The Pillars Program: College Knowledge for Parents, Guardians and Families

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College Degree Attainment by Country

Population that has attained at least tertiary education
Percentage, 2009 or latest available year
Statlink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932506628
Background: America’s College Attainment Challenge

• College Board, Natl. Conference of State Legislators, President Obama, Lumina Foundation’s “Big Goal for 2025”*

• Increase the number of Americans with high-quality college degrees from the current 39% to 60%.
• To accomplish this goal we must dramatically increase college degree attainment among first-generation, low-income, and students of color whose degree attainment rates are significantly lower than the national average and for whom the attainment gap has been widening.

*Source: Lumina Foundation’s Strategic Plan - Goal 2025
Benefits of College Degree

• Higher Income
• More job security
• Better health
• Closer families
• Stronger communities

Source: The College Board
Percentage of 2004 high school graduates who immediately enrolled in first postsecondary institution, by race/ethnicity and sex: 2006

NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

NOTE: The graduation rate was calculated as the total number of students who completed a degree within 150 percent of the normal time to degree attainment (for example, for bachelor’s degrees, 6 years) divided by the number of students in the revised cohort (i.e., the cohort minus any allowable exclusions). For this indicator, the revised cohorts are the spring 2011 estimates of the number of students who entered a 4-year institution in fall 2004 and the spring 2003 estimates of the number of students who entered a 4-year institution in fall 1996 as first-time, full-time undergraduates seeking a bachelor’s or equivalent degree. Students who transferred to another institution and graduated are not counted as completers at their initial institution. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see Appendix B - Guide to Sources.

In order to influence labor force needs, including:

• Who will work in our factories?
• Who will create and manage our businesses?
• Who will serve as our professionals: lawyers, dentists, teachers, accountants, doctors, engineers?
MISSION

The Center for Educational Outreach seeks to encourage academic excellence for all K-12 schoolchildren in the state of Michigan. We focus on continuing U-M’s commitment to educational outreach and to promoting collaboration between schools, organizations, and the community.
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Guiding Principals

• Academic excellence
• Access to higher education
• Diversity in college enrollment
• Empowerment through higher education
• Serving the common good through expanding educational opportunity
PILLARS promotes the creation of a college-going culture by focusing on guardians whose students would be the first in their family to attend college or those who seek assistance with the college going process. Family members participate in a series of workshops that guide them through the steps that their students must take to access a higher education.
Program Development

• Parental encouragement is known to have a positive relationship with post-secondary educational plans
• Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's initial thoughts and aspirations to attend college

Source: Hossler & Stage, 1992
Program Development

- Parental involvement is associated with
  - a greater likelihood of aspiring to attend college and actually enrolling (Perna, 2000)
  - Higher grades (Lee, 1993)
  - Lower rates of behavioral problems (Lee, 1993)
  - Lower likelihood of high school dropout and truancy (McNeal, 1999)
Program Development

“...college preparation programs should focus on ways to promote the types of parental involvement that encourage both the norms and standards that are required to enroll in college and that ensure that social relationships and networks provide access to the necessary resources and opportunities.” (Perna and Titus, 2005)
Program Elements

In architecture pillars are used to support beams or arches on which the upper parts of walls or ceilings rest.

They represent the aspects of:

• Strength
• Support
• Guidance
• To lift up and to hold firm
Program Elements

- Audience: Parents and guardians across the state of Michigan
- 5 week workshop series
- Interactive presentations tailored to address issues related to college access and success
- 6th-12th grade focus
- Campus visit
Program Curriculum

• Session I – Creating a College-Going Culture in the Home: “Why College?”

• Session II – Academic Achievement & Planning: “The Roadmap to College Success”

• Session III – Scholarships & Financial Aid: “Show Me the Money!”

• Session IV – Exploring College Fit & Match and the Application Process: “The College Selection and Application Process”

• Session V – Supporting College Students: “Giving Your Child Roots & Wings” (On-campus visit)
Evaluation and Outcomes

• Since 2011, Pillars has worked with over 200 parents/family members in Ann Arbor, Detroit, Livonia, Monroe and Ypsilanti
Evaluation and Outcomes

Some comments from Pillars participants:

• “I enjoyed the tour of U of M and Ann Arbor.”

• “I enjoyed learning about financial aid.”

• “The workshops were very interactive.”

• “I enjoyed learning new alternatives to encourage my student.”

• “I enjoyed all the conversations about college and diversity.”
Lessons Learned

• Building relationships and trust
• Every community is its own culture
• The importance of a dialogue versus facilitating
• Meeting participants where they are in their child's academic journey
• The constant evolution of intentional and research based programming
Next Steps

• Creating new partnerships throughout the state with schools and community organizations

• Funding

• Training graduate student staff to facilitate thus allowing us to serve a larger number of participants
References


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