



Expanding the Minority Advancement Program for College Completion

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Too many Connecticut 4-year colleges continue to have low rates of completion for minority students. Based on the most recently available federal data, in 2021, seven of Connecticut's 4-year colleges graduated less than half of their enrolled students of color within 150 percent of normal time (6 yrs at 4-year institutions).¹ In Connecticut's community colleges, completion rates for students of color within 150 percent of normal time (3 yrs in community colleges) range from just 6% to under 29%.²

This failure to adequately serve students of color seeking educational opportunity in Connecticut is a civil rights injustice. At times, it can leave students worse off than before they enrolled, if they accumulate debts without earning degrees.

Connecticut should invest in systemic change to address these shortcomings.

Background

There are evidence-based practices to increase retention and completion. For instance, some have been successfully implemented at community colleges in New York City and Ohio, as well as universities in Texas, Florida, and Georgia.

During his first 100 days in office, President Joe Biden proposed a \$62 billion grant program to invest in completion and retention activities at colleges and universities that serve high numbers of low-income students, as part of his [American Families Plan](#). Ultimately the federal program wound up being quite small.

However, Connecticut can invest in its own existing competitive program to increase the success of minority college students. By using robust reporting on implementation and outcomes from grant recipients, this investment will help to develop transformative, proven practices that are scalable across the state.

¹ This analysis is based upon the number of federally reported full-time, undergraduate students by race in Connecticut's 4-year colleges in 2021. (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Retrieved January 2023 at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.)

² This analysis is based upon the number of federally reported degree/certification-seeking students by race in Connecticut's 2-year colleges. (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Retrieved January 2023 at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.)

Connecticut's Minority Advancement Program

Connecticut's Office of Higher Education currently administers a **Minority Advancement Program (MAP)**, which provides *competitive grants to institutions of higher education that are investing in college completion for minority students*. MAP is divided into two programs, one that supports institutions of higher education in developing linkages with middle and high school students (ConnCAP), and one that funds institutions with students of color who have been placed on academic probation and need additional support (PASS).

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, for example, MAP was awarded \$1,688,165, which, combined with funding carried forward from previous years, was allocated as follows:

Minority Advancement Program - 2022-23 Investments			
	% Enrolled Students of Color ³	ConnCAP ⁴	PASS
Capital Community College	83.4%		\$100,000.00
Central Connecticut State University	37.4%		\$100,000.00
Goodwin University	45.5%	\$192,056.00	
Housatonic Community College	73.6%		\$35,000.00
Manchester Community College	48.5%	\$48,000.00	\$30,000.00
Naugatuck Community College	48.7%		\$100,000.00
Quinnipiac University	19.9%	\$244,993.60	
Southern Connecticut State University	41.8%	\$110,059.20	\$100,000.00
Tunxis Community College	41.3%		\$50,000.00
UConn - Avery Point	36.0%	\$100,000.00	
UConn - Stamford	61.3%	\$120,000.00	
UConn - Storrs	38.0%	\$230,000.00	\$100,000.00
UConn - Waterbury	52.8%	\$90,000.00	
Western Connecticut State University	44.0%	\$160,000.00	\$100,000.00

³ These figures are based upon federally reported data for enrollment of full-time students by race in 2021, the most recently available information. (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Retrieved January 2023 at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.)

⁴ Additional \$107,000 given through the ConnCAP program to AthLife Foundation, Inc.

As institutional investments, these are wholly insufficient to build the type of infrastructures that will help students to graduate on-time and enter the workforce with the skills they need.

Proposal

This year, facing a budget surplus, Connecticut should direct significant resources toward expanding the MAP program, providing support for institutions of higher education and administrative support for the Office of Higher Education. This would be an investment in a piloted and already-established program.

Examples of evidence-based investments to increase rates of retention and completion include, but are not limited to:

- Organizational changes to support students;
- Establishing/expanding professional advising teams to provide academic counseling and career coaching, as well as assistance in gaining access to public support services (e.g, SNAP, housing);
- Tools and policies that streamline students' paths to a degree;
- Wraparound services such as child care and mental health services;
- Faculty and peer mentoring;
- Emergency basic needs grants for students;
- Reforming remediation programs to ensure all coursework is credit-bearing; and
- Other innovative interventions.

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About Education Reform Now CT

The state chapter of a national organization and affiliate of DFER CT, Education Reform Now CT is a 501(c)(3) that operates as a think tank and policy advocate, promoting great educational opportunities and achievement for all by increasing equity, protecting civil rights, and strengthening the social safety net.