

Evaluation Summary of the Teagle Foundation's College-Community Connections Initiative

Established in 2005 by the Teagle Foundation, the College-Community Connections (CCC) initiative funds partnerships between New York City community-based organizations and New York City metropolitan area colleges and universities to help talented and underserved high school students prepare for and succeed in college by engaging them in academically ambitious programs. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of the CCC partnerships.

Exhibit 1
College-Community Connections partner profiles, 2013

Partnerships	Program content	Grade levels	Program size	Schedule	
				School year	Summer
BronxWorks Fordham University	History	9-12	25	√	√
CAMBA Brooklyn College	Social science	10-12	60	√	
Children's Aid Society New York University	Philosophy	9-12	30	√	√
Double Discovery Center Columbia University	Humanities	11- 12	60*	√	√
Harlem Educational Activities Fund Barnard College	History	11	30	√	
Harlem RBI SUNY Old Westbury	Multi-discipline	9 and 12	65**	√	√
Henry Street Settlement Cornell University	Environmental science	11	25	√	√
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center Manhattan College	Literacy	9-12	50	√	√
Sponsors for Educational Opportunity Skidmore College	Multi-discipline	11-12	75*	√	√
Union Settlement Association Drew University	Arts and science	9-12	40	√	√
UAI of Math and Science for Young Women Polytechnic Institute of New York University	STEM	9-12	80	√	

*The summer program serves a smaller number of CCC participants. During the school year, additional CCC participants are involved in mini-lectures and courses as part of the CCC-funded program.

**This includes 35 rising ninth-graders who participate in an overnight trip to the SUNY Old Westbury campus.

The Teagle Foundation commissioned Policy Studies Associates (PSA) to complete two studies related to its CCC initiative. One study examined the college-going outcomes of participants in the CCC initiative, while the other looked at the essential elements in sustaining and replicating the initiative. This document provides highlights from the two studies, as well as lessons learned about using data to demonstrate program successes to audiences as part of sustaining and replicating the initiative.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND OUTCOMES

There were a total of 1,172 CCC participants from 2006 through 2014 for which the researchers had demographic data. The majority of the participants were black (53 percent) and Hispanic (36 percent); another 11 percent were Asian, white, mixed, or other. A majority of the participants were female (63 percent) and a plurality took part in the free or reduced-price lunch program (although the free or reduced-price lunch status of a substantial percentage of participants was unknown).

I'm in high school now and I've been in this program since seventh grade. It's helped me not only get into my high school, but now it's helping me get to another point in my life, which is college. — *Student, HEAF*

Before the program, I didn't really pay mind to the whole college thing. After, I was just really excited, "Oh my God, I'm going to go to college." If it wasn't for the program, I don't think I would have created a [college] essay. — *Student, Kingsbridge*

To gauge the success of the program in helping participants prepare for and succeed in college, the researchers examined college enrollment and graduation rates of former participants. There were 950 CCC participants in the graduating classes of 2006 through 2013 for whom researchers had data on college enrollment and graduation.¹ The researchers found that 77 percent of CCC participants in the 2006 through 2013 cohorts enrolled in a two-year or four-year college (Exhibit 2). This compares favorably with the national 2012 enrollment rate of 66 percent of students overall (Kena, et al., 2014).

Exhibit 2
College enrollment rates of CCC participants by fall 2013, high school graduating classes 2006-13

	Total number of CCC participants	Percent enrolled in college
CCC Participants	950	77%
National (2012)	-----	66

¹ The number of CCC participants (950) included in the enrollment analysis was less than the total number (1,172) for whom demographic data were available because only those in the high school graduating classes of 2006-13 had data on college-going outcomes. In addition, the dataset made available to researchers was missing information (e.g., birthdate) for some CCC participants which prevented researchers from tracking college-going outcomes for these students.

In addition to looking at the percentage of CCC participants who enrolled in college, the researchers also looked at the characteristics of the colleges which they attended. As of 2013, over three quarters attended a four-year college (80 percent) and over three quarters attended full-time (79 percent) (Exhibit 3). This compares favorably to the national 2012 rate of 65 percent of college students attending a four-year college and 62 percent attending full-time (Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

Exhibit 3
Characteristics of colleges attended by
CCC participants, high school graduating classes 2006-13

College characteristics	CCC participants	National average
Two-year and four-year college enrollment (N=728)		
Four-year college	80%	65%
Two-year college	20	-----
Most recent enrollment status (N=519)		
Full-time	79%	62%
Part-time	13	-----
Less than part-time	5	-----
Withdrawn	3	-----

Enrolling in college is only the first step in a successful college experience. Examining graduation rates of CCC participants, the researchers found that 65 percent of CCC participants from the 2006 through 2009 cohorts who enrolled in college graduated from college by fall 2013 (Exhibit 4).² This compares favorably with the national 2012 six-year graduation rate from four-year colleges of 59 percent of all students, of 43 percent of black students, of 52 percent of Hispanic students, and of 63 percent of white students (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Exhibit 4
College graduation rates of CCC participants,
high school graduating classes 2006-09 (N=124)

	Number of participants	Percent graduating
Graduated from college	80*	65%
Graduated from college within four years	68	55
National (2012)	---	59

* An unknown proportion of the 44 who did not graduate may have still been enrolled and could have graduated in subsequent years.

² Only those students from the 2006-09 high school graduating classes would have had enough time to graduate from college by the time data were collected for the study.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO SUSTAINING AND REPLICATING THE COLLEGE-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS INITIATIVE

In conducting interviews with key individuals from the CCC partners, individuals from two similar programs at Scripps College and the University of Chicago, and Teagle Foundation staff, researchers asked about the key elements in sustaining and replicating the CCC initiative. Several themes emerged from these interviews and are highlighted below.

Integrating the CCC initiative into the fabric of the partner organization from the beginning helps with the long-term sustainability of the initiative. Embedding the CCC initiative's funding in the budget of the partner organization ties the initiative's sustainability to the sustainability of the partner organization. Moreover, increasing the visibility of the initiative across the larger organization increases the number of advocates for the initiative and helps sustain the initiative over time.

Involving faculty and staff across the organization helps develop their buy-in and raises the visibility of the CCC-funded program. In addition to involving a broad range of individuals, it is important to involve those individuals in a position to advocate for the program.

It is important for CCC-funded programs to define success, evaluate the degree to which they are successful, and communicate those successes to others. A clear definition of success will help unify individuals' efforts toward a common goal, build support for the CCC-funded program across the participating partner organizations, and develop support from internal and external funders.

For CCC participants, the experience of being immersed in a college setting is an essential element of the CCC initiative. Whether for one day a week during the school year or for two weeks during the summer, partners reported that placing CCC participants on a college campus for an extended period of time was essential because it provided participants with a simulated college experience that encouraged them to continue their education beyond high school.

Providing training and support to faculty is important to the success of the CCC initiative and should be an integral part of replicating the initiative elsewhere. Although it is important for the CCC partners to select faculty whose capabilities make them more likely to connect with participants, it is also essential to provide them with training and support in order to keep them and the program growing.

Partners reported that the Teagle Foundation played a positive role in supporting partnerships. The Teagle Foundation has a unique perspective that allows it to see across programs and grantees. With this perspective, it can create opportunities for partners to share knowledge and learn from each other. In addition, Teagle is in a position to act as a neutral party to help partners work through challenges.

LESSONS IN DATA USE

Using data to write a success story that helps sustain the CCC initiative and demonstrates which elements are worth replicating and which are not was a theme running through both studies. The effective collection and management of data is important as the Teagle Foundation and its partners seek to guide program improvement and demonstrate program impact. Interviews indicated that some partners are further along in this process than others. Teagle can play a role in facilitating the sharing of ideas on collecting and using data. To facilitate examining the CCC initiative as a whole, the Teagle Foundation can implement standardized collection and reporting procedures across partners for at least some of the data. For example, using standardized formats for participants' names, birthdates, and other information will make it easier to merge all the partners' data into one dataset.

The results from the study of participant outcomes show that participants in the CCC initiative enroll in college and graduate from college at rates that compare favorably with national rates. The next step in demonstrating the CCC initiative's impact is to compare participants' outcomes with those of a closely matched comparison group. The results of this comparison will allow the Teagle Foundation to more convincingly demonstrate to audiences the CCC initiative's positive effects on participants.

REFERENCES

Kena, G., Aud, S., Johnson, F., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., & Kristapovich, P. (2014). *The Condition of Education 2014*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

Snyder, T.D., & Dillow, S.A. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *Integrated postsecondary education data system (IPEDS), fall 2001 and spring 2007 through spring 2013, graduation rates component*. Washington, DC: Author.

Authors: Stephen Coleman, Tandra Turner, and Tamar Hellman
Policy Studies Associates, Inc.