

**PSC-ED-OUS**

**Moderator: Emmanuel Caudillo  
January 21, 2015  
1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Thank you all for standing by.

At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode.

After each presentation, we will have a question-and-answer session.

To ask a question, you may press star and then 1.

This call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this point.

I will now turn the meeting over to your host, Ms. Alejandra Ceja.

Ma'am, you may begin.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you.

Welcome, everyone. My name is Alejandra Ceja. I'm the executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. And

today, I'm joined by several colleagues here at the initiative. I want to thank you all for joining us for today's Webinar.

Before we get started, I would like to inform and remind you that this Webinar is off the record and not intended for press purposes.

I would also like to mention that, as the operator just said, this Webinar, including the Q&A, will be recorded and the recording and transcript, along with the slide presentation, will be posted to the initiative's Web site after the call. This gives us an opportunity to make sure that the information is available for anyone who was unable to join us today for the live Webinar.

So the agenda will proceed as follows. I will describe today's Webinar topic briefly and then introduce our first presenter who will speak for up to 15 minutes. We will then have 15 minutes for Q&A. Our second presenter will then speak for 15 minute and we'll open the floor up for Q&A for the remainder of the time. When we open the floor for questions, the operator will come on to provide guidance on how to get into the queue.

So onto our discussion for today focused on postsecondary completion. As you all know, early in his administration, President Obama set a goal for the United States to once again lead the world in the share of our population with a college degree by 2020. To achieve this goal, we must continue to support, strengthen and expand efforts that lead to increased postsecondary completion for our community.

This Webinar will include a presentation by Eric Waldo. He's executive director of the first lady's Reach Higher Initiative. He will talk about some of the administration's commitment and efforts to increasing postsecondary access and completion.

The second half of our Webinar we will hear from James Sandoval. He's vice chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of California Riverside. James will provide a brief overview of the programs and efforts at the university to strengthen postsecondary completion among Hispanic and all students.

So without further ado, I'm going to turn it over to our first presenter, Mr. Eric Waldo from the White House.

Eric?

Eric Waldo: Thank you so much, Al, for that generous introduction and thank you all for joining the call today.

So if we can move on to the first slide, which has the Reach Higher symbol on it, I want to tell folks a little bit about how we got here. And, you know, I've been part of this administration for now six years since the very beginning and I spent my first 5-1/2 years working with Department of Education.

As part of my role, I began - I work very closely with the White House. And one of the things I got to do at the very beginning of the second term was when the first lady approached Secretary Duncan and said that she was interested in starting a new initiative focused on education, we began talking to her and her team about what that might look like.

And that is what Reach Higher has become. And Al did a really great job setting the tone to say that really Reach Higher is all part of the president's larger goal around once again being number one in the world in terms of college completion. Obviously, a generation ago we were number one. We fell all the way to number 12 among industrialized nations.

So the reason the first lady landed on Reach Higher and college access and completion for young people is really because that's her own story. As a first-generation college girl herself, neither of her parents went to college, she saw the difference of getting to college, completing and what that difference made in her own life and the life of her family. So this is very personal for the first lady and she wants to bring out this message to inspire generation of young people to make sure that postsecondary completion is a priority for them as well.

If you move on to the next slide with our four key focus areas, I want to walk you through very quickly what are the main areas the first lady is talking about because in order to talk to the entire country and young people about the importance of education, I often tell people that you can think of the first lady as the school counsel and chief for the entire country. And as school counsel and chief, it shouldn't be that surprising on what she's going to talk about.

So number one is exposing students to college and career opportunities. We know for first-generation students and low-income students especially, if they didn't grow up in a family and a school and/or their community with postsecondary completion as the expectation, it's critical that we get them that exposure.

The types of things that the first lady has done to try to promote this include doing things like near peer mentoring and college immersion for first year students. One great example is last spring, the first lady went to Howard University here in Washington DC and she brought a group of Chicago public school students from the south side of Chicago who are participating in a program called the Escape to Mecca, which, every year, brings first-gen students from Chicago to Howard to stay with students from Chicago, from

their neighborhood to get that experience, to hear from someone their own age, that near peer, telling them about their own story of being able to be at college and be successful.

So if you turn to the next slide, Expose Students to College, one of the ways we are trying to promote and continue what the first lady saw firsthand as a really powerful effort was that we want to actually go ahead and encourage colleges to host more first-generation students on their campuses like we saw with the Trip to Mecca - Escape to Mecca program at Chicago public schools.

So I encourage you all to go to [ReachHigher.gov](http://ReachHigher.gov) to learn a little bit more about this. We had the challenges laid out. Oftentimes, when I go speak at events, the first question I get is, well, how can we get the first lady to come to our school? This is a great chance if you are partnering with a college, if you are a college or university or affiliated entity and you think, gosh, nothing will be more important or more incredible than for the first lady to come speak at our college commencement, what you should do is go online to [ReachHigher.gov](http://ReachHigher.gov), learn more about the near peer mentoring challenge and you can submit a video about what your college or affiliated university is doing to bring more first-gen kids onto campus and get them that college immersion experience. And you still have 36 days to do so, although I encourage you to send your application in before then.

If we move to the next slide, this is a little bit of the why. You know, we talked about the importance of 2020 goal. But it's so critical for - especially our first-gen low-income population because right now, we know that not enough of them are able to make it through to postsecondary completion, which is ultimately their life's outcome, their earning potential and their ability to really reach the middle class and the American dream.

So as this graph demonstrates, right now, only about 14% of low-income students are completing college. Now, that's compared to about 60%, a little over 60%, for the highest income quartile. So again, you know, we have tons of great research and data talking about the difference that a great education can make over the lifetime of a person's life. So that means \$1 million more in income. It means reduced likelihood of pregnancy. It means more - reduced likelihood of incarceration, increased likelihood of homeownership, all sorts of positive life externalities of completion of a postsecondary degrees and equal.

But right now, when we're seeing that people trapped in the lowest income quartile aren't able to break out through their education to get - to enter sort of the middle class, then we're not doing a good enough job. So this is why Reach Higher is so critically important that we do things like near peer mentoring and college immersion, so that we're doing as much as possible to bring that lowest income quartile, bring those numbers up and get more college completion.

If you move to the next slide, the second bullet from our big four bucket is around financial and college affordability. And we know that for so many people, there's - across the country, across income streams that there's a real concern about the cost of college. And the administration is doing a lot to address that through things like direct lending, FAFSA simplification, income-based repayment and other measures.

But for the first lady, as school counselor and chief, it's critically important that she's out there talking to young people and families so they understand that finances shouldn't be a barrier to entry. This is especially important given that the federal government does put out billions of dollars and resources. So you'll note the bullet upon that \$150 billion Federal Student Aid.

If you haven't taken a look, I encourage you to take a look at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). That is the Office of Federal Student Aid's Web site. It's been redesigned in the past couple of years. It has phenomenal resources for parents, students, all sorts of roadmaps and pipeline graphs for different age cohorts and groups, so how folks are really thinking about getting that postsecondary education and thinking about the financing side.

So last year, the first lady went and participated in a parent and student FAFSA completion town hall. She went to talk to parents and students who do it together. You may not know this but now with Smartlogic and online training, the FAFSA takes just under 21 minutes. She went and she helped bring this effort to bear and the scale by partnering with MTV and Get Schooled to talk to kids across the country about the importance of filling FAFSA.

Again, I mentioned the first lady's challenge around near peer mentoring. Well, we're doing a similar effort around the FAFSA, which is if you are affiliated with a high school, no high school but might want the first lady to come speak at their commencement, we encourage you again to go to [www.reachhigher.gov](http://www.reachhigher.gov) and look at the first lady's FAFSA commencement challenge.

Here, we're looking for high schools to send in videos around what they're doing to increase FAFSA completion at their schools and we're going to be judging schools on how they're getting increases in their FAFSA completion rate. Again, the FAFSA is that sort of barrier to entry for all the access to federal financial aid. So it's so critical that students do that. And we know especially for first-generation and low-income students having that access,

getting those dollars makes a huge difference as to whether or not they're going to actually matriculate, attend and complete.

In terms of the FAFSA completion, you still have time. Again, I encourage you to go to FAFSA and get it in soon. But you have about 58 days until March 16th deadline. So please take a look and think about how you want the first lady to come to your commencement.

Moving on to the next slide, which is around the third bucket, which is around inspiring and supporting academic and summer planning.

We know that it's so critical for all students not just to be ready and to go to college but when they get there to actually feel like they're academically prepared on day one.

So in this situation, the national statistics is that something around 1/3 of entering public college freshmen have to take remedial classes. That means when they show up on day one, they take that placement exam and, in fact, they're told "Nope, you got to go back. You got to take Basic English, remedial Math because you're not yet ready for college level courses."

And, in fact, I always talk about Massachusetts which is a state we think of as really high performing K-12 system. And in Massachusetts, actually 40% of entering public college freshmen have to take remedial courses. So again, we have to do a much better job making sure that students in that P-K pipeline are getting that academic rigor both in the academic year and then the non-traditional academic year like summer.

Some of the things the first lady has been doing to push this are things like partnering with the College Board, on their All In campaign to get more first-

gen and minority students to take the AP course, again, get them familiar ready for that college level class.

We've been talking about things as administration around do enrollment, early college from high school, again, getting students that exposure to what a rigorous level course is going to look like.

We've also partnered with folks like (Kathleen) around making commitments to help provide resources to students and get free access to test preps, SAT and ACT, which is, again, highly correlated with college readiness.

If we move on to the next slide, this is again a little bit of - sort of a data slide as to why this is important. And you'll notice the advanced placement enrollment by ethnicity. So here, you'll see the percent of total population, the percent of test takers and the percent of test passers.

You'll notice particularly within African-American and the Hispanic community, the percentage total of the population does not match the percent of test passers. It's particularly acute among African-Americans where you see 40% of the population - African-Americans like 40% of the population but only 4% of test passers. And Hispanic - in the Hispanic population, you've got 18% versus 16%. And you see sort of the reversed quality among Caucasians and Asian Americans where they make up a smaller percentage of the population but a greater percentage of test passers.

So again, to the extent that we're really concerned about equity and about preparing all students for academic success and postsecondary education, we want to make sure and use things like SAT enrollment as a good proxy for what that may look like.

Moving on to the next slide around supporting high school counselors, you'll notice that the first three slides really focus on students as the core audience for what we're talking about. However, when the first lady began thinking about how to create Reach Higher, the fourth bucket was thinking about what are some of those key perhaps underleveraged adult stakeholders who can make a huge difference. And this scenario we came to the issue around school counseling.

Now, again, just a little bit of data as a way of background, the national average has the current ratio in the United States about one school counselor for every 471 students. That's twice the recommended rate roughly from the National College - National Counseling Organization. And I personally think that the recommended rate, which is about 1-to-250 is still pretty high.

In places like California where again we have huge Latino population, obviously, it's about one school counselor for every 1000 students. So again, if we think about the role that counselors play having that roadmap to college and especially playing the critical role for first-gen families and students, we need to think seriously about how we're actually interesting the needs of those students to make counselors have the training they need, the resources they need and are able to get the students who need them the most.

We've been doing a few things to address that. The first lady actually spoke at the American School Counselor Association Conference in July and made a few commitments.

Number one, we showed up and we said we were announcing that your Colleague Letter from Secretary Duncan on how to use Title II dollars more flexibility for professional development for counselors.

Number two, we talked about the need to get commitments from other organizations around creating convenience to address the issues and needs of school counselors, which led to the Harvard Grad School of Education having meeting.

And number three we said we wanted to actually honor and list up the roles to counselors in a very public way. And folks may know that at the White House, we've been bringing the school counselors - we've been bringing the principal and the teacher of the year to the White House for I don't know how long, for years and years and years. But actually we've never brought the school counselor of the year to the White House. And for the first time ever, I'm happy to announce in 2015 fairly soon we will be bringing the school counselor of the year to the White House to be honored by the first lady. And again, just a small way that we can try to lift the role and the critical role that they play in schools and families and communities to make sure college completion occurs.

I talked a little bit about the commitment that Harvard made. They held a convening with us with 150 or so of the most widely respected experts around school counseling to talk about best practices and research for counseling, to talk about how to think about the professional development pre-service and in-service pipeline, and also how to think about the technology tools available at counseling students to connect them especially when we know there aren't enough counselors out there.

And lastly, that brings us to how we continue to try to use our pen to phone agenda and strategy to bring more commitments to bear especially in the face of our Congress. So, you know, pen to phone basically means that we still - even if Congress isn't going to pass the bill, we have a pretty great address

and a pretty attractive (unintelligible). So we can call on people to make big commitments to do new things.

We did this in San Diego in November where we had 32 states come together and make commitments around what they were doing to increase and improve college and career readiness for school counselor pipeline. And on December 4th at the College Opportunity Day of Action, we actually had 630 new commitments in four key areas. One of them was the first lady's area around school counseling.

So we are continuing to try to work together to get significant commitments from the external stakeholder population around what we can do to change the game. And I encourage folks if you haven't to take a look at the fact sheet and the list of commitments, which is available on [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov) around the College Opportunity Day of Action and you'll see things as specific as Southern Regional Education Board getting 13 university commitments around how they are going to change the teacher training plan at their universities to also places like the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation that are making - they made a \$35 million commitment for investment in school counseling. There's plenty more of that I encourage you to take a look.

What I'll say before we get to our last slide and break for questions is woven through all four of these buckets is really the first lady's commitment to tell and inspire folks around the country with her personal story, which is not just about doing these key things or being the school counselor but also understanding that grit, tenacity, persistence, sheer hard work are critical for every student to be successful. And the first lady sort of had that experience before to things like grit and tenacity were part of the social science vernacular, before we had people like Carol Dweck and Angela Duckworth and people like Paul Tough popularizing this at home.

But we know that it's so critical for students to believe in themselves, to work hard, to seek out help and to find resources to make it possible for them to be successful. And the first lady tells that story about her own life as a first-generation student at places like (unintelligible) and is able to communicate that directly to students. So I just want to make sure folks heard that as well.

One last piece before I jump into question is to say that there are a few opportunities for you to partner with us moving forward. Folks may be aware that we launched the Reach Higher Initiative in its sort of namesake form on May 1st last year in San Antonio, Texas at a College Signing Day and at the College Signing Day event in San Antonio.

Cities across the country, schools across the country host Signing Day just like that to celebrating career and college going the same way that we celebrate, you know, students getting ready to sign up for their college football team or the pro football team.

And so we're going to be looking to do a big push on May 1st again. I'm looking forward to getting ideas or suggestions from you about what your community school or entity may be able to do to help create a signing day ceremony in your community. The first lady will be doing events again, will be working with celebrities, media and others to really make that a huge event and a huge celebration again going to social media to post pictures of people with themselves in their college year and really just trying to celebrate this in a large way.

The last thing I'll say before I open up for questions is, you know, I always tell people that a generation ago, you had someone - a first lady like Nancy Reagan telling generation of young people just say no to drugs. And I think

we have a first lady that was telling the generation of young people just yes to college. That has really been her key to success and we think the key to success for this entire country.

So with that, I will pause and open up for questions.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you, Eric, for your wonderful presentation and for your leadership and all that you do for students across the country.

Operator, can you please tell callers how to get into the queue to ask a question?

Coordinator: Thank you.

Participants, we will now begin the question-and-answer session.

If you like to ask a question, you may press star and then 1 and please record your name. Your name is required to introduce your question.

To cancel your request, you may press star and then 2.

One moment, please, for the first question.

Alejandra Ceja: And as we wait for that first question, I just want to remind folks if you did not get a copy of the full slide presentation that Eric just walked through, please send us an e-mail at [whieeh@ed.gov](mailto:whieeh@ed.gov) and we'll make sure that you get a copy.

Eric Waldo: And, you know, Al, while we wait, let me just say one other thing especially in the wake of the State of the Union Address yesterday, I think it's critical to just mention two other stories.

You know, one is obviously the president's proposal that he had outlined last week and that he again mentioned last night around free community college is a place where again I think you're seeing the administration sort of put their budget where their talking points are and say that, you know, it's critical and we want to make sure that postsecondary education isn't just something that's aspirational but is something that is really a right in this country and something that people should expect to be successful.

And folks may have seen, if you watched the State of the Union last night, there was a young gentleman, Anthony Mendez, who's standing to the right of the first lady, and he was a guest of hers and invited by her to stand in the box that night. And the reason he was invited is because Anthony Mendez is a first-generation college student. He is a young man from the Bronx in time in his youth. Homeless but continued to pursue his education and was able to be the person at this time to go to college where he is currently a freshman in college in Connecticut studying political science.

And Anthony spent yesterday talking to reporters, talking about the importance of education, talking about the importance that it meant for him that the first lady listened to him, heard his story this summer when Anthony came and met with her to tell her why education was critical for him, why he pursued it despite his incredible struggles. And I think whatever one on this call is doing is really saying that you signed up, help us think about how to make Anthony story the norm and not the exception.

Coordinator: Thank you. Speakers, we have few questions in queue.

Our first question comes from Ms. (Eugena Cortez).

Ma'am, your line is open.

Woman: (Unintelligible).

Coordinator: I'm sorry for that.

Ms. (Timmy Leigh), you may proceed.

(Timmy Leigh): Hi. So my family is in North Jersey. And we do different things as a family. I'm not a student but I've got a student in community college, Broome Community College, and another who graduated at Broome Community College and now is going on to Ramapo College. And these boys also head up the New Jersey State Youth and College Division of NWCP and the community college student operates the Broome Community College cap at NWCP.

So we worked for, like, four years to implement the Latino Leadership Program at Broome Community College, which took place for the first time the last spring and we are going to do it again, like, now to be starting in a few weeks to help, you know, to help Latino youth get more engaged in community college life, which is a little bit challenging because, you know, like, a lot of schools, the community schools, that our school is.

And we would just like to know who we can connect with that can help us, you know, like, expand our reach to help other students, you know, like, learn what they have to learn to overcome the obstacles. There are so many obstacles. It's really challenging. Transportation, some kids are traveling two

hours each way back and forth to school. And some kids are hungry. A food pantry was set up. You know, there are many needs. And it's also completely unrealistic to ask students who are dealing with so many challenges to complete their college education, community college educations in only two years.

If you look at the statistics, kids are graduating in about three years and that's the time they need. So to try to push them to do something different is cruel.

Eric Waldo: Okay.

(Timmy Leigh): So...

((Crosstalk))

(Timmy Leigh): ...be able to solve these issues.

Eric Waldo: This is really, really helpful. And I really appreciate your leadership on this and everything you're doing. You can send a note and we'll connect you with some of the folks and resources. You can send something to reachhigher, that's R-E-A-C-H-H-I-G-H-E-R, at [who.eop.gov](http://who.eop.gov) and we can try to get on the phone or connect with the right folks to help you think about how to bring more resources and also I'd love to get your thoughts and really appreciate your feedback around the community college proposal because we're obviously going to be spending time for the next few months talking about that and certainly want to continue to hear and figure out and that certainly will require legislations. So, you know, the proposed versus the final product will be different. So it's really critical to get voices like yours. So thank you.

(Timmy Leigh): Okay, that's great. Did you say [who.eop.gov](http://who.eop.gov)?

Eric Waldo: Yes, that's reachhigher@who.eop.gov.

(Timmy Leigh): Okay, Eric. Thank you.

Eric Waldo: Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator, next question.

Coordinator: Our next question is from Ms. (Eugena Cortez).

Ma'am, your line is open.

(Eugena Cortez): Yes. I have a concern because the problem is not just with the low-income students but it's also part of the middle class people especially Hispanics because I myself have a degree and my daughter had great grades at AP classes and she applied to San Francisco State and unfortunately, she ends up dropping because according to the financial aid, we're too wealthy to qualify for anything other than unsubsidized loans. But the reality is we're too poor to be able to afford it. It was either pay the mortgage or pay her room and board. So I think it's more than just the low-income people that need to be looked into.

Eric Waldo: No, that's really, really helpful. Thank you for bringing that up. You know, I think that you're absolutely right. This is an every person question. It's a middle class problem. The issue of afford - you know, access affordability is real for everyone. And, you know, what you're describing is something that we're hearing when we travel across the country from folks who tell us the exact same thing where they've got to choose between their kids or they got to choose between what you just described, right? You know, is it the mortgage

or the education? And that's, you know, that's unacceptable because that's not a choice you should have to make. So I think you're right and I think we can continue to work on our own rhetoric in how we think and address those problems. But I think you're fundamentally correct. It is a middle class issue. And so we absolutely need to be able to think stories like yours.

(Eugena Cortez): And I believe that it needs to be more inclusive not just focusing on the lower income. I do know that there's a great need. But so many times middle class people are people like us that both my husband and I have a college degree. We get overlooked because we don't qualify for any of the extra help at school.

Eric Waldo: I think it's very helpful and I think something we can take back to the policymakers here in Washington and make sure we're passing your message and your story.

(Eugena Cortez): Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Mr. (Paul Jimenez).

Sir, your line is open.

(Paul Jimenez): Hi. My name is (Paul Jimenez). I'm a professor over at Loyola Marymount University. And I'm also a former high school counselor.

And my question has to do with specifically looking at the Latino population in California. The majority of Latinos in higher ed and public institutions are at the community college. And what we've noticed here in California is that our higher ed institutions, meaning our community colleges four-year public, four-year private, we tend to work in silos.

So I was wondering, you know, is the government thinking of doing anything to try to really connect the high school to the community college to the four-year publics because we're noticing a lot of our young Latino/Latinas are dropping out of school when it comes to these transition periods.

And with that said, something that we've created here at LMU is called the CURSA program, which is Cooke Undergraduate Research Scholar Academy, and we are able to work with 25 students. For the last three years we've been able to do that. But that's been done through private funders that have foundations that have been providing us the funding.

Eventually, our funding is going to run out. So that's why I'm asking the question of, you know, do you think there is a way that public, you know, public - or the federal state government can do something to connect these three types of institutions?

Eric Waldo: I think absolutely. So first of all, thank you again for your question and for your work. I think that's really insightful and actually something we were observing and seeing as well. I talked about that December 4th College Opportunity Day of Action and I mentioned that there were four streams of work that happened. One of them was counseling that I mentioned. Another one that I didn't talk about but I encourage you go learn a little more online was actually about how we build more partnerships between K-12 and higher ed and specifically what you're talking about. So having, you know, the school district leadership talking to the college leadership, which can include the - which includes the traditional four-year college and the community college.

(Paul Jimenez): Yes.

Eric Waldo: So we actually got about I think close to 55 communities all of whom made commitments to what they were doing to try to align those systems.

(Paul Jimenez): Yes.

Eric Waldo: You can find more. Again, we have the whole commitment list at the - you can just Google “whitehouse.gov” and call up you gave action. But we have the communities that are doing that. Folks like nonprofits like STRIVE Foundation and others have actually been the lead in this type of work with cities like Cincinnati and others to help make sure that we are bridging those gaps between the high schools and the colleges and the community colleges because it does need to be a community strategy and plan. So you’re absolutely right. And I think what we’re trying to do with our convene authority is bringing those people together, sharing best practices, giving them technical assistance and then supporting them in their work.

(Paul Jimenez): Yes. Thank you. I appreciate that. I think one of the areas I would really want to focus on also is I know it’s important to bring those people together. But unfortunately, as you know, in education system, people are somewhat overwhelmed. The idea would be if we can have an outside agency or coordinator that can bring all those institutions together to keep that constant communication between those institutional agents.

Eric Waldo: Yes. No, I hear you. And I think what we - yes, definitely tried to - I think we’ve tried to use the White House to be the convener to bring them together and help them create those. You know, we really helped folks create like a true longitudinal and communications but, you know, I encourage you to take a look and we can certainly talk more about it.

(Paul Jimenez): Yes. Okay. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Eric Waldo: Yes.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator, I think we have time for one more question and then we're going to move on to our second presenter.

Coordinator: Thank you, ma'am.

Our last question would be from Ms. (Jamie Jones).

Ma'am, your line is open.

(Jamie Jones): Thank you. Good afternoon.

Our organization, the Joint Council on Policy Education and Social Impact, we have two councils, our National Council on Women and Girls and our National Council on Men and Boys. And we have adopted a few schools in Louisiana. And one of them is Tensas Parish Louisiana. And the students there are bused from other smaller cities to one school.

And there - when you talk about the pipeline to community college, they face these challenges. One is transportation. They're two hours from, like, Baton Rouge or three hours from New Orleans. So those students, they - that school didn't graduate any young men with above a 2.0 grade point average. So between the technology gap, the transportation issues, and their lack of resources, not only within the school but when they leave home because they have to travel to school, they are not graduating out a lot of students who even enrolled into a pipeline for community college.

And so are you taking that into consideration for rural communities when, you know, when we're trying to push community college because this particular school, the closest school is like an hour away, which is on the Mississippi side of Louisiana?

So we have students and parents who are just at a loss because they don't know what to do because sending their child to school means sending them away from home.

Eric Waldo: Yes. No, that's - I mean, what you're describing is a really, you know, it's a real challenge. I think, you know, there are a bunch of things that I think we're trying to do and certainly, you know, on that level that's a pretty local and unique challenge. But I think the issue really is around thinking about how do we continue to provide more high-quality schooling options where people are - so that, you know, especially in rural and/or geographically isolated areas, I think, you know, that's one part is just in general trying to put more high-quality options out there.

I think number two, there's partly how do we create the infrastructure to make sure that no matter where students are that they're able to access high-quality education. So part of that is also things like providing, you know, the press has been calling for an SEC will be implementing \$4 billion in high-speed broadband, so that now a student in remote location can also access with a computer high-quality, you know, open courses, virtual courses and be able to connect to a teacher, a student, a counselor that maybe is not in their same geographic area but is still able to provide them services.

But the final issue is I think we, you know, I think we do just need to be always open to thinking about how we tailor these solutions to the local scenarios at play and I think that's obviously what you're describing as a

super specific example and I think, you know, without knowing more, I don't want to opine too much but I think that's a case where obviously, you know, leadership, school leadership, the leadership sort of cities and local leadership needs just come together and figure out how - you know, if they're not serving their community well and not keeping the educational options or access that they need then how do we come up with a different solution because that doesn't sound like it's sustainable or acceptable.

(Jamie Jones): Absolutely. So I will follow up with your office...

Eric Waldo: Yes.

(Jamie Jones): ...on that.

Eric Waldo: Please do.

(Jamie Jones): And really leaving the success of the student outside organizations because the school is tapped and they don't - and they're pretty much in, I hate to say it, dead zone and the students are the ones who are suffering because they have no resources. Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: Well, thank you, guys, for your questions. Eric, again, thank you so much for your leadership, for your time and know that you will probably have to jump off. I want to let folks on the phone know that those of you that were following the presentation, Eric did provide his contact information on the slide presentation. If you did not get the presentation, please e-mail us and we will forward it to him. So, Eric, again, thank you so much for your time and for your leadership.

Eric Waldo: Thanks so much, Al. This is fabulous. Thanks, everybody.

Alejandra Ceja: All right. Thank you.

So now, we are going to move on to our second presenter, James Sandoval, from the University of California Riverside. James?

James Sandoval: Thank you very much, Alejandra. And I just want to again join Eric in thanking everybody for joining us on this critically important topic. And one of the points that Eric made really resonated with me and that is the significance of the first lady's commitment to education and just say yes. And that's one of the prevailing themes that I think you're going to hear throughout my presentation. And that is the importance of the commitment of leadership at the very top.

And just in reflecting a bit on the title of our presentation, Campus Climate and Campus Commitment, those are really two critically important drivers for the success that our university has experienced literally over the last two decades, 20 years, and that we recognize the critical importance of campus climate. And that's not the climate for students. It's climate for faculty, staff and students because they are so instrumentally woven in terms of ultimately students discussed and then campus commitment. And again, that's the reference to the significance of the commitments from campus leadership. We've had the great fortune over the last two decades to be led by chancellors who are committed to diversity here at UC Riverside and our current chancellor, Dr. Kim Wilcox, is certainly committing to taking our institution to the next level.

If I can move on to the next slide, just wanted to go over the outline of the major themes for today's presentation.

The first is I think it's important to set the context and reflect a bit on the importance of diversity and why it matters both at the institutional level but most importantly to America's future, the importance of campus climate for both Hispanics and African-Americans. And again, the key theme here is diversity and we recognize the importance of having diverse population here at UC Riverside and given the challenges that the African-American population faces, we've put out the same level of - not the same level but high commitment and level of effort to encourage African-Americans to enroll and succeed here at UCR.

We want to emphasize the point that racial and ethnic gaps in graduation can, in fact, be closed. I know that we hear it as practitioners. We hear it all the time when talking about faculty pipelines, when talking about staff and leadership positions and then certainly students at the undergraduate level that there always seems to be barriers provided reasons why those gaps can't be closed but, in fact, our institution and others are serving an example that, in fact, they can be closed.

Institutional commitment where I'm going to spend most of my time talking about the exemplary programs here at UC Riverside and use out of the platform hopefully for others to be thinking through some possibilities at their institution and close out with one of the important points that Eric made reference to and was actually one of the questions, financial support for low-income students but I think all underrepresented students.

So if we can move on to the next slide, the benefits of diversity. I know that I'm likely preaching the choir and that these are well-understood points. But again, I think it's important that they not get lost in that on the individual level that diversity does improve the cognitive skills and critical thinking of individuals. So the exposure to individuals from diverse backgrounds, getting

a different perspective on life, the world, the nation, the universe, all of those things are enhanced by having a diverse student body.

That function in diverse environment certainly has the benefit -- essential benefit -- of reducing prejudice and enhances empathy across racial lines and promotes racial understanding, which is our nation is becoming more diverse and becoming interglobal that is critically - more critically important to our success as a society.

And then it promotes better demographic participation, self-engagement. And that certainly is our experience here given the recognition that UC Riverside has received for the output of our educational system here in terms of students who are more engaged in our system. And obviously, that becomes a cyclical thing where students from disadvantaged, underrepresented backgrounds go out and are committed to turning - or giving back to their communities and their society as a whole.

And just the final point in terms of diversity is that - that I wanted to make is that having the critical mass is not enough that some institutions are positioned and I think to an extent ours was 20 years ago that we were going to realize diversity even if we didn't try. But it's what you do with it that matters and that gets us back to campus climate and student success and it's critical that from the top down that leadership understands that unique - diversity presents a unique opportunity and we have to do unique things in order to leverage and take advantage of that, that responsibility actually that we have.

If I can move on to the next slide and - which is focused on campus climate and there's been a number of studies that have been done to look at campus climate. And the specific question that we've been focused on here in the

University of California, UC Riverside particularly, students of my race/ethnicity are respected on this campus.

And the result that you see here are from the University of California President's Accountability Report, so a very critically important thing is that the president of the University of California holds institutions accountable to key metrics to demonstrate their success and campus climate is one of those.

So we have good comparative data. And again, given the product of years of work that we've done here at UC Riverside and this data goes back to 2010 that since that period we have ranked amongst the most welcoming campuses where students feel that they're respected. And again, that's not by accident. The students come but in order - in terms of the climate, the experience, the welcome environment is something that needs to be orchestrated and engineered.

We can move on to the next slide. And again, just the evidence that the racial gaps can be closed.

And I think the most important aspect of this particular graph and this is reflecting gaps that very high elite accomplished research universities that you see that the most important part isn't the top and those few of us that are - have closed the gaps but rather the number of institutions that have not put that still have gaps and that represents and reflects the work that we have to do. And to an extent, I don't think that there should be tolerance for the excuses that are given that all the reasons why the gap can't be closed but rather it's going to take an institutional commitment in order for institutions to close that gap.

So what I'd like to do now move on to the next slide, some of the things that we've done over the past several years to enjoy our success and providing quality education to underrepresented students, Hispanics in particular, and promoting their success.

And there's three things that we talked about here at the institution. That is as we think about the development of our campus climate and that is identity, community and actually it's inclusiveness and integration. I actually like the term "inclusiveness" better. But what's fundamental concept is that when we are receiving a student, let's say a Latino student, that there is a tendency to want to view that student as Latino and put them into a particular bucket. But, in fact, that student comes with - in all of our students come with identities that go far beyond their racial and ethnical identity, their religious preference, their sexual orientation, et cetera, et cetera.

And what we invest heavily in for students matriculating at the university is - initially is to help them engage in activities that are going to - that will promote their understanding of their identity and what's important to them and what's going to be important for their experience here at UC Riverside.

And what we have done is gone to great lengths to establish communities where students who, based upon whatever they're identifying with, be it public service, be it political activism, be it scholarly work that we've established communities where students can become members of. And again, not wanting to put them into the racial or ethnic box but rather receiving them and facilitating their experience as a student and as a maturing adult and as an individual ultimately is going to move out into society and hopefully be successful.

And the inclusiveness, which is I think our biggest challenge, is that creating bridges between these communities, some that are diametrically opposed in terms of perhaps their philosophical orientation or what their activism is but finding ways that we can promote inclusiveness and integration of our various communities here on campus.

In some cases, that is just straight up. Racial and ethnic orientation in other cases it's not.

So the - one of the critical things that we have recognized over the years looking at early academic outreach program is the relationship between recruitment and retention. And I actually started here at UC Riverside back in 1989 in the enrollment management side of the house and in a very base way, it's just, you know, have students happy and if they're happy at the university, that has positive impacts on your recruitment.

As I've developed into my vice chancellor role over the last 12 or 13 years and work more of comprehensively understand that it's much deeper than that and that it's not a matter of satisfaction but it's the breadth and the depth of the experience that students have here and that that has to be infiltrated in recruitment in order to get - recruit the types of students that are going to be successful here.

And we've taken advantage of the University of California funded early academic outreach programs and many of the federal programs that have been preserved over the years, so the offer bound, educational search. We have taken advantage of the AmeriCorps program to - and establish in the University East Side collaborative. And I feel support services grants in here because in my mind, that reflects that ideal bridge where you work with

students as middle school and middle school, high school, they matriculate at the university and continue with the programs.

But one of the things that I know is so unique and special about our support services program and the other programs that we have is that back to community service orientation students coming back is that we have waiting list for students, currently enrolled students who want to be members of our outreach programs, federally funded and non-federally funded, because they want to engage in tutoring, mentoring and going back to their communities. And that's just that cycle that's so critically important when you think about both your recruitment and retention.

So moving quickly, the reason that I wanted to highlight the Inland Empire Scholarship Fund is, first, what that is, is that that is a - started by a distinguished alumna who's Dr. Manuela Sosa, who is - was a local dentist, retired, recognized the price here in the Inland Empire in Southern California for our under - for our Latino students in particular and take it upon herself to raise money for scholarships. And her program has been an inspiration for many in the region. Her husband have raised over \$2 million to support students enrolling in colleges and university and working with her. We are - have bridged the university support programs to mirror that.

But I think the importance of community engagement engaging the community with these activities are so critically important and the role that they play goes far beyond the money but it is literally students who developed the sense of loyalty to them and their success here at the university is tied up in that program and we have that comparable program again in the sprout up across many different groups and community-based organizations.

And just as a final point on that, of course, working with local churches, et cetera, is so important especially with our African-American communities.

Next critical program we have here is common ground, which is where we're providing students to opportunity to explore their identity, to think about who they are, what they want to be and then identify - starts as early as our orientation program. And then we have specific opportunities for students to become leadership, student-initiated programs and activities are initiated and activities actually do a lot of the good work in promoting the climate here at the campus.

It's a special interest resident for students who want to deeply immerse into the Latino culture. And we don't actually limit that to Latinos only, although it's predominantly Latino that participates in that.

Going on to the next slide quickly, again, in line with the spirit of what's so important to us is that we don't want to put our students into distinct racial and ethnic box but rather we want to encourage their participation in multiple groups across the campus.

And within our Student Life, we have over 400 organizations on campus that provide unique leadership opportunities for students as, again, that sense of identity. And what is actually a very good warning to us here at the university is we look at the makeup of our Student Life and organizations. They are extremely diverse in and of themselves even - or, you know, so our community service organizations, our religious orientation - organizations, et cetera have diversity. We have very few that are just one racial or ethnic group and, you know, I think that's become a hallmark for this campus.

If I have been giving this presentation 15 years ago, Chicano Student Program would have been the first thing that I would have shown because our Chicano Student Program was borne out of the 1970s. We were the first -- I think we might be the only University of California campus -- that has a program office that is dedicated to Chicano-Latino students.

And with that, it really is the home base. We have many first generation over. Probably 60%, 65% of Latino students are first generations. So no matter how much we - work we do on the frontend, we end up with a good portion of that population that faces the additional anxiety of entering into a university environment. And that's a safe place. It's a home base for students who are closely identify with the Latino background. That's where we create opportunities for our students to explore perhaps a little more cautious way. And I think most importantly, out of that program offices, we will promote education, cultural activities that serve just not our Chicano-Latino population but our entire campus community, again, beat into that notion of inclusion and then I can't say enough for peer mentorship but I think that for anybody who's in higher education, it's important. But we do run that program.

Last program I wanted to highlight is PODER, which is a student-run initiated organization. It stands for Provide Opportunities, Dreams and Education in Riverside. It was established by undocumented students wanting to provide support to undocumented students. Just in terms of our campus success, I just want to leave on this note that this group became more active. They actually challenged me. They challenged me as the vice chancellor saying that we don't do enough for undocumented students.

You know, so here I was - the institution was in a bit of an arrogance that we have been so successful, yet critically important population that we had been

successful with but we had not gone to the full length to recognize the needs of that particular community.

And the reason I put that out here is because I think that that notion of self-evaluation, institutions, you know, programs continually evaluate themselves and not reveling on their success but rather thinking very critically about how effective they continue in this community.

Now, we have a very active, robust undocumented program as a result of PODER. That's been supplemented by funding through the University of California president, President Napolitano. And we were in much better shape. But I just wanted to give a shout out to our students who really called in university on its lack of supporter or gaps rather and, unfortunately, we've been responsible to meet those gaps.

I just wanted to close with a financial piece because that's so critically important. I think one of the questions was centered on middle income and funding middle-income students.

First, at UCR, we have 56% of our students are Pell grant low-income students. We rank first of 190. What's important that's not by accident because Pell grants are the backbone of a financial aid program but many instances, you know, for low-income students that are facing high indebtedness there needs to be more. I'm very fortunate to work in a system the University of California that commits a good portion of its tuition dollars to need-based state. So we're able to supplement the Pell grants and also the state of California has a Cal Grant in response to the plight of middle-income families, the University of California has established the Blue and Gold Program, which is targeting middle income in the state of California itself as it's recently established a middle income grant.

But it's a comprehensive package that requires again institutional commitment. Fundraising scholarships are critical part of it.

And just wanted to conclude by recognizing the importance of federal work study. Many of us in the profession got our starts in higher education because of federal work study and work data opportunities. And it's appropriately essentially being given the grants that we don't have enough but federal work study and work study programs in particular provide students with experiences, they provide - that are going to help them down the road and I don't think we can offer enough work study for our students.

So that concludes my presentation and realized I may have gone a couple of minutes long. But I'm certainly available to answer any questions.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you, James. Really appreciate learning about just the robust programs that you have on your offering students in particular I appreciate hearing about the AmeriCorps connection. So I want to thank you for your time and your presentation.

Operator, can we open it up for callers? To see if there's any questions?

Operator?

(Emmanuel): Hello, hello? It's (Emmanuel) here.

Alejandra Ceja: Hi. We're trying to open it up for Q&A. Wondering if the operator is on the line.

Coordinator: Yes, ma'am.

(Emmanuel): (Britney), there you go.

Coordinator: Okay. Participants, again, to ask a question, you may press star and then 1.

Okay, again, participants, if you'd like to ask a question, you may press star and then 1.

One moment, please.

Alejandra Ceja: James, while we wait for the first question to come in, can you talk a little bit about how you've been able to pull in a partnership with the AmeriCorps program? And for folks on the line, AmeriCorps is a program that's run out of the corporation for national and community service and it's just a good example of how you're able to work and leverage some of the government resources and agencies that are doing good work in our school. Can you talk a little bit about that program?

James Sandoval: Actually I'm very happy to. It actually - so yes, we've been able to leverage off the federal funding but - and we challenged our local city, Riverside, our Riverside Unified School District, to become partners. And, in fact, we provide matching grants with them or funding for the program.

We identified an area adjacent to the campus, the east side of the city, which is probably about 3 miles away. It's a gang infested area that our university committed to engaging in student recruitment there, working with high school principals. And what we've been able to do is with the AmeriCorps grant is place our students, of course, under our direction in the local schools in that area that are - so what they're doing is providing tutoring, mentorship. Of course, with the partnership with the school district and the city, we're able to

expand - provide expanded services, so that, in addition to the mentoring, you know, especially in, you know, a time like now where police issue is so important. We have police engaged with us in terms of going to the schools and developing a relationship rapport and then also our students engaging cleanup of the city generally and then that area in particular.

So it has the dual purpose of providing actually money in the pockets for our students but I think most importantly, the experience of giving back in community service. And I've stayed in contact with many of our students over the years who have gone out and done some wonderful things in the communities that they may have come from as a result of that. And then the benefits, of course, to the city have been phenomenal.

Alejandra Ceja: That's wonderful. Thank you for sharing that.

Operator, do we have any questions in the queue?

Coordinator: Yes, ma'am. We have a few questions in queue.

Our first question comes from Ms. (Laura Salter).

Ma'am, your line is open.

(Laura Salter): I'd like to know what is - is there a cutoff age for this program? And my second point is, if you already have college credits, is this something that you can come back and finish your college education relative to a medical illness?

James Sandoval: Are you talking about specifically for AmeriCorps or for enrollment at the university?

(Laura Salter): Enrollment at the university.

James Sandoval: Okay. So no, there's no cutoff whatsoever. So that anybody who's interested just contact - would contact our admissions office. We did - we have dedicated counselors especially for reentry students that will sit down, look at their prior coursework taken. If they're high school students, of course, working - looking at their coursework there to see how that aligns with our admissions requirements and if there's some additional work that needs to be done in order to qualify for the university we will work with them, set up a course plan, et cetera.

(Laura Salter): Okay. Thank you.

James Sandoval: You're welcome.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Mr. (Alejandro).

Sir, your line is open.

Mr. (Alejandro), your line is open.

I'm sorry, speakers, that's all the questions we have on queue.

Alejandra Ceja: Okay, thank you so much, Operator.

James, again, thank you for the information, your presentation. As I mentioned earlier, if you did not get a copy of the presentation deck, please shoot us an e-mail. We'll make sure that you get a copy. And again, we will make sure that the transcripts to this Webinar are made available online.

So I want to thank you, James, for your time, your participation, Eric Waldo as well. We'll definitely be in touch soon to share the details of our next Webinar. We do hope that you found this information helpful. One of the opportunities for us is to make sure how we can continue to provide key information through organizations and individuals that are helping us reach the president's 2020 goal, making sure that our students and our community are prepared to achieve the future and to be successful.

So I want to thank you all. I hope you all have a great day. And this concludes our Webinar for today.

James Sandoval: Thank you.

Coordinator: And that concludes today's conference. Thank you all for participating. You may now disconnect.

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