MAP Advising Working Group
Final Report
Executive Summary

February 3, 2014

The Monetary Award Program (MAP) is one of the largest and most successful programs of its kind in the country. Started over 50 years ago and funded at over $373 million for state fiscal year 2014, it provides significant financial assistance crucial to year-to-year retention, program completion and graduation, and manageable student debt levels for about 140,000 students from lower-income families attending Illinois postsecondary institutions. Illinois' graduation rates stack up favorably to other states; the state's graduation rates always place Illinois somewhere in the top ten states.   Illinois also looks good in a comparison of student debt levels. Despite having some of the highest public university tuition and fees in the country, average student debt levels at $28,028 are below the national average of $29,400 for a bachelor's degree.[1] MAP plays a large role in reducing student debt by providing as much as $22,000 towards the cost of a bachelor's degree.

Despite the disadvantages of limited resources and unfamiliarity with college, MAP recipients graduate at about the same rate as other students attending the same school. However, since only a minority of schools graduate 60 percent or more of their first-time, full-time freshmen within six years, graduation rates at most Illinois schools could be improved. Some MAP recipients don't graduate at all, and of those that do, many take a long time to do it. Increased time to degree increases the costs of the program and decreases the likelihood of completion. Some MAP recipients drop out, often after only one or two semesters, and never complete a program that results in a credential. This can be a problem for MAP recipients who may have borrowed money to augment their grant aid and leave school without acquiring the credential necessary to be able to earn income sufficient to pay it back. MAP recipients who don't complete also increase the cost per graduate for the program. This is a perceived "inefficiency" that is especially problematic when money allocated to the program is insufficient to meet demand. The MAP program currently is serving only about half of the students eligible for the program and is providing them with only half the expense coverage that was provided a decade ago. MAP dollars are a scarce resource and not wasting them is a priority for everyone involved with the program. Improving program efficiency, i.e., increasing the percentage of students who complete their programs in a timely manner, therefore has become a priority. However, it is important to note that MAP is first and foremost a program that is intended to provide access to the post-secondary education of their choice for low-income students.

To help address the completion issue that results in a perceived "inefficient" distribution of MAP funds, the legislature put forth HR 296: "[ISAC] is directed … to form a working group to examine the

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[1] The Project on Student Debt, an Initiative of the Institute for College Access and Success: projectstudentdebt.org. Data is for the class of 2012. The percentage of students with debt graduating from Illinois schools is also below the average: 64% vs. the national average of 71%.

best practices for academic advising of higher education students who are MAP recipients, with an emphasis on support services for low-income and first-generation college students …" The hope of those offering this resolution was that providing some additional support for students receiving MAP, who are often first generation students with preparation and adjustment issues will increase likelihood of success for these students, demonstrated by increasing graduation rates, and speed up time to degree completion for others.

The MAP Advising Working Group (Working Group) was directed to:

- Catalog existing student academic advising and support programs in this state;
- Survey existing literature on effectiveness of similar programs across the country;
- Make recommendations to the Commission regarding minimum standards for student support and advising; and
- File a report to the Commission and the General Assembly on or before Feb. 3, 2014.

The MAP Advising Working Group was formed in September 2013 with 25 members. In four, five-hour public meetings, the group met and discussed the data that had been collected. The report details the data included and discussed; an overview of the Working Group's collective opinions and concerns; and a set of recommendations for the Commission.

The clear theme of all the data collected by the Working Group is that students need support, especially at-risk students defined by some combination of family income level, preparation issues, generation status, race/ethnicity or students with physical or emotional challenges. There is no dispute that large numbers of students do not enter college either well-motivated or well-prepared. However, as reported in "Promoting a Culture of Student Success", "simply by admitting these students, postsecondary institutions acknowledge their deficiencies and commit to helping them succeed."[2] The stakes are high. Students attempting college, especially at private institutions and public four-year schools are usually signing on for a lot of debt that will be very difficult to pay back without a degree. They are forgoing income that they may critically need.   "Sink or swim" under these conditions is no longer a fair or reasonable plan of action for colleges. The National Commission on Higher Education echoes these sentiments in *An Open Letter to College and University Leaders: College Completion Must Be Our Priority* as it points out that "first-generation, working, and part-time students far outnumber the 18- to 21-year-old residential students who used to be considered traditional, and the disparity is growing rapidly … They need flexible schedules, more financial help, and an efficient remediation system that doesn't discourage them so much that they drop out … For all students, traditional or not, offering access without a commitment to help students complete their degrees is a hollow promise."

Several of the reviewed studies found students lacking in academic readiness and motivation to complete a college credential.   Students lacked information about how to navigate the college

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[2] Promoting a Culture of Student Success, How Colleges and Universities Are Improving Degree Completion, April 2010. By A. Paul Bradley Jr., president, The Bradley Group Inc., and Cheryl D. Blanco, vice president, Special Projects, Southern Regional Education Board. Found at www. SREB.org.

enrollment process, how to choose a major and how to adjust to college life. Many have to make this adjustment more than once because they attend multiple schools for financial and other reasons. They need transfer issues to be worked out and clear paths to graduation to be established. More fundamentally, especially at large institutions, they need someone to notice that they are there, care about their progress and make them feel included.

Illinois schools report similar challenges faced by their students. Illinois schools have a variety of student populations that vary not only in academic ability but also by race/ethnicity, income levels of parents, percent of nontraditional students, and generation status of students, so it is not surprising that schools target different groups of students in different ways for advising. Both college-readiness of students and family income and generation status appear to affect graduation rates. Schools admitting students with higher ACT scores do tend to have higher graduation rates although these rates appear to be modified somewhat by family income levels. Being college-ready can significantly enhance a student's chances of graduating. Many colleges, however, as part of their mission, admit students who are far from college-ready and among schools with similarly qualified students and similar family income levels, some do appear to do better than others getting students through their programs.

There is one more component of program completion to keep in mind: with the exceptions of pass rates for licensing exams for nursing and a few other programs, there is currently no way to measure the quality of the degree conferred. Getting more degrees by reducing the standards for graduation is not a successful outcome for students or for Illinois. Clearly Illinois schools have very different student populations and have varying levels of success with them. A one-size fits all approach to implementing programs designed to increase retention likely would not be either successful or cost-effective for all schools. But schools must demonstrate that support programs, not relaxed standards, are responsible for higher graduation rates.

Although it is difficult to assess school intent to improve retention and completion, there is evidence that most Illinois schools are serious in their commitment to student retention. Of the schools responding to the Working Group survey, that educate approximately 80 percent of MAP recipients, nearly all require advising of some type, much of it mandatory, for students that each school defines as at-risk, and the majority of those provide at least one other support service. Schools do vary in the nature and number of programs offered which can be used as a crude measure of intent. Schools that appear to do somewhat better at retaining students provide, on average, more programs and more of them are mandatory. Overall, about three-quarters of the respondents offer additional academic support and about two-thirds offer additional counseling and mentoring opportunities. Transition and orientation programs are used by over half of the respondents and about half use some type of Tracking/Early Warning system. About 40 percent of respondents indicated their program has been successful and/or effective, specifically through increased retention/persistence rates (56 percent), higher grades (44 percent) and increased graduation rates (23 percent).

Students were also surveyed by the Working Group. Students responding to the Working Group survey are generally satisfied with the services they receive; however, about 40 percent acknowledge that the support they receive does not sufficiently address the issues they are having that could affect

their continued presence at school. Financial issues predominate for students followed by family and employment concerns. These are tough issues for schools to handle (although some programs attempt to do so). However, other identified problems seem well within the purview of schools: lack of encouragement, difficulty with courses, not fitting in or "liking" school, not being able to get the classes needed.

Some schools are providing financial awareness or fitness programs to help students manage their money and reduce debt, especially at community colleges. Financial problems (both the cost of attendance and the opportunity costs of not working) remain the number one barrier to college completion. An emphasis on "staying on track", getting career counseling, identifying a major, carrying a full-time load of courses each semester, and smooth transitions between schools could be components of the most effective cost reduction program – cutting a student's time in school from what is now often six years back down to the traditional four years, reducing the direct costs of education by up to a third and eliminating up to two years of the opportunity costs of foregone employment.

The Working Group examined a number of successful programs but there was no consensus on any particular type of program or intervention to be required. In general, there was agreement that simply adding a program or two would not produce the desired results. Instead, school cultures must change to focus on program completion. Several members of the group emphasized this idea – that progress in retention is a coordinated effort across many parts of the campus that requires leadership from the top administration followed by buy-in from lower levels of management to implement and sustain the programs.

There was agreement among the Working Group that schools, even within a sector, cannot be measured against a single objective standard. The performance of schools educating first generation students with average or weak academic skills coming from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot be compared to those educating primarily second generation students from higher income families who attended college prep high schools. There must be a more realistic assessment of the potential for improvement. The Working Group suggested a percentage increase over the baseline assessment over a few years time frame as a good place to start:

Recommendation One: **Illinois MAP approved institutions will institute programs to enable them to meet a target five percent improvement in graduation and completion rates over the next six years and begin to close any achievement gaps, defined as a gap between the schools' IPEDs graduation rate or the community college completion rate (defined by Complete College America metrics) for all students in a cohort and the rates for the school's designated at-risk group, MAP recipients, and minority students. The six-year goal for achievement gaps is a 25 percent reduction.**

All schools would also report CCA Progress Metric 5: Fall-to-fall retention rates, divided into the same subgroups as the completion metric.

To provide another measure of efficiency, all MAP-eligible institutions will provide CCA Progress Metric 6: Course Completion. This metric calculates the proportion of attempted credit hours being

completed by students. This metric would be provided for all students in a cohort and for MAP recipients in that cohort. Improvements in this measure can be translated into MAP "savings" that can be compared from year to year.

The fall 2014 (school year 2014-2015) data provides the baseline assessment. Programs designed to improve graduation outcomes should be in place by fall 2015 (school year 2015-2016).

The goal of the Working Group was to improve outcomes for students. The Working Group also emphasized repeatedly the need for school flexibility. Schools have different missions, serve different groups of students and are at different stages in their ability to provide services for at risk students. The Working Group believes that at this stage, setting reasonable goals such as those laid out in Recommendation One, and allowing schools to develop their own programs that help them meet those goals will encourage progress while acknowledging school diversity. There were programs that seemed to be promising and had positive results and were therefore recommended but not required in Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: The following list of interventions is either required or recommended by the Working Group. While all programs should be considered by Illinois MAP-eligible institutions, not all may be appropriate given programs already in place and the needs of the students each institution serves.

Required:

1. All MAP-eligible schools are required to make strong academic advising available for all students and provide mandatory advising for first year students and students that are part of the at-risk population identified by the school.   Because of the diverse nature of schools in Illinois, each MAP eligible school may determine the structure of the advising program at their school.

2. A description of the school's advising program and all other support programs targeted at student retention and completion shall be provided with the budget packets submitted to ISAC. The description of each program will include the type of program, its delivery mechanism (face to face, on-line, etc.), the targeted group of students, the number of students in the program, whether it is mandatory or voluntary, and the program length and duration.

The Working Group also recommends that schools consider adding the following programs, if they are not already operating at the school:

3. A blueprint for each incoming student illustrating how she can complete her program in the most timely manner – usually this would be four years for a four-year program3; two-years for a two year program; the most efficient path possible should developmental education be required.

4. A student tracking/early warning system established that alerts school officials early if a student is off track. The identification of students in difficulty should be coupled with additional intensive advising (academic, financial, social or emotional) designed to remove the roadblocks that keep the student from progressing.

5. Implement a mandatory freshman transition and orientation program. A good program should have students meeting frequently and provide a comprehensive introduction to college life and the services and support groups each school offers.

6. Include a financial literacy program for incoming students that emphasizes the cost of borrowing, the importance of graduating on time, and the resources available to help pay for college.

7. Schools should consider adopting a single advisor model for each incoming student so that the advisor and student get to know each other and form a strong relationship throughout the students' years at the institution.

8. Schools should consider denying late registration to classes for at risk students who would be severely disadvantaged by starting out a week or two behind everyone else.

Raising program completion rates is a long-term endeavor. It will take at least three years for sufficient data to be collected and a couple more before it can be ascertained if programs are working. After three years time, ISAC will evaluate the data to determine if a problem with meeting the improvement goals exists, and if it does, ISAC will convene a group to make further recommendations to the Commission.

The Working Group also discussed ISAC's role in improving retention and graduation and made the following suggestions to increase ISAC's participation.

1. Renewal cards to encourage FAFSA completion
The Department of Education sends a notice to file the FAFSA to former filers sometime in January. Some Working Group members thought a state reminder from ISAC would be a good additional reminder to file their renewal application. Some students forget that they have to refile for financial aid each year. To keep costs reasonable and connect with students in a familiar way ISAC would use the

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3 Many programs are 120 semester hours which translates into 15 credit hours per term for four years. Some degree programs, such as teaching, may require additional hours to complete the program which could extend the time-to-degree for a "timely" finish.

federal approach of sending an email. ISAC is prepared to undertake this project utilizing existing resources and have the service in place by FY2015.

2. Helping with student commitment through an acknowledgment by the student of his or her responsibilities.

The Working Group suggested that students read and sign a commitment pledge before their MAP grant is released each year. ISAC will take responsibility for developing this document and having it ready for launch in fall of 2015. The school responsibilities will include collaborating with ISAC in the preparation of this document and will be prepared to withhold a student's registration each year until the document is completed by the student.

3. Collecting and disseminating information about school support programs

The Working Group wanted a way to keep schools informed of best practices in the area of college retention and the programs that have proved successful in Illinois. A lack of specific information on programs that work was acknowledged to be a significant barrier to providing additional retention programs. A focus on collecting and disseminating retention and completion information could reduce this barrier.

ISAC already functions as a MAP program information clearinghouse and can expand those functions to include support program information provided by schools. The budget packages submitted by the schools to ISAC would have to be modified. As part of the annual participation process for MAP-approved schools, ISAC can collect program and contact information about outreach and intervention programs on each campus and maintain a central database for student and parent use and for review by other schools. Since new school programs would not start until 2015; ISAC could modify the budget packets and begin collecting the information in FY2016.

MAP Advising Working Group Final Report

February 3, 2014

The Concern: Improving Results for MAP Recipients

The Monetary Award Program (MAP) is one of the largest and most successful programs of its kind in the country. Started over 50 years ago and funded at over $373 million for state fiscal year 2014, it provides significant financial assistance crucial to year-to-year retention and program completion for about 140,000 students from lower-income families attending Illinois postsecondary institutions. Illinois postsecondary credential completion rates range from less than half to about 72% depending on the students counted (full-time, part-time, mixed attendance or all students), the degrees considered (just bachelor's, bachelors and associate's, or bachelor's, associates and quality certificates), schools attended (one school only or multiple schools) and time frame (100%, 150% or 200% time to degree) considered. Regardless of the methodology, Illinois' graduation rates stack up favorably to other states; the state's graduation rates are always somewhere in the top ten states.   Illinois also looks good in a comparison of student debt levels. Despite having some of the highest public university tuition and fees in the country, average student debt levels at $28,028 are below the national average of $29,400 for a bachelor's degree.[4] MAP plays a role in reducing student debt by providing as much as $22,000 towards the cost of a bachelor's degree.

While it is nearly inevitable that a student coming from a family with few resources for college will take on some debt, it is still possible for most Illinois students to get a quality bachelor's without a crushing debt load, however, it is not easy and it takes planning, knowledge, skill and discipline. As already mentioned, Illinois has some of the highest public university tuition and fees in country. But in addition to the MAP grant it has a large community college system and a Corps of state workers trained to assist students to get to college affordably. It has a large, diverse, private college sector that awards at least $800 million in aid, much of it need based, to its students. But it must be recognized that it is nearly impossible for a student today to work his or her way through college without additional financial support; that getting through college affordably takes both information and skill; and that knowing how to leverage the state and federal aid available can make the difference between graduating with comfortable debt levels, graduating with overwhelming debt or not graduating at all because financial barriers to completion become too great.

Despite the disadvantages of limited resources and unfamiliarity with college, MAP recipients graduate at about the same rate as other students attending the same school. However, since only a minority of schools graduate 60 percent or more of their first-time, full-time freshmen within six years, graduation rates at most Illinois schools could be improved. Some MAP recipients don't graduate at all, and of those that do, many take a long time to do it. Increased time to degree increases the costs of the program and decreases the likelihood of completion. Some MAP recipients drop out, many after only one or two semesters, and never complete a program that results in a credential. This can be a problem for MAP recipients who may have borrowed money to augment their grant aid and leave school without acquiring the credential necessary to be able to earn income sufficient to pay it back. MAP recipients who don't complete also increase the cost per graduate for the program. This is a perceived

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"inefficiency" that is especially problematic when money allocated to the program is insufficient to meet demand. The MAP program currently is serving only about half of the students eligible for the program and is providing them with only half the expense coverage that was provided a decade ago. MAP dollars are a scarce resource and not wasting them is a priority for everyone involved with the program. Improving program efficiency, i.e., increasing the percentage of students who complete their programs in a timely manner therefore has become a priority. However, it is important to note that MAP is first and foremost a program that is intended to provide access to the post-secondary education of their choice for low-income students.

To help address the completion issue that results in a perceived "inefficient" distribution of MAP funds, the legislature put forth HR 296: "[ISAC] is directed … to form a working group to examine the best practices for academic advising of higher education students who are MAP recipients, with an emphasis on support services for low-income and first-generation college students …" The hope of those offering this resolution was that providing some additional support for students receiving MAP, who are often first generation students with preparation and adjustment issues will increase likelihood of success for these students, demonstrated by increasing graduation rates, and speed up time to degree completion for others.

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- File a report to the Commission and the General Assembly on or before Feb. 3, 2014.

The MAP Advising Working Group was formed in September 2013 with 25 members. Participants were selected for expertise in both academic and financial aid advising and experience in coordinating these types of activities on campus. A balance in terms of sector, race/ethnicity, and region also was sought so that as many viewpoints as possible would be considered. The list of participants is found in Appendix A. In four, five-hour public meetings, on September 25, October 25, November 14, 2013 and January 10, 2014, the MAP Advising Working Group met and discussed the data that had been collected. This report details the data included and discussed, an overview of the Working Group's collective opinions and concerns; and a set of recommendations for the Commission.

Where the Working Group began: basic information about MAP and Illinois postsecondary education

In setting the stage for responding to the resolution, some basic information was presented by ISAC about Illinois postsecondary institutions, the Monetary Award Program and MAP recipients. One of the

tasks of the Working Group was to examine successful programs in Illinois and in other states and evaluate the potential for a more broad-based application of successful programs to MAP recipients or some broader at-risk student group – scaling up successful programs. To do that requires an understanding of MAP recipients, their college attendance patterns, and how they differ, if they do, from a school's total student population. It is also important to know how Illinois institutions are similar to schools across the country with successful programs for at-risk students and how they might differ from them causing implementation issues.

Who Are MAP recipients?

MAP recipients are a diverse lot – with the common denominator of a lack of funds for college. About 140,000 students in Illinois receive MAP each year:

Figure 1: Typical MAP Recipient

- 21% of Illinois undergraduates receive MAP
- 65% of MAP recipients are female
- 47% are white; 27% are black; 13% Hispanic; 6% Asian; 7% other or mixed
- 60% are dependent students; 40% are independent students[5]
- Based on the federal student financial aid eligibility criteria, about 58% have no resources available to pay for college and about 94% are federal Pell grant-eligible[6]
- Average family income is $31,000 for dependent students and $19,000 for independent students
- They choose practical majors – health care professions, business and teaching – at higher rates than the overall student population.[7]

A "typical" MAP recipient would be …

- Female
- White
- Dependent
- Living in the collar counties
- No resources to pay for college
- Attending a community college

The distribution of MAP recipients

MAP-eligible schools are found in all of our education sectors, offer a broad array of certificates, associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees and they serve many different types of students. All twelve public universities and all 48 community colleges are MAP-eligible as are most private non-profit, four-year institutions (currently 51) and 12 non-profit hospital schools. Only 9 of the more than 100 hundred proprietary schools in Illinois are MAP-eligible. There are significant hurdles for proprietary schools that

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[5] An Independent student is a student 24 or older, in the military, an orphan, married, or is providing more than half the care of a child or other dependent. These students are sometimes referred to as nontraditional. Dependent students are most students under the age of 24 and are sometimes referred to as traditional students.

[6] The students with no resources for college are called "zero-EFCs" – the eligibility formula calculates an "expected family contribution" (EFC) toward a student's education of zero.

[7] ISAC's Lumina-funded MAP Longitudinal Study. 55% of MAP recipients selected health care, business or teaching majors compared to 42% of the control group of higher income students.

wish to become MAP-eligible to mount, the most important ones being that their home office must be located in Illinois, they must be regionally accredited, and the majority of their students must be in two-year or four-year degree programs.

At each school, MAP recipients can represent as little as 5 percent of the student population to over half of the student body.   At public institutions roughly one of four students attends with a MAP grant. The University of Illinois-Urbana has the smallest percentage of MAP recipients (20%) while the University of Illinois-Chicago and Chicago State have the most (43%). Less than 10% of the proprietary schools operating in Illinois are eligible for MAP and the average percentage of MAP recipients at those schools is about 25%. Of community college undergraduates (excluding precollege and continuing education students who are not MAP-eligible), about 21% have MAP grants. The community college percentages range from 10% at Wabash Valley to 52% at Kennedy King. The percentage of MAP recipients at community colleges has declined, especially in downstate schools, largely due to the early cut-off date for MAP, necessitated by demand for the grant that far exceeds the appropriation.

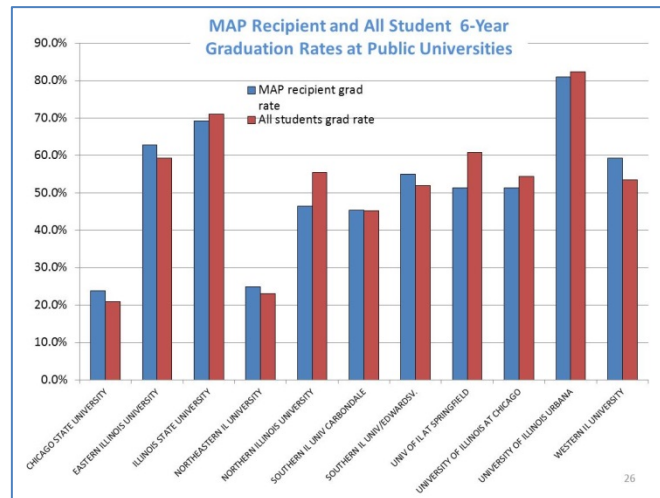Figure 2: MAP Graduation Rates at Public Universities

Figure 3: Graduation rates at Illinois four-year schools by average ACT score

Graduation rates of MAP recipients and MAP-eligible postsecondary institutions[8]

It is not commonly understood that MAP recipients do as well as other students do at the same school. Figure 2 shows graduation rates for MAP recipients attending public universities in FY2011 compared to the school graduation rate.[9] MAP recipient graduation rates track the school's overall graduation rate very well. Charts comparing the graduation rates of MAP recipients at

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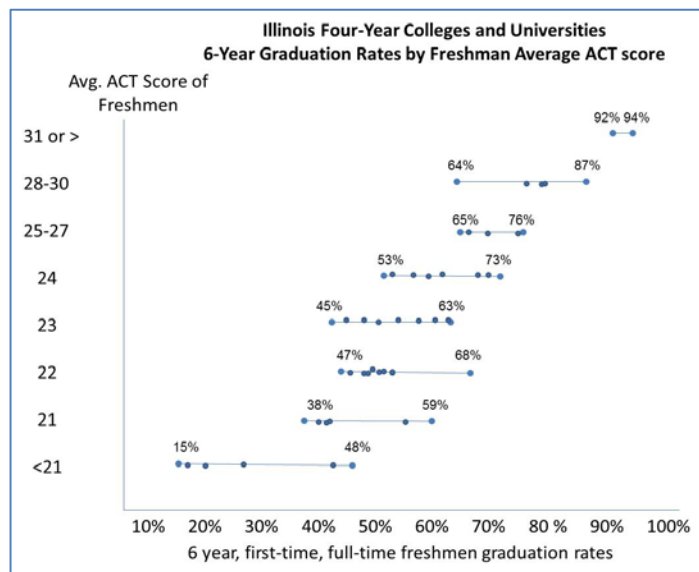
[8] At community colleges, graduation may not be the goal of enrolling for classes. Some community college advocates prefer using "completion" as a more relevant term.

[9] The school graduation rate is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data (IPEDs) six-year, first-time, full-time graduation rate. The MAP recipient graduation rate is a derived from National Clearinghouse Data.

community colleges and private four-year institutions can be found in Appendix A. However, MAP recipients disproportionately go to schools with lower graduation rates. Only 6% of MAP recipients attending private schools go to schools with graduation rates at 80% or above, compared to 26% of all students in private institutions. At schools with lower graduation rates, the percentages are closer but there is still a difference, with 21% of MAP recipients attending schools with graduation rates less than 40% compared to 18% of all students in private institutions. Public universities show similar discrepancies: 14% of MAP recipients go to public universities with graduation rates in excess of 80% compared to 21% of all other students while 14% also go to public universities with graduation rates less than 40% compared to 10% of all other students.

While some of the discrepancy with institutions' graduation rates can be tied to the preparation of their incoming students, Illinois post-secondary institutions vary in their success rates with similar students. Figure 3 illustrates the wide variety of outcomes for schools who take students with similar ACT scores. For example, schools in Illinois that have incoming freshmen classes with average ACT scores of 23 graduate their students at very different rates from a low of 45 percent to a high of 63 percent.

Table 1: Illinois MAP-eligible Four Year Schools by graduation rates, student's family income, and average ACT scores

Number of Schools	Institution Grad Rate	Avg. Income of FAFSA filers	Average ACT Score
5	>=80%	$ 97,330	29.7
6	70-79%	$ 88,332	24.1
15	60-69%	$ 67,603	23.8
15	50-59%	$ 58,925	22.2
8	30-49%	$ 56,870	21.8
9	<30%	$ 30,072	18.8

There are likely many reasons for the differences in graduation rates, but there was one rather striking difference – differences in family income. There are twelve schools in the state with graduation rates above 70%; for the eleven with sufficient data all but two have average parental incomes of FAFSA filers greater than $85,000 and the average income of the top group is $97,330 (see Table 1) Of the two that are below $85,000, one has an average adjusted gross income (AGI) of $79,000 and the other average AGI is $60,000. Contrast that with 17 public and private non-profit schools with graduation rates less than 50%. Seven had average AGIs less than $50,000 (with a low of $16,500) and another five had average AGIs between $50,000 and $59,999. Only five schools with very low graduation rates had AGIs at $60,000 or more and most of those were very close to $60,000. The schools with very low graduation rates (<30%) have students with average family incomes of $30,000, less than one third the family income of those students attending schools with graduation rates in excess of 80%.

Table 2: Illinois MAP-eligible, four-year schools ordered by average freshmen ACT score

Number of Schools	Average ACT Score	Top Half Grad Rate	Average Income of FAFSA Filers	Bottom Half Grad Rate	Average Income of MAP Eligibles
5	> 28	89-96%	$ 99,114	74-83%	$ 94,674
6	25 to 28	78-86%	$ 104,614	67-69%	$ 75,627
6	24 to 24.5	66-67%	$ 65,312	54-63%	$ 76,798
9	23 to 23.5	61-71%	$ 80,726	29-56%	$ 54,186
13	22 to 22.5	54-73%	$ 63,816	38-51%	$ 59,491
11	20 to 21.5	55-61%	$ 63,186	5-50%	$ 55,120
4	<20	50%	$ 40,162	21-29%	$ 27,242

This can be viewed in a different way, by holding test scores constant (shown in Table 2). Schools were grouped into ACT ranges and then further divided into two groups based on graduation rates. The schools with the top graduation rates for each ACT range had, with one exception, higher average family income levels for students, in some cases much higher.   However, there were exceptions. A private school with an ACT score of 22, and average AGI of $60,000 had a 72% graduation rate. Another private school with an average ACT score of only 18 and an average AGI of only $40,000 has a 50% graduation rate. One of the public universities with an average ACT score of 21 and an average AGI of $62,000 has a graduation rate of 61%.

The average family income of students at community colleges is about $30,000, very low compared to most students at four-year institutions and almost one-half of incoming students require some type of developmental education[10]. These students often have educational goals that are different from students attending four year schools that create additional challenges with using traditional graduation rates as measures of success at community colleges. Many of their students attend part-time and are not included in the full-time rate calculated for IPEDs. Some of the students are attending school briefly to acquire skills for their jobs or to raise their grade point averages to get admitted to four-year institutions.   Successful course completion, not credential acquisition measures success for these students. Others do complete all or most of a two year degree program but decide to transfer to the four-year institution without acquiring the two-year credential.   These students make successful transfers and complete their programs at the four-year institution. These completions are not currently being captured in the IPEDs graduation rate calculation.

In summary, both college readiness (as measured by the ACT score) and family income appear to affect graduation rates. Schools admitting students with higher ACT scores do tend to have higher graduation rates although these rates appear to be modified somewhat by family income levels. However, some schools with similarly qualified students and similar family income levels do appear to do better than others getting students through their programs.   Also, there is one more component of program completion to keep in mind: with the exceptions of pass rates for licensing exams for nursing and a few other programs, there is currently no way to measure the quality of the degree conferred. Getting more degrees by reducing the standards for graduation is not a successful outcome for students or for Illinois. Clearly Illinois schools have very different student populations and have varying levels of success with them. A one-size fits all approach to implementing programs designed to increase retention likely would not be either successful or cost-effective for all schools. But schools must demonstrate that support programs, not relaxed standards, are responsible for higher graduation rates.

Changes to the college readiness of MAP recipients over time
MAP has always been a college access and choice program – allowing students with limited means access to the college of their choice. Although MAP covers far less of the cost than it used to, it is still a significant source of financial aid for about 140,000 Illinois students each year. In the early years of the

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[10] In Fall of 2009, 49.9% of first-time students were enrolled in remedial coursework (24,388). 56.9% of full-time, first-time students enrolled in remedial coursework as were 35.6% of part-time students. Data provided by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB.)

program, fewer students needed or wanted to attend college and college preparation for those that did was taken for granted. Success in school was largely based on effort once the financial constraints were removed. Access was important; graduation less so. Without incurring debt, students could try out college; if it wasn't the path for them, they could find employment without the degree and they wouldn't be leaving school with debt. Students were often left to "sink or swim" with the knowledge that "sinking" was, in fact, survivable, and didn't create major problems later on in life[11].

Today, some form of postsecondary education is nearly mandatory for a life in the middle-class. Students who would not have pursued higher education in the past are finding it necessary, as are those whose skills have become outmoded in the workplace. Many of these students enter higher education unprepared academically, socially and/or emotionally, money is very tight, and they enter without fully understanding what is required to succeed. "Sink or swim" is no longer a choice – without some assistance, many of these new students, who badly need new skills, "sink" quickly and of those that do, many will leave with debt that will be very difficult to repay from the income of the employment available to them.

According to the ACT study *Readiness Matters: The Impact of College Readiness on College Persistence and Degree Completion*, "Many students do not persist in college to degree completion because they are ill-prepared for college and require remedial coursework. Many students also lack the academic behaviors and goals that are needed to succeed in college." ACT has devised a set of four college benchmarks based on the ACT exam given to Illinois public high school students as part of the Prairie State Exam in eleventh grade. ACT's analysis indicates that college readiness (determined by the number of benchmarks met) explains about half the difference in six-year bachelor degree completion difference between white students and African American and about 30 percent of the difference between students from lower income families and those from higher income families. The overall college readiness of Illinois students is not good. ACT estimates that about a quarter of Illinois high school graduates are ready for college; more generous estimates put the figure at about 45 percent.[12] Regardless of the measure used, less than half of all Illinois graduates are prepared for postsecondary work.

Students who received MAP grants during the early years of the program, when relatively few students attended college, were generally well prepared and motivated and only needed help to mount financial hurdles. MAP grants were "spent" at schools such as Northwestern, Loyola, IIT, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, and University of Chicago (top five in late 1960's.) Today the state schools dominate and nearly 60,000 MAP recipients attend community college and another 8,500 attend

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[11] In the early years of the program the two of the schools receiving the most MAP dollars were Northwestern and the University of Chicago. Today Robert Morris University alone, which caters to nontraditional students, receives more than twice the dollars going to both Northwestern and University of Chicago. Neither school is now among the top 40 in MAP dollars received.

[12] ACT uses the separate results of four parts of the ACT exam to determine college readiness. Students must be competent in all four subject areas – reading, math, English, and science - to be college ready. A more generous definition of college ready used by Illinois high schools is a composite ACT score of 21 or greater (the state average is 21.5). The composite score could "hide" a significant weakness in one or more areas of competency – a weak math score is a usual culprit.

proprietary institutions, both with relatively open admissions policies.   For many of these students, receiving a MAP grant is only the beginning. Without additional assistance, they will not complete their degrees.

Being college-ready can significantly enhance a student's chances of graduating. Many colleges, however, as part of their mission, admit students who are far from college ready. Many of these schools attempt to address the issues by placement exams followed by remedial or developmental courses. But developmental courses are under fire due to low pass rates and not many educators today are making the claim developmental education alone is adequate.   As already mentioned, it is estimated that roughly half the difference in graduation rates can be attributed to college readiness; other factors must explain the other half. These barriers to completion need to be identified and dealt with to improve graduation rates.

In summary, the reality is that schools are now and have been for quite a while accepting many students who, without some kind of assistance are unlikely to succeed and some of them receive a MAP grant. They enter postsecondary education with preparation issues and have other factors that create barriers to completing their programs. In the past, a student could try college and if it didn't work out, move on to something else that could lead to a secure future. Today, many entry level professions require some postsecondary education. And that education can be expensive. About two-thirds of Illinois students attending college are taking out loans to pay for college. Taking out a loan and not completing your program can leave a student with a large debt (the first year federally-subsidize loan maximum is $5,500 and some students can qualify for an additional $4,000 in unsubsidized loans.) These debts are rarely dischargeable in bankruptcy and can stay with a borrower for life, leaving a borrower far worse off after his attempt at college. Moreover, a student's inability or unwillingness to pay their student loan has long range, adverse implications for the post-secondary institution.

Further in the report it will be shown that some schools have successfully increased their graduation rates in the face of declining college readiness but overall many students still fail to complete their programs and of those that do finish, many take five or six years to complete what used to be a "four-year" degree.

Evidence for the need for and the effectiveness of academic advising and other support programs for at-risk students

The resolution prescribed that the Working Group undertake a national literature review of successful advising and other intervention programs. It also asked for a catalog of the academic and support programs that currently exist in the state.   Those tasks were executed and the results summarized below. In addition to those two documents, the results of three surveys were also used to inform the discussion. A bibliography and summarizing chart of the national studies reviewed, a catalog of Illinois school programs identified through a school survey, and the summarized answers to a survey of the members of the Working Group and another to Illinois students can be found in Appendices A through C.
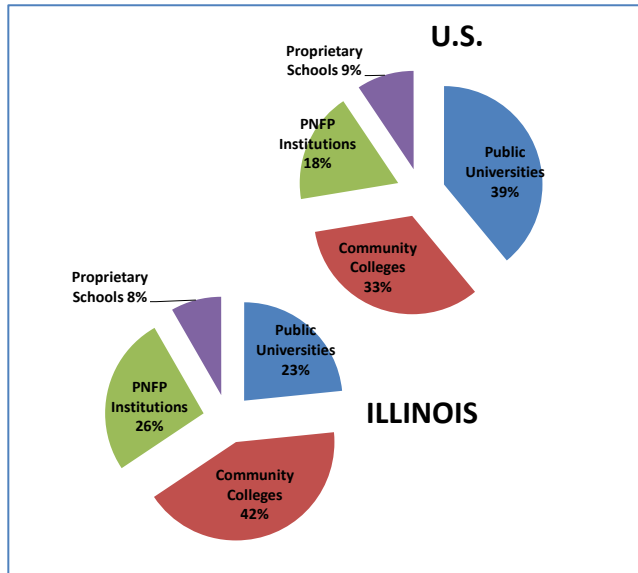
Data sets reviewed, evaluated and discussed

Review of national studies

About 30 national studies were reviewed (summaries can be found in Appendix C.) Most involved evaluations of a collection of studies about types of programs that had produced positive changes in student behavior that could be attributed to those changes in school initiatives. The results were mixed. The most common complaint was the lack of good data on the programs. If the study was missing a carefully designed control group, and most studies were missing any type of control group, it is hard to be certain that behavior changes can be attributed to the new school initiatives. Schools based success on positive behavior changes of program participants compared to former classes of students prior to the program. The national studies often contradicted themselves when identifying successful programs – both the type of program and the intensity of the change noted varied considerably from study to study.

It is also important to note that Illinois does *not* look like other states in terms of its postsecondary environment. Out of the 21 million students in postsecondary education in the US, about 850,000 attend school in Illinois. We have a

Figure 4: Where Illinois students go to school

relatively high high school graduation rate[13]; we provide some level of access and affordability through our large community college system and the MAP grant; we are one of the better states in terms of getting nontraditional students into college. Our distribution of students in the higher education sectors is very different from most states and the national average (Figure 4.) But we have relatively few students in the public university system and we have many students in private nonprofit schools, where costs are often, even with considerable institutional aid, even higher. We have many more students than most states in community colleges, with reasonable costs but with relatively lower graduation rates than four-year institutions.[14] Why highlight these differences here? They're worth keeping in mind if we look to other states for policy solutions, as we often do. What works elsewhere may not overlay perfectly for Illinois' students, who might have different needs and circumstances.

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[13] From ED's National Center for Education Statistics. About 82%; the best states are pushing 90%. 2013 state average was 78.2%; the lowest (Nevada) rate was 57.8%.

[14] Calculating a graduation rate for community colleges can be problematic in that a significant percentage (one school estimates nearly 70% of its incoming freshmen) enroll with the intent to transfer to the baccalaureate school and not necessarily earn an associate degree. Graduation rates overall are very sensitive to the way they are calculated. Graduation rate calculations from four-year bachelor's degree programs in Illinois range from 60% to 72% depending on the methodology.

Catalog of state programs (results of a survey of the schools)

All 133 MAP-approved schools were sent a link to a Survey Monkey survey asking questions about the type, nature, frequency and intensity of their advising programs and other student support services. They were asked to complete the survey so the results could be used to inform the Working Group and fulfill the requirements of the Resolution. To date, 86 of the 133 MAP-approved have provided information on support initiative(s) for underserved students at their institutions. This is a 65 percent response rate. These schools serve 80 percent of FY2012 MAP recipients. A list of the schools who responded and a description of each program that has been identified to date is included in Appendix B. By sector, 92 percent (11 of the 12) of public 4-year institutions have responded, 63 percent (32 of the 51) of private institutions have responded, 67 percent (32 of the 48) of community colleges have responded, 33 percent (4 of the 12) of hospital schools have responded, and 70 percent (7 of the 9) of proprietary schools have responded.

A survey of MAP-eligible students

About 98,000 FY2013 MAP-eligible student e-mail addresses were secured, and a message was sent to each student asking for feedback on the support initiatives being utilized at the institution they are currently attending (Report of the results can be found in Appendix A.) After two weeks, more than 7,200 students completed the survey. Ninety-seven percent of MAP-eligible institutions are represented in the findings. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated they are currently enrolled at a community college, and 40 percent indicated they are currently enrolled at a 4-year public or private institution and the remainder did not indicate a sector, were not enrolled, or were enrolled in a proprietary school, a two-year private non-profit or a hospital school. The respondents underrepresent somewhat the community college sector - about 57% of the eligible population listed a community college on the FAFSA and 37% listed a public or private four-year institution. There may be a more serious distortion in the respondents by attendance level. Thirty-seven percent of respondents identified their current status as sophomore, 23 percent as junior, 21 percent as senior, and 19 percent as freshman. The actual attendance level of the population is nearly half freshman, 22 percent sophomore, 16 percent junior and 12 percent senior. Freshmen, who often experience the most difficulty adjusting to college, are underrepresented in our respondent group.

Advising Working Group survey

The MAP Advising Working Group members were selected for their broad knowledge and experience with student needs and available support services. Part of our data collection activities included engaging the Working Group with a survey to elicit their opinions on how successful Illinois schools are currently in terms of supporting their at-risk students and what should be expected of them in the future. The 25 members were asked to provide feedback on ideas covered in the September and October meetings, and more specifically on an advising/support requirement for MAP students, by completing an online survey. To date, 14 members, or 56 percent, have completed the survey. The results are summarized in Appendix B.

The ISAC Lumina-funded Longitudinal Study of MAP Recipients

This study followed an 8,000 student sample of the 2004 cohort of MAP recipients for seven years. It tracked their progress through their postsecondary education programs, identified those who completed, and tracked their attitudes and behaviors.

Introduction to the Evidence

The clear theme of all the data collected is that students need support, especially at-risk students defined by some combination of family income level, preparation issues, generation status, race/ethnicity or students with physical or emotional challenges. There is no dispute that large numbers of students do not enter college either well-motivated or well-prepared. However, as reported in "Promoting a Culture of Student Success", "simply by admitting these students, postsecondary institutions acknowledge their deficiencies and commit to helping them succeed."[15] The stakes are high. Students attempting college, especially at private institutions and public four-year schools are usually signing on for a lot of debt that will be very difficult to pay back without a degree. They are forgoing income that they may critically need. "Sink or swim" under these conditions is no longer a fair or reasonable plan of action for colleges. The National Commission on Higher Education echoes these sentiments in *An Open Letter to College and University Leaders: College Completion Must Be Our Priority* as it points out that "first-generation, working, and part-time students far outnumber the 18- to 21-year-old residential students who used to be considered traditional, and the disparity is growing rapidly … They need flexible schedules, more financial help, and an efficient remediation system that doesn't discourage them so much that they drop out … For all students, traditional or not, offering access without a commitment to help students complete their degrees is a hollow promise."

There is also ample evidence that schools can substantially influence the graduation rate of any group of students they chose to serve. There are many successful approaches to improving performance but they all begin with a "completion-oriented culture" at the postsecondary institution. This belief was reiterated by several members of the Working Group. Without a leader implementing a culture of student progress and success that has been endorsed by management, programs are unlikely to succeed. Top administrators provide the necessary funding and set the tone and coordinate the effort. Student success is a responsibility that is shared across institution divisions and requires effective leadership to get the job done. According to *Promoting a Culture of Student Success*, "a graduation-oriented campus requires consistent messages from leaders about high expectations for students, how to achieve these goals, and the resources that are available."

Turning all Illinois postsecondary institutions into "graduation-oriented campuses" is beyond the scope of this Working Group. Other initiatives such as the P-20 council and the development of postsecondary performance funding are better suited for providing incentives to meet this broad-based goal. The goal for the Working Group is to recommend policies and programs that have demonstrated

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[15] Promoting a Culture of Student Success, How Colleges and Universities Are Improving Degree Completion, April 2010. By A. Paul Bradley Jr., President, The Bradley Group Inc., and Cheryl D. Blanco, Vice President, Special Projects, Southern Regional Education Board. Found at www. SREB.org.

their effectiveness by increasing retention and/or completion in a variety of institutions for at risk students with similar backgrounds to MAP recipients.

What do students need?

Many students attending postsecondary institutions today need additional assistance beyond the standard faculty/student interaction in a classroom. While opinions on what works varies among the studies and experts, the identification of the needs of these new, at risk students, is relatively consistent.

Evidence from national studies

Several of the reviewed studies found students lacking in academic readiness and motivation to complete a college credential. Students lacked information about how to navigate the college enrollment process, how to choose a major and how to adjust to college life. Many have to make this adjustment more than once because they attend multiple schools for financial and other reasons. They need transfer issues to be worked out and clear paths to graduation to be established.   More fundamentally, especially at large institutions, they need someone to notice that they are there, care about their progress and make them feel included. In Inside Higher Education's *Retention Agenda* twelve risk factors that increased the likelihood of dropping out were explicitly identified (Figure 5.) While some, such as an "inability to delay gratification," appear to be related to the age of the average student and have likely been risk factors forever, others, such as "uneven formal academic knowledge

Figure 5: A list of 12 research-validated risk factors for students dropping out of college:

- Uneven formal academic knowledge and skills.
- Lack of informal knowledge about being a college student
- Inadequate development of self-regulation skills
- Impaired self-efficacy and resilience
- A mindset believing in fixed rather than flexible abilities.
- Inability to delay gratification.
- Impaired ethical judgment
- Disengagement from the university environment
- Lack of interest in courses
- Issues in academic trajectory
- Psychological issues
- Financial concerns

and skills" may be fairly recent roadblocks that come with admitting students who would have never considered college twenty years ago. Some risk factors, such as "issues in academic trajectory," are certainly within the institutions abilities to mitigate. Some, however, may be beyond what even the best schools can do. One study concluded that today, one student in five arrives on campus with a serious emotional problem. [16] Schools may be aware of some of these problems but they are outside the control of the schools. However, an adequate and integrated advising program may be able to refer students to other services that would help them address these issues.

A conclusion from *Effective College Access, Persistence and Completion Programs, and Strategies for Underrepresented Student Populations: Opportunities for Scaling Up* is "that although academic preparation and performance do play a major role in retention of underrepresented students, up to 75

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[16] National survey of counseling center directors, 2011. By R.P. Gallagher. Alexandria, VA: International Association of Counseling Services. Retrieved from www.iacsinc.org.

percent of all dropout decisions are non-academic in nature. This statistic suggests that low achievement may be more a result of external pressures rather than a student's inherent ability." The Working Group's survey of Illinois MAP-eligible students indicates that this may be true in Illinois.

Survey of MAP-eligible students: what students say they need

Forty-two percent of all respondents to our survey indicated they are having problems that are making it difficult to stay in school. When asked to identify the factors or issues that are making it difficult to stay in school, 53 percent reported the cost of college is too high, 35 percent said family reasons, 24 percent employment opportunities, 23 percent each either said school is conflicting with their job or they are having trouble organizing their time, and/or 21 percent each either reported they are having difficulties with classes or they need to support their family. The remaining factors or issues were mentioned by less than 15 percent of respondents who are having difficulties – medical reasons (14%), unsure about education goals (11%), lack of encouragement from family (10%), classes not available (10%), got married and/or had a baby (6%), don't fit in (5%), and /or don't like school (3%). Community college respondents were more likely to have identified problems as "family reasons" (39% compared to 31%) and "I need to support my family" (28% compared to 16%), and much less likely to have identified "cost of college too high" (35% compared to 70%). Working Group members commented that this is not really surprising since community college students tend to live with their families or are nontraditional students with a family so they would be having those issues more than the student going to a four-year school. Many of these issues tie back to the need to assist students in developing a personal management or success plan.

Only forty-one percent of respondents reported the advising/support services they are receiving are helping with the problems that are making it difficult for them to stay in school. Four-year institution respondents were somewhat more likely than community college respondents to have indicated the advising/support services they are receiving are helping with the problems that are making it difficult for them to stay in school – 42 percent compared to 38 percent. Respondents who indicated they have not completed academic advising were much less likely to have reported that the advising/support services are helping (30%), compared to those respondents who have completed academic advising (45%). Respondents who indicated academic advising is either required or recommended at their institutions were more likely to have reported that the advising/support services are helping (46% and 42%, respectively), than respondents who reported academic advising is optional or that they are unsure whether it is required (26% and 30%, respectively).   It appears that some students have problems that cannot be addressed directly by the school advisers and counselors; however others may have difficulties that are identifiable and correctable.

Respondents were asked to identify what (if anything) would help them stay in school. Eighty-two percent indicated additional funding would help them stay in school, 33 percent said additional academic support, 29 percent additional guidance or counseling, and/or 26 percent reported more encouragement would help them stay in school.

Four-year institution respondents were more likely than community college respondents to have reported additional funding will help them stay in school (89% compared to 75%), and community

college respondents were more likely than 4-year institution respondents to have indicated additional guidance and counseling (31% compared to 25%) and more encouragement (28% compared to 22%) would help them stay in school. Freshman and sophomore respondents were somewhat more likely to have indicated additional guidance or counseling and/or more encouragement would be helpful in keeping them in school than junior and senior respondents.

Evidence from the Lumina MAP Longitudinal Study

The MAP longitudinal study makes it fairly clear that more support is needed for MAP recipients and other first generation, academically weaker students.

The majority of MAP recipients (at least three-quarters) responding to the surveys in this study are attending their first choice school initially and more are majoring in applied majors such as health care, teaching and business, than their counterparts from families with higher incomes. The students were surveyed over seven years. The responses to the early surveys showed that majority of the full-time students, even those at a community college, start out believing they will complete a bachelor's degree in four years. But by the end of the first semester, it starts to go wrong for many students. A disconnect quickly develops between expectations and reality. About 94% believe they will have a "B" or better average in college but by the end of the first semester, the average GPA is only 2.78. Over 80% believe they will complete college in four years but the average hours completed after the first semester is just a little over 12 – already they are one class behind. And by the end of the first term, nearly one of five has identified financial, preparation and personal issues that may make it impossible to complete school. These students are not attempting or completing enough credit hours to stay on track for graduation in four years and are seeing their GPA's drop by a half grade or more from their HS GPA. They are dropping classes, especially math classes, and about a quarter of them are finding college much more difficult than expected. At the end of six years, only a little over half of the participants in this study will have a credential of any kind.

In summary, students appear to need more attention, particularly more information and counseling that can help keep them on pace to graduate with an acceptable GPA. The national studies indicate that freshmen, some only sixteen or seventeen years old, do not make always make adult choices and need to be motivated and provided with practical information and guidance. The results of the survey of our MAP-eligible students made clear that these students have significant financial concerns, family obligations that conflict with school and have difficulty choosing school when work becomes available. Time management, good financial planning and a clear path to program completion would alleviate some of these pressures.

What Illinois schools are already doing

The information described in this section comes from the survey of the MAP-eligible Illinois schools and the student survey.

Responses from the Working Group survey of Illinois schools

Most Illinois schools already provide significant help in the form of academic advising and other support programs. Some of the support is funded by the federal government. Of the respondents, four

public universities, five private institutions, and 12 community colleges receive federal grants for TRIO programs designed to help first generation students from lower-income families who demonstrate a need for academic support with academic, social and emotional support (two-thirds of the participants must be both low income and first generation). Participation in TRIO programs is not mandatory – students are invited to apply. TRIO programs' success is measured by year to year persistence rates, graduation rates and academic achievement. The program success rates (measured in terms of year to year persistence) vary from school to school but appear to be significant at schools that have had the program for a while – one participant reported a retention rate of 96 percent, another 90 percent and another 82 percent, well above same-school averages. Since the programs are federally funded, there is a uniform calculation of the cost per student. Most schools report a per-student cost between $1,250 and $1,750. Drawbacks to TRIO include an admissions process and often a waiting list to get in the program. Students self select and some are not admitted due to size limitations. TRIO results must be looked at in this context – some of the increased "survival" rate is probably attributable to the initial self-selection process of motivated students.

Overall, considering both federally funded and campus initiatives, academic advising of some type is nearly universal. *Fifty-six percent* of the schools that responded reported that academic advising is *required for all students*, *37 percent* indicated academic advising is *required for some students*, and *7 percent* of respondents reported academic advising is *not required*. Whether academic advising is required varies considerably by sector: at public 4-year schools 33 percent require all students to complete academic advising and 50 percent require some to complete advising, at private institutions 83 percent require all students to complete academic advising and 7 percent require some to complete advising, at community colleges 34 percent require all students to complete academic advising and 66 percent require some to complete advising, at hospital schools 100 percent require all students to complete academic advising, and at proprietary institutions 33 percent require all students to complete academic advising and 50 percent require some to complete advising.

Illinois schools have a variety of student populations that vary not only in academic ability but also by race/ethnicity, income levels of parents, percent of nontraditional students, and generation status of students, so it is not surprising that schools target different groups of students for advising. The most often mentioned major population(s) targeted in the programs include first generation students (25 percent), all students, all first-year students, or all new students (24 percent each), low-income students (19 percent), academic disadvantaged or at-risk students (18 percent), students with disabilities (16 percent), all minority students or specific minority groups (14 percent each), and students who require developmental or remedial coursework (3 percent).

As shown in Table 3, below, respondents identified 74 percent of programs offered as Academic Support (Including Advising) followed closely by Counseling & Mentoring (69 percent). Transition & Orientation programs (60 percent) are also widely used and fifty percent or more of respondents also use some type of Tracking/Early Warning system. About 49 percent encourage formal Student-Faculty Interactions. Less widely used were Learning Communities (27 percent) or Scholarships (24 percent).

About 29 percent of programs fell under the "Other" category including financial aid, financial literacy, or financial fitness program (26 percent of the "Other" category), tutoring (15 percent), cultural programs (15 percent), and academic skills courses or workshops (13 percent). Fewer institutions mentioned career guidance or graduate or professional school preparation guidance, book stipends, or enrichment/ leadership/community programs. The majority of programs (62 percent) were voluntary.

Table 3: Student Support Programs provided by Illinois Colleges and Universities

Category	Total N=205	Public 4-year N=57	Private N=67	Community College N=67	Hospital N=6	Proprietary N=8
Counseling & Mentoring	69%	70%	79%	61%	17%	88%
Learning Communities	27%	32%	30%	19%	17%	50%
Student-Faculty Interactions	49%	60%	55%	34%	33%	63%
Transition & Orientation	60%	60%	60%	63%	33%	75%
Academic Support (Including Advising)	74%	67%	78%	76%	50%	88%
Tracking/Early Warning	56%	47%	64%	54%	17%	88%
Scholarships	24%	35%	15%	25%	17%	25%
Other	30%	28%	26%	32%	0%	33%

Just as the overall results indicate schools are using a combination of efforts in their programs, so do the results by sector. Counseling & Mentoring efforts and Academic Support (Including Advising) efforts are popular overall and by sector. Private institution programs are more likely to have Counseling & Mentoring, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Tracking/Early Warning components in their programs than the other sectors. This is true for proprietary institutions as well, although they represent a much smaller proportion of the programs.

Respondents reported that for 32 percent of the programs students participating are met with at least once a week (11 percent everyday, 12 percent a couple of times a week, and 9 percent once a week), for 15 percent of the programs students are met with a couple a times a month, and 14 percent of the programs meet with students once a month or less often (7 percent once a month, 5 percent once a quarter or semester, and 2 percent once a year). For 39 percent of the programs respondents identified some "Other" frequency that they meet with students participating in their program; 48 percent, or 30 programs, meet with students based on what the student needs, and for 15 percent of the programs the frequency changes as the program progresses.

The average amount of time spent with a student (or corresponding with a student) participating in the program in an academic year is 53 hours; however the range on that average is noteworthy, from one-half hour to 1,100 hours. For at least 40 of the programs/initiatives, respondents indicated the amount spent with a student varies depending on student need. For 96 percent of programs, respondents indicated they interact via individual face-to-face, 82 percent through email, 70 percent via group presentation, and 37 percent through social media.

The average annual cost (or grant amount) for the programs is $199,923, ranging from no (additional) cost to $1,900,000. The average, estimated cost per student for the programs is $1,263, ranging from no (additional) cost to $27,200. For those respondents who provided the source of program funding, respondents indicated 60 percent of programs are either fully or partially funded by institutional funds and/or at no additional cost to the schools, for 22 percent of programs the primary source is federal funds (21 specified Department of Education or Department of Education TRIO funding, and 3 Perkins Grant), for 11 percent of programs private or corporate grants or donations were mentioned as the source of funding, and for 8 percent (10 programs) state funding was mentioned as the primary source of funding.

Most schools (92 percent) attempt to track the effectiveness of their initiative(s).The variables tracked include retention/persistence rates (45 percent), GPA or grades (34 percent), graduation rates (20 percent), utilization of services (15 percent), and course completion (10 percent). About one-fifth of respondents mentioned using multiple evaluation and assessment tools that include surveys, interviews, learning outcome assessments, focus groups, reports, meetings, etc. About 40 percent of respondents indicated their program has been successful and/or effective, specifically through increased retention/persistence rates (56 percent), higher grades (44 percent), increased graduation rates (23 percent), surveys/evaluations of students (15 percent), and/or credit/course completion (13 percent).

An attempt was made to see if there were types of programs that produced better results than others among the Illinois schools who responded to the survey. The schools were divided into three groups "high achievers", "average achievers" and "low achievers" based on their graduation rates compared to other graduation rates for the same type of student – same level of preparation.[17] The average ACT score was used as a proxy for preparation. Using these categories we reviewed the responses to the questionnaire. A few patterns emerged. High achievers generally had more than one support program in place (67 percent) while low achievers did not (41 percent). A small majority of high achievers had mandatory programs while only about 40 percent of the low achievers required attendance. In specific program categories, high achievers had more transition and orientation programs (72 percent to 56 percent) and more student/faculty interactions (54 percent to 42 percent) than the low achieving group. Because we did not ask how long programs had been in place, many of these programs could be quite new, implemented in response to concerns schools already had or in response to other recent state initiatives. Since it takes six years to see a change in a six-year graduation rate, the full impact of some of these programs probably has yet to be felt.

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[17] The table below shows how the schools were grouped by ACT score and 6-year graduation rates.

Avg. ACT score	High	Medium	Low
30 & >	>=90%	80-89%	<80%
26-29.5	>=80%	70-79%	<70%
22.5-25.5	>=70%	60-69%	<60%
20-22	>=60%	50-59%	<50%
<20 or open	>=40%	30-39%	<30%

Sixty-seven percent of student respondents indicated they have completed academic advising this academic year. Community college respondents were somewhat less likely to complete advising (62 percent) than students attending four-year institutions (69 percent) and, surprisingly, freshmen were less likely to have completed advising (58 percent) compared to upperclassmen (70 percent.) Over half indicated that they met with an advisor once per term; about a quarter indicated they met twice or more and the remainder indicated a once-a-year meeting. A little over half report spending 16-30 minutes with an advisor; another quarter indicated they spend more than a half an hour and remainder indicated they spent 15 minutes or less. About 52 percent indicated they received advising from both professional staff and faculty; 28 percent indicated professional staff assistance only and 20 percent had advising from faculty only. About two-thirds met with the same individual each time. Community college respondents were more likely than 4-year institution respondents to have indicated they receive advising from a professional (34 percent compared to 25 percent), and less likely to have indicated they receive advising from faculty (16 percent compared to 23 percent). Community college respondents were less likely to have reported that they meet with the same (one) individual each time they see an advisor, 50 percent compared to 70 percent of 4-year institution respondents.

Respondents were asked to identify the primary way(s) they interact with an advisor when receiving services. Ninety-four percent of these respondents reported they interact with an advisor on an individual face-to-face basis, 48 percent through email, 20 percent by phone, 5 percent by group presentation. Less than two percent of respondents identified some other way they interact with an advisor. While the method of contacting students has expanded during the past decade, the primary method of interaction is still the face-to-face meeting on campus.

Help choosing classes was overwhelmingly the most common academic advising service received by respondents. Ninety-two percent reported they have received help choosing classes, 61 percent guidance related to choosing a major/career, 50 percent academic monitoring and support, 45 percent information about campus resources and support services, 40 percent information on financial aid or budgeting, and/or 19 percent of respondents reported they have received emotional support or guidance.

There were two differences in services received by community college and four-year institution respondents. About 40 percent of community college respondents reported receiving academic monitoring and support compared to 56 percent of 4-year institution respondents, and 47 percent of community college respondents indicated receiving information on financial aid and budgeting compared to 34 percent of 4-year institution respondents. Members of the Working Group indicated that they were not surprised by community colleges offering more financial counseling than four-year institutions as there has been a big push toward lowering student loan default rates at community colleges. There are many programs designed to ensure that students are aware of what are they doing and how much money they are taking out. The federal government has required debt counseling for several years but the emphasis now is on financial behavior before debt accumulates. It was also suggested that another reason for the increased emphasis at community colleges is that community

colleges are more likely to advise students using a professional counselor whereas four-year institutions are more likely to use professors for counseling who have a different, more academic issue focus.

Fifty-five percent of respondents reported they have taken advantage of a program, service, and/or initiative at their institution (other than academic advising) designed to help them succeed in college. Eighty percent of respondents reported the program they are participating in is voluntary, 17 percent indicated the program is required. Of those respondents, 92 percent reported on one program, and 8 percent reported taking advantage of more than 1 program. Fifty-eight percent of 4-year institution respondents reported they have taken advantage of a college success program compared to 49 percent of community college respondents. Upperclassmen were more likely to have reported they have taken advantage of a college success programs at their institution than freshmen: 61 percent of seniors have taken advantage of a program compared to 45 percent of freshmen. This could indicate that success courses are working – increasing the likelihood of making it to the senior level.

Respondents identified academic support (including advising, 59 percent)), counseling and mentoring (44 percent), student-faculty interactions (40 percent), as the most common types of programs offered. The help received was similar to regular academic advising: help choosing classes (53 percent); academic monitoring and support (51 percent), career and major guidance (48 percent), information about campus resources (47 percent), financial aid information (37 percent) and emotional support (30 percent). Students were satisfied with the services they were receiving. Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated the program, service, or initiative they are participating in is helpful. Suggestions for improvement were few and included better guidance (20 percent) and more time spent (18 percent) with each student.

Discussion: What types of programs might be needed for MAP-eligible students; what can be implemented; how can success be tracked and evaluated?

Although Illinois ranks in the top ten states for graduation rates, the graduation rates for MAP recipients and most individual school graduation rates could be improved. Both the conclusions from the national studies and Working Group discussions emphasized that schools need a commitment to student retention that starts at the top and permeates all management levels. Without leadership from the top and buy-in at all levels of the university, including faculty, implementing successful retention programs becomes much harder. The Working Group strongly believes that not all problems can be solved or behavior changes made through changes to the rules and conditions of the MAP program. This level of commitment should be encouraged by other ongoing Illinois initiatives such as the P-20 Council, Complete College America, and the enhanced student transfer protocol between community colleges and baccalaureate schools. The recommendations from the Working Group are presented as specific interventions to target specific problems for at-risk students assembled into a coherent framework of

support but are not a substitute for this larger commitment to student success. MAP is an important program but changes to MAP rules cannot build a culture of success at Illinois colleges.

After reviewing the data from the student, school and Working Group surveys, the national literature review and the MAP Longitudinal Study, several themes emerged and some issues for Illinois schools and students were identified. Specifically:

1. Although it is difficult to assess school intent to improve retention and completion, there is evidence that most Illinois schools are serious in their commitment to student retention. Of the schools responding to the Working Group survey, that educate approximately 80 percent of MAP recipients, nearly all require advising of some type for students that each school defines as at-risk, and the majority of those provide at least one other support service. Schools do vary in the nature and number of programs offered which can be used as a crude measure of intent. Schools that appear to do somewhat better at retaining students provide, on average, more programs and more of them are mandatory.

2. Students responding to the Working Group survey are generally satisfied with the services they receive; however, about 40 percent acknowledge that the support they receive does not sufficiently address the issues they are having that could affect their continued presence at school. While nearly 90 percent of the schools indicated that they provide advising, only 67 percent of the student respondents (and many of them likely to be in the at-risk category) indicated they had received any assistance. Sometimes students cannot identify some of the services that they receive. Academic advising may not be perceived as such by some students who are receiving those services.

3. Financial issues predominate for students followed by family and employment concerns. These are tough issues for schools to handle (although some programs attempt to do so). However, other identified problems seem well within the purview of schools: lack of encouragement, difficulty with courses, not fitting in or "liking" school, not being able to get the classes needed.

4. It appears that schools in Illinois that are more successful in graduating their students offered more than one support program, especially transition programs, and these programs were often mandatory. There were more expanded faculty/student interactions as well.

5. Some schools are providing financial awareness or fitness programs to help students manage their money and reduce debt, especially at community colleges. However, financial problems (both the cost of attendance and the opportunity costs of not working) remain the number one barrier to college completion. An emphasis on "staying on track", getting career counseling, identifying a major, carrying a full-time load of courses each semester, and smooth transitions between schools could be components of the most effective cost reduction program – cutting a student's time in school from what is now often six years back down to the traditional four

years, reducing the direct costs of education by up to a third and eliminating up to two years of the opportunity costs of foregone employment.

6. The advising and other support programs provided by Illinois schools are not distributed evenly over all the sectors. The community colleges, operating on small budgets but serving large numbers of students, provide the fewest auxiliary services (aside from developmental education) despite serving the poorest and least academically prepared students.

Some of these issues have been addressed by programs in other states. Programs have been developed that have improved year to year retention, graduation rates, or grades of a specified student population at schools around the country.

Programs that seem to work to improve student success rates – evidence from national studies

Basic academic advising is nearly universally required, although not always mandatory or offered to all students. Some form of academic advising is generally present even at schools with relatively low graduation rates. Other programs have been designed to augment the basic academic advising that has always been in place that generally consists of helping students to select courses to fulfill their major and minor requirements. Over 90 percent of the Illinois institutions that responded to the Working Group survey indicated that academic advising was required for at least a portion of their student body but at least half also had other support programs in place. A review of the national literature shows that, in addition to basic academic advising, there are many other types of intervention strategies that are used in conjunction with academic advising to enhance results. Summaries of the studies reviewed may be found in Appendix A through C and a summary chart of interventions in Appendix A.

One study, *Effective College Access, Persistence and Completion Programs, and Strategies for Underrepresented Student Populations: Opportunities for Scaling Up*[18] puts these additional support strategies neatly into five categories: transition programs, mentoring, learning communities, faculty/student interaction programs, and advising:

- "Transition programs include any type of summer bridge programs or orientation activities that a school may provide for its students.
- Mentoring programs can have multiple arrangements, from one-on-one to group mentoring, and may or may not be peer-to-peer.
- Learning communities are groups of students that typically enroll together, take a significant number of classes together during each academic year, and (in the case of residential colleges) typically live in the same dormitory.

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[18] *Effective College Access, Persistence and Completion Programs, and Strategies for Underrepresented Student Populations: Opportunities for Scaling Up, June 2010. Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.*

- Faculty/student interaction programs typically refer to specialized programs allowing students to interact with faculty members for mentoring, advice, and even for research positions.
- [Intensive] advising programs … typically refer to targeted, dedicated advising services for use by freshmen or underrepresented student groups." Other research coupled this type of advising with tracking and early warning systems.

These programs can address a variety of issues. While advising programs and faculty/student interaction typically address academic issues and the development of study skills and time management strategies; transition programs, mentoring and learning communities can often provide more in the way of social and emotional support. The big question posed about all of these support programs is, of course, do they work? The short answer, according to studies reviewed, is a qualified "yes."

Different studies report different results. Both the type of improvement and the intensity varied by report. For example, *Effective College Access, Persistence and Completion Programs, and Strategies for Underrepresented Student Populations: Opportunities for Scaling Up*[19] found transition programs (combined with tracking/early warning systems) had a direct positive impact on retention of at-risk students; learning communities had indirect, positive impact on retention; and mentoring programs were effective only for minority students. They found no impact on retention from faculty/student interactions or advising. However the study did find that there appeared to be synergies when several programs were implemented simultaneously and that schools that had successfully increased retention and graduation rates often used several different programs with impacts that were hard to separate. The report concludes: "Most institutions used a combination of interventions. The fact that counseling is only effective in conjunction with other approaches raises questions about excessive reliance on this approach."

The conclusions of *Community College Retention and Recruitment of "At-Risk" Students* were similar to those in the previous study *Effective College Access.* Many of the programs believed to make the highest contributions to retention at community colleges focused on "academic support/guidance, targeted interventions for specific student populations, and easing the transition of students to the college environment." Defining the requirements more broadly, *A Review of College Access Literature*[20] comes to nearly the same conclusion stating "the most important factors in college retention are academic integration and social integration into the college."

Another study also emphasizes the synergies possible with multiple support programs but has a slightly different slant on the role of academic advising. A review of the retention literature in *Creating the Case for a New Academic Advising Model at Winona State University* concluded with: "The retention literature has long recognized academic advising as one of the three most effective strategies, along with academic support and orientation programs, for improving student success. Although there has not

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[19] *Effective College Access, Persistence and Completion Programs, and Strategies for Underrepresented Student Populations: Opportunities for Scaling Up, June 2010. Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.*
[20] *A Review of College Access Literature, February, 2009. By John Heroff. Prepared for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.*

been a direct, causal relationship established between advising practices and retention, good advising promotes many outcomes that are also associated with a high rate of retention, such as student satisfaction, effective academic and career planning, goal setting, familiarity with and use of campus resources and support services, and student/faculty interaction outside the classroom."

"In addition to student satisfaction, academic and career planning, as well as goal-setting in general, are expected outcomes of good quality advising. These activities also impact a student's likelihood of staying in college. Research shows that most students, in fact about 75%, enter college without having made final decisions about majors and careers, because even those who declare a major right away are likely to change that major during their college experience. So most students are making these decisions while they are in college, and this exploration can and should be part of the academic advising experience."

Two of three different studies detailed in *Advising At Risk Students*[21] all found academic advising services worthwhile, especially those that increased a student's confidence and comfort level with school.   The first study, "Getting Prepared for the Unprepared," identified several effective academic advising services for at-risk students such as "programs that teach decision-making skills, promote self-advocacy, provide curriculum intensive advising, and provide services to support students during their first year. " These include using peer advisors and providing a visual means to disseminate information to the students before they even see their advisor. The second study Advising Underprepared Students, suggests using "an intrusive advising approach, insisting upon collaborative relationships with other campus resources, and encouraging advisors to invest in the student to help them gain a sense of belonging and that they matter."

Two ACT Policy Reports details specific guidelines for improving college retention gleaned from a study of existing programs that appear to produce results. One report, *The Role of Academic and Non-Academic Factors in Improving College Retention*,[22] suggests colleges "[d]etermine their student characteristics and needs, set priorities among these areas of need, identify available resources, evaluate a variety of successful programs, and implement a formal, comprehensive retention program that best meets their institutional needs. Specifically the report recommends implementing an early alert, assessment, and monitoring system based on HSGPA, ACT Assessment scores, course placement tests, first semester college GPA, socioeconomic information, attendance records, and non-academic information derived from formal college surveys and college student inventories to identify and build comprehensive profiles of students at risk of dropping out."

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[21] *Advising At Risk Students, by Pat Walsh, nacada.ksu.edu. References cited: Jones and Becker (2002), Getting Prepared for the Unprepared, The Mentor 4(2), and Nutt, C.L.(2003), Advising Underprepared Students, unpublished manuscript.*
[22] *The Role of Academic and Non-Academic Factors in Improving College Retention, 2004. By V.A. Lotkowski and S.B. Robbins and R.J Noeth. ACT Policy Report.*

Another report, *What Works in Student Retention: Four Year Public Colleges*[23] detailed the results of a survey sent to all four-year public colleges. The first result was not encouraging: "Respondents from four-year public colleges are far more likely to attribute attrition to student characteristics than they are to attribute attrition to institutional characteristics." However, the report did identify "[s]everal retention practices at high-performing four-year public colleges [that] differentiate those colleges from low-performing colleges. Those practices include:

- advising interventions with selected student populations,
- increased advising staff,
- comprehensive learning assistance center/lab,
- integration of advising with first-year programs,
- center that combines academic advising with career/life planning,
- summer bridge program,
- non-credit freshman seminar/university 101,
- recommended course placement testing,
- performance contracts for students in academic difficulty,
- residence hall programs, and
- extended freshman orientation for credit.

A report that focuses specifically on community colleges from The Center for Community College Student Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin's report is *A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success (A First Look).*[24] It found many programs that appear to increase student retention but many are operating on a small scale: ""Community colleges across the country have created innovative, data-informed programs that are models for educating underprepared students, engaging traditionally underserved students, and helping students from all backgrounds succeed. However, because most of these programs have limited scope, the field now has pockets of success rather than widespread improvement. Turning these many small accomplishments into broad achievement — and improved completion rates — depends on bringing effective programs to scale."

The report describes 13 promising practices in community colleges that likely have applicability to all sectors and can be grouped as follows:

• A strong start. Focusing attention on the front door of the college — ensuring that students' earliest contacts and first weeks incorporate experiences that will foster personal connections and enhance their chances of success. These seem to mimic the transition and bridge programs often mentioned as successful strategies at four-year institutions.

• Clear, coherent pathways. The many choices and options students face as they endeavor to navigate through college systems can create unnecessary confusion — and inhibit students' success.

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[23] *What Works in Student Retention: Four Year Public Colleges, 2004. By W.R. Habley and R. McClanahan. ACT Policy Report.*
[24] *A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success (A First Look), 2012. Center for Community College Student Engagement. The University of Texas at Austin, Community college Leadership Program.*

Colleges improve student success (and minimize ill-used time) by creating coherent pathways that help students move through an engaging collegiate experience.

•   Integrated support. Time is a resource — one of the most important resources a college has — and it is finite. A large part of improving success involves effectively connecting with students where they are most likely to be: in the classroom. This means building support, such as skills development and supplemental instruction, into coursework rather than referring students to services that are separate from the learning experience.

•   High expectations and high support. Students do their best when the bar is high but within reach. Setting a high standard and then giving students the necessary support — academic planning, academic support, financial aid, and so on — makes the standard attainable.

•   Intensive student engagement. Promoting student engagement is the overarching feature of successful program design, and all other features support it. In design and implementation of the collegiate experience, colleges must make engagement inescapable for their students.

Some studies unambiguously identified successful programs by their standards identified and described some blueprints for implementation, not all studies could identify, by the definition of success applied in the particular study, conclusively successful programs. The biggest problem was the lack of rigorous data. One study, *Campus-Based Retention Initiatives: Does the Emperor Have Clothes?*[25] reviewed almost one hundred articles describing and evaluating support programs and found the strength of the connections between programmatic interventions and student persistence varied in these studies. Only sixteen studies clearly linked a particular program with retention and "only in the area of transition programs did [the study] find a reasonable number of studies that reported consistently strong connections between interventions and improved student persistence."

Some types of programs were mentioned as being successful more often than others. No program was thought to be necessary or helpful for all students but the following programs were described as successful and cost effective by at least two studies:

• Academic advising is considered essential. It appears to be a nearly universal component in retention programs but its value increases when combined with other elements. It should be noted that many schools with poor graduation rates have some form of academic advising in place and several studies noted an overreliance on it to produce improvements in retention.

• A very early warning tracking system (first two or three weeks of class) coupled with intensive/intrusive advising to get the student back on track had several supporters. Early warning systems are considered relatively inexpensive to implement and using that to target candidates for intensive advising was considered a cost-effective use of scarce counseling resources.

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[25] *Campus-Based Retention Initiatives: Does the Emperor Have Clothes?, 2006. By L.P. Davis, C. Morelon, D. Whitehead and D. Hossler. New Directions for Institutional Research.*

- Mandatory transition and orientation programs were also considered successful in several studies. These varied considerably in scale and scope but intent was usually to acclimate students to campus, identify resources available to them and begin to get these new students involved in campus activities.

- Some studies indicate that there appears to be a benefit to having a single advisor throughout the student's program. At a minimum, the student should have one person to go to with their problems during the first year.

- Another relatively simple thing that seems to improve chances for success was removing the option of late registration for at-risk students.

- Providing each student with a "road map" of his path to a degree in his/her major was mentioned several times and was considered especially effective when coupled with career counseling.

- Summer bridge programs are often used in successful programs but they are usually four to six weeks long, expensive and highly school specific. Schools that have these programs have usually adopted increased retention as an explicit goal of the institution and are investing resources to make it happen.

Evidence from the Working Group survey

The Working Group participants were selected, in part, because while they are all familiar with the needs of MAP recipients and other first generation students from lower-income families, they are diverse in their perspectives and opinions. There was no consensus on any particular type of program or intervention. In general, there was agreement that simply adding a program or two would not produce the desired results – that school cultures must change to focus on program completion. Several members of the group emphasized this idea – that progress in retention is a coordinated effort across many parts of the campus that requires leadership from the top administration followed by buy-in from lower levels of management to implement and sustain the programs. Most members felt that this goal was beyond the scope of the Working Group. A less comprehensive goal, that of having an integrated package of services offered to students was embraced by some members of the Working Group and there were smaller steps schools could take that were identified and promoted by at least several Working Group members:

- Establish minimum student success outcomes. Some kind of measurable outcome related to a school's existing position. Schools with underprepared, first generation students would need to improve their completion rates but should not be compared to schools with well-prepared student from financially secure, well-educated parents.

- Establish a set of minimum requirements (not too prescriptive) for support programs. About 93 percent of the Working Group members that completed the survey indicated that there should be an advising/support requirement.

- These requirements could include broad outlines of who should receive additional help (freshmen, first generation, minority, low-income), the type of support (academic, financial, social, emotional), program structure (voluntary, mandatory) but should leave the details to the schools. Two-thirds of the Working Group thought that advising should be available for all students. Nearly 80 percent indicated that the programs should be mandatory and over 85 percent emphasized the importance of programs during the first year. About 86 percent of the Working Group thought academic advising should be required; 64 percent thought that a financial literacy component should be included and 43 percent indicated that social/emotional counseling be part of the package as well.

- Establish a "best practices" package. Schools that adopt the "best practices" package would be considered to have met all support requirements.

- Require some type of student commitment, an acknowledgment of student responsibilities. One recommendation was that students sign a commitment pledge before the grant is released each year; another recommendation centered around a quiz of some kind designed to reinforce the mutual responsibilities of the school and the student.

- Recommendations should be phased-in and should include both requirements for schools and student responsibilities.

- ISAC should provide school monitoring and financial aid information services on an as needed basis. Other roles for ISAC included notification of previous FAFSA filers that it was time to file again and establishing some type of on-line interactive program to enhance the financial aid awareness of students.

- A training program should be established to share information about best practices across campuses.

There was a majority agreement on some specifics. About 57 percent indicated that a requirement to meet at least once per term would be beneficial. The workgroup thought that year-to-year retention (93%) and program completion (79%) were the best ways to measure success. And a plurality of the group generally thought that compliance tracking through program compliance review(46%) preferable to compliance tracking through a school report to ISAC (which was favored by about 39%). ISAC strongly prefers the school report as a way to collect data and provide regular feedback on the process. ISAC does not engage in a program review at every school every year so several years could go by without any evidence of success being demonstrated by schools. ISAC also needs a way to collect annual unit record data on students until the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (LDS) is up and running.

There also was general agreement that students need more information on how to apply for and the availability and types of financial aid; the employment prospects and pay ranges in their chosen professions; and the net cost of various school choices. Currently, less than 40 percent of schools provide this type of information routinely to their students.

Discrepancies between the conclusions of national studies, the Working Group's preferences and what is already implemented at Illinois schools

There were three common success stories from the review of the national studies. Very early warning systems coupled with intensive advising, mandatory transition and orientation programs for incoming freshman and summer bridge programs for high school students transitioning to college were all found to be at least somewhat successful in retaining students.

Figure 6: Differences between Working Group interests and programs implemented by schools

Work group/ School differences

| Work Group		Schools	
• Tracking/early warning systems	86%	• Counseling and mentoring	71%
• Transition and orientation	71%	• Transition and orientation	63%
• Counseling and mentoring	50%	• Tracking and early warning	57%
• Student-faculty interactions	36%	• Student-faculty interactions	50%

Relatively simple changes such a single advisor that knows the student; denying late registration to classes for at risk students, and providing each student with career planning and a "road map" of her path through her program were also identified as initiatives that helped students complete their programs.

The Working Group felt that tracking and early warning systems were beneficial in helping schools retain at-risk students and a number of members were familiar with various tracking and early warning IT systems that provided this functionality. The Working Group also saw value in transition and orientation programs for freshman to acclimate them to the campus, introduce them to a network of staff who could help them, and help them understand what would be expected of them in their programs. Training should be able to accommodate the different type of students participating. Transfer students, traditional vs. non-traditional, etc. An orientation for a 19 year old living at home may not resonate with a 30 year old, self-reliant mother.

The majority of the Working Group felt that academic advising should be available to all students and mandatory in the first year for at-risk students.

Only a little over half of the schools that responded to the school survey already had some type of tracking/early warning system in place and about 60 percent had a transition and orientation program for its freshmen. These programs were combined with some level of academic advising. Schools that appear to be more successful in retaining students had more programs to support their basic advising services and more of them were mandatory.
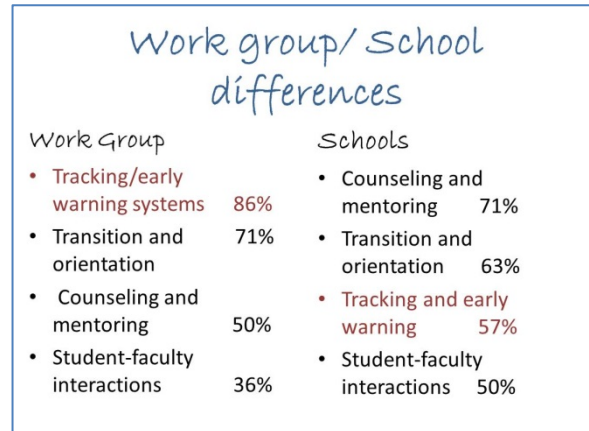
Example: First Year Initiative (FYI) (Montana State University)

- Program for high risk students (30% of entering class)
- Individual meetings with professional retention staff
- Group meetings and peer mentors who meet several times a semester
- Intrusive intervention after poor mid-semester marks. Sessions on test taking, academic/study skills, time management, test anxiety and stress management.
- Increased retention rates by 3 percentage points saving the University annually in tuition dollars an estimated $122,000.

Constraints to offering more student services

The large number of programs already implemented by Illinois schools, the results of the national studies and the preferences of the Working Group suggest some enthusiasm for and belief in additional support programs for at risk students. While many schools in Illinois offer at least one program, few offer a comprehensive set of programs that might strongly move a schools retention percentages. There are several reasons why implementing these programs might be considered difficult by the schools.

"Unfunded mandates" and "one size does not fit all"

Some Working Group members expressed concern over increasing unfunded mandates, especially during a period of time when state funding to schools has been curtailed. Working Group members emphasized the different roles different schools play and the diversity of students they serve. It was also noted that schools face different financial situations and where some retention programs might be perceived as cost-effective because they increase tuition revenues and decrease the cost of acquiring new students, for other schools, the additional program costs appear to be a burden without significant compensation in increased revenue or a decrease in other costs.

Example: Comprehensive Student Support Program Paul Smith's College

- High risk student body - nearly half are first generation; 40% are Pell-eligible and over half are in the bottom 50% of HS class.
- Created an academic success center to coordinate advising
- Early outreach to high risk students
- Implemented Starfish Early Alert system
- Students on probation after fall semester fell from 14.6% to 9.1% and student retention increased by 10%
- In 2.5 years, the program has increased net student revenue by $3 million.

Some of the national literature indicates that student retention programs can save the institution money if they are properly implemented and effective. A poorly designed or executed program that was not the product of a commitment to increasing student retention would be an obvious waste of money. The details of two financially successful programs, one implemented at a public university and one at a private four-year institution with large numbers of at-risk students, are shown in the boxes on the prior page. Both programs show that retention programs not only improve student retention rates, they are good for the school finances as well.

Issue of student privacy

Some Working Group members indicated that they had possible privacy issues with identifying MAP recipients. They weren't sure they could identify who a MAP recipient is, unless the financial aid office hands out that information to faculty or staff colleagues which they may not be allowed to do. Others felt that it was possible since students are already so identified for federal financial aid. Part of the student appeal process to retain the federal grant is a requirement that the student meet with an academic advisor if their academic pace or GPA drops below federal minimums. Students disclose themselves to advisors at this point when they come to them for advising and appeal forms. The advisor is not aware of the total financial aid package only that they aren't getting any more financial aid because they dropped below standards. But at the federal level some students choose not to appeal, so there is still the concern that the MAP student may feel his privacy is violated if that information is given out across campus to advisors.

Tracking students who leave – data limitations

Tracking students who leave is a difficult task. ISAC can help with MAP recipients by "finding" them at new MAP-eligible schools. But ISAC cannot track MAP-eligible students who do not receive the grant or track, specifically, minority students (race is no longer on the federal FAFSA database, which is ISAC's primary database). ISAC can match the FAFSA database to various years of the ACT database (ACT exam is taken by almost all students at public high schools in the eleventh grade, and its dataset contains race/ethnicity variables). But the match has to be made without social security numbers; there is very limited data on students who attended private high schools and no data at all for returning non-traditional students who comprise about 40 percent of MAP grants and about 50 percent of MAP-eligible students.

ISAC does work with National Clearinghouse databases that allow it to track all students (even those that leave Illinois) but it is very expensive to do so. ISAC would need some financial support to regularly use National Clearinghouse databases to track students. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) has considerable data on community college students that might also be available. After the Longitudinal Data System is up and running, ISAC would be able to track all students remaining in Illinois. For the most complete dataset, ISAC would still have to use the Clearinghouse data for students who leave the state. Schools are generally notified that a student might be leaving the state when a request for transcripts arrives. It may be possible to reduce the number of records sent to the Clearinghouse by utilizing the information in these requests. The timing of the LDS is still uncertain and most direct from the school data collection activities are recommended in the short run to fill in the gap. ISAC would expect that the data requirements for the schools would diminish significantly once the LDS is functioning.

Lack of good information about what works

While there are periodic national studies that review support programs designed to increase retention, there is no systematic collection of data and the type of data available is not conclusive due to flaws in methodology. When schools implement programs they are not setting up experiments; their purpose is to improve conditions for their students, not collect data.

Furthermore, the data that is collected is not widely disseminated or available. Schools in Illinois don't necessarily know what other campuses are doing. Many good programs nationally that could be replicated at other schools don't receive enough attention to become model programs. Simply being able to collect evidence that a particular intervention is successful in a variety of academic environments would be very useful. Uncertainty as to how to proceed can be as big a roadblock as lack of funding. Working Group members felt a "best practices" package of student support programs should be developed along with a training program to share information about what works.

Problems with measuring success

A variety of measures are used nationally to measure the success of advising and other support services. As already mentioned, most schools attempt to track the effectiveness of their programs but most do not do so in a rigorous fashion (using a control group.) The most common variables tracked were retention/persistence rates (semester to semester or year to year) and graduation rates. These

rates are sometimes tracked in conjunction with overall college GPA, utilization of student services, and individual course completion or course grade. To provide additional information, some colleges used assessment tools such as surveys and focus groups to better understand how their programs affected student behavior.

The focus in Illinois is on graduation rates, given the goal of 60 percent of the workforce with a quality credential by 2025. Increasing graduation likely necessitates increasing year-to-year persistence rates. Graduation rates take a while before changes can measured, the length of time determined by the graduation rate measured, four, five, six or eight-year rates at four-year institutions and 100% to 200% completion time for community colleges and other institutions that offer less-than-four-year degrees.

It has been established that MAP recipients graduate at the same rate as other students, when controlling for school choice. But MAP recipients disproportionately attend schools with low graduation rates. Getting school graduation rates to rise is beneficial to MAP recipients and may be the most effective way to address the problem.

Using year-to-year persistence is a quicker way to see if some progress is being made. Persistence has several components – it is more than simply showing up in the following year or semester. How well the student is doing (GPA) and if they are making course completion progress (pace requirements) can also be considered part of persistence. The Working Group was nearly unanimous in its support for year-to-year retention as an appropriate measure, and a large majority indicated that program completion was another appropriate measure. Pace and GPA were also considered appropriate measures by a quarter to a third of Working Group members. However, most MAP recipients are Pell-eligible (94 percent). Pell eligibility has pace and GPA requirements that have been recently tightened at the federal level. It was the opinion of the MAP Task Force and it was echoed by this group that these new requirements should be given a chance to work before implementing additional state-level or school-level changes.

Table 3: Changes in ACT score and graduation rates over time

Public and PNFP 4-Year Schools in Illinois		*Change in Graduation Rate*						
change between 2003 and 2012		*Increase*			*No*	*Decrease*		
#	change in ACT score	= >10%	5% to 9.9%	<5%	Change	= >10%	5% to 9.9%	<5%
19	increases in ACT score*	6	3	5	2	1	0	2
13	no change in ACT score**	4	4	2	1	0	1	1
11	decreases in ACT score***	1	0	6	0	0	2	2
43	institutions w/data available	11	7	13	3	1	3	5
64	public and PNFP institutions	***decrease in ACT from 1 to 3.5 points						
	**stays w/in +/- 0.5	*increase in ACT from 1 to 3 points						
	21 schools have insufficient data							

Issues with the standard graduation rates

It is interesting to look at Illinois MAP-eligible four-year public and nonprofit institution graduation rates over the previous decade. Table 3 shows the number of MAP-eligible four-year institutions for which we have sufficient data grouped by changes to the average ACT score of its incoming freshmen and changes to the six-year full-time, first-time graduation rate.

Nineteen schools saw the average ACT score of their freshmen increase by one to three points. Of those that increased the preparation level of their freshmen (as measured by the ACT), 74 percent saw an increase in graduation rates. About 11 percent saw no change in graduation rates and about 15 percent saw their graduation rates decrease. For the thirteen schools that saw little change in the preparation levels of their freshmen, most of them, 77 percent saw their graduation rates increase as well. And for the eleven schools that saw the preparation levels of their freshmen actually decline, 64 percent of them had an increased six-year graduation rate. Clearly, despite the rising costs and financial pressures on students, and even decreased preparation levels for some, many schools are seeing more students complete their programs than were completing a decade ago. Even making the unlikely assumption that all the schools with insufficient data did not improve, it is still true that nearly half of the MAP-eligible four-year public and nonprofit four-year schools have improved their graduation rates during the past ten years.

Figure 7: Percent of students counted in traditional graduation rates

There is still room for improvement. In order for the state to meet its 2025 goal of 60 percent of its workforce with a quality credential, more students must attend college and more students must complete their programs. However, the way traditional graduation rates are calculated will not capture all the changes in completions that will affect the 2025 goal. The graduation measure for at least a decade has been the six-year, same-school, full-time, first-time freshman graduation rate. The value in this measure is that it can be compared across years and, for most institutions, it is the highest graduation rate. More students in this cohort are likely to graduate than in cohorts of part-time students. The biggest problem with this measure is that many, many students are not covered by it. At some schools the majority of students in attendance are not counted in the schools' graduation rates, including most of its MAP recipients. Even within sectors, there is a huge difference in the percentage of the student body actually counted in the graduation rate. In the public university sector, the percent of students covered by the six-year graduation rate varies from 30% to 76%; in the community college sector, the range is 10% to 51% and in the private sector, the range is from 5% to 99%. Figure 7 illustrates the differences.

It was noted by workshop participants representing both community colleges and four-year schools that they weren't getting credit for graduating students who were taking nontraditional paths through college. According to the National Clearinghouse, students who change schools, often multiple times, who change status from full-time to part-time and back again, are the "new normal."   When the Clearinghouse included in its latest national analysis students who were either classified strictly part-time or mixed-time, they comprised 58.5 percent of total student enrollment. The freshman who enrolls at a four-year institution and remains there attending full-time until graduation, while not rare, is no longer the norm. First generation students and students from lower-income families who are our MAP recipients, often don't choose the correct college the first time or begin at a community college because it is familiar and cost-effective and then transfer. Non-traditional students, who make up forty percent of MAP recipients (and half of MAP eligible students) often attend school part-time. The traditional IPED's same-school, six-year graduation rate does not capture the behavior of either of these groups. Not counting these students can grossly underestimate the number of students graduating. Using the classic IPED's same-school, first-time, full-time, six-year freshman graduation rate results in a bachelor's degree graduation rate around 60 percent for Illinois. Using an "any school", "any status" analysis (possible for the Clearinghouse because of the way it collects its data), the Illinois' six-year, bachelor's degree graduation rate went from 60 percent to 72 percent, a big difference.

Increasing the time span from six years to at least ten would also more accurately capture what is happening. A part-time student, who takes two classes in the fall and two in the spring, a typical part-time course load for a student who works full-time, will need a minimum of 10 years to graduate from a 120 hour program. And to do that, he must never take a class he doesn't "need", never get out of sequence on courses taught in series and only offered in certain semesters and never withdraw or fail a class. A six-year graduation rate catches these students only halfway through their programs.

Improving Illinois college graduation rates, then, has really two components – increasing the number who cross the finish line and shortening the time it takes to get there. To motivate full-time students to take a full 15 semester hours per term, MAP eligibility is now tracked by credit hour. To get the full MAP grant each semester, students must carry 15 credit hours or more. If they carry fewer than 15, the award is prorated. For example, if the student carries 12 hours, he receives 12/15 of a full award. This preserves eligibility and provides some encouragement to carry a full load, especially at schools where 12 credit hours and 15 credit hours cost the same (mostly private institutions.)

MAP also has been adjusted over the years to accommodate independent, part-time students – "workers who go to school." MAP will pay out for part-time students who take as little as one three-credit hour course to help them stay in school from semester to semester even when they can't take two or more classes. Paying summer MAP to these students to help speed up the progress toward a degree would help keep them on track and graduate in less time. If a part-time student could afford to carry two more classes in the summer, the time to degree could be cut to about seven years from 10 years. But, MAP funds have never been available to pay for a summer MAP program. "Reallocating" existing MAP dollars for this purpose would *not* help the program meet its overall goals, since these part-time students have overall lower graduation rates and the program would be moving funds from students more likely to graduate to students less likely to graduate.

Getting full-time students to graduate in four years, rather than five or six.

A less-discussed graduation rate issue concerns using the four-year graduation rate for the students in bachelor's degree programs as a measure of success rather than the six year rate. Table 4 shows the four-year and six-year graduation rates for Illinois public universities.

Table 4: Four and Six Year Graduation Rates

Retention and Progression Rates	2011 6-Year Grad Rate	2011 4-Year Grad Rate
University of Illinois at Urbana at Champaign	82.5%	66.1%
Illinois State University	71.0%	47.8%
University of Illinois at Springfield	60.9%	43.8%
Eastern Illinois University	59.3%	31.7%
Northern Illinois University	55.5%	30.5%
University of Illinois at Chicago	54.5%	28.3%
Western Illinois University	53.4%	26.9%
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	51.9%	26.0%
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	44.5%	24.2%
Northeastern Illinois University	23.1%	5.3%
Chicago State University	21.0%	3.7%

Only one school gets more than half of its four-year degree students out in four years and that school, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, with an average ACT score of about 29, is selecting from the top ten percent of students nationwide. Other schools such as Illinois State, University of Illinois-Chicago and University of Illinois-Springfield have mostly well prepared students. The four-year graduation rates for their full-time students are all under 50 percent, and in some cases, well under. Private institutions have four-year graduation rates that deviate from their six-year rates in a similar fashion. Community colleges have a similar situation when comparing their 100 percent program time to completion to 150 percent time.

Some of these students take six years because they change majors and accumulate more hours than they need. Others attempt too few hours per term or withdraw from classes during the term. Still others get out of step with their programs and have to wait around for the courses that they need to be offered. Since six year graduation rates are a "same school rate," transfer issues are not part of problem. None of the students in IPEDS cohorts used to calculate the school's six-year graduation rate is a transfer student.

Moving students who currently attempt three to six credit hours per term - part-time "workers who go to school" - to full-time "students who work" attempting a full load of 15 credit hours is a difficult proposition for a number of reasons. The most common reason is that these are primarily independent students with families to support. But moving the "sort-of-full-time" student who carries nine or twelve semester hours instead of fifteen to a full fifteen credit hour semester course load who completes his classes (by limiting withdrawals) could have a significant impact on both graduation rates and debt

levels. The longer students remain in school, the less likely they are to graduate. The longer a student remains in school, the greater the direct cost of attendance and the higher the opportunity cost – lost wages that a student could be earning if employed in his field of study.

The Completion Gap: Overall graduation rates are important but achievement gap between some student groups is important as well

Several Working Group members also noted a difference in graduation rates by race. Even schools that are very good at graduating their students overall and are accepting only well-qualified freshmen, have a distinct difference in graduation rates for some minority groups. Illinois' high school graduating classes are not expected to expand in size over the next decade but the proportion of minority and lower income students (many who are MAP recipients) is expected to increase. Schools need to address achievement gap issues to ensure overall graduation rates increase and the number of credentials in the workforce increases.

A problem with using the IPEDS same school graduation rates or any state graduation rate is that it doesn't capture different graduation rates for lower income students or minority students that can occur either within an institution or among institutions as poor and minority students are funneled into schools with lower graduation rates. As already noted, MAP recipients graduate at about the same rate as the overall student graduation rate at the school they attend.   MAP recipients, however, disproportionately attend schools with lower graduation rates and some Working Group members have stated that that a single school graduation percentage often masks a racial disparity in graduation rates within an institution. Furthermore, MAP grants now are given only to about half the eligible students. Students new to college and students who are not as good at navigating the system are often the students who are left out. While data is difficult to come by for this group, we do see differences in retention rates for those students who receive MAP compared to similar students who do not. While the overall MAP recipient graduation rate is a good indicator of success especially when compared to the school graduation rate, it can hide important differences between all lower-income students and their higher income peers and different success rates among different racial groups.

At least two Illinois public universities have done some research reviewing the graduation patterns of students who receives federal need-based financial aid (Pell) and found that overall the graduation rates track the rates for the institution with the single exception of black aid recipients, especially black males. At one school the performance of minority students admitted as scholarship students were compared to the performance of students identified as at-risk and some surprising results were uncovered. The at-risk students' GPA at the end of three semesters was actually higher on average than the GPA of the scholarship students. They believe the difference was that at-risk students experienced a transition program upon their arrival at school or came in through a bridge program and then received some additional support services, while the scholarship students received no additional help because they were considered to have no adjustment difficulties. This result tracks with some data that ISAC has collected via its MAP Longitudinal study where it found that first generation students with high high school GPAs would see a drop in first semester college GPA that far exceeded what their second

generation peers experienced. Many minority students are first generation college students and unfamiliarity with college life can cause problems even for academically well-prepared students.

When a degree is not the goal

Another issue with graduation rates comes primarily from Working Group participants representing community college students. Working Group members representing community colleges and their students object to using graduation rates as the sole measure of success because many of their students come to a community college with something other than an associate's degree in mind. Some seek a certificate or simple proficiency in some area (such as basic computer skills.) Some want to take a few courses and move on to a four-year school. Some stay for two years but move on to a four-year school and graduate from there without acquiring the two year credential. As one Working Group member wrote in response to a survey question "Any of the above [graduation] measures may be difficult for community colleges. What about the students who only come to the community college because they did not succeed at a 4-year school and only want to improve their GPA to return [to that school] or are there for just one semester because of a lease requirement and then return to their local community college or are just moving from school to school? Has the community college not succeeded with these students? Many times we don't even know what their real plans are. They can tell us that they want to get a degree from our school, but [they] really have no intention of doing so. I think it is more difficult to measure success for open enrollment institutions."

At the same time community colleges struggle to figure out what success means, the four-year school that accepts these transfer students in their sophomore or junior years and graduates them has problems getting credit for these completions. Under the IPEDs graduation rate guidelines schools that accept transfer students don't receive credit for the degrees granted to them since there were never first-time, full-time freshmen in that school and don't belong to a graduation rate cohort for that school. Seven of eleven of our public universities count less than 60 percent of their students in a graduation rate cohort and all but one community college counts less than 50 percent of its students in the standard graduation rate cohorts; for 22 of them it is less than 30 percent.

How can graduation rates and retention rates be appropriate measures of school success with students?

As discussed, there are three goals with graduation rates: (1) increase the number of students who complete their programs and receive a credential; (2) decrease the time it takes to acquire that credential; (3) don't leave any group of students behind in pursuit of higher graduation rates. Pell eligibility is a good proxy for lower income students as is MAP eligibility (94 percent of MAP recipients are Pell-eligible.) Since Pell is given to almost all students who are eligible and actually attend school[26] while MAP awards are only made to about half the MAP-eligible students, the graduation rate of Pell eligible students is the better indicator of success with students from lower-income families. Several workgroup members asserted that race must also be considered because, regardless of income and

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[26] There may be a few students deemed ineligible because they have exceeded eight years of benefits; are in default on student loans; or for some other reason.

preparation level, some minority groups are not as successful at acquiring degrees as others, particularly black male students. No workgroup member objected to this extra consideration but several commented in general during the meetings and specifically in response to the survey, that the schools should have the flexibility to identify their own at-risk populations. Some schools will identify an at-risk population as the small percentage of students who don't perform at a relatively high level; other schools will identify an at-risk population as students who are at the very highest risk of dropping out. Schools that serve nontraditional populations who are usually at high risk for non-completion, must take those students into account when identify their high risk groups.

There was agreement that schools, even within a sector, cannot be measured against a single objective standard. The performance of schools educating first generation students with average or weak academic skills coming from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot be compared to those educating primarily second generation students from high income families who attended college prep high schools. There must be a more realistic assessment of the potential for improvement. The Working Group suggested a percentage increase over the baseline assessment over a few years time frame as a good place to start.

Since graduation rates changes take time to see, interim year to year retention measures could be used to measure progress. First-year retention rates are now routinely tracked in national databases; this would extend the analysis to retention between all academic levels.

What would be a reasonable expected increase in graduation rates? As shown in Table 3, 18 of 43 four-year schools were able to increase their graduation rates by at least five percent over the previous decade, some despite seeing a decline in the academic preparation of their students. The majority of schools experienced at least some small increase (> 0.5%). Expecting schools to increase their graduation rate by an additional 5 percent in six years (for example, increasing from 56% to 61%) would seem reasonable given past performance, for most schools. The graduation rate calculation would become a calculation of multiple rates, intent on capturing the changes in behavior of all the students the school serves. More formally:

Recommendation One: Illinois MAP approved institutions will institute programs to enable them to meet a target five percent improvement in graduation and completion rates over the next six years and begin to close any achievement gaps, defined as a gap between the schools' IPEDs graduation rate or the community college completion rate (defined below) for all students in a cohort and the rates for the school's designated at-risk group, MAP recipients, and minority students. The six-year goal for achievement gaps is a 25 percent reduction. The graduation rates that should be tracked will be the following:

1. For public and private baccalaureate degree granting institutions the measure tracked will be the IPEDS first-time, full-time, same school graduation rate for 100%, 150% and 200% of program time. Schools will also track the graduation rates of their transfer students by

establishing a separate cohort for these students. Both cohorts will be divided into subsets: race/ethnicity; MAP recipients; and the school's at-risk group (if it differs from all MAP recipients). Schools will have the flexibility to select the incoming freshman (both full and part-time) most at risk of not completing at their institution. If this group does not include all MAP recipients, an explanation should be provided as to why it does not.

2. Most schools that award bachelor's degrees have relatively small numbers of part-time students who can take eight to ten years or more to graduate. In addition to the IPEDs graduation rate, which tracks only full-time students, institutions will also track part-time student progress using the Complete College America's Progress Metric 5, fall-to-fall retention. The denominator of the retention metric is the number of first-time students entering in the fall semester of a specified year. The numerator is the number of students in the cohort (denominator) enrolling in the next consecutive fall semester. Full-time and part-time cohorts will be tracked separately. Students will be tracked this way from year to year to provide a "still attending school" category when comparing graduation rates. Both cohorts will be divided into subsets: race/ethnicity; MAP recipients; and the school's at-risk group (if it differs from all MAP recipients).

3. For community colleges, CCA outcome metrics two and three – graduation (at the 100%, 150% and 200% of program completion time) and transfer out rates - would be combined to create two completion metrics, one for full-time students and one for part-time students CCA Outcome Metric Two, graduation rates, calculates the percentage of entering undergraduate students who graduate from a degree or certificate program within 100%, 150%, and 200% of program time. CCA Outcome Metric Three, transfer out rate, the annual percentage of students who transfer from a two-year campus to a four-year campus. The graduation metric measures those students who leave with a credential; students who successfully transfer to another institution may have a credential or may not. Community colleges will disaggregate the completion metric to show students who obtained a credential and did not transfer, students who transferred without first obtaining a credential, and students who obtained a credential and transferred to another school, to avoid double counting.

4. Community colleges would also report CCA Progress Metric 5: Fall to fall retention, divided into the same subgroups as the completion metric.

5. To provide another measure of efficiency, all MAP-eligible institutions will provide CCA Progress Metric 6: Course Completion. This metric calculates the proportion of attempted credit hours being completed by students. The numerator is the number of credit hours earned by a student at the end of an academic year. The denominator is the number of credit hours a student attempted during the same academic year. This metric would be provided for all students in a cohort and for MAP recipients in that cohort. Improvements in this measure can be translated into MAP "savings" that can be compared from year to year.

6. The fall 2014 (school year 2014-2015) data provides the baseline assessment. Programs designed to improve graduation outcomes should be in place by fall 2015 (school year 2015-2016).

7. ISAC and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will help provide tracking for students changing institutions. MAP eligible schools will be required to provide ISAC and ICCB with sufficient data to allow these entities to continue to track these students.

8. Schools with graduation rates in excess of 80 percent will be exempt from the five percent increase target but will be subject to the achievement gap targets.

What is the path to success? A laundry list of options

Many Illinois schools have already identified low graduation rates as a problem for their institution and have taken substantial action to improve them. (The three text boxes on this and the following page highlight some successful Illinois programs.) Since the results of new initiatives take a few years for the effects to be felt, the state may not be seeing the benefits of programs newly implemented.

The goal of the Working Group is to improve outcomes for students. The Working Group also emphasized repeatedly the need for school flexibility. Schools have different missions, serve different groups of students and are at different stages in their ability to provide services for at risk students. The Working Group believes that at this stage, setting reasonable goals such as those laid out in Recommendation One, and allowing schools to develop their own programs that help them meet those goals will encourage progress while acknowledging school diversity.

> ### Example: The Associated Colleges of Illinois' (ACI's) Peer Mentoring Program
>
> - A year-long program matching minority, low-income, and first-generation freshmen enrolled at ACI member colleges and universities with trained and supervised Peer Mentors from similar high school backgrounds – to help at-risk students navigate the critical first year of college.
> - Embedded within a state-wide network of 7 private, liberal arts institutions, with ACI serving as Coordinating Partner.
> - Builds a "relationship bridge" between at-risk students, the campus community, and the college's social, academic, financial, and multicultural support services -- and provides an "early warning system" that anticipates and addresses the particular challenges these students face.
> - The program's intentional Peer Mentor-Mentee relationships foster an immediate conduit to the college's student and faculty/staff communities and enables the college to intervene early and often with individualized support to promote college persistence.

> ### Example: First Year Success Program at Harold Washington College
>
> - All students entering the college are included in First Year Success. The mission is to help retain more students through the first year and into the second year, and for those requiring remediation, help them speed through remediation into college level courses.
> - The program is a multi-pronged approach to enabling new student success. Students are advised into a pathway - 9 of 10 are career focused. Early alert is in place to identify those students in need of assistance. Tutors are available to address academic challenges. There is a Wellness Center to support social/emotional challenges experienced by students. An orientation is held prior to when students start, followed by a convocation/welcome week for students and their families. Fifty to 100 students are also enrolled in learning communities.
> - As a result of the program, the graduation rate of the participants at Harold Washington doubled within five years.

However, a review of national programs showed there was evidence that several types of interventions were producing good results for some schools and should be considered for implementation at schools with at-risk students. Based on its assessment of the current needs of Illinois students and the success of these programs at other institutions, the following Recommendation 2 provides a list of interventions that is recommended for consideration by the Working Group.

Example: Building Connections Mentoring Program and First Year Experience Course at Western Illinois University (WIU)

- Building Connections Mentoring Program pairs each new freshman with a WIU faculty or staff member to go over an interests and concerns questionnaire that the student fills out over the summer orientation session.
- A common course experience for all freshmen students was implemented to help explore the role of critical thinking, problem solving and information gathering skills to achieve success in college and personal growth.
- Programs such as these have improved the fall-to-spring retention rate to 89.3% from 82.2%. The percentage of new first-time freshmen in good academic standing or semester honors after their first semester was 78.2% in fall 2013, compared to 70.4% in fall 2012.

Recommendation 2: The following list of interventions is either required or recommended by the Working Group. While all programs should be considered by Illinois MAP-eligible institutions, not all may be appropriate given programs already in place and the needs of the students each institution serves.

Required:

1. All MAP-eligible schools are required to make strong academic advising available for all students and provide mandatory advising for first year students and students that are part of the at-risk population identified by the school. Because of the diverse nature of schools in Illinois, each MAP eligible school may determine the structure of the advising program at their school.

2. A description of the school's advising program and all other support programs targeted at student retention and completion shall be provided with the budget packets submitted to ISAC. The description of each program will include the type of program, its delivery mechanism (face to face, on-line, etc), the targeted group of students, the number of students in the program, whether it is mandatory or voluntary, and the program length and duration,

The Working Group recommends that schools consider adding the following programs, if they are not already operating at the school:

3. A blueprint for each incoming student illustrating how she can complete her program in the most timely manner – usually this would be four years for a four-year program[27]; two-years for a two year program; the most efficient path possible should developmental education be required. The blueprint must clearly lay out what courses she should attempt each semester and emphasize the advantages of a full course load. If the student is uncertain about goals or majors, she should be required to participate in a career guidance program during the initial year with the purpose of declaring a major by the end of the first term of the second year.

4. A student tracking/early warning system established that alerts school officials early if a student is off track. The identification of students in difficulty should be coupled with additional intensive advising (academic, financial, social or emotional) designed to remove the roadblocks that keep the student from progressing. Early alert is defined as contact with the student and assessment of student behavior *prior* to the second half of any given term.

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[27] Many programs are 120 semester hours which translates into 15 credit hours per term for four years. Some degree programs, such as teaching , may require additional hours to complete the program which could extend the time-to-degree for a "timely" finish.

5. Implement a mandatory freshman transition and orientation program. Many Illinois schools already have some introductory program but the programs vary in intensity, breadth and quality. A good program should have students meeting frequently and provide a comprehensive introduction to college life and the services and support groups each school offers.

6. Include a financial literacy program for incoming students that emphasizes the cost of borrowing, the importance of graduating on time, and the resources available to help pay for college.

7. Schools should consider adopting a single advisor model for each incoming student so that the advisor and student get to know each other and form a strong relationship throughout the students' years at the institution.

8. Schools should consider denying late registration to classes for at risk students who would be severely disadvantaged by starting out a week or two behind everyone else.

Penalties for school non-compliance – what happens if graduation rates do not rise?

Schools would be asked to develop graduation rate cohorts and implement the second required recommendation – including support program descriptions in the budget packet in Recommendation 2- in the budget packet submitted for the 2015-2016 school year. The first required recommendation, a strong mandatory advising program for first-year and at-risk students, in Recommendation 2 would be implemented by Fall of 2015. Not complying with the recommendations would result in program compliance issues.

Raising completion rates is a long-term endeavor. It will take at least three years for any results to be seen and a couple more before it can be ascertained if programs are working. After three years time, ISAC will evaluate the data to determine if a problem with meeting the improvement goals exists, and if it does, convene a group to make further recommendations to the Commission.

How can ISAC help?

ISAC administers the MAP grant to about 133 MAP-approved schools on behalf of approximately 140,000 MAP recipients, forecasts demand for the program and tracks students' MAP usage. In those roles it notifies students about grant eligibility, surveys students periodically, and undertakes database analysis regularly. In addition, more than 100 ISACorps members work with high school students across the state providing pre-college financial awareness and other services. There is a Corps presence in each community college district. Building on these strengths, ISAC can offer additional services using its existing resources.

Renewal cards to encourage FAFSA completion

The Department of Education sends a notice to file the FAFSA to former filers sometime in January. Some Working Group members thought a state reminder from ISAC would be a good additional reminder to file their renewal application. Some students forget that they have to refile for financial aid each year. The Working Group did not want an estimate of the possible award amount included in the reminder to avoid confusion – just a simple "you filed last year; don't forget to file again this year by X date." To keep costs reasonable and connect with students in a familiar way ISAC would use the federal approach of sending an email. ISAC is prepared to undertake this project utilizing existing resources and have the service in place by FY2015.

More broadly, ISAC can engage in other targeted communication. ISAC can use contact information gathered as part of the administration of the high school scholarship programs and the MAP grant to send targeted electronic communications to high school seniors at one or more critical points in the college application and selection process. Early interventions such as these can help promote appropriate match and fit. Better academic and financial planning on the front end should aid in persistence through the critical first year of college.

ISAC could also develop additional partnerships with colleges and universities to deliver services through its network of near-peer mentors. Each year ISACorps members work with thousands of low-income and/or first generation college students across state. While each individual ISACorps member may develop an ongoing mentoring relationship with two or three students who are planning to attend the same college, as a whole, ISACorps members may easily be working with tens of students planning to attend the same small college or hundreds of students planning to attend one of the largest universities in the state. Events that promote engagement on a campus and introduce students to college level resources can be easily coordinated by ISACorps members in partnership with MAP-approved institutions. The existing relationships and built-up trust and comfort with a near-peer mentor minimizes the effort needed to gain attendance and active participation in the critical transition period from high school to college.

ISAC has also launched B4College Alerts (a college planning app for high school seniors as they transition to college.) With a critical mass of active users, ISAC's existing B4 College Alerts app could provide an additional level of messaging during the 8th semester of high school, the dangerous summer melt period (when students who were planning on attending college, change their minds), and the critical first semester of college.

Helping with student commitment through an acknowledgment by the student of his or her responsibilities.

The Working Group suggested requiring some type of student commitment document as a way for students to better understand their responsibilities when they accept grant aid. One recommendation was that students read and sign a commitment pledge before the grant is released each year. ISAC will take responsibility for developing this document and having it ready for launch in FY2015. The school

responsibilities will include collaborating with ISAC in the preparation of this document and being prepared to withhold a student's registration each year until the document is completed by the student.

Collecting and disseminating information about school support programs

The Working Group wanted a way to keep schools informed of best practices in the area of college retention and the programs that have proved successful in Illinois. The Group wanted to be able to track national progress and devise a way to keep schools informed of promising programs and provide training, if possible. Finances were considered a barrier to implementing more support programs for schools, but lack of specific information on programs that work was also acknowledged to be a significant barrier. A focus on collecting and disseminating retention and completion information could reduce this barrier.

ISAC already functions as a MAP program information clearinghouse and can expand those functions to include support program information provided by schools. The budget packages submitted by the schools to ISAC would have to be modified. As part of the annual participation process for MAP-approved schools, ISAC can collect program and contact information about outreach and intervention programs on each campus and maintain a central database for student and parent use and for review by other schools. Since new school programs would not start until 2015; ISAC could modify the budget packets and begin collecting the information in FY2016.

ISAC can provide training in retention program development by retraining some of its Professional Development Staff. Through ISAC's existing statewide professional development series, content and sessions dealing with best practices for counseling, interventions, retention could be added for college-based professionals. ISAC can begin to deliver those services in FY2016. The MAP user group meetings from the past (originally developed as more and more electronic technology was being introduced into the administration of financial aid) could be re-launched as a higher level working group of enrollment management professionals working together to share challenges and best practices in retaining the highest risk students - most of whom are MAP eligible students.

Addressing the need for financial awareness and planning – facilitating the implementation of the financial literacy recommendation.

Although preparation issues often dominate the discussion of increasing graduation rates, it is problems with financing college that is the most mentioned obstacle to completing college. For some students the financial hurdles are simply insurmountable, but for others the problem is more subtle. Difficulty paying for college can increase

Table 5: How the cost of college has changed

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Average IL tuition and fees at a public university	$ 344	$ 828	$ 2,330	$ 4,160	$ 10,442
Federal minimum wage	$ 1.60	$ 3.10	$ 3.80	$ 5.15	$ 7.25
Number of work hours required to pay for a year of college	215	267	613	808	1440
Number of 40 hour work weeks to pay for a year of college	**5.4**	6.7	15.3	20.2	**36.0**

overall dissatisfaction with school. If a student is not doing well or doesn't believe he fits in, having difficulty paying for it can be the final straw. The Working Group recognized the lack of financial literacy as an impediment to college completion.

It needs to be said frequently that it is really not possible to work one's way through college anymore. As shown in Table 5, tuition and fees could be easily paid for by a summer's work in 1970 (and room and board could be covered too.) By 1990, it was still possible, but more difficult and the expenses of room and board would require other assistance. By 2010, with tuition and fees nearly five times higher than they were 20 years before, it would take 36 weeks of full-time work to just pay for tuition and fees for a year at a public university. Clearly, careful control of costs and an awareness of other sources of financial aid are necessary to now cover the cost of a degree.

About 55 percent of MAP recipients are now "zero-EFC", meaning their families have absolutely no resources to pay for college. About 94 percent are Pell-eligible which means their incomes are sufficiently low to qualify for this program targeting very poor students (those with EFCs less than about $5,000.)

Financial literacy training can perform a number of functions:

- Address the lower coverage of financial aid – financial planning can stretch the dollars
- Help students take on only the minimum amount of debt necessary and steer them away from private loans and credit card usage.
- Provide accurate information about the net price of college. Students and parents usually have insufficient information about net price and make enrollment decisions based on sticker price which can cause the wrong college to be selected.
- Strong budgeting skills can help minimize the number of hours a student works. Students who work many hours often become "workers who go to school" who have very high drop out rates.
- Basic economic instruction can help students understanding the high opportunity costs of delayed graduation.
- It can be emphasized that the easiest way to cut the cost of a bachelor's degree is to graduate in four years. One way to minimize the time spent earning a degree is to have a clear path to graduation mapped out ahead of time. Students who are uncertain about their career paths should find help available to determine a major.

ISAC has been providing financial literacy programs for years. Because ISAC is not affiliated with any particular school, it can provide objective information about all college choices. It can also make contact with the student prior to his entrance into college. ISAC is ideally positioned to discuss different college options such as the possibility of a community college first or help the student appropriately match to a college or university that will challenge him. For example, for students who know what they are doing, attending a community college for two years could be an attractive option. For a very well-prepared student, knowledge about potential merit aid that will reduce her net price can widen her choice of college options. It is hard for students and parents to compare the relative costs and access the

likelihood of completion for each type of education program. ISAC's enhanced financial literacy programs and services can help with issues such as these.

ISAC believes that no student borrower, acting in good faith and armed with the right information, should become delinquent or default on their federal student debt. Toward this end, ISAC, by partnering with industry colleagues can provide an educational and interactive online platform that provides users with the information and tools they need to make intelligent financial decisions in both the short and long term. Such a tool would combine an educational website that is geared to delivering financial information in an engaging format, a traditional financial literacy curriculum, and proactive education debt management services. The service would be available to all Illinois students.

These programs and others can be offered separately by ISAC through the high schools or combined with summer bridge or fall transition programs at colleges as part of the college's financial literacy program. ISAC can provide instructions and blueprints for programs, interactive materials, professional training or can run the entire program for the schools.

Other ISAC programs

There are other ISAC programs that could be scaled up and made available to schools at an additional cost to either the school or the state.

School specific programs that could be provided at additional cost to the school.

- Retention Call Center: Using existing technology, elements of ISAC's current student loan collection department could be re-designed to provide student contact and intervention services on behalf of partnering schools. Just as students are currently contacted when they stop making student loan payments in an attempt to either prevent default or rehabilitate defaulted loans, MAP recipients (or any students) could be contacted when they stop attending classes or stop-out. Again similar to default prevention and loan rehabilitation programs, the goal is to intervene with information and options before the student gets too far astray. In the case of the loan, the student's credit history and the lender's dollars are being protected. In the case of a MAP grant, the student, institutional, and state investments are being protected. This would be a fee-based service provided to schools opting to participate. (Some schools may opt to offer such a service on their own as part of their early alert systems.)
- Online Grant Counseling: Online counseling (similar to loan entrance/exit counseling) could be developed and made available as a default option for schools that don't currently have this capability and do not have the capacity to develop or purchase other electronic tools.

State wide programs that could be provided with additional cost to state

- MAP "Corps": ISAC currently operates the 100+ member ISACorps near peer mentoring program. The same model could be used to develop a "MAP" version of the ISACorps. Approximately 140,000 students receive MAP on about 133 campuses. Assigning near peer

mentors by region or by campus (depending on the area, for a target caseload of 1000 students each), near peer mentors could continue to provide the basic, but very important, single point of contact for college students that they do now for high school students. Research clearly indicates that students rely on information from non-experts (friends, family, classmates, etc.) with whom they feel comfortable. The ISACorps was designed to train individuals who "look" and "talk" like comfortable friends to be experts on financial aid. With additional funding, the MAP Corps is almost a turnkey solution.

- MAP Liaisons: This idea has been discussed as both school-based and ISAC-based, either version of which would require additional state funding. A MAP liaison is an individual employed either by ISAC or by the MAP-approved school, to have comprehensive knowledge of all social, academic, and financial services and policies on campus and to work with students and parents who are confused about where to turn to solve a particular problem that may threaten the student's continued enrollment. Either model would require close collaboration between ISAC and each school. The general concept is that through a team approach, whether a student contacts ISAC or their school, they will be pointed to the proper resource, get accurate guidance, and receive structured follow-up (well-being checks).

APPENDIX A

Per House Resolution 296, the Working Group was charged with cataloging existing student academic advising and support programs in this state and available information on those programs' outcomes. The Working Group was also charged with surveying existing literature on the effectiveness of similar programs within this State and outside of it.

Appendix A includes:

- a copy of House Resolution 296;
- a list of the MAP Advising Working Group members;
- a Research Brief that contains a summary of a survey sent to all MAP-eligible institutions asking them to provide information on their advising practices and on support initiatives offered for underserved students at their institutions;
- a list of the schools that responded and those that did not respond to the survey;
- a Research Brief that contains a summary of a survey sent to MAP-eligible students asking them to provide information on advising and support received at their current institution;
- a Research Brief that contains a summary of a survey sent to Working Group members asking them to provide additional feedback on ideas covered in meetings and more specifically on an advising/support requirement for MAP students;
- a table (created from the national literature review in Appendix C) that illustrates what a number of studies at the national level tell us about college student success; and,
- charts showing MAP student graduation rates compared to overall student graduation rates by sector and institution.

Under separate cover are Appendix B and Appendix C.

Appendix B includes a Research Brief that contains a summary of a survey sent to all MAP-eligible institutions asking them to provide information on their advising practices and on support initiatives offered for underserved students at their institutions (also in Appendix A), a list of the schools that responded and those that did not respond to the survey (also in Appendix A), and the individual school survey responses in their entirety.

Appendix C includes a table showing specific state campus-based student retention programs with measurable results, a table (created from the national literature review) that illustrates what a number of studies at the national level tell us about college student success (also in Appendix A), and a national literature review on college support programs.

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution 69 of the 97th General Assembly called upon the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) to form a task force to deliberate options for the adoption of new rules for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), with the goal of improving the outcomes for students who receive these awards; and

WHEREAS, The task force reported to the General Assembly and Commission with its findings on December 31, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Task force members concluded that MAP recipients, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college, could benefit from additional nonfinancial support, such as increased academic and financial counseling before and during college, as this guidance could help to increase retention and to minimize both time-to-degree and student loan debt; and

WHEREAS, Student success in college is a shared responsibility, requiring effort, commitment, and clear communication on the part of both students and the institutions of higher learning where they are enrolled, which, in the case of advising, requires the institution to provide support and the student to take advantage of this support; and

WHEREAS, Task force members also noted that additional, school-provided support for MAP recipients would demonstrate an institution's partnership with this State in promoting MAP recipients' college access and success; and

WHEREAS, Task force members believed that additional expertise and time were needed in order to refine this recommendation and develop specific new requirements for student advising, based on identifiable best practices in student advising and support; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission is directed, consistent with the recommendations of the Monetary Award Program (MAP) task force, to form a working group to examine the best practices for academic advising of higher education students who are Monetary Award Program recipients, with an emphasis on support services for low-income and first-generation college students; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the working group shall endeavor to catalog existing student academic advising and support programs in this State and available information on those programs' outcomes, along with surveying existing literature on the effectiveness of similar programs within this State and outside of it; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the working group shall make a recommendation to the Commission regarding minimum standards for student support and advising that should be available to encourage retention and degree completion of MAP recipients, as well as minimum requirements for students to take advantage of such support and advising; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the working group may consider not only the potential benefits that an academic advising requirement may bring to MAP recipients, but also such concerns as whether students would have adequate access to such advisors, whether current advising staff at institutions could properly provide appropriate levels of support given time constraints, what means of documentation might be warranted to document a MAP recipient's participation in advising, and any additional costs that may be incurred by schools in implementing a new advising requirement; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the working group shall report its findings and recommendations to the Commission and the General Assembly on or before February 3, 2014; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall implement requirements related to academic advising and student support services as soon as this is feasible, but not later than the 2015-2016 academic year; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be delivered to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

2013 MAP Advising Working Group Members

Eric Zarnikow, Executive Director, Illinois Student Assistance Commission

Karen Belling/Laura Negrete, Wheaton College and ILASFAA Rules and Operations

Ben Boer/Teresa Ramos, Advance Illinois

Todd Burrell, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville and Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling past-president

Cecil Cartwright, University of Illinois, Chicago

Earl Dowling, College of DuPage

James Flagg, Robert Morris University

Jerry Fuller, Associated Colleges of Illinois

Cynthia Grunden, City Colleges of Chicago

Dana Gautcher, Northern Illinois University

Lynne Haeffele, Lieutenant Governor's Office

Jeanne Kitchens, Center for Workforce Development at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Barb Karpouzian, Chicago Public Schools

Anne Ladky/Sarah Labadie, Women Employed

Theresa Morgan, Heartland Community College

Steve Rock, Western Illinois University

Arthur Sutton, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Lynda Swan-McClendon, Department of Children and Family Services Office of Education and Transition Services

Jennifer Timmons/Karen Hunter Anderson, Illinois Community College Board

Bill Trent/Lorenzo Baber, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Dave Tretter, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities

Tom Babel, DeVry University

Monica Zeigler/Lora Green, Eastern Illinois University

Sara Espinosa, Illinois Student Assistance Commission Corps Member

Kim Korando, Illinois Student Assistance Commission Corps Member

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Shana Rogers, Senior Research Associate
Kimberly Eck, Training Services Coordinator
Debbie Calcara, Secretary to the Commission

MAP Advising Working Group
2013-14 Illinois Student Support Services Survey – Illinois MAP Eligible Schools

Highlights:

✓ To date, 86 of the 133 MAP-approved schools that were asked to complete the Student Support Services Survey have provided information on support initiative(s) for underserved students at their institutions. This results in a 65 percent response rate. These schools represent 80 percent of FY2012 MAP recipients. A list of each program that has been submitted to date is included in Appendix B, and a list of schools that responded and did not respond can be found immediately following the report.

  o By sector, 92 percent (11 of the 12) of public 4-year institutions have responded, 63 percent (32 of the 51) of private institutions have responded, 67 percent (32 of the 48) of community colleges have responded, 33 percent (4 of the 12) of hospital schools have responded, and 70 percent (7 of the 10) of proprietary schools have responded.

  o Forty-five percent of respondents reported on one program at their institution, and 55 percent reported on two or more programs at their institution.

✓ Fifty-six percent of overall respondents reported that academic advising is required for *all* students, 37 percent indicated academic advising is required for *some* students, and 7 percent of respondents reported academic advising is not required.

  o At public 4-year schools 33 percent require *all* students to complete academic advising and 50 percent require *some* to complete advising;

  o at private institutions 83 percent require *all* students to complete academic advising and 7 percent require *some* to complete advising;

  o at community colleges 34 percent require *all* students to complete academic advising and 66 percent require *some* to complete advising;

  o at hospital schools 100 percent require *all* students to complete academic advising; and,

  o at proprietary institutions 33 percent require *all* students to complete academic advising and 50 percent require *some* to complete advising.

✓ Schools were asked to provide information on support services that their institution offers their at-risk students. Many of the programs serve more than one "at-risk" population. The most often mentioned major population(s) targeted in the programs include first generation students (25%), all students, all first-year students, or all new students (24%), low-income students (19%), academic disadvantaged or at-risk students (18%), students with disabilities (16%), all minority students or specific minority groups (14%), and students who require developmental or remedial coursework (3%).

✓ Respondents were asked to identify the category(ies) that best describes their respective program(s). Overall, respondents identified 74 percent of programs as Academic Support (Including Advising), 69 percent as Counseling & Mentoring, 60 percent as Transition & Orientation, 56 percent as Tracking/Early Warning, 49 percent as Student-Faculty Interactions, 27 percent as Learning Communities, and 24 percent as Scholarships. Respondents indicated 29 percent of programs fell under some "Other"

category; 26 percent of the programs (also) fell into a financial aid, financial literacy, or financial fitness type of program, 15 percent included tutoring, 15 percent a cultural program aspect, 13 percent offered some sort of skills course or workshop, 13 percent included referrals to student support services, 9 percent included career guidance and/or graduate or professional school preparation guidance, 8 percent (or 4 programs) included a book stipend, and another, 8 percent of programs (also) included an enrichment/leadership/community aspect.

- o Just as the overall results indicate programs are using a combination of efforts in their programs, so do the results by sector. Counseling & Mentoring efforts and Academic Support (Including Advising) efforts are popular overall and by sector. Private institution programs are more likely to have Counseling & Mentoring and Tracking/Early Warning components in their programs than the other sectors. This is true for proprietary institutions as well, although they represent a much smaller proportion of the programs.

Category	Total N=205	Public 4-year N=57	Private N=67	Community College N=67	Hospital N=6	Proprietary N=8
Counseling & Mentoring	69%	70%	79%	61%	17%	88%
Learning Communities	27%	32%	30%	19%	17%	50%
Student-Faculty Interactions	49%	60%	55%	34%	33%	63%
Transition & Orientation	60%	60%	60%	63%	33%	75%
Academic Support (Including Advising)	74%	67%	78%	76%	50%	88%
Tracking/Early Warning	56%	47%	64%	54%	17%	88%
Scholarships	24%	35%	15%	25%	17%	25%
Other	30%	28%	26%	32%	0%	33%

✓ The average, annual (approximate) number of students served by these initiatives is 715, ranging from a program that helps 3 students a year to a program that helps 15,000 students a year.

✓ For 58 percent of the programs respondents indicated there is no application process, and for 42 percent of the programs there is an application process.

✓ Respondents reported that for 32 percent of the programs students participating are met with at least once a week (11 percent everyday, 12 percent a couple of times to a few times a week, and 9 percent once a week), for 15 percent of the programs students are met with a couple a times a month, and 14 percent of the programs meet with students once a month or less often (7 percent once a month, 5 percent once a quarter or semester, and 2 percent once a year). For 39 percent of the programs respondents identified some "Other" frequency that they meet with students participating in their program; 48 percent, or 30 programs, meet with students based on what the student needs, and for 15 percent of the programs the frequency changes as the program progresses.

✓ The average amount of time spent with a student (or corresponding with a student) participating in the program in an academic year is 53 hours, ranging from a half hour to 1,100 hours. For at least 40 of the programs/initiatives, respondents indicated the amount spent with a student varies depending on student need.

- Respondents were asked to identify the primary way(s) staff interacts with students in their program. For 96 percent of programs, respondents indicated they interact via individual face-to-face, 82 percent through email, 70 percent via group presentation, and 37 percent through social media. For 22 percent of the programs respondents identified some "Other" way staff interacts with students, most often mentioned as phone contact (14 programs), class time (8 programs), and/or texting, postal mail, recruiting or through online student grade book and interaction software (3 programs each).

- The average annual cost (or grant amount) for the programs is $199,923, ranging from no (additional) cost to $1,900,000. The average, total, estimated cost per student for the programs is $1,263, ranging from no (additional) cost to $27,200. For those respondents who provided the source of program funding, respondents indicated 60 percent of programs are either fully or partially funded by institutional funds and/or at no additional cost to the schools, for 22 percent of programs the primary source is federal funds (specified most often as Department of Education or Department of Education TRIO funding), for 11 percent of programs private or corporate grants or donations was mentioned as the source of funding, and for 8 percent state funding was mentioned as the primary source of funding.

- Respondents reported that 62 percent of programs are *voluntary*, and 28 percent of programs are *required*. Respondents for many of the remaining 10 percent of programs who specified "Other" indicated that some students are required to participate while the program is voluntary for others, and/or that some elements of the program are required while other elements are voluntary.
    - Private institution programs are more likely to be required (35%) than programs at public 4-year institutions (19%) or at community colleges (27%). Programs at hospital schools and proprietary institutions are also more likely to be required (40% and 38%, respectively), although they represent a much smaller proportion of programs.

- Respondents indicated that 92 percent of the programs track the effectiveness of their initiative(s), and 8 percent of the programs do not track the effectiveness. The items respondents mention tracking include retention/persistence rates (45%), GPA or grades (34%), graduation rates (20%), utilization of services (15%), and course completion (10%). About one-fifth of respondents mentioned using multiple evaluation and assessment tools that include surveys, interviews, learning outcome assessments, focus groups, reports, meetings, etc. Formal tracking systems mentioned that aid in evaluation of programs include PALS Program, Datatel, Inside Track, Blumen Software, Jenzabar EX, Student Access Software, and the National Student Clearinghouse. About 40 percent of respondents indicated their program has been successful and/or effective, specifically through increased retention/persistence rates (56%), higher grades (44%), increased graduation rates (23%), surveys/evaluations of students (15%), and/or credit/course completion (13%).

- Twenty-two percent of respondents reported 1 staff person dedicates the majority of their time to the program at their institution, 13 percent reported 2 staff are dedicated to the program, 17 percent reported 3 or 4 staff dedicate the majority of their time to the program, and 13 percent of respondents reported 5 or more staff dedicates the majority of their time to the program at their institution. A little more than one-third of respondents identified some "Other" staff setup for the program at their institution; about half of these

respondents indicated that a small portion of the responsibilities of the program are shared by several staff, and/or that no one is completely dedicated to the program, and about 30 percent of these respondents reported that their program might have one coordinator but many faculty, staff, tutors, counselors, and/or mentors that share in the responsibilities of the program.

✓ About 45 percent of the programs are housed in Student Services (13%), Student Affairs (12%), Student Success (12%), Student Development (5%), and/or Student Counseling (3%), and nearly one-third of the programs are housed in Academic Affairs (8%), Academic Advising (8%), Academic Area/Division (7%), and/or an Academic Resource Center (4%). Another 7 percent are housed in the Provost area, and 5 percent of programs are housed in Enrollment Management.

RPPA, 1/25/14

Illinois MAP-Eligible Institutions Surveyed

Responded

Aurora University
Benedictine University
Black Hawk College
Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing
Bradley University
Carl Sandburg College
Chicago State University
College of DuPage
Columbia College
Danville Area Community College
DePaul University
DeVry University
Eastern Illinois University
Elmhurst College
Eureka College
Fox College
Greenville College
Harold Washington College
Harper College
Harry S. Truman College
Heartland Community College
Illinois Central College
Illinois College
Illinois Institute of Art - Chicago
Illinois Institute of Art - Schaumburg
Illinois Institute of Technology
Illinois State University
Illinois Valley Community College
John A. Logan College
John Wood Community College
Joliet Junior College
Kaskaskia College
Kendall College
Kennedy-King College
Kishwaukee College
Knox College
Lake Land College
Lewis and Clark Community College
Lewis University
Lexington College
Lincoln Christian University
Lincoln College
Lincoln Trail College
Loyola University
MacMurray College
McHenry County College

McKendree University
Midstate College
Millikin University
Moraine Valley Community College
Morrison Institute of Technology
Morton College
National University of Health Sciences
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University
Northwestern College
Northwestern University
Oakton Community College
Olney Central College
Parkland College
Quincy University
Rend Lake College
Richland Community College
Robert Morris University-Illinois
Rock Valley College
Rockford College
Roosevelt University
Rush University
Saint Augustine College
Saint Xavier University
Southeastern Illinois College
Southern Illinois University - Carbondale
Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville
Southwestern Illinois College
Spoon River College
Telshe-Yeshiva
Trinity Christian College
Trinity College of Nursing
University of Chicago
University of Illinois – Chicago
University of Illinois – Springfield
University of Illinois – Urbana
University of St. Francis
Waubonsee Community College
Western Illinois University
Wheaton College

Did Not Respond

American Academy of Art
Augustana College

Blackburn College
Capital Area School of Practical Nursing
College of Lake County
Concordia University
Dominican University
East-West University
Elgin Community College
Frontier Community College
Governors State University
Graham Hospital School of Nursing
Harrington College of Design
Hebrew Theological College
Highland Community College
Illinois Wesleyan University
Judson University
Kankakee Community College
Lake Forest College
Lakeview College of Nursing
Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts
Lincoln Land Community College
MacCormac College
Malcolm X College
Methodist College of Nursing
Monmouth College
National Louis University
North Central College
North Park University
Olive-Harvey College
Olivet Nazarene University
Prairie State College
Resurrection University
Richard J. Daley College
Saint Anthony College of Nursing
Saint Francis Medical Center College of
Nursing
Saint John's College/Dept of Nursing
Sauk Valley Community College
Shawnee Community College
Shimer College
South Suburban College
The School of the Art Institute
Trinity International University
Triton College
VanderCook College of Music
Wabash Valley College
Wilbur Wright College

MAP Advising Working Group
2013 Illinois Student Support Services Survey – Illinois MAP Eligible Students

Highlights:

✓ About 98,000 FY2013 MAP-eligible student e-mail addresses were secured, and a message was sent to each student asking for feedback on the support initiatives being utilized at the institution they are currently attending. In about a week and a half, more than 7,200 students completed the survey. Ninety-seven percent of MAP-eligible institutions are represented in the findings.

   o About 43 percent of respondents are currently enrolled at 16 of the 133 schools - University of Illinois - Chicago (5%), University of Illinois - Urbana (5%), DePaul University (4%), College of DuPage, Harold Washington College, and Northern Illinois University (3% each), and Chicago State University, Illinois State University, Kennedy-King College, Malcolm X College, Northeastern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, Southwestern Illinois College, Triton College, Western Illinois University, and Wilbur Wright College (2% each).

   o Forty-six percent of respondents indicated they are currently enrolled at a community college, and 40 percent indicated they are currently enrolled at a 4-year public or private institution.

   o Thirty-seven percent of respondents identified their current status as sophomore, 23 percent as junior, 21 percent as senior, and 19 percent as freshman.

✓ Forty percent of overall respondents reported that academic advising is *required*, 36 percent indicated it is *recommended*, 11 percent reported it is *optional*, and 14 percent of respondents indicated they are *unsure* about whether academic advising is required, recommended, or optional at their institution.

   o Twenty-four percent of community college respondents reported academic advising is required at their institution compared to 54 percent of 4-year institution respondents.

   o As the status of the respondent increased from freshman to senior, so did the percentage of respondents who indicated academic advising is required (freshmen – 30%, sophomores – 35%, juniors – 42%, seniors – 49%). Freshman respondents were much more likely to have indicated they were unsure whether academic advising was required; 25 percent compared to 12 percent of sophomore respondents, 11 percent of junior respondents, and 9 percent of senior respondents.

✓ Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated they have completed academic advising this academic year.

   o Sixty-two percent of community college respondents indicated they have completed academic advising compared to 69 percent of 4-year institution respondents.

   o Freshman respondents were less likely to have reported they completed academic advising (58%) then sophomore (66%), junior (71%), and senior (69%) respondents.

- o Respondents who indicated academic advising was required or recommended at their institution were more likely than respondents who said advising was optional or they were unsure to have completed academic advising; 78 percent and 69 percent, compared to 47 percent and 37 percent, respectively.
- o Fifty-two percent of these respondents reported they meet with an advisor once every quarter/semester/term, 21 percent reported they meet with an advisor twice every quarter/semester/term, 10 percent reported they meet with an advisor once a year, 7 percent reported meeting with an advisor more than three times every quarter/semester/term, and 6 percent of these respondents indicated they meet with an advisor three times every quarter/semester/term. The remaining 4 percent indicated some "other" frequency of meeting with an advisor.
- o Both community college respondents and 4-year institution respondents reported meeting with an advisor at similar frequencies as overall respondents.
- o Fifty-two percent of these respondents reported they spend 16 to 30 minutes with an advisor each time they meet with them, 23 percent spend 31 minutes to 1 hour, 22 percent spend 15 minutes or less, and 2 percent reported spending more than 1 hour with an advisor each time they meet with them. The remaining 1 percent indicated some "other" amount of time spent with an advisor each time they meet.
- o Both community college respondents and 4-year institution respondents reported spending a similar amount of time with an advisor as overall respondents.

- ✓ Fifty-two percent of respondents who indicated they have completed academic advising reported they receive advising from *both* professional staff and faculty, 28 percent indicated they receive advising from professional staff only, and 20 percent of respondents indicated they receive advising from faculty only. Sixty-two of these respondents reported they always meet with the same (one) individual, and 38 percent reported meeting with multiple individuals to receive academic advising.
  - o Community college respondents were more likely than 4-year institution respondents to have indicated they receive advising from a professional (34% compared to 25%), and less likely to have indicated they receive advising from faculty (16% compared to 23%). Community college respondents were less likely to have reported that they meet with the same (one) individual each time they see an advisor, 50 percent compared to 70 percent of 4-year institution respondents.

- ✓ Respondents were asked to identify the primary way(s) they interact with an advisor when receiving services. Ninety-four percent of these respondents reported they interact with an advisor on an individual face-to-face basis, 48 percent through email, 20 percent by phone, 5 percent by group presentation, and/or 1 percent of respondents reported interacting with an advisor through social media. Less than one percent of respondents identified some "other" way they interact with an advisor.
  - o Both community college respondents and 4-year institution respondents reported interacting with an advisor in similar ways as overall respondents, except for by e-mail; 31 percent of community college respondents reported interacting with an advisor through e-mail compared to 59 percent of 4-year institution respondents.

- ✓ Respondents were asked to identify the services they have received through academic advising. Ninety-two percent reported they have received help choosing classes, 61 percent guidance related to choosing a major/career, 50 percent academic monitoring and support, 45 percent information about campus resources and support services, 40

percent information on financial aid or budgeting, and/or 19 percent of respondents reported they have received emotional support or guidance. Two percent of respondents reported receiving some "other" services through academic advising.

- o Respondents who indicated academic advising is required at their current institution were more likely than respondents who indicated advising is recommended, optional, or that they are unsure, to have reported receiving all of the services listed except for information on financial aid and budgeting. Forty-one to 42 percent of respondents, regardless of whether academic advising is required or not, reported they received information on financial aid or budgeting through academic advising. Respondents who indicated academic advising is required or recommended at their institution were more likely than respondents who indicated advising is optional or that they are unsure to have reported receiving guidance related to choosing a major/career (65% and 60% compared to 44% and 49%, respectively), information about campus resources and support services (50% and 46%, compared to 28% and 39%, respectively), and receiving academic monitoring and support (59% and 44%, compared to 27% and 41%, respectively).
- o Both community college respondents and 4-year institution respondents reported receiving the various advising services at similar percentages as overall respondents, except for academic monitoring and support and information on financial aid and budgeting; 40 percent of community college respondents reported receiving academic monitoring and support compared to 56 percent of 4-year institution respondents, and 47 percent of community college respondents indicated receiving information on financial aid and budgeting compared to 34 percent of 4-year institution respondents.

✓ Fifty-five percent of respondents reported they have taken advantage of a program, service, and/or initiative at their institution (other than academic advising) designed to help them succeed in college. Of those respondents, 92 percent reported on one program, and 8 percent reported taking advantage of more than 1 program. Just 22 percent of respondents, who indicated they are taking advantage of a program, provided a name for the support initiative they are participating in at their institution.

- o Fifty-eight percent of 4-year institution respondents reported they have taken advantage of a college success program compared to 49 percent of community college respondents.
- o Upperclassmen were more likely to have reported they have taken advantage of a college success programs at their institution than freshmen; 61 percent of seniors, 53 percent of juniors, and 54 percent of sophomores have taken advantage of a program compared to 45 percent of freshmen.
- o Fifty-seven percent of respondents who indicated they have completed academic advising said they have taken advantage of a college success program at their institution compared to 47 percent of respondents who have not completed academic advising.
- o Sixty percent of respondents who indicated academic advising is required at their school said they have taken advantage of a college success program at their institution, compared to 55 percent of respondents who indicated advising is recommended at their school, 42 percent of respondents who reported advising

is optional at their school, and 40 percent of respondents who said that they are unsure whether academic advising is required at their institution.

✓ Respondents were asked to identify the category(ies) that best describes their respective program(s). Overall, respondents identified 59 percent of programs as Academic Support (Including Advising), 44 percent as Counseling & Mentoring, 40 percent as Student-Faculty Interactions, 36 percent as Scholarships, 23 percent as Learning Communities, 22 percent as Transition & Orientation, and 17 percent as Tracking/Early Warning. Respondents indicated just one percent of programs fell under some "other" category.

✓ Twenty-seven percent of respondents reported meeting or corresponding with someone as part of a program at least once a week (4 percent everyday, 12 percent a couple of times a week, and 11 percent once a week), 28 percent reported meeting with someone once a quarter or semester, 20 percent indicated they meet with someone a couple a times a month, 12 percent once a month, and 8 percent of respondents reported meeting with someone once a year. Just 5 percent of respondents identified some "other" frequency that they meet with someone as part of a program.

✓ The largest proportion of respondents, 36 percent, reported spending 16 to 30 minutes each time they meet with someone associated with a program they are participating in, 29 percent reported spending 31 minutes to 1 hour, 22 percent 15 minutes or less, and 11 percent of respondents reported spending more than 1 hour each time they meet with someone. The remaining 2 percent of respondents identified some "other" amount of time they normally spend with someone each time they meet as part of a program.

✓ Respondents were asked to identify the primary way(s) staff at their institution interacts with them as part of a program. Eighty-four percent of respondents indicated they interact via individual face-to-face, 50 percent through email, 24 percent via group presentation, and 9 percent through social media. Three percent of respondents identified some "other" way they interact with staff at their school as part of a program.

✓ Respondents were asked to identify the services they have received through the support initiative(s) they are participating in at their institution. Fifty-three percent of respondents reported they have received help choosing classes, 51 percent academic monitoring and support, 48 percent guidance related to choosing a major/career, 47 percent information about campus resources and support services, 37 percent information on financial aid or budgeting, and/or 30 percent of respondents reported they have received emotional support or guidance.

✓ Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated the program, service, or initiative they are participating in is helpful. When asked if there is anything that could make the program better, 62 percent of respondents indicated no changes were needed. Twenty percent of respondents suggested better instruction or guidance, 18 percent more time, and/or 8 percent suggested a different framework could make the program they are participating in better.

✓ Eighty percent of respondents reported the program they are participating in is *voluntary*, 17 percent indicated the program is *required*, and the remaining 3 percent specified some "Other" structure.

✓ Forty-two percent of all respondents indicated they are having problems that are making it difficult to stay in school, and 58 percent said they are not having problems. When asked to identify the factors or issues that are making it difficult to stay in school, 53 percent reported the cost of college is too high, 35 percent said family reasons, 24 percent employment opportunities, 23 percent each either said school is conflicting with their job or they are having trouble organizing their time, and/or 21 percent each either reported they are having difficulties with classes or they need to support their family. The remaining factors or issues were mentioned by less than 15 percent of respondents who are having difficulties – medical reasons (14%), unsure about education goals (11%), lack of encouragement from family (10%), classes not available (10%), got married and/or had a baby (6%), don't fit in (5%), and /or don't like school (3%).

  o Both 44 percent of community college respondents and 44 percent of 4-year institution respondents reported they are having problems that are making it difficult to stay in school. Community college respondents were more likely to have identified problems as "family reasons" (39% compared to 31%) and "I need to support my family" (28% compared to 16%), and much less likely to have identified "cost of college too high" (35% compared to 70%).

  o A similar percentage of respondents by class level reported having problems making it difficult to stay in school – freshmen (45%), sophomores (43%), juniors (47%), and seniors (41%). Sixty-eight percent of senior respondents and 60 percent of junior respondents identified the "cost of college is too high" as a factor making it difficult for them to stay in school compared to 42 percent of freshman respondents and 45 percent of sophomore respondents.

  o Forty-two percent of respondents who indicated they have received academic advising reported they are having problems that make it difficult for them to stay in school, compared to 48 percent of respondents who indicated they have not received academic advising.

  o Forty three percent of both respondents who indicated academic advising is either required or recommended reported they are having problems that make it difficult for them to stay in school, compared to 49 percent of respondents who said advising is optional and 46 percent of respondents who reported that they are unsure whether advising is required.

✓ Forty-one percent of respondents reported the advising/support services they are receiving are helping with the problems that are making it difficult for them to stay in school, and 59 percent said they are not.

  o Four-year institution respondents were somewhat more likely than community college respondents to have indicated the advising/support services they are receiving are helping with the problems that are making it difficult for them to stay in school – 42 percent compared to 38 percent.

  o This percentage breakdown was similar by class level; senior respondents were somewhat less likely to have reported that the advising/support services are helping (36%), than freshman respondents (41%).

  o Respondents who indicated they have not completed academic advising were much less likely to have reported that the advising/support services are helping (30%), compared to those respondents who have completed academic advising (45%).

  o Respondents who indicated academic advising is either required or recommended were much more likely to have reported that the advising/support services are helping (46% and 42%, respectively), than respondents who

reported academic advising is optional or that they are unsure whether it is required (26% and 30%, respectively).

✓ Respondents were asked to identify what (if anything) would help them stay in school. Eighty-two percent indicated additional funding would help them stay in school, 33 percent said additional academic support, 29 percent additional guidance or counseling, and/or 26 percent reported more encouragement would help them stay in school.

o Four-year institution respondents were more likely than community college respondents to have reported additional funding will help them stay in school (89% compared to 75%), and community college respondents were more likely than 4-year institution respondents to have indicated more additional guidance and counseling (31% compared to 25%) and more encouragement (28% compared to 22%) would help them stay in school.

o Additional funding is important for respondents from all class levels, but the percentage increased as the class level increased – freshmen (76%), sophomores (81%), juniors (84%), and seniors (89%). Freshman and sophomore respondents were somewhat more likely to have indicated additional guidance or counseling and/or more encouragement would be helpful in keeping them in school than junior and senior respondents.

RPPA, 11/8/13

MAP Advising Working Group
2013 Working Group Participant Survey

Highlights:

✓ The 25 members of the MAP Advising Working Group (external to ISAC) were asked to provide feedback on ideas covered in the September and October meetings, and more specifically on an advising/support requirement for MAP students, by completing an online survey. To date, 14 members, or 56 percent, have completed the survey.

✓ Ninety-three percent of respondents indicated there should be an advising/support requirement of some kind for a school to be MAP-eligible, and seven percent indicated there should not be a requirement.

✓ Fifty-seven percent indicated there should be minimum requirements for students to take advantage of advising/support, and 43 percent reported there should not be minimum requirements.

Comments from those who said there *should* be minimum requirements:

Student MAP recipient should have some "skin in the game".

Certainly all institutions should provide advising/support and all students should take advantage of those services. I would lean more toward "should" vs., "required" as it might take more time to appropriately develop and implement the measures and expected outcomes. Perhaps a phased-in approached over several years might be appropriate.

For MAP eligible students there should be some type of entry / exit counseling similar to taking student loans through FAFSA.

Schools and students receiving MAP should be meeting minimal requirements to insure that funding is being used productively and appropriately.

The evidence is clear: more advising leads to better retention and graduation rates.

This would assure the students are getting some support to help guide them on their path to graduate.

Comments from those who said there *should not* be minimum requirements:

Because there is no place to explain my answer to question #1, I will do so here: The focus should be on improving outcomes with advising and support, however an institution decides to do so. To that end, the school can require advising or

support, but that should not come from the state. The state should hold a school accountable for meeting measures of student success.

Just participating in advising or support does not mean it helped. Too hard to track and measure.

Administrative burden to verify participation.

How would you enforce and/or monitor this? What would the penalties be for a MAP student who doesn't complete advising? No MAP? What about non-MAP students? How would schools report this to ISAC? The monitoring and enforcing of the requirement seems incredibly complex. Significant system changes would need to occur at both ISAC as well as schools in order to enforce this, not to mention staff time to devote to it. I don't believe the benefit would outweigh the significant cost of implementing such a requirement.

All students should have mandatory advising and have the opportunity to take advantage of all support that is offered by the institution.

✓ Respondents were asked what set of standards should be used for the advising/support requirement to apply to the institution. Forty-six percent, or 6 respondents, said average graduation rate, 23 percent said none, 15 percent said 3-year cohort default rate, and/or 8 percent, or 1 respondent said average ACT and/or GPA of incoming students. Another 46 percent, or 6 respondents, suggested some "other" set of standards included below.

Some way of assessing the population served by the institution should also be applied, e.g., the number of Pell-eligible or MAP-eligible students that attend, to ensure that institutions that serve the most at-risk students and that do not selectively enroll students are valued. In addition, retention and progression toward a credential or degree might serve as a better measure than graduation alone.

Cumulative GPA, persistence and graduation rate.

Not so much GPA, but somehow measure the success rate that students who receive MAP. Possibly track the rate of pass / fail grades for those MAP eligible students.

I'm not sure I understand the question. Whatever requirement is set should be universal.

Allow the institution to identify their population of at-risk students and apply the requirement to that group. Looking at average graduation rate, 3-year cohort default rate or average GPA of incoming students will unduly place community colleges at an extreme disadvantage. The application of the requirement should apply equally to all schools.

Students with low combinations of ACT and HS GPA may be in a program that requires additional advisement and support.

✓ Sixty-four percent of respondents reported all students should receive the advising/support requirement, 29 percent MAP recipients, 14 percent MAP-eligible

students, and/or no respondents reported first generation students should receive the advising/support requirement. Fourteen percent, or 2 respondents, provided some "other" group or comment with regard to who should receive the advising/support requirement:

Recommend an institutional level requirement to have an advising support rather than student requirement.

While advising would benefit all students, our focus is MAP recipients.

✓ Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicated the advising/support requirement should be involuntary (at the institutional level), and 21 percent reported the requirement should be voluntary.

✓ Eighty-six percent of respondents reported the advising/support requirement should apply to first year students, 43 percent to returning students, and/or 36 percent to pre-college students. Thirty-six percent, or 5 respondents, provided some "other" group or comment, most often mentioning that the requirement should apply to all students who need the advising/support (see below).

If GPA, graduation rate and persistence are used as metrics, the requirement might well apply to all students.

Advising should be available to any student who needs it.

At a minimum, first year students. But it would be desirable to extend to others.

Upper classmen as needed.

It is important that first year and returning students receive mandatory advising and support. However, advising would be helpful for all students.

✓ Respondents were asked what type of advising/support should be required at the institutional level. Eighty-six percent of respondents indicated academic advising/support should be required, 64 percent indicated financial support should be required, and/or 43 percent reported social support should be required. Twenty-nine percent, or four respondents, provided some "other" comment; three of the four respondents indicated all of the types of advising/support are desirable.

Any advising or support that helps a student progress and graduate with a credential or degree.

Institutions should be required to have all of these types of support available to all students.

The other types of support would be desirable, but academic is number one.

Depends on the advising requirement and who it applies to. Although theoretically all of the above would be desirable, based on institutional resources, it is not feasible to require all of these for an extremely large population of students without additional resources.

✓ All of the respondents indicated the advising/support requirement should include academic support (including advising), 86 percent tracking/early warning, 71 percent transition and early orientation, 50 percent counseling and mentoring, 36 percent student-faculty interactions, 29 percent learning communities, and/or 21 percent scholarships. Another 21 percent, or 3 respondents, provided some "other" comment with regard to what should be included in the requirement.

"Require" may be the wrong word to use, but the categories I suggested (counseling and mentoring, transition and orientation, academic support (including advising), and tracking/early warning) are the bare minimum standards that an institution should have if it is not meeting its outcomes and achieving greater college success.

Financial/financial literacy.

Once again it is difficult to answer this question unless you know the target group it applies to. Again, while all in theory are desirable, they cannot all be practically applied based on the size the group they are required for.

✓ Fifty percent of respondents indicated a delivery mechanism should not be prescribed for an advising/support requirement, 36 percent suggested through group presentation, 29 percent via individual face-to-face, 21 percent each through either e-mail or social media, and/or 7 percent, or 1 respondent, by phone. Three respondents provided some "other" comment with regard to a delivery mechanism:

Information in student services office.

If the school already has appropriate programming in place to meet minimum requirements there is no need to change it. There should be some type of basic delivery mechanism requirement to all schools that are receiving MAP funding.

When a face-to-face or group presentation is not possible, an on-line information system, web sites and information through email should be available, depending on the information and support that is offered.

✓ Fifty percent of respondents indicated the minimum number of times each year the student receives advising/support should be once a quarter or semester, 43 percent reported there should be no minimum, and 7 percent, or 1 respondent, suggested the minimum should be once a month, but as many times as the student requires, with possibly a maximum of 4 times per month.

✓ Forty-six percent of respondents indicated ISAC should track compliance through compliance audits, and 39 percent through a school report. Of the remaining 15 percent, one respondent indicated they are not sure how ISAC should track compliance, and one respondent suggested that ISAC should gather the data based on the pre-defined metrics.

✓ Respondents were asked to think about how we will measure success, establish a baseline, and establish goals for an advising/support requirement, by identifying the

components they feel are important to measure or achieve. Ninety-three percent of respondents reported that year-to-year retention is important to measure, 79 percent program completion, 36 percent participant pace, 21 percent participant GPA, and/or 7 percent, or 1 respondent, suggested it is important to measure or achieve debt reduction, and 1 respondent suggested measuring credit hour completion.

✓ Respondents provided a variety of comments with regard to measuring success, establishing a baseline, and/or establishing goals for an advising/support requirement:

Graduation rates alone are too limited, so we should add progress and retention, as well.

Separate baseline and goal for each institution based on current retention and graduation rates for each institution.

Typically outcomes, i.e. performance, would not be measured until after the requirements have been implemented.

There should be a minimum of one advising session made available for financial, social as well as academic support for all students.

If a school has students who are moving along at an appropriate pace, staying in school and graduating I think that provides evidence of successful support programs.

Schools that achieve high graduation and retention rates should be excluded from the MAP Advising Support rules since they are already successful. Minimum requirements should be established and then the State and ISAC should focus efforts and resources on helping schools failing to meet them to reach an acceptable level so student outcomes improve. Compliance would be assessed in the MAP audit for those schools who are not meeting the standards for completion and retention.

Any of the above measures may be difficult for community colleges. What about the students who only come to the community college because they did not succeed at a 4-year school and only want to improve their GPA to return or are there for just one semester because of a lease requirement and then return to their local community college or are just moving from school to school? Has the cc not succeeded with these students? Many times we don't even know what their real plans are. They can tell us that they want to get a degree from our school, but really have no intention of doing so. I think it is more difficult to measure success for open enrollment institutions.

We need to discuss attainable goals. There are many programs that already successful. We should discuss what is common in all of them.

✓ Respondents were asked what should be done if goals are not met. Several respondents suggested that if the institution is not meeting their goals, they should be required to make a plan on how they will improve and then given time to improve.

Like with most audits, an institution should be given a certain amount of time to correct the issue and then considered MAP-ineligible if it cannot.

Not sure. Let's discuss at 11/14 meeting.

Institutions would continue to enhance/improve their programs until the required degree of success is attained.

An early warning advising session should be implemented to curtain the negative activity.

Schools should be required to narrow down exactly what the issue is and develop a plan for resolving it in order to continue receiving MAP funding. Perhaps they should be under some type of early warning system like the one suggested for students.

MAP eligibility probation, remediation plan.

Colleges and universities should create a plan of how they will meet the requirements and then ISAC should evaluate after a certain amount of time to ensure they are now meeting the goals under the new plan.

Provide an action plan in response to a MAP audit finding.

School could go on some sort of probation list and given time to improve.

I really dislike the idea of institutional penalties as opposed to student specific penalties.

The requirements cannot be established the same for all schools since the populations we serve are so very different. To do so, would unduly penalize open enrollment institutions and institution imposed sanctions without looking at the differences in institutions could harm those students who are most in need of MAP and are geographically bound.

Perhaps individual students should be warned, and then if progress is not made MAP aid could be held back.

✓ Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported they like the idea of an ISAC or MAP "Liaison" that could serve as a school contact for ISAC to aid in counseling students, and 23 percent, or 3 respondents, indicated they do not like the idea. Those that like the idea were asked how the position would work at their institution; they provided a variety of comments:

I do like the idea, however I would leave it up to the discretion of the institutional partners.

Similar to how the veteran's coordinator services student veterans.

I don't work at an institution but I think this person could be used to address and resolve system issues at the school that may be preventing students from being successful.

N/A

I like the idea of one contact for ISAC to use to contact the college or university but think that at the institution level that person then needs to share (Train the Trainer) information so that the liaison does not become the only person that all MAP students meet with. There is too much strain on Financial Aid and Advising areas during peak times that it would be beneficial for students to be able to meet with a variety of people rather than on specific

person. ISAC Corps can also help with this role.

An adviser would be so designated.

It would be ok as long as the ISAC liaison encourages students to work directly with their institution. Also, ISAC would need to understand that not all information could be shared with the ISAC liaison.

Not Sure

✓ Respondents were asked how they would like ISAC involved in an advising/support requirement. Seventy-one percent would like ISAC to provide information, 43 percent compliance, 43 percent a high school-to-college bridge program, and/or 36 percent a first year college student program. Two respondents provided comments:

Intervention with the non-compliant institutions (meaning those that did not meet their goals), like sharing best practices and establishing minimum advising/support requirements.

Advising and support services are school specific making it difficult for ISAC involvement.

✓ Of those respondents who would like ISAC to provide information, 83 percent would like to see the agency deliver this information through the Corps members, 58 percent through printed materials, 50 percent through the call center, 42 percent through an online counseling service, and/or 25 percent through online chat. Another 25 percent, or 3 respondents, offered "other" suggestions:

Web site.

Possible quarterly presentations.

Any of these might be appropriate. Let's see what we end up requiring first.

✓ For those respondents who indicated they see first year college student programs as one of ISAC's roles, 80 percent would like to see financial aid programs, and/or 50 percent, or 3 respondents, would like to see ISAC offer near-peer programs. Another 3 respondents offered other suggestions:

General college orientation programs.

Academic support: tips, and possible pitfalls to avoid.

Again, let's discuss this after we set up the requirements.

✓ Ten respondents offered a variety of suggestions for how to put all this together to develop a coordinated effort to help these students:

Hopefully it is clear from my answers, but I would like to see us establish minimum student success outcomes and a way to evaluate and intervene if institutions do not meet the goals.

ISAC monitors retention and graduation rates for each institution. ISAC provides low cost information services to students regarding financial aid.

The workgroup should be able to make the recommendation and then establish another workgroup to include subject matter experts from MAP eligible institutions, to develop and implement the program requirements (policy/procedure). The workgroup would also help develop best practices calling upon the expertise of those institutions already providing excellent advising/support programs.

Create a presentation, but make it accessible via internet. Make it mandatory that students go through training / advising prior to (receiving aid, selecting classes, etc.)

I would like to see existing on campus student support programs being used to their fullest extent to help students. Since most schools already have appropriate advising and support programs in place, it may be helpful to provide students with someone they feel comfortable asking for help when issues arise. Extending the ISACorps into the first year of college may be a simplified way to provide this support as Corps members already have access to the information students need and may be considered more approachable than others on campus.

Start with the goal(s) and work backwards to determine activities, policies, resources, etc.

I think a lot of cross training and Train the Trainers will be essential to share all the information across campuses and institutions.

Identify a best practices package. Highlight schools that achieve this level of designation. Perhaps competition would encourage others to go beyond a minimum.

I would encourage an approach that focuses on improving the retention rate for institutionally defined at-risk populations. Also, I would suggest that this be a phased in approach. The first three years may be just identifying the populations, identifying the current programs offered, measuring their success and then recommending changes to the programs to improve retention of this population. Then you could move to the phase where improvements are monitored. What this workgroup has suggested thus far from a policy/theory standpoint may be desirable, but implementation in the short-term (1-2 years) will be almost impossible for some institutions with large at-risk populations.

We need to discuss this further.

- ✓ Ten respondents commented on what they would like to see come out of this Working Group. Several of the comments suggested a flexible minimum advising requirement that would not be too difficult to administer and track.

Hopefully it is clear from my answers, but I would like to see us establish minimum student success outcomes and a way to evaluate and intervene if institutions do not meet the goals.

Specific, tangible and doable recommendation for ISAC to provide low cost information to students regarding financial aid to all students, but specifically targeting MAP eligible students.

A recommendation that sufficient academic/support advising is critical to the success of all students. Data that supports this conclusion and as evidenced by analysis of MAP recipients.

A consensus on what we can do in our educational capacity to increase retention and graduation rates; and also, minimize the amount of money / funding utilized on students who under achieve or under perform in class.

I would like to see simplified requirements for schools to show they are providing student support and for MAP receiving students to not necessarily be required to do any additional work but for them to receive increased access on where to seek out support when issues arise.

General understanding that advising/guidance/counseling is not an "extra," but rather something that all students need access to, and that should be tracked for results.

I would like to see a list of minimum requirements (not too prescriptive) for colleges and universities. We should also share some best practices and models (preferably things already happening in Illinois) that other colleges and universities can see and adapt to fit their particular institution. I don't think we can create a one size fits all solution but creating minimums and then providing a menu of "upgrades" or "add ons" for institutions would be helpful.

A minimum requirement that MAP eligible institutions provide academic advising for first year MAP students once each semester. I would have no problems if this was expanded/extended.

I would like to see a recommendation that challenges schools to do a better job in terms of working with at-risk students, but has an element of student responsibility also. Having schools be required to offer academic advising to all students is fine, but requiring that all students take advantage of it is not. If the group as a whole requires it, then the sanctions for not completing the advising can only be applied to MAP recipients and should be student specific. i.e., taking away or reducing the MAP award for a future semester if academic advising is not completed. The complexity of monitoring this requirement for both schools and ISAC would be monumental.   Timing would be an issue also, so that the award is cancelled/reduced before a student gets past the no refund period or schools will be left with large uncollectible tuition bills and students with unpaid tuition bills are unlikely to return as this becomes an insurmountable obstacle.   Can we not come up with something that challenges schools, but doesn't become a beast for both the school and ISAC to implement.

Flexible programs depending on the institution that help all students to succeed.

RPPA, 11/11/13

What Research at the National Level Tells Us about College Student Success

The Effect of Various Factors, Variables, or Interventions from Some Impact - ○ to Strong Impact - ● on College Student Success

Success Factors/ Variables/ Interventions	2. National Evaluation of Student Support Services: Examination of Student Outcomes After Six Years.	5. Effective College Access, Persistence and Completion Programs, and Strategies for Underrepresented Student Populations: Opportunities for Scaling Up.	7. Campus-Based Retention Initiatives: Does the Emperor Have Clothes.	9. Performance-Based Scholarships: What Have We Learned? Interim Findings from the PBS Demonstration.	10. A Review of College Access Literature. Prepared for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.	11. Community College Retention and Recruitment of "At-Risk" Students.	16. The Role of Academic and Non-Academic Factors in Improving College Retention.	18. Creating the Case for a New Academic Advising Model at Winona State University: A Review of the Literature.	22. What Works in Student Retention: Four Year Public Colleges.	23. Entering a Program: Helping Students Make Academic and Career Decisions.	26. What Can a Multifaceted Program Do for Community College Students? Early Results from an Evaluation of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for Developmental Education Students.	28. Student success courses and educational outcomes at Virginia community colleges.	29. Toward a New Understanding of Non-Academic Student Support: Four Mechanisms Encouraging Positive Student Outcomes in the Community College.	30. Academic Advising and First-Generation College Students: A Quantitative Study on Student Retention.
Transition programs/success courses		●	●		●			●	●			●		
Mentoring programs		○	○								●			
Mentoring programs for African Americans		●												
Learning communities		○	●						●		●			
Faculty/student interactions		○	●											
Advising programs		○			●			●	●	○	●		●	●
Financial aid			●		●	●			●		●			
Performance-based scholarships			●											
Targeted interventions for specific populations					●									
Early warning systems					●									
Emotional support for Hispanic students					●									
Academic integration				●	●			●						
Social integration				●		●			●				●	

26

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Home-based programs	○														
Blended programs	○														
Peer tutoring/tutoring	○										●				
Labs	○														
Workshops	○														
Services for students with disabilities	○		○			●									
Counseling	○														
Field trips or cultural enrichment	○														
Referrals to outside resources	○														
Services for those with limited English ability	○														
College re-entrance counseling	○														
Recent contacts with support services	○														
Customized package of services	●														
Student Characteristics Affecting Retention															
Job and family responsibilities					●										
Personal motivation					●										
Academic skills, self-confidence, goals							●		●						
Institutional selectivity or student/institution fit							●		●						
High school GPA							●								
ACT score							●								
Socioeconomic status							●								
Lack of motivation									●						
Too many job demands									●						
Attend full-time													●		
Addressing conflicting demands of work, family and college														●	

* Numbered studies in chart correspond to national literature review on college support programs included in Appendix C.

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RPPA, 10/22/13

MAP Recipient and All Student 6-Year Graduation Rates at Public Universities

Legend: MAP recipient grad rate, All students grad rate
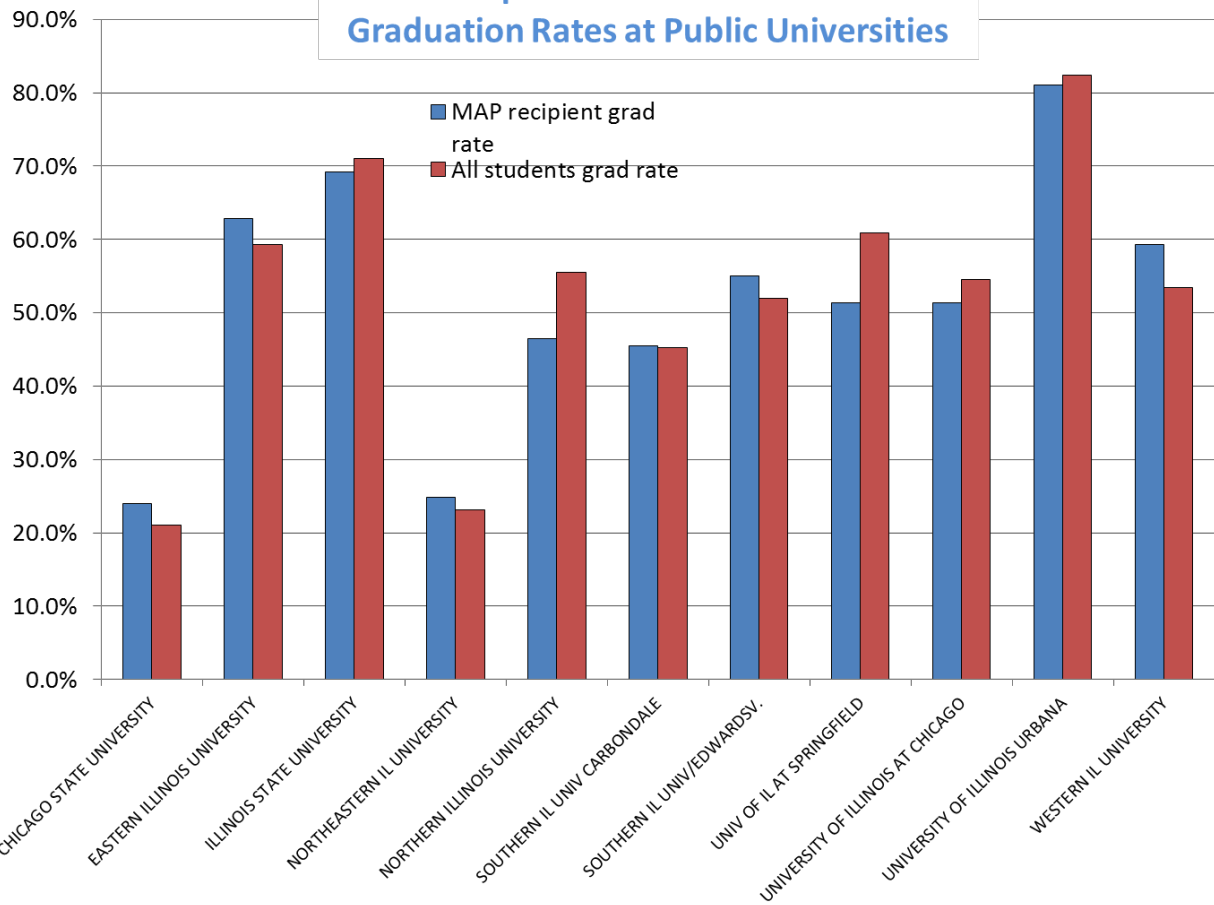
MAP Recipient and All Student 6-Year Graduation Rates at Community Colleges

Legend: MAP recipient grad rate, All students grad rate

MAP Recipient and All Student 6-Year Graduation Rates at PNFP 4-Year Schools