



college forward

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NEW STUDY DOCUMENTS BARRIERS TO COLLEGE SUCCESS FOR FIRST-GENERATION AND LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

College Forward Report Shows College Access Programs Must Think Beyond Test Prep

AUSTIN, TX – College Forward, a nonprofit providing college access and college persistence services, released a new study detailing the barriers economically disadvantaged and first-generation college students face in pursuing a bachelor's degree. The report, entitled *The Price of Persistence: Barriers to Postsecondary Success for Low-Income and First-Generation Students*, identifies enhancements college access programs should adopt to ensure the continued success of students enrolled in higher education.

The study, written by researchers at the University of Houston and funded by the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation, shows college access organizations need to provide more than college entrance exam preparation and application assistance. Areas such as financial literacy, study-skills and access to on-campus resources are critical components that should be included in any program designed to aid disadvantaged students.

Four major curriculum components and plans-of-action are outlined in the study. These include:

- Financial literacy training that extends beyond FAFSA preparation to address issues such as indebtedness and repayment, budget-planning, and the cost and rewards of working full-time versus part-time while enrolled;
- Instilling peripheral, but vital, skills like note-taking, time management, selecting the right degrees and classes to meet personal goals, self-advocacy and forming study groups;
- Creating lasting relationships with college partners so student can access resources and guidance while on campus;
- Urging colleges to prioritize on-campus work/study awards to Pell-eligible students and insisting students continue to submit FAFSA renewals every year.

"For economically disadvantaged and first-generation students, starting college is often a foreign and frightening experience," said Lisa Fielder, founder and Executive Director of College Forward. "This important study demonstrates that college access programs should not be satisfied with getting students into college, but need to provide them with the support to stick with it. We hope *The Price of Persistence* serves as a valuable tool to college access organizations everywhere."

"This study's findings reinforce the urgent need for campuses to carefully attend to a full range of needs of its low-income and first-generation students," said Dr. Catherine Horn, co-writer of *The Price of Persistence*. "Without such efforts, we will continue to lose the fight to close the college completion gap."



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The report was compiled by University of Houston researchers Dr. Horn and Dr. Miguel Ramos. The researchers selected a random sample of 86 College Forward participants and derived data through one-on-one and group interviews with 33 students.

The Price of Persistence has already gained attention within the college access community. Ms. Fielder was recently invited to present the report during the National College Access Network's annual conference and in a subsequent conference call. Joe Vladeck, College Forward's Organizational Advancement Manager, traveled to Toronto, Canada to provide expertise during a series of workshops on improving college access with attendees hailing from Canada, Europe and the U.S.

The Price of Persistence is available online at www.collegeforward.org.

ABOUT COLLEGE FORWARD: College Forward provides college access and college persistence services to motivated, economically-disadvantaged students, in order to facilitate their transition to college and make the process exciting and rewarding. We believe that access to higher education is the right of every young Texan. www.collegeforward.org