students? And have you changed any of your strategies for serving these students as a result of any collaboration that you had?

Mr. MAY. Madam Chair, the Texas Completes I think is unique in that what these colleges have agreed to do is share data we normally wouldn't share with each other and to benchmark ourselves against each other in the process so that we can really get a sense

among many institutions as to what is working and what is not working. And it has been quite revealing and really has resulted in many changes within our organization.

I mentioned developmental education, but also it has impacted how we advise students, understanding that what students are looking for is a clear pathway to not only a degree, but a future, so we have changed that, restructuring, in many cases, the—those types of support services that we make available.

Two, we have—in our developmental education we have invested—decreased the number of courses but increased tutorial support and mentoring support to help students be successful. As we have seen, that began to change the actual numbers, with more students being successful.

Also, we have realized that we have got to do a better job of encouraging students to go into STEM programs, and then what gets in the way of them completing those. So we have seen the completion in those areas go up dramatically as we have been able to share data and compare programs.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much.

Dr. Alexander, you mentioned that you oversee—your program oversees one TRIO program. Have you noticed any particular regulatory burdens or programmatic constraints inherent in that program that keep you from being as innovative as you can be with your other AAP programs serving low-income students?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Chairwoman Foxx, there are some glitches in some of the TRIO regulation that keeps us from doing some of the things that we do with some of the other programs. Certainly, you know, some of the requirements of TRIO programs are pretty specific as relates to activities, and some of the things that we do with other programs allows us to use more discretionary funding to enrich students' academic backgrounds.

And so that is probably the one area in which we have had some challenges, but other than that, you know, our program has been quite successful.

We have actually had a student support services program in the past, as well, and some of the technicalities around that, particularly with the prior experience points, sometimes can be quite challenging, so—

Chairwoman FOXX. In the very short time I have left, could you talk a little bit about your—the unique experiences of working with transfer students?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Certainly. We actually have a Center for Community College Partnerships that works with 24 community colleges in the L.A. Basin, and the idea behind that is to send students who have transferred into UCLA back to their home institutions to help other students with the application and college readiness process.

We also have a Transfer Alliance Program, which our faculty and our administrators work with community college faculty in terms of getting their courses up to par so that students actually can have transferrable courses that count towards a degree when they enter the university. So it has been a longstanding collaborative experience for us.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jeffries, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx.

And let me also thank the witnesses for your presence and testimony here today.

Fifty years ago seemed throughout much of America there were robust opportunities connected to manufacturing jobs and factory jobs in much of the country that would allow an American to have a pathway toward the middle class without having to obtain a college education. Those days have subsequently abandoned us. It seems many of those factory and manufacturing jobs have moved overseas and aren't available to Americans.

So we are in a situation now where increasingly, many of the jobs in our economy are going to require some higher education. I think in about 5 years I have seen statistics suggesting that more than 65 percent of the jobs will actually require a college degree.

And so given this changing sort of landscape that we find ourselves in, maybe we will start with Dr. Perna, I mean, what do you suggest that we do from a federal government perspective in investing in the notion that we are going to have to better prepare a wider number of Americans for successfully completing a higher education in order for us as a country, I think, to remain prepared for our folks to adequately succeed in the 21st century economy?

Ms. PERNA. Thank you, Congressman.

I think that you are asking exactly the right question. I think that this is one of the most important issues facing our country right now.

The data suggests that we cannot achieve the levels of workforce readiness that are required without closing the gaps that exist in educational opportunity. Unfortunately, there is not a simple answer to do this, right, so we have a comprehensive educational system, and there—the ways in which differences in opportunity for high levels of education are structured into our system begin early.

So we have profound differences in academic readiness that happen in the K through 12 schools, so this is an important structural issue that has to be addressed. We also have rising cost of college attendance; you know, the financial barriers are another section of—that has to be addressed. And we have to improve students' ability to navigate the complex pathways that we have.

So, you know, I really see those three different buckets.

The federal government plays a role, but other stakeholders play a role as well. So I think that one role of the federal government is to provide a catalyst and provide leadership to signal the importance of these issues and try to—you know, I think part of what we need to accomplish as a nation is identify the roles and responsibilities of different players in this complex process because there is no one simple, easy thing to do.

Federal government certainly plays an important role historically and needs to continue with regard to financial aid and ensuring that college is affordable to all students. The role with regard to college access programs is important, so in the absence of the types of systemic and structural change in the K through 12 academic system, we need to have these additional support programs in place to help students navigate our system.

And the same is true at the college level. Students need—

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you.

Dr. Alexander, in terms of the shift from a manufacturing, factory-based economy of 50 years ago to, increasingly, an economy anchored in the technology and innovation sectors, what we have got right now, I believe the vacancy rate is somewhere between 20 to 25 percent within the technology and innovation economy across the country. Extraordinarily high vacancy rate.

Companies consistently tell us as members of Congress, "We can't find highly qualified workers to fill these reasonably well-paying jobs even at the entry level, sometimes as high as $70,000, $80,000."

What do we need to do in order to tackle the preparation gap for younger Americans? Because it seems like in these sophisticated fields—science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computer programming—it can't just start at the higher education level. What needs to be done to create a reasonable opportunity for success so that when they get to an institution like UCLA they are prepared to tackle these STEM fields?

Mr. ALEXANDER. In the 10 minutes—10 seconds that I have, actually 7, I agree with Dr. Perna that early preparation is key. Early preparation, K–12, is critical in terms of preparation for these careers that you are mentioning.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Jeffries. You seem to get to the heart of the problem.

Dr. Adams, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And let me thank all of the witnesses who are here today.

You know, we have talked, I guess, a lot about access and affordability, and for me that is key. Without affordability, access doesn't mean very much.

I am one of those first-generation—or I was—first-generation, low-income students. I was able to survive and be successful at the Ohio State University, get my Ph.D. there, because of the North Carolina A&T, an HBCU that prepared me, gave me the skills that I needed that I didn't have when I left high school from New Jersey.

But I want to ask Dr. Cooper about Parent PLUS loans. This program underwent some changes in 2011 that resulted in students who were previously eligible and they were being denied as a result of the changes.

It affected a lot of students, a number of them in North Carolina, their ability to pay tuition. Dramatic effects on HBCUs.

When the problem first surfaced in 2012, 400,000 students nationwide were impacted; 28,000 HBCU students negatively impacted.

So do you believe that the recent changes to this program are enough to fix the problem created by the 2011 changes? And if not, what do you believe we need to do to address this problem?

Ms. COOPER. Thank you for your question.

I think it is unfortunate that the changes to the program denied so many students immediate access to college. Many of them had to drop out mid-semester. And certainly all institutions had the im-

pact of this change in the loan program, but we saw it most dramatically at many of the HBCUs, as you mentioned.

I think it is important that when we think about the changes to the Parent PLUS loan program, as well as any changes to financial aid, is that we keep them in the context of the broader conversation of college affordability, which is a complicated conversation—one that involves the states and their role in supporting affordability, but also institutions and their budgets, as well as the federal government.

So while the federal government certainly controls the federal PLUS loan component of that, we have to have a conversation with the other entities to make sure that college costs are maintaining a more affordable level so that we don't have the types of dramatic impacts that we saw when those changes took place.

Ms. ADAMS. Yes. Thank you very much.

I have spent 40 years teaching at Bennett College in Greensboro, so from another perspective, I certainly understand the plight of these students, and just a few days ago launched the bipartisan HBCU Caucus with my colleague, Bradley Byrne, so we are going to be working hopefully across the aisle and educating folks, because I think that is important.

So, Dr. Cooper, I want to ask you, in terms of the demographics and the students who attend HBCUs. And we know that they are different students, and perhaps if the same demographic of students at HBCUs were at other schools in the—we would have higher graduation rates.

So how would we then measure the success of HBCUs while taking into account that they enroll a significant percentage of low-income, first-generation students?

Ms. COOPER. That is a great question. Thank you.

I think it is absolutely correct that HBCUs enroll a number of students who come with academic challenges. They enroll a number of students who come with financial challenges. And these institutions have historically been chronically underfunded.

So they are really trying to do a lot with the most neediest students.

My advice is to make sure that we are supporting these institutions, but supporting them in ways that foster student outcomes and better student outcomes. We want to make sure that we are creating a viable pathway for these students to come into the institution, to get a degree that gains—earns them some value, but we also want them to graduate.

That is very important and it is a challenge for HBCUs because of the demographic of that population, but it is not impossible. And we have seen evidence of that in many institutions across the country who are really, you know, owning their student population and saying, "We are going to do whatever it takes to serve them well."

So my advice to the federal government is to support that, to show evidence of that, and to raise the visibility of those institutions who are doing a tremendous job. We don't hear about those stories enough.

Ms. ADAMS. One quick comment on Pell Grants and the need for access to these funds year-round, if you could comment on that?

Ms. COOPER. Could you please repeat that for me one more time?

Ms. ADAMS. Pell Grants. We don't have them in the summer anymore. What is your thought about it?

Ms. COOPER. The Pell Grant program is the centerpiece of the financial aid program, and certainly we need them at all these institutions, but minority-serving institutions that are serving high numbers of students who have financial challenges need them tremendously, so we have to make sure that we are investing in that—

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you very much. I am out of time.

Thank you, Madam.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you.

Mr. Polis, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Cooper, our discussion today and the comments and questions really focused on creating opportunities and encourage college completion among low-income and first-generation students. Can you talk about how programs like competency-based education and innovations in that area can provide students the flexibility they need to complete their degree and reduce costs and remove—reduce some of the cost barriers?

Ms. COOPER. Certainly. Thank you.

So programs like competency-based education and a number of these other types of innovations that we see and are hearing more and more about certainly have some promise. I think that we should continue to study them; we should continue to explore the efficacy of them and how they are not only serving students, but providing them with post-college outcomes that give them long-lasting, positive effects.

Mr. POLIS. And do you find that some of the challenges, in particular with low-income students, revolve around scheduling, having to work jobs, and that the flexibility that a competency-based course, perhaps online, might have might make it easier for them to matriculate?

Ms. COOPER. Sometimes that is the case. What we have often found is that for a low-income and first-generation student the best approach is usually either if not—if it can't be fully in a classroom, some type of a hybrid model, where you have some face time that is one-on-one with an instructor as well as the use of technology.

Mr. POLIS. And I also wanted to ask you about the flexibility for Pell dollars. In my district, Colorado State University saw the number of Pell-eligible students enrolling in summer programs double when they were able to use their Pell dollars over the summer term—more on-time graduations, a number of effects. Unfortunately, the flexibility is gone and students who depend on Pell dollars can only use them in the fall and the spring.

What could Pell flexibility mean in particular for low-income and first-generation students?

Ms. COOPER. We certainly know that the year-round Pell program adds value to these low-income students. They are able to enroll at a continuous pace and graduate more on time. So we hope that those types of programs can come back.

Mr. POLIS. And might that be an issue—and again, in particular low-income students, might have to balance work and a schedule might enable them to take one or two classes less each semester,

work a little bit more to support themselves, take classes over summer to supplement that? Is that what can help on—particularly on the low-income student end?

Ms. COOPER. It is the flexibility, as you say. It is the flexibility that accommodates the nuances of their lifestyle.

Mr. POLIS. And, Dr. May, if you care to comment on either of those questions, but I did want to ask you an additional one, as well.

In Colorado we have a very robust dual enrollment program, not only removing some of the economic barriers to high-schoolers getting college credit and associate's degrees, but also having the sort of 360-degree, you know, support that a public school K–12 side can offer. Many students graduate from high school already having completed an associate's degree or at least some college degrees.

Can you talk about the importance of dual enrollment programs for low-income and first-generation students? And can you discuss any models where dual enrollment students could also be Pell eligible?

Mr. MAY. And absolutely. Just to point out, I was the former president of Pueblo Community College and former president of the Colorado Community College System, so I am very familiar with the robust dual enrollment program leading to many students in Colorado to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate degree. That is where we really had the original data to prove that the initiative worked, that if we could get students enrolling in college classes earlier, that we increase dramatically the likelihood they would earn not only bachelor's degree, but an advanced degree.

So I think that is a proven model that needs to be expanded.

I would also, again, kind of reiterate early college high school is a variation of that, and—which is really a more tightly managed process for dual enrollment-type programs in many ways. So they work, and we need to encourage it.

I would also, like I say, just want to comment on the competency-based education. We do see great value, but where we really see that value are for people who what we call have already earned education equity, where they may have been in the military or the workforce and they can bring that previous education right into a college degree without having to retake courses. Again, it accelerates time to degree and gives a reward to an individual who has already been able to demonstrate prior learning.

Mr. POLIS. And what do you think we can do here? Obviously a lot of the dual enrollment programs are locally driven. What type of policies here could encourage and further allow the flexibility for dual enrollment programs?

Mr. MAY. Well, I can tell you, the number one barrier—in most states across the country for a dual enrollment program is the issue of do the high schools get the funding for it or does the community college get the funding for it? They end up in a battle back and forth, and I think clarification that it really is about the student, not about the institutions are the most important aspect of that.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you.

Yield back the balance of my time.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Polis.

Mr. Hinojosa, I recognize you for closing remarks.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx.

This hearing today has been very timely, as Congressman Bobby Scott mentioned. I think that we are going through appropriations bills right now and amongst the cuts that are being discussed are on education and Pell Grants and funding that each and every one of you has said has made a difference in the last 4 years in increasing the enrollment and graduation rate of men and women who in the past have not had the access and affordability to higher education, and so that troubles me.

But I am hoping that both sides of the aisle will see their way clear to continue the investment that increased, as I said, in the past 6 years towards MSIs, because the demographics indicate that Latinos and African-Americans make a majority of the population in my state of Texas and many other states, and that if we are going to have better quality of life for all Americans, we must invest in education, everywhere from very early pre-kinder all the way to what we are discussing here, and that is the community colleges and the universities.

So we thank you for giving us current information that could be used by the leadership of both sides of the aisle and that, with your help, that we can continue to emphasize the recommendations that were made by each one of you, because, as Dr. Foxx said, she understands it and it is very important to her since it impacted her the way that gave her the opportunity to get a higher education, get a doctorate degree, and be chairman of this subcommittee.

I have a bachelor's and a master's degree in business administration and I think that I have really enjoyed my work here 19 years on the Education Committee because I think that we are making a difference in helping get education for all.

So again, we thank you for the work that you are doing, and keep the hope up for those who listen to your remarks everywhere you go to speak, because I think that they will be encouraged by the growth in the population of particularly women and minorities in higher education. And I just hope that in the next 5 years that we can see many more women who are graduating from colleges at a rate of about 55 percent, compared to 45 percent for the men, can go on to serve on corporate boards, to go on to head programs like you all have, and that as a result of that we are going to be able to continue to increase the investments in higher education.

And we thank you for being here.

I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Hinojosa.

This has been, in my opinion, a very good hearing this morning, not just because it is a subject that most of us who are here this morning are very interested in, but I think because you provided a lot of good information to us.

I alluded to it in the beginning, that I have been involved with these programs for a long time. When I stop to think about how long ago that was it is a little surprising to me.

Like Dr. Adams, I have been involved in the education enterprise for a long time. I became involved with Upward Bound in 1972, with Special Services in 1973.

I did that for 4 years and then I was in charge of academic advising and orientation for all new students—transfers and freshmen—at Appalachian State University. Worked for the program for minority students who didn't meet admissions requirements. And one of them I met the other day at the installation of the new chancellor at Appalachian and he really, really made me feel great about his experiences as a result of being in that program. So I know that these programs work in many cases.

Just before Mr. Jeffries said what he said, I had written down to comment that your comments all point back to the inadequate preparation that students have for going to college. And so our problems begin much sooner than the time students present themselves to college.

And here we are in the middle—I mean, in the 21st century, and we have been talking about these issues, again, since I was the director of Upward Bound and Special Services, and yet, we are still talking about them in practically the same ways. I will tell you, it is very frustrating to somebody like me.

And, Dr. Perna, while I am a big proponent of doing more research, and particularly honing in on what works and what doesn't work, in many cases we know what works and what doesn't work.

You all represent—Dr. Alexander, Dr. May—you have shown us. I mean, the programs I ran, I knew what worked and what didn't work. But yet, somehow or another, we can't seem to get that message spread across our culture.

Even Mr. Hinojosa, who is always looking for us to increase funding, said in his program that—I mean, his comments—not just a matter of money. It is a matter of tracking the students. It is a matter working with the students. It is a matter of showing them what is possible.

And it seems to me the examples you all have given, particularly Dr. May, Dr. Alexander, and I think the research, probably, that Dr. Perna is showing, is that the colleges have to take some more responsibility in this area. And it is a vested interest of theirs to do that. It is a vested interest of the states to do this, to say, "We want to invest more money in our students and not just rely on the federal government to do these things."

One of the concerns I have always had is why we don't shift more money into the programs that have proven their successes and say, "Okay, you have proven your success. Let's help you more," and say, "We want more role models."

You know, Mr. Jeffries, again, alluded to the fact that we have a lot of jobs out there. I believe, the staff tells me, the latest number is 5.1 million jobs unfilled in this country because people do not have the skills to fill those jobs.

What is wrong with us, as the greatest nation in the world, that we can't figure out a system to match the people who are unemployed with those jobs? I mean, it isn't a lack of money; it is a lack of will somewhere.

And I think Dr. Perna pointed it out, too. Whose responsibility—who is going to accept this responsibility and how do we define these?

So it is enlightening to hear you all, but it is also a bit frustrating because, again, we have been hearing these stories. I mean,

when I was the director of Upward Bound we talked about this at every meeting—regional meeting: How can we get the institutions to take more responsibility?

Again, seems like we haven't learned a lot in the last 40-some years, or at least people haven't changed their behaviors very much.

So I appreciate you all coming today more than I can tell you, and you have been very kind to share your expertise with us. And I want to thank all of you for your commitment in this area to helping students and to make—and to doing what you can to help other people understand what they can do to help these students, who I think do want to succeed but they do need a lot of guidance.

So thank you very much.

There being no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]