Final Project Report

Improving African American Student Success at UIC

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Submitted: November 15, 2019

Executive Summary

This report is reflective of a 22-month process of understanding the landscape of African American student success in higher education, starting from a national perspective then contextualized inside of the happenings of the University of Illinois at Chicago, historically and contemporarily. In this report we offer recommendations for ways of improving African American student success at UIC. These recommendations require a commitment of both will and resources to address the historical structural deficiencies that impede success for this population. These recommendations are not new; instead they amplify and expand the voices from the past, voices internal and external to the university and voices exhausted by the lack of action or clear communications regarding actions. In this report you will find that we have adopted a holistic approach for understanding success. This approach demands that we recommend ways of moving forward that consider the totality of the African American students’ experience, inclusive of the climate for African American faculty and staff.
Summary of Recommendations

We offer several recommendations throughout this report with specifics on how to address each recommendation. This is a summary of those recommendations:

1. Commit to increase funding for African American students
2. Offer more effective, focused, and centralized communication for African American students
3. Create an inclusive and affirming classroom environment for African American students
4. Reimagine measures for accommodating African American students who may be at a comparative disadvantage in gateway courses
5. Improve campus climate for African American students
6. Increase recruitment and retention of African American faculty

While these offer a brief summary of recommendations, you can track all recommendations throughout this report as they are easily identifiable with bold red font.

Summary of Hiring Recommendations for New Personnel

Throughout this report, we make four recommendations for hiring new personnel. Here is a summary of all the hiring recommendations herein:

1. Hiring a Communication Liaison: The Liaison would be charged with gathering and promoting events from various units campus-wide to provide students with one succinct way to understand the various ways the campus supports African American students. The Liaison would also:
   - Create and maintain a website for African-American student-centered and faculty-centered activities.
   - On an annual basis, maintain and expand the African-American Resource guide created by the Chancellors Committee on the Status of Blacks.
   - Coordinate a university-wide calendar that is populated by all units and colleges that clearly outlines the happenings of the university on a daily basis.
   - At the campus level, work to improve and establish relationships with the Chicagoland area of African-American community members by keeping them informed and engaged in ways that directly impact our recruitment, retention, success, and campus climate.
   - Beyond the unit-by-unit approach, the Liaison would be responsible for a systemic campus-wide assessment of programming and engagement within UIC and the Chicagoland-area African American community.
- Convene meetings with stakeholders to plan and implement programs to best support the success of African American students. These meetings will take place monthly or at least twice each semester.
- Convene an annual town hall meeting of both internal and external partners to discuss existing issues impeding the progress of African American students, along with sessions to discuss practical solutions and to develop action items. They will connect with scholars and various professionals who have demonstrated expertise in the area of African American student retention and success.

2. **Hiring an external specialist in Underrepresented Minority (URM) academic affairs to consult with colleges, units, and Communication Liaison.** This was a key recommendation from the 2016 SSI report, and though Provost Poser commissioned the office of the Vice Provost for Diversity to make this hire in Fall 2017, this fell by the wayside in the transition between Vice Provosts. This specialist would facilitate discussions at the college and department levels about academic and non-cognitive issues that URM students face. The Specialist could also assist with several other key areas including:
   - Syllabus design and pedagogical approaches in gateway courses
   - Targeted faculty mentoring and advising for African American students by faculty in departments with at-risk gateway courses
   - African-American upperclassman mentoring of freshman in the same major.
   - African American graduate and professional students mentoring African American undergraduates

3. **Hiring a Financial Aid Point Person** to assist with FAFSA application tracking for African American students; provide guidance and point of contact for verification tracking. This person would also assist with programming in the success centers regarding financial matters.

4. **Hiring additional African American faculty across campus.** There are many ways to tackle this and we are aware that there are ongoing conversations around the university grappling with how to address this concern. However, we push for metrics, accountability, and communication in this area. Who is responsible? What are the goal numbers per year for the next 5-10 years? What is the plan? How will this plan be communicated to the UIC community on a continuous basis? As one way of accomplishing this, we recommend creating a partnership with another university to bring underrepresented faculty into UIC as part of a faculty diversity pipeline.

**Purpose and Scope**

The goal of this SSI project was to identify and propose actions/programming/personnel that have the potential to significantly increase retention and graduation rates of African American students at UIC, and also have clear and measurable outcomes. The SSI team considered existing recommendations and data from multiple campus-wide stakeholders, relevant campus committees, focus group work, and best practices at other institutions as part of our comprehensive recommendations for action. The benchmarks to fulfill these objectives are as follows:
1. Create a repository of programs that seek to increase retention of African American students at UIC.
2. Determine high-impact practices at other institutions that contribute to African American student success.
3. Compare our current programs to the high-impact practices, identify successes, and consider areas for improvement.
4. Recommend new programs/practices/resources that will impact African American retention and graduation.
5. Implement an assessment mechanism to determine the impact of each program on African American student success.

**Expected Outcomes**

1. UIC will have a clear understanding of high-impact practices at other institutions that contribute to African American student success.
2. UIC will be able to identify areas of success for the practice and programs currently in place.
3. UIC will be able to identify areas of improvement to consider for the success of the African American student body. UIC will have recommendations, based on feedback from various stakeholders, on programs/practices to improve the success of African American students.
4. UIC will have a recommended assessment mechanism to determine the impact of each program/practice on the success of the African American student body.

These expected outcomes are **addressed in bold lettering** throughout this report.

**Final Outcomes**

During the last 22 months, the SSI project team has diligently worked toward the expected outcomes outlined above. Throughout this report we offer recommendations organized under the four categories of Expected Outcomes, as outlined above. Our recommendations emerge from meetings with various stakeholders, a focus group, and multiple data points, as outlined below:

**Data Points:**
1. Letter to Henley and Kaufman
2. Pathways Report
3. Non-returning student surveys (2014-17)
5. Faculty & Staff Focus Group (August 2018)
6. Meetings with key stakeholders (March 2019-May 2019)
7. Peer institutions’ high-impact practices
8. Nikos Varelas’s report on DFW rates
9. Focus Group Notes
10. Summary of Chancellor’s Report and SSI Group
11. Academic Forgiveness Policy (February 2017)
12. AALC Goals and Objectives
13. Ida B. Wells Scholars Final Draft
14. CCSB African American Resource Guide
15. Explanation of iAdvise
16. Subcommittee Reports
17. Open-ended college-level data
19. PAP Annual Report 2017
20. UPPF Program Academic Year 2017
21. Education Program
22. African American Student Success Inquiry
23. UIC IBHE 2015 Narrative Report
24. “Men of Color on Your Campus” Webinar by Shawn C. Best (CUNY Black Male Initiative)

Meetings with Stakeholders:
1. Cecil Curtwright
2. Joey Volpe
3. Nikos Varelas
4. Sue Farruggia
5. Elizabeth Houlihan
6. Caroline Swinney

Focus Group Participants:
1. Kendal Parker
2. Cecil Curtwright
3. Tom Moss
4. Johari Jabir
5. Elizabeth Todd-Brelan
6. Yuji Toefield

Detailed information on data points, meetings with stakeholders, and focus group can be found in Appendixes 2 through 22.

Expected Outcome #1: UIC will have a clear understanding of high-impact practices at other institutions that contribute to African American student success.

The SSI team found several high-impact practices across the country, detailed in Appendix 6. In summary, based on our background research on best practices at other institutions, effective African American student success programs contain one or more of the following elements:
1. Financial Support
2. Centralized communication across programming
3. Peer & Faculty mentoring/tutoring of students
4. Faculty mentoring

In this report we refer to each of these areas with recommendations for improvement. However, we give these recommendations fully aware that while retention and student success of African American students is monitored by the VPUAA, we have not had a clear assessment mechanism to evaluate the success of these specific programs at the campus level. This is one of the resource issues addressed in our recommendations.

**Recommendation #1**

**Commit to increase funding for African American students**

Per institutional data for the Fall 2018 entering cohort, 66 African American students were not retained from Fall 2018 to Spring 2019. Of the 66 students, the total outstanding balance was $226,042.08.

Twenty-one of the students were dismissed for academic reasons; however, the remaining 45 students academically eligible to continue represented $207,671.64 of the overall outstanding balance. Thirty-eight of the 66 had no FAFSA application on file, accounting for $64,052.94 in accounts receivable.

Of the 19 students eligible to register for the Spring 2019 semester who had filed the FAFSA, 16 had balances in excess of the $200 financial hold threshold with an average balance of $8,976.00. The highest balances of this group were the students (6) who had filed the FAFSA yet failed to complete the verification process to secure any funding towards their bill. When verification requirements were met, the average outstanding balance decreased to $5,970.76.

Of the Fall 2019 cohort of African American students, there are currently 89 students (out of 345) with current financial holds. Unlike last year, only 2 of the 89 have not submitted their FAFSAs and 10 have not completed their documentation. Their average balance is $9,123.14.

Seventy-seven students have completed a FAFSA and provided all materials, but still have balances that would prevent them from progressing to the Spring term. See Appendix 1 one for more data on student numbers.

With this data in mind, we recommend the following:

1. **Hire Financial Aid Point Person** – to assist with FAFSA application tracking for African American students; provide guidance and point of contact for verification tracking. This
person would also assist with programming in the success centers regarding financial matters.

2. **Special Scholarship Funding** specific to enrolled student population – recommended award of $6,000.

3. **Extended Payment Plan Option** – We further recommend a more extended payment plan be established allowing students in dire financial circumstances to enroll in a special payment plan that accepts smaller payments over a longer period of time. Students would be allowed to continue in school as long as the agreed-upon amount was paid. We also should be more generous in waiving burdensome cumulative fees with the understanding that many students are not withholding payment because they chose to but because they simply do not have the ability to pay.

4. The university should also create **fundraising initiatives** to solicit funds for African American student recruitment and retention. With the hiring of a new Vice Chancellor for Advancement who supports race-targeted fundraising, the university can target specific organizations and donors for this purpose. Also the university should be pursuing grant opportunities akin to the AANAPISI and HSI programs that support a broad array of programs and services for African American students.

5. Housing and indirect cost (books, supplies, computers, etc.) produce financial burdens. Recommendations for addressing these are to 1.) **establish a long-term university loan**, and 2.) **revise the housing policy for cancellation**.

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**Recommendation #2**

**Offer more effective, focused, and centralized communication for African American students**

Current African American student success programs at UIC align with many of the best practices from other institutions with the exception of providing centralized communication across programming (see Appendix 6). Therefore, significant resources should be allocated to centralized communication of UIC’s African American student success programs across students, faculty, and staff. In order to do so we recommend the following:

1. **Hire a Communication Liaison** – In order to have a focused, effective, centralized form of communication for African American students there first must be a commitment to hiring a Communication Liaison. Providing up-to-date communication is imperative for the success of African American students. Until this point, communication has been fragmented and specific to each support unit. The dynamic nature of the programming at UIC necessitates our commitment to ongoing communication. We recommend this be made a priority at UIC.

   The Liaison would be charged with gathering and promoting events from various units campus-wide to provide students with one succinct way to understand the various ways the campus supports African American students. The Liaison would also:
Create and maintain a website for African American student-centered and faculty-centered activities.

On an annual basis, maintain and expand the African-American Resource Guide created by the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Blacks.

Coordinate a university-wide calendar that is populated by all units and colleges that clearly outlines the happenings of the university on a daily basis.

At the campus level, work to improve and establish relationships with the Chicagoland area of African American community members by keeping them informed and engaged in ways that directly impact our recruitment, retention, success, and campus climate.

Beyond the unit-by-unit approach, the Liaison would be responsible for a systemic campus-wide assessment of programming and engagement between UIC and the Chicagoland-area African American community.

Convene meetings with stakeholders to plan and implement programs to best support the success of African American students. These meetings will take place monthly or at least twice each semester.

Convene an annual town hall meeting of both internal and external partners to discuss existing issues impeding the progress of African American students, along with sessions to discuss practical solutions and to develop action items. They will connect with scholars and various professionals who have demonstrated expertise in the area of African American student retention and success.

2. **Create and maintain a digital presence (website, social media, application development)** outlining all of the resources available at UIC for African American students in a central location. This would serve as a one-stop shop for students to find information on everything from tutoring to social events. Having information easily accessible for a population with low help-seeking behaviors and sense of belonging is an important part of their success. In doing so, the creation and maintenance of this online presence should be part of the Communication Liaison’s responsibilities, including student input with consideration to regular assessments on its progress and upkeep.

3. **Create and maintain a campus-wide calendar of relevant events.** The Communication Liaison would coordinate with units and colleges across campus and community partners to continually update the calendar. This could be a model for other units around campus. This will also assist in letting potential families know the breadth of events organized on behalf of African American students.

4. **Coordinate and facilitate student participation aligned with our strategic priority of Chicago and Community Engagement.** The Communication Liaison will assist units in coordinating student participation in events internally and externally.

5. **Create and maintain a print resource guide for African American students.** The Communication Liaison would coordinate with the various stakeholders across campus.

Expected Outcome #2: UIC will be able to identify areas of success for the practice and programs currently in place.
Expected Outcome #3: UIC will be able to identify areas of improvement to consider for the success of the African American student body. UIC will have recommendations, based on feedback from various stakeholders, on programs/practices to improve the success of African American students.

Anecdotally, there are multiple areas of success at UIC for African American student success. However, very few have the capacity or resources to assess programs for their effectiveness. In addressing Expected Outcomes #2 and #3, in order to fully understand what is working, or not working, across campus for the success of African American students, we offer the following recommendations:

1. The Office of Institutional Research should create and make data essential to African American student success available regularly, absent a request. The types of data and frequency of data determined in collaboration with success units.

2. Regular meetings should be conducted to review and analyze data so that programs can be created and revised to address the needs of students. The recommendations from these meetings should serve as advisory to the Chancellor and Provost to ensure authority to move programs forward with resources when they are identified as working.

3. A thorough annual review of programs and activities by designated personnel, as part of their campus-wide regular duties, should be conducted to determine if students are participating at a significant level and whether or not the programs are meeting their objectives.

Expected Outcome #4: UIC will have a recommended assessment mechanism to determine the impact of each program/practice on the success out the African American student body.

Data-driven campus responsiveness is a challenge, as identified above in recommendations for Expected Outcome #2. The SSI committee spent time with several individuals from various departments across the UIC campus to gather an extensive understanding of areas of improvement to consider for the success of African American students. Those departments and units include:

- African American Academic Network
- CHANCE
- African American Studies Department
- Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Blacks
- TRIO
- Office of Diversity
- Financial Aid
- Undergraduate Affairs
- Academic and Enrollment Services
- African American Recruitment and Retention Initiative
- Liberal Arts and Sciences
Office of Advising Development  
African American Cultural Center  

The responsibility of student success for African American students is campus-wide. We would expect that additional departments, support services, and colleges would be brought into this conversation. No one should be exempt from these discussions. In reviewing areas that need improvement, we offer several key recommendations below.

**Recommendation #3**  
Create an inclusive and affirming classroom environment for African American students

This can be done through a workshop or series for inclusive classroom practices focusing specifically on African American students. This could be implemented through careful planning, publicity, and investment by the colleges and units. We propose that the following steps be taken to organize and implement the workshop:

1. **Training could be given at the departmental level by a team of in-house trainers.** This could be done through a single workshop session of a few hours to a full day, or a series of two or more shorter sessions. A current model could be the new Teaching International Students / Inclusive Classroom Workshop offered by the Office for Diversity in partnership with the Office of Global Engagement and Faculty Affairs (now offered to small target audiences of faculty, but possibly expanded to be given to departments upon request); or the “Navigating Allyship” workshop offered by the Gender and Sexuality Center.

2. Faculty in select departments that traditionally enroll the largest numbers of African American students, or that offer the gateway courses to certain majors with the greatest disparity of grade performance between African-American students and peers of other races, could be required or encouraged by their respective deans to take the workshop.

3. **Faculty recognition** could be given to incentivize participation in the workshops. This could involve some form of certification of training in inclusive classroom best practices, which could be considered an important means of campus service and could be put on anyone’s resume. Participation in such workshops could also be officially recognized as a key criterion for promotion and tenure for tenure-track faculty. The Office of Diversity could provide a checklist for faculty that lists several inclusivity-related concerns and high-impact practices for course design, which could include:
   - Creating welcoming classroom environments, which includes avoiding racially and culturally determinative examples
   - Remembering student names
   - Requiring students to visit faculty drop-in hours
• Crafting syllabus language as positive and encouraging (not punitive)
• Posting iAdvise alerts when needed

Recommendation #4
Reimagine measures for accommodating African American students who may be at a comparative disadvantage in gateway courses

We recommend three specific measures to pursue based on existing research in the field and at UIC, which would help fulfill the yet-unmet prior recommendations:

1. Hiring of an external specialist in Underrepresented Minority (URM) academic affairs to consult with colleges, units, and the new Communication Liaison. This was a key recommendation from the 2016 SSI report, and though Provost Poser commissioned the office of the Vice Provost for Diversity to make this hire in Fall 2017, this fell by the wayside in the transition between Vice Provosts. This specialist would facilitate discussions at the college and department levels about academic and non-cognitive issues that URM students face. The aforementioned concerns about syllabus design and pedagogical approaches in gateway courses could certainly be addressed. Moreover, this person could promote the following three recommendations among departments.

2. Targeted faculty mentoring and advising for African American students by faculty in departments with at-risk gateway courses. The salutary impact of individual intervention by concerned faculty at crucial moments in a student’s academic career should not be underestimated. In the focus group of African American faculty and staff that this Task Force conducted in August 2018, one particular anecdote was raised of a certain UIC Economics professor who volunteered to personally mentor the handful of African American economics majors, all of who ended up succeeding at UIC. Furthermore, in the 2019 “Men of Color on Your Campus” Webinar, Shawn C. Best, Director of the CUNY Black Male Initiative, suggested that 10 to 15 social exchanges per week between African American students and campus professionals are ideal for maintaining a culture of inclusion. Though a formal faculty mentoring program might not be feasible in every department, and while not all faculty would be in position to take on individual mentoring, faculty in all departments should be encouraged to commit in some way to lending extra help to African American students in need, or at least to be specially attuned to their needs. This mentoring could be incentivized and accounted for by the Diversity Scorecard for each department. All faculty in each department should be encouraged to take part in such mentoring, and the responsibility should not fall on African American faculty alone.

3. African American upperclassman mentoring of freshman in the same major. While mentoring partnerships between newer and more advanced students are already being facilitated by programs like PAP STEM, AAAN, and TRIO, this could also be done for African American students specifically in various departments. Departments could arrange peer mentoring partnerships on the basis of shared experiences with majors
coursework and professors. While the logistics of such mentoring might not work out in every department, all departments could be encouraged to seek out such opportunities where they may arise. This could also certainly be accounted for and rewarded by the Diversity Scorecard.

4. **African American graduate and professional student mentoring of African American undergraduates.** The Black Graduate Student Association is independently developing a mentoring program for African American students, undergraduate and graduate students alike. The University should provide resources and support for this enterprise, and ensure its continuation annually. The URM academic affairs specialist should serve as a liaison with this organization and other units that offer this support.

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**Recommendation #5**

**Improve campus climate for African American students**

African American students express feelings of invisibility on campus because of their relatively small numbers. Negative comments and even hate speech at times has reinforced a sense of isolation and alienation (see focus group responses in Appendix 12). Results from the 2012 UIC Climate Survey corroborate these feelings. That is, compared to White, LatinX, and Asian American students, African American students report the lowest satisfaction with diversity in the classroom, dorms, and extracurricular student groups. African American students also report the lowest levels of belief that faculty and staff respect diversity (significantly lower than White and LatinX students). African American students are less comfortable expressing their personal identity on campus than LatinX students. African American students also perceive more unfair treatment of minority groups on campus than White, LatinX, and Asian American students (see the full Subcommittee Reports in Appendix 14). There are several recommendations we offer for improving campus climate:

1. **Ensure that educative diversity material is a part of all freshman seminars.** The new 2020 requirement for all incoming freshmen to attend a first-year seminar serves as the ideal way for the integration of educational material on diversity. Though each college structures their seminar differently, CAAD can be targeted for buy-in with regards to integrating diversity materials into the seminar courses.

2. **A portion of student and faculty orientation is dedicated to issues of diversity.** The Office of Diversity and the UIC Dialogue Initiative previously initiated conversations during student orientation. We recommend that this be reenacted and extended with attention to the issues facing African American students and therefore creating a greater sense of belonging.

3. **Research-based programming focused on sense of belonging is specifically designed and developed for African American students,** as led by the Office of Diversity.

4. **Inclusive classroom modules are developed that focus specifically on African American students.** This will help ensure that faculty understand this population and are better
equipped to serve them. To incentivize and reward participation, this module should count under the category of service on promotion and tenure files.

5. **Comprehensive training on racial climate and diversity is implemented for all members of the UIC community.** It is not enough to offer education to faculty alone. In order to change the climate, staff and other students must be included as well.

6. **The wealth of knowledge and commitment of the African American staff is utilized to intentionally engage and mentor African American students.** This can be done by creating a formal mechanism for mentorship. While there is an undeniable need for African American students to see themselves when they walk into the classrooms of UIC, we also need to fully embrace the UIC staff as resources for students when they step outside of the classrooms. This programming should be thoughtful and include staff training, and recognition for providing an invaluable service that will ultimately help build a sense of belonging shown to improve retention and graduation rates amongst this population.

7. **Recruitment activities are reinstated as part of the work of the African American Academic Network.** This will help build a sense of community and belonging prior to their matriculation, which is essential for the success of UIC’s African American students. This can be modeled after the ongoing recruitment established in LARES.

There is also some programming that should be part of the fiber of our institution to increase students’ sense of belonging at UIC. These programs should include, but are not limited to:

1. **Black Orientation** – A focused, one-day orientation designed to acclimate students of African descent into the UIC campus climate and every unit or department that touches Black students. Incoming students with a completed intent to enroll will spend time with current students, faculty and staff to learn about UIC while building community with all black campus entities.

2. **Immersion Day** – A one-day immersion program where prospective students have an opportunity to visit campus, shadow current UIC students, attend classes and participate in workshops and activities to strengthen their interest in attending UIC.

3. **Town Hall Meetings** – Specific gatherings created to discuss strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of students of African descent.

4. **Black Student Success Conference** – Regional conference hosted by UIC to bring higher education professionals together to discuss best practices on the subject of black student recruitment, retention, graduation.

As previously stated, part of the recommended assessment efforts needs to include analysis of the various programming and a shoring up of resources and programming that is successful in the African American Academic Network, CHANCE, African American Cultural Center, Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Blacks, and any other entity with a particular focus on the African American Student. We show that these students matter through dedicated sustainable resources that fund programs for their success.
Recommendation #6
Increase recruitment and retention of African American faculty

All of the task forces and studies carried out at UIC in the last decade (or more) point out that a crucial contributor to African American student success is the presence of black faculty. African American students gravitate to faculty who look like them and are receptive and understanding of their concerns. Black faculty serve as a role models for high level professional success, and can be the primary access point for students in need of support services. Black faculty also provide leadership in their departments in creating resources for underrepresented students and pushing their colleagues to shift their thinking and pedagogical approaches. In an effort to address this we recommend the following:

- **A ten-year hiring initiative to recruit and retain black faculty**, particularly in fields where few if any now exist. In addition to zero-percent departments, those units (departments and colleges) where the small numbers of black faculty shoulder a huge burden in this area (Engineering, Business, etc.) must be bolstered with new hires. This could be accomplished through a cluster-hire program or other strategy.

- **Course releases and other support for existing black faculty who provide added services to black student support**. Faculty should be supported and rewarded for their disproportionate responsibilities in mentoring and retaining vulnerable students.

- **Coordination between faculty and advising and mentoring services to improve support for black students**. This effort could be co-led by the VP of Undergraduate Affairs, VP for Faculty Affairs, and VP for Diversity.

- **Recognition of student-focused support activities as departmental and university service** and should be formalized in the procedures and policies for faculty tenure and promotion decisions.

- **Creating mechanisms for non-tenure-track faculty to contribute to black student support and retention activities**. They are an important part of our ecosystem of support and we need to be intentionally inclusive when creating support systems.

As we attract and retain more African American faculty members and review our current General Education requirements, we recommend that, as one of the nation’s most diverse campuses, there be a general education requirement of a diversity course for all students. As it currently stands students can leave UIC without having taken one course on diversity. We are doing students a disservice by placing them in a diverse environment without requiring that they grapple with what this means, while challenging their assumptions and biases.

**Conclusion**

The Student Success Initiative on African-American Student Success epitomized the need for and importance of collaboration and communication at UIC. This SSI team committed nearly 2 years to interviewing stakeholders, discussing our history to help us pave a course for the future,
researching, and grappling with understanding various programs and initiatives that would impact the recruitment, retention, and graduation of African American students at UIC. Each member offered a different perspective which created a dynamic team with a wealth of experiences and a passion for black student success.

The issues facing the success of black students in higher education are very complex, and even two years is not enough time to complete a thorough assessment. During this time, we heard repeatedly from stakeholders that UIC knows what to do; however, the will to do it is not there. Thus, in a commitment to change this narrative, this committee would like to reconvene in a year to assess what progress has been made on these recommendations. We are confident that without real follow-through and communication on progress to faculty, staff, and students, the relationship that UIC has with the African American community writ large will continue to erode. As advocates for this community and for UIC, we are committed to ensuring that that does not happen.
Appendix 1

For Recommendation #1: Commit to Improve Funding for African American Students

Appendix 1A:

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Appendix 1B:

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Appendix 1C:

| FAFSA ON FILE, ELG TO REG           | (Multiple Items) |

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Appendix 2 - Letter to Henley and Kaufman

26 November 2013

To: Lon Kaufman, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost Barbara Henley, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Re: “Responsive Diversity Programming – An exciting partnership” Dear Lon and Barbara:

This is to provide you with a status report of an exciting partnership that you had encouraged me to foster and develop in Spring 2013. As I return to my faculty opportunities, I want to thank you for this opportunity and especially thank all the individuals in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, who continue to be engaged in this partnership and look forward to its many, many future successes.

For convenience, I am calling it the “Responsive Diversity Programming Partnership,” have subdivided the efforts into topics and put the narrative in third person.

Background/Origin of the Responsive Diversity Programming Committee

The idea of “Responsive Diversity Programming” had its inception in three separate unanticipated incidents in Spring 2013. Working closely with members of the Campus Auxiliary services, led by Michael Landek (Associate Vice Chancellor/ Director, Campus Auxiliary Services), members of the Office of Diversity, then led by Mrinalini Rao (as Interim Special Assistant to the Provost and Advisor to the Chancellor for Diversity), transformed these incidents into teaching and learning opportunities. In the first of these incidents, in March 2013, an RSO summarily withdrew its invitation to Louis Farrakhan and Boyd Watkins, creating concern in the external community about UIC’s commitment to diversity. The Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change (CCUSC) and the Office of Diversity conducted a Town Hall meeting open to all students, staff and faculty, on the topic of “Freedom of Speech.” The meeting was well attended and supported by various members of Campus Programs and the Office of Student Affairs. In April 2013, two unrelated incidents occurred in the same week; the “Undocumented and Unafraid” posters at UIC were vandalized, and the Boston Marathon bombing occurred. Based on concerns from many quarters the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity, sponsored a Brown Bag Town Hall meeting on “Commitment to Diversity.” In the format of a facilitated dialogue open to all students, staff and faculty, it addressed issues of inclusiveness and
embracing diversity. Key to this dialogue were the voices of faculty who have expertise and interest in the issues and those of concerned students.

These two Town Hall meetings were possible and successful because of the combined efforts of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, and engaged students, faculty and staff. It showed the value of exploring a sustained model to develop proactive programming around themes of diversity and inclusiveness. In addition we felt the need to develop a network of experts who can be called upon for a thoughtful response to unforeseen circumstances that may arise out of local, national or international situations (e.g. the Boston Marathon bombing). Therefore, Mrinalini Rao and Mike Landek convened a group comprising members of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to brainstorm and develop a cohesive plan of what such “Responsive Diversity Programming” efforts should entail. The idea was supported by both Vice Chancellors. The Committee has had monthly meetings since May, 2013, and two important themes emerged – Responsive Diversity Programming and Communications. The Committee recognized early on that the efforts should be office function-dependent and independent of the specific leaders. Thus, since Fall 2013, the efforts of the office of Student Affairs have been led by Ms. Roniciel (Joy) Vergara (Director of Campus Programs) and that of the Office of Diversity by Dr. Charu Thakral (Interim Executive Director, Office of Diversity).

Responsive Diversity Programming
Through their discussions, members of the Committee identified an opportunity to provide valuable service to the campus by being attentive to campus incidents as well as national and international events, and by being alert to the distress such incidents can cause to students, faculty and staff. While some incidents can be anticipated, others are unexpected. The Committee recognizes a need to prepare for responding to both types of occurrence, collectively and efficiently. To this end, the Committee supports the notion of collaborative proactive programming at least once a semester. This led to engaged support of the proactive program – the Identity Backpack in Fall 2013, sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs and publicized and supported by the CCUSC and the Office of Diversity. A similar proactive partnership is anticipated around the Heritage Garden in Spring 2014. Moving forward, the Committee sees value in working to identify flexible templates for response to a variety of incidents. One model the Committee anticipates exploring is that of the CCUSC’s “A Protocol for Peaceful Counter-Demonstrations on Campus.” This protocol outlines effective strategies at each stage of an incident, from the moment the campus is alerted to an incident, including: communication strategies; effective responses that preserve a sense of safety and model UIC’s commitment to inclusivity, equal access, and diversity; and effective follow-up, debriefing, and self-care for the service providers. This Committee’s experience in Spring 2013 programming responsive Town Hall meetings suggests that while the specific format of responsive programming may vary (whether a brown bag panel, a story circle, a mass-mail, or candlelight vigil), it is confident that collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs is beneficial to support the kind of broad inclusivity and interdisciplinary response that enhances the community’s capacity for processing difficult emotions, and can enhance a sense of connectedness and growth through challenging times.

Responsive Communications
Members of the Committee agreed there is a need to develop cohesive guidelines for outlining communication strategies. These would supplement and enhance already extant mechanisms that deal with potentially life-threatening events dealing with safety issues and emergency moments. However, there are a number of other events that impact student, faculty and staff wellbeing that would benefit from having a clear line of internal and external communication developed. For example, if there were an incident of vandalism with racial overtones but one where no one is physically injured, how might we hear about it?
What is the process for determining the response at the appropriate level of administration? What is the process for sharing news "up the chain" and laterally across campus units? Similarly how might the response to such an incident be communicated to the larger external community in which we live? How do we deliver messages that we care about students and our environment holistically and that harassment will not be tolerated? Currently, the campus lacks clear protocol on how to address these questions.

Recommendations and Next Steps
As mentioned above, leadership transitions within both the Office of Diversity and Campus Programs took place this Fall, and as a result, the last several meetings of the Committee were led by co-chairs Charu Thakral and Joy Vergara. The committee continues to identify and refine ways to move forward with this initiative, and plans the following steps for development of responsive capacity at the campus level. I recommend strongly that they be given full encouragement to continue this important collaboration.

- A committee that includes representation from Campus Programs, the Office of Diversity, External Affairs, and other units as needed, continue to meet to flesh out strategies outlined above in a manner consistent with the goals outlined in UIC’s Diversity Strategic Plan. Its charge would be twofold:
- To develop a structured procedure for responsive communication to the campus, that will guide campus leadership and leaders of affected units in responding to incidents affecting the UIC community at the campus, national, or international level. The committee will identify lines of communication for sharing news
of an incident and its ongoing response, to ensure expedient communication across campus units and between levels of administration, as well as outlining a process for responsive communication to come from the appropriate level of campus administration.

- To establish a template for responsive action to incidents impacting the UIC community, including a variety of responsive programs that highlight UIC’s commitment to inclusivity and its attentiveness to the “whole student,” while making use of UIC’s assets and expertise to provide perspective and a learning and growth experience through interdisciplinary and holistic programming. The Committee will explore existing templates to develop a flexible framework for rapid response to a wide variety of possible incidents. Drawing on expertise within Campus Programs and the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change and across campus, the committee will aim to ensure that high quality responses may be coordinated thoughtfully and efficiently for the UIC Community.

In closing I wish to reiterate my appreciation for having been provided the opportunity to begin this critical partnership. I wish you both the best of success in continuing this endeavor. Please feel free to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely

Mrinalini C. Rao,
Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, Special Advisor to the Provost; and Interim Special Assistant to the Provost and Advisor to the Chancellor for Diversity (August 15, 2012– Sept 30, 2013)

Cc: Paula Allen Meares, Chancellor
    Michael Landek, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs/Director, Campus Auxiliary Services
    Charu Thakral, Interim Executive Director, Office of Diversity
    Joy Vergara, Director
    Campus Programs.
Appendix 3 – Pathways Report

Pathways Report

DRAFT

Not for Distribution

Report of the Pathways to Success for African American Males at UIC

Prepared by

Celina Sima, College of Education Patricia Inman, Degree Progress Office
Malcolm Smith, Office of the Dean of Students for

Provost R. Michael Tanner

January 2010
We wish to acknowledge the contribution of Emilia Chico for assistance with transcription and coding of the interviews, and Todd Brown, for assistance with survey data analysis and coding of the interviews.
Pathways to Success for African American Males at UIC

Purpose

This study examines the pathways to success for African American male students who have moved through the academic and social systems at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and, as of spring 2009, were approaching degree completion in a timely manner (4 to 6 years). The study was designed so that the responses of the student participants would be helpful in informing the campus about the institutional, social and personal facilitators of, and obstacles to, success for these students, and so that these findings would suggest policy and program recommendations that may benefit future students.

Background

At UIC, the entering freshman class in 1990 was 50% male; by fall 2007, the entering class was 45% male. For African American freshmen, 32% of the entering class students were males in 1990, and 25% were males in 2007. During this 18-year span, UIC has engaged in many efforts to improve the access, retention and graduation rates of all students. Along with these demographic shifts, the UIC six-year graduation rates have risen from 36% for the 1987 freshmen cohort to 54% for the fall 2003 cohort. While the graduation rate for African American students also improved during this period (23% in 1987 and 40% for the 2003 cohort), it is troubling that it still lags the overall rate by 14%.

This study was designed to better understand the paths traveled by UIC African American male students who were making good progress toward degree completion. Through this research, we examined the strategies used, obstacles faced, and facilitators, both on and off campus, for these students. A mixed methods approach allowed us to look at the quantifiable characteristics and, through personal interviews, to uncover the answers to the “why” and “how” questions regarding the success of these students.

Study Framework

We have learned much from research based on models of college departure. Tinto’s model (1993) led to an understanding of student persistence that incorporated the characteristics and abilities of the student with the role of the institution. That is, persistence is not strictly a matter of student pre-enrollment background, ability and intention factors. The interaction of the student within the institution has also been found to play a role in student persistence/departure decisions. Tinto specifically detailed the role of institutional academic and social integration as key factors in persistence.

Volumes of research validating or refining Tinto’s model of student departure have led to a better understanding about why students leave college (Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000; Tiernery, 1999; Guiffrida, 2006). In addition, Braxton (2000) has offered alternatives to the applicability of the Tinto model to the variety of students who participate in higher education. From this research, we have learned that the “engaged”
student is more likely to stay, but much less research has been focused on the investigation of the factors that improved student retention.

For this project, we have also turned to important studies that have revealed the strategies and paths of high achieving African American students generally, and African American male students in particular (e.g., Harper and Quaye, 2007; Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hyek, 2004; Cuyjet, 1997). These studies suggest that it is important to understand cultural nuances in applying the Tinto model to student retention studies.

In response to criticism about the cultural limitations of Tinto’s model, Douglas Guiifrida, in 2006, proposed a modified model that incorporated the psychological and cross-cultural factors that are important for application to minority students. Guiffrida’s proposed modified model provided the framework for this study. Specifically, Guiffrida’s model provided nine variable domains that informed the development of the study survey, interview, coding and analysis. The domains included Cultural Norms and Values; Family Background; Skills and Abilities; Prior Schooling; Motivational Orientation, Goals and Intentions; External Commitments; Academic Systems (Academic Performance and Faculty/Staff Interactions); University Social Systems (Extracurricular Activities and Peer Group Interactions); and Home Social Systems (Family and Friends).

Methods and Data Analysis

We used a mixed method approach in our attempt to understand the experiences of successful African American male undergraduates at UIC. In this study, we defined success as “advanced undergraduates who entered UIC as a freshman (not transfer students) and were making timely progress toward degree completion.” Because we wished to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the African American male undergraduates who persisted to advanced standing, our sample included all African American male students who fell within the defined parameters of student success for participation in the study.

Three methods of data collection were employed:

➢ Student pre-enrollment and enrollment information were drawn from the student database to outline the characteristics of the students.

➢ A survey of academic and co-curricular student experiences was administered as a way to gather general student engagement characteristics and perceptions of the campus environment.

➢ Individual student interviews were conducted to provide an in-depth understanding of the personal facilitators and obstacles experienced, and the individual strategies used, as the students successfully negotiated campus academic and social systems and processes.

While the survey and interview were informed by Guiffrida’s model, it is important to note that the design of the survey included opportunity for novel interviewee responses, and all of the interview questions were open-ended.
Description of Study Participants

The target group for the study included students who entered UIC as freshmen and were approaching graduation in a timely manner (within 4, 5, or 6 years of entry). In the spring term 2009, there were 160 African American male undergraduates enrolled at senior level standing. Of this total, 114 entered UIC as transfer students. The remaining 46 seniors entered UIC as freshmen. Forty-three of the 46 (all but 3) entered in the fall of 2003 or later. This figure (43) included one student from the Fall 2006 entering class. This student had entered from high school with 38 placement credits (at sophomore standing). Given the distinct outlier status of this student, he was omitted from the study targeted sample. Thus, the group of 42 seniors was the target sample for the study.

All 42 students who met the study criteria were recruited to participate. Of that group, we received survey responses from 20 students and we interviewed 17 of the 20 survey respondents. The table below outlines the cohort distribution of the respondents as well as the status of other students from each of the freshman cohorts.

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The academic progress and entry origins of the spring 2009 African American male seniors, who entered UIC as freshmen, are graphically displayed in Appendix A. It offers a visual representation of the targeted sample (sorted by study participants and non-participants). The total targeted sample represented is 42 students; twenty students who participated in the Pathways survey, and 22 students who did not participate. The average ACT composite for Pathways participants was 22.4, and for non-participants; 21.9. The average GPA of the participants at the end of fall 2008 term was 2.76; for non-participants, it was 2.63. Using a simple t-test for comparison of group means, we found that there was no difference between the two groups (participants and non-participants) on composite ACT (pre-enrollment academic readiness) or cumulative GPA (current academic standing).

Although the focus of this report is the students who were successfully progressing toward UIC degrees, it is interesting to note the comparison of the students in the sample with those who were not part of the sample. The two primary cohorts of students in the study entered UIC as freshmen in Fall 2004 (n=63) and Fall 2005 (n=78). From this total of 141, 38 were eligible to participate in the study (senior standing during
18 participated in the study; 16 had already graduated; 14 were still enrolled at UIC, but not at senior standing; and 73 were no longer enrolled at UIC and did not graduate. Using ANOVA procedures, we found that the five groups did not have significantly different ACT composite, ACT math, or ACT English scores.

As for the financial aid profile of the 42 students in the targeted sample, 38 students had a FAFSA (application for financial aid) on file. One indicator of student need from the FAFSA is the EFC (estimated family contribution). Of the 38 FAFSA files, the average EFC was $4521, with totals ranging from $0 to $26,534. (A lower EFC indicates a higher need for financial assistance). The table below shows the aid profile of the total targeted sample, the participants, and the non-participants.

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Survey and Interview Recruitment Procedures

The study target population was made up of the 42 African American male undergraduate students who were at senior standing during the spring 2009 term and began their studies at UIC as freshmen in the fall of 2003 or later. An initial letter of invitation and a survey were mailed to the students. The letter provided a brief description of the study and the nature of participation – specifically that participation in the study was a two-part process that included completion of the survey and a one-hour interview. A participation stipend of $50 was offered for students who completed both the survey and the interview. E-mail notices were sent to the students encouraging them to participate. Approximately two weeks later, a second mailing (letter and survey) was sent to students who had not responded to the first mailing. Three additional e-mail notices were sent to non-responders subsequent to the second mailing. Approximately three weeks after the first mailing, we began to schedule interviews. Interviews were scheduled as surveys were received. A total of 20 surveys were received by the final submission date. Seventeen students responded to the request for an interview. Several attempts were made to schedule the final three interviews to no avail.

The analyses of survey responses include the twenty students who returned surveys. The interview analysis includes the seventeen interview participants. In some instances, interview responses are tied to survey responses. Obviously, these analyses are limited to the seventeen students who participated in both the survey and interview components.
Survey and Interview Instruments

Guiffrida’s model, (drawn from Tinto) provided the framework for the development of the survey instrument and the interview questions. Specifically, Guiffrida’s model provided nine variable domains that guided the development of the study survey and interview. Appendix B is a representation of Guiffrida’s recommendations to Tinto’s model. Note that the recommended variable domains are represented in bold print.

For the survey, we used items, and modified items, from three established student engagement surveys; the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ), and the College Senior Survey (CSS). We also developed new items when specific variables were not represented in earlier surveys. For the interview, we developed items that would give participants the greatest opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with regard to each domain. We also created open-ended questions to encourage completely novel responses. Appendices C and D are samples of the survey and interview instruments respectively.

The Survey and Student Responses

The survey instrument is a four-page pencil and paper survey which students completed prior to the interview. The survey gathered information on student behaviors, attitudes and views, and served the dual purpose of providing information about the students, and developing a backdrop for the interview with each student.

The survey was divided into five sections targeting specific variables to develop a profile of each student. Each set of responses contributed to an overall understanding of influences, facilitators and challenges for each student. The variables associated with each section of the survey are listed as follows:

- **Student Background (Pre-Entry Attributes):** Parental education; readiness for college; financing college; living arrangements while in college
- **Drive and Motivation (Goals/Commitments):** Student self assessment of skills, confidence and drive; role of outside factors in motivation for learning; key factors influencing success
- **Time Allocation (Experiences While at College):** Allocation of time among various scheduling demands – such as preparing for class, studying, relaxing, volunteering, working, etc.
- **Gains and Satisfaction (Connections/Outcomes):** Self-report of their gains on a range of skills and academic factors; relationships with students, faculty and staff; and overall satisfaction with UIC
- **Challenges and Supports:** A list of the top three challenges and the top three supports during college.
Due to the small size of this targeted sample, statistical analysis on the responses is not appropriate; however, it is useful to note some common themes, and instances in which the responses were evenly distributed. General findings from the surveys are listed as follows:

**Student Background**
- 55% of the students came from households with college-educated parents; 25% of the parents had attended college, but did not complete a degree; and 20% of the group reported that their parent(s) had no exposure to college.
- All but one student reported a primary reliance on a combination of financial aid and loans to finance college.
- 40% of the students had no experience with the UIC residence halls; while 50% lived in campus housing at least 2 years.

**Drive and Motivation**
- Students rated themselves highest on: drive to achieve; intellectual self confidence; and cooperativeness;
- followed by academic ability and leadership.
- They rated themselves lowest on math ability and spirituality.
- The students reported that they are primarily motivated: 1) in order to challenge themselves; and 2) by subjects that interest them.
- Getting good grades for the sake of good grades or simply getting good grades to get a better job are less powerful motivators for these students.

**Time Allocation**
- On most of the 13 items, the students reported a modest allocation of time to any one activity – suggesting a fairly even distribution of time across the various activities.
- Students reported the greatest amount of time overall was spent relaxing and preparing for class/studying.
- In some instances, such as off campus employment, (2 students reported working off campus more than 30 hours each week), and care of family (2 students) skewed an overall negligible time allocation; the impact of the external commitments was evident, however, they were outliers in the overall picture.

**Satisfaction and Gains**
- Students rated faculty as supportive, and rated staff as somewhat less helpful.
- They rated their relationships with other UIC students as most positive.
- They generally felt positive about their gains in academic, critical thinking and social skills.
- The area of least gain was math ability followed by time management.
- When asked about their overall satisfaction with their educational experience at UIC, 60% indicated that it was good or excellent; 40% rated it as fair; no student rated it as poor.
- When rating their overall satisfaction with UIC, ratings fell slightly with 10% indicating that they were very dissatisfied.
The Interview and Student Responses

Individual interviews were conducted with each student participant. Each interview was tape recorded with the student’s permission. During the interviews, one investigator asked questions, while the other took notes and asked follow-up questions. Each interview focused on 11 questions that guided the students’ responses regarding the personal facilitators of, and challenges to, their success. At the end of the interview we asked the students to tell us what advice they would give to an entering African American male freshmen about how to succeed at UIC. We also asked what advice they would give to UIC to help students succeed.

While the open-ended interview questions provided an opportunity for students to tell us the story of their successful transition into and through academic and social experiences at UIC, we used the nine variable domains of Guiffrida’s proposed model as the framework for coding the interview responses. The variable domains and definitions are found in Appendix E. The responses to the open-ended questions yielded a tenth variable domain; Student Support Systems. This domain will be defined and described later in this section.

In the following review of interview responses pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the study participants.

Student Pre-Entry Attributes

Student pre-entry attributes include the four variables that describe the students as they arrive on campus. They include the student’s preference for individual versus collectivist (group) study, their family background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling.

Cultural Norms – Individualist/Collectivist

In a study by Thompson and Fretz (1991), they predicted that high levels of collectivism would predict successful academic and social integration of successful African American students. Instead, their study findings revealed that the students had positive attitudes toward more competitive learning situations and individualist learning environments.

For our study, the investigation of cultural norms and values was focused on whether individualism or communalism (collectivism) would be more characteristic of successful African American male students at UIC. In the interview we asked students, “As a UIC student, would you describe yourself as someone who mainly works individually, or someone who works with a study partner or study groups?”

Of the 17 respondents, 16 told us that when they came to UIC they preferred to study individually rather than in partners or groups. Eight students indicated that they still prefer to work individually rather than in groups, and they shared their reasons for this preference. Reasons included:

• a lack of productivity when working in study sessions with a group;
the distractions of group study; a lack of study time for individuals who know the material and had to spend more time in the group teaching instead of learning;
• inexperience with the benefit of consulting others; shyness and feelings of vulnerability;
• the challenging logistics involved in getting a study group together when many students commute;
• poor quality of the product when working with others;
• a preference for working alone out of habit;
• more confidence in their own ability than in the abilities of the group; and
• a lack of study partners of his ethnicity within his discipline.

The following are representative responses from the student interviews:

Interviewer: Would you describe yourself as someone who works mainly individually or who works with a study partner or a study group?
Andre: Individually. I never had study partners.
Interviewer: And that is by choice? That’s what you preferred?
Andre: I’ve studied with people. But we never did any work. So I just stay by myself. And if I don’t get it, that’s it, I just don’t.

Ervan: I work individually. There are two schools of thought. Some people feel like it would be great to work in groups a lot of times. I found that especially on campus...if you really put the time in yourself to work on and go over the problems, questions will arise; you’ll start to figure it out. My experience with group study sessions, if I just join a group; the one who knows the most about the subject will just get hammered down with questions. If he decides to help them catch up, he won’t have time to study for himself if he needs help. That happened to me a couple of times. I’m not going to say that I dislike study groups, but it can be difficult in terms of how far you are, or where you are at.

Kendrick: I’m just pretty individualistic I guess....For some classes you really need the study groups, something more like math classes and things like that; architecture, mainly when we have group projects. I just try to stay more to myself to try and get work done. When I am in a large crowd it gets distracting. Like in our studio class some people just play music out loud, socialize, frequent breaks, it’s just kind of distracting. So uh, that’s why I just had to get my own place or whatever.

Nelson: It’s more of an option. I am more than willing to team up with my friends to tackle an issue and things like that but if we’re in a classroom with 50 or so other people, and he gave us an option of doing it by ourselves or in a group, I’d quickly do it by myself.

When it comes to group, when you’re in a class and you don’t already know the people in there you’re going to get thrown into a group with random individuals. And maybe it’s just my luck I always get paired with people who have no idea what they’re doing. So you’re doing the whole project and they’re lucky if they can even comprehend. So from things like that it gets to the point where I dread having to do group projects. Things like that...it’s kind of like the deciding factor...I think I had six classes signed up for this semester, one of them sent out the syllabus early. I saw that there was a group project. I dropped that one. It turned out that the other ones had some as well. But I just knew that if I had to do a group project for that whole class I would rather pass on that. I will stick to the individual papers, no matter how long it is.... It’s hard to work in a group with people...
who you know have no idea what they are saying and are going to depend on you for the whole project. It wears you down so much that it just gets to the point where you just say, “I wish I was the only person in here.” In the end they just hold you back. I’d much rather do it myself, get it done, and not have to worry about it. Especially, like I said, with this campus, with people always commuting you have to find time to meet them. And you have to meet them there. And there are always other things they are doing whether it be work or family; whatever. So it’s hard to just get into a group and work together. So it turns into not five people working on one thing, but five people working on separate things that just so happen to go to the same place like if you’re doing a power point. It’s usually every person does two slides about whatever topic it is, and just throw it together, not us working together to decide what’s going on these slides. So if you’re doing that, you might as well do ten slides by yourself.

Lawrence: Um….more often than not I would work individually. Even if I do have someone within the same class just because I trust my abilities more than the next person so I’ll always usually rank my work higher. So that’s actually why the main reason I’ve never really cheated like off of someone in a test setting or anything like that because I just assume that I know more than them. I would hate to get a grade…even if I’m not totally sure of the material…because I decided to go with someone else’s work other than mine. So…more often than not I do work individually

Hasan: I would have to say [I study] on my own. It’s what I’ve actually done throughout my entire time here, but I wouldn’t recommend that you actually do that. I mean if you have the support of either other students in a particular class then it would be great for you to actually do that. But it’s not your willingness to say…lets meet in the dorm room and let’s study all night or something. It takes others as well. And a lot of things go into actually setting up…well I want to study with you. Because a lot of students have stereotypes on who they should study with. When it comes to science, ORGO [Organic Chemistry] I and II, courses that you need to pass for MCAT and PCAT, just look at the diversity make up of those study groups. There’s not going to be many, I don’t know too many African Americans that are taking ORGO I or II, and if they do, they’re trying to study with the same ethnicity or something like that. That’s who they feel they would be successful with.

Ten of the students, nine of whom began their college careers as individualists, indicated that they engaged in study groups later in their academic careers, and mentioned the benefits of academic group work. Reasons included:

- preparation for group work in the post-graduate professional career setting;
- getting help in understanding something;
- assistance with class notes;
- moral support; and
- developing friendships through study.

Marcus: .....I really like to tackle my work and do things on my own, on my own terms just for convenience sake, but this last semester, with all these group projects and everything its kind of unavoidable. I would say it’s like a benefit to work with a partner because you need to get used to being in that environment and working with others. So like the last couple semesters I had a couple group projects. That’s really helped me go out and talk to people and get to form groups on your own. Do all these things and learn

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to be successful working with somebody. And if you don’t understand something you can always ask for help. That’s the one bad drawback to that. Like if I sometimes don’t understand something. When I first originally came here I would ask my brother or something or I would just sit there and just try and tough through it. But now if I don’t understand something I can ask some of my classmates that I’ve been taking the classes with. That helps out a lot.

Brandon: I have a really good friend; she has been in all my math classes since the get go. I met her here. I’m a year older than her. I met her in Calc I or Calc II. We’ve been in all the same classes. Her major is different. There have been times, especially now, when we both can’t make it to class, or I can make it and she can’t. We’ll copy each other’s notes and she’ll explain it to me, and if she misses, I’ll explain it to her. We’re both learning. And then she’s been...we both feed off of each other. I dropped a class that she was in, and she was very upset, but I told her, “you can make it through”...she’s doing well. She’s not in one of my classes, and I’m doing well. Even though we’re not in the same class together -- so she’s been helpful in telling me that, “you can do it,” this is easy for math majors if you’ve gotten this far. We’re going to finish.

Franklin: In the past definitely individually, recently it’s both individually and in groups. As I’ve gotten older, I’ve gotten more confidence to go up to people and say “we should study together” and stuff like that.

Otis: I would have to say study groups and study partners. I think it’s an added bonus because you’re doing well in school and you’re building connections and building friendships. Most of the friendships that I built were from study groups. And it’s so funny because I would see a whole class who didn’t know each other at the beginning of the semester, two, three hundred students and at the end of the semester they all come together and build lasting relationships, because you know, when you’re up one to two o’clock in the morning studying, you probably have side conversations. You’re talking. You have conversations about life. I think that’s the beauty of UIC. You have this interaction of people of different races...different...we’re all in the same boat. We’re all trying to get through this class. We lean on each other for support. That’s how I describe myself.

Interviewer: Was that you, all four years, or did you grow to be more orientated toward study groups?

Otis: I think the first year I was very individual. I was always to myself, trying to study, and for a couple of tests I had, I thought, I have to add at least a couple more people...the bigger the better. My sophomore year to now -- study groups. [I] call people and ask if there is a weekend study group.

Some students consciously chose when they would work individually, and when they would work in a group.

Brandon: ...I like to work individually when I need to understand something. If I have like a study group, I know my friends, they’ll study but they’re going to take breaks when they want breaks and because they’re not doing anything I’ll lose my focus and I can’t do that. So I think right now I’d rather [work individually]. It depends on what I’m doing. It depends on the subject. If I’m doing math, I’ll do it by myself. That’s my major I need to understand it. If I’m doing something like Spanish or Anthropology I’ll do it in a study group because it comes to me easier than math does. And I like to work by myself. I don’t mind groups actually.
David: Half and half. It kind of depends on the course. For 241, that was a big portion of....I read it first. It was better to come together afterwards, then collectively talk about the work. The math and science, kind of more independently, or more so to go over after my independent work was done. So it’s really a half and half.

...One thing that isn’t big on the campus, by being a big commuter school, there isn’t much of an influence among friends. Once you get here, you’re here, that’s it, and once you’re gone you don’t really talk too much. But when I met [my best friend] there was a big difference. We hung out outside of school. Me and her and other friends, we’d get together and study. Yeah, this is what was missing before. So, some way to try and create that community among UIC students, I think is needed. Its not strong enough here.

Jamar: You know what…I have done most of my time; I’ve operated most of the time, individually. But the last semester I did a class, it was pretty demanding, and I did a lot of group studying during that class. It definitely helped.... And most of the time I was helping others understand concepts. But you know when you help others you have to first fully understand the concepts, and as you help them, it reinforces it in your own mind. I found that it was especially in that class and contributed to my success in that class. But the majority, the overwhelming majority of the time I’ve been here at UIC I did most of my work by myself. Probably to my disadvantage but luckily its not a real, measurable, huge disadvantage, I would say. Would my GPA be a little bit higher if I did more group work, probably.

Isaac: I would say both. I realized freshman year that I used to work on my own. Everything was my own, because I wasn’t used to working with people. I would study on my own, and after a while I realized I needed someone to study with, so I started studying with people. Then I realized if you study too much with people sometimes people just come to talk. They really don’t do that much. So I pretty much, okay, this is what I do....I study on my own, then I go to people and we’ll talk about. So my friend, A., both of us study all the time, we pretty much study on our own. Then we come together to talk about it. We discuss. Ask questions and stuff like that. Sometimes it’s in groups and sometimes by myself. So I think both ways are good.

One student moved from working in study groups to working individually.

George: Initially study partners and study groups, but the past year and half I have been doing everything on my own. But mostly just a study partner if anything. My buddy and I, we were always studying together. We tried to study with other people, but they never wanted to study. Well at least the friends we had. They never want to study. We mainly study by ourselves or together. Then, we had a couple classes with this one friend, and again I don’t want to sound like a racist, but this does happen at UIC. We had these two friends; we would study together, 5 – 6 hours a night. Or like 18 hours for an exam. We wouldn’t sleep. Stay up with NoDoz and caffeine. That’s what we do. The minute we’re like, we’re tired we’re going to go to asleep or we just understand this. They would act they were tired or during the entire study session they would be asking us all the questions and have us explain things to them. Then once we went home to go to sleep they would stay up all night studying. And they wouldn’t tell us about it. Then they would always score higher then us. We wondered, what the heck is going on? And then we finally figured it out. That’s one thing that occurs, with [named specific ethnic groups]. They will study with you and ask you questions. They understand everything already. Then they go home and continue to study. And then they’ll pretend like they didn’t study.
at all. You start to notice methods of deception to get higher grades. [My buddy] and I didn’t really appreciate that so we started working on our own. Then [my friend] and me lived together and had a falling out; then I moved on and live by myself. So now I study by myself.

By senior year, about half of these successful students indicated that they preferred to work individually, and the other half indicated that there were times when each mode of study was appropriate. Ultimately, no student indicated that communal study was preferred.

Family Background

Some aspects of family background at the university were covered in the earlier discussion of the survey results, but within the interview, eight students commented on their pre-college family support. For all of these students, it was clear that their parents were invested in their education.

One student told us that there were differences between his goals and those of his family, and he discussed the family conflict about his college choice:

David:....I actually wrote about this in a paper. When I talked about my family, as far as, selling drugs, going to jail....and not actually achieving much outside of high school, ...and just knowing that I wanted to go above and beyond that. I want to see the world and go past the four corners of Adams and Kostner....and maybe take a trip to Italy one day....or Paris. Just go above and beyond. They don’t quite grasp that concept, its more, “lets kick it at home, watch TV, drink, smoke,” and um, we have that constant battle. But I hear, “you know you’re kind of boring,” because you don’t want to do the things we want to do....and I’m like, no, I just want to do more than what you want to do.

Another student told us about the positive influence his parents had in helping him to be prepared for a diverse social environment.

Brandon: The social aspect [of college] wasn’t as difficult as the academic aspect because even though I did go to an all Black high school, my parents made sure that I did do a good amount of diverse things. We did a lot of traveling and going to other states for vacation and stuff like that. But it wasn’t as bad, but it was different to be on my own; transition by myself. My parents weren’t there to start the conversation with someone or to tell me to just go ahead and do it...you’ll be fine. And then again I was only 18.
Six of the students discussed the significant positive influence that their mother’s had on their academic success, whether it was support when they did well, encouragement in the face of challenge, or the expression of confidence in their ability. The following are two examples of their comments:

*Nelson:* Family...my mom has always supported me. If I have any issues I can call her. She is always willing to give me comforting words, saying again, that it is, just a paper, or one issue. It’s not something that’s going to blow up in your face. Just take it easy and think things through and there won’t be any problems for you.
Carl: Well let me see, I went to a very good high school and my family always pushed me to do well academically. As far as family goes, my mom and my grandmother….have always been a big support behind my back. They’ve always been, “you can do it” you know, they’ve always been the type, that they want the best things for you. They always have your back and want the best things for you; they always do what they can to help you, academically, etc....One thing, growing up, my mom always pushed me...pushed for harder challenges. So all throughout my academic life; from elementary school through high school, I always took honors and AP courses. I would say my first two years at UIC were quite simple. I already had college prep; I was already prepared for college by mid-high school, per se. As far as challenges go, I liked that the school had challenges regarding, like Education. I was studying to be a teacher, originally, before I changed my major. I believe that those classes were really challenging and I liked it. It pushed me to work harder for my major.

Two students discussed the support received from a brother.

Marcus: Family; well my brother actually went through UIC and he graduated a couple years ago. So he kind of prepared me for the business core classes, because he got a degree in marketing and management. I am going for accounting in the same College of Business so he had prepared me for what I was going to do. All the teachers, he had given me a heads up on all the teachers and everything. He pretty much told me that my writing was a little bit weak and that I would need to work on that. So I got a lot of input from him, so I would be ready.

Jamar: My brother, he’s in New Jersey. We talk from time to time so. I don’t know.... Interviewer: Is he an older brother?  
Jamar: No he’s a younger brother. We talk. It was funny, he was going to school while I was in the service. And when I was in the service, I was in the Marine Corps. That’s where my mind was. That was the track I was on. I was ultra motivated gung-ho marine. I would talk to him and he’d be trying to talk to me about college and I was like na na na. He would say…you have been educated stupid. You can talk about anything without approaching it from all these different angles...you don’t enjoy things. That’s how some of my conversations would be. Then, when I got out and decided to go to school, I had all new experiences. I really learned to think about things in different ways. I started to see where he was coming from. I guess he helped me in that fashion...now we can bounce our brains off each other, because that’s always good.
Skills and Abilities, Prior Schooling and the Transition to College

When the students responded to the survey question asking them to rate themselves on a number of traits in comparison with the average person their age, they rated themselves the lowest on mathematical ability. Within the interviews, when the students were asked about their prior schooling, preparation for college level work and their transition to UIC, nine of the students told us that their transition was relatively smooth. However, eight of the students indicated that they were not adequately prepared, and as a result, the transition was difficult. The students who experienced a smooth transition emphasized the importance of high school support. It is important to note that one of the interview questions directly asked students to comment on their academic transition in math, writing, science and computing.

The following are two student responses are characteristic of those students who experienced a relatively smooth transition:

Carl: When I got to middle school, 7th and 8th grade, I went to a public school, but then I was in an honors program. I was already taking high school algebra and classes that were getting you ready for algebra II. Freshman year I was already take geometry. Sophomore year I was taking algebra II, etc. As far as science goes, I consider myself an average science student. I never really got really big into biology and chemistry. I took an AP chemistry class; it didn’t go too well for me. In high school I took AP calculus and AP English and both those classes worked great for me. Calculus was right at my level my senior year and I felt like AP English was right at my level senior year as well. I took the AP exams for both those courses and I scored a 2 on both AP exams. And when I got to UIC I always said I wanted to be a teacher, but I didn’t know which I wanted to be a math teacher or English teacher so I just decided to be an English teacher….I already knew how to use computers. I was computer literate. I always had the Internet. Again, I took the AP English and math course. So when I came in taking Math 118, and taking English Composition I and II, it was more like high school work to me because I was basically exposed to those already. …And one thing, from my background, going to high school and taking accelerated programs and classes all throughout my academic years, you learn how to multi-task very well. Some people can multi-task, work full-time, go to school full time. During the day they have to squeeze time out for their own personal leisure. They can do all three, or do multiple things; be part of organizations and still go to school. Some students can’t because they are not able to multi-task. That’s an important trait you have to master. In your adult life you have to learn how to balance work/career your family and the unexpected things you come across.

Otis: Well, I think for one, I would have to credit a lot of that preparation to my high school. I attended Brooks College Prep., which is a college preparatory academy, and they really prepared us in ACT prep; prepared us on how to work on various projects; prepared us in math, and things of that nature. Going right in to UIC I knew I had the preparation to excel, but I knew I had to work a little bit harder, because it was a different level of education. I never said I could come in and ace every class. I knew that wasn’t going to happen. I knew I had to work hard, but I would have the basic tools to get me through the classes.
Of the eight students who told us that their transition to UIC was difficult, seven mentioned that math was a challenge, and one mentioned chemistry; and science in general. Following are responses of students who discuss transition challenges:

Hasan: So just coming from a Chicago public school into a four-year university is a transition in itself. You have prerequisites when you come into school so they cover a wide range of subjects. So, when you enter a four-year university and you come from a Chicago public school, you will find out whether or not you are prepared to actually do well in these classes. A lot has to do with the actual person in itself. The study habits and things like that....but at the same time, the majority of it comes from what you've actually carried with you from high school. So I think the social transition was most difficult for me because, I came from a vocational high school, so we had the choice of either taking some type of math class, I forgot what it was, or we can choose physical education.

Brandon: ....I went to a majority Black high school. The education there at the time when I got out of high school I thought was great. Until I came to UIC and realized that I didn't understand the fundamentals in order to succeed in some of the classes that I needed to succeed in. Which is why...which led to two semesters of not doing so well. And because of that, I tried my hardest to tell the [high] school that they should fix that, but of course, I'm only just one student. But it was very hard to transition from high school to college -- because of that....also because of the different dynamic...UIC is very diverse, so going from an all Black high school to everybody else, it was very hard, and very challenging to adjust to.

Interviewer: Could you tell us a little bit more about academic preparation? You said you felt like you didn't have a good solid grasp of the fundamentals. Can you tell us what you mean by that?

Brandon: For like, um...well I guess. The teachers at the school, at the high school I was at, they tried to, instead of teach the curriculum....they tried to just get through the curriculum. They knew that they had to give us information but they didn't try to make sure we understood the education. But the majority of the classes that we needed as far as the physics and the sciences --they just tried to get through...so that they can tell their boss, “see I taught them.” That's where the fundamentals come from, and coming here, I needed those fundamentals in order to get on with physics, chemistry and biology, which I didn’t have.

Kendrick: In high school I was already accustomed to computers. Math and science were my strong points. English wasn’t so much. But um, I was doing pretty well in high school, then I came here, and well....my senior year, I didn’t have to take a math class senior year, so I placed out of the math prerequisite for UIC. So I came in freshman year and did calculus and I guess completely forgot about the whole year of math, so that kind of put me behind and um, science is no problem, physics is no problem, English I did fairly well. My junior year I had the choice to take algebra or trigonometry and I guess like, the school suggested that I do the advanced algebra. I guess that didn’t help me. I should have taken the trigonometry.
Goals/Commitments Motivational Orientation

When students enter the university, along with the pre-entry attributes discussed in the previous section, they also bring a motivational orientation, goals, and external commitments that influence college adjustment, commitment, and success.

Motivational Orientation

For this study, the examination of motivational orientation was drawn from self-determination theory (SDT). Guiffrida (2006) explained that according to SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1991, and Reeve, Deci and Ryan, 2004), people are motivated to learn by one of two motivational orientations: (a) intrinsic motivation (learning because one finds the content interesting; the material is closely aligned with interests or values; it satisfies the need to be effective in interactions with the environment, or it satisfies the need to establish close, secure relationships with others; or (b) extrinsic motivation, or learning as a means to an end (i.e., grades, praise, pay). SDT theory posits that the most meaningful and successful learning occurs when students are motivated intrinsically.

In a study of 100 first generation Latino students by Dennis, Phinney and Chuataco (2005), personal motivations, and the motivation to work toward a fulfilling career were found to be predictors of college adjustment, and slight predictors of college commitment, when they controlled for certain variables like high school GPA. Contrary to their hypothesis, the extrinsic motivation of family expectation did not prove to be a predictor.

Of the 17 interview respondents, 16 students commented on their motivational orientation. Fourteen of the 16 described themselves as intrinsically motivated, having strong personal drive or career goals. The three following comments are good representations of many of the student responses:

Carl: I just value education. No matter what I’m doing. I have to get this done. I have to get this paper done. I have a test coming up. It’s an overall value of education. You automatically prioritize things. I can’t hang out tonight; maybe I can hang out later in the week. I mean I’m not an angel. I got excessive from time to time. My first semester, I had a perfect 4.0. It’s difficult though; going into college there should be so much structure for freshman....and so when you get that freedom right away, some people can make that transition and become responsible early-on. Where they can not have their parents, how do I put this...their parents are not there to monitor everything they do, but they can still stay focused and accomplish what they are supposed to do and do their work. When they get the freedom they don’t have the backbone right away so they buckle down and stay focused. That can be a challenge for some students, not necessarily a challenge, but something that is valuable. You feel like an adult a lot more. .... Staying focused. Staying focused. I mean, no matter what happens. When I was student teaching, I told my sister, no matter what happens, you can’t lose sight of your ideals and your goals. A lot of my friends ended up dropping out or transferring to another school; and the reason why, not because UIC is a bad school; it’s about priorities. One thing that I did was simply stayed focused. No matter what happens, yeah I like to socialize. I had to work off campus. But my whole purpose at UIC is to get in; get a college degree; get cultured; in many different aspects, regarding social studies, liberal
studies and get a bachelor’s degree. That’s the whole goal. But then a lot of students come on
campus and they don’t have that goal. They come on campus and put education on the back burner
and forget, “wow, I’m here to learn.” And they’re not in school anymore. So basically it’s how to stay
focused.

Otis: I have a drive like no other. I am very passionate. Very driven. I think that’s always been a part of
me. I think my drive did not really awake until high school when I recognized that college was my only
opportunity to make something of myself. There was nothing in my neighborhood. The social aspects
of gangs and drugs. Not having an education but still trying to make a living was not a life that I wanted to
live. Was not a life I wanted to partake in. It was not a life where I would birth a kid and have them live in
a household with an uneducated parent; people who could have made a better life for themselves. I think
that was my drive to really get the education. Educate myself and persevere. And ....I’ll say this, that train
ride home on the red line, coming from the blue line to the red line, that was a motivation. Be on the
train -- and you see people who are not educated. Not...you know...making something out of themselves.
That drove me to work hard, and study hard, and make something out of myself.

Brandon: My own sense of drive fit in, I would say, I didn’t want to be a statistic. I didn’t want to come
here and be another African American who didn’t finish or just...I don’t like to quit. I don’t like to let
things defeat me. I know my GPA is not where I want it to be. I’m not going to just stop, and say let me
not graduate and stay here; time is money. I have to keep it moving, regardless. There will always be a
way.

Two students who fell within the group of the intrinsically
motivated students also discussed other factors that influenced
their motivation. The following student response describes the
influence of faculty mentors:

David: Professor LS, I had her for advanced fiction writing about two years ago. When the semester was
over, she said, “it was pleasure having you in class, and I challenge to write outside of what you normally
write in,” and “you excelled beyond what I thought you were actually going to do.” And she said she “I am
very proud of you.” And that continued me to actually push me to do things outside of what I normally do.
For my writing, as far as fiction goes, I was going down the whole Harry Potter route, and she said that I
could do much better than that. I tried, and I actually enjoy writing...and I thought, “I rock.”

Another student told us that knowledge of the Guaranteed
Professional Program Admission (GPPA) program would have
given him an extra push.

Quenton: One thing that I did know when I came here, I don’t know if it’s off topic or not. I heard of a
program just last year, they call it GPPA. I didn’t hear of that at all in high school... I’m not sure and I
don’t want to discriminate. But it seems like all the north suburban kids, the Caucasian kids, they all
know about it. But as far as south side and African American kids, nobody had ever heard of it. It was....I
want to say schooling.
Not to say I would have [done] it. But if I would have heard about it, maybe I would have decided to do it.
We had honors classes, which I took, but not to say, hey, if you get this score on the ACT you can pretty
much be guaranteed that you’ll get into a pre-professional school. I mean I would have tried a lot harder.
Not to say that I didn’t try, but it might have given me an extra push.
Finally, two students provided descriptions that were a strong indication that they are extrinsically motivated. Their responses reveal their lack of connection to the campus community or to a larger academic or professional goal.

Andre: [When I graduate] I’m going to celebrate. It’s not like that; walking across the stage and all of that. That can wait. I just want the diploma.

Franklin: um, yeah. I had definitely a lot of friends my sophomore year. And a few of those friends were really on top of their academic work. They are good guys who I am still friends with. They would say, [student’s name], if you keep this up, not doing your work and partying all the time, you’re going to fail out of school. We need to talk. I remember going back to my room and thinking, oh they’re right. And I started doing some work right then and there. So those guys, for a while, put me on the right path. But you know once you get into a habit it’s hard to break that habit. Even though I started doing my work right then and there for about a week after a while, I was back... When I’m not that interested in something it’s just so much harder for me to really put forth the effort. So I just did school to, you know, to do school I guess.... My dad wanted me to be a lawyer or a doctor. I majored in philosophy thinking that that would be my major to get into law school. I wanted to make him happy, but not really thinking what I wanted to do. I never even thought that way. I was just like, I’m going to go to class; work hard; then come back and hang out with my friends.

It is important to note that many of the students overcame obstacles as they attempted to maintain their motivation, and many students spoke of individuals who inspired them in the face of challenges to success.

External Commitments

We asked students to tell us about how their external commitments affected their academics. Twelve of the respondents commented on their external commitments. Ten of the twelve held off campus jobs that were a challenge to academic success. On and off campus jobs are included in the extracurricular activities and external commitments category that will be discussed later in this report.

Other comments regarding external commitments included volunteer work, religious activities, entrepreneurial ventures, and family obligations (children or ill parents). Two students mentioned the lack of time for girlfriends. The following are representative student responses:

Volunteer and Religious Commitments

Quenton: Yes, Saturday mornings I go to the Chance, a program at IIT. Saturday mornings I go there and I do a big MCAT review but I also volunteer as a tutor, mentor. On Thursdays I go to Project Brotherhood, which is on 64th and Woodlawn. For the first three hours I shadow doctors, and then I call back patients. Volunteer; give patients the right prescriptions.
Interviewer: Is it a clinic?
Quenton: Yeah it’s a clinic. Pretty much, low income people I tell them about health care. Try to get them to take their medications. It’s pretty much, just on Thursday it’s a Black male clinic. You can come in and get tested.

Isaac: Sophomore year I was working and I was volunteering at the VA hospital. Then after a while I realized that I was spending way too much time out there and maybe I need more time to study. So I made a rule... study, then I volunteer. Then I realize I need more time off. I can’t volunteer this much because I have like, too many credit hours. I pretty much didn’t do anything outside of campus and study so it’s just...I go to school, I study and I volunteer. And I work on campus. That’s too much for my life. I didn’t do anything after that.

Marcus: Yeah, on the weekends I would go and work at a retirement facility in the kitchen, or whatever. It was a challenge because I would have to find time to do my work and everything, and with off campus commitments, I have like church and a few other things, like groups and meetings we like to do. Those were more like pressed for time. If I do those then I won’t have time to study or I would have to like squeeze in studying.

Marcus: I’m committed to like church and I have a job and everything. Church is just helping out around the church whenever they ask. If they have a program just doing it...or participating in the program or whatever.

Entrepreneurial Commitments

George: I’m a budding entrepreneur. I’m on my fourth or fifth entrepreneur venture. Based on entrepreneur books, entrepreneurs usually have about seven ventures that fail before they hit big. I’m right on time. <laughs> Working, watching TV, social commitments, doing my own research on different topics that I want to learn about -- that I might not be learning in school, family.

Of all of the descriptions, only Jamar described his external commitments as having a substantive influence on his motivation.

Jamar: But my second year I was trying to get personal business things going on. And I had started a business, and going through that process, it hurt my grades -- but at the time I was thinking, I’m going to be super successful with my business so it doesn’t even matter. You know as soon as this business gets off the ground, I’ll take a little hiatus from school and I’ll come back whenever I feel like it, whenever I get down spending my millions. So...you know I wasn’t all that concerned about school at the time and my grades reflected it.

Family Commitments

Quenton: ok...off campus commitments. I have a five year old daughter. That’s an off campus commitment. That’s a big commitment. There was a time she was staying on campus with me but housing didn’t allow it at the time. She had to go home with my mom. And that was a stressor because I wanted her with me. The whole agreement was, as long as I finished college, when I go to medical school she’ll come back to school with me. So that’s a big burden, I wouldn’t say burden. She just turned five.
Carl: As far as involuntary stuff. My father died in the middle. My mom bought a house halfway through college. Those involuntary things can be a distraction.

David: My nephew who is seven. I try to spend as much time as possible as him. I think he may have seen his dad a couple times in his lifetime. I try to be there as much as possible to kind of balance that. I can’t replace his father, but I can do the best I can:

Jamar: I’m sure you can imagine. Going to school and taking care of a toddler. Its not exactly...when you get done with school it requires so much attention. I could never really get started with school work ‘til after the kids go to bed. Half the time I’m taking care of one child and half of the other time I’m taking care of two kids. And the one, the mother works in the evenings. So I get the kids to bed. By the time that’s done its like 9:30 or 10. I got my own evening things to do. That is difficult I guess. What else...

Girlfriends

Ervan: I tried to keep my commitments down. My friends outside of campus will always say get a girlfriend. I would say I don’t have time for all that.

Kendrick: Yeah, extracurricular activities. I had a girlfriend.

Experiences While at College

After considering pre-entry attributes, motivational orientation, goals, and external commitments, we finally turn our attention to the experiences students have while they are attending college. Four major variable domains help us to sort out the experiences, and include formal and informal academic systems related to academic performance and interactions with faculty and staff; student support systems (campus level support that augments the student’s academic success); formal and informal university social systems including extracurricular activities and peer group interactions, and the home social systems of family and friends.

Academic Performance

While we know the actual academic performance of the students who participated in the study, the interviews provided an opportunity for us to learn about students’ perceptions of their academic performance. We asked students to tell us about their academic adjustment to UIC. We also asked them to specifically describe their adjustment in math, writing, science and computing. The students’ descriptions of their performance fell into two broad categories; those students who generally found academics at UIC challenging, and those who did not.

Earlier, we presented student responses regarding broad transition issues that focused on the influence of high school on academic preparation and social transition. In this section, students describe their transition experiences after they arrived at UIC. Of our 17 respondents, 7 did not find the transition to UIC, or their ability to perform while at UIC, particularly challenging.
Franklin: I’m a communication major now. I don’t know if I want to do anything with communications. I think it’s a good major because it’s so broad. I can find a job once I graduate. My heart...everyday, whether I’m happy or sad, I go to the gym six days a week; play basketball for hours; work out. I love playing my guitar. I love music. I love drums. Through thick or thin, happy or sad, I always make time for that. So it’s just...those are my main interests. When I’m not that interested in something, it’s just so much harder for me to really put forth the effort. So I just did school to, you know, to do school I guess.

Two of the students talked about the similarities and differences between their high school and university academic performance. They also expressed a bit of disappointment that the experience at UIC was not more different from high school.

Nelson: My adjustment, to me, I think it was pretty smooth. In high school, I was an underachiever....Say I had homework for that day, the next day, I would come in before class, I would scribble something down, get it done, and turn it in. I would pretty much get through with that. Getting A’s and B’s doing it that way....so I kept doing that. So when I got into [UIC], I started the way most people did. I am going to read the book all the time, and I’m going change my academics, and things like that. Most times it ends up being; if you can do half the work and not really try, and get a B, you’ll just do that again. And I just found that I could do that again. So again, I ended up being an underachiever, waiting ’til the last day, and scribble some stuff down, or stay up all night, write the 10 page paper, get an A or B the next day; no problem. It was a pretty easy transition. I didn’t really even think about much....oh I’m going to college, and I’m going to have to do this and this now. It was more, when I get to college, we’ll see how it works out. If I have to do more I will, but if I’m not going to have to, I’m not going to.

David: Computers didn’t really change too much until our last semester when I took social statistics and I had to use SPSS; so that was a new thing that I hadn’t done before. That was when computers changed. Otherwise it was pretty much the same. Math....I took a couple of courses, when I first started, where it was very different from high school; where I had the same teachers there with me every day. No TA, nobody else. I had the time for one-on-ones. I had 12 people in my Calc [calculus] class in high school, versus having a lecture hall full of students. It was also kind of a wake up call ...I realized even though they weren’t requiring me to be in class, I had to be in class on my account. So that was a big wakeup call, because that didn’t quite happen at first. “Oh I don’t have to be in class today.” I kind of took that and ran with that for a little while. The writing, I grew dramatically, from having Professor S as my first English teacher, to working in the Writing Center now. Seeing other people’s writing, and revising mine like there is no tomorrow, I didn’t do that too often in high school. Now that I do take the time, I actually revise a paper about three times before I turn it in. That’s something that did not happen in high school. You did it the week of, and that’s it.

Science....I’m taking a class this semester. There really isn’t that much of a difference, with the exception of smaller classes. I liked bio [high school biology] then; I like it now. Nothing has changed too much.

Interviewer: When you said something about the accountability of going to class. If somebody had called you on that, early on during your freshman; that first term, and said, you know you’re not going to class, do you think it will affect your grade? Would that have made a difference?
David: I think it would have. I really didn’t think about it at all. I just got the taste of “oh you don’t have to go.” I honestly believe that it definitely would have made a difference.

Three students made a point of talking about the relationship between good academic preparation in high school and their academic success at UIC. They also appreciated the challenge of the courses in their major.

Carl: I went to a very good high school and my family always pushed me to do well academically. Taking accelerated classes throughout middle, all throughout all my childhood academic years. This was big help here at UIC, so when you take your first two years, your Gen Eds. It’s like a repeat of what you did in high school. Then you get to your core level classes, your distribution class, or in teaching, your methods courses. That’s when it finally clamps down and gets a little tougher and exciting; a lot exciting. If anything I would say make the Gen. Eds. a little harder, but at the same time that’s biased on my opinion. And I know there are a lot of high schools out there don’t prepare students for college as well as the high school that I went to. The community high school in the southwest suburbs.

Carl: One thing, growing up, my mom always pushed me -- pushed for harder, for challenges. So all throughout my academic life; from elementary school through high school, I always took honors and AP [advanced placement] courses. I would say my first two years at UIC were quite simple. I already had college prep.; I was already prepared for college by mid-high school. As far as challenges go, I liked that the school had challenges regarding, like Education. I was studying to be a teacher originally, before I changed my major. I believe that those classes were really challenging, and I liked it. It pushed me to work harder for my major.

Otis: Going right in to UIC I knew I had the preparation to excel but I knew I had to work a little bit harder because it was a different level of education. I never said I could come in and ace every class. I knew that wasn’t going to happen. I knew I had to work hard, but I would have the basic tools to get me through the classes.

Perry: Oh yeah, well coming out an accounting major, it requires a certain amount of perseverance and persistence to get through that major, to pass the courses. One thing is that taking those courses has helped me to get through some of the easier courses that I have taken….and also they put an emphasis on studying, and made it a priority while I’ve been here.

Jamar told us that he owed his smooth transition and good academic performance to being “blessed with above average intelligence.”

Ten of the 17 respondents described considerable challenges in their transition or in academic performance at UIC. While three students told us that challenging programs and courses were motivating, overall the students’ descriptions of the challenges were varied:

- One student described his education at UIC as more challenging in general in comparison with what his friends were saying about the experiences they were having at other institutions;
- another student explained that in freshman year his mom was in poor health, and as his moms health improved, his grades improved;
• two students talked about being on probation, one explaining that after 3 semesters on probation, he decided that he needed to make some changes if he was going to succeed, the other stating that he did well in classes when he was interested in the class, and that he learned that smaller classes helped his interest level;
• one student took classes elsewhere to improve his grades in particularly challenging classes, and he talked about the challenge in being the only Black male in his UIC classes;
• one student talked about the importance of the proper sequencing of courses, and in a similar comment, another student discussed the importance of the entrance exams in assisting him in making a smooth transition;
• one student told us that he thought his CPS education had not prepared him, particularly in math, and that as an English major he should have been better advised about his options in fulfilling the math requirements;
• finally, one student explained that, as a Nigerian, he came to UIC with a language barrier that affected his performance when he first arrived. He overcame the challenges with the help of the Writing Center, friends and in consultation with faculty.

The following responses are representative of this group:

Kendrick: With the challenging academic program, it’s nice to have something more interesting. Being bored throws me off a bit, I guess.

George: In terms of academic program, I spoke to a lot of people about it. The chemistry program here, the science program here, I feel is a lot harder than it would be at another university. I consult with other friends, and I tell them about certain things we do in class, how my tests are structured, and I hear about how easy it is where they are.

Quenton: My College allows you to take difficult science classes somewhere else as opposed to here [at UIC]. In classes that I would get a C in, now I score an A – like in Orgo [Organic] Chemistry. You need 12 hours here to be a full time student, but I wanted to get those classes out the way, so I ended up combining [classes at UIC and at a community college]. Would I advise it? No! Was it doable? I work…my UIC classes were pretty much Monday through Friday. Physics at Olive Harvey was Tuesdays and Thursdays in the afternoon. On Mondays and Wednesdays Chemistry was 6-10 at night. So you go 6-10 at night; try to get some sleep. Say you get back at eleven o’clock; you’ve got to get up at 1:30 just to be at work on time. A lot of people ask me, how do I do it? I don’t know, but I still do. Honestly, it’s taken a toll on me. Because I call my mom….I’ve had a couple of emotional breakdowns, I don’t know why. I guess I’m just really stressed out….I think the professors made a big deal [of difference], but at the same time, because I know I got a C in the first one [class], I told myself that I would get an A in this one. It was the professor, but at the same time it was me too -- wanting to do better....I kind of knew how everything was going -- it was more time management based....I had a more of a set schedule. You come in; you sleep. You do this, this and that. [It was] probably more time management skills. Different from first semester where you are trying to come to college, but still trying to figure out everything else, professors, what you’re classes are. Yeah, first semester I guess you can say I was kind of overwhelmed, and by second semester I was kind of used to it....As far as
academics...by going into the medical field, I have to take a lot of science classes. I don’t particularly like chemistry, but I do what I have to do to get the grade that I want. But for me personally, any mathematics and science classes taken here at UIC are challenging. I’m not going to say that it’s discouraging, but being the only African American male in a classroom is overwhelming. That’s always been a part of it. You look past it, and do what you got to do. And that’s pretty much what I do.

Brandon: In the beginning,...around junior year was a very good year socially. I led an organization. That’s when I was taking the hardest classes. I led the organization and my grades suffered. About three semesters I was on probation. Then I got out of that. I decided that I can’t do this anymore. I let that go. I saw that I was giving more to the organization than I was my schoolwork. I changed. As the classes got harder I changed. You’re now going from Pre Calc to Calc I. All the math I’ve taken here, it changed, because things started to get harder....If my friends had questions, they knew they could come talk to me. At the same time, freshman year to junior year, I would be...”who would like to have a study group?”....and I would be teaching them. I would learn because I would be doing it myself. As time went on, and they changed their majors from something to something else. I was forced to be by myself. It’s kind of hard to be the only Black male in most of these math classes....I feel like some of the majors are not socially there, so it’s hard with communicate to them. If I needed help I would go to the Math Learning Center and ask for help there....And when I came to UIC, English 160, was where I was placed into. I liked that UIC has topics you can pick. I picked topics that I liked, and I wrote about them....and the resources here at the Writing Center, and if you have a professor where you can hand in drafts, that helped me out a lot. At first I would just hand it in, and if I didn’t do as well as I thought, well this is how I wrote in high school. He [the professor] explained to me, well this isn’t high school; you have to write for college, and he told me about the Writing Center, and if you need a proofreader you can do that...and I did that...and I got an A in writing....in English 160 and 161.

Interviewer: So you’re saying that the business writing class (BA200) should precede some of the other...come earlier or at least...

Marcus: Well yeah, if you’re in the business school, I would say yes, it should definitely precede. Like in one of my classes I had to write a case study and ...with business writing there are all these techniques and formats that you can use to put in the case study that will enhance your writing overall.

Ervan: When I first took the entrance exam I didn’t realize how important the entrance exam was to your starting classes and your career. I took five years [to complete my degree]. I could have taken four if I would have thought about it then. I could have taken Calc I, and Chem 112, and passed them easily. But I’m kinda glad that I took the path I did. I didn’t fail any course. It took me five years because I started off a step behind.

Hasan: I took [Math] 090. I just had trouble with [Math] 070 and 090. I should have focused on math. You know I didn’t think the transition was going to be so difficult when I got here. But if I really buckled down and focused on my math in high school, I would have been alright when I got here --but it took a while; I had to take them over. I never completed 090....and then, through the grape vine, I found out that I can satisfy my quantitative reasoning with political science, statistics [course]....You know, taking alternative routes to get something satisfied. When you come in, and its that transition, who do you talk to, to actually find out...can I get this satisfied so I don’t have to keep taking it over and over and prolonging my, you know, my progress? To actually get
credit coursework so I can actually graduate….So I actually took that [statistics course], after so many unsatisfactory grades and a satisfactory in 070; I got that coursework out of the way.

**Interviewer:** No academic advisor?

**Hasan:** You know what, I went to an advisor.

Interviewer: you went to an academic advisor while you were struggling in math? Hasan: Right. You know what they told me? They said you have to pass; you have to get past the pre-credits to go on to the credit courses.

**Interviewer:** No one offered you other options?

**Hasan:** Right, it was like; the alternative was not an option. I guess that’s why I kept taking the course over and failing. And they presented it as if there was no alternative option when actually there was.

Interviewer: Was that an academic advisor in the college?

**Hasan:** Right.

**Interviewer:** And clearly 070, doesn’t sound like it prepared you for 090 and 090….070 is supposed to prep you for 090.

**Hasan:** You know, it is....it didn’t happen so. I mean ...I’m not saying that UIC has committed any wrongdoing. It’s just an uphill battle when you’re making the transition to a four-year university. And you know if you’re not prepared then....in any aspect, if you’re not prepared to study, if you’re not used to actually taking math courses --. If math courses are not really required at your [CPS] high school -- then it’s a different language to you. Just the entire routine of actually transitioning; sitting down, attending class lectures and discussions. If you have a question; actually taking the initiative to reach out for help from your professors or TA’s. That all is combined in completing and successfully passing those courses.

**Interviewer:** It’s like you said, seeking out these instructors.

**Hasan:** It’s reluctance....it’s just a lot of things. It’s nothing that you can really put your finger on. But if they [students] are able to get those basic foundation skills....you know, getting to class on time; making sure you make the classes; and like if you’re discouraged from math or something like that -- I was discouraged. It was another language to me when I got here, so you don’t go to class, or you think you’ve already seen the material. You just graduated, and you actually did take an algebra class or something like that -- I was discouraged. It was another language to me when I got here, so you don’t go to class, or you think you’ve already seen the material. You just graduated, and you actually did take an algebra class or something like that, and you already think that you know the material and a lot of these math professors will tell you: “you think you know this material, and then you’re in for a rude awakening at the end of the course when you don’t actually pass the course.”....and it’s the truth.

Hasan: I’m an English major, I’ve always had an interest in English writing and reading, not necessarily reading. But writing, I’ve always been good at it. I would focus on English in high school. We didn’t really have to do math in my high school. When I got here, I placed into the English courses. I didn’t place into the math course. So I did well in that....in English. I had one difficult transition, my freshman year, and that was Shakespeare. So ...at my school, it wasn’t really an emphasis on the Complete Works. It’s just preparation. You come from a school and you’re not familiar with the Complete Works that a lot of these professors have assumed you’ve read. If you don’t have those under your belt when you get here, its another language to you. Just like pre-credit 070 or 090, if you don’t have that under your belt, then it’s going to be a setback for you.

English 101 was another course that set me back. Having those foundation skills of actually sitting down and having to independently read, and then actually taking the time to actually use the elevated language that Shakespeare uses. Being interested. Working
yourself to figure out what’s going on. I wasn’t interested in that at all. It was another language to me. I can’t recall reading any Shakespeare. It’s pretty appalling.

It’s important to add that all of the students were asked about their computing skills. All of the students reported that they had no challenges with computing. A number of the students indicated that they had access to computers in high school, and some said that they received a computer as their high school graduation gift. They all had adequate computing preparation in high school.

Many students mentioned that they received assistance from the UIC Writing Center to enhance their academic performance. The Writing Center and other support units will be discussed further in the section entitled Student Support Systems.

Faculty/Staff Interactions

The survey revealed that the students rated faculty and administrative personnel as generally supportive of their success at UIC. They rated teaching assistants as helpful, but less so than faculty or staff. Of the 20 students surveyed, 11 students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that a faculty member had been important in their success. Thirteen students indicated that an administrator had been important in their success.

The review of the interview responses reveals that of the 17 interviews, 10 of the students spoke only of positive and supportive relationships with faculty; the other seven providing a more balanced description of some faculty who were supportive, and others who were not. One student discussed an experience in which he believed he was the victim of racism on the part of the faculty member.

Representative positive responses indicated that their professors are skilled teachers who engaged students in learning by creating a friendly, engaging, interesting, motivating and open learning environment.

Nelson: [I] think if you talk anyone, they would have faculty in their top three [supports]. The majority of the professors, over time, a lot to them, fall into the category of real amazing. They have great ideas; they really bring you into the topic. I took a philosophy class; he brought you in, and gave all these different ideas of how to look at things. It was very interesting. He didn’t teach it straight out of the book -- here are the ideas, here are my interpretations of it, and here is how it’s used in real life. It was a friendly open environment. You could ask questions if you wanted to. If you didn’t, it was ok.

Most of the professors I had, I would consider above average.....they wouldn’t just focus on the black and white. They give you what they did in their research, or whatever, but they still had it tied into the book or the readings. I’m trying to think of other examples. There were a couple of others. I think Prof. B. was pretty interesting. They took it where, here are the basic facts, and then here are how things fit into the major scheme of things. Not just, here is the bare-bones minimum, and that’s all I’ve got for you. They were more than willing to give you the insight, but not to just feed you their opinion. I do have professors, who try not to do that, but you can see they are just giving their own ideas -- and like forcibly just saying this is what it is and this is how I feel about it. As long as they can keep it open for you to decide and still give you what you still need to...
know, and give you some extra, it makes class so much easier. Most of the time, you are more than willing
to show up for class and sit through the whole thing. Especially like for Prof. L’s class; the class would end at
15 after, and he would have to call it at 25 after because everyone wanted to stay and keep talking about
it…. It’s good to have a professor who can give you everything that they know, and say, this is what I think
about it, but you can make up your own mind about it. Things like that make it so much easier. It’s amazing.

George: Dr. S. in ASAP [Academic Support and Advising Program in the College of Applied Health Science],
in kinesiology and nutrition. She really helped. She made sure I stayed on track. She helped to guide me
mentally, finding what I really want to do….just really searching with in myself, and mustering the extra
whatever to study….to go above and beyond, in terms of research and things like that. Just going to class,
I don’t feel like I was taught enough. Taking that extra step, she was very instrumental in that way. Then
another professor, he really opened my eyes to a lot of things, in the school system, and the outside
world, I would say.

David: My sociology professor, Prof. J., I had him my first semester. He said I’m very proud to see another
African American male on the verge of graduation. He told me that there were not many at UIC who
actually start and finish. He said that statistics show that one of nine of us goes to jail, and I was thinking,
I know. Trust that I have seen that, just in my cousins…We actually still talk, even now, as far as my
progress in school; he was the one who actually guided me to a sociology minor, which I am enjoying.

Ervan: When I started taking more sophomore and junior courses over in the Chemical Engineering
building we had a smaller classroom setting. There are only two classrooms in the building. One is used
for everything. There is one giant classroom on the second floor. All the teachers’ offices are around that
classroom. We see all of our professors every day. We’re right next to their office, so when I was taking
classes in the lecture center for Chemistry 112 or for Physics, or a giant lecture course, the professors
teach you there. Then after class, they say “come to my office if you have any questions.” It’s always way
over somewhere else. I know for me, I didn’t feel like going way over there to an office. If I had a question
I’d ask right after class, as opposed to trying to go find him. In the Chemical Engineering building you
couldn’t help but see them. If you had a question they are right there. So it made it a lot easier….and the
faculty in the Chemical Engineering building are really helpful. They are a mix of professors. Some are
more helpful than others. From what I’ve learned, there are a few main Chemical Engineering professors.
One of them is a brilliant guy. He is not as good at teaching you what he knows, but he knows a lot.
Sometimes he is so mathematically attuned he says stuff and it just goes over your head….but he’s a good
guy. I have another professor, he can teach you little bit better. You ask him a question and he can tell
you the answer in more simplified terms. This other professor, he’s really old. He’s brilliant but his
teaching style is different. He doesn’t bring notes. He teaches straight from what he remembers doing. He
has to teach on a regular set schedule. He knows all the chapters. They are all really nice guys they are
helpful and supportive.

The representative comments of the students who provided a
more balanced view made some of the same positive comments.
The following students added positive comments about professors
who understand the student’s perspective, and provide supportive
challenges. These students also discussed the negative effects of
professors who were too research focused, not prepared as
teachers,
and were disorganized, or made disparaging remarks about students who are struggling academically.

Quenton: I’ve had some professors, I’m not going to say many, that could actually understand [the student perspective]. But we’ve also had professors who are strictly by the book. I prefer the professors who can kind of understand college life, and commitments outside of college that you have to do. For example, for Nutrition I was actually failing the class, and the professor and I had a talk. And he said, I bet you ten dollars that you can improve your grade. I ended up coming out with an A just because he bet me I guess, in a way, I kind of needed motivation. I was in his office and the TA’s office all the time. They were actually very supportive.... same for my anatomy class, and my math classes; Prof. J.’s classes. As far as other classes in my actual major, you have some professors who are very vague and just tell you about their research. I don’t know if they do this for college, but for high school, you have to go and get a teaching certification, but in college, as long as you have a Ph.D. you can just teach. I’m not sure if that’s the case, but if so, they need to change that rule; it’s ridiculous. I mean,...I’m an organized person....[and one of my professors], he’s like the most unorganized person I’ve ever met. When you have disorganization, and you’re trying to teach it to me, I don’t comprehend it at all. I have like a systematic approach to learning. If you don’t give notes, and all you do its talk, and you’re lectures are not based on the material that you use for the test, I don’t know what you want us to do. There were five of us actually talked about it in class, ....and he took offense to it. We tried to speak up, but it didn’t go anywhere. I want to say that some of the older professors are more understanding. I think the younger professors probably have something to prove. That’s just my intuition.

Interviewer: Are you seeing that more in your college, or generally across the campus? Quenton: Generally, across the campus, of all the teachers I had, I think I did better with older professors than with professors who were in their late 20’s or early 30’s. Maybe they just got out of graduate school and think, ok, I know all this and this. They don’t teach the basics of what you need to know. I just need to know what I need to know for the MCAT; lets just take the test. And the MCAT is very general, so I don’t want to know everything, I just want to know the basics so I can get where I’m going. Maybe that’s just me. I’m not saying that I take the easy way out but I try to make things as easy as possible on myself as opposed to doing all this stuff. Just teach me the basics of what I need to know to get where I’m going.

Hasan: See I’m an English major so I’ve only been focused really on the English department. Some faculty are supportive. Others are not and that’s just, I can tell you now, its devastating, you have a lot of faculty and professors that are understanding for whatever reason, but you know you have a lot of faculty and professors that are not too understanding. They can’t relate to the transition. I’ve learned that. The best example would be...last semester I was a peer tutor at the writing center, and we would have round table discussions where English professors would come in and talk to us and say, this is what they’re working on and they’re going to be coming into the Writing Center, and I want you to work on this. I’m going to give you samples of their writing. I’m not going to give you’re their names and I want you to work on this...this is what they’re struggling with. And I would ask questions, and they would make comments and say...one professor said I don’t know how these kids got here; I don’t know what they’re doing in college. Wow. Then you speak with professors who teach the pre-credit courses, you get these a lot at the writing center. Its like explore Chicago, I don’t know the topic of the class, it’s a pre-credit course, before you place into 160 or 161, and then
you stick with those professors, and they just can’t relate to where these students are coming from. So when they get into these pre-credit courses, they just can’t picture them in the classroom...they act like they don’t want to work with them. Since I’m going into teaching...when they make comments like that, it makes me idolize what they’ve actually said; it makes me upset but at the same time....And you learn that in the pedagogy of teaching and race, if they already have preconceptions of students when they come here...

...“well why don’t you know how to do this?”...“you should already know how to write a thesis statement, punctuation and grammar should already...yada, yada, yada,” and once you move up in English courses they say, well didn’t you take 160, 161; didn’t you learn this already? Those are the attitudes that I’ve encountered my entire time here, but you might have one or two professors who say...ok...you know they understand why you’re struggling, so they’re not trying to tear you down or anything.

Interviewer: But you’re saying that those professors are in the minority. I’m just reflecting back...

Hasan: I mean just the racial make up of the English department...period. I mean...but regardless of their race, it’s just the way I’ve actually encountered...just my experiences. Some will help and some will just....some just won’t lend a hand. Because they feel like you should already know this stuff. It just goes back to secondary education and that takes a toll on you before you even get here.

Students’ negative comments centered on the effects of a professor’s lack of preparation to teach, carelessness in grading practices, and racist behavior.

Nelson: I had a Spanish teacher who was Chinese; spoke Chinese, and she taught Spanish; but she didn’t know English. When you asked her to say a word, we had to figure out what it was in English so she can say it. We were guessing a lot. It was more of a challenge to do all these things. I just need someone who can come in and teach me. You get to the point where you just say, can I just go home and read the book, because you’re just making it so much harder. Constantly, when I’m with my friends and we’re talking about teachers, everyone has something like that....where they have no idea what they are doing. It seems like people are here because they are known for this and this. It doesn’t mean they are good professors. It just means that they know what they are talking about. Once that happens, and you can clearly find out within the first week or so, everyone just tunes out.

Lawrence: I’ve had the best of luck with a lot of the faculty. I’m not one of those students who comes at the end of the semester and says, I think I really did bad in that class, and ends up with an A. I’m always the opposite. I think...oh yeah, I did great, then check my grades, and I’m like, wow a C, that’s not what I expected. Pretty much every semester that I’ve been here I’ve had to speak with professors regarding a grade I received, and more often than not, they don’t have a lot of backing as to why I received this grade. Because a lot of the times, I’ll actually be in the class with another person that I know personally, or I’ll get the same grade, or higher grades than them throughout the class, and somehow end up with a grade different then they did. Luckily, I had that as a basis. So when I do go in to talk to these professors, which I didn’t do as much as a freshman, because I was new, and I’m sure it would have changed my GPA greatly if I had because I didn’t know what to do, and I didn’t have the confidence or strength to handle it. Since then I’ve been getting a lot of grade changes just on the basis that the professor goes back and says, oh I made a mistake. The first couple times I was like ok they made a mistake. It’s actually been going on until my last semester, during which I actually got a grade change from a C to an A, pretty much because the professor
decided that he didn’t really want to look at the grade too closely and then he was like, oh I glanced at your paper and it looked like you did C work. And I said, I don’t know what that means, what does glancing at a 12 page research paper mean? As a professor I thought it would be your responsibility to thoroughly read through assignment and give a deserving grade. I had actually gone into this particular professor’s office and I had worked extremely hard in this class last semester, and it was a ridiculous amount of work and that’s fine. Professors have the right to teach the way they want to, and in the end, the class was quite helpful if you want to go into a research direction.

Brandon: That was a very big challenge I noticed last year or junior year. I did not experience racism, I experienced racism but not as....The situation was that one of the teachers...I was the only Black person in the class....and while in the class, the teacher asked a question, and I would raise my hand. The teacher would look at me and go to someone else who wasn’t raising their hand. I approached the teacher, and he said “oh, I didn’t see your hand,” and gave me a general excuse. I was like ok, whatever. But it didn’t occur to me until I got my paper back, and I got an F, and I didn’t understand why I got an F. I took it to the department, and they read it and said, this is not an F. From then on, they talked to the teacher, and I don’t think he works here anymore. They were able to help me change my grade in the class from an F to a B....but it was just that...people say everyone experiences racism, you just don’t see it. And I personally don’t see it because I don’t like to think that way. Everyone can’t progress as a people....and that was the first time I was just shocked. And um...the department was able to help me get through that, and I could trust them, with whatever I need help with, as far as graduate schools, academics, or just to say “hi, how you doing?” They are very helpful now, they were always helpful, and it’s just that racism threw me off.

When asked about their relationship with teaching assistants (TA’s), 9 students were generally positive, but eight were either ambivalent or shared negative teaching and learning relationships or experiences with their TA’s. Three students expressed concerns about English language barriers that hindered their learning opportunities. One student believed that a TA was exhibiting racist behavior.

David: You tend to have more one-on-one time with the TAs. That’s where I only had a few small classes, where I was actually able to have the one-on-one time with a professor. But the TAs always seemed more approachable; maybe because they got to know my name a little better than the professor did.

Carl: Some TA’s are very supportive. They give you their email address and their personal email address. Some TA’s, if you’ve got concerns, and you can’t reach them via e-mail, you can call them on their cell phones -- some of them, they’re willing to help you. As you’re willing to help them as well... If you’re willing to work with them they’ll work with you. Um, especially a TA I had when I took a foreign language core. Every TA I had for Spanish was always readily available and had a good ear for listening to what was on your mind regarding taking the course. Like the challenges, things you have trouble understanding or things that don’t really work for you. I mean, TA’s for the most part, are good too.

Brandon: The faculty and professors would teach a certain way and I wouldn’t understand. We would tell the TA’s, this is what she went over in class, and the TA would say there is a much easier way to do it, and she’ll show us. That’s how they were
more helpful than the teachers because they would show us an easier way...and even a smarter way than the teachers were showing us...which made my life a lot better when it was time to take the test. Even though the teacher wanted it a certain way I was able to understand what the teacher wanted, and what the TA showed me. Put those two together so that I could understand everything.

Brandon: Across any of the courses, math, science, history, whatever class I was in, I made sure if there was TA there, I was going to talk to that TA. They did help. That’s what I don’t like about UIC, the higher you go, there are no TA’s. Then you’re on your own, and you don’t know what to do. You go to the learning center and there are people to tell you the same things in different ways. It’s harder as you go higher. There’s no one to sit and talk to about it.

George: TA’s sometimes just don’t want to help. They act like you’re supposed to know everything. Especially in the science dept. They act like they don’t have the time for you because they know everything and you should know it. I never got any help from a TA.

Quenton: I think the majority...ok I’m just going to come out and say the word racist. You have some TA’s, and not only because I’m Black, and I purposefully did this. Me and another student get the same grades. We did the same lab report. I just paraphrased portions different, but the exact same thing. He got a 35 on it, and I got a 15. We have the exact same data, just different ways of paraphrasing. He couldn’t understand it. I couldn’t understand it. The professor couldn’t understand it. Why take so many points off? I would go to her; she was very snotty. I asked her about it. She actually blew up in my face about it. I had a couple of Black friends who had her as a TA. There were more than ten of us.

Interviewer: What class was it? Chemistry.

Quenton: It was General Chemistry II. Don’t get me wrong; you have some good TA’s. My math TA was fine. Maybe it’s just science TA’s. No. I would probably say. This is another thing. When it comes to register for classes and I’m not trying to be rude. I kind of look for names that are in English, that I can understand, as opposed to foreign last names because. It’s a language problem. I go to class and if I can’t understand what the TA is saying, I really, really can’t perform well on the lab. I can go to the professor, but the professor kind of doesn’t want to step over the TA.... Maybe because UIC is a diverse college that’s what you get. But you kind of have to deal with it.

Nelson: Some of the TA’s are horrible. I had a math TA for pre-Calc.[Calculus]; he didn’t know English at all. He couldn’t tell us the answers because he didn’t know how to pronounce them. Half of the class didn’t care anymore. The other half were trying to think of ways we could get him kicked out. It’s hard to learn math when you go to the TA and he can’t explain it to you at all. It’s kind of like, if I have questions, who is going to answer the questions....because you can’t go to the professor.

Finally, when asked about the relationships with administrative staff, most students referred to experiences with various forms of academic advising roles. Of the 11 students who commented on administrative staff, only 5 shared positive interactions. The six students who did not comment received advising from faculty within their colleges.

George: I dealt with a couple probation situations; late registration and financial issues. I lost my financial aid a couple times. I had to pay for a semester or two. So when I tried to get it back, they rejected my initial appeal. So I rewrote another one and it was sent to
…someone here in SSB building – he really helped putting an extra word in for me. He watched my grades and things like that; sending me e-mails for support…..awesome, great guy, Dr. G!

Marcus: Staff, like my counselors [in the College of Business Administration], and all of them; they have been very encouraging and forthcoming. They have suggested classes. Like after I found out about the Writing Center. Because like, I think it was one class, BA 100 they were originally...the staff; the counselors; were actually teaching the class. They were like, this is where you need to go; this is the Writing Center. Then they would give you assignments like go to this place and do this and that. Go out and see the campus. They would give you suggestions and instructions on how to be successful and that helped me find my way around and let me know where I could go get help.

Nelson: Let’s see. I had the DARS reports, I asked about does this count for this, that, whatever? There was a section on there where it added up your numbers. It had your total. The numbers were off for some reason... I asked her why is this number off. She looked at it and said oh that actually does make sense. I asked why that is, she had no answer for me. Eventually I had to figure out myself that it was a calculation thing any case, I assumed that if I asked her questions about how the hours are calculated, she would have some type of answer. Instead of saying, I don’t really know; that’s just weird! It seems like it would be a lot better, it might be hard, but if it was geared towards your major. I was talking about double majoring, political science, criminal justice. I wanted to make sure everything was fine. People told me you had to do a writing and discipline thing that if I did if for one I wouldn’t have to do it for the other. I was talking to her about it; she really didn’t have an answer. She just said, that she does anthropology and sociology, she dint know about this. But this does happen. That’s great and all I see you’re trying to help. But I’m not in any of those. Eventually she gave me a number for someone in the political science dept and sent me to them. If I would have had their number from the beginning, I could have cut that time. I talked to him about it. He had the answers. I have friends who go in there too. You talk to them and it’s just a nodding head. They don’t give you feedback that you don’t already know. It’s like you’re going to hear confirmation of yourself. I don’t know what advising they really do. But they just kind of agree with you. I’m sure if I just went in there and told them that I was dropping out they would say that’s a great idea. I mean they didn’t ask anything at all but print out the DARS report.

Nelson: For academic advising….I've been given one for AAAN and the one in UH for LAS. I rarely use the one in AAAN. He was helpful when I needed him to be, but I just don’t personally want to constantly come out here and talk to him about things. I’ve gone to the one in UH to talk about taking the right classes. About graduating, making sure I have everything covered. All they do is print out your DARS report and read it to you.

That was absolutely no help at all. I was doing this to ask questions and straighten things out and all you were going to do is print out a DARS I wouldn’t have waited in line to get in here.

Andre: Well financial aid, just has to do with you getting money to pay for school, so that’s always important. The advising is important, too. If you don’t either don’t, or can’t, enroll in any class for any reason….a lot of times it would be a class for my major; it would be major required; I would have all the prerequisites, but I just couldn’t enroll on line. I don’t know how the online system works. So I would always have to go to them and tell them and they would just put me in it. They would look at my DARS and they would say that I have to take so many classes. And another was like, started in 2003;
they did all this restructuring. The class I needed wasn’t available anymore. It was weird. Towards the last two years, that was a lot of the problem. That’s why they helped.

Brandon: At the front saying that my DARS report says I shouldn’t go to medical school. You should do this instead. Why not talk about what I want to do. And then...that’s why students don’t go to advising and that’s why they get lost. Especially African American students, because they’re offended, because advisors tell them that; then at the same time they here for five, six years and the school is still getting their money and they are stuck in debt. They didn’t do what they wanted to do and they switched majors and they don’t like what they’re doing.

Interviewer: You’re saying, and once again I don’t want to put words in your mouth, what you’re saying is, first of all, don’t be discouraging. Don’t say you can’t do this or you won’t do this. But the other piece that sounds really important is you’re looking to the advisor to give you guidelines on how to get there rather than discouragement about not getting there at all. Is that...

Brandon: Exactly, yeah. My personal drive was to...I always envisioned that when I graduated I would look at advisors and say I made it and you told me I couldn’t make it. You know. That’s my personal drive. Someone who personally told me I couldn’t do it. To like, I did it, this is my degree, and I did this by myself, regardless of what you told me I couldn’t do.

Interviewer: I just think it’s an important distinction. You’re saying, set out the path to say, sounds like you really want to do this, if you want to do this, here are the things you have to do. You probably have to study 20 hours a week. To say...here’s what a student who makes it is doing. Then you’d have a guideline. You have something to go by. Then it’s your choice. I don’t want to put words in your mouth. It’s an important thing for us to understand.

Brandon: That’s exactly what I’m saying....that’s one thing I don’t like about UIC, going to an academic advisor, they tell me, oh, your grade is what it is and you shouldn’t do this...they tell you what you shouldn’t do. Even though you want it....I said I want to go into medicine. Oh, you shouldn’t do that because you won’t make it. I don’t think that’s the good way to tell students. Even though it’s the realistic way, and there is a way about approaching that. I would prefer that they say your grades are not where they need to be so you need to work harder if you do want to get to medical school. Not just say...you shouldn’t do medicine.

Lawrence: I have had quite a few issues with the UIC advising. As far as telling me to take classes that I had no need to take. Telling me to take the same class again. Even though it was on my DARS report. Or telling me to take a class that already had a requirement fulfilled. It’s really frustrating, because at the end of the day, it’s a waste of my time. I mean, thankfully, I’m in a situation where I am a scholarship athlete and student...so it’s not as much a financial factor as much as it is a time and effort factor that it’s going into something that’s totally unnecessary and basically no good. They have done that multiple times. I just don’t view them as very helpful. Even when I, my first year when I did struggle in school because of some outside factors, the whole probation system was really poorly run. It didn’t help me at all. You have the mandatory meeting to get your back on track and basically it was a run through with very little structure that I don’t see many people getting any type of motivation to do any better. And from what I’ve seen, other than me, at least on my team, people that have been on probation have stayed on probation. Because I feel like there is not really enough of motivation and drive from the advisor to get off of that system. The worst threat I got was, oh, if you get another C, you’ll drop another point in your overall [GPA], like I forgot
that the grade count is towards failing, not grade point. You get like plus one for B, plus two for A. and the other on the lower side. But they didn’t really say if you do better here it will help you later. They never alluded to the fact that if you do well, it’s going to have a great affect on your later things in life, but instead, they just simplified it to this number system. That I would think for most students means next to nothing. It’s not even GPA, it’s just a fictional number the university came up with in order to [make] a dismissal from school. You can stay at a negative two your entire college career, and it really won’t have much of an effect; unless you think of it that way ‘til you graduate. I guess that’s been the advising.

Interviewer: You’re in Liberal Arts. That was in the college framework?
Lawrence: Yeah. Yeah…actually, the way it works, is as an athlete they have a program called PORT, which is an academic study center which actually was in the ground level of the PEB building, and you actually have a required number of hours of study for each week, and do they do provide tutors and all that and it is…as much up to…well actually at the point…I don’t know the best word for it….not liaison, I guess academic/athletic support person…at that time wasn’t too much involved in the students and they pretty much waited for the students to come to them with help. And obviously with a lot of students that’s not going to happen. They’re just going to struggle until it’s too late, and oh no, now I got an F….and that’s pretty much what happened to me. Because I thought, oh, I will be fine; it will all work out. Since then, it got a lot better. The woman, her name is S.O., she is very helpful, and she does take an active role, and since then, it’s gotten better....[Regarding probationary advising] I actually saw four advisors that year for probationary meetings; they were required. And out of four, there was one that was actually helpful, not only that she provided great insight as to why I should do better but pretty much she said something that I would basically never forget, as far as a college career goes. She saw my GPA, and she heard me talking, and I was very articulate. My demeanor spoke to something that was much greater than my GPA showed, and she basically guaranteed me that the following semester this wouldn’t be the case again and that I would be on the deans list. And I was like, oh yeah, that’s great. I’m sure I would go from a 1.6 to the deans list. And I’ll always remember that. It was almost like…I’m trying to think. It was like prophecy. She was kind of like this will happen if you believe it will happen and I thought that was really cool and no one else ever did that.

They just pretty much looked at you said, oh, wow you’re doing pretty bad…...and I know I’m doing bad, or I wouldn’t be here. That was not constructive at all....The whole advising process I can see being a little bit better than to assist someone....I know they have to deal with students on a very large scale, but if you’re going to bother taking on the title of advisor, you need to actively engage within advising on a good level. I have collectively heard students, even outside of the athletic department, have been very disappointed, and have been hurt more than helped by the advising system....which I really feel for them, in particular, because these are the students who are commuting for hours at a time to get here. They are taking out loans. They are working a full time job to pay for their own education, and their money and time is being wasted because an advisor isn’t doing their job properly. I feel that it’s really, really unfortunate.
Student Support Systems

While not included in the Guiffrida/Tinto model, the Student Support Systems variable domain was added because all students discussed the influence of various formal and informal campus level supports that influenced their success.

All 17 of students who were interviewed indicated that some form of campus level student support influenced their success at UIC. In almost all cases that support was considered a positive influence.

Twelve of the students mentioned the influence of financial aid, and of those, 11 indicated that financial was an important positive factor in their success. Four of the students emphasized the point by stating that the financial aid they received was critical to their being able to attend the university. Only one student indicated that financial aid would have been helpful, but due to his family's financial profile, he was not eligible.

The following two responses are representative of those who found financial aid a positive factor:

Carl: You know with financial aid, for the most part, financial aid covered most of the school -- but then I got scholarships too. Some semesters, if you don’t get the scholarships you need, or if they don’t come in at the time you need them, then you start to worry a little bit about tuition and cost each semester. Fortunately, for me, everything came through; whether it came through early, or a little later, it came through at some point to help me out….Oh, financial aid was a big help for college. Doing financial aid helped me take care of the expenses, you know, loans helped me. Truthfully, and in all honesty, if I didn’t have financial aid, I probably wouldn’t be able to be in college, or not be at an institution like this one. I grew up with only my mom, and she wouldn’t be able to afford this type of school.

Perry: ….the people who I know, like my friends, and people who are trying to get into school -- they say financial aid is very critical for them to come to UIC. For a lot of people who I talked to, financial aid was a factor that determined whether they would go to school or not, because the tuition has risen over the years; not just for UIC, but other schools too. Financial aid is a critical factor.

Perry: Yeah finances. Um…even though my financial aid paid for tuition and the books there are still other expenses that you have to support yourself while you’re here. You have to pay for meals while you’re here during the day; maybe dinner. You have to buy clothes, supplies, and just have money so you can pay for…usually, if you don’t have a part time job, you can apply for more financial aid which puts you more in debt -- or get a part time job. Over the years I borrowed one semester, and another semester I’d work. Get stable, and go back and forth with that. But um…overall it’s kind of a challenging thing. One day you cannot have lunch, and another day you’ll have some money so you can pay for things.

While the students appreciated the support of financial aid, it is important to note one recommendation for improvement:
Carl: Financial Aid, they’re okay, but sometimes they don’t have the direct answer for your questions, and that can mess you up. Sometimes you have questions and they can’t answer the question. Quite often, in my opinion, they can’t answer your question up front. You usually have to set up an appointment with your financial aid counselor, and that usually takes an additional few days. So if you’re trying to get something accomplished, it might slow you down a bit. But for the most part though, they’re pretty adequate. For the most part, if you’re just turning in paper work, or asking basic questions, FAQ’s — but anything above that, the people up front are not that effective. Sometimes I think they can be a little bit more knowledgeable.

Nine of the students mentioned the influence of the African American Academic Network (AAAN). Three of the students were positive about the support of the AAAN staff. Four indicated that while they were aware of the support, they did not use this campus level support office. Two students expressed concerns about the AAAN.

Two of the positive comments are as follows:

Hasan: You know what; I’ve seen the AAAN advisors a couple of times, and I know they have tutors there if you need help. The tutoring help was always there. When I was there they had a great tutor, V. She was a big help for African Americans. I used to get help in math and things like that. Yeah, V’s great.

Hasan: As I leave this school, I reflect on what could have been done. Or I speak to other students that are struggling, and they can’t get past these courses, and I think my AAAN advisor Mr. A., he’s no longer with us here at UIC, but you know we’d have an informal advisor session. You know, they’ll sit down and I guess they have criteria they work with, time management, yada, yada, yada, but that’s if a student actually comes in and sets up an appointment to speak with a AAAN advisor. I don’t think most students actually take the initiative, I mean, there are a lot of African American students who do not become involved with AAAN. If they’re not involved with AAAN, then they’re just out here by themselves, and it’s just a huge transition -- and I think that’s why a lot of them come [to UIC] and then you don’t see them here anymore. So I’ve been here for five years, and I’ve seen a lot of people who have come and gone, but I think it is important for them to get the basics of transitioning into the university coursework.

Isaac: My advisor’s name...J.(AAAN), from freshman year, he was my advisor and he was pretty much like family. I call him all him all the time. If I have a problem, I just look up to him. I was comfortable with him. If I need help, I call him up,...and if it’s something he thinks I should know, he will send me an e-mail or something like that. So pretty much like, if there is something he thinks I should know, he sends me an e-mail. I made a logical choice. Pretty much, administratively -- Joel is much help.

The two concerns expressed by students are as follows:

Andre: Yeah orientation, like, I thought it was fine, until they tell you, you have to go to the African American network advisee thing. I went and really didn’t understand what I was doing there. I mean, I know I’m Black. They gave me this paper work. My mother went to a meeting, and they didn’t show up. I went there for advising once and they didn’t know my classes. They had a meeting for someone else, and I was
there. And they were confused. It never worked. I only did it once. I knew I wasn’t going to do it again because it didn’t help.

David: I tried AAAN, but I just felt they couldn’t help me the way I needed to be helped, so stopped going there. I hadn’t been to too many administrators for help….the only one that I can think of is AAAN, but I haven’t been there since orientation.

Interviewer: So you just went to AAAN at orientation.

David: Yeah. And just off of that experience, that kind of keeps in with the non-supportive [category]. When I met with them, and I told them what my goals were….they were like, “our primary focus is trying to get you out of UIC.”

Interviewer: To get you out of UIC?

David: Yeah, and I was kind of taken back. I was like, really? He told me that I would flourish more in a historically black college as opposed to UIC. I hadn’t even started classes yet, and he’s telling me I should go. And it also didn’t help that first semester at UIC that I didn’t want to be here. There was a power struggle between me and my mom that my dad didn’t help with. I got into Morehouse, and I got in here. She said there is no family down there, if something happens, no one can go get you. UIC is close. It ended up being so late that I sent in my forms. I was forced into health and sciences and LAS. And that really didn’t help.

Five students talked about the value of their positive residence life experience. A representative response is as follows:

Kendrick: Just because I stayed in the dorms, it was pretty much a whole little community already. I tried staying in the dorms every weekend. I live on the north side, so every weekend I could go and just see the family, but I just stayed after a while. So I just stayed with my roommate and other friend. We would try to go downtown. Most of them lived in the suburbs so we would go to the suburbs. Come up with things to do -- fishing, things like that. Pretty much, most of the [residence life] staff has been, like lenient. They’re really relaxing. It’s not too much of a challenge. Some of the RA’s, they’ve been really nice, and I keep in touch with them. Some of the professors, they meet with you after class, they chit-chat about life -- you know. So that was really helpful. I guess the whole surrounding.

Three students mentioned the support of the orientation program and two mentioned the support of the staff of the Student Development Services office. One student had a good representative response:

Jamar: ....the orientation program was good. When they let you know that you have these advisors here. They let you know the resources that are available. And so I was able to connect with those resources, as I knew that they were available. You know, I made it a point to ask the questions, and get the issues that I had addressed. And luckily for me, everybody who I had questions for, had answers. But it’s funny because, for the most part, I had the tools that I learned.... in the service and as a parent; time management and task management. You know, those things; those were the tools that I had. Um, but as a little side note, a lot of younger students don’t have those skills, so maybe putting something in place that can kind of help students achieve those skills, learn those skills. For me the thing that was really the catalyst, you know that’s just an ingredient. Like, for instance, I first M, through.....he is a faculty advisor for the student organization that I’m in. That’s how I connected with him. Actually, no no no. I first met him...K. recommended that I participate in the student government election planning
committee….and M. was the faculty connection for that. And so we connected through that. He recommended me toward the student organizations that I’m in.

Interviewer: Is that a fraternity?

Jamar: It’s an offshoot of the BMI [Black Male Initiative]. You know, everyone is really helpful, supportive and encouraging….oh maybe you should look into this or look into that.

Three students mentioned the Writing Center as a source of support.

A representative response is as follows:

Marcus: ...after I found out about the Writing Center...I think there was one class, BA 100, ...the staff, the counselors were actually teaching the class. They were like, this is where you need to go. This is the Writing Center. Then they would give you assignments like go to this place, and do this and that. Go out and see the campus.

They would give you suggestions and instructions on how to be successful, and that helped me find my way around and let me know where I could go get help....The Writing Center was a big help. Going to the Writing Center every now and then; they’ll help you out....

One student mentioned the role of the library as a place to concentrate on studies:

Ervan: When I was home, I lived with my uncle. I moved from my mom and my sister’s place, but my uncle wouldn’t be home until late because he’d be at work. It was me and the TV -- and we have regular TV, so there wasn’t much on during the day. I found myself watching programs I didn’t even like....anything to keep me from doing work.

That’s why I thought coming to UIC library would help. I figured I can just focus. Also you don’t want to spend your time in school all day. Even when I would have my friends, you can study too. We would sit and chat together. It was better than hanging out, where I wouldn’t study at all.

Other positive campus supports that were mentioned by students included the Black Student Union, TRIO, the Wellness Center, SEO Math Tutoring, the PORT program for athletes, and the GPPA program. These were all single mentions.

It is important to note that, while this is not a support, within the comments about financial aid, four students mentioned the challenges presented by the expense associates with required book purchases. The students also expressed concern about books and other materials that were never used for the course.

Extracurricular Activities and External Commitments

Fourteen of the students commented on extracurricular activities and external commitments experiences while in college, but it is important to mention that, in general, this group of students did not participate in multiple extracurricular activities. Only one student mentioned his involvement with two student organizations. One student indicated that he’d been involved in sports and clubs for a while. Two students were on UIC athletic teams; one gymnastics and the other track. One student was a member of the Black Student Union, and another was a member of a student organization in the College of Business. The primary extracurricular activity was employment – either on or off campus. Within their
comments, they discussed the benefits and challenges of extracurricular activities to their academic success. Generally, on-campus endeavors supported academic success, and off campus-activities posed more challenges -- particularly in relation to off-campus jobs.

Eleven of the students mentioned that, at some point, they held an on or off campus job. The following are representative descriptions of their experiences:

_Quenton:_ As far as the job at Fedex, my academics had gone down hill....probably because of lack of sleep...two to three hours a night, for six days straight. I don’t think that’s healthy at all. I guess you’re supposed to get 40 hours in five days. I didn’t get that.

_Interviewer:_ Do you feel the needed to work at Fedex?

_Quenton:_ Yeah I need money. This is my normal schedule: wake up; go to work; pick up my daughter from my brother’s house; drive all the way back south; go to my mom’s house; get her [the daughter] ready; take her to day care; drive all the way back down here; go to class; do my studying; go all the way back south; pick her up from day care; back down here -- It’s a lot. That alone, just having a baby, that’s a lot. As far as daycare being $196. a week; I need a job. Even though the state is helping me, my co-pay is still $180. Even having relationships. That’s a lot too. That’s its own...I guess in a way its kind of nice, time to go to the movies. I would say an outside commitment is trying to get in to med school. Trying to get professors to write recommendations. Doing volunteer work. Shadowing doctors. Lots of outside academic stuff.

_Marcus:_ Well for the on campus job. I didn’t want to take out too many student loans and everything. So I picked up an on campus job actually. At one point I was working two jobs and going to school full time. It was hard trying to focus. My on campus job, now that I’m towards the end, it’s actually quite beneficial. I can go to work and leave from there and then go. It was sort of a challenge when I was working both those jobs.

_David:_ Working in the writing center and having a break in between classes. Just to be able to go to work and get some extra money. I have a non-campus job too. The big difference is, the time it takes to do that one vs. being in the writing center and working in between classes, I am already here, the time would have been used here, might as well use it working. More on campus jobs would help. Unfortunately with the way things are right now that could be a big challenge.

The following are responses regarding involvement with student athletics and organizations:

_Lawrence:_ The largest one would be my role on the UIC gymnastics team. As an extracurricular activity. On the off season, which for us, is not really a quote unquote off season. You’re just not competing, but your training schedule doesn’t get any easier; it’s not like other sports, like baseball and football, where you just kick it and don’t do anything for three months. There is no such thing in gymnastics. There is no off time. But the off season you’re still going to be working out during school or 20 plus hours a week, three hours a day every day except Sunday. So that is...its very demanding. But at the same time the coaching staff and the academic department reinforces the need to keep up with your studies. They have different programs like PORT and they have required advising to actually have grade report sheets that are like interim grade reports that show if you’re doing okay. And if you’re not, they make sure to
provide you with a tutor, or whatever help you need. They have been helpful. In my studies even though they are the reason my studies are more difficult than the next student. But then, in the off season, I’m in season now, and um, it’s hard for a lot of professors to understand how long we’re actually gone. This year in particular I didn’t travel that much because I actually got mono in January. It wasn’t the best thing for my senior season. But we travel literally almost every weekend. And we’ll be gone the entire weekend. You have all those days of practice and then another 48 hours when you’re just out of state. Much of which is either eating, or preparing for the competition. You don’t have as much time as professors would like to think to do your studies.

*Carl:* One thing I got invited to was the Black Student Union meeting long before I came to Orientation. I went to those and they were helpful. They told you about financial aid, about prioritizing, about other student organizations -- everything to look out for going into your freshman year.

**University Social Systems/ Peer Groups Interactions**

When asked to rate the quality of relationships with faculty, teaching assistants, faculty, and staff, the survey results revealed that the students rated their relationships with their peers as most positive. The positive comments regarding peers were found in the interview responses as well, but overall, their comments fell into four categories: positive, negative, and two categories of responses in which student claimed they “never connected” with their peers, or “it depended on the friends.”

Responses representative of those students who found that their relationship with other students was positive are as follows:

*Franklin:* My sophomore year I lived in the dorms on the East side. I had a single, and I remember my first time being by myself -- that transition from my freshman year, when I had roommate in the dorms. That transition to being in the single was pretty tough for me. I got kind of depressed. I remember, I was in the library one day, and I tried to do some homework. I broke down and started crying. I called my dad. I told him...I’m alone; I’m lost. It was really traumatizing. He drove to see me to talk and to cheer me up, and he said, if you feel like you want to come home because it’s too tough, you can. I was like, no, I don’t want to come home. I remember thinking to myself; I wasn’t alone, because my friends were in the same dorm building and stuff like that. It was just that going to a room, a single, was kind of hard. That made me think that I had to adapt to it by spending more time with my friends. I would study with them, and spend less time in my room by myself. I didn’t tell my friends that I had a nervous breakdown. I just went to them for more social stuff. I chose how my dad helped me out. My family, my friends helped me out by being there and I just took it upon myself to go to them.

*David:* One thing that isn’t big on the campus, by being a big commuter school, there isn’t much of an influence among friends. Once you get here, you’re here, that’s it, and once you’re gone you don’t really talk too much. But when I met [names a student friend] there was a big difference. We hung out outside of school. Me and her, and other friends, we’d get together and study. Yeah, this is what was missing before. So, some way, try and create that community among UIC students, I think it’s needed. It’s not strong enough here.
Nelson: Like I said, they [student friends] really help to get your through those tougher times when you really need some kind of support. Um, even when there is no weight on you, it just makes things easier. Knowing that, you know, that I was going to go to class and come back and hang out with friends, even just for that day. As long as I knew that there was someone there I could hang out with from time to time, it makes it a lot better. Because you know they are going through the same things you are, even if it is with different majors or classes, whatever. You know you can go back there [residence hall] and talk to them about it, make jokes, laugh about it, and everything is fine. They’re not going to be there and say well, blah, blah, blah, this is how UIC works; you have to get used to it. They’ll say, yeah, that is a problem, I’m doing the same thing, and you can’t do anything about it, but we’ll just deal with it together; we’ll just help each other out.

Um, it’s probably one of the few things that really motivates you; that you can get through the whole thing. When you have friends like that, especially really close friends, you know that they’re never going to let you slip through the cracks. They are more than willing to say, hey, this is what you have to do. I’ll help you out, no matter what. There were times where you could see, people who wouldn’t normally study, were more than willing to come out and study with you, and it would push you too. Friends will easily make sacrifices to help you out with that, and you knew, even if it was tough, they would be there. So things like that made it to where, friends were driving to help you go further.

Out of classroom, like I said, as a commuter school, it’s hard to find extracurricular activities through the school. I never did any of that. There was always just...mainly because of the situation I was put in with those people on that floor, I had a social life. But I didn’t have to do it through the school. Go to a club and try to meet people, or sit on campus and try to start conversations. I had a group of individuals, who we were on an extremely friendly basis... there was never any need to go out and forcibly do this. Through them, we went to the UIC theatre. Through the school, we went to see things like Wicked. You can do these projects and stuff. I didn’t have to go with random people or join a group and go somewhere every Thursday or Friday or something. You could just go home do things within your group, and work around the system in a way. But it seems like it would have been extremely hard to meet people outside of the [residence hall] floor, or outside of the building, just because there is no way to find anyone; considering everyone is gone. When it hits Friday afternoon, don’t expect to see anyone until Monday morning....The main thing I guess, just laughing about the situation, was the best way to deal with it. When you sit back and you’re all just sitting there on a Thursday night and you start realizing that it doesn’t make any sense, you laugh about it, because it makes it go a lot easier. Because the last thing you want to do is be sitting in your room by yourself, writing a huge paper, and thinking about how UIC is going to mess with you in another way. So by just talking to someone else and saying I can’t wait ‘til something bad happens again, you can just laugh about it, and say that eventually we’ll get through the next four years somehow.

Brandon: Out of classroom, freshman year, I got involved...I lived on campus all five years. I got involved with the residence halls because I did want to make sure that I wasn’t just hanging out with the African Americans on campus. I wanted to make sure I got a diverse group of friends. I feel like if you have a diverse group of friends, there can be different things to talk about; different things to do; different social backgrounds. So I got involved in the residence hall association.

Lawrence: The majority of my closer friends are members of my gymnastics team; a few of which I live with now. They have all been very supportive. Pretty much from the
beginning, both scholastically and athletically, they all do well in school as well. We all like to do well together. We would always have the running joke that we have the highest GPA of the men on the team. We just like to come off as the ones that do try and have something to show for it. It’s just something at this point in your life that you should be doing the best that you can, and you should be proud of that. My friends have been a big part of that; they have pushed me to do better; and I have pushed them. We always make sure that we are on top of our studies, and on top of our training. It’s a collective effort to be the best possible.

Otis: I think….a lot of freshman, particularly that come to UIC; they’re not connected to the university. I would say the majority of UIC students are commuter students, and they have no sense of connection. They come to class during the day, and then they leave, they might grab a bite to eat, but that’s it. There is no connection. We call them U-Pass students or Parking Lot students. That was a word we used for them during orientation. There is no sense of connection. No interest in what’s going on campus. No interest in speakers. No interest in organization; just no connections. And I think your success rate automatically drops if you have no connection. You know, compared to other campuses which are resident halls oriented. People have a sense of community. People want to stay down there; they want to be involved in their campus. So I think that was my added bonus, I think that’s the reason why I was able to be successful here at UIC. Just having that bond with UIC….First year was very huge. It was kind of awkward. I went to a predominantly Black high school; predominantly Black elementary school. So it was a big adjustment…. It wasn’t as if I was oblivious to talking to a White person, or a White woman, or an Asian, or an Arab. I always had initial context here and there, but UIC allowed me to really challenge that interaction and really step out of my comfort zone and talk about theories, topics and issues. One of the things I really admired was finding a common denominator between…even if it was like basketball. Something we could talk about….Most of the friendships that I built were from study groups. And it’s so funny because I would see a whole class who didn’t know each other at the beginning of the semester; two, three hundred students, and at the end of the semester they all come together and build lasting relationships because, you know, when you’re up one to two o’clock in the morning, studying, you probably have side conversations. You’re talking. You have conversations about life. I think that’s the beauty of UIC. You have this interaction of people of different races…different…we’re all in the same boat. We’re all trying to get through this class. We lean on each other for support. That’s how I describe myself.

The three students who said that they “never connected” with other students were commuters. The following is a response of one of those students:

Hasan: More recently, I believe that at UIC you have to open up. They say that UIC is diverse, and it is, and I’ve experienced the benefits of diversity. I have Nigerian friends. bi-racial friends, friends from Malaysia. People you wouldn’t normally have lunch with, study with, or pull all-nighters with. You would never do that type of stuff. You know Chicago is broken down into their own…You just have to connect. Some people will connect with you, and they’re friendly. But I just think for the most part if you don’t connect it’s very difficult to connect here. Interviewer: So you’re saying that you have to put yourself out there, or its not going to happen. Hasan: No, it’s not going to happen. In my experience, and I’m pretty friendly, so I’m always looking to connect with someone, regardless of who they are, or what they look
like. But I think a lot of people, from where they come from, are hesitant to communicate with someone outside of where they come from; social class, ethnicity, etc…. and that’s a huge part of diversity. Here they say…diversity, diversity; one of the most diverse. But you have to look at the downside of diversity at this campus as well.

The two students who believed that peers could be either a positive or negative influence, depending on the student, were commuters. One of the students replied as follows:

_Ervan_: I was thinking about what I said about friends as a challenge. You really have to pick your friends; who you hang out with. Some are more focused on studying and getting work done, but there are other people who want to have a social life outside of class as well. The ones who want to have a social life outside of school, they tend to not focus as much, and depending on the group, you don’t want to feel left out, but you want to do the same things they do. And if the group doesn’t do homework a lot, then you’ll end up not doing homework. I try to hang out with people who are in the library studying all the time. I think it depends on how you pick your friends. It can be a great help if you have friends who really motivate you to learn. Because right now in chemical engineering, there are students who want to get their GPA’s up before they leave, so now they are trying to study. There are people in our group, and we tell them, hey, where are you going? You’re going home. You should stay, and try and get some work done. Stuff like that can really inspire someone and pull someone over. Even if they don’t want to that type of encouragement….At the same time, it’s a double edged sword, because if you have someone who is not interested in studying, they can encourage you to not study; it all depends on who you hang out with.

The lone student who thought that peers were a negative influence, was a commuter.

When the responses were further examined within the four categories, it became obvious that most the students who considered peer relationships as positive also mentioned that they lived in the residence halls. In fact, 9 of those 11 students lived in the residence halls for at least one year; 6 of the students lived in the residence halls for at least 3 years. One student spent one year living off campus, but within walking distance of the campus, and only one student was a commuter all four years.

The apparent relationship between positive perception of peers and experience in residence halls prompted us to take another look at the relationship between the survey items that asked the interviewees to rate the quality of relationships with various groups and resident status. We discovered the following:

Students who never lived in the residence halls:
- Relationships with students (1 to 6, 6 is good) 3.7
- Relationships with administrators (1 to 6, 6 is good) 2.9
- Relationships with faculty (1 to 6, 6 is good) 3.9

Students who lived in the residence halls (1 year or more):
- Relationships with students (1 to 6, 6 is good) 5.6
- Relationships with administrators (1 to 6, 6 is good) 5.0
- Relationships with faculty (1 to 6, 6 is good) 4.7
While our survey sample is too small to report the statistical significance of the responses, it is interesting to note that students with some experience in the residence halls perceive that their relationships with students, administrators, and faculty were generally better than their non-resident peers. This phenomenon should be investigated further. In addition to the relationship between positive perception of peers and experience in residence halls, it is important to note a few other themes related to the influence of peers:

Throughout the responses about peers, students consistently referred to themselves, and other students, as either “connected” or “not connected” to other students or to others on campus.

It is important to note that a number of the students described experience with depression or loneliness at some point while attending UIC. They explained that peers and family members helped them to overcome these feelings.

A number of students indicated that friends pushed, or motivated, each other academically.

A number of students also discussed the value of the diversity of students at UIC for their personal growth.

One student talked about the positive influence of his involvement with athletics and the students on his team.

Home Social Systems: Family and Friends

Earlier in this report, in the pre-college entry attributes section, the influence of family and friends from home was considered. As a final variable to consider during the college experience, we examine the influence of family and friends once again.

Of the 17 respondents, 14 discussed the positive influences of their parents on their academic success exclusively. In other words, their parents had no negative influence. The positive influences identified included encouragement, emotional support, financial support, serving as a role model, having expectations for academic success, providing advice about college, shielding from home responsibilities, and help with basic needs like food care packages, or a ride to the campus when they missed the train. Representative responses are as follows:

**Brandon:** My family was very helpful. They helped me every semester. Every semester I finished. There were times I did not do so well and they always told me that, as long as I was determined to finish, I would finish.

**Andre:** My mother and father pretty much back me all the way. Other family I can’t talk about. Most of them didn’t go to college. I mean, I don’t even know if they have a high school diploma. My father has some college. My mother has some college. So they can at least help me a little bit. You know, at least in telling me what happens. They have been pretty much, my two biggest supporters.
Hasan: Number one [support is] family, I’ll be the first to graduate in my immediate family, from a post secondary institution, so, just encouragement, support, words of wisdom, advice, feedback on certain things that are actually taking place, involvement. Making sure my grades are up to par if I’m not doing too well, and things like that. I just have a great support system from my parents.

Isaac: Family for me...sometimes I’m down...like in my English class....if I get a D or something, I just call my parents, and they cheer me up.... If I need money, I call them up. Like last week, Saturday, I was just sitting in my room....My mom called, and I told her I was hungry, and she said, don’t worry I’ll bring you food. So she actually bought me food....it’s like a 45 minute drive. Family, my dad, and my mom, and my brother have pretty much supported me. I have a brother and two sisters. One older, and two younger ones. Everyone is in college right now. So pretty much everyone supports us when it comes to school.

Carl: My mother as far as college goes, would always try to do things for me; she would always try to do anything she can for me so I wouldn’t have certain worries. Like my mom still, if I come home, she still washes my clothes. Or if she goes grocery shopping, she still buys things that I like to eat and drink. Little things like that. If I was living on campus or if I lived in my own apartment I would have to worry about doing little things like that, chores around the house, paying bills and things like that. Bills I take care of myself. I have my own cell phone payment and my own car payment. I always pay my own bills. She’ll do little things to help me out. My grandmother, she is the same way, if I come around, she’ll do things to help me out. Or do things she thinks will help in the long run. One thing that my mom was always worried about, me coming here, is just being distracted; but it worked out.

Otis: In a sense, I had to decide, should I stay living at home or make the transition of living on campus? So then I finally moved on campus, a lot of my family, (not to say problems), but issues were eliminated. Because my mother, she worked real well with me, she was like you know what?...any little thing that happens in the family, I’m not going to call Otis because I know you have things you have to worry about on campus, so I can call you time to time to check in. Which was great, because you know, it helped me focus on classes, and on my college career, and also stay connected to my family. Interviewer: So they made that adjustment with you when you moved on campus.

Otis: Yeah. And that is the support structure with my family. My mother recognized that I was dealing with, I would come home and then I got to deal with this. She recognized that and she worked with me during that transition.

Otis: I think, financially they were very supportive. My father, he was the breadwinner. He was the provider. He works in the area. He actually works at the South Water Market and Produce Company. He would always call me to ask, do you need any money? He always asks me if I need money. He’s always been supportive. He always motivated me to get an education. He only did some college. He always wanted one of his sons to go on to college and get an education. He was proud that. There was a little story that UIC pushed the produce company backwards. He was mad that UIC moved his company. But now he’s proud, because, now my son attends there. He has a new affection, a new connection to the university. He has no bad blood with UIC. My mother has always been supportive. She’s always championed education ever since I was in kindergarten. She was always there to help.
Jamar: My dad, he’s a teacher. I can talk to him whenever I need to about whatever. He’s definitely one of my biggest role models and examples. He went back to school when he was thirty. I was like 8 or 9...years old at the time. He got his degree...he was done after five or six years. Been teaching since; and got his masters. He has been there as an example, and we have good conversations. Growing up my daddy was the closest thing to a working professional I had in my circle -- in my immediate vision....and he didn’t start teaching 'til I was 14 or 15 years old. Three and a half years later, I went away to the Marine Corps. My grandfather was a mechanic for Commonwealth Edison for thirty five years. My uncle was a factory worker, with several lay-offs. So it’s like not these are more well-off people -- your Oak Park’s and your Evanston’s -- these families who grow up with degree holding professionals. It’s common place. It’s nothing abnormal. They get these images...with their mothers...they already believe that...you know, if I do decide to go to school, I’m going to end up getting my degree and I’m going to get a good job and so on and so forth. They don’t have to overcome a mental reorganization. That’s step one. When you already know that doing the degree work and getting the degree is important, and it’s going to make a difference, it’s easier to do what it takes. But when you’re not sure...I bet there are plenty of people who if you ask them...what are you doing?...they’ll say, I don’t know, I’m just here. They have an inkling that it’s a good thing...they just don’t know. They don’t have the examples. My dad went to school, got his degree. His two sons....I’ll be a degree holder in August, and my younger brother has had his degree for two years....and that’s no accident. And we’re also...as we got older, we’ve been introduced to people; other African Americans who are accomplished. It adds to your sense of okay...there is some method to the madness.

Five of the 17 students mentioned the influence of their brothers. In three cases, their brothers helped them with college advice. In one case, the student’s younger brother was “his Zen,” and in one case, the student felt he needed to succeed to be a role model for his younger brothers.

Brandon: Whenever I need to get away from this place, I would go home. The minute I would go home, I would forget about everything I had to do. Someone is in the house, enjoying themselves and having a good time, or my brother, who I’ve gotten close with since I came to college; we’d just relax, and enjoy each others company. He’s in high school and I’m in college. We don’t have time to hang out. He was like my Zen. I needed that, to [re]connect on Sunday night or Monday morning, and hit it again....And I do that once a month or twice...once a month usually. Of course it’s a lot less now because its time for me to get older and you know and heal my self. Every now and then, I’m going to go home.

Marcus: My brother, he made sure I knew the material he gave me suggestions like if this is class is hard, you need to make sure you go to this class every day, or whatever, whether you feel that you know the material or not. They might like, allude to a certain point, and that might be on the test. Just having a person that went through, my brother was sort of like my mentor....like he went through it and he gave me tips on how to be successful at UIC and how to do well in classes.

Hasan: I have had a real difficult life. I’m the type of person who’s able to accept what I’ve actually been through, and actually make the necessary changes so I can move forward. So I am able to take the negative and make it positive. For instance, two summers ago, my oldest brother was shot three times in an alley. So...you have to take that, how do you continue to go to school and you know...yada yada yada. Who wants
to go to school...and be shot three times for nothing? You know what I’m saying? My father, you know, he has a drug problem. Just getting past all of the things, the problems that people have in their family....you have to take that in, and once they see that you want to do better than that makes them, say okay...well my brother he’s actually pursuing education. Once I leave here, I am actually going to become a teacher....My youngest brother...I have to be that model for him.

One student talked about challenges that family posed, and that this situation motivated him to “want to do more.”

David: I’m just saying what they have not done. I actually wrote about this in the paper. When I talked about my family, as far as, selling drugs, going to jail, and not actually achieving much outside of high school....and just knowing that I wanted to go above and beyond that. I want to see the world and go past the four corners of Adams and Kostner.... and maybe take a trip to Italy one day....or Paris -- just go above and beyond. They don’t quite grasp that concept, its more, lets kick it at home, watch TV, drink, smoke, and um, we have that constant battle. But I hear, you know, you’re kind of boring, because you don’t want to do the things we want to do. And I’m like, no I just want to do more than what you want to do.

One student discussed the challenges of child rearing.

Jamar: I’m sure you can imagine....going to school and taking care of a toddler. When you get done with school, it requires so much attention. I could never really get started with school work ‘til after the kids go to bed. Half the time I’m taking care of one child and half of the other time I’m taking care of two kids....and the one, the mother works in the evenings. So I get the kids to bed. By the time that’s done its like 9:30 or 10. I’ve got my own evening things to do. That is difficult I guess.

Friends from home seemed to have almost no influence on the participants. Only two students discussed a minimal role of friends from home.

Ervan: I had friends who were UIC students. They were the ones I was with at the library. Outside of campus life, my best friends from high school....we’d hang out every now and then. Every now and then I go play ball if we had a day off. I’d see them every now and then....only occasionally.

Marcus: I actually spent a lot of time off campus. A lot of my friends they were actually going to Columbia, Columbia is on Roosevelt. They are doing animation....so I would sometimes go out there and hang with them. They would sometimes come here and get guest passes for the recreation center and we would sometimes play basketball -- every now and then. Off campus life was interesting. We would go see movies and stuff...
Conclusions and Implications

The African American male students who generously shared their experiences through their survey and interview responses were aware that they would not be the main beneficiaries of this research. They all expressed an interest in informing UIC, and more important, in improving the “pathway” for future African American male students. Whether administrator, faculty, staff, parent, sibling or peer, those involved in the academic lives of the African American males in this study interacted with the students at various points along the pathway to their success. Some interactions facilitated their progress, and others presented obstacles. The study findings reveal that there are numerous factors that influenced the success of each student. Each actor in the life of a future student may find the recommendations of this report useful, but we would propose that a broader awareness of the full complement of factors that contribute to the path to success may improve the effectiveness of each individual actor. While each actor performs a unique and important role, the awareness of the network of support may improve the advice and support that the students need to succeed. To that end, it may be useful to gather key actors representing each factor together on an annual or semi-annual basis to discuss the role and function of each, to plan support activities and communication, and to learn about gaps and redundancies.

For each major actor, we have developed a list of recommendations. While it was a challenging task, we have attempted to list the recommendations, in priority order, based on the interview responses of the students. There is no environment in which it would be easy to address every recommendation immediately. The current fiscal environment presents even greater challenges. At the same time, the priority listing helps us to begin our efforts with the recommendations students have told us are most important for their success, and to make sure that we are not cutting the supports that are most critical. It also helps us to stage, or phase, our response over some reasonable timeframe. In addition, there may be recommendations that have less to do with additional resources than a change in the way we do what we do.

The recommendations are presented with four audiences in mind: UIC leadership and staff; UIC faculty; UIC students, particularly African American male students; and the parents of the students. Each set of conclusions and recommendations are informed in two ways; through the themes drawn from the survey and interview responses of the students, and through the responses from three direct questions asked of students at the end of each interview: If you were to give advice to a African American male freshmen about how to succeed at UIC, what would you say?; If you were to give advice to UIC about what could be done differently to help UIC students to succeed, what would you say?; and What should UIC be sure not to change?

The responses drawn directly from the answers to these questions are listed in italics.
Advice to UIC Leadership and UIC Staff Address the Critical Need for Financial Aid

- Maintain levels of financial aid, and continue to search for new sources of financial assistance.
- Continue to offer financial aid information sessions to students and their parents.
- Ensure that communications with students and their parents regarding financial aid and other forms of financial assistance are communicated effectively.
- *Ensure that front-line financial aid counselors are well informed, and are regularly receiving professional development, so that they have the most updated and accurate information.*
- Offer financial aid for summer session.
- Maintain a commitment to provide on-campus jobs for students.

Improve College and Campus Level Advising

- Advisors should have adequate training to interpret the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) report.
- Advisors should have ongoing training regarding the programs of the students whom they are advising.
- Whatever the source of advising (campus, college or department level), students should be informed of the scope and limitations of the advising they will receive from the advisor.
- Advisor guidance should generally be informative, positive and encouraging when working with students. (e.g. Advisors should say, “your grades are not where they need to be, so you need to work harder if you do want to get to medical school, not …you shouldn’t do medicine.”)
- Advisors should provide specific guidelines. (e.g. “Successful students typically study 20 hours a week.”)
- Advisors should be aware of all of the academic support units on campus (i.e. the UIC Writing Center and the Math Learning Center).
- Take a closer look at ways AAAN might provide support for a larger proportion of African American male students.

Ensure that Departments Continue do a Good Job Advising their Students (distinguished from college or campus based advising).

- *Help undeclared students find a major sooner, (by sophomore year), because the best advising is in the departments.*
- If it becomes obvious that a student has chosen the wrong major, advisors should help the student transition to a major of interest.
Consider What May be Learned about the Benefits of Residence Life

- Students indicated that living in the residence is a great experience; be mindful of helpful linkages between academic life and residence hall life.
- Seek out ways to help commuting students build social and academic connections with their peers on campus.
• Continue the helpful peer [and faculty] mentoring that has taken place in the residence halls.

Create a Better Transition, Particularly for Students from CPS.

• Better define expectations for new students.
• Ensure that students know what they must do (particularly CPS students) to be well-prepared for college.
• Create structure for freshmen so that they stay focused.
• Improve the advising structure.
• Improve mentoring programs, particularly for first generation students who don’t know “how to do college.”
• Ensure that UIC’s New Student Orientation continues to offer opportunities for students to meet other students and develop longer-term connections to other students.
• Ensure that UIC continues to do a good job showing students resources to help them.
• Continue to offer supplemental instruction of the type offered by Minority Engineering Recruitment and Retention Program (Engineering).
• Partner with CPS, regarding math and science preparation in particular, to ensure that students enter UIC prepared to succeed.

Maintain Academic Support Offered through the UIC Writing Center, the Math Learning Center, and the Library.

• A number of students spoke of the benefit they derived from the Writing Center and the Math Learning Center.
• For some students, the only place where they have access to a study environment is the UIC Library.

Hold Faculty More Accountable for the Improvement of Teaching and Student Learning.

• Create opportunities for faculty to take lessons from the great instructors [several were named].
• Use fewer adjunct instructors.
• Where small class size is not possible, reinforce faculty efforts to create small class type experiences (e.g. work in small break-out groups, small group help sessions with teaching assistants)

Create Opportunities for Freshmen to Talk to Each Other.

• New Student Orientation was identified as a mechanism for early engagement that,
in some cases, led to long term friendships.

- Encourage students to engage in the campus.
- Promote school spirit.
- Create more opportunities for weekend socializing
Be Mindful of Campus and College Level Policy that May Undermine Student Learning

- Be careful about the temptation to create large class sections exclusively; particularly for freshmen.
- Give serious consideration to any changes to transfer policy that would cut off possibilities for students to articulate coursework that supplements UIC courses, or that would hinder student progress during the summer.

Market UIC’s Strengths to Students

- Acknowledge and promote the benefit of the location of UIC for student personal and professional growth.
- Acknowledge and promote the diversity of the students as a critical positive factor student personal and professional growth.

Identify Ways to Inspire Students to Succeed

- One student mentioned that the Guaranteed Professional Program Admission (GPPA) program would have “given [him] that extra push” to do well in high school.

Find Ways to Reach Out to Students Experiencing Depression

- It is important to note that a number of the students described experience with depression or loneliness at some point while attending UIC. We should consider mechanisms to connect them to on campus supports.
Advice to UIC Faculty

Don’t Underestimate the Inspirational Importance of Your Encouragement

- Assume that your students will do well.
- Don’t set the bar low; create appropriate challenges.
- When they succeed, give them a word of acknowledgement.
- When they face challenges, encourage them.
- Recognize that you are an influential mentor.

Use Every Opportunity to Engage Students in Academics

- Emphasize the importance of class attendance and study sessions.
- Hold regular office hours, and welcome students to seek assistance.
- Make sure that teaching assistants are good facilitators of learning.
- Make sure that teaching assistants are able to communicate effectively with students.
- Make sure that teaching assistants are able to work effectively with students of all cultures.
- Welcome students to seek help from teaching assistants.

Use Group Projects and Study Groups to Help Students Build Academic and Social Linkages on Campus.

- When asking students to form assignment work groups, be mindful that some students may not be comfortable approaching others, especially if new to UIC.
- If employing group projects, help students to manage group process and organization (i.e. identify a group leader, project timeline, and a meeting place).
- Be clear about the final product and assignment goal, and the benefit of group work in achieving that goal.

Appeal to Students’ Intrinsic Motivation for Learning

- Whenever possible, make links between course content and the interests and values of students (i.e. their professional goals and aspirations).
- Appeal to their interest in the subject matter.
- Help to make them aware of the relationship between what they are learning and skills they are building.

Recognize that Students Approach Course Content from Varied Perspectives

- Students indicated that they are more likely to engage in class discussion if it is evident that they can approach the material with different ideas about how to look at questions raised in class.
- Students prefer an open and friendly classroom environment.
- Students like to be informed about the material being covered, and then challenged to come to their own conclusions.
• Remember that they are undergraduates, and cover material at an appropriate level.

Be Prepared and Organized to Teach Each Class.
• Students expressed that it is difficult to understand material when it is not presented in an organized and thoughtful manner.

Be Careful in Your Grading Practices.
• Be sure that students know what is expected (e.g. clear statement in syllabus.)
• Be sure to carefully examine the relationship between the students work and the grade they are receiving; especially when teaching assistants are involved in the grading process.

Be Attentive to the Cost of required Books
• Ensure that books that students must purchase are truly required.
• When possible, offer students alternatives to book purchase.

Take Advantage of Opportunities to Learn Lessons from the Great Instructors [several were named].
• Engage in peer classroom observation of accomplished professors.
• Attend department, college, or campus sponsored faculty lectures.
Advice to UIC Students

Of the three questions, the first, advice to a new freshman, generated the most response and reflection from the students. Most were adamant and passionate about the strategies to succeed. Some of their responses were true to their own strategies for success, and other comments were more a recommendation from the ‘if I could do it all over, I would have done these things’ perspective. The list below delineates distinct themes that emerged within their responses.

Be Confident

- *College is totally doable, as long as you don’t get in the way of yourself. First believe that you can do it. Know that you can do it.*
- *Don’t let the concept of college overwhelm you... It is just another project to do ... with new people, and a new teacher. You will make it through this just like you made it through anything else.*

Financial Aid is Critical

- Become familiar with sources and processes to secure financial aid.
- Be sure to attend to financial aid application requirements each year in attendance at UIC.
- Be mindful of communications regarding financial aid requirements.

Establish a Relationship with Instructors to Gain Needed Assistance and Guidance.

- *Make sure your professor knows your name.*
- *Get to class on time -- that is very important.*
- *Visit your professors and your TA’s during office hours.*
- *Seek your professor’s help.*

Don’t Underestimate the Importance of Academic Advising

- Pay attention to the results of your placement tests, and the courses you are being advised to take.
- Make sure that you understand the proper sequencing of the courses you are taking.
- Make sure that you understand the options available to you as you consider taking challenging required courses (e.g. taking a statistics rather than a math class in certain majors).
- Ask your advisor (and others) for advice about opportunities to take small section classes.
Find Like-Minded Study Partners

- Although you may be accustomed to studying and working on assignments on your own, give serious consideration to the occasions when working with others would be of benefit. Working with others may help to provide moral support, and may better prepare you for group work in your post-graduate professional career.
• Learn the circumstances when you learn best by working alone (e.g. what subjects?), and when you learn best by working with others.
• If you can find someone, or some group of friends, who can help out, it makes it a lot easier.
• Find a group of friends you want to study with, and make sure they have the same goal.
• Find other people who you can be friends with, who are relatively intelligent or find the material kind of easy. Stick with them.
• It's not about sticking together because you're a minority. It doesn't matter what race you are; it's about getting it done and surviving your classes. And that is the unifying thing. -- We're all trying to study and pass our classes.

Maintain Academic Focus

• Don’t get distracted; especially during the first semester.
• Think about the connection between the time and money you are investing, your ultimate goal, and doing well in the courses you are taking in order to meet your goal.
• Stay focused! You are here to get a diploma. If you are not here for your degree, you are wasting your time.
• Stay focused on classes, first and foremost.
• Pay attention to what is expected of you!
• Go to class no matter what. Attendance may not be required, but even if you think it’s pointless, if you go to class, at least you hear what the teacher is talking about.
• Students who feel that the lack of an attendance requirement is permission to not attend are often the students who do not persist.
• Get your books.
• You have to study. Take time to study for your courses, especially during your freshman year.
• School is the priority.

Find Opportunities to Build Your Math and Writing Skills

• If your math skills are strong, don’t let time lapse between math courses, or courses that require math.
• If you need to strengthen your math skills, don’t hesitate to take a course that will get you up to speed, even if you need to take that course at a community college.
• Make sure that you are aware of the math requirements for your major.
• If you need to strengthen your writing skills, don’t hesitate to get assistance from the UIC Writing Center.
• If possible, find a student who will read your work and give you advice about your writing.

Get Involved on Campus (with Some Warnings)

Advice about social engagement was offered as a double-edged sword. While students offered that engaging in campus co-curricular and social life is important in becoming fully immersed in UIC life, they also indicated that it is important to distinguish between beneficial social life and that which can hurt chances for success.
Thus, this advice came with both recommendations and warnings:

- **Join groups to become busy with campus life; it puts structure into your life.**
- **It is important to do sports. It’s a great de-stressor. It clears your mind.**
- **Its college; freshman year; you’re going to have fun and you’re going to drink and everything, but after a while, people flunk out easily.**
- **Some friends just wanted to party; that’s pretty much all they did; these people didn’t come back the second semester.**
- **Don’t get caught up in the hype of things -- the excessive partying and things like that. If you come to college with that mentality, you don’t need to be here.**
- **I didn’t do a lot of (social) things like basketball games, I kind of wish I had.**
- **Live on campus if you can afford to. It makes the transition from high school friends to college friends much easier. Join student organizations. That will help (the transition) as well.**

In summary, students seemed to be saying, get involved with the campus social life in moderation, particularly your first semester of freshman year.

### Manage Your Time

- **Within the first semester, find balance (in your schedule).**
- **Manage your time well. Make smart choices about how you manage your time throughout the semester.**
- **Time management is vital throughout your whole academic course of study.**
- **Stay on top of things.**

### Make Use of Support Systems

- **Use the academic support facilities more than I did. The first three years here, I didn’t use advisors.**
- **Use advisors; particularly departmental advisors.**
- **Use the Writing Center**
- **Use the academic help offered by professors, teaching assistants, Honors College tutors, and study groups.**
- **Seek help. You have to find time to get the help regardless of the obstacles.**
- **UIC is a very friendly school ... there are plenty of places to go to help you academically ... that helps us get through the challenging courses. ... I am stubborn and scared to ask for help, but I would be quick to tell anyone to get the help when you need it.**
Advice to Parents

Be Attentive to Financial Aid Deadlines

- Become familiar with sources and processes to secure financial aid.
- Be sure to attend to financial aid application requirements each year in attendance at UIC.
- Be mindful of communications regarding financial aid requirements.

Don’t Underestimate Moral Support from Family

- Don’t underestimate the importance of your support when he succeeds, your encouragement when he is challenged, and your high expectations that he will be a success.
- The support of his siblings, especially his brothers, whether older or younger, is important.
- Let him know that his goals are important to you.

Academic Support Can Come in a Variety of Ways

- Direct academic support (ie. help with subject matter) or indirect academic support (purchasing a laptop computer) are appreciated and contribute to academic success.

Understand that Campus Life Plays a Role in Academic Success

- Living on campus can be a benefit to student success, but even a commuting student can benefit from involvement in more campus life.
- It is important to students for you to help minimize distractions from their studies.

Sometimes a Successful Student Just Needed a Home Cooked Meal

- A number of successful students expressed deep appreciation for the everyday ways in which their parents supported them. A number of students mentioned special dinners or food care packages from mom. Some mentioned help from dad – like a ride to the campus when he missed a train.
References


Appendix 4


A Report on the Undergraduate Students who didn’t return for Fall 2014

prepared by the Office of Academic & Enrollment Services

Summary: This report examines two facets of the fall 2014 ‘eligible but not enrolled’ population. These are undergraduate students who did not continue at UIC, although they were academically eligible. First, we report on the students who opted to enroll at other institutions rather than UIC - using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker data. Second, we administered a brief survey of these ‘non-returning’ students to seek better information on the factors that contribute to a not enroll decision. Sixty-one percent of students who did not enroll were in good academic standing at the end of spring 2014 term. Of the ‘non-enrolled’ students, 44% were enrolled at another institution during fall 2014 term.

Background

A total of 15,255 degree-seeking undergraduates completed the Spring 2014 term at UIC. Of that total, 2591 students graduated at the end of spring or summer term. A total of 250 were assigned drop status for academic reasons. The total number of returning students enrolled in Fall 2014 was 11,400 thus, 1014 students were eligible to return, but did not enroll. Without additional information, we can only speculate on the reasons these students did not enroll. Some might have transferred, others just stopping out. Anecdotal evidence suggests a myriad of factors contribute to the decision to not continue at UIC – academic reasons, financial factors, and personal influences. This report examines two facets of the fall 2014 ‘eligible but not enrolled’ population:

- Tracking subsequent enrollment at other U.S. postsecondary institutions using the National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker; and
- Understanding the reasons for not returning to UIC through a survey of the students.

This is the third year that Academic & Enrollment Services has prepared this report and administered this survey. Some comparisons to prior year findings are included.

The Target Sample 2014

The target sample is the approximately 1000 undergraduate students who were eligible to enroll for the Fall 2014 term, but did not enroll. This sample includes students in good academic standing and on probation; and students at all class levels (freshmen to seniors). Table 1 provides a summary profile of the students in the population for the analysis.
### TABLE 1: Characteristics of the Students Eligible to Enroll Fall 2014, but Did Not Enroll (N=1014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>College (Spr. 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Afr Amer 9%</td>
<td>CBA 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Hispanic 25%</td>
<td>Education &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Asian 19%</td>
<td>Engineering 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Caucasian 40%</td>
<td>CADA 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other 7%</td>
<td>LAS 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Standing</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Standing</td>
<td>AHS 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad Difficulty</td>
<td>CUPPA &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Methods

This project is designed to gather information about UIC undergraduates who decide not to continue their enrollment. The sample was 1014 UIC undergraduates who completed the Spring 2014 term and were eligible to enroll in the Fall 2014, but did not enroll.

**Phase I:** In order to determine if the students were enrolled at another institution during the fall 2014 term, a request was submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker system. As a member of the Student Tracker service, UIC is able to track student enrollment at over 3600 U.S. institutions. A request for subsequent enrollment of the not-enrolled students (N=1014) was submitted in November 2014.

The file with subsequent enrollment records from NSC was matched to UIC records and analyzed to provide summary information disaggregated by student characteristics.

**Phase II:** The second phase of the analysis was designed to gather information about students’ reasons for not continuing their enrollment at UIC. A brief survey asking students about the factors that influenced their decision not to enroll during the Fall 2014 was administered to the 1014 students who were eligible, but did not enroll.
Results

**Phase I Results:** From the 1014 records submitted to NSC, a data file yielding 445 usable student enrollment records was returned to UIC. The 445 students were enrolled at 103 different institutions. Additional points about the subsequent enrollments include:

- 48% of the students were attending a four-year institution
- 90% were attending an institution in Illinois
- 65% of the students were in ‘Good Standing’ at the end of spring 2014 term at UIC.

Table 2 shows characteristics of the students with a subsequent enrollment record. Table 3 shows the top subsequent enrollment institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Did Not Return</th>
<th>% with subsequent enrollment record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1014</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Standing**

- Good Standing: 623 (50%)
- Academic Difficulty: 391 (34%)

**Class Level**

- Freshman: 300 (62%)
- Sophomore: 220 (59%)
- Junior: 218 (48%)
- Senior: 276 (16%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>2yr / 4yr</th>
<th># in Good Standing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS @ URBANA</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC - WRIGHT COLLEGE</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC - HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>MORaine VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHAMBERLAIN COLLEGE OF NURSING</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLLEGE OF DUPAGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEPAUL UNIVERSITY</td>
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<td>TRITON COLLEGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC - MALCOLM X COLLEGE</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC - RICHARD J. DALEY COLLEGE</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC - HARRY S TRUMAN COLLEGE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Phase II Results:** Survey invitations were sent to 1014 non-returning students. A total of 284 invitations were opened (28%) and 126 students responded to the survey – a 12% return rate of the total population, 44% response from those who opened the email. While this is a low response rate, we fully expected that a number of students had disengaged from UIC and would be reluctant to respond. Results reported in this section should be interpreted with the caveat of the low response rate.

However, it is useful to examine the feedback both in the survey responses and the open-ended responses to understand the students’ experiences and perspectives.

Table 4 provides a profile of the survey participants. The distribution of the participants across racial/ethnic categories and college of enrollment approximate the distribution of the target population. A total of 90 students -- 71% of the respondents were in academic ‘good standing’ at the end of spring 2014 term. That is, their cumulative course performance at UIC did not signal academic difficulty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population (N=1014)</th>
<th>Respondents (N=126)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfrAm</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engin</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADA</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUPPA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Standing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Standing</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey allowed students to indicate factors that influenced their decision to not enroll for fall 2014. The factors were grouped as: academic, financial, and personal. Within each set of factors, students were able to indicate multiple factors within each group or indicate that none of the factors listed in that group influenced their non-enrollment. Table 5 reviews the responses to the survey questions. Also shown are the responses to the same question for the Fall 2012 and Fall 2013 non-returning student survey.

A few general observations about the survey responses are noted below:

- The most frequently cited factor was a change in students’ financial situation.
- Overall, students cited an academic factor more frequently than financial factors or personal factors in their reason for not enrolling for fall term.
- Students indicated combination of academic influences (more than one factor), more frequently than multiple financial factors or personal factors.
- Issues around academic advising, academic support and feeling overwhelmed (all academic factors) were always cited in conjunction with other academic factors, i.e., never cited as the sole academic factor.
- Students citing inadequate academic advising as an academic factor decreased over the 3 years of the survey administration.
### Table 5: Summary of Non-Returning Student Survey Responses

#### Q: How likely are you to enroll at UIC in Spring 2014?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Likely</strong></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Somewhat likely</strong></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undecided</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Somewhat unlikely</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Unlikely</strong></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Q: Following is a list of academic/financial/personal factors that may or may not influence your decisions about enrollment. Please read each statement and check those that contributed to your decision to not enroll at UIC for the Fall 2014 term. (Check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Factors</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved all that I wanted to achieve at UIC</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed my major/academic interest</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses were not challenging</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with my grades</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't register for the classes I needed</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelmed by the demands of college</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive adequate academic advising</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive adequate academic support</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy with quality of instruction</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure about my academic goals</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to another institution</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these factors contributed to decision</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Factors</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced a change in my financial situation</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not anticipate the full cost to attend UIC</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel the education at UIC is not worth cost</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive adequate financial aid</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job interferes with my academic success</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to get work experience</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these factors contributed to decision</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Factors</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health related problem (personal or family)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't seem to fit in at UIC.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with campus social life</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in personal circumstances</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed my friends and family from home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not balance work and school</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not balance family and school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these reasons contributed to decision.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final item on the survey was an open-ended question which simply asked: “Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about why you are not enrolled at UIC this fall?” A total of 54 students (43% of the students) provided some feedback. The responses fell into the following general categories (in order of frequency of comments):

- Financial concerns including financial aid, cost to attend, and cost/benefit for value
- Personal factors that were key influences — e.g., health, family matters.
- Academic concerns —
  - Admitted to a major program at a different institution (primarily nursing)
  - Dissatisfaction with classroom teaching, academic program and advising
  - Temporary absence associated with internship or co-op experiences
  - Dissatisfied with academic performance/in academic difficulty (probation)
- Job opportunity/entrepreneurial venture
- Course offerings/scheduling concerns

Representative quotes below with student class level and college convey sentiments on some topics of concern:

_Couldn’t afford full tuition out of my pocket._
Freshman, LAS

_I failed my classes because I worked a lot._
Freshman, Engineering

_I was not accepted into UIC’s nursing program, so I had to transfer to another school._
Junior, LAS

_I work fulltime and the math classes that I need are 5 day classes. That’s just not feasible with my work schedule. It would be nice if UIC offered 2-3 hour long math classes._
Senior, LAS

_My course schedule allowed me to take classes at Harper, which is closer to home and work and is also significantly cheaper. I plan on registering at UIC for the spring 2015 semester._
Senior, Engineering

_Only transferred (to UIC) to build my transcript during a year off from UIUC originally._
Senior, Engineering

_.. Critiquing the advising was like poking a beehive with a stick._
Junior, CBA
Observations

This is the third year of the non-returning student survey. Contrasting the response from prior administrations, financial challenges continue to be the most frequently cited reason that students don’t return. It is interesting to note the significant decrease in the proportion of students indicating inadequate advising or academic support as reason for not returning.

Closing Thoughts

The reasons students don’t persist at UIC are varied. Sometimes students find a better academic or personal fit at another institution, for other students, transfer may have always been a goal. Unfortunately, some students may not find a fit, for some students financing education is too much of a burden. Gathering information in varied ways allows us to begin to piece together a complex picture of the individual student narrative to better inform campus efforts to improve student success.

For additional information on the Eligible but Not Enrolled Student Survey or other aspects of this report, contact Patricia Inman, pinman@uic.edu.
Appendix 5
A Report on the Undergraduate Students who didn’t return for Fall 2014

prepared by the Office of Academic & Enrollment Services

Summary: This report examines two facets of the fall 2014 ‘eligible but not enrolled’ population. These are undergraduate students who did not continue at UIC, although they were academically eligible. First, we report on the students who opted to enroll at other institutions rather than UIC - using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker data. Second, we administered a brief survey of these ‘non-returning’ students to seek better information on the factors that contribute to a not enroll decision. Sixty-one percent of students who did not enroll were in good academic standing at the end of spring 2014 term. Of the ‘non-enrolled’ students, 44% were enrolled at another institution during fall 2014 term.

Background

A total of 15,255 degree-seeking undergraduates completed the Spring 2014 term at UIC. Of that total, 2591 students graduated at the end of spring or summer term. A total of 250 were assigned drop status for academic reasons. The total number of returning students enrolled in Fall 2014 was 11,400 thus, 1014 students were eligible to return, but did not enroll. Without additional information, we can only speculate on the reasons these students did not enroll. Some might have transferred, others just stopping out. Anecdotal evidence suggests a myriad of factors contribute to the decision to not continue at UIC – academic reasons, financial factors, and personal influences. This report examines two facets of the fall 2014 ‘eligible but not enrolled’ population:

- Tracking subsequent enrollment at other U.S. postsecondary institutions using the National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker; and
- Understanding the reasons for not returning to UIC through a survey of the students.

This is the third year that Academic & Enrollment Services has prepared this report and administered this survey. Some comparisons to prior year findings are included.

The Target Sample 2014

The target sample is the approximately 1000 undergraduate students who were eligible to enroll for the Fall 2014 term, but did not enroll. This sample includes students in good academic standing and on probation; and students at all class levels (freshmen to seniors). Table 1 provides a summary profile of the students in the population for the analysis.
### TABLE 1: Characteristics of the Students Eligible to Enroll Fall 2014, but Did Not Enroll (N=1014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>College (Spr. 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Afr Amer 9%</td>
<td>CBA 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Hispanic 25%</td>
<td>Education &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Asian 19%</td>
<td>Engineering 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Caucasian 40%</td>
<td>CADA 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other 7%</td>
<td>LAS 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AHS 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CUPPA &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Methods

This project is designed to gather information about UIC undergraduates who decide not to continue their enrollment. The sample was 1014 UIC undergraduates who completed the Spring 2014 term and were eligible to enroll in the Fall 2014, but did not enroll.

**Phase I:** In order to determine if the students were enrolled at another institution during the fall 2014 term, a request was submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker system. As a member of the Student Tracker service, UIC is able to track student enrollment at over 3600 U.S. institutions. A request for subsequent enrollment of the not-enrolled students (N=1014) was submitted in November 2014.

The file with subsequent enrollment records from NSC was matched to UIC records and analyzed to provide summary information disaggregated by student characteristics.

**Phase II:** The second phase of the analysis was designed to gather information about students' reasons for not continuing their enrollment at UIC. A brief survey asking students about the factors that influenced their decision not to enroll during the Fall 2014 was administered to the 1014 students who were eligible, but did not enroll.
Results

**Phase I Results:** From the 1014 records submitted to NSC, a data file yielding 445 useable student enrollment records was returned to UIC. The 445 students were enrolled at 103 different institutions. Additional points about the subsequent enrollments include:
- 48% of the students were attending a four-year institution
- 90% were attending an institution in Illinois
- 65% of the students were in ‘Good Standing’ at the end of spring 2014 term at UIC.

Table 2 shows characteristics of the students with a subsequent enrollment record. Table 3 shows the top subsequent enrollment institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Did Not Return</th>
<th>% with subsequent enrollment record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1014</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Standing**
- Good Standing: 623 (50%)
- Academic Difficulty: 391 (34%)

**Class Level**
- Freshman: 300 (62%)
- Sophomore: 220 (59%)
- Junior: 218 (48%)
- Senior: 276 (16%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>2yr / 4yr</th>
<th># in Good Standing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS @ URBANA</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>CCC - WRIGHT COLLEGE</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPAUL UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRITON COLLEGE</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC - MALCOLM X COLLEGE</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC - RICHARD J. DALEY COLLEGE</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC - HARRY S TRUMAN COLLEGE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase II Results: Survey invitations were sent to 1014 non-returning students. A total of 284 invitations were opened (28%) and 126 students responded to the survey - a 12% return rate of the total population, 44% response from those who opened the email. While this is a low response rate, we fully expected that a number of students had disengaged from UIC and would be reluctant to respond. Results reported in this section should be interpreted with the caveat of the low response rate. However, it is useful to examine the feedback both in the survey responses and the open-ended responses to understand the students’ experiences and perspectives.

Table 4 provides a profile of the survey participants. The distribution of the participants across racial/ethnic categories and college of enrollment approximate the distribution of the target population. A total of 90 students -- 71% of the respondents were in academic ‘good standing’ at the end of spring 2014 term. That is, their cumulative course performance at UIC did not signal academic difficulty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population (N=1014)</th>
<th>Respondents (N=126)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AfrAm</td>
<td>90 9%</td>
<td>13 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>258 25%</td>
<td>31 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>190 19%</td>
<td>23 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>403 40%</td>
<td>50 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>73 7%</td>
<td>9 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1014 100%</td>
<td>126 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Population (N=1014)</th>
<th>Respondents (N=126)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>113 11%</td>
<td>10 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ</td>
<td>9 1%</td>
<td>2 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engin</td>
<td>138 14%</td>
<td>18 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADA</td>
<td>81 8%</td>
<td>6 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS</td>
<td>619 61%</td>
<td>87 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHS</td>
<td>14 1%</td>
<td>2 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>34 3%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUPPA</td>
<td>6 &lt;1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Academic Standing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Standing</th>
<th>Population (N=1014)</th>
<th>Respondents (N=126)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Standing</td>
<td>623 61%</td>
<td>90 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>391 39%</td>
<td>36 29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Class Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level</th>
<th>Population (N=1014)</th>
<th>Respondents (N=126)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>300 30%</td>
<td>36 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>220 22%</td>
<td>24 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>218 21%</td>
<td>34 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>276 27%</td>
<td>31 25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey allowed students to indicate factors that influenced their decision to not enroll for fall 2014. The factors were grouped as: academic, financial, and personal. Within each set of factors, students were able to indicate multiple factors within each group or indicate that none of the factors listed in that group influenced their non-enrollment. Table 5 reviews the responses to the survey questions. Also shown are the responses to the same question for the Fall 2012 and Fall 2013 non-returning student survey.

A few general observations about the survey responses are noted below:

• The most frequently cited factor was a change in students’ financial situation.
• Overall, students cited an academic factor more frequently than financial factors or personal factors in their reason for not enrolling for fall term.
• Students indicated combination of academic influences (more than one factor), more frequently than multiple financial factors or personal factors.
• Issues around academic advising, academic support and feeling overwhelmed (all academic factors) were always cited in conjunction with other academic factors, i.e., never cited as the sole academic factor.
• Students citing inadequate academic advising as an academic factor decreased over the 3 years of the survey administration.
Table 5: Summary of Non-Returning Student Survey Responses

Q: How likely are you to enroll at UIC in Spring 2014?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat likely</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unlikely</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unlikely</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Following is a list of academic/financial/personal factors that may or may not influence your decisions about enrollment. Please read each statement and check those that contributed to your decision to not enroll at UIC for the Fall 2014 term. (Check all that apply)

**Academic Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved all that I wanted to achieve at UIC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed my major/academic interest</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses were not challenging</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with my grades</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn’t register for the classes I needed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelmed by the demands of college</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive adequate academic advising</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive adequate academic support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy with quality of instruction</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure about my academic goals</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to another institution</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these factors contributed to decision</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced a change in my financial situation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not anticipate the full cost to attend UIC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel the education at UIC is not worth cost</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive adequate financial aid</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job interferes with my academic success</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to get work experience</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these factors contributed to decision</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personal Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health related problem (personal or family)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't seem to fit in at UIC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with campus social life</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in personal circumstances</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed my friends and family from home.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not balance work and school</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not balance family and school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these reasons contributed to decision</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final item on the survey was an open-ended question which simply asked: “Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about why you are not enrolled at UIC this fall?” A total of 54 students (43% of the students) provided some feedback. The responses fell into the following general categories (in order of frequency of comments):

- Financial concerns including financial aid, cost to attend, and cost/benefit for value
- Personal factors that were key influences —e.g., health, family matters.
- Academic concerns —
  - Admitted to a major program at a different institution (primarily nursing)
  - Dissatisfaction with classroom teaching, academic program and advising
  - Temporary absence associated with internship or co-op experiences
  - Dissatisfied with academic performance/in academic difficulty (probation)
- Job opportunity/entrepreneurial venture
- Course offerings/scheduling concerns

Representative quotes below with student class level and college convey sentiments on some topics of concern:

_Couldn’t afford full tuition out of my pocket._
Freshman, LAS

_I failed my classes because I worked a lot._
Freshman, Engineering

_I was not accepted into UIC’s nursing program, so I had to transfer to another school._
Junior, LAS

_I work fulltime and the math classes that I need are 5 day classes. That’s just not feasible with my work schedule. It would be nice if UIC offered 2-3 hour long math classes._
Senior, LAS

_My course schedule allowed me to take classes at Harper, which is closer to home and work and is also significantly cheaper. I plan on registering at UIC for the spring 2015 semester._
Senior, Engineering

_Only transferred (to UIC) to build my transcript during a year off from UIUC originally._
Senior, Engineering

_... Critiquing the advising was like poking a beehive with a stick._
Junior, CBA
Observations

This is the third year of the non-returning student survey. Contrasting the response from prior administrations, financial challenges continue to be the most frequently cited reason that students don’t return. It is interesting to note the significant decrease in the proportion of students indicating inadequate advising or academic support as reason for not returning.

Closing Thoughts

The reasons students don’t persist at UIC are varied. Sometimes students find a better academic or personal fit at another institution, for other students, transfer may have always been a goal. Unfortunately, some students may not find a fit, for some students financing education is too much of a burden. Gathering information in varied ways allows us to begin to piece together a complex picture of the individual student narrative to better inform campus efforts to improve student success.

For additional information on the Eligible but Not Enrolled Student Survey or other aspects of this report, contact Patricia Inman, pinman@uic.edu.
Appendix 6 - Peer Institutions’ High-Impact Practices

University of Louisville

Cultural Center Retention Program

http://louisville.edu/culturalcenter/retention/retention-plan-flyer

The Retention and Assessment unit within the Cultural Center was implemented in the Fall of 2014. This unit is responsible for designing and implementing an academic support system and program evaluation for student success initiatives. This support system acts as a supplement to current programming within the Cultural Center and the campus community. This unit will provide additional support to retention programs currently within the Cultural Center including the African American Male Initiative (AAMI), Hispanic/Latin@ Initiative, and the Woodford R. Porter Scholars.

Retention Programs:

African American Male Initiative

The African American Male Initiative at the University of Louisville seeks to increase the retention, graduation, engagement and overall success of African American males by addressing various scholastic and social challenges, through academic engagement, mentoring, peer connection, and student involvement.

Hispanic/Latin@ Initiative

HLI’s mission is to build strong support systems for Latino students at Uof L through programs and events that explore our many identities, develop leaders, and provide coaching and mentoring for life success, share campus resources, and build community and campus collaborations.

Woodford R. Porter Scholarship Program

The Porter Scholarship program is the largest scholarship organization at the University of Louisville. Named after a former university trustee, the late Woodford R. Porter Sr., the scholarship program was created in 1984. The mission and purpose are to provide academic, personal and professional support and to all recipients of this scholarship. Areas of support are based on the four pillars of promise which include scholarship, leadership, service and heritage.

African American Female Initiative

The African American Female Initiative was created Fall 2016 and offered to African American first year and transfer students. This program offers structured academic support and counseling to assist the success and academic development in the first year of college.

The African American Female Initiative is designed to provide intrusive advising support and to connect students to critical academic and campus resources which may encourage their success at the university. The overall goal of the African American Female Initiative is to support students’ academic performance and retention, as measured by first semester GPA and second semester enrollment.
The African American Female Initiative offers individual “coaching” with professional staff members. Students meet with a retention coach for 3 regularly scheduled sessions occurring through the academic year. The retention coach works with the students to create an academic support plan for the fall/spring semesters, answer personal and time management concerns, and to advocate for students with campus services and support.

Students are also encouraged to attend and participate in programming designed to support their holistic success at the University of Louisville. This programming includes:

- Cultural Center Career Development Series
- Cultural Center Diversity Lecture Series
- Women4Women events
- Empowering Ladies Together events
- American Association of University Women (AAUW) at UofL
- Women's Student Veterans Group
- Student-Parent Association
- College Women's Leadership Conference
- Elect Her
- International Women's Day
- Self-Defense Workshop
- Start Smart Salary Negotiation Workshop
- Clothing-Exchange Project
- Campus Talk
- Mentoring Program
- Equal Pay Day

African American Male Initiative (AAMI)

The African American Male Initiative at the University of Louisville seeks to increase the retention, graduation, engagement and overall success of African American males by addressing various scholastic and social challenges, through academic engagement, mentoring, peer connection, and student involvement.

After a year of planning by the African American Male Initiative (AAMI) Task Force, along with a preliminary unveiling of the program structure via a Campus Presentation, this student success program formally began in Fall 2011. AAMI seeks to increase the retention, graduation, engagement and overall success of African American males by addressing various scholastic and social challenges, through academic engagement, mentoring, peer connection, and student involvement.

The AAMI’s core Areas of Focus are expressed through AMPS:

- Academic Engagement
- Mentoring Support
- Peer Connection
- Student Involvement

Participants are encouraged to utilize academic support resources including REACH, TRiO, the Writing Center, formal study groups as well as attend AAMI workshops and events. A Mentoring Family Network allows upperclassmen, faculty, and staff to assist participants in navigating academic and personal challenges.

Additional AAMI Activities and Services included:
• **Brothers United (RSO)**
• **Early Arrival Program**
• **AAMI Living-Learning Community**
• One-on-One Academic Coaching
• Brotherhood Retreat
• Brothers of the Academy: Men of Color Networking Night
• Suited 4 Success
• Career Development Workshops
• Participation in campus intramural sports
• Student Leadership Conferences and Brotherhood Trips
• Suits & Sneakers Gala: AAMI Honors Ceremony
• Community Service Initiatives
• Brotherhood Events: Barbershop Talks, 3-on-3 Tournament, Game Night

**AAMI History**

After a year of planning by the African American Male Initiative (AAMI) Task Force, along with a preliminary unveiling of the program structure via a Campus Presentation, this student success program formally began in Fall 2011.

Initial funding was provided by committed AAMI Partners including the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and International Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Affairs, the Office of Community Engagement, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the University of Louisville Cultural Center. Fundraising and development to support AAMI goals and objectives is ongoing.

Assessment, participant feedback and evaluation of the African American Male Initiative continue to ensure participants are challenged and supported toward degree completion while ultimately improving institutional experiences and rates of graduation for African American males at the University of Louisville.
Wayne State (MI)

- **APEX Scholars program**: for students, most of whom are minority, that are slightly below admission criteria and need some extra help (special tutors, regular required progress meetings with advisors, etc.) [https://apex.wayne.edu/](https://apex.wayne.edu/)

- **Learning Community Initiative**: To support Wayne State University’s commitment to student learning and retention, the Learning Community Initiative seeks to enhance our undergraduates’ experience by providing all interested students dynamic, focused communities in which students, staff, and faculty learn and grow together [https://wayne.edu/learning-communities/listing/](https://wayne.edu/learning-communities/listing/)
  - RISE Learning Community: RISE is a Learning Community whose purpose is to provide a safe space for self-identified Women of Color (WOC) to come together for continued growth and education.
  - THE NETWORK: As part of the Network Learning Community young men work together, to support what they are learning inside the classroom.
  - APEX Scholars: The APEX (Academic Pathways for Excellence) Scholars Learning Community provides first-year APEX students with classroom and community experiences that promote the successful completion of an undergraduate degree at Wayne State University.

- Miscellaneous:
  - Nearly doubling the number of **student advisors** by 45 for a total of close to 90
  - **Financial literacy counseling**
  - **Peer and alumni counseling**
  - **Relaxing of financial barriers** which disproportionately affect African American students


Chicago State

- **Raising Expectations: A Black Male Initiative**: In 2008, Chicago State University received a two-year grant under the U.S. Department of Education: Predominantly Black Institutions Program (PBI) to enhance the educational outcomes of African American males. Among other initiatives, these funds are being allocated to support programs and activities that positively enhance the climate of the Chicago State University campus, communicate messages that emphasize the importance and relevance of the college experience, and analyze issues and disparities that serve as barriers to college attendance. [https://www.csu.edu/dosa/AAMRC/aamrcwelcome.htm](https://www.csu.edu/dosa/AAMRC/aamrcwelcome.htm)

- **Kwesi Ronald Harris African-American Male Resource Center**: The mission of the AAMRC is to actively increase retention and graduation rates of African-American men on campus while helping participants reach their highest levels of academic, intellectual, vocational, and personal success. [https://www.csu.edu/dosa/AAMRC/aboutus.htm](https://www.csu.edu/dosa/AAMRC/aboutus.htm)
Eastern Illinois University

- **S.T.R.O.N.G. MENtoring Program** aims to stimulate the minds of underrepresented male students and foster a climate that will enhance their abilities to overcome challenges that may hinder them from graduating. S.T.R.O.N.G.’s main purpose will be to cultivate our students into successful business and community leaders. We plan to: Provide study tables/groups as a way to increase cohesiveness and foster a climate of learning for men of color. Increase efforts to connect faculty/staff with male students of color. Have mentors/staff do weekly check-ups on students i.e., call log, lunch meetings, etc. [http://www.eiu.edu/minoraff/strongmentoring.php](http://www.eiu.edu/minoraff/strongmentoring.php)

- The **Peer Helper Program** was founded in 1985 by the Afro-American Studies Program in order to help African-American students make the transition to EIU. The program is now coordinated by the Office of Minority Affairs and has expanded to include all interested students. The program was designed to give new students both a sense of belonging and the confidence of knowing that there is someone to whom they can turn for help and guidance during the first, critical semester. Our main goal is to help our new students to successfully bond with the university socially and academically. [http://www.eiu.edu/minoraff/peerhelper.php](http://www.eiu.edu/minoraff/peerhelper.php)

- **African American Achievers** is a student organization that initiates discussion regarding the African American experience from an historical context to the present day. The goal of African American Achievers is to provide a favorable environment for academic and personal growth and for members to expand their knowledge base in the area of African American Studies through discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences, and academic excursions. [http://www.eiu.edu/slo/rso/rso_info.php?id=350](http://www.eiu.edu/slo/rso/rso_info.php?id=350)

Governors State (IL)

- **Campus Inclusion Team (CIT)** Governors State University’s Campus Inclusion Team (CIT) is a committee of students, faculty, and staff from a cross-section of disciplines university-wide. The committee was charged by GSU President Elaine P. Maimon, to be “proactive, thinking, and planning strategically” about issues of diversity and inclusion on GSU's campus. [http://www.govst.edu/CIT/](http://www.govst.edu/CIT/)

- **The Male Success Initiative (MSI)** is an enrichment program for male students, particularly men of color, which provides professional, academic, and personal development. MSI helps participants develop a game plan for success, from orientation to graduation. [http://www.govst.edu/msi/](http://www.govst.edu/msi/)

Illinois State

- **The Student of Color Process Group** provides a safe and supportive space for students of color to openly engage in dialogues around issues and concerns related to what it means to be in an academically rigorous and predominantly white environment. Such dialogue will occur in a therapeutic environment with qualified therapists facilitating the group process. Central themes to be discussed may include but are not limited to: academic concerns, family and romantic relationships, sexism, racism, micro-aggressions, imposter syndrome, stereotype threat, self-awareness, self-esteem, emotional health issues and other stressors related to being a person of color in this environment. Group members will also have an opportunity to provide and receive feedback related to how others experience them within the group context. [https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/counseling/group/](https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/counseling/group/)
• **Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LS-AMP)** Funded by the National Science Foundation, LS-AMP is a support program for minority students majoring in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Math, or any other STEM program. It offers a variety of support programs and services, but it really offers an opportunity to join a community of supportive peers, mentors, staff and faculty who will help you reach your short term and long-term goals in the STEM fields. [http://universitycollege.illinoisstate.edu/lsamp/](http://universitycollege.illinoisstate.edu/lsamp/)

**Northeastern Illinois**

• **Project Success** was established in 1968 as an educational access and equity program whose main focus was to recruit and retain African American students. Today, Project Success remains dedicated to access and equity by serving students of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, and backgrounds making it one of the most diverse programs on campus. Project Success also continues its tradition of creating innovative student support services that help retain students by providing support services that help students build a strong academic and social foundation while they are transitioning into the collegiate environment. [https://www.neiu.edu/university-life/project-success](https://www.neiu.edu/university-life/project-success)

• **Angelina Pedroso Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs** develops and provides programming and initiatives in a welcoming environment designed to educate, empower, and retain students from socially and culturally diverse backgrounds. [https://neiu.edu/university-life/angelina-pedroso-center-diversity-and-intercultural-affairs](https://neiu.edu/university-life/angelina-pedroso-center-diversity-and-intercultural-affairs)

**Northern Illinois**

• **Success and Succeed Plan (S-Plan)** pairs upper-level African American students with incoming students in the same major to help in the transition and completion of college. Following the principle motto, "we lift as we climb," our vision is to facilitate graduation for all participants. [http://niu.edu/blackstudies/student-resources/s-plan.shtml](http://niu.edu/blackstudies/student-resources/s-plan.shtml)

• **Black Male Initiative (BMI)** focuses on graduating as many African American males as possible. The organization started with five members in 2002 and has grown to over 80 and has a 100 percent graduation rate. Along with academic achievement, BMI is dedicated to community service, mentoring and leadership development and holds events such as motivational speakers and social outings. [http://niu.edu/blackstudies/student-resources/black-male-initiative.shtml](http://niu.edu/blackstudies/student-resources/black-male-initiative.shtml)

**Southern Illinois—Carbondale**

• **The Black Resource Center**, a unit of The Dean of Students, exists to foster students' educational experiences, encourage unity within the Black community, enhance the exploration of cultural and personal identities, and promote leadership and inclusive excellence. [http://smrc.siu.edu/brc/](http://smrc.siu.edu/brc/)
Southern Illinois—Edwardsville

- **Goal-Oriented African-American Males Excel (G.A.M.E.)** is a six-credit, two-semester program for entering freshmen. It is designed to assist African-American males in their success at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) through academic, social and co-curricular activities. This year 20 students will be selected to participate in the program. Each participant is an incoming freshman who is selected based on high school GPA, ACT score, leadership potential, volunteer experience, and potential for success at SIUE. [https://www.siue.edu/soar/project_game.shtml](https://www.siue.edu/soar/project_game.shtml)

- **Females of African-Descent Modeling Excellence (F.A.M.E.)** is a six-credit, two-semester program for entering freshmen. It is designed to assist African-American females in their success at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) through academic, social and co-curricular activities. This year 20 students will be selected to participate in the program. Each participant is an incoming freshman who is selected based on high school GPA, ACT score, leadership potential, volunteer experience, and potential for success at SIUE. Please note that there is a $45 application fee due when the application is returned. [https://www.siue.edu/soar/project_fame.shtml](https://www.siue.edu/soar/project_fame.shtml)

U. Illinois—Springfield

- **The Black Male Initiative (BMI)**, a pilot project established by the UIS Diversity Center intends to increase, encourage, and support the inclusion and educational success of male students of color, particularly African-American males (AAM). The program assists students in both, their academic and professional endeavors, promotes and advocate for an improved educational experience and quality of life at the University of Illinois Springfield. [https://www.uis.edu/diversitycenter/programs/blackmaleinitiative/](https://www.uis.edu/diversitycenter/programs/blackmaleinitiative/)

- **The Necessary Steps Mentoring program** is a Living Learning Community that was established in 2009 at UIS. It is designed to transition first-generation students to the challenges and demands of college life. First-generation is defined as students whose parents/guardians have not graduated from a four-year college or institution. Necessary Steps is intended to assist in the transition from high school to college, as well as transforming our students into scholars. Each freshman in the program will be paired with an experienced Necessary Steps student who will act as a mentor, friend, and confidant.

U. Illinois—Urbana/Champaign

- The mission of [Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center](http://bnaaac.illinois.edu/) is to provide a network of programs and support services promoting the individual, social, cultural and academic well-being of Illinois’ African American students.

- The [Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations](http://ois.illinois.edu/) coordinates programs focused on the early success of first generation, low-income, and underrepresented students through the [Readying Illinois Students for Excellence (RISE)](http://rise.illinois.edu/) extended summer orientation program and focuses on increasing African American student retention through the mentor and academic preparation program, [100 STRONG](http://100strong.illinois.edu/).

- The [President’s Award Program](http://coquard.illinois.edu/) grants $5,000 to incoming African-American, Latino and American Indian freshmen whose ACT scores qualify and are at or below the poverty line.

- The [Office of Minority Student Affairs, OMSA](http://omsa.illinois.edu/) offers:
  - Free tutoring and instructional services for students, including walk-in sessions for help with chemistry, math and physics and matched sessions for other subjects.
Students identified as Educational Opportunities Program recipients by the Office of Admissions are eligible for academic services and counseling support. OMSA assigns a Graduate Counselor to EOP students and provides the students with these services.

OMSA offers proactive mentoring services to students at Illinois through its fulltime professional staff and more than 50 graduate students hired and trained by OMSA. The centerpiece of OMSA's general mentoring services is the Graduate Mentor program, which provides assistance to freshmen students in the President's Award Program and Educational Opportunity Program, and other students. GM's are assigned to students before classes begin.

- The University of Illinois has a goal to increase the number of underrepresented minority tenured/tenure-track faculty members. At Illinois, underrepresented faculty members are defined as Black, Hispanic, and American Indian. The national pool of minority faculty is small, and competition for their services is keen. In order to assist departments in this competitive marketplace, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provosts make available nonrecurring funds that can be used as research awards to enhance an offer of employment, on an as-needed basis.

- Five Days for Change is an intensive training program designed to provide university staff members with the opportunity to acquire and strengthen cultural competencies, awareness, and skills. This training will increase the visibility, skill, and effectiveness of allies in the cause of social justice and campus civility as critical campus incidents arise.

- Facilitated by fellow students, I-Connect uses collaborative exercises and engaging discussion to build participants’ communication skills and their ability to collaborate, learn, and work in diverse environments. All of us—regardless of our experiences or social group membership—must understand both our similarities and our differences in order to work and live with one another. I-Connect workshops provide students with an opportunity to begin these important discussions and learn from each other.

Western Illinois

The Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center provides ongoing cultural experiences, academic enhancement opportunities, and social programs designed to aid in the adjustment of African American students at Western Illinois University. The Center also serves as an important resource in providing cultural enrichment opportunities for Western Illinois University and the region.

http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/gwendolyn_brooks_cultural_center/
Appendix 7 - Summary of Chancellor Report and SSI Group

Summary of the highlights of Chancellor’s Taskforce report:

Academic
- Gateway courses: hire a consultant to advise departments for addressing the disparity of performance for African American students
- Classroom Environment: mandatory online training for all faculty, TAs, and Adjuncts on “diversity in classroom” and an annual day-long event for faculty training on diversity, inclusion, micro-aggression, biases.
- Academic forgiveness policy review to facilitate recovery
- Diversity in the Faculty representation: recruiting minority faculty and helping them get tenured, focus on pipeline (postdocs)
- Early Intervention: Summer Bridge programs and more
- Non-traditional adult students resources and support

Campus Climate
- Campus-wide training on diversity/inclusion for all in-coming students – an orientation on diversity for students and faculty
- Funds for educational/cultural community-building events focused on connecting African American Students and Faculty
- Annual high-visibility MLK Day event/lecture
- Expanding partnership ties to Chicago’s African American Communities

Support Services
- Enhance resources and elevate the programs offered by AAAN, both through staffing, space, and fund allocation as well as programmatic expansion

Finances
- Special scholarship allocation
- Designated financial aid advisor for URM students
- Finish-line funds
- Housing contact flexibility and funding resources
- OBFS payment plan opt-out rather than opt-in
Summary of the highlights of SSI Focus Group:

- Dire need for more African-American faculty/staff representation in UIC: promote the value of direct faculty engagement in student success, facilitate such level of engagement
- Absence of a mechanism for the UIC African-American faculty/staff for staying connected with other African-American colleagues and a lost sense of community among those who are here, lost opportunity for the African-American faculty to share best practices in serving their students
- Need for a coordinating entity, an African-American UIC resource book and website that is kept updated
- Pre-matriculation bridging efforts: Transition to UIC, working with high schools, success units wrap-around approach to capture the African-American student even before they arrive and continued after they are here, connecting them to the UIC resources
- Invest on the current African American UIC students role as ambassadors of recruitment in their Chicago neighborhoods
- Shift the perspective in regards to UIC’s responsibility toward African American student success: move away from deficit-based approach
- Detail data analysis on achievement gap: African American students who arrive with similar academic readiness but end up performing lower
- Predictive metrics for African-American student success: adjust the support strategies based on the regular gauging of those metrics
- Analysis of African American Student performance gap in courses such as Math 180 or English foundation courses and correlating that to the progress to degree trend for these students
- Explore data on African-American student homelessness or hunger and create intervention
- Revise the UIC’s deficit-based approach regarding academic readiness of new students for STEM
- Explore the roots for the Psych 100 African-American students performance gap
- Adopt a more mindful approach to solving the belonging problem: consider the already-small African American Student population at UIC and
- Forge collaboration between colleges and success units for supporting African-American students
- Maximize the resources and programmatic efforts by success units such as CHANCE or AAAN
- A serious look at best practices from the few universities who succeeded in fixing their achievements gap issue
- Physical spaces within the university that is conducive to community building and sense of belonging
- Balancing the proportion of humanities and science courses for African American students in STEM majors
- Best practices on how to reach connect/reach students using email, text messaging, social media, Blackboard, UIC Connection, etc
- Address the culture and history surrounding African American students reluctance to choose UIC
- Increase the value of teaching in P&T review: promote the importance of African-American faculty-student connection and mentoring
- Professional development for the current faculty: inform them about campus resources/programs for African-American students, train them about classroom inclusion
- Recruitment practices regarding 2-year college transfers and guaranteed admission for the top performing African-American students from certain high schools, look for the correlation of African-American population decline in the inner city and UIC’s African-American enrollment
- Elevate and expand the peer mentoring practices for the African-American students: capitalize on the current junior and seniors
- Craft and promote challenge grants for student organizations: a chance for more funds if they increase the total GPA of the group (will automatically result in the upper classman helping the freshman)
Appendix 8 - Academic Forgiveness Policy

See https://catalog.uic.edu/ucat/degree-programs/univ-degree-requirements-graduation/#repeat-policy

Policies Affecting Degree Requirements and Graduation

Repeat Policy for Standard Graded Courses

Students may repeat a course to increase their knowledge of the subject matter. There are circumstances under which repeating a course is advisable and to a student’s advantage. There are also circumstances where repeating a course may disadvantage a student and narrow a student’s options. Some colleges require students to discuss any plan to repeat a course with their academic advisor before they register to repeat the course.

Courses with A or B grades may not be repeated. Normally, courses with a C grade may not be repeated. Courses with D or F grades may be repeated once without written permission. In all cases, the original grade for the course and the grade for each repeat will appear on the transcript. Only one registration for the course counts toward the total number of credits required for graduation. A course cannot be repeated after receiving credit in a course for which the repeat course is a prerequisite.

To repeat a course more than once requires written permission from the student’s college dean. Students who have been dismissed may not appeal on the grounds of intention to repeat courses. Certain courses may not be repeated; students should consult their college before repeating a course.

Undergraduate Grade Point Average Recalculation Policy

- Colleges may elect to implement this policy as early as the end of the junior year, or as late as the final semester during degree certification.
- The college will evaluate each student unable to graduate because of an academic grade point average deficit. The deficit may occur in the UIC GPA, the program GPA, or both.
- The academic record is examined so as to determine if courses, deemed appropriate by each college, with grades of F or grades of D, may be excluded from the student’s grade point average.
- A total of four courses may be excluded, with one course excluded at a time until the necessary quality points are obtained to meet the UIC GPA requirement and/or degree program minimum GPA. The credit hours associated with excluded course grades will not count towards graduation requirements.
- Only the college can initiate course exclusions, and only in consultation with the evaluated student.
- Students may not request exclusions.
- Only courses taken at UIC may be converted as part of this policy.
- This policy only applies to undergraduate degree seeking students.
- All courses taken and all grades will remain on the official transcript.
• The grade exclusion policy does not apply to courses failed as the result of a student conduct hearing.
• In cases where these procedures would impact program accreditation, licensure or similar, colleges may use their discretion to allow the policy. Colleges, departments, and programs may have discretion in choosing courses that impact the student’s major.
### Appendix 9 - AALC Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment &amp; Retention</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>The planned increase (35K) in student enrollment warrants close attention be paid to expanding and retaining the numbers of AA students</td>
<td>Steps need to be taken to ensure AA student enrollment proportion does not drop relative to student expansion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The AACLC supports the 30 recommendations put forth by the Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students (TF) [<em>this report should be read by all AALC members</em>]</td>
<td>The AA Council can assist with many of the recommendations made under the four categories: academia, campus climate, student services and financial needs and policies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overlapping recommendations from this report will be marked by an asterisk*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The AA Council will urge the university to look beyond CPS and the State of Illinois for AA students</td>
<td>In-state tuition should be offered to students throughout the 4 state region</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensuring UIC has a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining AA students</td>
<td>UIC must commit to finding an extra $1M for the Presidential Awards Program -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase scholarships</td>
<td>50 scholarships over the next year, 250 scholarships over the next 5 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Offer more paid internships</td>
<td>UIC needs to increase internship opportunities by 25% - offering 50 internships per year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promote Early Intervention for Success or Bridge Programs</strong></td>
<td>Promoting existing programs, adding others – marketing them to community contacts. TF #1F, p. 8</td>
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<td><strong>Market to Non-traditional students</strong></td>
<td>TF recommends developing an adult education program with flexible course curriculum and evening hour availability.* #1.E, p 8</td>
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<td><strong>TF recommends creating UIC focal points for African American students, faculty and staff in an effort to highlight AA presence on campus</strong></td>
<td>Feature events, symposiums, speakers, MLK day, etc. TF #1.E, p10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty</strong></td>
<td>Effort needs to be made to retain faculty, recruit tenured and tenure-track faculty* - 10 additional a year* TF #1.D, page 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on increasing the numbers of faculty where AA are or need to be AA students – College of Business, STEM, College of Engineering, Math, Physics</td>
<td>Aim for adding 25% new AA faculty/year <strong>excluding AA studies</strong>, ask if Deans are using UFRP funds for recruitment* TF #1.D page 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange meetings with selected Deans [Business, Engineering, LAS] regarding their strategy to increase number of African American faculty.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>College of Engineering (COE) – Dean Peter Nelson</strong></td>
<td>Over next 3-5 years increase faculty hiring by 1000% (only 1 now) by hiring 1-2 per year – should target hiring tenured professors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>College of Business (COB) – Dean Michael Mikhail</strong></td>
<td>Increase hiring by 500% increase in the College of Business over a 5 year period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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| College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS)  
Dean Astrida Orle Tantillo  
Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry,  
Mathematics/Statistics and Computer Science and  
Physics are in LAS | Increase faculty by 10% per year in each department | |
| | Where are AA students clustered?  
Determine how AA Council meets with deans and  
how to monitor progress | Need to identify other deans where most AA students are present |
| Minority Purchasing | Recommendations will be presented at the meeting. | |
Ida B. Wells was an African American journalist and civil rights leader who was born in July 16, 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. She was a former slave who reported on the horrors of lynching which was prevalent throughout much of the country during her time. As a Memphis newspaper editor at the age of 30, she traveled throughout the South, interviewing families and residents about lynching incidents in their communities. Her articles were widely read in more than 200 newspapers domestically and abroad. Because of her candid writings about the vicissitudes of lynching, her life was threatened, the newspaper office was destroyed and she relocated to Chicago where she met her husband, Ferdinand Barnett who was a lawyer and civil rights activist. Ida B. Wells help founded the N.A.A.C.P. and the National Association of Colored Women. During the final years of her life, she organized on matters of mass incarceration and worked as probation officer until her death in 1931.


Applicant Eligibility and Criteria

Applicants must be:

- Graduating seniors in the top 4% of their class at one of the following Chicago Public High Schools – Austin Community High School, Chicago Vocational High School, Collins Academy High School, Dunbar Vocational Career Academy, Harlan Community Academy, Hyde Park Career Academy, John Marshall Metro High School, Manley Career Academy High School, Morgan Park High School, Percy L. Julian High School, Simeon Career Academy

- Admitted by and planning to attend the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)

- Engaged in extra-curricular activities demonstrating leadership potential and a dedication to community service

First preference is given to students who identify as African American. Applications that are incomplete will not be reviewed. Five (5) scholars will be awarded for the 20xx-20xx academic year. The deadline for submission is TBD. [Please note that I am waiting to hear from AES on this item]

Recipients will be selected based upon merit. Applications will be reviewed by a designated committee guided by the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and UIC Student Affairs.

Fund Agreement Language

Ida B. Wells Scholars Fund

Fund account:
Date established:

Type of fund:

Restrictions/Guidelines

Governing Document: Fund Agreement

The net income is to be used for scholarships assisting first-year undergraduate students attending the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The scholarships have the potential to be renewable assisting recipients during their second (minimum of 30 credit hours earned) consecutive academic year at UIC. **The initial awarding will be for a cohort of up to five (5) scholars with the awarding to increase to cohorts of ten (10) scholars in future years.**

First preference is to be given to students who identify as African American and are in the top 4% of graduates from the following Chicago Public High Schools: Austin Community High School, Chicago Vocational High School, Collins Academy High School, Dunbar Vocational Career Academy, Harlan Community Academy, Hyde Park Career Academy, John Marshall Metro High School, Manley Career Academy High School, Morgan Park High School, Percy L. Julian High School, Simeon Career Academy.

Recipients should demonstrate leadership potential, dedication to community service and may study any discipline offered at UIC. If there are no eligible graduates from the designated high schools attending UIC in any one year, income is to accumulate and additional scholarships may be given the following year. If there are no eligible graduates for a second consecutive year, up to half of the accumulated income shall be given to Chicago Public High School graduates deemed worthy to receive the scholarship.

The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, or designees, shall determine the recipients, amount, and timing of the scholarships to be given, subject to the approval of the appropriate University officials. Scholarships shall be known as “Ida B. Wells Scholars” and shall be appropriately recognized and publicized.
Content for the UIC SnAP scholarship portal

Scholarship Application Description

Ida Bell Wells (July 16, 1862 to March 25, 1931), better known as Ida B. Wells, was an African-American journalist, abolitionist and feminist who led an anti-lynching crusade in the United States in the 1890’s. She went on to found and become integral in groups striving for African-American justice.

The Ida B. Wells Scholars Fund has been established on the campus of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to provide financial support for under-represented first-time freshmen across the academic disciplines. Funds shall be used for educational expenses including, but not limited to tuition and fees. Scholarship funds will be awarded for the first academic year of study at UIC; 50% of the funding will be allocated for the fall semester and 50% of the funding will be allocated for the spring semester.

Ida B. Wells Scholars will be publicly recognized at an awards program. Additionally, the scholars will be required to participate in a mentoring program and fulfill a community service project while a recipient.

Recipients of the scholarship in their first academic year at UIC may receive the scholarship for their second consecutive academic year at UIC if the following conditions are applicable:

- The student is in good academic standing
- The student has completed at least 30 credit hours at UIC
- The student has fulfilled the requirements of the mentoring program
- The student will be full-time at UIC throughout their second academic year (fall and spring semesters)
Scholarship Application Questions:

1) Please upload your current high school transcript that includes a school watermark, crest, or seal. The transcript will be used to verify your high school and academic record.

2) In 250 words or less, write an essay explaining what Ida B. Wells and her life mean to you.

3) A letter of reference from a teacher, mentor, guidance counselor or employer is required. Please upload the letter of reference by attaching the file with the browser below.

4) Please list of your out of class engagement (athletics, church, community service, employment, family responsibilities, student leadership etc.) since you have been in high school. Indicate the month and year(s) of participation highlighting your role and/or student leadership. Sample format:

   Anti-Bullying Club       September 2016 – Present       Member

   Family Responsibility   August 2014 – Present          Care giver for autistic brother

   Sweet Stop              May 2016 – Present (M-F)       Donut maker daily before school
Appendix 11 - Stakeholder Meeting Notes

SSI – African-American Student Success: March 25, 2019
The SSI project team met with a list of UIC stakeholders to gain their perspective of what they see as some of the major issues inhibiting the success of African American students at UIC. Those individuals included:

Nikos Varelas, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs
Sue Faruggia, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs
Caroline Swinney – Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Community Engagement
Cecil Curtwright – Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services (retired)
Joey Volpe – Director, UIC Office of Advising Development
Liz Houlihan – Director, First-Year Initiatives

Their candid assessment of some of the issues students encounter greatly informed the work of the SSI project team and the themes are woven throughout this final report and our recommendations.
Appendix 12 - Focus Group Participants Notes

African American Student Success Focus Group – Notes
August 24, 2018

Moderator: Aisha El-Amin (AE)
Notes: Mark Bennett, Kiely Fletcher, Charu Thakral

Faculty
Faculty
Staff
Staff
Staff
Staff

AE: What factors are most important for African-American student success at UIC?

Staff: The ability to seek out resources and finding people who look friendly who may look like them. We try to forge strong ties to high schools to tell students to look up CHANCE and AAAN when they get to UIC.

Staff: UIC should issue metrics for gauging “success”: how do we quantity it? It’s not just retention and graduation but gaps between various groups on campus – how do we close achievement gaps? This will determine if retention and graduation rate goes up.

Staff: You can be in the race but if your car ain’t fast enough you ain’t winning—you need to look at how fast you’re going, what needs to be done—look at gauges; need discrete metrics that can be examined every semester, not every 6 years.

Staff: Is there a performance difference between African-American students in Math 180 in mean GPA compared to other groups? That fundamental math course is important to lots of other majors; if you find a gap, you’ll see down the line what impact it has on other metrics. If we address this early on, we’ve minimized some of the risk African-American students have because we’ve addressed a need African-American students have—this also applies to composition courses.

Staff: We can start adjusting intervention strategies each semester; continue what works, point more resources in issues that aren’t working—metrics should have short time frame, someone monitors these metrics constantly

Staff: We haven’t seen a change in the gap, even though retention rate of African-American students has gone up, the gap with other groups hasn’t changed in 27 years. The difference in probation rate has remained the same in decades. We need to look at what specifically needs to be done for African-American students to shrink the gap.
Charu: What specifically is at issue with not examining gaps?
Staff: Reluctance to look at these gaps, but something else—I think the culture of campus regarding students of color is a culture of opportunity. We’re giving “them” the opportunity to come to UIC. “F” that, screw opportunity, admission requirements, etc. --what are the outcomes? This gives a false sense that we’ve done all we can do; they’re here, end of story, then the onus is on students

Staff: When we switch to outcomes, part of responsibility shifts back to university—calling in resources is hard to do.

Faculty: This is my sixth year at UIC. I teach a large Gen.Ed class of 120 students, with maybe 4 or 5 black students in it. I teach about the history of UIC, how the school was placed here to be a buffer between the south side and downtown. A black student said maybe that’s why black students don’t want to come to UIC. Maybe the space here can feel oppositional and doesn’t encourage belonging. This is a matter of affect—how do we feel if we belong? This could be part of institutional failing, not personal.

Faculty: Undergrads have financial issues, family duties, homelessness. Lots of times when students told me they’re homeless, I’ve had nothing to suggest though I try to reach out to resources.

Faculty: Student success is finding community, and even more so for grad students, which is not often discussed – a major blind spot. The History Department has two black PhD-seeking grad students, and it’s just them in all their classes – they’re even more isolated than undergrads.

Faculty: It’s rather telling – [Staff ] began with Math, but Humanities folks have a more nuanced relationship. Math is a very specific track African-American students are placed on. Many H.S. students on the south and west sides have been converted to STEM. It’s the responsibility of a public university in Chicago where it’s not hard to find black students; many arrive already having decided to pursue a field that they’re really not prepared for at the high school level. They arrive traumatized by the demands of STEM courses; this is not a deficit, but UIC depicts it as a deficit.

Staff: Math is not just STEM but social sciences, anything with a quantitative background; do African-American students go into STEM more than other groups? That’s not the case; I just used Math as example, but I also mentioned composition

Staff: When we look at data, there’s also a gap in Psych 100, a gap in composition, history—we need to understand what’s driving this gap, what sort of interventions are needed.

Staff: Writing is just as important as math; critical thinking; lots of different kinds of things. I’m not sure that many black students come to UIC with a deficit in certain areas. We can look at data with the same SAT scores and over time African-American students still don’t do as well as other groups with the same scores. This is a nationwide problem that could be due to any number of things. We don’t want to assume black kids come here underprepared, but something happens here….

Staff: AAAN and CHANCE tend to see kids in a triage moment, not on the front end—we need to do a better job of sustaining the energy throughout the year. Once they’re engaged, they do better; we shouldn’t just work with them in crisis. How do we frame this engagement as institutional?
Staff: Gerry [Smith], [Jeff Brown] know things about certain students—we talk about family with them, etc. [CHANCE] often get[s] calls from other faculty referring students to [us]. We have partnerships with writing instructors, so students learn how to talk to faculty. How do we make it mandatory for students to talk to us, to seek out resources?

AE: Do students know where these resources are?

Staff: They have so many things coming at them, it’s a matter of remembering, making them come back.

Staff: How do we convey to incoming African-American students that these services don’t mean that there’s something wrong with them? We don’t want to identify students for being at risk, but we know they are at risk. This should be a preventive sort of thing, not reactive; we need to build a culture where coming to see you is normative.

Staff: We’ve always masked our support through activities—trick students by giving them free food.

Faculty: Food is a basic need; we should all feed our students.

AE: What are some of the stumbling blocks at UIC for African-American students?

Faculty: Faculty don’t always know CHANCE’s schedule of activities, we don’t always know what’s going on. With listservs we know in general what’s out there, but I don’t know the specifics of 2018-19.

Staff: We hold a breakfast meeting with African-American faculty; some said breakfast isn’t good for meeting; only 3-4 faculty showed up. But yes, how do we communicate with you?

Faculty: There’s an underrepresented faculty meeting every year, like the Hunger Games, where everyone screams and then we go back to the way things are. In LAS there are 14 total African-American faculty, 12 tenure-track in all of LAS—no wonder it feels like this, it’s happening at the faculty level as well.

Faculty: University Hall is so siloed; I don’t know anyone on other floors; outside of the black faculty listserv, I don’t know anyone else. Social events (happy hour) could help us meet each other; lunch is better than breakfast, Fridays have most open schedule.

Staff: Systemic things are happening that are hard to discuss. At SIU the food court is full of African-American students, it’s a vital space; we don’t get that feeling at UIC.

Staff: It’s the problem of the tipping point; we need enough African-American students so it seems like African-American students who come here belong. We need more African-American faculty and administrators; so how do we hire more African-American faculty? It’s a matter of will; it can’t happen in the short term. We talk about solutions for the short term, there are already excellent support services, but if we don’t hire more faculty of color, there’s only so much we can do.
AE: With the Equity Score Card, it’s revealing how many departments haven’t hired a person of color. The Provost is incentivizing African-American hires (one additional hire for every faculty of color hire); but it’s still a matter of will; we need to shake the bias.

Staff: 20 years ago the Student Center East was a hub of African-American life; African-American students knew this was the spot.

Staff: This is a commuter campus, but UIC is doing better than Carbondale’s African-American retention. UIC has a higher African-American graduation rate than most HBCs but still in the 40% range.

Staff: Structurally, there’s been a reluctance of the leadership to look to other institutions who have taken on this challenge and are doing well. University of Virginia’s black graduation rate is higher than that of the white students. University of Georgia, Temple have taken on this challenge; they want to change this; but at UIC there’s a reluctance to reach out to schools that are already doing this.

Staff: Virginia has a culture among black students; they tell other black students “if you ain’t about the business, go to Harvard.”

Faculty: UIC tends to have an identity crisis—on one hand, we want to compete with more elite institutions rather than owning who we are. We could learn from similar institutions but we see them as inferior. Rutgers-Newark does a great job retaining African-American students but it’s not seen as a peer even though it’s an urban campus, majority-minority. Urbana always gives us an identity crisis. Temple is a good place to look at—places that actually match our profile.

Faculty: I was a high school counselor and you knew which schools black students tend to go to—NIU, SIU, not UIC. I went to a state school; though it was only 6-7% black, you knew where to hang out, but it was a residential campus so we lived together as well. UIC’s commuter status dilutes community.

Faculty: Voices of students are missing in our analysis. UIC could give an exit interview for students who leave; students could tell us better than we can pretend to understand how to fill these gaps.

Faculty: STEM students performed better when they had a balance of science and humanities classes; this may say something about the opportunity to study for themselves. There’s a problem with the balance of different types of classes, not all STEM.

AE: How do we promote events to African-American students?

Staff: Blackboard. Whoever signed up with the program gets BB announcements; but only if they apply; we don’t deny students.

Staff: AAAN uses UIC Connection which is like a social media platform; we think it’s moderately successful, and any UIC student can have access to it.
Staff: Facebook is the easiest way to connect with students, to see what’s really going on with them. Each incoming class has its own Facebook page started up by Admissions; there are some interesting conversations that pop up, students interact freely.

Staff: There’s a “UIC Sucks” website; a UIC Confessions and Crushes Facebook page—students are communicating.

Faculty: As faculty, I’m not sure whether to engage with students on social media, though I follow certain student groups. There’s a “Who’s Who at UIC” hashtag and mostly black and LatinX students take part. The info is self-reported among students (name, major, etc., post picture)—we could tap into this.

Faculty: Where is the platform to talk about black students? There’s a sharp decline in African-American enrollment from the inner city—where do they go to school beforehand? Is this discussion happening?

Staff: African-American enrollment has been steady over the past 25 years; there was one point when a much larger number of black students was here when UIC had open enrollment; when that ended, black enrollment went down as Latino enrollment went up.

Staff: The inner city—there are not as many people in the inner city, period, let alone those graduating from high school. Hirsh H.S., where I went, just had a freshman class of only 2. Many African-American students move to the suburbs. Is it cheaper to go to Urbana? If you live on campus it’s actually cheaper to go there than commute to and from UIC. We’re expensive compared to some other options.

Staff: The critical mass of black juniors and seniors is what I’m most interested in; not just the front end but those actually retained. If African-American freshmen see more African-American juniors and seniors, this could retain more of them.

Faculty: We’re supposed to serve a population within a certain proximity, so we need to return to this mission.

Staff: Yes, but it’s easier to put everything on the front end instead of resources required to retain them. The graduation rate increase needs to be the result of efforts to retain them rather than sheer numbers up front.

Staff: If African-American students are successful here, they’re our best recruiters—they could pull students away from ISU, UIUC.

[Charu]: We should focus on retention versus recruitment?

Staff: Yes, know that the commitment to retention requires a great deal more—more African-American faculty requires a whole lot….

Faculty: There’s an identity crisis at UIC—I served on 3-4 task forces, and more times than not it’s just a data dump. With the LAS Diversity Committee we got reports but we didn’t do anything; we should see reports from other schools that seem like better options to African-American students.
Faculty: We should push harder at 2-year college transfers and where we recruit for high school students, maybe automatically admit the top percentage from certain schools.

Faculty: UIC administration prides itself upon expansion, but campus housing is not affordable to African-American students; if UIC doesn’t offer anything to keep you, why not go out of state?

AE: If you had 1 million dollars, where would you allocate the funds?

Faculty, Staff: Financial aid, housing, book vouchers.

Staff: African-American student organizations; we could offer challenge grants for student orgs to be involved in certain activities. We used to give money to student orgs based on raising GPA for their members. They soon realized that only freshman GPAs could go up, so juniors and seniors worked with them so they could reap the benefits; this incentivizes upperclassmen involvement with freshmen.

Staff: I went to UIC as an undergraduate, and the only way I finished was by hanging out with older students, building those relationships. We should reward student groups for collectively supporting younger students.

Faculty: We should highlight the important work done by CHANCE, AAAN—students are thinking about the student life experience, not graduation rates.

Faculty: HBCUs have a collective sense that we’re all in this together. They have a study group culture with older students working with and tutoring younger students; this encourages peer support among African-American students otherwise isolated; a work hard / play hard mentality.

Staff: Is there a resource for faculty showing where to go for homelessness, other issues?

Faculty: A card showing campus resources is handy.

[Charu]: Faculty are a crucial resource – what can we do better?

Faculty: There’s no continuing education component for new faculty, no follow-up; you should presume faculty know nothing.

Faculty: Amen.

Staff: We delete so many emails without opening them; students are no different from us.

Faculty: I’m more likely to notice hard copies of things, like the card, in my faculty mailbox.

Faculty: I’ve never met the dean.

Faculty: We’re so busy researching and teaching, we can’t go out of our way to find this info.
[Charu]: Are multiple modes of delivery better?

Faculty: It helps to have boilerplate info to easily convey to students; there’s been no intentional conversation about underrepresented minority issues at all.

Faculty: It isn’t just isolated students, but the whole culture here; why is it acceptable to not know our dean?

Faculty: As black faculty I feel a kind of contempt because I serve my black students in a certain way; I wonder if other black faculty feel the same way for connecting to their students in certain way. This disconnect is extended through our teaching.

Faculty: We’re often penalized for going out of our way; this is time spent not writing and researching, which ensures my being employed next year.

Faculty: If African-American students connect to African-American faculty they’re more likely to stay.

Staff: There was a study at UIC 8 years ago—African-American students who stayed said there was one black faculty member who believed in them.

Staff: In the Economics Dept. one professor said he’d take on all 6 black students in Econ and said he’d work with them; this cut through all the talk about stats, etc. – direct faculty engagement works better than anything.

Staff: Yes, and he didn’t do some heroic service.

Staff: What if every department did this? Is this what we should be doing anyway?

Faculty: Some schools are honest about this problem during the hiring process for black faculty—that teaching African-American students should be a primary concern.

Faculty: Where’s the book? Mindset for tenure-track faculty not valued for our service?

Faculty: Why is teaching not the most valuable part of tenure-track work? Teaching is treated as secondary. Students come from high schools where so little is expected of them; UIC is a culture shock for those students.

AE: We're considering creating an Information Coordinator position for black students—what do you think?

Faculty: That would be so helpful. African-American Studies doesn’t have the money to do activities I wish I could work in; this position could actually integrate info sent from a centralized source; therefore AAAN would not be seen as some sort of aberration but part of a common effort.

Staff: There could be an African-American resource book like at some schools; an actual paper copy is better than a website.
Faculty: A website constantly updated would be better for reference. Faculty could integrate events into syllabi that we know about early on (extra credit on syllabus)

AE: Anything else we should know?

Faculty: It needs to be everyone’s job to do this work. The diversity of campus masks the fact that we’ve done poorly by African-American people; we need to address this forthrightly, while the default is to go on with nothing changed. UIC needs to repair wrongs done to this community.
Appendix 13 - iAdvise

What is iAdvise?

- iAdvise is UIC’s integrated planning and advising system
  - A tool to work together more effectively
  - A technological tool for streamlining communication, collaboration, processes and workflow
  - Used by advisors, students, faculty, and a range of campus staff who work with students
  - Provides opportunity to leverage its capabilities to increase student success

iAdvise

- Advising interactions component, often called “connect” or “core” in Starfish
  - Online scheduling including syncing with your Outlook calendar
  - Interactive, swipe-based responsive kiosk for each office which streamlines student intake - essentially a “virtual lobby”
  - Advising notes capability and information sharing between advisors
  - Capability to provide success planning with optional to-do list with reminders, referrals, and messaging with and for students
**iAlert**

- Starfish provides the option to enter alerts for students who need interventions
- Early Alerts will be administered in iAlert
  - Automated reminders for faculty
  - Advisors receive real-time notification of alerts entered by faculty
- Opportunity to provide positive feedback in the form of a "kudos"

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**Starfish Opportunity - Success Plans**

- Starfish provides the option to create success plans with your students that can include "to do’s" and referrals
- The plan is customizable and can include due dates and reminders
- It allows also for the ability to analyze outcomes using reports so that if a targeted group of students have the same type of success plans, outcomes can be reviewed, etc.
iPredict

• Starfish’s predictive analytics component
• Helps to strategically leverage available data to identify students who may need assistance
• Provides opportunity to optimize information and create action plans based upon data available
• For advisors, it assists in identifying strategic interventions to targeted populations including referrals

iAdvise Implementation

• Discussion about providing a technology platform for students began in 2012 and two success projects resulted in our purchase of Starfish
• The iAdvise Implementation project began mid-Fall 2018
• Pilot is slated to begin this April 15, 2019
• College of Engineering
• Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services (lARES)
• ACE
• African American Academic Network (AAAN)
• Math and Science Learning Center
• Units will be entering into iAdvise beginning in the summer through Fall 2019

Growth Mindset

• A philosophy, growth mindset language is used in interventions within Starfish
• Encourages positive attitudes and beliefs regarding students’ ability to learn
• Addresses common psychosocial barriers as a key component of effective interventions
• Contains subtle messages that convey
  • A sense of belonging at your institution
  • Normalizes uncertainty and struggle
Growth Mindset

• Some questions our communications group will explore is how to leverage iAdvise for our new Genz population...

Questions?
African – American Student Success Task Force

Academic Forgiveness

Authors:
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Gerry Smith

Background
Academic success is at the core of student success. However, UIC’s retention rate for African -American students is disproportionally lower in comparison to other groups\(^1\). One way to address this is through policies that hinder progression, like academic forgiveness policies.

In the 2016 report from the Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students at UIC one recommendation was to establish an Academic Forgiveness Policy. Ideally the policy would allow students to recover and continue to succeed after experiencing a difficult semester, or when returning to school after an extended absence. Some transfer students bring negative GPAs with them that prove to be obstacles to their success. Since many of our students are low-income city residents, and therefore navigate all the challenges, traumas and obligations of an intense urban environment, there are some semesters in which non-academic issues and problems make consistent academic performance especially difficult.

Associated Research

According to Rob Dixon, UIC Registrar (email communication November 20, 2018) –

“UIC has had a policy in place for decades that spoke to Repeating Courses. There was some flexibility to forgive failed courses in the graduation review with the long-standing policy with NO exclusion of the earlier failed course from the GPA.”

Then in 2009, a GPA Recalculation Policy was approved which allowed a student to retake a course with the chance of replacing an earlier grade with the second grade. This policy proved disastrous as students were spinning their wheels repeated retaking the same classes. The old grades remained on the transcript although excluded from GPA. Students were maxing out on hours in the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress analysis and losing all Financial Aid. The policy was so problematic on several levels, that in Fall 2016 CAAD amended to the more user-friendly policy we have now.

\(^1\) see Fall 2016 non- Returning students Report
The current policy allows for grades to be excluded from GPA at the college discretion closer to graduation. This policy was crafted by all colleges after much collaboration.

Additionally, according to a priorities list from According to the Committee on Assistant and Associate Deans (CAAD) dated May 19, 2016:

“Fall 2009 Grade Forgiveness Policy created unintended consequences that have negatively impacted students. The 2009 policy was implemented with the intention of improving retention and graduation outcomes, there is anecdotal evidence that students have misconceptions about the policy including the belief that the original grades are expunged from their transcript and will not be seen by professional and graduate schools post-graduation; and stories of students doing poorly intentionally in order to be able to repeat a course to receive a grade of A or B. Additionally, the policy has had a significant negative impact on financial aid, as it may result in progress measures that are insufficient to maintain financial aid according to federal requirements: Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) ratios below 67%; and/or an excess of attempted hours over 180. CAAD put this as a list of priorities to address in April of 2016.

Campus Initiative

The New Academic Forgiveness Policy, led by CAAD’s efforts, at UIC became effective Fall 2017

See https://catalog.uic.edu/ucat/degree-programs/univ-degree-requirements-graduation/#repeat-policy

Policies Affecting Degree Requirements and Graduation

Repeat Policy for Standard Graded Courses

Students may repeat a course to increase their knowledge of the subject matter. There are circumstances under which repeating a course is advisable and to a student’s advantage. There are also circumstances where repeating a course may disadvantage a student and narrow a student’s options. Some colleges require students to discuss any plan to repeat a course with their academic advisor before they register to repeat the course.

Courses with A or B grades may not be repeated. Normally, courses with a C grade may not be repeated. Courses with D or F grades may be repeated once without written permission. In all cases, the original grade for the course and the grade for each repeat will appear on the transcript. Only one registration for the course counts toward the total number of credits required for graduation. A course cannot be repeated after receiving credit in a course for which the repeat course is a prerequisite.

To repeat a course more than once requires written permission from the student’s college dean. Students who have been dismissed may not appeal on the grounds of intention to repeat courses. Certain courses may not be repeated; students should consult their college before repeating a course.

Undergraduate Grade Point Average Recalculation Policy
- Colleges may elect to implement this policy as early as the end of the junior year, or as late as the final semester during degree certification.
- The college will evaluate each student unable to graduate because of an academic grade point average deficit. The deficit may occur in the UIC GPA, the program GPA, or both.
- The academic record is examined so as to determine if courses, deemed appropriate by each college, with grades of F or grades of D, may be excluded from the student’s grade point average.
- A total of four courses may be excluded, with one course excluded at a time until the necessary quality points are obtained to meet the UIC GPA requirement and/or degree program minimum GPA. The credit hours associated with excluded course grades will not count towards graduation requirements.
- Only the college can initiate course exclusions, and only in consultation with the evaluated student.
- Students may not request exclusions.
- Only courses taken at UIC may be converted as part of this policy.
- This policy only applies to undergraduate degree seeking students.
- All courses taken and all grades will remain on the official transcript.
- The grade exclusion policy does not apply to courses failed as the result of a student conduct hearing.
- In cases where these procedures would impact program accreditation, licensure or similar, colleges may use their discretion to allow the policy. Colleges, departments, and programs may have discretion in choosing courses that impact the student’s major.
African-American Student Success Task Force

Campus Climate

Authors:
Charu Thakral
Aginah M. Muhammad

Background
African American students express feelings of invisibility on campus because of their small numbers. Negative comments and even hate speech at times has reinforced a sense of isolation and alienation (see focus groups responses in Appendix F). Results from the 2012 UIC Climate Survey corroborate these feelings. That is, compared to White, Latino, and Asian students, African American students report the lowest satisfaction with diversity in the classroom, dorms, and extracurricular student groups. African American students also report the lowest levels of perceiving that faculty and staff respect diversity (significantly lower than White and Latino students). African American students are less comfortable expressing their personal identity on campus than Latino students. African American students also perceive more unfair treatment of minority groups on campus than White, Latino, and Asian students (see Appendix G). Clearly, UIC needs to make a more concerted effort to make African American students feel welcome and at home on its campus and in its classrooms.

The five key recommendations of the 2016 SSI report were the following:

- A required cultural competency/diversity course for all incoming students.

- Additional programming funds be allocated for educational, cultural and community-building events and projects that focus on connecting African American students and faculty and making the African American presence on campus more visible.

- We recommend that the Chancellor host an annual MLK Day lecture and/ or symposium to which the community (grassroots community people not just dignitaries) would be invited.

- We recommend a new decentralized set of community partnership opportunities that forge greater ties with Chicago’s African American communities.

- A clear and central component of student (and faculty) orientation deal with issues of diversity and highlight not simply with the general principle of diversity, but the concrete issues facing African American students and the university’s values and policies regarding diversity and inclusion.

Review of Previous Campus Initiatives and Existing Projects

- Cultural Competency/Diversity Course: Liberal Arts & Sciences currently offers freshmen seminar courses. There have been discussions within the deans committee to implement freshmen seminars by 2020. If this is true, then this is the perfect mechanism to integrate diversity material for all incoming freshmen. Each college structures their seminar differently. CAAD can be targeted for buy-in with regards to integrating diversity materials into the seminar courses.
• **Allocation of Additional Programming Funds for Educational, Cultural and Community-Building Events:** The Center for Student Involvement through the leadership of Joy Vergara plans and facilitates various community-building events and projects. In addition to events sponsored by CSI, the Student Activities Board accepts proposals from organizations for funding programs. Proposals can be submitted by students and organizations to receive funding for the purpose of developing student centered and cultural programs. Listed below are past and future programs:
  - “An Evening With” campus conversations
    - Andrea Kelly, Keynote Fall 2018
  - Black History Month
    - Yara Shahidi, Black History Month Keynote Spring 2018
    - Vic Mensa, Black History Month Keynote Spring 2018 sponsored by NPHC
• **Annual MLK Day Lecture and/or Symposium:** The Center for Student Involvement through Campus Activities Board is responsible for organizing the annual MLK Day Lecture. Since 2017, Student Affairs has hosted a university event to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Keynote speakers are selected in the Fall semester who will speak about the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the impact he has had today. Listed below are the speakers for the MLK Day Lectures:
  - Kendrick Sampson (Spring 2019) - *Scheduled for January 22, 2019*
  - Michael Eric Dyson (Spring 2018)
  - Melissa Harris Perry (Spring 2017)
• **Student and Faculty Orientation Focused on Issues of Diversity:** The Office of Diversity and the UIC Dialogue Initiative previously initiated conversations during student orientation. We recommend that this be reenacted and extended with a focus that provides attention to the issues facing African-American students.
  - Note, there isn’t an organized orientation with a focus on issues of diversity for faculty and/or staff. There needs to be a comprehensive focus on diversity and issues specific to African-American students and struggles that engages the entire faculty/staff community.
  - It is recommended that the conversation needs to be ongoing.
    - Sue Farrugia - Assistant Vice Provost of the OVPUAAP, Office of Research on Student Success, has conducted research on noncognitive factors, such as one’s sense of belonging, self-efficacy, perseverance, and academic motivation to understand the ways that these factors influence UIC student success and to improve existing supports for students and develop additional needed supports.
      - Sue has presented across the campus; however, a broader discussion needs to occur across campus with faculty and staff to help improve the type of support provided to students.
      - We recommend that an intervention focused on sense of belonging be designed and developed for African-American students; this could be piloted and tested for efficacy within various colleges before a full roll-out across the campus is recommended.
      - We recommend that an inclusive classroom module be developed that focuses specifically on African-American students;
    - Professor Ruby Mendenhall, Sociology and African American Studies at UIUC has conducted research on racial microaggressions in the U.S. She is also engaged in research at UIUC focused on a “Multicultural Campus: Rhetoric versus Reality”.
      - During a campus conversation, she shared a Racial Microaggressions Campaign video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SidVLsEd7Ic&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SidVLsEd7Ic&feature=youtu.be)
      - Other available resources that informs the work that UIUC is conducting on the topic of racial microaggressions
        - [http://www.racialmicroaggressions.illinois.edu/resources/literature/](http://www.racialmicroaggressions.illinois.edu/resources/literature/)
• http://www.racialmicroaggressions.illinois.edu

• Implement a comprehensive training on racial climate and diversity. Higher Ed Topics has developed a programming and awareness guide for the purpose of:
  • Creating a progressive, more respectful campus environment.
  • Raising diversity awareness and understanding throughout the entire campus population.
  • Promoting positive, productive discussions and actions. https://www.raceoncampus.com
African-American Student Success Task Force

Creating an Inclusive and Affirming Classroom Environment for All Students

Authors:
Charu Thakral
Mark Bennett

Background

UIC recognizes the historic performance gap between African-American students and their peers of other races at UIC, which includes grade performance in certain gateway courses, 1st-to-2nd-year retention, and 4- to 6-year graduation. Consequently, considerable concern has been raised about non-cognitive factors such as African-American students’ perceptions of belonging at UIC and fair and supportive treatment by their faculty. The sense of lack of belonging can include differential treatment by faculty and lowered expectations for African-American students. Moreover, micro-aggressions such as culturally insensitive comments and jokes by instructors, which even when not intended to offend, can often contribute to an inhospitable classroom environment that discourages full participation from African-American students. The SSI African-American Student Success Task Force believed that UIC must do more to raise awareness among all teaching faculty of the factors that contribute to inhospitable classroom environments and the roles that faculty play in improving campus climate for African-American students.

The two key recommendations of the 2016 SSI report were that

- A “diversity in the classroom” online training be implemented for all instructional staff, in consultation with faculty unions and faculty senate;
- The university establish an annual faculty seminar on teaching in a diverse setting, which would run at least one full day. Deans would identify departments and instructors that could benefit from participation, and some sort of certification could be conferred upon completion.

Review of Previous Campus Research

- Focus Group from 2016 SSI Task Force Report: In March 2016, the African-American Student Success Task Force conducted three focus groups to survey black students on the factors that affect their retention and progression at UIC. Some of the key findings were that black students felt alienated in classes with so few other black students enrolled; black students felt alienated by racially insensitive comments made by their instructors; financial concerns were a key factor in not persisting at UIC; academic advising services were not always helpful; and appropriate student support services were too difficult for them find.

- “Pathways for Success for African-American Males at UIC” Report: In 2010, a Provost-commissioned study was conducted by Celina Sima, Patricia Inman, and Malcolm Smith via student survey and focus groups. The study gathered data from 20 African-American male students in their senior year at
UIC. Overall, the report found that black male students could benefit from greater community among other black students, and that individualized faculty support was crucial in helping students persist. The report recommended that faculty give positive inspirational messages to African-American students, communicate their expectations clearly, be available to help students in need, provide opportunities to build social linkages to other students and to campus through the course, and recognize the varied perspectives that African-American students bring as resources for the class.

- **Climate Survey from VPUA** (see 2016 task force report): This 2012 climate survey that gauged the attitudes of students of different racial categories found that African-American students had the lowest self-ratings for “Satisfaction with Campus Diversity,” “Perceived Staff and Faculty Respect,” and “Sense of Personal Identity.” African-American students also reported highest for “Perceived Unfair Treatment of Minority Groups.”

**Current Practices in Inclusive Classroom Practices**

To date, the two key recommendations of the 2016 SSI report—online diversity training and an annual faculty seminar (at least one full day) on teaching in a diverse setting—have not yet been enacted. However, some academic programs do make concerted efforts to foster understanding of diversity on campus in ways that address the climate concerns of African-American students.

One concerted program that UIC has implemented since 2010 is the First-Year Dialogue Seminars, whose pedagogy is informed by intergroup dialogue principles. The seminar’s outcomes are to foster increased intergroup understanding among its students, increased intergroup relationships, improved intergroup collaboration, and improved perspectives of diversity at UIC.

In the English Department, which serves the vast majority of UIC undergraduates through the required first-year writing courses and the Writing Center, crucial theories of intersectionality and culturally sensitive pedagogy are taught in the practicum courses for new teaching assistants (English 555) and Writing Center peer tutors (English 222).

The Office for Diversity in partnership with other units has begun to develop a series of pilot workshops that focus on inclusive classrooms.

**Recommendations for Future Programming**

A workshop or series for inclusive classroom practices that focuses specifically on African-American students could be implemented through careful planning, publicity, and investment by the colleges and units. We propose that the following steps be taken to organize and implement the workshop:

- Training could be given at the departmental level by a team of in-house trainers. This could be done through a single workshop session of a few hours to a full day, or a series of two or more shorter sessions. A current model could be the Title IX training workshops offered by the Office of Access & Equity (given to departments upon request) or the new Teaching International Students / Inclusive Classroom Workshop offered by the Office for Diversity in
partnership with the Office of Global Engagement and Faculty Affairs (now offered to small target audiences of faculty, but possibly expanded to be given to departments upon request).

- Faculty in select departments that traditionally enroll the largest numbers of African-American students, or that offer the gateway courses to certain majors with the greatest disparity of grade performance between African-American students and peers of other races, could be required or encouraged by their respective deans to take the workshop.
- Faculty recognition could be given to incentivize participation in the workshops. This could involve some form of certification of training in inclusive classroom best practices, which could be considered an important means of campus service and could be put on anyone’s resume.
- The Office of Diversity could provide a checklist for faculty that lists several inclusivity-related concerns and high-impact practices for course design, which could include:
  - Creating welcoming classroom environments, which includes avoiding racially and culturally determinative examples
  - Remembering student names
  - Requiring students to visit faculty office hours
  - Crafting syllabus language as positive and encouraging (not punitive)
  - Posting iAdvise alerts when needed
  - _LINK to OAD – advising summits on special issues_

One possible model for this workshop, albeit on a larger scale than what we’re proposing for UIC, is the Five Days for Change program at the University of Illinois at Urbana.

The workshops would require full endorsement and support from the deans of the various colleges and participation among department heads. This would compel decisions to be made about whether the training would be optional (perhaps motivated by certification) or mandatory. One further option, which may motivate participation, would be to use African-American student success as a factor into any given department’s courses as part of the Office of Diversity’s Equity Scorecard for each department.
African-American Student Success Task Force: SSI Report

Gateway Courses

Author: Mark Bennett

Background
The 2016 SSI report claims that there is a significant disparity in grade performance between African-American undergraduate students and students of all other races in certain gateway courses at UIC (i.e., large foundational courses, or courses that are prerequisites for certain majors). Drawing from published research and grade analysis, the 2016 report cites numerous factors that are not necessarily unique to African-American students at UIC: inadequate high school preparation, inability to connect with instructors, difficulty finding study partners, inhibitions to help-seeking, and cultural insensitivity in instructors’ pedagogy and teaching style.

The 2016 report recommended the following measures for accommodating African-American students who may be at a comparative disadvantage in gateway courses:

- syllabus redesign
- adjustments to pedagogy
- creation of new bridge courses
- hiring of outside specialists to consult with departments
- series of provost’s meetings with deans and department heads in all relevant units
- external URM expert to advise and facilitate discussion among campus units, and the commissioning of a small committee to make specific recommendations.

To date, no campus-wide efforts have been made to enact these recommendations by the Provost’s office, though efforts have been made by large academic programs, as well as colleges and departments, to specifically support African-American and other URM students.

Past Research
The 2016 SSI report found that certain courses had statistically significant disparities in the number of A/B/C grades given to African-American students as opposed to students of other races. The full range of courses reviewed was extensive—168 courses covering the entire gamut of UIC’s undergraduate programs in which African-American students were enrolled in Fall 2015. Sixty-one of these courses had significant D/F/W rates among African-American students as compared to students of other races. There was no discernible pattern to these courses, which ranged from mechanical engineering, bioengineering, biological sciences, kinesiology, sociology, management, and urban education to name a few. Moreover, most of these would not be considered “gateway” courses per se. On the one hand, it should be noted that many of these cases of statistical significance were for courses that had very few African-American students enrolled (some with as few as one or two), and indeed the most statistically significant cases tended to be in relatively small courses to begin with, ranging from 20 to 80 students enrolled in Fall 2015. Therefore, the D/F/W status of one or two of these African-American students pulls down the entire A/B/C rate for the entire group disproportionally while deepening the disparity with the aggregate non-African-American student group.
On the other hand, though, this survey might serve to highlight a broader problem for African-American undergraduate students at UIC. Despite its shortcomings, this survey clearly illustrates that there are comparatively few African-American students enrolled in these courses to begin with, and thus very little networking and collaboration that could be done among African-American students undergoing the same struggles in those courses. One key takeaway from the “Pathways to Success for African-American Males at UIC” report, which in 2010 surveyed 20 African-American male students who were nearing graduation, was that one of the major pitfalls they faced in their early years was the lack of community support among African-American students at UIC. This included academic support as well as socioemotional support, the lack of which contributed to pervasive feelings of inadequacy and alienation. Crucially, one of the factors that was most impactful in helping African-American male students persist at UIC was the targeted encouragement and support that individual faculty members gave them at crucial points in their academic careers. Positive intervention from individual instructors, as well as older students who have “made it” in these courses, can have untold benefits in helping new students persevere through their early struggles.

Current Policies

Certain colleges and campus programs have been designed to provide targeted support for at-risk students, though not always African-American students specifically. The Urban Health Program (UHP), which encompasses several UIC colleges, is designed to recruit and support underrepresented minority students, and particularly African-American and Latinx students, with mentoring and career opportunities in the health professions. The UHP faculty and staff are thus specially commissioned to support URM students. Moreover, the PAP STEM program is designed to support URM undergraduates majoring in STEM fields, instilling a culture of academic success that includes seeking help when needed. Significantly, PAP STEM has established the First Semester Mentor program which pairs an advanced student with a first-semester student, a well-established best practice.

At the departmental level, one example of targeted academic intervention is the English Department’s establishment of the English 071 Engagement Coordinator position. A disproportionate number of students who place into English 071 are African-American, and the 071 engagement coordinator is charged with holding regular drop-in office hours in the Writing Center, contacting certain English 071 students who are showing signs of academic distress, and setting up informational events with various campus offices.

Recommendations for Future Programming

We recommend three specific measures to pursue based on existing research in the field and at UIC, which would help fulfill the yet-unmet prior recommendations:

1. Hiring of an external specialist in URM academic affairs to consult with colleges and units. This was a key recommendation from the 2016 SSI report, and though Provost Poser commissioned the office of the Vice Provost for Diversity to make this hire in Fall 2017, this fell by the wayside in the transition between Vice Provosts. This specialist would facilitate discussions at the college and department levels about academic and non-cognitive issues that URM students face. The aforementioned concerns about syllabus design and pedagogical approaches in gateway courses could certainly be addressed. Moreover, this person could promote the following two recommendations among departments. Perhaps this could all be part of the duties of the new African-American Student Success Coordinator that this Task Force is proposing.
2. **Targeted faculty advising for African-American students by faculty in departments with at-risk gateway courses.** The salutary impact of individual intervention by concerned faculty at crucial moments in a student’s academic career should not be underestimated. In the focus group of African-American faculty and staff that the Task Force conducted in August 2018, one particular anecdote was raised of a certain UIC Economics professor who volunteered to personally mentor the handful of African-American economics majors, all of who ended up succeeding at UIC. Though a formal faculty mentoring program might not be feasible in every unit, and while not all faculty would be in position to take on individual mentoring, it would be worthwhile to encourage faculty in all departments to commit in some way to lending extra help to African-American students in need, or at least to be specially attuned to their needs. This mentoring could be incentivized and accounted for by the Diversity Scorecard for each department. *Need to create opportunities for all faculty to do this, not just African American faculty*

3. **African-American upperclassman mentoring of freshman in the same major.** While mentoring partnerships between newer and more advanced students are already being facilitated by programs like PAP STEM, this could also be done for African-American students specifically in various departments. While campus units like AAAN and TRIO facilitate peer mentoring among African-American students, such bonding and networking could be facilitated by departments as well, and specially done on the basis of shared experiences with majors coursework and professors. While the logistics of such mentoring might not work out in every department, all departments could be encouraged to seek out such opportunities where they may arise. This could also certainly be accounted for and rewarded by the Diversity Scorecard. *Could this be facilitated by AAAN at the college level? Peer coaches [ACE] is doing work in this vein – could this be expanded? Could this be mandated for certain freshmen? Mandating “big brother/big sister” check-ins with peer coaches*
Appendix 15 – CCSB African American Resource Guide
Welcome to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is one of the most diverse urban research universities with a philosophica commitment to enhancing that diversity. The information in this booklet will provide resources geared towards African American students on the UIC campus.

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Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Blacks (CCSB)

The Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Blacks (CCSB) is an advisory body dedicated to promoting the academic, professional, cultural and social welfare of the Black community as well as providing leadership on the history, needs and resources of said population at the University of Illinois at Chicago. To do this, the various subcommittees of the CCSB focus on a variety of facets of UIC life such as representation, climate, policies, services, and practices that affect Black faculty, staff and students.

Contact Information ccsb@uic.edu
The African American Academic Network promotes success and high impact engagement for students of African descent through comprehensive advising, developmental programming, student advocacy and structured learning experiences within an inclusive community.

AAAN addresses the unique interests and needs of African American students at UIC. Students who participate in AAAN programming will graduate from UIC as highly engaged leaders prepared to contribute to a global society.

Contact Information

Suite 2800. Student Services Building | 312.996.5040

aaan@uic.edu
The UIC CHANCE Program

CHANCE, which stands for Counseling Help and Assistance Necessary for a 21st century College Education, was formed in 2004 to help UIC reach students from underrepresented populations and provide them with support through counseling and workshops.

UIC CHANCE facilitates access to the necessary activities and professional services that will enable them to persist and graduate as well as prepare professionals for the 21st century global economy.

Contact Information

Suite 2650. Student Services Building | 312.355.5025

https://chance.uic.edu/

chance@uic.edu
CHANCE Program
African-American Cultural Center (AACC)

The African-American Cultural Center (AACC) at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) is an interdisciplinary unit that supports the academic and diversity missions of the university through innovative programs and initiatives that relate particular African-American and African Diaspora traditions, creative practices, and experiences to broader frameworks of thought, feeling, and action.

The Center connects campus and community partners who reflect Chicagoland’s diverse intellectual and cultural life to promote inter-cultural understanding and social change.

Contact Information

Addams Hall 2nd floor. 1 312.996.9549 https://aacc.uic.edu/

uicaacc@uic.edu

African-American Cultural Center

African American Resources on Campus 8 1 9
TRIO Student Support Services (SSS)

TRIO’s mission is to support low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities with their educational plans from high school to post-baccalaureate programs.

To achieve this mission, TRIO provides an atmosphere of creativity and belonging where students are nurtured and supported in achieving academic excellence that leads to college graduation and career endeavors. TRIO’s students are developed to become critical thinkers, leaders, and effective communicators who are prepared for living and working in a global world.

Contact Information

Suite 2720 Student Services Building. 1312.996.5046

https://trio.uic.edu/

asp@uic.edu
UIC Urban Health Program (UHP)

The Urban Health Program (UHP) was established in 1978, to recruit and support students from underrepresented minority groups, specifically African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans, into graduate and professional degree programs leading to health related careers.

The ultimate goal of the program is to train a cadre of underrepresented health professionals dedicated to improving the quality and availability of healthcare in underserved urban areas.

Contact Information

Room 173 College of Medicine East Tower. 312.996.7727

https://uhp.uic.edu/

seas@uic.edu

Urban Health Program

Photo Credit: UIC Urban Health Program Website
UIC Department of African American Studies

African American Studies, a comprehensive study of the African American people’s experience, combines the approaches of the humanities and the social sciences, imparting skills in critical thinking, research methods, theory building, analysis, and written and oral expression.

Training in African American Studies is useful for graduate work in literature, American studies, law, history, sociology, social work, government, business, journalism, and employment in the public sphere.

Contact Information

601 S. Morgan St., 1223 University Hall. | 312.996.2950

https://aast.uic.edu/

Photo Credit: UIC African American Studies Website
Minority Engineering Recruitment and Retention Program (MERRP)

Minority Engineering Recruitment and Retention Program, designed to assist underrepresented Black, Latino, and Native American students earning degrees in the engineering profession has played a key role in providing academic and professional development services to students for over 30 years.

MERRP currently offers these services to more than 300 students; augmenting their requisite skills in academic subjects and enhancing their career experiences.

842 West Taylor St., Room 2065 | 312.996.2950

Contact Information

https://merrp.engr.uic.edu/

gasmith@uic.edu
African American and Affiliated Student Organizations

To find out the contact information for any of these UIC student organizations search online: UIC Connection: connect.uic.edu/

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Delta
Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Sigma
Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. National
Society of Black Engineers African
Student Council
Student Veteran Association (SVA)
Black Student Union
Black Graduate Student Union
National Association of Black Accountants Collegiate
100 African Council

Individual Academic Coaching - ACE Instructors will work with students on a one-on-one basis to address academic concerns and aid students in planning a course of action.

Strategic Learning Workshop(s) - ACE Instructors provide a number of useful workshops, including customized on-site workshops, and professional growth of students, faculty, and staff at UIC.

Location:
Student Services Building 1200 W. Harrison, Suite 2900 (M/C327)
Chicago, IL 60607-7164
Phone: 312-413-0031
Fax: 312-413-7897
Email: uicace@uic.edu
Website: http://studentaffairs.uic.edu/ace/

Campus Resources

Academic Center for Excellence:

- Learning support services enable all UIC students to accomplish their academic goals.

- Academic Skills Program (ASP) courses: ASP courses are designed to help students meet the reading, writing, study, and earning demands at UIC.

- Academic Probation Support - A program designed to help students on academic probation to fulfill their educational goals.
Campus Advocacy Network (CAN):
The Campus Advocacy Network (CAN) is an on campus service center dedicated to providing confidential, anonymous, free services to UIC students, staff and faculty who have experienced sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking and hate crimes.

In addition to direct victim services CAN offers education and training on these topics as well as programming about prevention education, bystander intervention, and men's initiatives.

Location:
1101 W. Taylor Street, 3rd Floor (above Chicago Public Library) Phone: 312-413-8206
Email: can-appointment@uic.edu Website: https://can.uic.edu/contact-us/

Commuter Resource Center:
As the Commuter Student Resource Center (CSRC) team, we strive to provide a sense of belonging among commuter and off-campus students while offering programs and services to enhance wellness, academic success, and student engagement at UIC.

We work to educate our campus on understanding the commuter student experience and how to best support the 85% of UIC of off-campus students who travel to campus daily. Whether you commute from home or live in an off-campus

Location:
750 South Halsted St., Suite 245, Student Center East (M/C 330)
Chicago, Illinois 60607
Phone: 312-413-7440
Email: commuter@uic.edu
Website: http://csrc.uic.edu/about-us/contact/

Counseling Center:
The Counseling Center provides diverse services to help students deal with stress, handle a crisis or trauma, cope with the transition to college, gain strength from gender and cultural identity, or manage serious mental illness and many other issues. The Counseling Center is supported by the Health Service Fee as assessed to all students enrolled at the university and therefore enrolled students are eligible for Counseling Center mental health services without additional cost.

Location:
Student Services Building
1200 W. Harrison, Suite 2010 (M/C333)
Chicago, IL 60607-7164
Phone: 312-996-3490
Fax: 312-996-7645
Website: https://counseling.uic.edu/contact.sh.tm
apartment - we are here to assist you.
CRISIS SERVICES:
If you feel you are experiencing a crisis please do not hesitate to contact us. Call us or walk-in to the Counseling Center as soon as possible. If you are experiencing a crisis or emergency and require services outside of the Counseling Center regular business hours there are a number of resources available to provide the support you need.

In Person Emergency Care
In the event of a life-threatening mental health emergency for which you require immediate emergency services, regardless of insurance coverage or proximity to where your home is, please dial 911 or go to the closest emergency room to receive immediate emergency care.

If you experience a mental health emergency while near or on UIC campus, please call or go to:

UIC Hospital Emergency Room
1740 W Taylor St Chicago, IL
60686
312-996-7298

Crisis Hotlines
The InTouch Hotline is a free crisis intervention, counseling, and referral service offered to UIC students and members of the greater Chicagoland area. Calls placed to the InTouch Hotline remain confidential and are treated in an objective, non-judgmental fashion. Sunday - Friday 6:00pm - 10:00pm 312.996.5535

24-Hour Hotline Assistance: National Suicide Prevention Hot line 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

Northwestern Memorial Hospital Outpatient Psychiatry Hot line 312-26-810

African American Resources on Campus
Disability Resource Center:
The Disability Resource Center (DRC), as part of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), recognizes that students with disabilities are assets to the university. UIC is committed to full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of university life.

The DRC works with students who are admitted or enrolled at UIC to ensure equal access to academic programs and services. Whether transitioning from high school, community college or another university, it is important to understand the process to request accommodations and/or auxiliary aids due to a disability.

Location:
1200 W. Harrison St. Room 1070 SSB (MC 321)
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: (312) 413-2183
Fax: (312) 413-7781
Email: drc.uic.edu
Website: http://drc.uic.edu/

Gender & Sexuality Center:
We are passionate about our mission to create a more inclusive campus and catalyze positive social change. Through innovative programs, interactive workshops, special events, and the sharing of resources, we challenge heteronormativity and promote deeply engaged and life affirming thinking, learning, and action. We serve students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members throughout Chicago of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations.

Main GSC Location:
Behavioral Sciences Building- GSC Lounge, Room 181 (First Floor by Harrison Entrance)
1007 W. Harrison St. (MC 369)
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: (312) 413-8619
Fax: lgbtqa@uic.edu
Website: http://gsc.uic.edu/

Institute for Research on Race & Public Policy:
The Institute for Research on Race & Public Policy (IRRPP) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) promotes and coordinates engaged research on racial and ethnic justice in the U.S. Our mission is to increase society’s understanding of the root causes of racial and ethnic inequality and to provide the public, organizers, and practitioners, and policymakers with research-based policy solutions.

To fulfill that mission, IRRPP funds research on race and ethnicity, trains scholars to participate in policy discussions, collaborates on social justice projects with community organizations, and holds events exploring the link between policy and racial and ethnic injustice.

Location:
Institute for Research on Race & Public Policy (MC 347) 412 S. Peoria St., Room 322
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-996-6339

African American Resources on Campus 24125
Office of Career Services:
Career Services helps UIC students and alumni identify their career goals, prepare for their future careers, and connect with Chicago's diverse array of employers. Whether you need to find an internship, work on-campus, explore career options, or prepare for an upcoming interview, we encourage you to explore the resources online and in person at the Career Services office.

Location:
1200 W. Harrison, Suite 3050 (M/C 099)
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-996-2300
Fax: 312-413-0383
Email: Careerservices@uic.edu
Website: http://careerservices.uic.edu/

Office of the Dean of Students:
Provides a student-centered learning environment that offers support, advocacy, and resources that contribute to student success.

The Office of the Dean of Students serves as an advocate to assist students with academic and personal concerns. Provides legal services to students. Supports and assists student veterans in their transition to university life. Assists students in resolving administrative, academic, and personal grievances. Provides support and assistance for student crime victims. Offers consultation services for students, faculty and staff on a variety of issues related to student concerns and student misconduct. Refers students to on-campus and off-campus resources as necessary.

Location:
1200 W. Harrison St, Suite 3030 (M/C318) Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-996-4857
Fax: 312-413-3716
Email:
Website: http://dos.uic.edu/

Office of Diversity:
The aim of this office is to ensure that neither difference nor disadvantage impede the intellectual and professional achievement of our campus community. We welcome students, staff, and faculty from a variety of racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities to achieve this aim. At UIC, diversity is not an end in itself, but a vehicle for advancing access, equity, and inclusion. We strive to promote an organizational culture and structure that honors diversity through integration of the principles of access, equity, and inclusion.

At UIC, diversity is not an end in itself; but a vehicle for advancing access, equity, and inclusion. To promote an organizational culture and structure that honors diversity through integration of the principles of access, equity, and inclusion.

Location:
2631 University Hall, MC 103 601 S. Morgan St.
Chicago IL 60607-7127
Phone: 312-355-1308

African American Resources on Campus
26127
Fax:
Email: diversity@uic.edu
Website:
https://diversity.uic.edu/

African American Resources on Campus
26127
Student Accounts Receivable:
Helps assists students with payment plans, sends out bills, and issues financial aid refunds,

Location:
Student Services Building, Room 1900 (M/C073)
1200 W. Harrison Street
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-996-8574
Fax: 
Email: usfscohelp@uillinois.edu Website: https://paymybi11.uillinois.edu/

Student Loan Management Center:
The Student Money Management Center (SMMC), a division of University Student Financial Services and Cashiering Operations (USFSCO), empowers University of Illinois' students to make positive behavioral changes associated with their finances to ensure students take control over their financial futures.
Phone: 312-996-8574
Email: Studentmoney@uillinois.edu Website: https://studentmoney.uillinois.edu/

Student Employment Office:
We are a centralized service that offers assistance to UIC students, departments and off-campus employers. In addition, this office sponsors various job fairs throughout the year and a series of career development workshops.

Location:
1200 West Harrison Street, SSB, (M/C 335) Chicago,
Email: studentjobs@uic.edu Website: https://studentemployment.uic.edu
Student Financial Aid and Scholarships:
At UIC, a great education is within reach. The goal of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (SFAS) is to make the application process simple and to provide resources to assist in applying for financial aid. SFAS administers an array of federal, state and institutional financial aid programs. The UIC offers a range of scholarships for incoming, transfer and continuing students. Information is available on the UIC Scholarships website. Additionally, students are encouraged to visit UIC SnAP to access scholarship descriptions and applications.

Location:
Student Services Building
1200 W. Harrison, Suite 1800 (M/C334)
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-996-3126
Fax: 312-996-3385
Email: money@uic.edu
SFAS Website:
https://financialaid.uic.edu/ UIC Scholarship website:
https://snap.uic.edu/

Email: studentjobs@uic.edu
Website: https://studentemployment.uic.edu

African American Resources on Campus
28129
SUBSCRIBE TO THE UIC SCHOLARSHIPS MAILING LIST!
Simply provide us with your UIC email address and we will add you to the e-newsletter distribution. After joining our mailing list, you will receive an e-newsletter publicizing scholarships and related opportunities.

Wellness Center:
We support student learning, academic success, and retention by providing wellness services that promote healthy attitudes and behaviors, empower students to make informed choices and enhance holistic well-being.

Location:
750 S. Halsted St, Suite 238
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-413-2120
Fax: 312-413-8438
Email: Wellnesscenter@uic.edu Website: http://wellnesscenter.uic.edu/

Women's Leadership & Resource Center:
The Women's Leadership and Resource Center serves as a resource for the entire campus community while placing the experiences of diverse women at its center. We work to promote gender equity through programming that raises awareness of women and gender issues, develops women's leadership, and celebrates women's accomplishments and contributions. We provide resources as well as individual consultation on issues such as sexual harassment and sexual assault. The WLRC provides a welcoming, safe and inclusive space for all genders that encourages dialogue and diversity.

Writing Center:
The Writing Center helps students with course assignments, personal statements, and resumes. You and the tutor will begin by choosing priorities. You can expect tutors to treat your questions with care and respect. Tutors provide options, resources, and support for making improvements. Of course, the final responsibility for revising assignments remains with you.

Location:
105 Grant Hall
Phone: 312-413-2206
Website: https://writingcenter.uic.edu/

African American Resources on Campus
30131
Appendix 16 – Open-Ended College-Level Data

**QUESTION 10**
Does your College/Unit provide specific programs or resources to support the success of underrepresented minority students (separate from campus wide programs or resources)? Please provide a brief description of these programs/resources:

- **COLLEGE OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES**
  - Our college is a part of the UIC Urban Health Program (UHP). We have a Director and Associate Director of UHP who support underrepresented students to be successful from recruitment through graduation.

- **COLLEGE OF NURSING**
  - We have a robust Urban Health Program. As part of the program we offer a Seminar for Excellence In Nursing Science initiative. This is a seminar series focused on skills needed for success at the graduate and undergraduate levels. For example, the summer before matriculating into the Baccalaureate in Science in Nursing (BSN) students can participate in this seminar that focuses on math and pathophysiology.

- **COLLEGE OF PHARMACY**
  - Academic Assistance program (tutoring, mentoring, one-on-one counseling/advising, diversity scholarships, stress busters)

- **HONORS COLLEGE**
  - The President's Award Program-Honors (PAP-H) focuses on recruiting, admitting, and retaining eligible underrepresented students in the Honors College. Features of the program include: full tuition and housing in the living-learning community of the Honors House, a pre-college Summer College program to ease transition into the first year, and during the first year, participation in ten touchstone exercises to help keep students connected to the Honors College community and provide awareness of the opportunities available at UIC. In addition, the Honors College uses “supportively intrusive” methods of tracking its students and has built relationships with other campus units in recruiting and retaining students, such as the African American Academic Network and LARES.

- **HUMAN RESOURCES**
  - NO RESPONSE

- **JANE ADDAMS COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**
  - NO RESPONSE

- **OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH**
  - NO RESPONSE
QUESTION 11

Does your College/Unit provide specific programs or resources to improve the STEM pipeline for underrepresented minority and women students (separate from campus wide programs or resources)? If yes, please provide a brief description of these programs/resources:

- COLLEGE OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES
  - NO RESPONSE
- COLLEGE OF NURSING
  - Our have connections with many high schools and provide opportunities for high school students to spend time in the College or provide career workshops at the high schools.
- COLLEGE OF PHARMACY
  - Pipeline programs (elementary-postsecondary), Urban Health Program Recruitment and Enrollment management activities/outreach programs
- HONORS COLLEGE
  - The PAP-Honors Program described above certainly makes STEM and other education more accessible for minority students.
- HUMAN RESOURCES
  - NO RESPONSE
- JANE ADDAMS COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
  - NO RESPONSE
- OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH
  - NO RESPONSE
Appendix 17 – Improving African American Student Success Report

African American Academic Network
SSI- Improving African American Student Success
Submitted: Wednesday, March 14, 2018
AAAN Mission and Vision Statement

Mission
The African American Academic Network promotes success and high impact engagement for students of African descent through comprehensive advising, developmental programming, student advocacy and structured learning experiences within an inclusive community.

Vision
Students who participate in AAAN services and programs will graduate from the University of Illinois at Chicago as highly engaged leaders prepared to contribute to a global society.

AAAN Key Activities

Advising
The African American Academic Network (AAAN) Advising/Student Development unit is a comprehensive plan of services, providing one-on-one, holistic advising, group advising and programs to address the academic, social and personal needs of students. These services are designed to enhance the retention, persistence and graduation of our participants. Professional staff are available to help students strategize and develop plans to promote their academic success.

Black Tech Scholars Program
In collaboration with UIC’s Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies, the African American Academic Network collaborated to implement a program that fosters diversity in technology through coding opportunities. The Black Tech Scholars program is an initiative geared toward providing undergraduate students the opportunity to develop their business acumen and gain valuable hands-on experience building mobile-friendly websites. Through this program, students obtained an awareness of entrepreneurial and social issues through launching a mock venture that would influence the larger social and economic environment.

Black Male Initiative
The purpose of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) is to foster and promote community and brotherhood amongst black male identified students on UIC’s campus. BMI provides a space for participants to come and discuss current events happening globally, nationally, and locally. BMI allows students to not only network with other students but also with faculty and staff. The Black Male Initiative is dedicated to exposing its participants to leadership opportunities, volunteering, diversity, personal development, and cultural experiences in an effort to further a well-rounded college experience.

Freshmen Immersion Retreat for Successful Transition (FIRST Scholars Program)
The FIRST Scholars Program is a two-week, on campus retreat designed to prepare first year students of African descent for their first year at UIC. Retreat participants have the opportunity to network with students and staff, engage in seminars and team-building activities, connect with valuable campus resources, and participate in an internship experience.

Peers Achieving Community Together PACT Peer Mentoring Program
The PACT Peer Mentoring program is designed to assist first year African American students with their transition process from high school to college and increase both retention and persistence rates. First Year students (mentees) are paired with an upperclassmen student leader who will serve as a peer mentor. These leaders will provide their mentees with guidance and ample assistance navigating the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) community and support through academic enhancement, cultural exploration, transitional adjustment and leadership development. First year African American students that participate in AAAN’s Peer Mentoring Program will gain a stronger sense of belonging to UIC. They will find it easier to connect with campus resources and student services. They will also establish and strengthen relationships with other students, faculty and staff. Our Peer mentors will continue to grow as student leaders and positively impact UIC’s campus.

Learning Resource Center and Tutoring
The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is a place where students come and receive academic assistance, collegiate nurturing and peer networking in an environment that is supportive and student focused. Peer tutors who have successfully completed their course work at UIC are hired and developed in strategies of teaching and learning to and they guide students in their course work.

Woman to Woman
The mission of Woman 2 Woman is to serve as a safe space for woman-identified undergraduate students of African descent to achieve multiple levels of self-awareness. Through Woman 2 Woman, participants learn and develop transferrable skill sets that they use to navigate their undergraduate experiences, as well as their personal lives. Woman 2 Woman encourages its participants to shape their own unique identity while they simultaneously support the collective empowerment of women of African descent both on and off campus.

Computer Lab
One of AAAN’s most sought after resources is its 8 station computer lab. Located in a designated area within the office suite, students are afforded the opportunity to use computers with free internet access to do homework, conduct research or check email and social media. In most cases, printing is also available upon request.

Scholarships
AAAN is creating a scholarship suite to assist students who demonstrate financial need with tuition related expenses. To date, AAAN offers three different awards which are: AAAN Tuition Assistance
Award, Riversville Foundation Scholarship, and the Dr. J. Nnaemeka and Uche Onwuta Scholarship. Please contact the AAAN office for more details about eligibility.

Program Utilization

August 2016-May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Key Activity</th>
<th>Participants and Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising and Workshops</td>
<td>2338 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male Initiative</td>
<td>10 active participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Tech Scholars</td>
<td>7 active participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentor</td>
<td>86 mentees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>844 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman 2 Woman</td>
<td>27 active participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>658 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship recipients</td>
<td>35 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chart above shows all AAAN key activities and the number of unique participants during the 2016-2017 academic year.
Appendix 18 – President’s Awards Program Annual Report 2017

President’s Award Program Annual Report 2017

Executive Summary
The President’s Award Program now in its sixth year continues to promote student success, academic excellence and a four year graduation among students designated PAP Scholars at the University of Illinois at Chicago. We collaborate with eight colleges and the School of Public Health to provide programming and the entire UIC community to encourage students to persist in their respective majors. The second cohort (Class of 2017) graduated this past May. The students received a PAP lapel pin and a red cord that they proudly wore during graduation ceremonies. The students expressed sincere thank you to Kevin M. Browne, Mary and the university for being a part of the program and for providing scholarships.

Introduction
The President’s Award Program is the most prestigious scholarship at the University of Illinois. The program was created in 1985 to recognize and award students graduating from Illinois high schools who have demonstrated outstanding academic performance and who represent the rich diversity of the State of Illinois. Prior to 2012, the scholarship amount was $1,000 merit-based and up to $3,000 need based as verified by the financial aid process. There was no scholarship requirements or programming for students.

In 2012, a new PAP was implemented to increase student diversity, create a flagship program for excellence to recruit, retain and graduate high-achieving students and to keep top Illinois students in the state. The scholarship became merit based and the amount increased to $5,000 a year for four years for a total of $20,000 for students designated as PAP Scholars. A new category, PAP Honors Scholars, was also added to attract the highest achieving students for $10,000 a year for four years for a total of $40,000. These students are also eligible for a tuition waiver based on the financial aid process. They are required to be members of the UIC Honors College and live on campus. Please note that this report covers PAP Scholars only.

Our vision is to prepare students to persist in college, graduate in four years with competitive grade point averages (3.0 and higher), and pursue graduate and/or professional school. Persist is defined as being enrolled full-time, pursuing a degree (Astin, 1975), and to have the expectation to graduate in four years (Guthrie, 2002).

Program Components
The President’s Award Program has three components:

The PAP Scholars Program
The PAP Scholars component is four years and promotes student success, academic excellence and a four-year graduation in collaboration with the entire UIC community. PAP Scholars participate in the PAP Academy held during the UIC Summer College. Students must also attend PAP Freshman and Sophomore Year Overview held one week prior to the start of the fall semester. All PAP Scholars are required to complete a fall and spring activity contract until the end of their junior year to insure that they participate in college resources, undergraduate research, a study abroad experience, career, and graduate/professional school preparation.
The PAP Honors Scholars Program

The PAP Honors Scholars Program is a four-year residential scholarship program that provides opportunities for academic engagement and mentoring as a member of the UIC Honors College. The PAP Honors Scholars Program promotes academic excellence within and beyond the Honors College community, connects students with Honors College Faculty Fellows and other faculty members, and fosters civic engagement and leadership. The Honors College provides a collaborative and supportive educational environment that allows students to explore issues in depth through small classes and specialized research projects. The scholarship covers four years of tuition and housing, a week-long Summer College orientation program, and a new laptop computer. Students must apply separately to the Honors College for consideration.

PAP STEM Initiative

In 2015, the PAP STEM Initiative was implemented to support PAP Scholars and PAP Honors Scholars majoring in biochemistry, biological sciences, chemistry, computer sciences, earth and environmental sciences, engineering, mathematics, neuroscience, or physics. Those who show interest in conducting research in science and pursuing graduate education in their STEM field are invited to join PAP STEM.

These students join a community of distinguished UIC scientists and engineers. Students conduct research under the supervision of Dr. Donald Wink, Professor of Chemistry and develop a professional network. They enhance their experience at UIC through faculty seminars, classmate interactions, and the option to live in a residential living-learning community on campus, while preparing for graduate school.

PAP Scholars Program Structure

We have high expectations for our students. PAP provides programming that is relevant (not keeping students busy) to their success through collaboration with the seven colleges that admit freshmen (Applied Health Sciences, Architecture, Design and the Arts; Business, Education, Engineering, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Urban Planning and Public Affairs). During the junior year, the College of Nursing and School of Public Health provide activities for students entering their programs. In addition, the UIC Success Units (African American Academic Network and Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services), provide supplemental advising and support to these students. Students are strongly encouraged to use all campus resources include Counseling Services, the Wellness Center, the Commuter Center, the Science Learning Center, Math Learning Center, Writing Center and Library.

PAP Programming

In having high expectations for our students, the President’s Award Program coordinates relevant programming based on data, research, best practices, and the needs of the students to promote academic excellence in which they are challenged and supported. The intent of such programming is to support and encourage students to maintain a minimum 2.75 grade point average. In addition, programming will encourage research, persistence and preparation for career, graduate and/or professional school.

The first two years are highly structured. Student progress is closely monitored to provide appropriate interventions and referrals. Students receive activity contracts from their colleges for three years except...
Liberal Arts and Sciences. During this time, PAP also provides activity contracts for LAS juniors that focuses on career and professional/graduate school preparation.

PAP Strategies for Students

- Set high expectations for themselves and be committed to academic excellence
- Be responsible members of the UIC academic community
- Attempt to graduate in four years by completing 15 – 16 credits per semester
- Attend and participate in classes on a regular basis and do all homework and assignments
- Visit professors during office hours and schedule appointments as needed
- See academic advisor once a semester and as need arises
- Use academic support services as needed
- Seek assistance when experiencing difficulty of any kind
- Complete activity contracts for fall and spring semesters
- Fully participate in planned events and activities including PAP, their colleges, and in all communities of interest (Success Units, Diversity Centers, Student Organizations, etc.)
- Know the rules, policies, expectations, and deadlines for the UIC academic community

First Year Experience

The first-year experience concept is based on the recognition that the freshman year is the foundation of which the rest of the college experience is based, and that there needs to be a shift of attention and resources from the last two to the first two years (John N. Gardner, The Freshman Year Experience).

Therefore, the first year will be highly structured and monitored by the PAP office and the colleges. The first year experience focuses on the college transition and developing strong academics (competitive grade point averages). PAP Scholars are required to participate in their colleges’ contract and must complete activities in areas of academics, social, and personal/leadership for fall and spring semesters.

In addition, the program provides the following strategies for the first and second year:

First Semester and First Year Strategies:

- Early warning alert in use
- Midterm and final grades review
- Academic advising and intrusive counseling
- Scholars receive weekly updates and program information via Scholar listserv on university deadlines, time management, study skills, procrastination, stress, homesickness, wellness, campus events, scholarships, internships, meetings etc.)
- UIC PAP Facebook is used for updates on campus announcements, resources, and workshops

According Vincent Tinto, there are five conditions that are supportive of student retention: expectation, advice, support, involvement and learning.
Students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that:

- Expect them to succeed (high expectations are a condition for student success)
- Provide clear and consistent information about institutional requirements and effective advising about the choices students have to make regarding their programs of study and future career goals
- Provide academic, social, and personal support
- Involve them as valued members of the institution
- Foster learning - learning has always been the key to student retention (Taking Student Retention Seriously, Tinto, 2000)

Institutional Strategies

- Communicate to the students the institution’s high expectations, academic requirements, and policies
- Demonstrate to incoming students the institution’s commitment to their success and that their success is important to the us/university
- Provide funding to PAP for programming
- Identify the best professors to teach incoming freshmen
- Create First and Second Year Experiences to provide structure and support/challenge
- Coordinate Third and Fourth Year Experiences to provide preparation for graduation and after undergraduate school
- Communicate to the entire university, faculty, staff, students, and external constituents that the President’s Award Program Scholars is a program for high-achieving students
- Communicate to the students a culture of success that including maintaining academic excellence and graduation in four years
- Communicate to students that they are valued members of the academic community
- Develop effective programming that is based on data, research, best practices, and students’ needs and interests
- Communicate all policies and requirements to students governing their eligibility to maintain the PAP scholarship (i.e. grade point average and participation)
- Encourage students to seek assistance when experiencing difficulty of any kind

2016 PAP Scholars Program

Highlights PAP Academy

The President’s Award Program hosted five sessions of PAP Academy during Summer College and one late session to welcome the Class of 2020. The purpose of PAP Academy is to share information regarding the program’s scholarship requirements, policies, expectations; to introduce concepts, resources, and skills necessary for successful learning in higher education; and to facilitate adjustment and engagement in a new learning environment, the research university. PAP Academy is the cornerstone of the program. It supports and encourages incoming freshmen by exposing them to high expectations of a research university and faculty. In addition, students are made aware of their responsibilities in a new learning environment, good time management and study skills, appreciating diversity, exposure to campus resources, talking with professors, and how to ask to help. PAP Academy serves as a cohort-building event to introduce students to each other for peer-to-peer support.

Two hundred and fifty students attended PAP Academy and 249 enrolled for Fall 2017. Of the 249 enrolled, 182 were Pell eligible and 239 completed FAFSA (source: the UIC Office of Financial Aid). One hundred and thirty-six identified as first generation as defined following the TRIO guidelines as no parent or guardian having completed a bachelor’s degree.
A student feedback survey was distributed and 213 collected. The student survey scale: 1= Needs Improvement; 2= Neutral; 3= Adequate; 4= Good and 5= Excellent

Results:
Indicate your understanding of being a responsible member of UIC: 4.62
Indicate your understanding of PAP eligibility, expectations & policies: 4.72
Indicate your understanding of the college transition: 4.33
Rate the PAP Handbook: 4.44

Rate the following: time management, study strategies, critical thinking: 4.48
Rate the following: Self-Efficacy (no presentation for Session 6): 3.69
Rate the following: Wellness Presentation: 4.82
Rate the following: Panel Discussion: 4.66

The PAP Freshman and Sophomore Overview
The third annual PAP Freshman and Sophomore Overview was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2016, a few days prior to the start of the fall semester. PAP Freshman and Sophomore Overview goal is to welcome and reconnect students to their college representative. These events also serve as a way to congratulate the sophomores on completing their first year of college and encouraging the freshmen to have a successful first year at UIC.

First Semester Mentor
The First Semester Mentor component was created and first implemented the fall of 2015. Its purpose is to transfer knowledge and share college experience between an advanced student and entering freshman. In 2016 a total of forty-five matched mentor pairs was formed. An intensive training for mentors was held in addition to an opening and closing receptions. All mentors received a $15 UIC Bookstore gift card and water bottles with gifts inside. Mentees received water bottles as well.

Mentoring is important for low-income, first-generation college students (Crisp and Cruz 2009; Torres 2004) as well as for academically underprepared students (Salinitri 2005). It also helps many students of color on predominately white campuses, who sometimes find the environment unsupportive and inhospitable (Fleming 1984; Hurtado and Carter 1997; Johnson et al. 2007).

Wednesday Words
Wednesday Words is a weekly message sent to all PAP Scholars (Class of 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020) via listserv to keep students informed and motivated with messages on deadlines, staying healthy, study and time management strategies, procrastination, emotional intelligence, stress management, scholarships, internships, research, etc.

Weekend Advisor/Scholarship Probation
Via Blackboard, the program will provide additional support and motivation to students on scholarship probation (students who have competed four semesters at UIC) with an online class and live chats two Saturdays a month from 5:00—9:00 pm.
Activity Contracts
Eight colleges and the School of Public Health coordinate activities for PAP Scholars until their junior year. Nursing and the School of Public Health start in the junior year. Contract categories include academic, social, and personal/leadership.

Grade Reviews
*Early Grade Review*—between the 2nd and 4th week of classes, students are contacted if they are missing class, not doing homework and other disruptions to the learning process.
*Mid-Term Grade Review*—all students enrolled in 000-100 level courses receive grades; program contact those students to provide feedback on their academic performance
*Final Grade Review*—students receive feedback including a congratulation message

Course Schedule Review
All incoming first year students’ fall and spring course schedules are reviewed to insure they are enrolled in the correct courses. Students are contacted to revise schedules prior to the late registration deadline if needed.

Structured Advising
On request, students receive one-on-one advising to support and to motivate them to succeed.

Student Monitoring
All students’ progress is monitored closely by the PAP office because of the minimum grade point average to maintain scholarship eligibility and to promote a four-year graduation.

We monitor early warning, mid-term, and final grades and we contact students to follow up and provide strategies to succeed. We share students’ progress with colleagues in the colleges and other campus unit as needed. We strongly encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and decision-making. There is an Open Door Policy and walk-in hours to encourage dialogue between students and the program.

The PAP Selection Committee
Each fall, the PAP Selection Committee convenes to give scholarship consideration for the entering freshman class. The PAP Selection Committee will set the academic criteria for entering class that include standardized test scores, high school percentile rank, and grades to provide a comprehensive review for scholarship consideration. Consideration for PAP awards begins after a student is admitted to the university. Students do not apply directly to the program and there are no supplemental forms or materials to submit. Students meeting the stated criteria receive an individual review by the President’s Award Program selection committee and will be notified by mail if offered a scholarship.
PAP Selection Criteria

The PAP Selection Committee reviews admitted First Year students who are U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents, qualify for in-state Illinois residency, and will graduate from an Illinois high school. In addition to these base requirements, candidates must also meet academic criteria and be part of one of three designated populations.

Fall 2017 PAP candidates needed to meet one of the following academic criteria:

- Greater than or equal to 25 ACT Composite (1200 SATr) AND greater than or equal to 75 High School Percentile Rank (HSPR).
- A 24 ACT Composite (1160 SATr) AND greater than or equal to 90 HSPR.
- Greater than or equal to 96 HSPR OR greater than or equal to 3.90 High School GPA. Candidates must also be:
  - Part of an underrepresented race/ethnicity category (American Indian or Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander).
  - From a low-sending Illinois county (as identified by University Administration).
  - Identified as having $0 expected family contribution (EFC) via FAFSA.

The PAP Selection Committee’s emphasis has shifted in the last two years away from ACT Composite scores to a stronger emphasis on High School GPA and Class Rank. Beginning with the Fall 2016 review process, students in the top-four percent of their graduating class – regardless of ACT score – are considered by the Selection Committee. The order of candidates presented to the Selection Committee has also changed. Between Fall 2012 and Fall 2015, the Committee reviewed a list of candidates sorted by ACT Composite score. During review for the Fall 2016 class, the committee reviewed two lists: one sorted by ACT and a second sorted by GPA. The Fall 2017 class was selected solely from a list sorted on High School GPA. Additionally, the earlier opening of FAFSA allowed the committee to include $0 EFC candidates with their first meeting in November rather than waiting until February or March for this data to be available.

PAP and Enrollment Yield

PAP positively impacts yield compared to an overall yield rate for all First Year students. Admits chosen for PAP are 3% to 7% more likely to enroll at UIC when compared to overall First Year yield rates. Admits awarded PAP Honors are more than twice as likely to enroll at UIC when compared to overall First Year yield rates, with a total yield of 66% from Fall 2012 to Fall 2016.
### PAP Award Offers, Enrollment, and Yield Percentage Fall 2012-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All PAP Offers</th>
<th>PAP Enroll</th>
<th>PAP Yield %</th>
<th>Overall Yield %</th>
<th>PAP-S Offers</th>
<th>PAP-S Enroll</th>
<th>PAP-S Yield %</th>
<th>PAP-H Offers</th>
<th>PAP-H Enroll</th>
<th>PAP-H Yield %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2012</strong></td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2013</strong></td>
<td>731</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2014</strong></td>
<td>841</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2015</strong></td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2016</strong></td>
<td>966</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total over all cohorts</strong></td>
<td>4,685</td>
<td>1,581</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4,311</td>
<td>1,331</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PAP Award Offers, Enrollment, and Yield Percentage by Race & Ethnicity Fall 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>F16 PAP Offers</th>
<th>F16 PAP Enrolls</th>
<th>PAP Yield %</th>
<th>Overall Yield %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIAN</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr Amer</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHPI</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total over all cohorts</strong></td>
<td>966</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overall PAP Award Eligible, Offers, and Award Accepts Fall 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Offer</th>
<th>ITEs</th>
<th>PAP</th>
<th>Enroll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>Accepts</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>1,772</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>1,983</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent change</td>
<td>+12%</td>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>+24%</td>
<td>+42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PAP Scholars and PAP Honors Scholars 2016

### Fall 2016 Racial/Ethnic Distribution of PAP and Non-PAP new First Year Students and Proportion of Groups identified as PAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Non-PAP</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PAP-S</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PAP-H</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% of FR enrollment = PAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIAN</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr Amer</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1272</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHPI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3307</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3035</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PAP and Non-PAP Entry Profile - Fall 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Composite</th>
<th>HS GPA</th>
<th>HSPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non- PAP</td>
<td>PAP-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes by the Numbers
We measure the impact of programming by students’ grades, persistence and graduation.

PAP Scholar and Honors Persistence rates by cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Entry</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Yr1</th>
<th>Yr2</th>
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<td>143</td>
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<td>78%</td>
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<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>143</td>
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<td>59%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>208</td>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>94</td>
<td>89%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>94</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
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<tr>
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<td>225</td>
<td>92%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>282</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>96</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>92</td>
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</table>

STEM Major* denotes students who declared a STEM major upon the beginning of their program. Persistence rates are calculated using enrollment in any major.
The President’s Award Program (PAP) is a tangible representation of the University’s commitment to enroll and support the neediest students and students from groups underrepresented in higher education or at UIC. The PAP has become one of the most prestigious scholarship programs at the University. Established in 1985, PAP is a merit-based scholarship awarded to students entering UIC as a first time freshmen each fall.

In Fall 2012, programmatic elements were added to the PAP at UIC to provide support beyond the dollars represented in the scholarship. A PAP Honors component was added with a larger scholarship and a requirement to live on a PAP Honors floor of UIC residence halls. PAP Scholars are not required to live on campus. Programming and assessment for PAP Honors is directed by the UIC Honors College. In addition, student performance criteria were introduced to define academic expectations for recipients of the PAP scholarship. Since 2012, PAP students participate in a pre-enrollment summer program, research opportunities during their sophomore year and supplemental mentoring, and advising throughout their enrollment at UIC.

**PAP Students at Entry**

Between 2012 and 2016, PAP represented 10% of the entering first year cohort – ranging from a high of 15% in 2012 to 8% to 9% in Fall 2014, 2015 and 2016. Of the racial/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in higher education - AIAN, Hispanic, and African American – PAP (Honors and Scholars) represent 21%, 21% and 50% in the period 2012 to 2016. See Table 1 for the Racial/Ethnic distribution and proportional representation of PAP students.

PAP students enter with higher ACT composite scores, better high school GPA’s, and high school percentile ranks than non-PAP students. (See Table 2 for detailed entry characteristics).

**PAP and Progress to Degree**

The PAP (Scholars) overall persist to Year 2 enrollment at a higher rate than other students – 87% for PAP in contrast to 80% for all students. In addition the four year graduation for the PAP Fall 2012 cohort was 37% in contrast to 34% for the 2012 cohort overall as reported by OIR. Table 3 details the persistence and graduation progress of the PAP cohorts from 2012 to 2016.
### Fall 2012-16 Racial/Ethnic Distribution of PAP and Non-PAP new First Year Students

**PAP and Proportion of Groups identified as PAP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2012 to 2016 ALL</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Non-PAP</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PAP-S</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PAP-H</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% of FR enrollment</th>
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<td>AIAN</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3924</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3872</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afr Amer</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>5226</td>
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<td>4140</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>151</td>
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<td>International</td>
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<td>382</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHPI</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>4391</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>16049</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>14474</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>133</td>
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### PAP and Non-PAP Entry Profile - Fall 2012-2016

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<th>HS GPA</th>
<th>Non-PAP</th>
<th>PAP-S</th>
<th>PAP-H</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>HSPR</th>
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<td>87.7</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>77.31</td>
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<td>Grad within 4 Yrs</td>
<td>Grad within 5 Yrs*</td>
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<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avg over all cohorts</td>
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<td>79%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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* Five Year Graduation Data is incomplete -- Summer 2017 graduates are not available
Looking to the future: Entering PAP Scholars for Fall 2017

### 2017 PAP Candidate Academic Characteristics

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### 2017 PAP Candidate Pool - Race/Ethnicity

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</tr>
</tbody>
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### 2017 PAP Candidate Pool - Admitted College

<table>
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<td>402</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1152</td>
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<td>1982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In closing, the President’s Award Program will continue to provide programming to promote student success, academic excellence and a four-year graduation among the students enrolled in the program. A special thank you to Cecil Curtwright, Brad Gardner, Patricia Inman, PhD and Kevin Pinkston, PhD in the Office of Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services in preparing this annual report.

Submitted by Mary L. Fleming
Appendix 19 – UPPF Program Academic Year 2017

UPPF Program Academic Year 2017-2018

1) A brief description of the program’s activities, mission, vision, and goals.

The Urban Public Policy Fellowship (UPPF) program is a leadership development program designed to expose historically underrepresented minority undergraduate students at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to key public policy issues. The program provides Fellows with weekly seminars offering a solid introduction to theory and practice in the areas of public policymaking, advocacy, community development, and service provision and also a valuable internship experience.

Students from all academic areas are eligible, including those with an interest in fields such as education, urban planning, political science, sociology, urban health, communication, and law. Upperclassman standing (minimum 45 hours) is necessary to participate in this non-degree, non-credit program.

2) A list of key success indicators based on the program goals (e.g., improved grades, retention, graduation, scholarships, etc.)

3) The number of individuals who have participated in the program each of the last three semesters broken down by race/ethnicity and entering cohort.
20 UIC undergraduate student participants during AY 2017-2018. 13 African-American students. 7 Latino students.

4) A summary of student progress on the key success indicators over each of the past three semesters.
All Fellows are currently enrolled at UIC. The UPPF program ends May 2018. Fellows complete an exit interview the last week of program where they list scholarships awarded, date of expected graduation, if they were offered an employment opportunity at their internship site and if they plan to apply to a graduate program or will start graduate school in the Fall.
Appendix 20 – Education Program

1) A brief description of the program's activities, mission, vision, and goals

The College of Education established an E-USE Task force that has as one of its goals to improve student success. The specific goals of the task force include: 1) providing learning supports and continuous progress monitoring; and 2) offering 100 Hour Undergraduate Research Internships (HURI) and The Undergraduate Research Fund (TURF) to provide mentoring, research, and financial opportunities. The College of Education also established the $5 for 4 Scholarship fund to provide financial support to students and to prevent them from taking semesters off for financial reasons. Lastly, the College of Education created student-friendly, safe spaces in the College.

2) A list of key success indicators based on the program goals (e.g., improved grades, retention, graduation, scholarships, etc.)

The College awarded more than 40 scholarships this year from its funds to support undergraduate students success.

3) The number of individuals who have participated in the program each of the last three semesters broken down by race/ethnicity and entering cohort

Data are not available at this time.
Appendix 21 – African American Student Success College of Nursing

UIC College of Nursing
Urban Health Program (UHP)
Response to African American Student Success Program Inquiry
Contact: Charese A. Jackson, MPA, Assistant Director for Urban Health Program
Catherine Vincent, RN, PhD, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

*Brief Description of Program activities, mission, vision, and goals*
The mission of the UIC UHP is to recruit, retain, and graduate underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students, specifically African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans into the health professions. The UHP seeks to expand education and research opportunities for these groups at all academic levels (including pre-college students) in order to develop underrepresented minority healthcare professions, faculty, and researchers with the goals of eliminating health disparities and advancing health equity. The College of Nursing UHP seeks to fulfill this mission by offering a variety of retention activities and programs through academic and professional support.

One major program is our Seminars for Excellence in Nursing Science (SENS) Program which provides newly admitted students a head start to the rigors of the nursing courses that students will encounter during the fall semester. SENS are offered for five weeks during the summer and covers major subjects (e.g., Pathophysiology, Physiology, Doctoral Statistics, and Philosophy of Science) across all of CON academic programs; namely the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Advanced Generalist Master of Science, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and Doctor of Philosophy. Other activities and services include tutoring through the CON Student Success Center, academic skills workshops, and professional development workshops. The CON UHP also offers annual cultural workshops that provide information and knowledge that helps students better understand how to care for patients from a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds.

*A list of key success indicators based on the program goals*
The CON retention goal is always to have 100% retention of all students. One major success indicator is the students’ ability to successfully complete prerequisite/basic courses and move on to the more advanced course(s) in their program. Other indicators include:

- Building effective study habits
- Promoting mental wellness with an emphasis on time management
- Developing effective test-taking strategies
- Developing peer mentoring and support through group study
- Building strong communication with faculty
The number of individuals who have participated in the program each of the last three semesters broken down by race/ethnicity and entering cohort

While we record attendance for every event, we generally do not record race and ethnicity. However, we are able to provide this information for our Summer 2017 SENS Program, which is noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A summary of student progress on the key success indicators over each of the past three semesters

While we do not measure specific outcomes for the key success indicators mentioned previously, the College does work with each student to ensure academic success. Together with our Office of Academic Programs, we hold academic skills and professional workshops that address study skills, time management, personal wellness, test-taking strategies, mentoring, and networking.

The College of Nursing enrolls about 600 newly admitted students per academic year across all programs, of which, 11.8% are African American. When looking at graduation for the Spring 17 and Fall 17 semesters, 447 students earned degrees across all programs, of which 6.48% are African American. There are occasions when students take a leave of absence; are dismissed due to poor academic performance; or delayed in their ability to progress. For example, for the fall 2017 semester, four students across all programs were dismissed due to poor academic performance and failure to progress; none of whom were African American. However, there were eight African American students who were decelerated due to poor academic performance. Being decelerated means that students must repeat a course before they can progress forward to graduation. They are provided with academic support services when this occurs.

Overall, African American students are successfully progressing through to graduation. When the CON-UHP staff is aware of challenges, we seek to help students identify resources to help ensure success.
Goal 1 in the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success requires that higher education institutions describe their efforts to increase educational attainment to match best-performing states. The emphasis for the 2013-14 academic year report is to be placed on retention and completion of underrepresented students.

Promoting the recruitment, retention, and success of underrepresented students has been a key priority at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) for several years. With a 57% racial minority undergraduate student population, UIC is a national leader among urban, public higher education institutions in providing access to underrepresented students. In 2013 UIC established a Student Success Initiative to enable more students to overcome barriers to academic success. A strategic goal of this initiative is to provide access to a world-class undergraduate education. For UIC “world-class” means promoting a learning environment in which an extraordinarily diverse population of students fully reaches their potential. Specifically, the campus has set a goal of reaching an overall retention rate of 85%, graduation rate of 65%, as well as racial and ethnic parity in retention and graduation rates. Our campus overall retention rate is 80% and our campus overall graduation rate is 60%.

UIC has made important progress toward its goal of recruiting and promoting the success of diverse students. In general, all students’ 6-year graduation rates have improved. Latino students have made the most advances. For instance, the Latino class of 2000 had a six-year graduation rate of 40%. The class of 2008 had a graduation rate of 56%. The African American class of 2000 had a six-year graduation rate of 34%. The class of 2008 had a graduation rate of 43%. The Asian class of 2000 had a six-year graduation rate of 58%. The class of 2008 had a graduation rate of 65%. However, despite these improvements in graduation rates we continue to have gaps in retention and graduation rates by race/ethnicity. In Fall 2013 there was a three-percentage point gap in the retention rates of both African American and Latino students compared to White students (75% for Blacks and Latinos and 78% for Whites); this represents a narrowing of the Black-White gap since Fall 2009 when there was a seven-percentage point difference. The Latino-White gap has been relatively stable during the same period. Conversely, the Asian American student retention rate is 11 percentage points higher than the White student retention rate, the largest difference between the two groups since 2010. Racial and ethnic disparities in six-year graduation rates have also steadily decreased over the past several years. In 2007, there was a 27-percentage point gap in the six-year graduation rate between Blacks and Whites (26% and 53%, respectively). As of 2013, the six-year graduation gap has been reduced by almost one-third to 19 percentage points (43% and 62%). Latino six-year graduation rates are currently within six percentage points of all students (56% and 62%)
down from nine percentage points in 2007 (44% and 53%). Finally, Asian graduation rates supersede that of White students (65% and 62% respectively).

UIC is continually striving to provide equal access and success for underrepresented students. Our efforts to promote the success of these groups has taken multiple forms, including early outreach and pipeline programs, pre-matriculation activities to prepare students for the rigor of college, campus student support units that offer rigorous programs to promote the academic success of underrepresented students, merit based scholarships, and campus cultural centers. Our hope is that these initiatives and programs will enable UIC to meet its goal of having parity in retention and graduation rates and remain a destination university for underrepresented students.

**Academic & Social Support Programs (ASSP)**

UIC’s ASSP programs facilitate the recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented and underserved students by providing students with access to a network of social support systems designed to cultivate their overall well-being in addition to their academic success. Often collaborating with other campus and community partners to achieve their goals, ASSP programs provide academic support, financial resources, exposure to university life, and personal development tools necessary to succeed in college.

**Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**

ACE is a comprehensive student academic learning center, which serves all UIC undergraduate, graduate and professional students. ACE provides a variety of learning support to enable all students to accomplish their goals by developing critical thinking skills and learning strategies that will enhance their academic success. These student-centered approaches include academic skills courses, academic coaching, English as a second language courses, academic workshops for undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and study tips. The ASP courses are designed to assist students with the reading, writing, study, and learning demands of college. ACE designs academic workshops in collaboration with units, departments, and student organizations to meet their specific educational needs. Students participate in workshops that include general study strategies, time management, critical thinking and reading, preparation for examinations, test taking strategies, academic and professional writing and English as a Second Language (ESL).

**African American Academic Network (AAAN)**

The mission of AAAN is to increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of African American students and establish an inclusive and supportive campus environment. AAAN oversees 15 programs and activities across the UIC campus. Recruitment efforts in the 2013 academic year have resulted in 15 high school visits and 614 contacts from high school connections. The Learning Resource Center in the AAAN is focused on facilitating students’ adjustment to the academic demands of college. A total of 109 (41%) of African American freshmen utilized the Learning Resource Center during the 2013-2014 academic year. A total of 111 (41%) African American freshmen received advising through the academic advising and student development services efforts of the AAAN. Freshmen engagement by the AAAN likely contributed to the 75% African American retention rate in 2013. During the 2013-2014 academic year, the AAAN as whole has engaged 598 African American students, 42% of the African American undergraduate student population.
African American Recruitment Enrollment Initiative (AAREI)
The primary objective of AAREI is to strategically recruit and admit improve yield (i.e., moving an admitted applicant to an enroll decision) of African American students. AAREI targets a group of 21 high schools from which UIC historically admitted but did not enroll many African Americans students. After several recruitment efforts, the Fall 2013 yield of African American students from AAREI high schools increased 19% since Fall 2011 (from 28% to 34%). This is a change from the overall UIC African American yield, which decreased from 31% to 26% during that same time period. The total number of applicants from AAREI schools remained at about 20% of the total number of African American applicants, and the number of new freshmen from AAREI schools represented 30% of the African American freshman cohort (in contrast to 25% in Fall 2011).

CHANCE Program (CP)
CP assists in the recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented students through a comprehensive set of programs. CP transforms the lives of underrepresented populations who enter the university underprepared for the academic challenges that lie before them. Some of CP’s recruitment programs include: Saturday College, Summer CHANCE for Change STEM Camp, STEM Academy, and Chicago Scholars Onsite College Admissions Forum. Saturday College is a 12-week program designed to expose high school students to “college level” learning and instructors in order to ease their transition from high school to college. 57% of the seniors currently participating in this initiative have been admitted to UIC. STEM Camp is a six-week summer recruitment initiative for thirty students to receive extensive instruction about scientific inquiry using project-based learning principles. Chicago Scholars recruits talented students from Chicago Public Schools’ underrepresented communities and nurtures their talent through an innovative five-year program than spans from a students’ senior year of high school through their senior year of college; the culminating event is the onsite admissions event, which is designed to ensure that scholars are matched with a set of good-fit college. In Fall 2013, 97 high school seniors were recruited to participate in CP and 71% enrolled at UIC. During the 2013-14 academic year 193 students were serviced, 77% of these students were in good standing, 15% were on probation, 8% dropped or withdrew from the university.

Hispanic Center for Excellence (HCE)
The aims of the HCE are to improve the medical care of Latinos in Illinois by providing programs that strengthen the pipeline and increase the number of Latino applicants pursuing health careers; to enrich the education of Latino students, with an emphasis on producing linguistically and culturally-competent health practitioners; and to build partnerships with others that share the same vision. A signature program of the HCE, the Medicina Scholars Program, guides and supports Latino undergraduate students interested in the medical profession in a three-year span. It admits a cohort of 30 students every fall and each group partakes in a series of professional development/medical seminars designed to expand their familiarity with the health field. The curriculum provides a strong foundation in the history of medicine, professionalism issues, public health policy, cultural competence, primary and specialized care, and guidelines for medical school admissions processes. Additionally, scholars are required to participate in academic advising and community service activities. To date, seven 30-person cohorts (210 students) of Medicina Scholars have completed the program; 27 of them are in medical school, and 13 are in the application process for the 2015 admissions cycle. A total of
145 participants have completed a bachelor’s degree, and 16 pursued a health professions or graduate program.

**The Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services Program (LARES)**

LARES is a recruitment and retention unit at UIC working primarily with low income and underserved Latino students in urban and suburban areas. The program prepares participants for professional and civic engagement by encouraging their participation in academic, social, and leadership activities that enrich their undergraduate education and increase their potential for success. LARES develops its own programming and initiatives, including co-sponsoring activities with other university units, Latino student organizations, policy-focused Latino committees, and other Latino groups. Services offered by LARES’ bilingual/bicultural staff include academic, career, and financial aid counseling; orientation for beginning freshmen, transfer students, and their families; and college and career success workshops. LARES has an established track record of increasing (Latino) student success. The six-year Latino graduation rate has doubled since 1998 (for the 1992 cohort of entering full-time, first-time freshmen); it is up from 28% to 56% in 2014 (for the 2008 cohort).

LARES received an Outstanding Institutional Advising Program Award from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) at its annual conference in Minneapolis. The award recognizes programs for best practices in academic advising. LARES was also recognized by Excelencia in Education, a national nonprofit whose mission is to accelerate Latino student success in higher education, and named LARES as its 2014 Example of Excelencia award, as the nation’s top program for increasing achievement for Latino students in the undergraduate category.

**Native American Support Program (NASP)**

NASP strives to increase the enrollment, retention and graduation rates of Native American students. The program fosters a climate supportive of positive experiences for Native American students at UIC and within Native communities. Academic advising services are offered including assistance with the admissions process, institutional policies, class registration, graduation requirements, degree programs, and tutoring. Financial aid assistance is provided to students by informing students about scholarships and grant opportunities and working closely with students throughout the application process to ensure timely completions of funding applications. From 2010 to 2013, the number of entering freshmen has grown more than 150% (30 to 80) for students identifying as solely American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) undergraduate or Multi-Race/Hispanic with AIAN while the retention rate has remained relatively stable (73% to 71%).

**TRIO/Academic Support Program (TRIO/ASP)**

TRIO/ASP is one of the federal TRIO Programs. It is a student services program that identifies and outreaches to 160 students from disadvantaged backgrounds and assists them with overcoming environmental, social, cultural and academic barriers to higher education. The program provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements and motivates students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. The goal is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of the student
participants. In the program’s thirty-year history on the UIC Campus, over 1200 students have been served. The students who participate in the program are low-income and/or first-generation (neither parent holds bachelor degrees), and those with disabilities. The program provides academic tutoring, advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection, assistance with information on student financial aid programs and public and private scholarships, educational counseling, exposure to careers and career selection, assistance with applying graduate and professional programs and exposure to cultural events, and a book library. AY 2014 accomplishments include: 88% of program participants persisted from AY 2013 to AY 2014; 81% were in good academic standing; 68% of participants graduated with a bachelor’s degree within six years.

**Urban Health Program (UHP)**

UHP is a K–16 comprehensive talent search and development program to recruit, retain, and graduate underrepresented minority students in the health sciences and professions programs. UHP’s ultimate goal is to enhance health care quality and access and reduce unmet healthcare needs in the City of Chicago and State of Illinois. UHP achieves this mission through the operation of several programs: (1) Early Outreach Program for K-12 students is a pipeline program whose primary focus is to recruit Chicago and suburban school children to participate in Saturday College and Summer Preparation school programs. Over its 30-year history, EOP has maintained a steady stream of high performing and talented students who frequently place among the States most highly sought after graduating high school seniors; (2) a support program for undergraduate level college students, and (3) collaborative support and coordination of the university’s graduate and professional level programs.

UHP’s strong academic and non-academic support services have contributed to successful matriculation of over 6000 underrepresented students since its creation in 1979, in part due to UHP’s provision of a wide range of services including academic advising, tutoring, career development, research forum, internship and externship opportunities, financial and other workshops, seminars, exposure and interaction to the health sciences schools as well as graduate and professional students. In 2013, underrepresented minority students represented 21% of all new students in the six academic health sciences programs (i.e., Applied Health Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health), which reflects a 2.5% increase from 2012. Underrepresented students comprised 18% of the total enrollment in 2013. All underrepresented students (100% retention rate) who enrolled during 2013 were retained and re-enrolled in 2014. Finally, 16% of 2013 graduates in the health sciences programs were underrepresented students, representing a 3.5% increase from 2012.

**Urban Public Policy Fellows Program (UPPF)**

The one-year UPPF program targets students from historically underrepresented backgrounds and provides them with leadership development and exposure to policy issues. The program is structured as a paid internship in which the students work at a site relevant to their policy interests, produce a research poster, and participate in guest lectures and workshops. UPPF has had approximately 120 students complete it since 2009. There are currently 27 students in this year’s cohort. The Urban Public Policy Fellows Program is currently engaged with an external evaluator in order to conduct an independent evaluation of its program outcomes related to their
primary goals of leadership development and policy exposure. Part of this evaluation will include gathering data on the academic success- graduation rates, GPA, graduate school attendance- of students who participate in the UPPF program.

**Center for Student Success Initiatives**

In January 2015, UIC repurposed the Undergraduate Success Center to create the Center for Student Success Initiatives, which broadened the scope of the previous Center significantly. The new Center (a collaboration of the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and the Dean of Students Office) will house three student success-related units: Office of Project Management for Student Success Initiatives, Office of First-Year Student Initiatives, and the Undergraduate Advising Resource Center.

**Office of Project Management for Student Success Initiatives** is a collective process to significantly increase student success rates as measured by year-to-year retention and six-year graduation rates. The initiative seeks to identify strategies to help vulnerable and underrepresented students. Throughout much of 2013, task forces convened and provided recommendations for campus consideration. In Summer 2014, UIC received a Transformational Planning Grant from the Association of Public Land-grant Universities, which provided support for planning the implementation of the overall initiative. A project management framework was adopted for the implementation phase following the consolidation of the original Student Success Plan recommendations into 39 “projects.” The task of prioritization of projects was done based on the likely high impact on student success, particularly those at higher risk, underrepresented, or low income. Eleven projects have been identified and shared with the campus for the first round of implementation. A “project management plan” document was drafted that specifies the scope, deliverables, roles and responsibilities for each project. A clear “communication plan” will ensure transparency of the implementation process and provide regular updates to all the stakeholders and the campus.

**Office of First-Year Initiatives/Transition Coaching** is funded by the TPG/APLU grant and will provide coordinated support to transition coaching programs that are currently working with our students to make their work more effective. A transition coach is defined broadly as non-UIC personnel engaged in mentoring or “coaching” activities with students currently enrolled at UIC in an integrated approach that addresses the academic and non-academic needs to help them succeed in college and graduate in a timely manner. One component of this pilot will be to create a referral service of at-risk (low income -- i.e., EFC of zero -- and first generation in college) entering first year students to one of the programs. The goal of this partnership is to embed personnel from community based organizations as alumni coordinators/transition coaches to maximize the support that the coaches at these organizations already provide to students, and link this embedded personnel with a UIC liaison. The partnership will involve non-profit organizations working overwhelmingly with students of color.

**Undergraduate Advising Resource Center (UARC)** provides valuable resources to undergraduate students including: (1) professional development workshops and webinars, (2) an advising summit attended by all campus advisors, coaches and student support personnel, (3) administration of professional advising awards, and (4) baseline training to ensure a level of consistency among undergraduate advisors. To address the lower success rates for our underrepresented students, UARC instituted a “Multi-Cultural Advising” Subcommittee to discuss and work together across colleges and units on advising challenges for advisors and resource staff who work with students from underrepresented groups. Regular workshops will take up the topic of advising students from underrepresented groups. UARC also administers UIC’s Early Alert Program, which has an impact on advising underrepresented students and marshals the resources of advisors from both colleges and support programs. Early Alerts allows advisors on campus to receive alerts about students who are struggling in select first-year courses and provides a means for support units to work together to help students succeed. Over the 2014 – 2015 year 52% of the alerts came through from students from underrepresented minority groups.
CPS Higher Education Compact
As a function of our involvement in Thrive and other projects, UIC has developed a strong working relationship with Chicago Public Schools. In January 2015, UIC joined a number of area colleges and universities in signing on to the CPS Higher Education Compact, which is a collaborative effort to ensure that 3 in 5 CPS graduates earn a postsecondary degree by 2025. In 2014, 31% of UIC’s incoming first-year students were from CPS schools. Of these, about 66% are Black or Hispanic. The most recent graduation rate is about 50%, well below the current campus rate of 60%.

Student Success Research
For the past two years, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs (VPUA) has engaged in a number of research projects aimed at understanding the factors that are associated with student retention and graduation. These studies include: (1) family and student demographic and student academic preparedness factors as predictors of college success; (2) characteristics and qualities of high schools that promote success in college; (3) non-cognitive survey of entering freshman; and (4) mixed methods exit study of students who do not return after their first year. The exit study examines a broad range of factors that lead students to leaving college before graduating. Early findings highlight finances and financial aid as key barriers to persistence in college. One of the key aims of the non-cognitive survey is to understand the disparities in student success based on ethnicity. Based on findings from the non-cognitive survey, a new academic mindset study is being developed that will be targeted towards students who scored low on perceived self-efficacy.

Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change
UIC’s Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change are a collaborative group of six centers with distinct histories, missions, and locations that promote the well-being of underrepresented groups and an inclusive campus at UIC by providing opportunities for cultural awareness & enrichment and intercultural engagement among students, staff, and faculty. Research indicates that students’ experience of their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes.

African-American Cultural Center (AACC)
The AACC supports the academic and diversity missions of UIC through innovative programs and initiatives that relate African American and African Diaspora traditions, practices, and experiences to broader frameworks of thought, feeling, and action. The Center connects campus and community partners who reflect the diverse intellectual and cultural life of UIC and the greater Chicago area to promote intercultural understanding and social change. During the 2013-2014 academic year over 40 cultural activities have taken place in the AACC. The center’s largest event, “The Reason Why the Colored Americans were NOT in the World’s Columbian Exposition,” was developed with the support of a $5,000 Illinois Humanities Council (IHC) Program Grant. The exhibition had an estimated 1,190 visitors.

Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) Initiative
The UIC AANAPISI initiative supports the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Asian American, Pacific Islander, and English language learner students through high impact programs that are culturally relevant and focused on student engagement with campus and community resources to enhance college success. The Initiative is funded by two grants from the U.S. Department of Education.
A number of AANAPISI initiatives, housed in the Asian American Studies Program have contributed to enhancing the academic experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students and connecting AAPI students to the community. There has been an expansion of core course offerings (5-6 courses/year), summer study abroad opportunities (India 2012, 2013; Japan 2014), and financial subsidies to support students’ study abroad (approximately 10 students per year). Co-curricular enrichment has included undergraduate grants of up to $1,000 to support independent research or creative projects. There were 10 grant recipients in 2014 and 12 in 2015.

AANAPISI supports new curriculum-instruction in English 160 and 161- in the First Year Writing Program that is specifically targeted to English-language learner (ELL) students. Additionally, AANAPISI supports initiatives at the Writing Center to increase tutor support for ELL students, training for tutors, and also a Writing Partners program to work with students in 070 (the ESL course for students who still need to take 160, 161). Moreover, the AANAPISI grant supports an undergraduate academic advisor who provides supplemental advising for AAPI and ELL students at UIC. 344 AAPI and ELL students utilized this service in 2013-2014. Additionally, the AANAPISI grant supports the Educational Employment Grant (EEG); administered through Career Services, the EEG supports 31 student employees on campus who are engaging in career development with their supervisors.

**Asian American Resource Center (AARC)**
The goals of AARC are to increase awareness of diverse Asian American issues, cultures, and communities, and to strengthen the overall Asian American campus community. AARC offers social, cultural, and educational programs that foster engagement with issues relating to Asian Americans and Asian American studies. The Center collaborates and consults with other campus units to ensure the goals of the center are fulfilled. The Asian American Mentor Program (AAMP), one of the initiatives of the AARC, was designed to ease the transition of new students to UIC during their first semester. AAMP activities consist of social activities, academic and cultural enrichment workshops as well as group outings off campus.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**
The mission of the DRC is to deliver high quality services and resources to individual students with disabilities, promote curriculum accessibility and flexibility, inclusive and innovative learning practices and provide opportunities to understand disability culture on campus. To accomplish its mission, the DRC staff works collaboratively with campus constituents, including faculty, students, teaching assistants, academic advisors, and staff. For instance, the DRC participates in student orientation and recruitment events, collaborates with the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities (CCSPD), and partners with other local organizations. Self-identified undergraduate students with disabilities at UIC has grown over the last ten years, from 1% in 2005 to 3% in 2014.

**Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center (LCC)**
The mission of the LCC is to expand the appreciation for and understanding of Latino cultures on campus and throughout local communities. The LCC also works to ensure that Latino students have a positive self-defined identity and practical tools to help them graduate, join the workforce, and become the next generation of leaders. The LCC advances its mission through
programs and initiatives that feature cultural and artistic expressions, intercultural and civic dialogues, scholarly presentations, and first-voice stories. LCC programs and initiatives connect social and environmental sustainability, draw on cultural heritage to address contemporary issues, and build partnerships across diverse communities for positive social change. The LCC offers public programs (developed in collaboration with faculty, staff, student leaders, and community partners), provides services to students on campus, builds student leadership and professional capacity, and supports student advocacy efforts, coalition building, and research to improve the lives of Latinos and local communities. Visitors are diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. During the 2013-14 academic year, 54% of visitors to the LCC and its affiliated programs self-identified as Latino/a, 4.2% as Black, 4.6% as Asian, 7.3% as white, 4.6% as Middle Eastern, and 4.2% of mixed ethnicity.

Women’s Leadership and Resource Center (WLRC)
The WLRC provides consultation and training programs to all UIC members dedicated to working more effectively with gender issues on campus. The WLRC is closely connected to the Campus Advocacy Network (CAN), an innovative program that provides a team approach to advocacy in order to assist UIC students, staff and faculty who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking and hate crimes. Additionally, the WLRC hosts a number of programs including the Women’s Leadership Symposium, Women’s Heritage Month, and UIC Daughters at Work Day.

Scholarship/Fellowship Programs
UIC’s Scholarship/Fellowship Programs provide financial awards to underrepresented and underserved students who have demonstrated academic promise. Award recipients often receive supplemental academic training and professional development support.

Martin Luther King Scholarship Program
The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship program was established in 1985 at UIC to recognize underrepresented students who have demonstrated high academic achievement and have shown a commitment to civil rights and social justice through community service. In an effort to keep Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.’s dream alive, these meritorious and/or monetary awards are given to undergraduates, graduates and professional students. Fifteen $2,000 undergraduate scholarships, five $5,000 graduate fellowships, and five $5,000 professional fellowships are awarded each year. Recipients must maintain high academic standing during the terms they receive the award. The MLK Scholarship is one of many tools used in the effort to help retain and graduate students as the award directly addresses an area recognized by the recent Student Success Initiative report as a vital component to student success: financial assistance. Additionally, the scholarship requirements promote engagement and community service, which have been recognized by scholars as high impact practices linked to student retention and graduation.

President’s Award Program (PAP)
The PAP is a university-wide scholarship awarded to new undergraduate students at UIC who have been underrepresented by racial, ethnic or geographic representation. The overall mission of the PAP is to assist students to persist and graduate with a competitive grade point average and/or to pursue work, graduate or professional school studies. PAP collaborates with the entire
UIC campus to provide resources, support, and attention for students to succeed in college and life by creating programming that promotes academic excellence and professional development. PAP Scholars receive structured programming that includes completing one activity in academics, social/personal and leadership per semester. Programming efforts are designed to promote student success, academic excellence, and graduation in four years. Since 2012, 85-90% of PAP Scholars have been from underrepresented groups. For Fall 2013 Asians represent 2%, Blacks 17%, and Latinos 70% of PAP scholars. One-year retention rates for Black PAP scholars (2013 cohort) were 92% compared to 69% of all Black students. Similarly, one-year retention rates for Latino PAP scholars (2013 cohort) were 88% compared to 72% of all Latino students. The 2013 graduation rate for Black PAP scholars was 54% compared to 44% of all African-American students. Similarly, 2013 graduation rates for Asian and Latino PAP scholars was 88% and 52%, respectively, compared to 65% and 49% for all Asian and Latino students.

Other Initiatives Benefiting Students from Underrepresented Groups

First Year Intergroup Dialogue Course
UIC’s First Year Dialogue Seminar (FDYS) leverages the diversity of the undergraduate student body by offering a 1-credit course for freshmen students that seeks to improve intergroup understanding, intergroup relations, and intergroup collaboration and action. The racial and ethnic composition of enrolled students during academic year 2013-2014 was 17% Asian, 12% African American, 32% Latino, 29% White, and 2% multi-racial. Students taking the course expressed positive feelings about participating in future courses and activities related to underrepresented minorities. Approximately 91% of students in the course said they were very likely to participate in community service or a volunteer project, 62% of students said they were very likely to enroll in courses primarily covering race/ethnic issues in the future, and 69% of students said they were very likely to attend co-curricular intergroup dialogue (i.e. presentations or workshops).

The UIC Experience
The UIC Experience is a co-curricular opportunity that enhances students’ learning and development as tomorrow’s global leaders by reinforcing three key areas: urban exploration, intellectual inquiry, and engagement in a diverse community. Students’ descriptive answers about what they had learned from themed activities of The UIC Experience program during the academic year 2014 were categorized into seven learning domains. The top three domains were knowledge acquisition, integration, and application (34%), civic engagement (17%), and practical competence (17%).

Honors College
The Honors College is a program for talented and motivated students, which provides high-impact practices that engage students in the intellectual life of the UIC campus, both inside and outside the classroom while supporting students with holistic advising and mentoring. In fall of 2014 nearly 40% of Honors College students were Pell-eligible. Thirty-three percent of Honors College students are Asian, 8% Black, 17% Latino, 36% White, and 3% Multi-racial. Of the 2009 first-year cohort, 77% of the Pell-eligible students in the Honors College graduated from
UIC in five years, although the average time to degree was 4 years. This graduation rate almost equals the 80% five-year graduation rate for this Honors College cohort as a whole.

**Minority Engineering Recruitment and Retention Program (MERRP)**

MERRP serves and supports historically underrepresented students pursuing an engineering degree in the UIC College of Engineering through several academic and professional development programs including Supplemental Instruction (SI) and Preparation for Majoring in Engineering (Prep-ME). SI sessions, led by graduate students, successful undergraduates and faculty, offer an opportunity for students to engage more deeply with course-related materials such as lectures and exams outside of the classroom. The benefits of SI include learning problem solving techniques, teamwork, developing efficient study strategies, and improving academic performance and grades. Prep-ME (a five-week session during the summer prior to a student’s first fall term) focuses on assisting incoming minority students with their transition from high school to college and preparing them for Calculus, Engineering Concepts, Computer Science, Spatial Competency and Physics for success in their first year of engineering. Tuition for all students enrolled in Prep-ME is paid for by the College of Engineering.

Since the start of Prep-ME, one-year retention rates for minority students in the College of Engineering have increased to 70%, compared to below 50% in prior years. When engineering students complete their first year successfully, there is an 85% higher chance they will achieve their degree. Participation in Prep-ME helps to ensure that students are able to stay on track to graduate in a reasonable time frame of four to five years. Participation in Prep-ME provides students with a head start to their college career, and continued mentoring through MERRP gives them the momentum to succeed and graduate as engineers. Students that participate in MERRP are also involved in numerous community outreach activities offered to enrich and recruit Chicago public school and other area high school students to the STEM field.

**Summer College**

Summer College is a tuition-free collection of college programs that increase incoming students’ chances of success by easing their transition from high school to college. Over the past ten years, Summer College has grown from a handful of “bridge” programs to fifteen programs, two college lectures, a number of seminars sponsored by various campus support units and resources, and other activities. In Summer 2014, over 594 students participated in at least one of the programs, most of whom (N=453, 76%) were in Math and Writing workshops. About 60% of Summer College participants are either Hispanic or African American, which corresponds to rates of remedial placement for these groups (about 50% of those who earn remedial placements in either writing or math are Latino or African American. UIC Summer College continues to succeed at moving students with remedial placements into credit bearing courses during their first semester. In 2014, an average of 83% of participants in the three academic workshops- Summer Enrichment Math Workshop (SEMW), Writing Workshop (SEWW), and Chemistry Workshop (SECW)- received “revised placements.” Students in SEWW and SECW earned 15% more credits than their peers and students in SEMW earned about 6% more credit hours.