



**National
College
Access
Network**

Building Connections. Advancing Equity. Promoting Success.

Closing the College Graduation Gap

**National College Access and
Success Benchmarking Report**

July 2015

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Introduction and Summary of Findings

The National College Access Network (NCAN) and its members are increasingly focused on improving the use of data to better understand program performance and finding better ways to serve students. For the students served by NCAN members, typically low-income, often of color, and frequently from families without a history of college-going, a program's efficient collection, management, analysis, and use of data can make the difference in whether or not a student attends and completes college. NCAN members assist more than two million individuals annually. The services that help students get to and through college, many of which are informed by data, deserve to be constantly evaluated for ways to improve.

Ensuring postsecondary success for low-income, first-generation students continues to be critical because access to postsecondary education and, eventually, a better life (in terms of increased income and lower unemploymentⁱ, improved health outcomesⁱⁱ, and a longer lifeⁱⁱⁱ) continues to be unequal for these students. Beyond being a matter of equity, postsecondary access and completion for these students also represent an economic opportunity. The greatest potential for progress toward President Obama's 2020 Goal for the United States to regain its position as a world leader in the proportions of college-educated adults can be found among these students, many of whom are not currently on the path to a postsecondary degree.

Last year, in the first iteration of this annual report, we posed the question: How much of a difference are NCAN members making for the students they serve? That question, to which we had individual and qualitative answers from the anecdotes we hear from members across the country, remained elusive from a quantitative, NCAN-wide perspective. Through a first-of-its kind effort with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), we received a preliminary quantitative answer to our question: NCAN member programs participating in the benchmarking study were largely meeting their goals of seeing students enroll and complete college at the same rates, or in some cases at higher rates, as their peers.

Based on the success of the first round of research, which resulted in the first enrollment and completion benchmarks for students served by college access and success programs, NCAN and the NSC embarked on a second, more robust, round of the National College Access and Success Benchmarking study in order to get better answers to old questions and initial answers to new ones. Once again, this study aggregates student data from NCAN members, examines these students' postsecondary access and success milestones, and compares NCAN-served students' progress to national results. New data points collected from NCAN members this year allow for more complex, disaggregated analyses in this round.

There are a few important points to highlight before any discussion of the results of this year's study. First, the increase of programs participating in the benchmarking project from 24 last year to 42 this year is encouraging. The more programs and students involved in this project, the more generalizable its results and the closer to a representative sample we will have to examine. We hope that the data contained in this report will encourage more programs to submit their data for the third round of the benchmarking project or begin to lay the groundwork for collecting the necessary data for a future round. Second, whether the results are encouraging or discouraging, there is intrinsic merit in the mere undertaking of this process. Data can provide insight and evidence about the current state of the field, or an individual program, that guesswork and hunches

“Data can provide insight and evidence about the current state of the field, or an individual program, that guesswork and hunches cannot.”

cannot. The iterative process that NCAN is undertaking with our benchmarking initiative, in which we hope to improve upon each previous round and move closer to a more perfect understanding of our members' impact, is one that we hope individual programs are undertaking in their own activities.

“Students served by NCAN-member programs outperform expectations for college enrollment and completion, demonstrating that current national lower levels of postsecondary attainment for poor and minority students are not destiny.”

What did we find in this second year? Students served by NCAN-member programs outperform expectations for college enrollment and completion, demonstrating that current national lower levels of postsecondary attainment for poor and minority students are not destiny. Specifically, the study showed:

- College enrollment rates for NCAN students were comparable to students who attended higher income high schools.
- The six-year college completion rate of NCAN students who graduated from high school in 2008 and enrolled in the year after high school was approaching the national rate for all students younger than 20 years old who also first enrolled in postsecondary education in 2008. The NCAN students' completion rates meaningfully exceeded the completion rate for low-income, first-generation students from the high school class of 2003^{iv}.
- Because of additional data collected from NCAN members this year, we are able to release new findings, including college enrollment and completion rate benchmarks for students based on gender, race/ethnicity, Hispanic background, and first-generation status.

These results continue to support the conclusion that NCAN's members are making progress toward closing the college knowledge, opportunity, and completion gaps for the students they serve. Moreover, the use of this data is valuable irrespective of the results derived from it. NCAN's cycle of data collection and analysis reinforces the message to which so many of our members have already subscribed: through the use of data, programs' strategies can and should be adapted to ensure that they are effective in getting students to and through postsecondary education. These data, and data collected by our members, are spurring the national college access and success conversation from debating the perceived merits of various service delivery models to measuring actual student outcomes.

Data Source and Methodology

NCAN worked with the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC) to conduct the benchmarking study. The NSCRC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to using data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to inform educators and policymakers. The NSC is a 501(c)(6) organization that collects information on enrollment and degree completion from 3,600 higher education institutions covering 98 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the United States.

Through the National Student Clearinghouse, virtually any organization related to college access and success—whether a community-based nonprofit, a public high school, a university-based outreach program, or a state higher education agency—can obtain data about whether the students they assist enroll in, persist, and complete a postsecondary credential. The NSC provides these data affordably to these entities if they have obtained students' permission to access their records.

Using student-level data provided by 42 NCAN member programs, the NSCRC examined both enrollment and completion rates for students served by NCAN members. The participating programs gathered data on the students they served who graduated from high school in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014.

The data included the standard student identifying information required by the NSCRC to determine a student's enrollment or completion status, as well as other data elements (listed below) NCAN was interested in studying this year.

All data were submitted to the NSCRC through their StudentTracker service to determine students' postsecondary enrollment and four-, five- and six-year completion rates. The enrollment and completion rates comprised an "NCAN Benchmark" against which programs can measure their own outcomes. These benchmarks are important because there is not currently a reliable annual source for data on the outcomes of low-income, first-generation students; this is true of both students who received college access and success services and those that did not. Federal data collections and surveys are either too incomplete or too infrequent when it comes to providing a clear picture of the performance of underserved students. Consequently, in the results section that follows, we use the best postsecondary enrollment and graduation rate comparisons available, acknowledging that they are not perfect.

Like last year, programs also submitted additional data points for each student. These data points allow NCAN to perform deeper analyses of the NSC data. The additional data points collected in this round of benchmarking included:

- race/ethnicity
- gender
- first-generation status^v
- selectivity of program^{vi}
- students' expected family contributions (EFC) for the first year of postsecondary education
- whether a student was provided with scholarship funds by the program during the student's first postsecondary year

In the first round of the benchmarking project, participating members were asked to indicate whether or not students had participated in postsecondary success services. In this round, we went further and asked programs to indicate whether students had each received any of eight different interventions. Although we are aware that these eight interventions do not represent the full range of services NCAN members provide to their students, and that their implementation likely differs from program to program, collecting this data does offer insights into the experiences of students in the benchmarking sample. The interventions that programs were asked to report included:

- assisting in completing and submitting the FAFSA
- financial literacy/aid education (e.g., paying for college, sources of financial aid, loan repayment)
- academic support/counseling/advising while in high school (e.g., course selection, tutoring, dual credit opportunities)
- college admissions test prep courses and/or materials
- postsecondary admissions counseling (e.g., fit/match, college tours, application/essay completion assistance)
- specific curriculum and/or activities designed to encourage grit, persistence, non-cognitive, or other social/emotional/life skills
- provide information to parents/families (e.g., postsecondary education, financial aid/paying for college)
- success/completion/retention services while in postsecondary education

Collecting these additional data points allows us to provide new analyses and insights in this round of the benchmarking project over and above what was possible last year.

Benchmarking Participants...

- Were based in 18 states from coast to coast
- Included 501c3s, foundations, and school districts
- Worked with individual high schools, entire school districts or states, across multiple cities and everywhere in between
- Ranged from having multiple decades to just a few years of operation

Results

“The students who NCAN members serve can succeed when provided with access and success service support. Community and education leaders, policymakers, and others should take notice.”

Postsecondary Enrollment - Overall

For enrollment rates, the NSCRC calculated the percentage of students who enrolled in college at any point in the first year after high school graduation for the four cohorts (2008, 2009, 2010, and 2014). For benchmarking purposes, NCAN compared the results to first-year postsecondary enrollment rates published in the NSCRC’s High School Benchmarks Report. This report, published in the fall of 2014, includes first-year postsecondary enrollment rates for students from 12 categories of public non-charter high schools that participate in the NSCRC’s StudentTracker Service. The NSCRC Report does not include the same cohort years as the NCAN benchmarks, however, so comparisons are made to the NSCRC high school graduation cohort of 2012. The first-year postsecondary enrollment rates for the 2008, 2009, and 2010 NCAN cohorts were 74%, 71%, and 69%, respectively. The rate for the 2014 cohort was 64%, but only six months of postsecondary enrollment data were available at the time of analysis. Given enrollment data for the full 2014-15 academic year, the rate for the 2015 cohort could reach the 70% mark as well.

In general, as in last year’s report, the first-year enrollment rates for the NCAN cohorts exceed the enrollment rates for many of the categories of high school graduates from the High School Benchmarks Report. The 2008, 2009, and 2010 NCAN cohorts’ enrollment rates are much higher than the six categories of low-income high schools for the NSCRC Class of 2012. The NCAN cohorts’ enrollment rates are also higher or equal to four of six categories of higher-income schools (see Table 1). Even the incomplete 2014 NCAN cohort outperforms those lower income high schools.

These outcomes provide evidence that our students’ outcomes are comparing favorably to or exceeding those of students from better resourced communities who are typically more likely to go to college. The students who NCAN members serve can succeed when provided with access and success service support. Community and education leaders, policymakers, and others should take notice.

| Category | Enrollment Rate |
|---|-----------------|
| High-Income, Low-Minority, Suburban High Schools | 77% |
| High-Income, Low-Minority, Urban High Schools | 76% |
| NCAN Class of 2008 | 74% |
| NCAN Class of 2009 | 71% |
| NCAN Class of 2010 | 69% |
| High-Income, Low-Minority, Rural High Schools | 69% |
| High-Income, High-Minority, Suburban High Schools | 69% |
| High-Income, High-Minority, Urban High Schools | 68% |
| High-Income, High-Minority, Rural High Schools | 66% |
| NCAN Class of 2014* | 64% |
| Low-Income, Low-Minority, Urban High Schools | 62% |
| Low-Income, High-Minority, Suburban High Schools | 60% |
| Low-Income, High-Minority, Rural High Schools | 59% |
| Low-Income, High-Minority, Urban High Schools | 58% |
| Low-Income, Low-Minority, Suburban High Schools | 54% |
| Low-Income, Low-Minority, Rural High Schools | 52% |

*NCAN 2014 Cohort is a partial year of enrollment.

Postsecondary Enrollment - By Student Characteristics

The additional variables collected for this year's benchmarking project both allow us to learn more about the sample, and to develop benchmarks based on student-level characteristics. The values in Table 2 may be valuable for individual NCAN members' comparison purposes to see how their program measures up against a large sample of other member-served students.

Table 2. First-Year Enrollment Rates, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Heritage, and First-Generation Status Classes of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014

(Total Number of Students in a Given Group in a Given Year)

| | Female | Male | Unknown Gender | American Indian | Asian | Black | Multiracial | Pacific Islander | Unknown Race | White | Hispanic* | First-Generation |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2008 | 76.3% (5,721) | 74.2% (3,405) | 66.5% (287) | 64.3% (42) | 85.2% (608) | 76.2% (3,184) | 69.1% (136) | ‡ | 72.3% (3,285) | 75.9% (2,145) | 62.2% (1,425) | 72.2% (4,332) |
| 2009 | 77.2% (7,214) | 75.1% (4,522) | 58.3% (2,944) | 75.6% (45) | 84.4% (704) | 76.1% (4,200) | 75.7% (222) | ‡ | 67.3% (6,461) | 76.9% (3,042) | 68.3% (1,701) | 73.1% (4,624) |
| 2010 | 74.4% (23,567) | 71.9% (14,302) | 49% (3,583) | 72.5% (182) | 79% (2,888) | 74.9% (9,859) | 75.8% (1,737) | 72.2% (194) | 66.2% (19,689) | 76.6% (6,903) | 69.3% (14,041) | 72.5% (18,821) |
| 2014 | 68.3% (36,420) | 63.5% (23,116) | 48.4% (3,231) | 54% (289) | 73.7% (3,889) | 64.7% (12,585) | 66.7% (3,443) | 63.8% (240) | 63.8% (32,038) | 68.8% (10,283) | 65% (26,548) | 66.4% (30,175) |

Note: The values for unknown gender and unknown race are particularly susceptible to influence from a small number of programs. One program accounted for over 87% of students with gender reported as "unknown." Four programs accounted for over 76% of students with race reported as "unknown." The values for these columns are more reflective of the outcomes of these particular programs' students, not the outcomes of all programs who submitted data for this study.
 * Because the Hispanic indicator variable was collected separately from the race/ethnicity variable, students could be identified as any of the race/ethnicity values and Hispanic.
 ‡ Value suppressed because of low sample size

Overall, female students tended to enroll at higher rates than male students. Until the class of 2014, white and black students enrolled at approximately the same rates while Hispanic students enrolled at lower rates across all four years. Asian students were consistently the racial group with the highest enrollment rates over all four years. Caution should be exercised when considering Pacific Islander and American Indian students' enrollment rates because of the relatively low sample sizes for these student groups. First-generation students' enrollment rates were lower than those of all students in 2008 and 2009 but exceeded the average enrollment rate for the classes of 2010 and 2014.

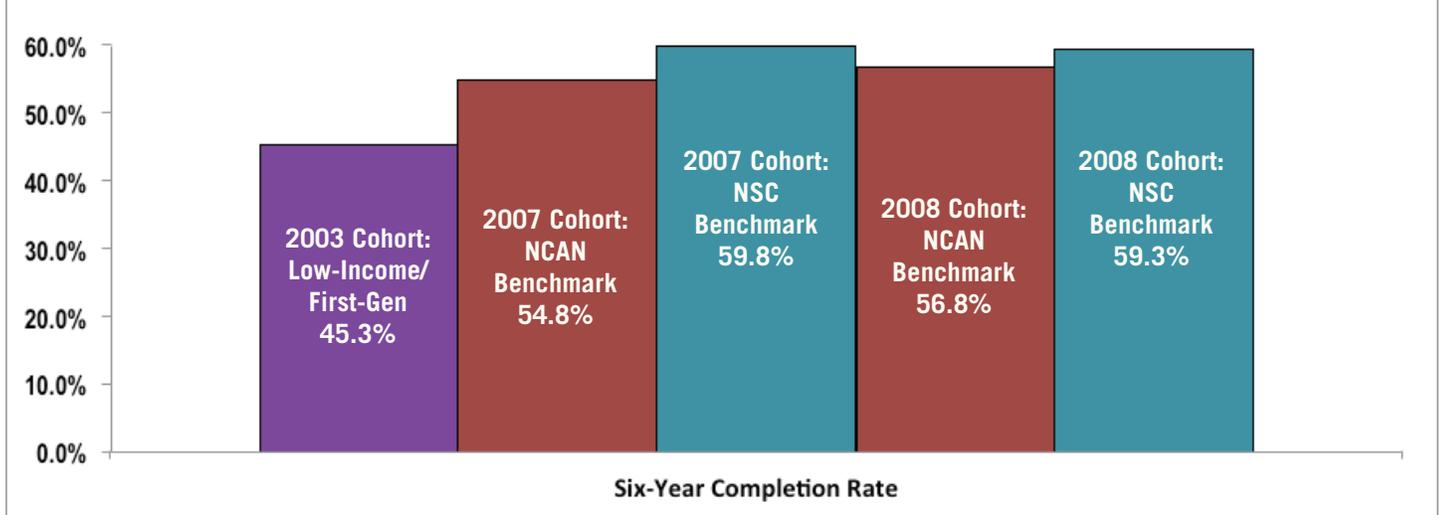
In future rounds of benchmarking, as more NCAN members participate in this project and the number of students submitted increases, these enrollment figures will become more representative and, consequently, more useful to NCAN members and the college access field.

Postsecondary Graduation - Overall

Students Who Enrolled Within a Year After Graduating High School

For completion rates, the NSCRC calculated the percentage of students from the 2008 high school graduation cohort who completed a postsecondary credential within six years of enrollment. For benchmarking purposes, the NSCRC compared the results to the national six-year degree completion rate published in the NSCRC's Degree Completion Report. This report, published in the fall of 2014, analyzes degree completion rates for the cohort of students that entered college in fall 2008. In Figure 1, the NSC benchmarks shown are for students age 20 or younger when they first enrolled in postsecondary education in the given year, although the vast majority of these students were 18 and enrolled in college in the academic year immediately following high school graduation^{vii}.

Figure 1. Six-Year Completion Rate Comparison for Students Who Enrolled in Postsecondary Within One Year of Graduating High School



**National Center for Education Statistics Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Students 19 or younger who started college in 2003 whose parents did not obtain a bachelor's degree and whose family incomes were \$25,000 or less.*

For the second year in a row, the six-year completion rate for a cohort of NCAN-served students was approaching the national six-year completion rate published by the NSCRC for students aged 20 or younger upon first postsecondary enrollment. Notable about the class of 2008 data from this second round of the benchmarking report is that the completion rate for NCAN students who started at a postsecondary institution in 2008-09 (56.8%) is actually higher than the completion rate of all NSC-reported students, of any age, who started postsecondary in the same year (55.1%). However, we use the 59.3% completion benchmark from NSC for students who were 20 years old or younger when they enrolled because, based on what we know about the students served by these NCAN member programs, we believe this represents a more accurate point of comparison.

“NCAN members continue to make great strides toward closing the significant, and persistently challenging, higher education graduation gap typical for these students.”

The NSCRC's national completion rate benchmark for this group of students in 2008 was 59.3%. For the 2008 NCAN cohort, 56.8% of the students who began postsecondary education in 2008-09 completed either a bachelor's degree, associate degree, or certificate within six years. Figure 1 shows both of these figures as well as the corresponding NSC and NCAN benchmarks for the entering class of 2007 (59.8% and 54.8%, respectively). Although the gap between the NSC and NCAN benchmarks is smaller for the class of 2008 than for the class of 2007, it is difficult to say whether or not the gap narrowed as the NCAN sample's composition is different for each of the two years.

This similarity in college completion rates is notable and encouraging given the backgrounds of NCAN-served students, many of who are coming from communities where college enrollment and completion are not the norm. These students, who are underrepresented in postsecondary education, often have lower completion rates than their peers. Since more recent national comparisons are unavailable, Figure 1 shows the most recent completion rate we were able to obtain for low-income, first-generation students from the high school graduating class of 2003, which the NCAN benchmarks for the classes of both 2007 and 2008 greatly exceed^{viii}. NCAN members continue to make great strides toward closing the significant, and persistently challenging, higher education graduation gap typical for these students.

Students Who Enrolled Any Time in Six Years

When we consider all high school graduates in the 2008 NCAN cohort regardless of when, or whether, they matriculated, the degree attainment picture changes. Overall, 44.5% of all students from the class of 2008 completed a postsecondary credential (bachelor's, associate's, certificate) within six years of high school graduation. The completion rate for students who enrolled in postsecondary at any point after graduating high school was 53.3%. As noted earlier, the completion rate of NCAN member-served students who enrolled immediately following high school was 56.8%. NCAN member-served students who enroll in postsecondary education immediately after graduating high school compare well against students nationally who also enroll immediately after high school. Members' students who enroll more than one year after high school graduation lag behind in terms of postsecondary completion, but the fact that these students have had less time to complete a credential is also a factor to consider.

For bachelor's degree completions in particular, the results underscore the importance of the fifth and sixth year of postsecondary study (see Table 3). The percentage of all students in the 2008 NCAN cohort who completed bachelor's degrees rose nearly 20 percentage points from the fourth year to the sixth year of postsecondary study; the 2009 cohort was on track for comparable results, and a similar trend was observed in last year's benchmarking report.

Table 3. Percent of All 2008 NCAN HS Graduates Who Completed a Degree or Certificate, By Year

| | Bachelor's Recipients | Associate's or Certificate Recipients | Total Degree Recipients |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2011-12 (4th Year after HS Graduation) | 19.7% | 4.8% | 24.5% |
| 2012-13 (5th Year after HS Graduation) | 32.4% | 6.3% | 38.7% |
| 2013-14 (6th Year after HS Graduation) | 37.1% | 7.4% | 44.5%* |

*For total degree recipients within six years of high school graduation, the reported values, 44.5% in Table 3 (calculated by NSC) and 44.9% in Table 4 (calculated by NCAN), vary slightly. This is because .76% of the approximately 131,000 student outcomes were omitted from the student file submitted to NCAN by NSC. The omission was necessary because approximately 1,000 records included values for first or last name that weren't compatible with the de-identification process.

Postsecondary Graduation – By Student Characteristics

Much like enrollment outcomes, we are able to examine students' six-year completion outcomes for the 2008 cohort based on their individual characteristics. Table 4 below examines the six-year completion outcomes of four groups of students:

- those who enrolled in postsecondary education during the 2008-09 academic year, their first year after graduating high school;
- those who enrolled in postsecondary education any time after the 2008-09 academic year;
- those who enrolled any time in the six years between 2008-09 and 2013-14; and
- all students from the class of 2008, regardless of when, or whether, they ever enrolled.

Table 4. Students Who Completed by 2014, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Heritage, and First-Generation Status Class of 2008

(Total Number of Students in a Given Group)

| | All Students | Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multi-racial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic* | First-Gen |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Enrolled First Year After HS | 54.5% (7,081) | 49.1% (2,525) | 57.6% (4,365) | 53.9% (191) | 60.6% (1,628) | 44.1% (2,425) | 70.6% (518) | ‡ | 58.5% (94) | 62.9% (27) | 56.9% (2,377) | 39.1% (886) | 47% (3,126) |
| Enrolled Two or More Years After HS | 43.2% (855) | 36.1% (293) | 47.8% (537) | 28% (25) | 33.3% (210) | 51.3% (290) | 60.7% (28) | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | 40.4% (309) | 28.4% (211) | 38.6% (437) |
| Enrolled Any Time After HS | 53.3% (7,936) | 47.8% (2,818) | 56.5% (4,902) | 50.9% (216) | 57.5% (1,838) | 44.9% (2,715) | 70.1% (546) | ‡ | 55.5% (108) | 67.7% (31) | 55% (2,686) | 37.1% (1,097) | 46% (3,563) |
| Total, Class of 2008 | 44.9% (9,413) | 39.5% (3,405) | 48.4% (5,721) | 38.3% (287) | 49.3% (2,145) | 38.3% (3,184) | 62.9% (608) | ‡ | 44.1% (136) | 50% (42) | 45% (3,285) | 28.5% (1,425) | 37.8% (4,332) |

‡ Value suppressed because of low sample size

* Because the Hispanic indicator variable was collected separately from the race/ethnicity variable, students could be identified as any of the race/ethnicity values and Hispanic.

Because six years' worth of data was not yet available, Appendix A contains five-year completion rates for the 2009 cohort and four-year completion rates for the 2010 cohort.

Overall, those enrolling immediately after high school graduation completed at higher rates than those who enrolled two or more years after graduating high school. This may be a result of those who immediately enrolled having six full years to complete a certificate or degree while those who postponed enrollment had less time to complete such a credential.

Female students, white students, and Asian students completed at higher rates while male students and students of color, notably Hispanic students, completed at lower rates. First-generation students, regardless of race, outperformed black and Hispanic students.

A Deeper Dive into the Benchmarking Sample

Worth noting before describing the sample of students in this year's round of benchmarking is that the programs and students included are from a subset of NCAN members. The students examined should not be considered a representative sample of NCAN member-served students or students nationwide. As more programs and students engage with this important work and the project's methodology is refined it is possible that the set of students examined could approach being a representative sample. For now, we can say only that the programs and students participating are a subset of NCAN's membership. This subset of students considered in this report, however, still provides both an important starting point and important insights for the field.

In this round of benchmarking, we can describe the sample of students with much finer granularity. For example we can examine student-level characteristics like race/ethnicity, gender, and first-generation status as well as the interventions received.

Nearly half of the students submitted for this round of benchmarking came from the high school graduating class of 2014 (see Table 5). 2008 had the fewest number of students and programs submitting data. In the future, as the benchmarking project continues and our members' data capacities continue to grow, we expect the numbers of both programs and students included in the sample to increase.

Demographic Characteristics

Student-level characteristics for the entire sample are in Table 6 below. These characteristics can be found for each year in Appendix A. Overall, the sample tended to be more female, black, and Hispanic than other characteristics. Given that NCAN programs often serve first-generation students, many of whom are students of color, the composition of this sample was in line with our expectations. Notable, however, is how few students (just under 50 percent) had their race/ethnicity data reported. Tracking this type of basic demographic information is important to help programs ensure equitable outcomes among different groups of students.

| Year | Students (Programs) |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| 2008 | 9,554 (35 programs) |
| 2009 | 14,947 (37 programs) |
| 2010 | 42,365 (42 programs) |
| 2014 | 63,672 (42 programs) |
| Total | 130,538 (42 programs) |

| Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multiracial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic* | First-Gen |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 35.3% (45,345) | 56.8% (72,922) | 7.8% (10,045) | 17.4% (22,373) | 23.3% (29,828) | 6.3% (8,089) | 0.4% (453) | 4.3% (5,538) | 0.43% (558) | 47.9% (61,473) | 34% (43,625) | 45.2% (57,952) |

*Because the Hispanic indicator variable was collected separately from the race/ethnicity variable, students could be identified as any of the race/ethnicity values and Hispanic. Consequently, the sum of all of these values is greater than 100%.

Expected Family Contributions

Students served by NCAN members often come from low-income families. Although we were not able to collect information directly on students' family incomes, some programs did report expected family contributions (EFCs) for a small percentage of students, which sheds some light on their financial circumstances:

- There was a large percentage (83%) of students in the sample for which no EFC values were reported.
- Across the sample, the average EFC was \$3,590, which would have made a recipient eligible for a maximum Pell Grant of \$2,180 in the 2014-15 academic year, depending on an institution's cost of attendance and a student's intensity of attendance. This \$2,180 represents about 40% of the maximum Pell Grant overall for the 2014-15 academic year.
- In the four years examined in this round of benchmarking, the yearly average EFC ranged from \$2,622 for the class of 2014 to \$4,437 for the class of 2008.
- Of students for whom EFC was reported, the percentage of students with an EFC of \$0 (those eligible for a maximum Pell Grant) was 49%. The percentage of students with an EFC of \$0 ranged from 38% in 2008 to 58% in 2014.

Scholarship Recipients

Many NCAN members provide some type of scholarship for the students they serve. Although the qualifications for these scholarships vary from program to program, these funds are invaluable for students pursuing postsecondary education.

- Programs reported scholarship values for 54% of students across the entire sample.
- Overall, 15% of students in the sample received scholarships from the programs that serve them. The percentage of scholarship recipients declined in each successive year. 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2014 had values of 56%, 34%, 13%, and 5%, respectively. The larger sample sizes in later years were the reason for this skew.
- Across the sample, the average student received approximately \$616 in organizational scholarships for their first academic year.
- Average organizational scholarships ranged from \$293 for the class of 2014 to \$1,568 for the class of 2008, but these numbers are affected by the much larger sample sizes in later years compared to earlier.

Access to Interventions

Finally, Table 7 shows the percentages of students who experienced each of eight types of college access and success interventions. Unsurprisingly, financial aid education, college admissions test preparation, and college admissions counseling, which are historically the cornerstone services of NCAN member programs, were the interventions students were most likely to experience. On the other end of the spectrum, services focused on providing information to parents and postsecondary success were those least commonly reported in this sample, although they are key components of some programs' models.

| FAFSA Help | Financial Aid Education | High School Academic Advising | College Admissions Test Prep | College Admissions Counseling | Grit/ Life Skills Curriculum | Information to Parents | Postsecondary Success Services |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 64.93% | 91.09% | 65.84% | 65.93% | 78.62% | 58.48% | 23.30% | 22.95% |

The enhanced data collection for the second round of benchmarking provides new contexts in which to consider the enrollment and completion outcomes in the following sections. Although not all programs were able to provide these student-level characteristics, we hope that this capacity will grow in the future, providing an even more robust data set for us to examine.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The first National College Access and Success Benchmarking study offered broader evidence than ever before that college access and success programs are achieving their goals of assisting low-income, first-generation students to achieve their dreams of postsecondary completion and to overcome persistent knowledge and attainment gaps. The second year of this study takes the next step by offering more details on the current state of postsecondary enrollment and completion by students served by NCAN members. By collecting more data points from NCAN members about the students they serve and conducting more in-depth analyses that include outcomes disaggregated by student-level characteristics, the college access and success field now has even more benchmarks against which to compare itself and its outcomes.

This new evidence is encouraging, but it remains incomplete. This work merits further research, and NCAN looks forward to devoting efforts toward that research in the next year and beyond. The 42 member programs that participated this year (up from 24 in round one) represent a significant step forward toward becoming more representative, but this sample is still not representative of the entire NCAN membership nor the nation's underserved students overall. We hope that this new evidence will inspire even more members to contribute to this critical effort; adding more students' data will continue to grow our understanding of student outcomes across the entire college access and success field.

Although we are already considering how to improve the third round of the benchmarking study, there are other analyses that can and will be released using data from this round. For example, we will conduct a demographic analysis of students who never enrolled, enrolled but did not complete, and those who completed within six years. We will also dive deeper into the interventions received by various student groups and explore whether certain interventions, or combinations of interventions, are more strongly associated with enrollment or completion than others. These studies will further contribute to the field of college access and success and serve as resources for NCAN members.

This report has continued to move NCAN, its members, and the entire college access and success field along a path towards both a greater understanding of the outcomes achieved by the students we serve and the ability to understand how to better make students' postsecondary dreams a reality. We thank our member organizations for working with us hand-in-hand on this initiative and look forward to learning more together in years to come.

ⁱ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment." April 2, 2015. Accessed via http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm. May 26, 2015.

ⁱⁱ Cutler, D.M., and Lleras-Muney, A., *Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence* (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2006), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12352> (accessed May 26, 2015); Feinstein, L. et al., "What Are the Effects of Education on Health?," in *Measuring the Effects of Education on Health and Civic Engagement: Proceedings of the Copenhagen Symposium*, eds. Desjardins, R., and Schuller, T. (Brussels: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006), <http://www.oecd.org/edu/innovation-education/37425753.pdf> (accessed May 26, 2015).

ⁱⁱⁱ Hummer, R.A. and Hernandez, E.M. "The Effect of Educational Attainment on Adult Mortality in the U.S." Population Reference Bureau. July 2013. <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Reports/2013/us-educational-attainment-mortality.aspx> (accessed May 26, 2015). Kaplan, R. M., Spittel, M. L., & Zeno, T. L. (2014). Educational Attainment and Life Expectancy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1(1), 189-194. <http://bbs.sagepub.com/content/1/1/189.full.pdf+html> (accessed May 26, 2015).

^{iv} Enrollment rate benchmark via: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2014). *High School Benchmarks: National College Progression Rates*. October 13, 2014. Accessed via <http://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/HighSchoolBenchmarks2014.pdf> on May 10, 2015. Completion rate benchmark via: Shapiro, D., Dunder, A., Ziskin, M., Yuan, X., & Harrell, A. (2013, December). *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates-Fall 2007 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 6). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Accessed via <http://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport6/> on May 25, 2015. Class of 2003 benchmark via U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Accessed via <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps/>.

^v For the purposes of this study, participants were asked to use the definition of "first generation" that they use in their own programs.

^{vi} Participants were asked to report on whether they serve all students, or whether they limit participation based on financial or academic criteria, or both.

^{vii} Consultation with the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, June 16, 2015.

^{viii} Class of 2003 benchmark via U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Accessed via <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps/>.

Appendix A

Demographics

| Submitted Students, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Hispanic Heritage Classes of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Class Year | Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multiracial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic* | Unknown Hispanic Heritage | First Generation | Unknown First Generation Status |
| 2008 | 36.1% (3,405) | 60.7% (5,721) | 3% (287) | 22.7% (2,145) | 33.8% (3,184) | 6.4% (608) | 0.1% (13) | 1.4% (136) | 0.4% (42) | 34.8% (3,285) | 15.1% (1,425) | 26.2% (2,475) | 46% (4,332) | 30.9% (2,916) |
| 2009 | 30.8% (4,522) | 49.1% (7,214) | 20% (2,944) | 20.7% (3,042) | 28.6% (4,200) | 4.7% (704) | 0% (6) | 1.5% (222) | 0.3% (45) | 44% (6,461) | 11.5% (1,701) | 53.5% (7,867) | 31.4% (4,624) | 36.2% (5,324) |
| 2010 | 34.5% (14,302) | 56.8% (23,567) | 8.6% (3,583) | 16.6% (6,903) | 23.7% (9,859) | 6.9% (2,888) | 0.4% (194) | 4.1% (1,737) | 0.4% (182) | 47.4% (19,689) | 33.8% (14,041) | 22% (9,130) | 45.4% (18,821) | 20.5% (8,530) |
| 2014 | 36.8% (23,116) | 58% (36,420) | 5.1% (3,231) | 16.3% (10,283) | 20% (12,585) | 6.1% (3,889) | 0.3% (240) | 5.4% (3,443) | 0.4% (289) | 51% (32,038) | 42.1% (26,458) | 17.6% (11,106) | 48% (30,175) | 14.4% (9,081) |

*Because the Hispanic indicator variable was collected separately from the race/ethnicity variable, students could be identified as any of the race/ethnicity values and Hispanic. Consequently, the sum of all of these values is greater than 100%. Total headcounts may not match the corresponding figure in Table 4 because of the omission of approximately 1,000 student records from the file received by NCAN from the NSC. These records were omitted because of errors corrected by the name-matching and de-identification processes.

Completion

Class of 2008

| Students Who Completed by 2014, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Heritage, and First-Generation Status Class of 2008 (Total Number of Students in a Given Group) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--|
| | All Students | Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multiracial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic | First-Gen | |
| Enrolled First Year After HS | 54.5% (7,081) | 49.1% (2,525) | 57.6% (4,365) | 53.9% (191) | 60.6% (1,628) | 44.1% (2,425) | 70.6% (518) | ‡ | 58.5% (94) | 62.9% (27) | 56.9% (2,377) | 39.1% (886) | 47% (3,126) | |
| Enrolled Two or More Years After HS | 43.2% (855) | 36.1% (293) | 47.8% (537) | 28% (25) | 33.3% (210) | 51.3% (290) | 60.7% (28) | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | 40.4% (309) | 28.4% (211) | 38.6% (437) | |
| Enrolled Any Time After HS | 53.3% (7,936) | 47.8% (2,818) | 56.5% (4,902) | 50.9% (216) | 57.5% (1,838) | 44.9% (2,715) | 70.1% (546) | ‡ | 55.5% (108) | 67.7% (31) | 55% (2,686) | 37.1% (1,097) | 46% (3,563) | |
| Total, Class of 2008 | 44.9% (9,413) | 39.5% (3,405) | 48.4% (5,721) | 38.3% (287) | 49.3% (2,145) | 38.3% (3,184) | 62.9% (608) | ‡ | 44.1% (136) | 50% (42) | 45% (3,285) | 28.5% (1,425) | 37.8% (4,332) | |

‡ Value suppressed because of low sample size
NOTE: Total headcounts may not match the corresponding figure in Table 5 because of the omission of approximately 1,000 student records from the file received by NCAN from the NSC. These records were omitted because .76% of the approximately 131,000 student outcomes were omitted from the student file submitted to NCAN by NSC. The omission was necessary because approximately 1,000 records included values for first or last name that weren't compatible with the de-identification process.

Class of 2009

| Students Who Completed by 2014, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Heritage, and First-Generation Status | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Class of 2009 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>(Total Number of Students in a Given Group)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | All Students | Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multi-racial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic | First-Gen |
| Enrolled First Year After HS | 46.7% (10,686) | 44.5% (3,398) | 51.8% (5,570) | 34.4% (1,718) | 57.8% (2,338) | 39.4% (3,197) | 62.6% (594) | ‡ | 50.5% (168) | 35.2% (34) | 43.8% (4,351) | 36.1% (1,161) | 42.5% (3,381) |
| Enrolled Two or More Years After HS | 25.9% (1,404) | 25.8% (367) | 35.7% (616) | 11.6% (421) | 28.5% (214) | 32% (405) | 36.5% (41) | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | 20.9% (724) | 27.6% (181) | 32.3% (454) |
| Enrolled Any Time After HS | 44.2% (12,090) | 42.7% (3,765) | 50.2% (6,186) | 29.9% (2,139) | 55.3% (2,552) | 38.6% (3,602) | 60.9% (635) | ‡ | 49.4% (180) | 34.1% (41) | 40.5% (5,075) | 35% (1,342) | 41.3% (3,835) |
| Total, Class of 2009 | 36.4% (14,680) | 35.5% (4,522) | 43% (7,214) | 21.7% (2,944) | 46.4% (3,042) | 33.1% (4,200) | 54.9% (704) | ‡ | 40% (222) | 31.1% (45) | 31.8% (6,461) | 27.6% (1,701) | 34.2% (4,624) |

‡ Value suppressed because of low sample size
 NOTE: Total headcounts may not match the corresponding figure in Table 5 because of the omission of approximately 1,000 student records from the file received by NCAN from the NSC. These records were omitted because .76% of the approximately 131,000 student outcomes were omitted from the student file submitted to NCAN by NSC. The omission was necessary because approximately 1,000 records included values for first or last name that weren't compatible with the de-identification process.

Class of 2010

| Students Who Completed by 2014, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Heritage, and First-Generation Status | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Class of 2010 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>(Total Number of Students in a Given Group)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | All Students | Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multi-racial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic | First-Gen |
| Enrolled First Year After HS | 29.6% (29,570) | 25.5% (10,277) | 32.9% (17,535) | 20.8% (1,758) | 40.8% (5,286) | 25.5% (7,382) | 33.1% (2,281) | 26.4% (140) | 25.3% (1,316) | 27.2% (132) | 27.2% (13,033) | 25.8% (9,725) | 27.9% (13,635) |
| Enrolled Two or More Years After HS | 18.9% (3,634) | 18.4% (1,138) | 22.3% (2,048) | 5.1% (448) | 24.6% (463) | 17.9% (804) | 32.4% (185) | ‡ | 16.4% (146) | 9.5% (21) | 17.2% (2,003) | 18.2% (1,386) | 20.7% (1,637) |
| Enrolled Any Time After HS | 28.4% (33,204) | 24.8% (11,415) | 31.8% (19,583) | 17.6% (2,206) | 39.5% (5,749) | 24.8% (8,186) | 33.1% (2,466) | 24.3% (152) | 24.4% (1,462) | 24.8% (153) | 25.9% (15,036) | 24.8% (11,111) | 27.1% (15,272) |
| Total, Class of 2010 | 22.8% (41,454) | 19.8% (14,302) | 26.4% (23,567) | 10.8% (3,583) | 32.9% (6,903) | 20.6% (9,859) | 28.2% (2,888) | 19% (194) | 20.6% (1,737) | 20.8% (182) | 19.8% (19,689) | 19.6% (14,041) | 22% (18,821) |

‡ Value suppressed because of low sample size
 NOTE: Total headcounts may not match the corresponding figure in Table 5 because of the omission of approximately 1,000 student records from the file received by NCAN from the NSC. These records were omitted because .76% of the approximately 131,000 student outcomes were omitted from the student file submitted to NCAN by NSC. The omission was necessary because approximately 1,000 records included values for first or last name that weren't compatible with the de-identification process.

Match Rate

Percentage of Students Not Matched to NSC Data, By Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Heritage, and First-Generation Status

Classes of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014

(Total Number of Students in a Given Group in a Given Year)

| | All Students | Male | Female | Unknown Gender | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Multi-racial | American Indian | Unknown Race | Hispanic | First-Gen |
|------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2008 | 15.6% (9,413) | 17.2% (3,405) | 14.3% (5,721) | 24.7% (287) | 14.3% (2,145) | 14.7% (3,184) | 10.1% (608) | 7.6% (13) | 20.5% (136) | 26.1% (42) | 18.2% (3285) | 23% (1,425) | 17.7% (4,322) |
| 2009 | 17.6% (14,680) | 16.7% (4,522) | 14.2% (7,214) | 27.3% (2944) | 16.1% (3,042) | 14.2% (4,200) | 9.8% (704) | 16.6% (6) | 18.9% (222) | 8.8% (45) | 21.4% (6461) | 21.1% (1,701) | 17% (4,624) |
| 2010 | 19.9% (41,454) | 20.1% (14,302) | 16.9% (23,567) | 38.4% (3,583) | 16.7% (6,903) | 16.9% (9,859) | 14.6% (2,888) | 21.6% (194) | 15.8% (1,737) | 15.9% (182) | 23.6% (19,689) | 20.8% (14,041) | 18.8% (18,821) |
| 2014 | 34.4% (62,769) | 36.4% (23,116) | 31.6% (36,420) | 51.5% (3,231) | 31.2% (10,283) | 35.3% (12,585) | 26.3% (3,889) | 36.2% (240) | 33.2% (3,443) | 46% (289) | 36.1% (32,038) | 35% (26,458) | 33.6% (30,175) |

NOTE: Students might not be matched for a broad variety of reasons. These include incorrectly spelled names, inaccurate birthdates, postsecondary institutions not submitting data to the National Student Clearinghouse, and postsecondary institutions submitting data late to the National Student Clearinghouse, among others. Total headcounts may not match the corresponding figure in Table 5 because of the omission of approximately 1,000 student records from the file received by NCAN from the NSC. These records were omitted because .76% of the approximately 131,000 student outcomes were omitted from the student file submitted to NCAN by NSC. The omission was necessary because approximately 1,000 records included values for first or last name that weren't compatible with the de-identification process.



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1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036