KEEPING COLLEGE WITHIN REACH: ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND TAXPAYERS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 24, 2013

Serial No. 113–15

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

Available via the World Wide Web:
www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/committee.action?chamber=house&committee=education
or
Committee address: *http://edworkforce.house.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

80–427 PDF WASHINGTON : 2014

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

JOHN KLINE, Minnesota, *Chairman*

Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, California
Joe Wilson, South Carolina
Virginia Foxx, North Carolina
Tom Price, Georgia
Kenny Marchant, Texas
Duncan Hunter, California
David P. Roe, Tennessee
Glenn Thompson, Pennsylvania
Tim Walberg, Michigan
Matt Salmon, Arizona
Brett Guthrie, Kentucky
Scott DesJarlais, Tennessee
Todd Rokita, Indiana
Larry Bucshon, Indiana
Trey Gowdy, South Carolina
Lou Barletta, Pennsylvania
Martha Roby, Alabama
Joseph J. Heck, Nevada
Susan W. Brooks, Indiana
Richard Hudson, North Carolina
Luke Messer, Indiana

George Miller, California,
Senior Democratic Member
Robert E. Andrews, New Jersey
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, Virginia
Rubén Hinojosa, Texas
Carolyn McCarthy, New York
John F. Tierney, Massachusetts
Rush Holt, New Jersey
Susan A. Davis, California
Raúl M. Grijalva, Arizona
Timothy H. Bishop, New York
David Loebsack, Iowa
Joe Courtney, Connecticut
Marcia L. Fudge, Ohio
Jared Polis, Colorado
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan,
Northern Mariana Islands
John A. Yarmuth, Kentucky
Frederica S. Wilson, Florida
Suzanne Bonamici, Oregon

Juliane Sullivan, *Staff Director*
Jody Calemine, *Minority Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

VIRGINIA FOXX, North Carolina, *Chairwoman*

Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, California
Glenn Thompson, Pennsylvania
Tim Walberg, Michigan
Matt Salmon, Arizona
Brett Guthrie, Kentucky
Lou Barletta, Pennsylvania
Joseph J. Heck, Nevada
Susan W. Brooks, Indiana
Richard Hudson, North Carolina
Luke Messer, Indiana

Rubén Hinojosa, Texas,
Ranking Minority Member
John F. Tierney, Massachusetts
Timothy H. Bishop, New York
John A. Yarmuth, Kentucky
Suzanne Bonamici, Oregon
Carolyn McCarthy, New York
Rush Holt, New Jersey
Susan A. Davis, California
David Loebsack, Iowa

C O N T E N T S

KEEPING COLLEGE WITHIN REACH: ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND TAXPAYERS

Wednesday, April 24, 2013
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Washington, DC

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Virginia Foxx [chairwoman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Foxx, Thompson, Walberg, Brooks, Hudson, Bishop, Bonamici, McCarthy, and Davis.

Also present: Representative Kline.

Staff present: Katherine Bathgate, Deputy Press Secretary; James Bergeron, Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Heather Couri, Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Amy Raaf Jones, Education Policy Counsel and Senior Advisor; Brian Melnyk, Professional Staff Member; Krisann Pearce, General Counsel; Nicole Sizemore, Deputy Press Secretary; Emily Slack, Legislative Assistant; Alex Sollberger, Communications Director; Alissa Strawcutter, Deputy Clerk; Tylease Alli, Minority Clerk/Intern and Fellow Coordinator; Meg Benner, Minority Education Policy Advisor; Kelly Broughan, Minority Education Policy Associate; Tiffany Edwards, Minority Press Secretary for Education; Jamie Fasteau, Minority Director of Education Policy; Brian Levin, Minority Deputy Press Secretary/New Media Coordinator; Rich Williams, Minority Education Policy Advisor; and Michael Zola, Minority Deputy Staff Director.

Chairwoman FOXX. Good morning, everyone. A quorum being present, the subcommittee will come to order. Welcome to today's subcommittee hearing. I would like thank our panel of witnesses for joining this important discussion on higher education transparency.

Receiving a college acceptance letter can be one of the most joyous moments in a student's academic career, but for many families, that moment is often followed with the question: can we afford it?

In January the New York Times detailed the exhaustive research many prospective students and parents conduct when choosing a college. After their son was accepted into college, the Ewell family of Chicago tried to navigate the federally-mandated college cost calculators to better understand the financial investment, but it wasn't as easy as they had expected.

Quote—"We didn't have a lot of confidence that those were real numbers," Ms. Ewell said. "They are all so different, and it seemed like there were such wide ranges and so many caveats that it really didn't feel apples-to-apples"—end quote.

In recent years, the federal government has taken steps to improve data collection and transparency in the higher education system. Under Republican leadership, the 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act included several provisions to help provide families with the data needed to make informed decisions about their postsecondary opportunities.

First, the law directed the Secretary of Education to collect and report 26 different pieces of information about institutions including the percentage of students receiving different types of financial aid, average cost of tuition and fees, and the percent change in total tuition and fees. This data is compiled in the College Navigator, which provides information for approximately 7,000 colleges and universities.

Second, the law required all colleges participating in federal student aid programs to post net-price calculators on their websites. These calculators are supposed to help families understand the price of attendance at an institution, factoring in any grant or scholarship aid to give a more realistic estimate. However, as the Ewell family quickly realized, the calculators can be hard to use and are often difficult to find on college websites.

Finally, the 2008 HEA reauthorization required the Department of Education to develop a model financial aid award letter to help students better understand their aid packages. This Financial Aid Shopping Sheet is now used by more than 500 colleges and universities, but some higher education leaders have concerns that the shopping sheets are overly cumbersome and lack flexibility for institutions to present information in a way that makes the most sense.

President Obama recently took another step to enhance transparency, releasing an online tool known as the College Scorecard in an effort to highlight key information about higher education institutions, including costs, completion rate, and average student loan debt. According to the Center for American Progress, however, college-bound high school students struggle to understand the scorecard. Additionally, the scorecard has come under fire for using different methodologies to calculate data, creating more confusion for students who are trying to access accurate information about their postsecondary options.

Clearly there are areas for improvement in higher education data. However, as we discuss opportunities to provide more useful information to students and families, we must also bear in mind the significant investment colleges and universities already make to comply with existing reporting requirements.

Data collection is a time-consuming endeavor that leads to higher costs for many institutions. During the 2012-2013 academic year, institutions spent an estimated 850,320 hours and almost $31 million to fill out required federal surveys. This is in addition to the time and money spent complying with reporting requirements from states and regional, national, or programmatic accrediting agencies.

As we approach reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, we must discuss ways to improve data without placing additional burdens on institutions or creating more confusion for students and families. We should also explore opportunities to better align federal transparency initiatives with state and accreditors' reporting requirements. I am confident our panel of witnesses will provide valuable insight into these issues, and I look forward to their testimony.

With that, I now yield to my distinguished colleague, Mr. Bishop, for his opening remarks.

[The statement of Chairwoman Foxx follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training

Good morning, and welcome to today's subcommittee hearing. I'd like to thank our panel of witnesses for joining this important discussion on higher education transparency.

Receiving a college acceptance letter can be one of the most joyous moments in a student's academic career. But for many families, that moment is often followed with the question: can we afford it?

In January the New York Times detailed the exhaustive research many prospective students and parents conduct when choosing a college. After their son was accepted into college, the Ewell family of Chicago tried to navigate the federally-mandated college cost calculators to better understand the financial investment—but it wasn't as easy as they had expected.

"We didn't have a lot of confidence that those were real numbers," Ms. Ewell said. "They're all so different, and it seemed like there were such wide ranges and so many caveats that it really didn't feel apples-to-apples."

In recent years, the federal government has taken steps to improve data collection and transparency in the higher education system. Under Republican leadership, the 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act included several provisions to help provide families with the data needed to make informed decisions about their postsecondary opportunities.

First, the law directed the Secretary of Education to collect and report 26 different pieces of information about institutions including the percentage of students receiving different types of financial aid, average cost of tuition and fees, and the percent change in total tuition and fees. This data is compiled in the College Navigator, which provides information for approximately 7,000 colleges and universities.

Second, the law required all colleges participating in federal student aid programs to post net-price calculators on their websites. These calculators are supposed to help families understand the price of attendance at an institution, factoring in any grant or scholarship aid to give a more realistic estimate. However—as the Ewell family quickly realized—the calculators can be hard to use and are often difficult to find on college websites.

Finally, the 2008 HEA reauthorization required the Department of Education to develop a model financial aid award letter to help students better understand their aid packages. This Financial Aid Shopping Sheet is now used by more than 500 colleges and universities, but some higher education leaders have concerns that the shopping sheets are overly cumbersome and lack flexibility for institutions to present information in a way that makes the most sense.

President Obama recently took another step to enhance transparency, releasing an online tool known as the College Scorecard in an effort to highlight key information about higher education institutions, including costs, completion rate, and average student loan debt. According to the Center for American Progress, however, college-bound high school students struggle to understand the scorecard. Additionally, the scorecard has come under fire for using different methodologies to calculate data, creating more confusion for students who are trying to access accurate information about their postsecondary options.

Clearly there are areas for improvement in higher education data. However, as we discuss opportunities to provide more useful information to students and families, we must also bear in mind the significant investment colleges and universities already make to comply with existing reporting requirements.

Data collection is a time-consuming endeavor that leads to higher costs for many institutions. During the 2012-13 academic year, institutions spent an estimated 850,320 hours and almost $31 million to fill out required federal surveys. This is in addition to the time and money spent complying with reporting requirements from states and regional, national, or programmatic accrediting agencies.

As we approach reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, we must discuss ways to improve data without placing additional burdens on institutions or creating more confusion for students and families. We should also explore opportunities to better align federal transparency initiatives with state and accreditors' reporting requirements. I'm confident our panel of witnesses will provide valuable insight into these issues, and I look forward to their testimony. With that, I will now yield to my distinguished colleague, Mr. Tim Bishop, for his opening remarks.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Foxx.

First of all, let me thank our distinguished panel for being here with us this morning. I look forward to hearing your testimony and exploring in detail the many suggestions that you will offer today.

I would also like to take a second to thank the majority for holding this hearing. Although our two sides may differ on many of the policies contained within the HEA reauthorization, the majority is to be commended for its willingness to consistently invite nonpartisan experts on higher education to testify on reauthorization.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not also briefly discuss the impact of the fiscal year 2014 Republican budget on higher education. By eliminating the mandatory funding elements of the Pell Grants program, shifting Pell to a program funded entirely by discretionary appropriations, rolling back Pell eligibility expansions for low-income students, freezing the maximum Pell Grant for 10 years, exposing federal work-study and SEOG to massive cuts through sequestration and discretionary spending caps and allowing certain student loan interest rates to double on July 1, we must recognize that such a budget, were it ever to become law, would have a disproportionately negative impact on students.

We have reached a critical point for the future of higher education in this nation. As we all know, college tuition continues to rise, state appropriations continue to fall, and our students are now responsible for shouldering more of the burden than ever before.

With student loan debt recently surpassing $1 trillion and sequestration inflicting significant cuts to programs like the College Work Study and SEOG, it is imperative that Congress promotes sustainable policies that encourage college access, affordability, and completion for our students.

Enrolling in college is a lifetime investment. Studies universally indicate that a college graduate will earn significantly more over his or her lifetime than a non-graduate. While the national unemployment rates for those with a bachelor's degree or higher currently sits at 3.8 percent, for those with a high school degree or lower, the national unemployment rate stands at 8.5 percent.

At the same time, a study released by Georgetown University notes that the gap between the supply of workers with postsecondary credentials and available job openings requiring those credentials may be as wide as 3 million people by 2018.

And yet, research shows that the United States has fallen from first to 16th in the world in the percentage of 25-to 34-year-olds with a college degree. In fact, the United States is the only country in the world in which degree attainment levels for those just entering the labor market, at 39 percent, is actually lower than those preparing to retire and leave the labor market, at 41 percent. In order to maintain global competitiveness and our perch as the world's top economy, we must continue to support our students by investing in federal financial aid programs that encourage college access and affordability.

We must do a better job of providing students and their families with clear, useful, and timely information about college costs and financial aid options to help them make the right decision. Given the variety of ways students attend college and the growing reliance on federal financial aid dollars, the federal government is in a unique position to help collect such information so that students and their families can make a direct comparison across institutions.

Although Congress, the Obama administration, and the Department of Education have jointly issued a number of initiatives aimed at introducing transparency into the system, we must revisit these decisions in order to tweak, update, and ensure that these measures are helping our students make the most informed decisions possible.

We must also work with the states to ensure that they are doing everything in their power to preserve, not eliminate, programs that enable families to afford college. State governments have played a vital role in the higher education triad since passage of the first Higher Education Act in 1965. Though we understand the difficult financial circumstances facing many of the states, balancing budgets on the backs of students and families is simply the wrong prescription for fixing these problems.

As we look to reauthorize the Higher Education Act in the coming months, we must address these issues and many more with clear vision and an eye towards the future.

I look forward to having a productive conversation with my colleagues and our distinguished panel. I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Bishop follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Timothy H. Bishop, a Representative in Congress From the State of New York

Thank you very much, Chairwoman Foxx.

First of all, I'd like to thank our distinguished panel for being here with us this morning. I look forward to hearing your testimony and exploring in detail the many suggestions that you will offer us today.

I would also like to take a second to thank the majority for holding this hearing. Although our two sides may differ on many of the policies contained within HEA reauthorization, the majority should be commended for its willingness to consistently invite nonpartisan experts on higher education to testify on reauthorization.

However, I would be remiss if I did not also briefly discuss the impact of the FY2014 Republican budget on higher education. By eliminating the mandatory funding elements of the Pell Grants program, shifting Pell to a program funded entirely by discretionary appropriations, rolling back Pell eligibility expansions for low-income students, freezing the maximum Pell Grant for 10 years, and allowing certain student loan interest rates to double on July 1, we must recognize that such a budget—were it ever to become law—would have a disproportionately negative impact on students.

We have reached a critical point for the future of higher education in this nation. As we all know, college tuition continues to rise, state appropriations continue to fall, and our students are now responsible for shouldering more of the burden than ever before. With student loan debt recently surpassing $1 trillion and sequestration inflicting significant cuts to programs like Federal Work-Study and SEOG, it is imperative that Congress promotes sustainable policies that encourage college access, affordability, and completion for our students.

Enrolling in college is a lifetime investment. Studies universally indicate that a college graduate will earn significantly more over his or her lifetime than a non-graduate. While national unemployment rates for those with a bachelor's degree or higher currently sits at 3.8 percent, for those with a high school degree or lower the national unemployment rate stands at 8.5 percent.

At the same time, a study released by Georgetown University notes that the gap between the supply of workers with postsecondary credentials and available job openings requiring those credentials may be as wide as 3 million by 2018.

And yet, research shows that the United States has fallen from first to sixteenth in the world in the percentage of 25-to-34 year olds with a college degree. In fact, the United States is the only country in the world in which degree attainment levels for those just entering the labor market—at 39 percent—is actually lower than those preparing to retire and leave the labor market—at 41 percent. In order to maintain global competitiveness and our perch as the world's top economy, we must continue to support our students by investing in federal financial aid programs that encourage college access and affordability.

We must do a better job of providing students and their families with clear, useful, and timely information about college costs and financial aid options to help them make the right decision. Given the variety of ways students attend college and the growing reliance on federal financial aid dollars, the federal government is in a unique position to help collect such information so that students and their families can make a direct comparison across institutions.

Although Congress, the Obama Administration, and the Department of Education have jointly issued a number of initiatives aimed at introducing transparency into the system, we must revisit these decisions in order to tweak, update, and ensure that these measures are helping our students make the most informed decisions possible.

We must also work with the States to ensure that they are doing everything in their power to preserve—not eliminate—programs that enable families to afford college. State governments have played a vital role in the higher education 'triad' since passage of the first Higher Education Act in 1965. Though we understand the difficult financial circumstances facing many of the states, balancing budgets on the backs of students and their families is simply the wrong prescription for fixing these problems.

As we look to reauthorize the Higher Education Act in the coming months, we must address these issues and many more with clear vision and an eye towards the future. I look forward to having a productive conversation with my colleagues and our distinguished panel and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Bishop.

Pursuant to committee rule 7(c), all subcommittee members will be permitted to submit written statements to be included in the permanent hearing record.

And without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow statements, questions for the record, and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record.

Before introducing our panel of witnesses, I would like to recognize the fact that we have in the audience with us today seven parliamentarians from the country of Turkey, the Republic of Turkey, and we are very pleased to have them with us.

They are accompanied by some other folks. They are visiting the United States, spending several days here in the Congress observing our work, and I am very honored that they chose to attend our hearing today.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our distinguished panel of witnesses. Dr. Donald Heller is Dean of the College of Education and a professor in the Department of Education Administration at Michigan State University.

Prior to his appointment in January 2012, he was director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education and professor of education and senior scientist at the Pennsylvania State University.

Mr. Alex Garrido is currently a student attending Keiser University in Miami where he is studying criminal justice. Prior to enrolling at Kaiser, he served as a combat engineer in the Navy.

Dr. Nicole Hurd is the founder and executive director of the National College Advising Corps, a consortium of 18 partner colleges and universities in 14 states that higher recent college graduates to serve as college advisors.

Mr. Travis Reindl oversees the Education Division's postsecondary education work area at the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. He also led the 2010-2011 NGA Chair's Initiative Complete to Compete, which focused on increasing college completion and productivity.

Before I recognize you individually to provide your testimony, let me briefly explain our lighting system. You will have 5 minutes to present your testimony.

When you begin, the light in front of you will turn green. When 1 minute is left, the light will turn yellow. When your time has expired, the light will turn red.

At that point, I ask that you wrap up your remarks as best as you are able. After you have testified, members will each have 5 minutes to ask questions of the panel.

I now recognize Dr. Donald Heller for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DR. DONALD E. HELLER, DEAN, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Mr. HELLER. Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to address you on today.

I am speaking as a researcher on college access and not as a representative of Michigan State University this morning.

As the price of college has risen over the last three decades, there has been much discussion of ways to ensure that students and their families have adequate information about the costs, programs, and benefits associated with attending college.

We know that there are positive returns to investments in higher education, the college wage premium, the additional amount that someone earns after earning a bachelor's degree as compared to those with only a high school diploma, has more than doubled in the last 35 years.

In order for students to make appropriate choices about attending college however they need good information about postsecondary educational options. In thinking about ways to do this, it is important to realize a few key facts about where students attend college in our nation.

Fifty-four percent of first-year students attend community colleges and the great majority of these are in their local regions. Another 14 percent are enrolled in proprietary schools where again, they are most likely attending one in their local communities. These proportions are even greater for adult students.

Over two thirds of first-year students are enrolled in an institution within 25 miles of home, and 81 percent are enrolled within 50 miles of their home.

What these data tell us is that the majority of perspective college enrollees are looking at a fairly limited choice set. Those institutions that are very close to home and primarily community colleges and proprietary institutions.

For individuals who are thinking about attending college, there are a number of sources of information. One of the most important is a student's family and peers. Research has shown that these are critical data sources particularly for students in the earlier parts of the college search process.

There is much information available from colleges and universities themselves including admissions and financial aid websites, view books, college costs and financial aid calculators.

Like any information provided by an organization selling a good or service, however, it is only fair that the information be consumed with a warning of caveat emptor.

While I do not mean to imply that colleges and universities may intentionally mislead potential students, it is advisable to keep in mind that information is generally provided to maximize institutional rather than student interests.

For students enrolled in high school guidance counselors are a valuable and critical resource. However, access to good college counseling in high schools is very inequitably distributed with schools serving high proportions of first-generation and poorer students least likely to provide access to good college counseling.

The Department of Education has made a number of efforts some under congressional mandate to provide more consumer friendly information to students as Dr. Foxx mentioned. The IPEDS college navigator provides a single website with information about things like prices, enrollments, graduation rates, financial aid, etc.

There are also a number of federal programs, most notably the TRIO and GEAR-UP programs, which have as an important part of their mission, providing information about colleges to their participants.

There are also many private sources of information about college including college guidebooks and rankings. Other private sources include not-for-profit organizations devoted to improving college access such as the National College Access Network and its many state affiliates.

There are also private college counselors who charge hourly or flat rate fees to parents to help their children choose colleges and prepare applications. These fees may run from a few hundred dollars to as much as $14,000 for a 4-day application boot camp. The states are also a source of information, but I will defer to Mr. Reindl on that topic.

The Internet has greatly helped to democratize access to information. What has not done as well has been to help people access the right information at the right time to meet their needs.

Let me turn now to a few recommendations to enhance higher education transparency. First, there is no substitute for access to knowledgeable information that could be tailored to the needs of individual students.

While local school districts and states have the main responsibility for funding high schools, the federal government could consider a highly targeted program to place more qualified college counselors in schools serving lower income students.

Second, the Department of Education can improve the information about college and financial aid that it provides. Just as the Institute of Education Sciences' What Works Clearinghouse provides access to educators on proven educational programs and practices, the department could develop a similar website on college access.

Third, Congress should continue to support the existing Department of Ed programs, such as TRIO and GEAR-UP that provide information to students about college and how to pay for it.

Fourth, there are some innovative experiments being conducted by researchers that are providing high-quality, low-cost information about college to students who desperately need it. One I highlighted in my written testimony is the Expanding College Opportunities Project.

I would also like to add one cautionary note. There has been much focus recently on collecting better information about the salaries earned by graduates of specific colleges or in specific majors.

While there are important vocational training components of many postsecondary programs, a college degree confers returns to the individual and society that cannot be valued only by the simple measurement of an individual's wages in her first job after college.

I will close by thanking you once again for the opportunity to address you today. I would be happy to take your questions after the remaining witnesses have testified.

[The statement of Mr. Heller follows:]

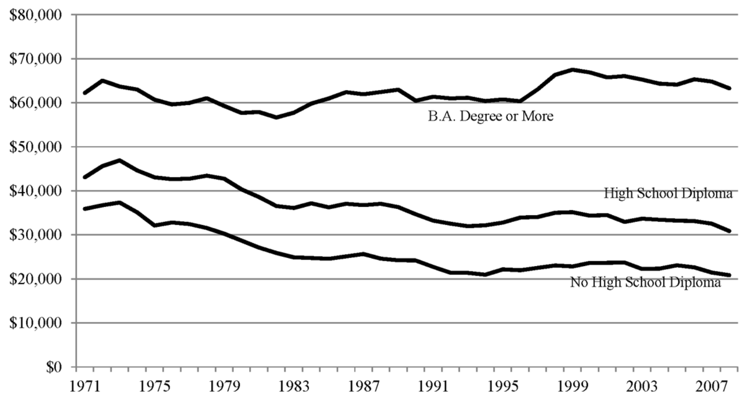
Prepared Statement of Dr. Donald E. Heller, Dean, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

CHAIRWOMAN FOXX, RANKING MEMBER HINOJOSA, AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE: Thank you for the opportunity to address you on today. I would like to offer a special greeting to Representative Walberg, from Michigan's 7th District, right next to our campus, as well as Representative Thompson, with whom I have met in the past and who represents the district of my former employer, Pennsylvania State University. I come to you today as a researcher having conducted studies on college admissions and access for over fifteen years, and not as a representative of Michigan State University.

As the price of college has risen over the last three decades, there has been much discussion of ways to ensure that students and their families have adequate information about the costs, programs, and benefits associated with attending postsecondary education. We are reasonably assured of the benefits of attending college; much has been written of the lifetime returns earned by those with a college degree as compared to those who enter the labor market with only a high school diploma. One example, from a recent book of mine, is shown in figure 1 on the next page. In 2008, the median income of men holding bachelor's degrees was 105 percent greater than men holding only a high school diploma, and 204 percent greater than high school dropouts. More importantly, this college wage premium—the additional amount, on average, that someone with a bachelor's degree earns over those with only a high school diploma or less education—has more than doubled over the last 35 years. This increasing college wage premium is the primary reason that most analysts describe to explain why college enrollments have continued to rise, even in the face of price increases that have well exceeded inflation over the last three decades.

It is important to note that earning a bachelor's degree is not the only path toward achieving what we often have called a "middle class lifestyle." However, it is clear that fewer and fewer jobs in our economy today, as well as into the future, will allow people to earn a decent wage if they don't have some form of postsecondary training.

Figure 1: Median income of men age 25 and older, by educational attainment, 1971-2008.



Income in constant (2008) dollars. Source: Heller, D. E. (2011). Trends in the Affordability of Public Colleges and Universities: The Contradiction of Increasing Prices and Increasing Enrollment. In D. E. Heller (Ed.), *The States and Public Higher Education Policy: Affordability, Access, and Accountability* (2nd edition, 11-38). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

It is clear that it is a national imperative to ensure that we have good information available about postsecondary educational options for students and their families. In thinking about ways to do this, it is important to realize a few key facts about where students attend college (all data are the author's calculations from the U.S. Department of Education's National Postsecondary Student Aid Study of 2008):

- 54 percent of all first-year students enrolling in postsecondary educational institutions attend community colleges, and the great majority of these are attending community colleges in their local regions. Another 14 percent of first-year students are enrolled in proprietary institutions, where again, they are most likely attending one in their local communities.
- This proportion is even greater for independent students, those generally over the age of 24. Fifty-nine percent of these students attend community colleges, and another 22 percent attend proprietary institutions.
- Over two-thirds of all first-year college students are enrolled in an institution within 25 miles of their home, and 81 percent are enrolled within fifty miles of their home. Again, these proportions are even greater for adults students—three-quarters and 90 percent, respectively.

What these data tell us is that the vast majority of prospective college enrollees, both traditional-aged students as well as adults returning to college for the first-time, are looking at a fairly limited choice set: those institutions that are very close to home, and primarily community colleges and proprietary institutions.

This is not to say that given better information about postsecondary educational choices, more students would not choose to move farther from home to attend college, or more students could not be persuaded that a four-year public or not-for-profit institution would be a better option for them. But the reality is that for many students attending college for the first time, there are a very small number of the over 7,200 accredited, Title IV-participating institutions, that these students are considering.

For high school students or adults who are thinking about attending college, there are a number of sources of information available:

- Parents, families, and peers: One of the most important sources of information about college is a student's parents (if a traditional-aged student), families, and peers. Research has shown that these are critical data sources, particularly for students in the earlier parts of the college search process, i.e., those in the early high school years.[1] Students later in high school seek out and find additional sources of information, but family and friends are critical in the earlier stages.
- The quantity, quality and reliability of information about college available from family and friends varies greatly by such characteristics as income and parental education.

---

[1] Bell, A. D., Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., & Perna, L. W. (2009). College Knowledge of 9th and 11th Grade Students: Variation by School and State Context. The Journal of Higher Education, 80(6), 663-685.

• Colleges and universities: There is lots of information from colleges and universities themselves, including admissions and financial aid websites, view books, and college cost and financial aid calculators. Most college also provide tours to prospective students who visit the campus, and send representatives to college fairs out in the community. Like any information provided by an organization selling a good or service, however, it is only fair that the information be consumed with the warning of caveat emptor. While I do not mean to imply that colleges and universities may intentionally mislead potential students, it is advisable to keep in mind that information is generally provided to maximize institutional, rather than student, interests.

Many colleges, including my own, offer outreach programs that bring high school students to their campuses to give them an intensive experience of what it is like to be on a college campus, provide academic and test prep tutoring, and the like. These experiences may range from the relatively short-term (such as a weekend) to as long as four or more weeks in the summer.

• Guidance counselors: For students still enrolled in high school, guidance counselors (as well as teachers and other school staff) can be a valuable resource. However, access to these kinds of resources—particularly guidance counselors, who are most likely to have the best and most up-to-date information about attending college—is very inequitably distributed. A study conducted for the National Association for College Admission Counseling found that high school guidance counselors can be critical in improving college access for racial minority and low socioeconomic status students, but these are exactly the populations who are likely to have the least access to good college counseling.[2]

• Federal government: In recent years, the Department of Education has made a number of efforts, some under Congressional mandate, to provide more consumer-friendly information to students. The IPEDS College Navigator, for example, provides a single website with basic data about every Title IV-participating institution in the country. This includes things like prices, enrollments, programs offered, financial aid available, and graduation rates. The Department has also worked with colleges to help them implement Net Price Calculators, mandated by Congress in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

• There are also a number of federal programs, most notably the TRIO and GEAR-UP programs, which have as an important part of their mission providing information about colleges to their participants.

• Private sources: There are also many private sources of information about college. This includes:

• Publications, such as college guidebooks written by individuals or organizations, or rankings published by such organizations as U.S. News & World Reports, Barron's, and The Princeton Review. This includes numerous books providing advice on how to pay for college. A simple search on Amazon for "college guides" returns over 3,000 entries.

• Information provided in written and other forms by not-for-profit organizations devoted to improving college access, most prominently the National College Access Network and its many state affiliates around the country.

• Private college counselors, who charge hourly or flat rate fees to parents to help their children choose colleges. These fees may run from a few hundred dollars to as much as $14,000 for a four day "Application Boot Camp."[3] As with access to guidance counselors in high schools, access to private college counseling is correlated with the income of the student's parents.

• States: Information from the 50 states and the District of Columbia, who control and provide funding to public colleges and universities that enroll 72 percent of all college students. I will not say much else about this, however, as I know that Mr. Reindl will be discussing this topic.

I would argue that there is no issue with the volume of information available about college. As mentioned earlier, there are numerous guidebooks, websites, magazines, and other sources that are often freely accessible and available to most all prospective college students. As has been said by many, the Internet has greatly helped to democratize access to information. What it has not done as successfully, however, has been to help people get access to the right information to meet their needs. And it is critical that we help prospective students to get the right information in their hands at the necessary times.

---

[2] McDonough, P. M. (2006). Counseling and College Counseling in America's High Schools. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling.

[3] Hernandez College Consulting. (2013). "Application Boot Camp." Retrieved April 21, 2013, from *http://www.hernandezcollegeconsulting.com/application-bootcamp/*

Having provided you with this overview of the availability of information about college and how to fund it, let me turn now to a few recommendations regarding how we can improve the this information.

Some of these are actions that the federal government can assist with; others are better suited for other levels of government or private sector actors.

First, there is no adequate substitution for having access to objective, unbiased, and knowledgeable information that can be tailored to the needs of individual students. A couple of generations ago, when we had a much smaller proportion of high school students who transitioned into college (and adult students were few and far between in comparison to today), this role was fulfilled by the high school guidance counselor. Schools in upper-middle and upper-income communities were the ones sending a high percentage of students onto college, and these schools provided adequate access to college counseling.

Today, we have a higher proportion of students who aspire to attend college, and they are distributed among a broader set of high schools than in the past. However, we have not provided access to good college counseling in the schools to many of these students who historically have been underrepresented in higher education, those predominantly from lower-income and racial minority families. Because these students tend to be clustered in lower-resourced schools, they are not provided with the same level of college counseling afforded to students from wealthier families. And for most of them, access to private college counseling—including the $14,000 “Application Boot Camp” mentioned earlier—is well beyond their means.

While local school districts and states have the primary responsibility for funding and operating high schools, the federal government could consider a highly-targeted, federally-funded program to place more qualified college counselors in schools serving lower-income students. A complimentary approach would be for the federal government to partner with non-profits, such as the National College Advising Corps (NCAC), a largely privately-funded organization which works with colleges and universities to place recent college graduates into high schools serving high proportions of low-income and first-generation students. The NCAC representatives work one-on-one with these high school students to supplement guidance counselors who are often overwhelmed with high student-to-counselor ratios and many other demanding responsibilities.

Students in predominantly low-income schools who have had been able to gain access to good college counseling from an individual report how important it has been to them. In one study, respondents described this person as being “almost ‘savior-like’ ” (p. 674) in helping them gain good information about college.[4]

Second, the Department of Education can also continue to improve the information about college and financial aid that it provides to students and families. While as I noted earlier the Department has made great strides in recent years with its websites and other sources of data, the information that is provided is still focused on providing facts and figures. If a student wants to know what majors are offered at a particular institution, or what the tuition and fees and net price are, or what the six-year graduation rate is, the IPEDS College Navigator is a good place to go. But it is not a place to visit to help students understand if a college is the right “fit” for them. I am not suggesting that the Department get into the college guide book business, but it could create a portal to objective information that could help students find a good college. Just as the Institute of Education Sciences’ What Works Clearinghouse provides access to educators on proven educational programs, products, practices, and policies, a similar website on college access could provide pointers to good, objective information about choosing colleges.

Third, Congress should continue to support the existing Department of Education programs, such as the TRIO and GEAR-UP programs, that have as part of their design providing information to students about attending college and how to pay for it.

Fourth, school districts and state governments need to step forward and ensure that high school students and their families are being provided access to high quality information about attending college and paying for it. One way of doing this is to ensure that schools are adequately funded so that students have access to good advice from school personnel. As described earlier, there is no good substitute for this level of personalized attention. Schools should be encouraged to work with private organizations, including local businesses and non-profits, that have as their mission getting more students enrolling in postsecondary education.

[4] Bell, A. D., Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., & Perna, L. W. (2009). College Knowledge of 9th and 11th Grade Students: Variation by School and State Context. The Journal of Higher Education, 80(6), 663-685.

As I described earlier, the great majority of students are interested in attending college very close to their local communities, and for many of these students, the local communities can offer at least one postsecondary option that is the right price, offers the program they want, and would be that proverbial "good fit." Thus, providing good information about these local options should not be as daunting a task as trying to help students choose from among the over 7,000 accredited institutions across the country.

Fifth, there are some innovative experiments being conducted by researchers that attempt to target information at those students who historically have been underrepresented in higher education and generally have poor access to good information about it. One I will highlight is the Expanding College Opportunities Project, being conducted by researchers Caroline Hoxby of Stanford University and Sarah Turner of the University of Virginia.[5] This project has targeted high-achieving, low-income students, and provides them with very low-cost, highly-targeted information (via the mail and websites) about colleges, financial aid, and net prices. While the study is somewhat limited because the target population is those students who have relatively high levels of academic achievements, early results nevertheless show that the approach holds promise.

I would also like to add one cautionary note. There has been much focus in the last year or two, particularly in some states, on collecting better information about the salaries earned by graduates of specific colleges and universities, including data on earnings by major. This issue has been framed not just as one of providing better information to prospective students, but also as one of institutional accountability. While this kind of information can be helpful, I think that it also can be used in a way that narrows the purpose of a postsecondary education. While there are important vocational training components of many postsecondary programs, a college education—whether it is one that leads to a bachelor's degree or not—confers returns to the individual and society that cannot be valued only by the simple measurement of an individual's wages in her first job after college. The true value of an education can only be seen five, 10, or even 20 years after the education is experienced, and in ways well beyond the size of the paycheck earned by the recipient of that education.

In summary, we have made some good strides on getting more information to students about college. These efforts have been accomplished by the federal government, states, local districts, and private organizations. But we still have a long way to go to improve on these efforts if we are going to ensure that all students have the right information at the right time and tailored to their needs.

I will close by thanking you once again for the opportunity to address you today. I would be happy to take your questions after the remaining witnesses have testified.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much.

Mr. Garrido, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF ALEX GARRIDO, STUDENT, KEISER UNIVERSITY

Mr. GARRIDO. Good morning, Chairwoman Foxx and committee members. It is an honor to have been invited to testify before the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training to share my story about college experience.

As you said earlier, I was a military member from 2001 to 2006 as a Sea Bee which is a combat engineer, civil engineer.

During my time in service I went to countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Guam, Iraq, and Kuwait. I was medically discharged for my injuries sustained while in service and came back to Miami, where originally, where I was from.

I found a job as an FAA—at a FAA repair station, which was as a jet engine mechanic. Unfortunately, as the economy plummeted, I found myself without a job in 2008. Unable to readily find work,

[5] Hoxby, C., & Turner, S. (2013). Expanding College Opportunities for High-Achieving, Low Income Students. Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University and the University of Virginia.

I chose to enroll in college so I could continue providing for my family. I began to search online for colleges and degree programs which were of interest to me.

While doing my research, I looked at the Veterans' Affairs website and I found out about the Post 9/11 benefits were available and could cover housing stipend, books, and tuition. This helped me with my decision and I knew it was time to go back to school.

Although the VA was not involved with my search for schools, they did help me however, with the necessary forms for my education funding.

Initially, I looked online at different schools in South Florida and I felt best—what would best meet my needs. I was looking for schools that had degree programs, which could be completed quickly, would not require a long commute to school, and that the student body that was serious about learning.

The main information I was able to obtain online in these searches was what degree programs were often offered as well as the college locations. I was also able to use the website to get a feel for the schedule and plans for the various degree programs.

For me, schedule was important seeing as how I was already in my thirties and had been out of school for a long time so the idea of focusing on three to four classes at once was a daunting task.

After selecting the schools I was interested in, I began to visit the campuses and speak to admissions advisors. I wanted to get a feel for the environment of each individual school and then this had gauge slowly—from my—I couldn't gauge this from the websites.

The first school I visited had an admissions representative who spoke quickly and could not keep my attention. This did not take the time—she didn't take the time to answer my questions and I was—she was forcing contracts my way.

Another school I visited, I was informed I would need to take general education courses, which would have about thirty students per class.

Class size was an important issue so I began speaking to my—with friends; and they informed me that classes would normally have between 50-100 students. Having been out of school for so many years I wanted more individualized attention so I ruled those colleges out.

When I discussed my options with my girlfriend, she encouraged me to come up with a game plan. I went to see her friends at Keiser University where the admissions counselor, she knew. Arriving, he gave me a tour of the college, explained in detail the degree programs offered, along with taking and what to expect.

After he got to know me, and the fact that I was a veteran, he took me to financial aid to see about my veteran's benefits. I was not able—aware of any navigation tools from the Department of Education, which was why my decision was based mostly on my visit and the support of my friends and family.

Unlike the experience to another college where I felt I was being pressured into signing paperwork and enrolling, this was not the case at Keiser because of the experience during my first visit, I returned a few days after knowing that I was going to—expected to take a test and then later to see if I was going to be admitted.

Keiser did everything they could to fund my education in conjunction with benefits from the VA and also the Yellow Ribbon Scholarship. Then Keiser matched whatever the Yellow Ribbon would offer.

I filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is the FAFSA and obtained a Pell Grant. I was also eventually offered an academic scholarship because of my grades and a military scholarship for being a veteran.

I have been at Keiser University since 2009 and I likely—and I like everything about the school from small classes, everyone being required to be in professional attire, and the fact that Keiser is a Level 6 accredited, a Level 6 SACS accredited school offering doctoral degrees.

I am a firm believer in that the environment plays a role in the attitude of the students. Teachers are easily accessible whether you meet with them on campus or by email them after hours.

My associate—I earned my associate's degree in 2011 with a GPA of 3.6. I would never imagine that I would have graduated with such a high GPA with my associate's.

After graduating with my associate's, I continued my education my bachelor's, and I am proud to say I am going to graduate in September.

For me, choosing a college was about the academics needed to come, and my decision was not lightly. I considered the graduation rates, the number of students in my class, and the length and degree of the program because my funding would not last indefinitely.

I chose a career of criminal justice, and Madam Chair and members, thank you for the opportunity to speaking today about my experience and hoping the decision of transparency will help things a little easier for people like me, people with busy lives, children, and those who are veterans. I look forward to any questions that you might have for me.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Garrido follows:]

Prepared Statement of Alex Garrido, Student, Keiser University

Good morning, Chairwoman Foxx and Committee Members. It is an honor to have been invited to testify before the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training to share my story about my college experience.

Let me begin by sharing a little of my history. I served in the United States Navy from 2001 to 2006 and I was a Sea Bee, which is a civil engineer. During my time in the service I went to countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Guam, Iraq, and Kuwait. I was medically discharged from injuries sustained while in service and came back to Miami, where I was originally from. I found a job at a FAA jet engine repair station. Unfortunately, as the economy plummeted, I found myself without a job in 2008. Unable to readily find work, I chose to enroll in college so that I could continue providing for my family. I began to search online for colleges and degree programs, which were of interest to me.

While doing my research, I looked at the Veterans' Affairs website and I found out that Post 9/11 benefits were available and could cover a housing stipend, books, and tuition. This helped with my decision and I knew it was time to go back to school. Although the VA was not involved in my search for schools, they did help me fill out the necessary forms to have my education funded.

Initially, I looked online at different schools in South Florida I felt would best meet my needs. I was looking for a school that had degree programs, which could be completed quickly, would not require a long commute to the school, had a student body that was serious about learning, and classes that would interest me. The main information I was able to obtain online in these searches was what degree programs were offered as well as the college locations. However, I was also able to use the websites to get a feel for the schedules and plans for the various degree programs.

For me, the schedule was important seeing as how I was already in my thirties and had been out of school for a long time so the idea of focusing on three or four classes at once was daunting. After selecting the schools I was interested in, I began to visit the campuses and speak to admissions advisors. I wanted to get a feel for the environments of each individual school and this is hard to gauge solely from school websites. The first school I visited had an admissions representative who spoke too quickly and could not keep my attention. She did not take the time to answer my questions and was forcing contracts my way. At another school I visited I was informed I would need to take general education courses, which would have about thirty students per class.

Class size was an important issue so I began speaking with friends; I was informed classes at a number of my other choices would have anywhere from 50-100 students. Having been out of school for so many years I knew I wanted more individualized attention so I ruled out those colleges. When I discussed my options with my girlfriend, she encouraged me to come up with a game plan and move forward with my education. I went to see a friend of hers at Keiser University who was an admissions counselor. After arriving, he gave me a tour of the college, explained in detail the degree programs offered, how long they would take, and what to expect. After he got to know me, and the fact that I was a veteran, he then took me to financial aid to see about my veteran's benefits. I was not aware of any navigation tools from the Department of Education which is why my decision was based mostly on my visits and the support of my friends and family.

Unlike an experience at another college where I felt I was being pressured into signing paperwork and enrolling, this was not the case at Keiser. Because of the experience during my first visit, I returned a few days later to take my entrance exam and I already knew what to expect from the school if I was admitted. Keiser did everything they could to help fund my education in conjunction with benefits offered by the VA—the Yellow Ribbon Scholarship and a match by Keiser. I filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and obtained a Pell Grant. I was also eventually offered an academic scholarship because of my grades and a military scholarship for being a veteran.

I have been at Keiser University since 2009 and I like everything about the school from the small classes, everyone being required to be in professional attire, and the fact that Keiser is a Level 6 SACS accredited school offering doctoral degrees. I am a firm believer that the environment plays a role in the attitude of the students. Teachers are easily accessible whether you meet with them on campus or email them after hours. I earned my Associate's degree in 2011 with a 3.6 GPA and would never have imagined I could graduate with such a high GPA. I immediately continued my education and went on to obtain my Bachelor's degree; I am happy to tell you I will graduate this coming September. The one class at a time structure allows me to absorb the information presented and with the way the information is continuously delivered over that month it helps me to retain what I have learned, having it become second nature. The University administration is always available to listen to the concerns of students and takes action on issues raised, which is greatly appreciated by the student body because it lets us know our voices are being heard and we are not just a number.

For me, choosing a college was about my academic needs and I did not come by my decision lightly. I considered graduation rates, the number of students in my classes, the length of the degree program since I was receiving funding that would not last indefinitely, accreditation and placement rates. These things would all determine how successful I would be in my chosen career path of criminal justice; my goal from the start has been to be employable. I did not enroll with any unanswered questions and it has made the task of focusing on my studies that much easier.

Madam Chair and Members, thank you again, for the opportunity to speak to you today about my experiences. My hope is that today's discussion about transparency helps make things a little easier for people like me—people with a busy life, children, those who work and veterans. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Garrido.

I now recognize Dr. Nicole Hurd for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DR. NICOLE FARMER HURD, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS

Ms. HURD. Thank you for the honor of being here today.

As the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the National College Advising Corps, I am here representing 335 recent college graduates who are serving as college advisers to nearly 117,000 students in 389 high schools across 14 states.

Our program places these college graduates from our 18 partner universities into low income underserved high schools to help students navigate the path to college and earn meaningful credentials.

We are an evidence-based, data-driven, high-impact program that has seen an increase of 8 to 12 percent college matriculation rates in these schools. And this morning, I have to share with you that the Department of Education data shows is that we have helped 36,000 students file their FAFSA forms this fall—or this spring.

We—our mission is simple. We are to help every student, every student find the right match and fit so they enroll in schools that serve them well.

My testimony is from the vantage point of these near peer advisors. They spend every day working alongside our guidance counselors, teachers, and principles making sure our students take advantage of educational opportunities and are ready to compete in the global economy.

There are real barriers for our high school students today; the gap between what they think they know and what they need to know. If you ask an eighth-grade class in this country how many of them want to go to college, every head will go up. But we lose them.

We lose them in the process. They are unaware of fee waivers. They are unaware of Pell grants. They are unaware of the net price calculators. They do not know to look for graduation rates and they don't know how to make wise choices.

In my home state of North Carolina and many of the other states represented here, 100 students will enroll in our public colleges and universities. Only 13 will graduate with a 2-year degree in 4 years, and only 29 will graduate with a 4-year—from a 4-year institution within 8 years.

We need to do better. There are real barriers. Our college guidance counselors—excuse me—our high school guidance counselor rate is way too high. The recommended ratio is 250 to 1. In California, it is 810 to 1. In Texas, it is 711 to 1. And in Michigan, it is 660 to 1.

Our job in the National College Advising Corps is to bring these near peer graduates into the schools to help those guidance counselors make sure that all of our students find a match and go to a school where they will succeed.

But there are very simple barriers; the barriers that you can help us fix. Information barriers that are also preventing our students from enrolling and completing higher education. There are certain activities that all high school students need. They need to go on college visits. They know college is good, but they have no idea what a vocational school, a community college, or a 4-year school can offer them.

They need financial literacy. They do not know the difference between a grant or a loan. They have sticker shock. They have no difference between what the sticker price of the University is versus their actual net cost that they will pay.

And my most heartbreaking example I want to share with you this morning as a family who did not want to take out a loan and take support from the federal government because they were too proud and thought that that was aid that they did not want to take and so instead, they put their tuition on a 15 percent credit card not realizing a credit card is actually a loan.

We have a lack of timeline in knowledge in our schools as well. We need timelines for all students, the 9th through 12th grade, and they need to be posted in every classroom, not just in the guidance office.

The students need to know when to register, when to take the SAT and ACT, when to start their scholarship searches, when to fill out their FASFA, priority deadlines, these are all things that can be really, really big barriers and they are really small, but we need to knock them down.

I cannot tell you how many students we advise that did not take their SAT or ACT in their junior year, did not see a list of courses they needed until 12th grade and therefore were not college and career ready and did not realize that you file financial aid forms and when you do is important.

You all have done some amazing things to help us and I want to thank you for that. We ask you to have universal adoption of the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet. It is so important that our families see things apples to apples. In order to have graduation rates there, those make a huge difference.

Think about what choice you can make when you can actually see a school's graduation rate, loan default rates, median borrowing, grants and scholarships, net costs so our families, especially our low income families can see what this is really going to cost them.

As you know, reading financial award letters up until this time, you need an advanced degree for. They are full of jargon. They are hard to read, and they have been a barrier. Net price calculators; thank you for what you have done to make our higher institutions put those there. They need to be places where people can see them.

They are so buried right now that our families, our students, our counselors, and our advisors can't get to them. And again, we need to explain to people the difference between the sticker price and the net price.

And finally, I want to thank you for what you have done with college navigator and all of the other things that are coming up to help people with families—and their families navigate the college process.

I will say we still worry about how much predatory and wrong information is out on the Internet. People should not have to pay to fill out their FAFSA. People should not have to pay to get information from public domains.

So my final comment is just to thank you all for this and again, on behalf of the 335 recent college graduates all who are part of this amazing advising corps, all who are part of major universities, I want to thank you. Every student in this country deserves to fulfill their potential through education and this committee is leading the way. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Hurd follows:]

Prepared Statement of Dr. Nicole Farmer Hurd, Founder and Executive Director, National College Advising Corps

Chairwoman Foxx, Representative Hinojosa, and Members, thank you for the honor of providing this testimony to your committee.

As the Founder and CEO of the National College Advising Corps, I represent 335 recent college graduates who are serving as college advisers to nearly 117,000 students in 389 high schools across 14 states. Our program places these college graduates from 18 partner universities into low income and underserved high schools to help students navigate the path to college and earn meaningful credentials.

Our partner universities, some from your states, schools such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Georgia, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, New York University, the University of Virginia, Franklin & Marshall College, Texas A&M, and Cal, Berkeley, are so committed to ensuring all of our students are college and career ready and have a meaningful postsecondary plan that they join us—with their dollars and talents—in placing their recent graduates in high schools. My testimony is from the vantage of these near peer advisers who spend every day, alongside guidance counselors, teachers, and principals, making sure our students take advantage of educational opportunities and are ready to compete in the global economy.

There are real barriers for our high school students today. There is a gap between what students think they know and what they need to know. If you ask an 8th grade class how many of them want to go to college, 100% of the hands will go up—and yet as the years go by—we lose these students. They do not understand financial aid or what classes they need to take. They are unaware of fee waivers, Pell grants, and net price calculators. They do not know to look for graduation rates and how to make wise choices, so in North Carolina, and many of the other states represented here—100 students will enroll in our public colleges and universities, only 13 will graduate with a 2 year degree within 4 years and only 29 will graduate from a 4 year institution within 8 years (*http://www.completecollege.org/docs/North—Carolina—Feb28.pdf*).

There are structural barriers that prevent our student for achieving their full potential through education—our high school counselor to student ratio is too high. The America School Counselors' Association recommends a ratio of 250:1, but recent Department of Education data shows the national average is 459:1—in California it is 810:1, in Texas it is 711:1, and in Michigan it is 660:1.

The vast majority of our Education Schools which train our counselors, teachers, and school leadership do not include college and financial aid counseling in the curriculum. There is not enough human capital to serve our students well.

The National College Advising Corps is helping to address this human capital issue by placing near peer advisers in our partner high school to work alongside our counselors and teachers and help make college and career dreams become reality.

And yet there are simple barriers—information barriers—that are also preventing our students from enrolling and completing higher education. They are certain activities that all high school students need in their schools.

College Visits

Students think they know what college is, but many have never been to a campus. They do not understand how higher education works and may not see how they could be successful in college until they see it with their own eyes—research shows if they actually visit a college campus, their chances of matriculating increase.

Financial Literacy

They think they know how much college costs, but we have not educated many of them or their families on financial literacy. They do not know the difference between a grant and a loan. They do not know the difference between the college cost and the net price. My most heartbreaking example is a family, who did not want to take out a loan due to pride—refused their government backed aid—and instead put the tuition on a credit card with a 15% interest rate—not realizing a credit card is a loan.

Lack of a Timeline and College Information throughout the School

One of the most effective things we have seen is enhancing a school's college-going culture. In one low-performing school in North Carolina, our adviser changed the signs on the all the classroom doors—instead of reading "Mrs. Smith, History or Mr. Jones, Math", they read "Mrs. Smith, History, the UT Austin or Mr. Jones Math, the University of Georgia." The principal called me to say he had never seen the aspirations and the conversation in a school change so quickly. These students thought they did not know anyone who went to college or anyone to ask for advice when the reality is they were surrounded by college graduates every day. We now do this across the country and refer to it as our "Diploma Doors" campaign.

Timelines for all students—from 9-12th grades—need to be posted in every classroom, not just the in the guidance office. Students need to know when to register and take the SAT or ACT exams, when to start scholarship searches, when to fill out to the FAFSA, and priority deadlines for applications. These seem like small steps, but I cannot tell you how many students we advise who did not take the SAT/ACT in their junior year, did not see a list of courses needed for college until 12th grade and then had the shock to learn that they are not college ready, did not realize that when you file your financial aid forms is of the utmost importance.

And there are real barriers that can be knocked down by the work this Committee is doing:

Universal adoption of the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet—This document is a game changer for our students. There are many key areas—graduation rate, loan default rate, median borrowing, grants and scholarships, net costs, options to pay net costs that this document provides in a clear and concise format. As you may know, reading financial aid award letters from many of our colleges and universities requires an advanced degree. They are full of jargon, hard to read, and do not allow consumers to make wise choices. We are excited that 600 college and universities have adopted the Sheet. Every institution should use this form—for the first time a student can compare apples to apples—they can look at their options and see real graduation rates, real net costs, and what the investment in their education will cost. Our college and universities need to honor this investment by providing clear information in this accessible form.

Net price calculators—While we have made great advances in helping students and families understand net price vs. college costs, the sticker shock of the price of education is still discouraging too many of our students, especially our low-income students from pursuing higher education. A Century Foundation study found that at the most selective 146 colleges and universities, 74% of students come from the wealthiest socioeconomic quarter of the population, but just 3% from the poorest quarter. Yet the graduation rates at the most selective institutions are higher and these schools provide substantial aid. Our low income students do not realize they can afford to go to these institutions. And while it is great that net price calculators are now required on college websites, many of buried them deep within the content. The calculator needs to be where prospective students and families can find it.

College information—in addition to College Navigator, there are many websites from credible sources that are assisting students and families with making wise choices. The College Board's Big Future site, *https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org,* the Chronicle of Higher Education's College Reality Check, launched this week, *http://collegerealitycheck.com/,* and the Administration's launch of the College Scorecard have made comparing college and accessing important data points a reality. Wage data is becoming another way to help empower students to make wise choices with sites such as College Measures that shows earnings by college and major in four states: Arkansas, Colorado, Tennessee, and Virginia. *http://www.collegemeasures.org/* Our concern is the level of misinformation still available on the web. Students and families need to have credible information and fall prey to sites that charge them for access to information and forms that are in the public domain.

My final comment goes back to the human capital. As I mentioned in the opening, I represent 335 recent college graduates who are working daily to ensure our students have the information they need to access and persist in higher education. We do this work with great partners—high schools, non-profits, the National College Access Network, and other support networks. What makes our model unique is that higher education institutions help select, train, place, and pay for our advisers who serve in high schools. And they are not recruiting for the partner university, but rather for all forms of post-secondary education. I would encourage the committee to look at this engagement as a way to have higher education assist with our nation's college access and information barriers.

Each university has admissions professionals, financial aid professionals, recent graduates and others who can assist our high schools in helping students navigate the path to college and careers. In a global economy, where more of citizens will need a college education to compete, we must create a seamless and collaborative education pipeline that includes higher education working with K-12, and that empowers our students. I am grateful for the leadership of this committee for their work to help our students navigate their post high schools plans and to fulfill their potential through education.

ATTACHED: NATIONAL COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS OVERVIEW AND DATA

The Adviser Difference

We also compare the survey responses of students who had met with the NCAC adviser at their school with those who had not. It should be noted that these are not causal analyses. While the differences reported here could be attributable to the student's having interacted with the NCAC adviser, that is not necessarily the case. It is possible that students who want to engage in college prep activities and who want to apply to college seek out the NCAC adviser rather than the advisers encouraging more of these behaviors among the students with whom they interact. The statistically significant differences between students who have and have not met with the NCAC adviser are reported below.

- In terms of targeting students, compared to seniors who have not met with the NCAC adviser at their school, **students who have met with the NCAC adviser are**:
  - ✓ 3% more likely to be first-generation college goers
  - ✓ 34% more likely to be very concerned about college finance
- In terms of college-preparation activities, compared to seniors who have not met with the NCAC adviser at their school, **students who have met with the NCAC adviser are**:
  - ✓ 22% more likely to aspire to attend college early in their education careers
  - ✓ 107% more likely to take 3 or more ACT/SAT prep courses
  - ✓ 50% more likely to take 3 or more classes for college-level credit
  - ✓ 65% more likely to read college rankings magazines
  - ✓ 79% more likely to read college guidebooks
  - ✓ 28% more likely to view college websites 3 or more times
  - ✓ 98% more likely to attend college workshops
  - ✓ 198% more likely to attend financial aid workshops
  - ✓ 54% more likely to visit colleges 3 or more times
  - ✓ 40% more likely to take the ACT/SAT
  - ✓ 62% more likely to submit the FAFSA
  - ✓ 99% more likely to use a fee waiver for college applications

- In terms of actual college applications and acceptances, compared to seniors who have not met with the NCAC adviser at their school, **students who have met with the NCAC adviser are**:

  - ✓ 42% more likely to apply to a college/university
    - 76% less likely to apply to no institutions
    - 63% more likely to apply to 3 or more institutions
    - 137% more likely to apply to 6 or more institutions
  - ✓ 73% more likely to apply to a 4-year institution of higher education
  - ✓ 67% more likely to be accepted to a college/university
    - 60% less likely to be accepted to no institutions
    - 63% more likely to be accepted to 3 or more institutions
    - 125% more likely to be accepted to 6 or more institutions
  - ✓ 84% more likely to be accepted to a 4-year institution of higher education
  - ✓ 31% more likely to be committed to attending college in the fall (as indicated by having submitted a deposit to a college/university)

These findings suggest that NCAC advisers are doing a good job of targeting students, as the student they have met with are more likely to be first-generation college goers and to be concerned about financing their college education. Furthermore, compared to student who have not met with an NCAC adviser, student who have met with an adviser are more likely to: aspire to go to college, participate in college-prep activities, apply to college (and multiple institutions), be accepted to college, and be committed to going to college in the fall.

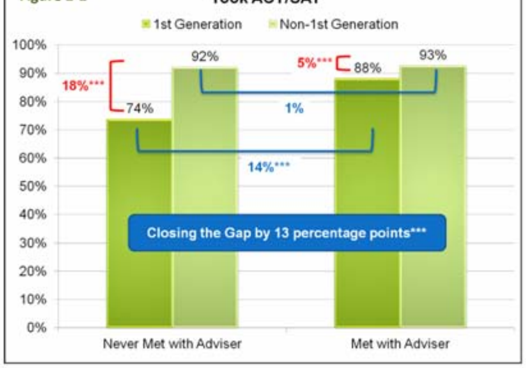
Photo Courtesy of Missouri College Advising Corps

Closing the Gap

In our 2010-11 evaluation report, we conducted a series of "closing the gap" analyses. We repeated these analyses using the 2012 student survey data. In these analyses, we examine how the gaps between student subgroups differ among students who interacted with the NCAC adviser and among those who did not. Again, these are not causal analyses. The statistically significant differences in gaps between subgroups among students who met with the NCAC adviser and students who did not are reported below.

- ❖ When comparing the <u>difference</u> between first-generation and non-first-generation students among students who have and have not met with the NCAC adviser:
  - ✓ The gap in taking the ACT or SAT is closed by 13 percentage points.

Figure 1-1 **Took ACT/SAT**



Interpreting "Closing the Gap" Charts

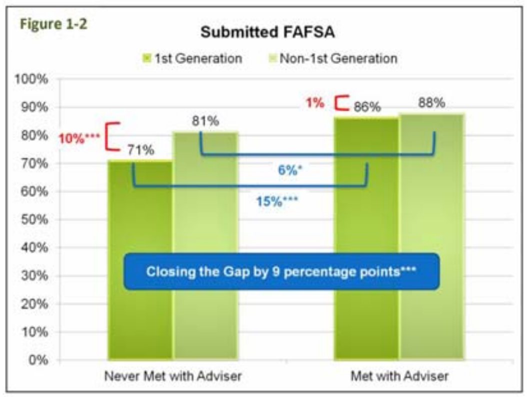
The chart to the left provides 4 data points:

1[st] Gen Never Met Adviser (74%)	1[st] Gen Met Advier (88%)
Non-1[st] Gen Never Met Adviser (92%)	Non-1[st] Gen Met Adviser (93%)

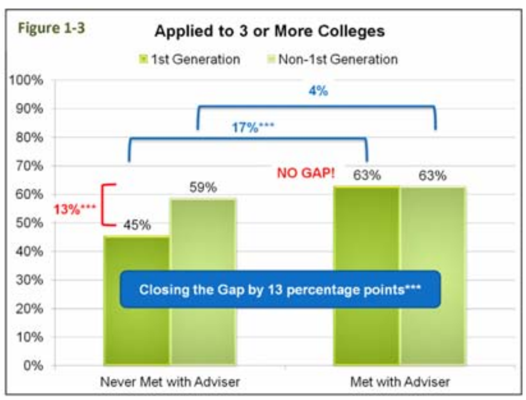
The blue "gap brackets" demonstrate that non-first-generation students are 1 percentage point more likely to take the ACT/SAT if they have met with an adviser. In comparison, first-generation students are 14 percentage points more likely to have taken the ACT/SAT if they have met with an adviser. Meeting with an adviser is associated with a 13 percentage point closing of the gap.

The red "gap brackets" demonstrate that the difference in this same metric between first-generation and non-first-generation students who have never met with an adviser is 18 percentage points. In comparison, the difference is only 5 percentage points among those who have met with an adviser. This is another way of showing the same 13 percentage point closing of the gap.

✓ The gap in submitting the FAFSA is closed by 9 percentage points.

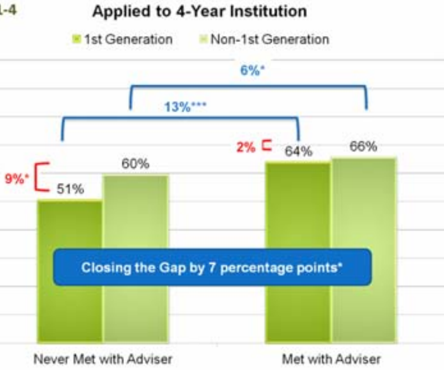


✓ The gap in applying to 3 or more institutions is closed by 13 percentage points.



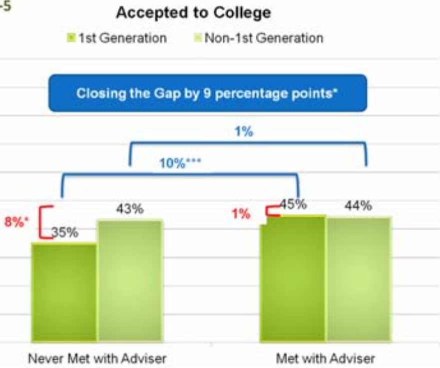
✓ The gap in applying to a 4-year institution is closed by 7 percentage points.

Figure 1-4



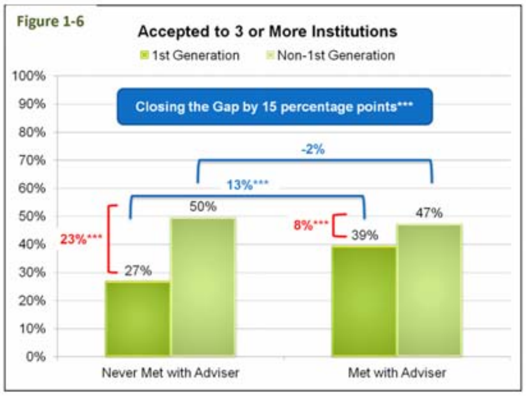
✓ The gap in being accepted to college is closed by 9 percentage points.

Figure 1-5



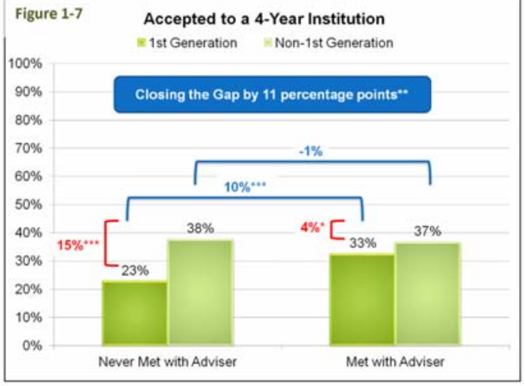
✓ The gap in being accepted to three or more institutions is closed by 15 percentage points.

Figure 1-6

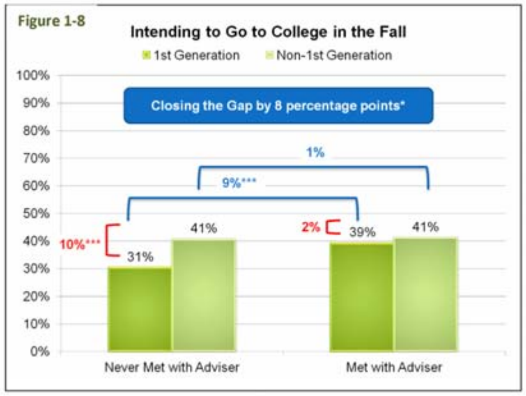


✓ The gap in being accepted to a 4-year institution is closed by 11 percentage points.

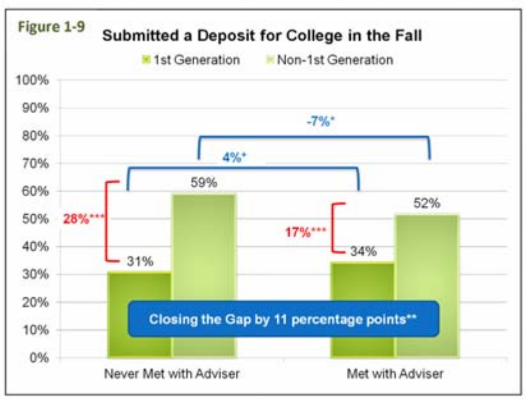
Figure 1-7



✓ The gap in intending to go to college in the fall is closed by 8 percentage points.



✓ The gap in having committed to attending college in the fall (as indicated by submitting a deposit to a college) is closed by 11 percentage points.



There are two ways to interpret these "Closing the Gap" findings. These analyses demonstrate that the odds of being prepared for college, applying to college, and being accepted to college increase more for first-generation students who have met with an NCAC adviser compared to non-first-generation students who have met with an adviser. These analyses also demonstrate that among first-generation college-going students their odds of being prepared for college, applying to college, and being accepted to college are greater for those who have met with an NCAC adviser compared to those who have not.

Photo Courtesy of Michigan State University College Advising Corps

NATIONAL COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS

Empowering Students to Succeed

THE MISSION

The National College Advising Corps aims to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college and underrepresented students who enter and complete higher education. By placing recent graduates of partner institutions — many of whom are themselves first-generation college students — as college advisers in under-served high schools, our program works in communities across the country to provide the advising and encouragement that many students need to navigate the college admissions process and secure financial aid.

Advisers work in schools full-time to help students plan their college searches, complete admissions and financial aid applications and enroll at schools that will serve them well.

Since its inception in 2005, the Advising Corps has served nearly 300,000 underserved students across the country. In school year 2012-2013, 334 advisers representing 18 institutions of higher education in 14 states will serve nearly 117,000 students across the country.

THE NEED

The Advising Corps meets a critical need. With guidance counselor caseloads reaching 500 students per counselor nationwide, our advisers work one-to-one with the students who most need them — helping each student search for an appropriate two- or four-year college, complete admissions and financial aid applications and take the final steps needed to complete his/her enrollment.

This help is crucial for students at underserved high schools, who are less likely than their more affluent counterparts to have friends or family members who have navigated the complicated world of college admissions and aid and can be called upon for advice. Because advisers are close in age and background to the students they serve, they can connect with students in ways that others often cannot.

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS 2012-2013:

State of Alaska
Brown University
Franklin & Marshall College
Michigan State University
New York University
Texas A&M University
Texas Christian University
Texas State University
Trinity University
University of California at Berkeley
University of Georgia
University of Illinois
University of Michigan
University of Missouri
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Texas at Austin
University of Virginia
University of Wyoming

The 2011-2012 National College Advising Corps in front of the US Capitol Building in Washington DC

NATIONAL COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS
200 North Greensboro Street • Suite C8 • Carrboro, NC • 27510
www.advisingcorps.org • T 919.843.8116 • F 919.843.0372

EVALUATION RESULTS

According to an evaluation of our program completed by Stanford University, led by Eric Bettinger, Ph.D., high schools that partner with the Advising Corps see an 8-12 percentage point increase in college-going rates versus control schools in the area. In both urban and rural schools this increase is as great as 14 percentage points. Further, upon introduction of an adviser, Advising Corps schools see an average increase of $1 million in scholarship support for their college-going students.

Specifically students served by the Advising Corps are:

- 85% more likely to apply to six or more institutions of higher education
- 25% more likely to file a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- 76% more likely to attend a financial aid workshop
- 45% more likely to take an SAT/ACT prep workshop
- 25% more likely to take a class for college credit
- 18% more likely to visit a college

Of greatest importance, students served by the Advising Corps are:

- **20% more likely to be accepted to college**
- **34% more likely to get accepted to a four-year (versus two-year) institution**
- **12% more likely to be accepted to more than one institution**
- **33% more likely to receive a federal grant for postsecondary study**

LEADERSHIP THROUGH SERVICE

The Advising Corps was modeled in the spirit of national service: Advisers serve two years as they work to determine their future graduate school or career plans. This allows us to attract passionate, dedicated young graduates. The Advising Corps is creating a new generation of active and engaged civic-minded leaders who hone their skills as they serve our country and our nation's public schools. Close in age and background to the students they serve, their primary message is, "I graduated from college. You can, too!"

Dr. Nicole Hurd (L), accepts the 2012 National Service Impact Award from Corporation for National and Community Service CEO Wendy Spencer.

AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM BASED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Launched in 2005 with $12 million in funding from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, with additional support from the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Advising Corps has served nearly 300,000 underserved students across the country since its inception. The Advising Corps is supported by the Social Innovation Fund.

NATIONAL COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS

www.advisingcorps.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact:

Nicole Farmer Hurd, Ph.D., Founder and Executive Director: nhurd@unc.edu

James P. Mulvey, Director of Development: jpmulvey@admissions.unc.edu

---

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Dr. Hurd.

I will now recognize that Mr. Travis Reindl for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF TRAVIS REINDL, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION CENTER FOR BEST PRACTICES

Mr. REINDL. Madam Chairwoman, Mr. Bishop, members of the subcommittee, good morning.

I am Travis Reindl, program director for postsecondary education at the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. I thank you for the opportunity to share a state-level perspective on increasing transparency and higher education, and I look forward to your questions.

States have an established track record when it comes to promoting transparency from their colleges and universities. And today, states face a combination of challenges that require even more transparency including a growing demand for a more educated workforce, significant and lasting fiscal constraints, even as revenues improve, and increasing enrollment by students from historically underrepresented and underserved populations.

Governors are leading the call for better information about postsecondary outcomes recognizing that students and their families and taxpayers need more and better information about how our colleges and universities are doing at getting students to and through college, outcomes for those students, and the return on states' and students' investments in their education.

In 2010, the National Governors Association launched Complete to Compete, an effort to improve how states measure and communicate the performance of their postsecondary institutions. That effort has produced metrics in two areas.

The first is college completion. NGA has partnered with Complete College America in an effort to improve and build on the graduation rate as a performance measure. The result is the common completion metrics.

These metrics cover one, student progress and this includes indicators in areas such as students taking remedial courses, course completion, credit accumulation, and retention; and two, student outcomes, which includes indicators such as the number of degrees awarded, graduation and transfer rates, and average time and credits to degree.

Today, 32 states are collecting and publicly reporting these metrics and making real changes in policy. For example, Connecticut has adopted legislation designed to overhaul and eventually end remedial education as we know it statewide.

The second area is efficiency and effectiveness. Governors are also interested in whether their state's colleges and universities are producing graduates that can get jobs in today's economy and participate in their communities and how efficient those institutions are in moving students to degrees and certificates.

As a result, NGA is developing metrics in four areas; meeting workforce needs, completion relative to enrollment, return on investment, and student learning.

States are currently working to adopt and use these metrics for public reporting and making policy decisions. I am pleased to report progress on both fronts. Public reporting is becoming more accessible and user-friendly. For example, a growing number of states including Arizona, Kentucky, and Washington are creating online interactive data dashboards that display state and campus level data in areas such as college readiness, student progress and success, research and economic development, and efficiency and innovation.

States are also using the data to shape policy. Colorado is developing performance contracts with its colleges and universities that are based in part on indicators of student outcomes and institutional efficiencies. Tennessee now bases its general fund appropriations to public colleges and universities on a range of progress, outcome, and efficiency measures. And Nevada's governor has proposed a move in that direction as well.

States experiences yielded several key lessons including, number one, focus on outcomes as well as inputs. States are focusing more on results when it comes to reporting postsecondary performance. As students and their families invest more in higher education, they are expecting more information on what kind of return they can expect from that investment. Federal data collection such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System or IPEDS should move in the same direction, perhaps drawing on the common completion metrics.

States' focus on outcomes is also one of several reasons why NGA does not support maintenance of effort requirements for participation in federal programs.

Two: less is more. States are taking this lesson to heart and are striving to build data dashboards and performance funding formulas that are simpler and clearer than their predecessors, which didn't last because they were too complicated.

Simpler and clearer should also be a goal in federal efforts. Specifically, there should be review of all existing federal dashboards and data tools for postsecondary education to determine whether and how they are being used and if there is unnecessary duplication.

Number three: craft policies for the long-term. As evidenced by NGA's work, reform doesn't happen overnight. Moreover, real sustained reform requires a long-lasting, stable, yet flexible framework to allow growth, exploration, and ongoing innovation. In this and other areas, NGA urges Congress to exercise legislative restraints and craft federal policies with an eye for the future.

In short, increasing transparency in higher education has been and continues to be a priority for states. I thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Reindl follows:]

Prepared Statement of Travis Reindl, Program Director, Postsecondary Education, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Hinojosa, members of the Subcommittee, good morning. I am Travis Reindl, program director for postsecondary education at the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. I thank you for the opportunity to share a state-level perspective on increasing transparency in higher education, and I look forward to your questions

1. The Need for Greater Transparency

States have an established track record when it comes to promoting transparency from their colleges and universities. More than three decades ago, Tennessee unveiled the first performance-based funding formula for its postsecondary institutions and in the years since every other state has engaged in efforts to increase accountability among its public colleges and universities.

Today, states face a combination of challenges related to postsecondary education that call for even more transparency and more use of the data states and institutions gather:

- Demand for a more educated workforce. The number of jobs requiring education after high school continues to rise in all states, and estimates show that our colleges and universities are not on track to meet expected labor market demand for educated workers. According to the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, the gap between the supply of workers with postsecondary credentials and available job openings requiring those credentials may be as wide as 3 million by 2018.[1]

• Significant and lasting fiscal constraints. State revenues are recovering to prerecession levels, but the recovery is uneven across states. Moreover, there are a number of urgent demands competing for limited state resources, including health care and K-12 education.[2] For colleges and universities, this may mean a slow and modest recovery of state investment.

• Changes in who goes to college. The demographic make-up of states is changing, which means changes in the college-going population. The students who are increasingly heading for our colleges and universities—low-income students, working adults, students of color—are the same types of students who have historically faced greater hurdles in getting to and through certificate and degree programs.[3] Identifying and overcoming these hurdles will be essential for states and their institutions to increase attainment and meet workforce needs.

Given these challenges, governors, students and their families, and taxpayers need more and better information about how our colleges and universities are doing at getting students to and through college, outcomes for students, and the return on states' and students' investments in their education. This information is critical for making informed choices about how and where to invest scarce resources and in tracking progress toward meeting workforce needs.

States are leading efforts to make higher education more transparent and more productive, and are learning important lessons along the way. The federal government can support these efforts, specifically by streamlining and coordinating regulations across federally funded programs to promote better accountability, transparency, and reduce redundancies and administrative costs.

2. Gubernatorial Leadership on Transparency

Governors have led the call for more transparency and more of a focus on outcomes in postsecondary education for years. A quarter century ago, former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander dedicated his year as chair of the National Governors Association (NGA) to an initiative called Time for Results, which raised awareness of the need for more and better data about colleges' and universities' performance. In the years that followed, states developed fact books and performance funding and budgeting policies, and the federal government enacted the Student Right to Know Act, which mandated the reporting of institutional graduation rates.

Now, in the face of rising economic demand and limited public resources, governors are once again leading the call for better information about postsecondary outcomes, including return on investment. Under the leadership of former West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin and former Washington Governor Chris Gregoire, NGA launched Complete to Compete, an effort to improve how states measure and communicate the performance of their postsecondary education institutions. The effort has focused on two types of measures:

Completion Metrics

States and the federal government have used the graduation rate for years as a measure of student outcomes, but the graduation rate doesn't tell the whole story about outcomes. It doesn't, for example, cover part-time or transfer students, who represent a significant share of total enrollment. It also does not address questions such as where students are encountering the greatest roadblocks on the way to graduation, or how long it is taking students to get certificates and degrees. Given the trends outlined above, these are increasingly important questions.

NGA partnered with Complete College America in an effort to answer those questions, and released the Common Completion Metrics in 2010.[4] The metrics fall into two groups:

Student Progress

• Remedial education: How many students end up in remedial courses? How many of them pass the remedial course and go on to pass a course for credit?

• Gatekeeper courses: How many students pass key first-year courses in subjects such as mathematics and English?

• Credit accumulation: How many students complete a full load of courses in their first year?

• Course completion: How many courses do students pass in relation to the number they attempt in a particular year?

• Retention: How many students continue their enrollment from the first semester to the second semester or from the first year to the second year?

Student Outcomes

• Degrees awarded: How many students complete certificates and degrees each year?

• Graduation rate: What percentage of students graduates within normal time (2 or 4 years) or extended time (3 or 6 years)?
• Transfer rate: What percentage of students successfully moves from two-year institutions to four-year institutions?
• Time and credits to degree: How long does it take for students to get certificates and degrees?

NGA and Complete College America recommend these metrics because they are backed by research on what helps—and hurts—students complete certificates or degrees. For example, we know that students who enroll in remedial classes are less than half as likely to get a certificate or degree.[5] Similarly, we know that students who don't take and finish a full load of courses in their first year are more likely to lose momentum and drop out of college.[6]

What are states doing with these metrics? Today, 32 states are collecting and publicly reporting the metrics through Complete College America's Alliance of States. For example, publishing data on remedial education has increased the pressure to do something about that issue and states are responding. Connecticut has adopted legislation designed to overhaul and eventually end remedial education statewide.[7]

Efficiency and Effectiveness Metrics

Completion represents just one part of the transparency picture. Governors are also interested in answering the "what" and the "how" of completion—whether their state's colleges and universities are producing graduates that can get jobs in today's economy and how efficient those institutions are in moving students to degrees and certificates.

As part of Complete to Compete, NGA also identified metrics designed to help states gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of postsecondary institutions and systems in four areas:[8]

• Meeting workforce needs: Are institutions meeting the state's need for an educated workforce? [Metrics: certificates and degrees awarded relative to the number of employed adults with a postsecondary credential; certificates and degrees awarded relative to the number of adults in the state with no postsecondary credential]
• Student output relative to input: How many students are graduating relative to the number enrolled? [Metric: certificate and degree completions per 100 students enrolled]
• Return on investment: What is the return on the state's and students' investment in terms of completed certificates and degrees? [Metric: certificate and degree completions per $100,000 of state appropriations and net tuition revenues]
• Quality: How can colleges and universities increase efficiency without sacrificing student learning? [Metrics: learning assessments, licensure/certification exam pass rates, job placement rates]

NGA has worked with and can point to a number of states that are taking significant steps toward increasing transparency, and more importantly, using data for making important policy decisions.

Data Dashboards

• Arizona. The Governor's Office of Education Innovation has produced the Arizona Ready Report Card, an interactive online report that shows state and campus-level progress toward goals in K-12 and postsecondary education and the workforce. Postsecondary and indicators include degrees awarded, transfers, cost of attendance, and credit accumulation.[9]
• Kentucky. The state's Council on Postsecondary Education has developed an interactive online dashboard that displays statewide and campus performance on indicators in four categories: college readiness, student success, research and economic development, and efficiency and innovation.[10]
• Washington: Using the Common Completion Metrics and other key indicators, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) has developed an interactive online dashboard that covers the state's six public universities and colleges. The dashboard provides statewide and campus-level data in three categories: enrollment, student progress, and degrees and graduates.[11]

Performance Contracts

• Colorado: The Colorado Department of Higher Education is developing binding contracts with its public colleges and universities and systems that are based on a range of performance metrics, including student outcomes and institutional efficiency.[12]

Performance Funding

• Tennessee: The state now allocates its general fund appropriations to public two-year and four-year institutions using performance metrics that include certificate and degree completions, transfers, success in remedial education, job placement, and degree completion relative to enrollment.[13]

- Nevada: The state is currently considering a complete overhaul of its postsecondary funding formula. If adopted, the new formula would allocate state general fund appropriations on outcomes: the majority on course completions and the remainder on a menu of other performance measures, including degree completion in priority areas and degree completion relative to enrollment.[14]

3. Lessons Learned

As in many areas, states have been the laboratory for new thinking when it comes to transparency in higher education. Their experiences yield several lessons that have implications for federal action, including:

- Focus on outcomes as well as inputs. States are focusing more on results when it comes to reporting postsecondary performance. As students and their families invest more in higher education, they are expecting more information on what kind of return they can expect from that investment. Inputs such as enrollments and revenue still matter, but they need to be accompanied by metrics on student success and efficiency.

Federal data collections such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) should move in the same direction, perhaps drawing on the Common Completion Metrics.

States' focus on outcomes is also one of several reasons why NGA does not support maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements for participation in federal programs. Demanding a fixed level of input (i.e. appropriations) without regard for outcomes runs counter to how states are increasingly looking at their higher education systems.

- Less is more. One of the reasons why many of the accountability efforts of the 1990s did not last is that they collapsed under their own weight. They had too many goals, too many measures, and policymakers and students were overwhelmed with data. States are taking this lesson to heart and are striving to build data dashboards and performance funding formulas that are simpler and clearer than their predecessors.

Simpler and clearer should be a goal for federal efforts as well. The upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act provides a prime opportunity for the Congress to review all of the existing federal dashboards, report cards, and data tools for postsecondary education (e.g. College Navigator, College Scorecard, United States Education Dashboard) to determine whether and how they are being used, and if there are opportunities for streamlining or consolidation.

Similarly, we encourage a thorough review of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), with the goal of identifying and eliminating surveys and survey items that are rarely used. This would provide needed relief for states and their colleges and universities.

- Craft policies for the long term. As evidenced by NGA's work, reform doesn't happen overnight. Moreover, real, sustained reform requires a long-lasting, stable, yet flexible framework to allow growth, exploration, and ongoing innovation. If Congress were to craft a solution for success based on today's knowledge, two things are likely to occur: (1) the federal policy will be outdated and obsolete before it's even enacted; or (2) the law will inhibit state creativity and problem solving to help students. NGA's work tells but a small story of the growing body of knowledge. In this and other areas, NGA urges Congress to exercise "legislative restraint" and craft federal policies with an eye for the future.

4. Conclusion

Increasing transparency in higher education has been and continues to be a priority for states. With leadership from governors and other policymakers, states have made more information about the performance of colleges and universities available to students, families, and taxpayers. They have learned important lessons along the way and are eager to share those lessons with the federal government as it seeks to improve the information provided to higher education's funders and consumers.

ENDNOTES

[1] Carnevale, Anthony, with Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl. Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018. Washington, D.C.: Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University, 2010.

[2] "Summary of Fiscal Year 2014 Proposed Executive Budgets," National Association of State Budget Officers, 23 March 2013. Accessed from: *http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/pdf/FY2014%20Proposed%20Budgets%20-%20Summary.pdf*

[3] Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates. Boulder, Colo.: Author, 2012.

[4] Reyna, Ryan. Common Completion Metrics. Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices: 2010.
[5] Complete College America. Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere. Washington, D.C.: Author, 2012.
[6] Complete College America. Time Is the Enemy of Graduation. Washington, D.C.: Author, 2011.
[7] Mangan, Katherine. "National Groups Call for Big Changes in Remedial Education," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 13 December 2012.
[8] Reindl, Travis and Ryan Reyna. From Information to Action: Revamping Higher Education Accountability Systems. Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2011.
[9] *http://arizonaready.com/content/*
[10] *http://dataportal.cpe.ky.gov/sadashboard/dashboard—master.swf*
[11] *http://www.ofm.wa.gov/hied/dashboard/index.html*
[12] *http://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/General/StrategicPlanning/MasterPlan2012/Master—Plan—Final.pdf*
[13] *http://www.state.tn.us/thec/Divisions/Fiscal/funding—formula/1-Outcomes%20Based%20Formula%20Narrative%20-%20for%20website.pdf*
[14] *http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/Initiatives/2013legislative/NSHE%20Formula%20Study.pdf*

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you all again very much.

I now recognize as the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Kline for 5 minutes.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Madam Chair for recognizing me for the hearing.

I want to thank the panel for being here today; really excellent testimony. We are grappling with a problem that has been perplexing us for a very, very long time.

And I want to start with Mr. Garrido because as I—you got both the Pell grant and the G.I. Bill to help you out, but you didn't know about that by going to the department's website or something like that. Correct? I mean that you—I think your testimony was you went personally and talked to advisors at different colleges.

Mr. GARRIDO. Yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. Is that right?

Mr. GARRIDO. Yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. And so I guess it is a little bit perplexing because we always talk about what information ought to be on these websites and how they ought to be user-friendly, but if you don't even know they are there, it doesn't help very much. It is a great website and really user-friendly. And so I think that is what your testimony is, right?

Mr. GARRIDO. Yes, sir, the VA—in all actuality, the VA just let me know that there was a form for me to submit to be able to get my benefits that I paid into.

When I got to Kaiser however, they were so versed in how to use and how to understand the system that they were able to help me, guide me, into the steps that I needed to take.

In other words, they gave me like a checklist and on that checklist, meaning my DD 214, anything that I needed to have, they gave me all of those things that I needed to be able to submit to be able to go through the process. But it was very difficult. If an individual was having to do this on their own, I don't think they can do it, honestly.

Mr. KLINE. All right, okay. Thank you. I was pretty sure that was your testimony. I just wanted to understand it. You didn't go to a terrific website, get all your answers, and then go make a decision.

Mr. GARRIDO. It wasn't just a one-stop, yes.

Mr. KLINE. You had to sort of wade through it the old-fashioned way.

Mr. GARRIDO. Correct.

Mr. KLINE. Okay, thank you very much.

Dr. Heller, one of the things that we grappled with here I am sure way before I ever came on the committee but certainly since I've been here is reporting requirements that institutions have. We had a witness testify here a couple or 2 or 3 years ago and he brought in a whole stack of three ring binders for just things that the college, that the institution had to do and so I am interested in your suggestions, your thoughts about how we might be helpful in scaling back some of these requirements, but not harming the information that students like Mr. Garrido need to make informed decisions.

Mr. HELLER. Congressman, I don't think we need more data about college and college admissions and financial aid. We have lots of data from the sources that all four of us have talked about. What we need for prospective students and their families is better information. And that is where, you know, the role of college counselors come in, high school counselors.

Dr. Hurd mentioned things like visiting colleges, getting a sense and Mr. Garrido mentioned that when he visited Keiser University he got a much better sense of what it was going to be like to be a student there.

So I am a firm believer that there is not more data that we need. I think that some of the data the department—and that the Department of Education collects through the IPEDS system could be improved.

We could have a conversation about that, but I certainly don't think we need any more data, and I don't think even though there are concerns about the burdensome requirements of the reporting, I think most colleges in this day and age with the data systems they have are able to report the kind of data that are necessary in IPEDS, that show up in the IPEDS college navigator and the net cost calculators and things like that without a lot of difficulty.

So I wouldn't recommend that we try to roll back on any of those data and those reporting requirements that we are talking about today. There may be other reporting requirements for colleges and universities that may be very different, but I think the ones we are talking about today are not frankly that burdensome on colleges.

Mr. KLINE. Okay. Thank you. I guess I would in my example of the witness who had the stack of three ring binders, it was all reporting requirements.

Mr. HELLER. Correct.

Mr. KLINE. But interesting, your perspective on this particular piece.

And then finally, I see my time is about to run out but I am curious, Mr. Reindl, how do states determine what process to use? How do they determine at what to put on these dashboards?

Mr. REINDL. Well, Chairman, we like to say in the governors association, "When you have seen one state, you have seen one state." There is always a bit of a respect for state culture but it has always started from what you have. One of the things that we have encouraged at NGA in working with states and governors have really picked up on this is to really take a look at what is and to look at how it has been used or when it has been used or where it has been used and if we add measures, we should be taking measures away.

So it is a one in, one out kind of a philosophy. We are still working on that and trying to make some progress there but it is taking whatever a state has and try to help them to balance that so that we are not getting to the binders that you were mentioning with Dr. Heller.

Thank you. I see my time is up, I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I now recognize Mr. Bishop, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you very much.

And thank you for the testimony. I think it was very, very good; very insightful, and very helpful.

I have three issues so I want to try to handle them quickly. I want to just pick up on Chairman Kline's question. I will address it to Dr. Heller and Mr. Reindl.

Are we currently collecting any information that is not particularly useful to either policymakers or students that we could do away with? Just real quick. Anything come to mind?

Mr. HELLER. Within this realm that we are talking about in this hearing, Congressman, no, we could have a discussion about whether it is important for colleges to have on the College Navigator their enrollments by gender for example overall in the university, but again, frankly, given the burden of those kinds of reporting requirements, I don't think that there is anything there that I would say we need to get rid of.

Mr. BISHOP. Okay.

Mr. Reindl?

Mr. REINDL. Mr. Bishop, I think governors look at this in difference between collection and reporting and I think Dr. Heller did a good job in describing the collection part. It is the reporting. There are things that we report that maybe aren't as valuable and governors are really focused on outcomes.

So it is taking the data and to Dr. Heller's point, turning it into information, combining the outcomes with what we spend, the inputs, and putting that on the table for taxpayers and students and families. So I think it is less the collection issue than the reporting issue.

Mr. BISHOP. And if I may then, if you could submit to the committee some things that you are currently reporting or that colleges are currently reporting that you, at least in the opinion of the governors, is not particularly useful.

Mr. REINDL. Certainly, certainly. From our experience, we can send in that for the record.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you.

Second issue, both Dr. Hurd and Dr. Heller, you talked about the concept of fit, which is I would imagine a particularly elusive concept and one that is intensely personal and it seems to me that the point that you are making particularly you, Dr. Hurd, with respect to fit, goes to the human element of the college selection process which in turn goes to the element of the college completion process.

I mean, one of the truisms of student retention issues if you want students to finish right, you have got to get them started right and one of the ways to get them started right is to make sure they pick the right school.

So what I want to pursue with both of you is the suggestion you are making, Dr. Heller, about some federal role in helping particularly low income schools afford a better college counseling program. So could you talk about it from the perspective of what is in your head, and then Dr. Hurd, what your actual experience is?

So Dr. Heller?

Mr. HELLER. Sure, Congressman Bishop, I know there is not a lot of support in Washington today for new federal initiatives——

Mr. BISHOP. You have you have noticed that? [Laughter.]

Mr. HELLER. Even up in Michigan we have noticed that.

Nevertheless, I think there is a very good and strong history of the federal government supporting local school districts through Title I programs for example.

And with respect to college counseling, I think that is another area where the federal government could step in to under-resourced schools that are being strangled through local funding, local district funding, state funding, and one of the easy things to cut out are things like guidance counseling because they are not being tested about that and school districts are obviously concerned with complying with state testing needs.

So I think this is a case where the federal government could step in, could help out these under-resourced schools to ensure that these schools and the students in them have an opportunity to get the kind of high touch need to figure out for students, help them decide what is the right fit in a postsecondary institution.

Mr. BISHOP. But what you are talking about is some kind of either formula-driven or competitive grant program that would place college counselors in high need school districts?

Mr. HELLER. Correct and I think most effectively if it is partnered with the states and local districts.

Mr. BISHOP. All right.

Dr. Hurd?

Ms. HURD. And so that is actually what we do. So we have been fortunate enough to have federal funding and I am happy to tell you that not only is our federal funding being used wisely, it is actually matched 3:1.

So we can get the school districts, we can get the private sector, and we can get our higher education institutions to coinvest on our federal dollars to make sure that we put really well-trained, really well-advised counselors by our guidance counselors and make sure that every young person has a pathway to a postsecondary plan.

Mr. BISHOP. And the federal funding you receive is through AmeriCorps?

Ms. HURD. It is through AmeriCorps and it is through the Social Innovation Fund, and it is also through Challenge Grant money through the Department of Ed, so we have competed for every dollar that we have got and what we have been matching that.

Mr. BISHOP. And the match is from what source?

Ms. HURD. So the match has been a couple places—so part of this is going back to the question about higher education institutions. I actually think it is higher education institutions that have to get in the game.

They have to be part of the solution. So they actually match our dollars by going out and raising money with their donors. So corporations, foundations, alumns. Then the National Office also raises dollars.

So like I said, for every dollar, we are matching at the National Office, and the higher ed institution is matching as well. So I think there is an incredible way to leverage these dollars and make sure again when things—again, I would like to congratulate you all for doing this especially the funding, that is evidenced-based, it is data-driven, and we have to show impact.

And again, I think we can do that in a way that honors our students and allows us to have capacities in schools where frankly our low income students—I think you saw the statistics—out of 146 most selective schools in this country, 3 percent of those students are from the lowest quarter economically; 3 percent.

Mr. BISHOP. Okay. My time is up. Thank you very much. That is a fabulous program. Thank you very much.

Chairwoman FOXX. Mr. Walberg, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady.

And Dr. Heller, it is good to see Michigan State here and appreciate the work that you do. In the coming weeks they will be a lot of high school students in Michigan that will be looking at Michigan State and many this coming the fall will be matriculating into the school.

We have talked about some generalities, but if you could give us some specifics on how many avenues the average Michigan student and parent have to access information about a college or university and also its associated costs.

Mr. HELLER. Well, I described a number of those in my testimony. Depending upon what kind of high school they are in, they may have access to good college counselors. In other high schools, they might not have any kind of college counseling.

Dr. Hurd has talked about some of the ratios, the student-counselor ratios around the country and she singled out Michigan as one where it has a very high ratio. They can go to college websites. They can go to the Department of Education. They can look for view books.

So as I said earlier, there's lots of sources of data out there. The problem is that we don't have better information for the students and also giving them better information at the right time, which is early enough in the college search that they can make informed decisions about what they need to do themselves, what they need to do to prepare themselves both academically as well as financially.

If a student starts a looking at college at the end of the junior year because they have got to decide what they are going to do after they graduate in 12 months, it is too late for a lot of students. So we have to have a focused effort to get better information not just data into students' hands earlier in their careers; in the earliest years of high school or even middle school.

That is the reason why GEAR-UP for example starts working with students in middle school so they can start to work with students to prepare academically and they have plenty of time to do that before graduating from high school.

Mr. WALBERG. Is there any information out there—speaking of reports and studies—is there any information showing any difference between students that come from academic experiences that were highly associated with choice schools, in the sense that they made their own choice. The parents worked together, they picked schools of choice, academies, charter schools, whatever else in comparison to those who just a general followed the local option?

Mr. HELLER. With respect to where they attend college, Congressman?

Mr. WALBERG. Well, no, specifically—yes. Ultimately the—where they attend college, the success in attending college, the good choices that are made, their preparation, having SAT, ACT tests taken.

Just from the—I guess what I am getting at is if they have throughout the course of their academic career have made significant choices already, they have taken responsibility for making those choices because it has been afforded to them regardless of economic strata, are there any studies out there showing a difference in ultimate outcome?

Mr. HELLER. Not that I am aware of and certainly not any studies that do a good job of controlling for background characteristics and what we call selectivity bias in terms of differences in the parental background, parental aspirations, and the kind of push that parents give.

So I haven't seen any studies that look at the difference between students who participate in choice programs like we have in Michigan in K-12 schools versus those who don't.

Mr. WALBERG. And I guess I would ask that of any others if you have seen that.

Dr. Hurd, in relationship you are pushing for guidance counselors, counselors, peer counselors that are going to be there but do you see any—are there any reports showing that we ought to be, as you say, starting out earlier?

Ms. HURD. So I think the earlier the better in terms of giving them knowledge and giving them access to knowledge. I also I think all of our public schools—and we are in Michigan. We actually have a lot of advisors in Michigan. Michigan State is a chapter as well as the University of Michigan.

I think what we are seeing is the earlier they get the information the more they understand the choices, the more they understand the options because there are some great options in Michigan. They do have great high, you know, high graduation rates where financial aid will go a long way.

I will also just say in terms of charter schools and others we actually have a national partnership with KIPP, so I think it is not just one public school or one sector that is actually struggling with this.

I think all of us are trying to make sure that our students get the most and the best information as early as they can so that they and their families can navigate this together, but it is a human capital issue.

I think they have to have the not just information, but they have to have somebody help them navigate that path to college. And so whether you are in a charter school, a public school, a big school, or a small school, it is about making right decisions early and making sure that somebody helps navigate that path with you.

Mr. WALBERG. Part of that navigation, does that include saying to a student, "Not only is this school not the best for you, but there is another approach to education you ought to consider; proprietary, vocational——

Ms. HURD. Absolutely, absolutely. So I think it is about postsecondary opportunity that every young person, and that is why I use the words match and fit very intentionally.

You know, in our program it is any postsecondary plan is a success, but they need to have a plan. So whether it is military, vocational school, 2-year, 4-year. This isn't about getting everybody to school X, this is about getting everybody to a place where they have a meaningful credential that has been valued well, that has been paid for affordably, and gets them to where they get to go so they can make their American dream happen.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Walberg.

Ms. Bonamici, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Foxx.

Thank you so much to the witnesses for this important hearing. I really appreciate all of the testimony.

Dr. Heller, I especially appreciated in your testimony where you raised some concern that I share about the problems of valuing a college based on the wages of an individual upon graduation.

I would be concerned for example of what if a college graduates a lot of students who go into nonprofit work or the Peace Corps or some other AmeriCorps program for example.

So I share that concern. I also applaud those of you who are talking about getting this information, important information, to students early not just early in the college search, but early in their education.

There is a school district in my congressional district down in Oregon that actually gives all eighth-grade students, they explore all 10th grade students the plan and all of 11th grade students the ACT and it is resulted in a lot of students actually thinking well maybe I could go to college because of they are already in that process.

Dr. Reindl, you talked about better ways that we can measure outcomes and compare different colleges. We actually have a program in Oregon called ASPIRE trying to fill those gaps because we also don't have enough college counselors to meet that recommended ratio. And ASPIRE is Access to Student Assistance Programs in Reach of Everyone with thousands, about 15,000 now trained volunteers.

It is available to any student regardless of income, and students really get that one-on-one mentoring throughout the school year. It has been quite successful and has expanded with some federal grant help but a lot of volunteers throughout our state.

There is also some great nonprofit work going on in this area. We talked about what the states are doing. There is The Education Conservancy, is a nonprofit organization that just did a pretty thorough joint research project with consumers union called Information Matters and they did a lot of student surveys including non-traditional students, focus groups, polls, and interviews with experts.

They have five recommendations including simplifying the research and admissions process, which they found of course too complex and confusing. But one of their recommendations is to minimize the information overload by having a more standardized framework.

So I wondered if the people on the panel and I especially want to hear from Mr. Garrido, what do you think should be in that standardized framework? And following up on what Mr. Bishop asked, what information do students really need and are we giving them information that they might not find useful?

Dr. Heller? You are not here for Michigan State, but you have a Spartan tie on, would you like to——

Mr. HELLER. Sure, sure. Let me just first say, Congresswoman, that I am glad it you raise the issue about measuring college outcomes based on wages and challenges in doing that.

The best example that I give people is that I can have two students graduating from my teacher education program. One could be a—they could both be secondary science teachers. One could take a job in one district and have a wage of $35,000 in her first year. Another one maybe in another district in Michigan and be making $60,000 in her first year.

Now you tell me whether those are—should be looked at as two very different kinds of outcomes. The wage data alone would say yes, but I would argue those are very similar kinds of positions.

As far as standardizing, having a template of information, I think that is a move in the right direction and I think that the work of The Education Conservancy out of Portland is doing is doing a great job on trying to nudge the institutions on standardizing information just as we are trying to do with the financial aid letters and having a template about that.

It would be nice if we could standardize information about admissions and the kind of fit we have been talking about. It is a little bit more of a challenge because college is obviously very complex. You have got lots of different majors. You have got lots of different students between 18-year-olds versus adult students.

So I think it is a little bit more of a challenge to come up with a workable template that all colleges could fit into regarding admissions as we are trying to do on the financial aid side.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, and Mr. Garrido, what would be most important in that standardized form for you?

Mr. GARRIDO. Maybe the way an individual like myself would try to get all the information. When I went looking for this information, it was not readily available.

I had to not only ask friends, ask former teachers. It is—for a person like myself, it was difficult, however, there are some people that can, you know, have the access but in my case, I did not have that access. It was very difficult for me to find any information on that.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you.

Dr. Hurd?

Ms. HURD. You know, it has been the Wild West out there. I have no doubt that he had a hard time. There is just too much information out there. So I do think there are very consistent things, and you all have already moved on some of them in terms of graduation rates—in terms of what is in that standard award letter, you can give those categories very simply to somebody so they can make decisions.

My biggest issue is that they are not comparing apples to apples so things like the College Board has this a new site called Big Future that is a huge step in the right direction and the Chronicle of Higher Ed just gave a college reality checked website this week that shows apples to apples. I think part of the problem is when you are apples to oranges, you start making unwise choices.

Ms. BONAMICI. And I see my time has expired. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you.

Mrs. Brooks, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BROOKS. Thank you. I am a former senior administrator at our state's community college, Ivy Tech Community College, and also am the mother of a very recent college graduate and one of the things that I know we have struggled with at not only our college but I think colleges often struggle with this and I am curious is this whole conversation around return on investment and whether or not young people and returning adults, adults returning to school, really have a very good grasp on what their career path might be, what type of majors would lead to actual jobs versus just entering into programs of study that they just are interested in.

And so I am curious and I guess I will start with the governors association, what kind of metrics and things we ought to be—or and information we ought to be providing students at all ages about how that field of study will actually lead to a career and while I appreciate that it is not all about salary, I think it is about needs in this country and what kind of job openings there are going to be and how are we doing a good job in higher ed or what do we need to be doing to do a far better job educating young people and older people on what is really a very good career path for the future.

Mr. REINDL. That is an excellent question, Congresswoman, thank you. We have to crawl before we walk and I think that from a governor's perspective, we need to look at, are students employed after they graduate and is that employment in a family supporting salary or wage. I think that it is very easy to get very granular quickly and saying does X major lead to Y job.

We don't live in a planned economy and I don't think we will be so I think that the question for governors is are we educating people that can in fact be employed and that are employed in a way that allows them to be contributors to their communities, to the tax basis and be a little bit less granular and specific about does a particular major lead to a particular job.

Because, and I know where my major ended up and my parents are surprised. So I think that is a case study.

Mrs. BROOKS. Actually, if you would just like to share, Dr. Heller, I would be curious what your thoughts are because—but what could we put in these college—you know, in these guides and in all of the different systems that are out there that can help answer that question.

Mr. HELLER. You know, we are certainly—our economy is certainly passed this stage, Congresswoman, where people take a first job either out of high school, out of college and stick in that job or with that employer for the rest of their careers.

People now are expected to hold a large number of jobs over the course of their careers and in all of those jobs they have to have the ability to learn new skills, learn new things whether it is on the job or through additional training.

So focusing only on the kinds of wages that people earn coming out of school very quickly or very soon after they have graduated from college I think can provide a lot of misleading information. If anything, you want to know where somebody is 5, 10, 15, even 20 years down the road with their career.

Mr. Reindl gave the example where if you looked at what he is doing today, and the same would certainly be true with me, it would necessarily match up with what I did as an undergraduate. So I think that is the challenge and that is the difficulty with trying to map specific careers to specific majors outside of those vocational programs that are very clearly and targeted at specific locations.

So a lot of the Ivy Tech programs for example that are training people for specific careers but even in those cases, we see people who may do that career for 5, 10 years, and then switch at some point in the future. So that is the biggest challenge we have in trying to do this mapping that Mr. Reindl is talking about.

Mrs. BROOKS. And I guess I would ask Mr. Garrido, you chose criminal justice and I have been involved in criminal justice system actually most of my career until Ivy Tech. Were there certain things that you looked at in any of the tools that you looked at or was it the advising that helped lead you towards the criminal justice major?

And how are the job prospects looking?

Mr. GARRIDO. In my situation, seeing as how I was over 30 years old and when I was a child in, you know, your middle school and high school I was, I want to be that or I have ambitions to be a firefighter or, you know, role model in the community. I joined the service.

Mrs. BROOKS. And thank you for your service.

Mr. GARRIDO. Thank you. Unfortunately, I was hurt and if not for me, for myself being hurt, I would still be in the service. Now, I had to get into something that I can relate to in the service and in the civilian world, so I can contribute.

I chose criminal justice because it was so close to the field that I can relate to. In my age, I wasn't able to have people, you know, you should be a lawyer or you should be a consultant. I didn't have that, you know, an opportunity.

So by me choosing a vocational school, that was able to teach me or to streamline that process was awesome in my—I am sorry for the word, but, you know——

[Laughter.]

Mrs. BROOKS. Well, thank you and thanks. I will think you make a terrific firefighter someday or public servant. Thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Mrs. Davis, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I appreciate you all being here.

Dr. Hurd, I wanted to talk to you a little bit more about the Stanford study. I think you mentioned it and in that case they found that students who ordinarily would probably not apply to what they call Peer Colleges, high esteem colleges perhaps that when they have more information they are more likely to apply and that more information is basically the fact that over the course of their college education that their costs would not be as dramatic as perhaps they might have thought.

Ms. HURD. That is right.

Mrs. DAVIS. And so with that kind of information and I think there has been a follow-up study as well, why aren't—is there a better way then to get out that information for students? And clearly, it has to be done much earlier? There are programs—I think someone mentioned STRIVE, I know AVID as a program that really does a good job of integrating the college experience with the curriculum so that it is, you know, it is not something that comes after.

Ms. HURD. Right.

Mrs. DAVIS. What is it within that—I mean, if the Stanford study is actually an important one in terms of learning, what is missing in kids knowledge about what their options are? Why aren't we doing more than that?

Ms. HURD. Well, so, I think you are hitting on something really important which is that information matters. So graduation rates matter. That net income matters because what we are talking about is low income students that frankly they and their parents have sticker shock and they think I can't go to school X for $40,000 or $50,000 a year when they realize that they might be going to school X for nothing or they might be going to school X actually for $5,000 or $10,000 a year.

So part of it is just at that lack of information and because like I said that some of the measures you all have made it to make these things more standard so that we can compare apples to apples it is becoming more transparent. It happens more.

I do think we have a human capital challenge. So again, I think this is why I am so honored to work with the recent graduates I work with but frankly in this space, we have had a lot of cohort programs, so 15 kids get served but the other 500 in the senior class don't get served.

And we have had a lot of, you know, if you have a GPA of 3, you know, 3.0 and higher you might get served or if you have a GPA of 3.5 or higher you might get served. I think we need to get to a place where every student counts and every student is given this information.

And so again, I think we have had a situation where we have had just cherry picking frankly; certain school districts, certain populations, certain numbers of kids when every young person, every citizen deserves to have the information.

I also think one of the barriers frankly is that again, families when they have that sticker shock they don't make those choices as wisely as they could, and again if you look at retention rates—so this is another thing that is important about that study.

If they go to those highly selective schools, their chances of actually graduating go up as well.

Mrs. DAVIS. They are higher, right.

Ms. HURD. So it is not just about picking the right school because it is the right match. It is about retaining and having a meaningful credential and I do think this is a pressure point on our higher education institutions to actually make sure that when they—that they honor the investment. When they take a young person, they should make sure that they graduate.

Mrs. DAVIS. We had a hearing earlier and I know one of the—I think the entire panel in many ways was suggesting actually to all of us who were looking for a federal role in this, is there one? We are suggesting that, well, we don't really know very much yet and so you don't want to act on, you know, information that perhaps is not really accurate.

But on the other hand, when it comes to retention and certainly what you are suggesting is we do know that in many cases they—there is a—the schools that students may shy away from may be more inclined to be more rigorous in supporting the outcomes. And so I think this is—we do know that—what is it that we don't know actually?

Ms. HURD. Well, and again, I think others—just real quickly—I said this statistic before because it keeps me up at night, frankly. So if you take our 146 more selective institutions, many of them are in your states, and you look at who is going, the bottom, you know, the bottom quarter—there is only 3 percent of those kids that are low income. So we have got a huge gap.

And so I think part of this again is what we don't know is that—or what we do know is why are they not going? It is because we are not actively recruiting them. We are not telling them what is possible and I do think higher ed has to get in the game.

So again, I think of the 18 universities that I work with are all selective institutions and they are not recruiting for just their own institution, they are recruiting for all forms of higher ed, but to have a Michigan State or a UNC Chapel Hill or a Cal Berkeley say we care so much about every student that we are going to put our recent graduate in there and make sure that every person has a graduation rate in front of them, every student has a financial aid package in front of them, is an incredibly powerful thing and I think the federal government could be huge in making sure that that kind of national service frankly and that kind of transparency is presented to every single one of our students.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes. Thank you very much.

Anybody else want to quickly and the two seconds we have left weigh in on that? No? Okay, thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you.

Mr. Thompson, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Thanks to the panel.

Mr. Garrido, thank you for your service.

When—a little bit different—I want to back up a little bit to post-discharge. When you were on active duty, did the Department of Defense in terms of that transition help at all or during your active duty service in terms of providing information on access to education whether it is online education or anything like that or how well did that information get pushed out if it got pushed out at all to those of you in the front lines?

Mr. GARRIDO. What they had it was a program called the Navy College Online and basically for instance when you do like a C school or an A school, depending on what type of course title it had, it was able to be then taken into a, like a educational standpoint.

In other words, you could take it as a credit for let's say math or science credit. Depending on what classes you took and what classes were available for you to be able to take as like a—for instance some of my higher training was chemical, biological. We had detaining, that type of stuff. So in the civilian sector, it is not really a acknowledged title——

Mr. THOMPSON. That was kind of my follow-up question. How well did the training that you did translate into the academic setting? I think that is something we could—that is a challenge to our universities, our career and technical education centers to honor our veterans by doing a better job of that.

Did—in your search, you know, once you were doing the online search, you were looking for resources for a school and the one you picked, in that one or others, did you see information that, you know, kind of was connected to that, that kind of provided answers of, you know, if you are a returning veteran you got—maybe you had, took some courses that were translated into semester hours or credit hours but also did you see anything where there were colleges that recognized and somehow would provide recognition of your training and experience?

Mr. GARRIDO. I know for a fact Kaiser does that. Part of my checklist was to bring up my SMART Transcript and then they were able to document to see what was able to be taken and used so I would have that much less time in the academic, you know, in the training environment to get me out that much quicker out into the field.

Mr. THOMPSON. To give you a head start.

Mr. GARRIDO. Correct.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thanks.

Mr. HELLER. Congressman, if I may, back when I was at Penn State in your district, I did a study funded by the National Science Foundation that we were looking at veterans who were transitioning into postsecondary education and the kind of information they received and we spoke to veterans on I think six campuses around the country and we heard a very common message from all of them.

They all said that they wished they had more information about their postsecondary options earlier in their military careers. Most of them received the information only when they were separating when they said they were absolutely swamped with everything from information about health benefits to education to housing, et cetera.

And they are reflected back and said they wish they had better information earlier in their military careers so they would know the kind of training that they were signing up for in the military and how that would translate to later credits in college. So they all wanted more information at earlier.

Mr. THOMPSON. Very good, thank you.

Dr. Hurd, you mentioned a phrase that is near and dear to me, I talk about a lot, and that is financial literacy. Now how would—what would—for you, what would be your definition of full financial literacy for perspective students and their parents? And then a follow up to that, in your opinion, what is the optimal time to begin that process?

Ms. HURD. Thank you for the question. Early. We are talking sixth, you know, seventh, eighth grade. Some of our advisors actually play this game, they call it the game of life and everybody gets an envelope and everybody has a different career and you start paying rent and you start paying back your loans and you start—and then all of a sudden, people start running out of money and it is ah-ha moment. And if we did that in 12th grade or frankly if we do that in college or we do that after college, that is when we get into the credit card situation we are in right now, that is when we get into all sorts of things.

So I would say middle school is when financial literacy really needs to kick in, and I do think the difference between a loan and grant—it might be basic to everybody in this room—it is not basic to our students.

You know the difference between like I said, a net price and what the sticker price is, huge difference. Again, there are some amazing institutions in Pennsylvania, a lot of our students could go there for a lot less than what is on the website or what is in a college guide book.

So, I mean, I do think there are some very basic things like I said in my testimony, we have people putting their tuition on credit cards because they feel like a government loan is a hand out, because they feel like they don't want to do this, they don't want to do that, and so again, I think loan, grant, scholarship, net price versus what the sticker price is—there are just some very basic things in terms of financial literacy that would be game changers for our families.

Mr. THOMPSON. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Chairwoman.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

Mrs. McCarthy, your recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you.

And thank you for—I am sorry I missed all the testimony. I had—we both—all of us probably all have two committees and we have to go running between the two of them.

Dr. Hurd, I want to follow up on, you know, what—some of the things that I have read about the program on sending the college graduates to be placed in high schools as peer advisors. What is the average stay of the students in the schools that they're placed?

Ms. HURD. So, we place our recent college graduates in school for 2 years and then after their 2 years, they are replaced by another member. So we are there for the long haul, but their term of service is 2 years. We actually track them to see what happens to them afterwards and I am happy to report a lot of them are going to education schools. They are going to places like Dr. Heller's school. A lot of them are going into public service. I was actually this morning with our divisor in TC Williams Alexandria who is off to Syracuse to do an MPA. She wants to staff you all someday. So some of them see as a policy issue, some of them say they want to be practitioners, but we are creating new generation of leaders friendly by having them go into these public schools for 2 years.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. And how is the relationship between the students that are coming into the schools and the counselor that might already be there?

Ms. HURD. Yes, so, because they are recent graduates and they are there full-time, they integrate into the school very well. So frankly, if they were current students or if they were kind of roadrunners coming back and forth I think we would have some issues, but they are there full time. So they are there from 7 in the morning until 5 at night. They are there for football games. They are there for this and that. And as I said before, our guidance counselor/student ratio is so horrific in this country, our guidance counselors are actually welcoming them with open arms.

And I will tell you they see them as this next generation of guidance counselors so they actually are writing their rec letters to education schools and other things.

The thing that also gets me really excited is frankly we have not—and Dr. Heller can talk about this—we have not always educated our guidance counselors very well. So we see a lot of guidance counselors who want to come back to us for training. They want to come on our summer training. We do not teach college advising and financial aid in our education schools. And frankly, we don't need to just teach the guidance counselors, we need to teach the teachers, and we need to teach the principles because the whole school has to believe in a college going culture, not just the guidance counselor.

So I do think part of it is the lack of education that they are getting in the professional training on some of these issues which I know Dr. Heller and others are trying to remedy, but that is historically been a problem with a guidance counselor opens up their arms and says thank you so much, I didn't know all of these things that you know.

And our training is so great because our universities are doing this—I should just clarify—it is our financial aid people, our admissions people who are taking the time to give these advisors 6 weeks of really thorough training.

And one of the things I have to ask you to look at is our high schools are drowning in this information, why aren't we asking our universities, our admissions and financial aid professionals and to help so this is a seamless pipeline that helps everybody and not this completely siloed system we are in right now.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. I have a very strong opinions on some of our teaching colleges and how we are actually teaching our teachers to be teachers. I think that needs to be looked at. A lot of the states are looking at that but I think that something that should be looked into even deeper.

Mr. Garrido, tell me how you chose the school that you ended up going to.

Mr. GARRIDO. I—my other—my better half, she has a Bachelor's in Biology, an Associates in Psychology, a Bachelor's in Nursing, and now she is going for a nurse practitioner. She was a high school teacher and when I came back from the service, she was a high school teacher for 3 years.

The guidance counselor like they have been you know, testifying about, my other half was the activities type—the ones for the Grad Nines—the, you know, all the fun stuff in high school that you always want to have the memory, the proms, well, my—Jackie had a really close relationship with her students.

So she was able to talk to all these recruiters and these people who are coming on campuses and she was able to gauge an angle to see which student would best work out with what school. She was able to do that for me and I ended up Kaiser University.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. All right. And as far as the transition coming from military life going into——

Mr. GARRIDO. Criminal justice.

Mrs. MCCARTHY [continuing]. University setting, how did the school work with you to make that transition? Because from what I have spoken to, some of these colleges that are certainly reaching out to our veterans coming home to give them the education that they are looking for. A lot of those military people had a very hard time and it is almost a new world I guess for the universities because so many are coming back almost like after World War II and they have had to come up with programs. So was that transition good for you?

Mr. GARRIDO. Being a part of the service I am used to being in a tight structure that you wake up in the morning. At 6.30, you are going to PT. At 9 o'clock, you are going to muster. At 10 o'clock you are going to do this. You know, getting out of the service and just all of a sudden you are free, doesn't help.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. No. I could imagine.

Mr. GARRIDO. It is very difficult, and my situation was extremely difficult to be able to find the resources add that I needed to be able to continue. If it wasn't for my support system, I don't think I would have been able to make it.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Heller, did you want to add anything to that?

Mr. HELLER. No. Just to add to what Dr. Hurd said, you know, guidance counselors particularly in schools that serve predominately low income populations, first-generation populations. They spend most of their time on what they will tell you is STD, and that is not sexually transmitted diseases, it is scheduling, testing, and discipline.

And they spend so much time on that they don't have the time to work with the students in their school who may express an interest in going to college. So that is why the supplemental work that people and Dr. Hurd's program can do are welcomed into these schools generally with open arms because the counselors recognize that they just don't have the time to do that because they have their hands full with other things.

Mrs. McCarthy. Thank you. My time is up.

I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you. I want to thank all of the members for being so good on their questions and staying on time today. Everybody has done a great job. So thanks for recognizing that.

I am now going to recognize myself for 5 minutes.

I am very impressed that all of you are talking about outcomes and information versus data. I think you all have either explicitly said that or implicit—or implied it.

Dr. Heller, if you had to pick five pieces of information that the federal government should collect and ensure it is provided to students, what would they be and why?

Mr. Heller. Oh boy, that is a good question. I will start with net price data. I think net price data is critical as the other witnesses have said as well. So and also net price data for example by family income. So not just an average net price, but if you are in this income bracket, here is what the average net price is at our institution.

The second thing that would be information about the kinds of admissions criteria that make a difference for that institution. So for example, how heavily are things like test scores weighed versus high school grades; AP classes, things like that.

Certainly, graduation rates is critical and this is an area as I mentioned earlier, we have lots of data but we don't have the right data about graduation rates because right now we are only tracking students who start in one school and complete in that school.

And with over half of all students today attending more than one institution, we need to have some kind of way of tracking students who cross institutions because for example, if a student starts at Michigan State and spends 2 years there and then transfers somewhere else, that is not going to show as a completion to us even though they may go elsewhere and complete their bachelor's degree at a school down the street in 2 more years. So we need better data that tracks students across institutions.

That is three and I will let anybody else chime in on the other two that they would like to add.

Chairwoman Foxx. Mr. Reindl, do you want to add to that?

Mr. Reindl. Well, I think that from the governor's perspective it is really important and you want to look at who is coming and that is age, race, income. It is just essential especially for working adults like Mr. Garrido. We need to know how many of them are participating and then number two, remediation. That is the ticket out for too many students. And it is a national disgrace that we were not being transparent about that until governors came together and said no, we are going to be transparent about that.

It is to Dr. Heller's point, completion. Again, age, race, income. If I were a working adult, I would like to know how good that college does at getting people like me to graduation. How do we pay for it? I think Dr. Heller touched on that very nicely.

Net and debt—this is what I would say—you know, net tuition—net price as well as the indebtedness and then the return. It is essential to know if I am paying this tuition, what is my likelihood of being employed somehow somewhere and how much—how many people are being helped by my tuition and by the money that states pay. So it is coming, going, and paying.

Chairwoman FOXX. Coming, going, and paying. Okay. Great.

Dr. Hurd, do you have anything to add to that?

Ms. HURD. They have done a beautiful job covering it.

Chairwoman FOXX. Right. Thank you very much.

Mr. Reindl, would you talk a little bit more about how the information that we are talking about gets presented? Are there some suggestions, are there some states that have done a wonderful job of presenting the information so that we could look at those as models?

Mr. REINDL. Certainly, Chairwoman Foxx. And in my testimony, I point to three states; Kentucky, Washington State, and Arizona. They have developed interactive dashboards. You go on the web. You are able to pull down—it is a small number of measures so that you are not overwhelmed—you can tell how many students graduated from X University or College that year or look at it statewide or look at how many students ended up in remedial classes at the community colleges in the state or at a specific college.

So those three states—and there are others—but those three states in particular make it easy for a consumer to just go, push the button that you want, and look at it either across the state if I am a legislator or just a taxpayer or at a particular campus.

If I am that working adults and I want to know, how many people like me end up in remedial education so I think those are three examples of states that have done some good work in that.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much.

I want to thank the panel again for taking time to testify before the subcommittee today. I think again it has been a very good hearing. I think the questions were well asked and I think you all have done a great job.

Mr. Bishop, do you have any closing remarks you would like to make?

Mr. BISHOP. Other than to thank the panel both for their testimony and also for the work that they do and to congratulate Mr. Garrido on what I am sure is going to be a great career. So thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Well I would like to make a couple of observations based on the comments that I have heard today. I appreciate the emphasis, Dr. Hurd, that you have put on evidence-based and data-driven results. I am going to submit some questions to you after today's hearing that I didn't want to try to—I knew you wouldn't probably have the answers at your ready and so I am going to ask you some questions about that.

In reading your testimony, Dr. Heller, I have noted our talking about traditional versus nontraditional and I have challenged other panels that we have had. When you are talking about 70 percent of students going to community colleges and proprietary schools, that is what I believe is the total in your testimony, the term traditional doesn't mean anything anymore.

Certainly if—I can't remember the exact amount but the number of students in 4-year schools that are between ages 18 and 24 is something like 14 percent now or at least that is making up 14 percent of our college going population. So I am challenging people to come up with a better title than traditional-nontraditional because the nontraditional have become the traditional or they are certainly the majority.

I am again, intrigued by the emphasis that all of you have put on the word information as opposed to data. I think that is very, very important that we pay attention to those and I appreciate that a lot.

Again, the emphasis on outcomes. Many, many years ago I thought we were going to get to that point. I have been around for a long time. I have been involved with Southern Association, accreditations, and been railing against inputs for a long time and saying when are we going to get to where we talk about outcomes. And so I appreciate very much the emphasis, Mr. Reindl, that you say that the governors are putting on this and I think it is really, really important that we do that.

I don't have a concern about people choosing to go to school closer to their homes or going to community colleges to begin with. That does not—or proprietary schools—that doesn't seem to bother me but it does seem to bother some people that we are not—that folks are doing that.

There is an implication that that is not as good as going a long distance to some school. You know, frankly, I think it is a smart decision on the part of a lot of people to do that.

When we talk about the enormous debt that many students take on, maybe these students are pretty smart and their parents and they are saying we are not going to take on the debt because they have looked at the outcomes and they have seen that it isn't necessary to get a degree from an Ivy League school to do well outside—after you get out of college.

And so I think that that is very good. I think most, or a lot of my colleagues think the wisdom of the world is out there in flyover country and so we are very keen on that.

I did note a couple people mentioned up here the issue of personal responsibility, and while I believe that if we spend hardworking taxpayer dollars, we deserve to get good outcomes for that, there is something about personal responsibility that I think is getting lost in our country and it concerns me a great deal.

It is as though the government has an answer for everything and I think that in some cases we diminished the emphasis on personal responsibility for people and that we expect people to be spoon-fed in some way.

So there are responsibilities. However, again, I think there has to be a balance. If we are going to pay for something, either at the local, state, or federal level, then we ought to be getting value for where that money is being spent.

So I appreciate again all of the testimony that we have had. I do think this will be useful to us as we look to the reauthorization of the higher ed bill, as we look to other issues that we are dealing with on this subcommittee and on the larger committee.

So I want to thank you all again for being here.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for being here today.

There being no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Additional submission for the record from Hon. Suzanne Bonamici, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, "Information Matters," by the Education Conservancy, may be accessed at the following Internet address:]

http://www.educationconservancy.org/InformationMattersResearchReportRv.pdf

---

[Additional submission for the record from Hon. George Miller, senior Democratic member, Committee on Education and the Workforce, follows:]

Prepared Statement of the National College Access Network

The National College Access Network (NCAN) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the April 24, 2013, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training hearing titled, "Keeping College within Reach: Enhancing Transparency for Students, Families, and Taxpayers." NCAN and our over 350 affiliate organizations nationwide work to assist low-income, first-generation, and students of color to achieve their educational dreams. A large portion of the services provided to our over 200,000 students annually is guidance through the complicated and opaque pathway to college.

Increasing the number of Americans with postsecondary credentials economically and socially benefits both the country and those individuals receiving degrees. But today's pathway to and through college is often confusing and full of barriers. In order to increase those going to and graduating from college, the federal government, state governments, and institutions must each do their part to provide a transparent pathway to and through college. Transparency includes simplicity for students and accountability to the taxpayers.

NCAN's response will further explore the role the federal government can play to increase transparency for students and taxpayers. Mr. Travis Reindl spoke for the state role during his testimony, and Dr. Don Heller on the role of institutions. NCAN concurs with Dr. Nicole Hurd's assertion that institutions must, "honor their investment by getting students to graduation." This first and foremost must be the priority of every institution in this country.

The profile of the college student is rapidly changing. Students who follow the traditional path enter college directly after high school, live on campus, and graduate within five years. With 44% of Pell grant recipients over the age of 24 [1] and 75% of all college students commuting to campus,[2] the traditional path no longer defines the college experience for most students. NCAN encourages a shift away from labeling students "traditional/non-traditional," as suggested by Representative Foxx. Other terms currently used in the field to describe the new normal include: new majority students, post-traditional students, 21st century students, dependent/independent students, and traditional-aged/adult learners.

For these students who are first in the family to go to college, receiving guidance through the college going process is crucial. The federal government must lead the effort to collect and disseminate the information students need. Representative Foxx asked witnesses what the most important information for students to have when making a college choice is. For NCAN, the two most crucial pieces of information for students are:

- Disaggregated graduation rates for all students. Currently, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) only collects graduation rates for first-time, full-time students and does not break down those rates by Pell grant status. With a growing number of students following a post-traditional college path, this limited definition of graduation rates does not inform students as to their chances of completing a degree from an institution.
- Net price by family income. It is important for students to know not only the net price of an institution, but what that net price is for their family's economic

[1] "Rethinking Pell Grants." The College Board. 2013. *http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/policycenter/advocacy-rethinking-pell-grants-one-pager.pdf* Page 1.

[2] Time Is the Enemy." Complete College America. 2011. *http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time—Is—the—Enemy.pdf* Page 6.

quintile. Many low-income students still think college is out of reach based solely on the cost.

Additional helpful information would be the profile (age, race, income, part time/ full time, size) of the student body, the cohort loan default rate, and the admission criteria for the school. Admission criteria is important for students to learn in middle school so that they can plan their high school paths to not only complete high school but have the right courses to be college ready and eligible as those two paths are always the same.

The federal government must continue its support of competitive funding programs, such as AmeriCorps and Social Innovation Grants, that the non-profit sector leverages in its work. As Dr. Nicole Hurd testified, the National College Advising Corps has multiplied these federal funds several times over to place near-peer counselors in high schools across the country to provide the high-touch, one-on-one counseling that students need to help them through this process. Schools with NCAC advisors experience an 8-12% increase in college going rates in comparison to similar high schools without college advisors.[3] Further, NCAN has affiliates running proven, effective programs across the country that leverage AmeriCorps members to provide added assistance in high need high schools. Many of these AmeriCorps volunteers are first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds who become college advisors to give back to their communities.

The importance of this direct, in person advising was discussed during the hearing, and its role cannot be understated. During his testimony, Dr. Don Heller noted that guidance counselors, who traditionally provide these supports, are burdened by high case loads and frequently spend most of their time on scheduling, testing, and discipline, leaving little time to help their students plan for their futures. Because of this burden on counselors, NCAN affiliates such as the National College Advising Corps work with guidance counselors to provide the individual support students need while building a college-going culture[4] within the high schools so that all students have the opportunity to succeed. Additionally, fewer than 10% of guidance counselor training programs nationwide offer a course in college planning according to Patrick O'Connor, former president of the National Associations for College Admissions Counselors.[5] NCAN affiliates also aid counselors by bringing training and expertise to high need high schools.

The hearing witnesses showed why our higher education system needs to be more transparent—so that all students have the opportunity to attend college without barriers. It also was clear that while technology is an important part of this outreach to students, that direct advising is crucial to the process. The federal government must lead the effort to collect and disseminate the crucial information students need about all colleges as well as continue to provide funds that the non-government sectors can leverage to do this work so that students have access to the best information and tax payers can examine their return on investment.

[Questions submitted for the record and their responses follow:]

U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, June 5, 2013.

Dr. DONALD HELLER, *Dean, College of Education,*
Michigan State University, Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane, Rm. 501, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

DEAR DR. HELLER: Thank you for testifying before the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training at the hearing entitled, "Keeping College Within Reach: Enhancing Transparency for Students, Families and Taxpayers," on Wednesday, April 24, 2013. I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the subcommittee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than June 19, 2013 for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Amy Jones, Brian

---

[3] National College Advising Corps. "Success & Results." *http://www.advisingcorps.org/success-results.* 6 May 2013.

[4] Corwin, Zoe and William Tierney. "Getting There—and Beyond: Building a Culture of College-going in High Schools." USC Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis. January 2007. *http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED498731.pdf* Page 3.

[5] Adams, Caralee. "Guidance Counselors Lack Training in College Admissions." Education Week. 28 December 2010. *http: / / blogs.edweek.org / edweek / college — bound / 2010 / 12 / counselors — lack — training — in — helping — students — get — into — college.html?utm — source = feedbur ner&utm — medium = feed&utm — campaign = Feed%3A + edweek%2FBVuj + %28Education + Week + Blog%3A + College + Bound%29*

Melnyk or Emily Slack of the committee staff who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you again for your important contribution to the work of the committee.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA FOXX, *Chairwoman,*
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.

CHAIRMAN JOHN KLINE (R-MN)

1. It seems the federal government provides a number of tools for students and families to utilize in their college search process whether it be the College Scorecard, the Shopping Sheet, the net price calculator, or data derived from new regulations. Do you have a sense about whether these tools offer consistent data? So, for example, if a student uses more than one tool, does he or she get consistent information?

2. The College Navigator displays data at the institutional level. Do you think that collecting data at this level assists the current college-going population or do you believe we need to display information by program? What information might we want at the programmatic level?

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD HUDSON (R-NC)

1. Dr. Heller, you mentioned that both traditional—aged students as well as adults returning to college generally are looking at institutions close to where they live. What other metrics, besides location, do traditional-aged students examine when choosing a college? Do these vary for non-traditional students?

2. Your testimony mentions that the Department of Education can improve upon the information it currently provides to students and families. Are there more appropriate or accessible ways the federal government can present data to students, parents, and taxpayers?

Dr. Heller's Response to Questions Submitted for the Record

CHAIRMAN KLINE

1. It seems the federal government provides a number of tools for students and families to utilize in their college search process whether it be the College Scorecard, the Shopping Sheet, the net price calculator, or data derived from new regulations. Do you have a sense about whether these tools offer consistent data? So, for example, if a student uses more than one tool, does he or she get consistent information?

In my experience, information useful in the college search process provided by the Department of Education (ED)—most of which is derived from data collected and disseminated by the National Center for Education Statistics—is consistently distributed to consumers. It is very unusual to find the same data element from the same time period having two different values in the information provided by ED.

The key point here is the same data element from the same time period. You may find similar data elements reported with different values; one example would be the sticker price reported for a particular college as compared to the net price. Similarly, there may be situations where one data element is reported with values from two different time periods on different tools disseminated by ED. When this does occur, it is usually related to differences in data collection or propagation schedules.

In general, however, my experience is that there is good consistency across the various ED tools available to students and parents.

2. The College Navigator displays data at the institutional level. Do you think that collecting data at this level assists the current college-going population or do you believe we need to display information by program? What information might we want at the programmatic level?

The Chairman has raised a very good point. Right now, all the data in the ED College Navigator is at the institutional level, not the program level within institutions. At present, I do not see this as particularly problematic. In most institutions, the tuition prices are generally fairly consistent across programs, though in some institutions there are small numbers of programs that charge higher, or premium, tuition rates.

These are generally laboratory-intensive programs with higher costs, such as nursing, laboratory science, and the like.

However, if the ED begins to disseminate more information about the earnings of graduates of particular programs, then the College Navigator would be enhanced if it provided data at the program level. This is because the earnings of students with different majors within an institution are often greater than differences in the average earnings of students across institutions. Right now, there is not an accurate and reliable source of earnings data for students by institution, never mind within different programs at institutions (I recently blogged about this issue—see part one at *http://edwp.educ.msu.edu/dean/2013/measuring-the-return-on-investment-of-attending-college-part-1/* and part two at *http://edwp.educ.msu.edu/dean/2013/measuring-the-return-on-investment-of-attending-college-part-2/).*

If the Congress does agree to consider allowing ED to develop a student-level unit record data system, this would be a step toward collecting better data on the earnings of graduates of colleges and universities at the program level. This could be accomplished by matching university records with Social Security earnings records. If this step is taken, then providing College Navigator data at the program level could be useful to students and families.

In addition, if colleges move more toward charging differential tuition—varying tuition rates for different majors—than it would be useful to have these different program rates reported in the College Navigator.

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD HUDSON

1. Dr. Heller, you mentioned that both traditional-aged students as well as adults returning to college generally are looking at institutions close to where they live. What other metrics, besides location, do traditional-aged students examine when choosing a college? Do these vary for non-traditional students?

For traditional-aged students, the price of college and availability of financial aid are important and growing factors in their decisions regarding where to attend college. The research shows that sensitivity to price is inversely related to income, i.e., the lower the financial resources of the student and her family, the greater is her sensitivity to rising prices.

There are also a number of other characteristics that the research shows can influence traditional-aged students' decisions about college attendance. These include: size of institution; racial/gender mix; program availability; retention and graduation rates; urban/suburban/rural location; support services; and campus amenities, including housing, dining, and cultural and recreational facilities.

For non-traditional students, price and availability of financial aid are also important factors, as are program availability. However, the other factors mentioned above tend to be less important for adult, working students, and location and price tend to be most important.

2. Your testimony mentions that the Department of Education can improve upon the information it currently provides to students and families. Are there more appropriate or accessible ways the federal government can present data to students, parents, and taxpayers?

As I stated in my testimony, we have a plethora of data available about colleges, but less information that is truly useful to students and parents who are trying to distinguish among different institutions. I do not believe there is much more the federal government can do to improve the delivery and availability of existing data to students and their families.

What we need is more help for potential college attendees to wade through the data that are already available, and this is where better access to college counselors and the like can be helpful. This is particularly true for first generation college students.

U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, June 5, 2013.

Dr. NICOLE HURD, *Founder and Executive Director,*
National College Advising Corps, 200 No. Greensboro, Suite C8, Carrboro, NC 27510.

DEAR DR. HURD: Thank you for testifying before the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training at the hearing entitled, "Keeping College Within Reach: Enhancing Transparency for Students, Families and Taxpayers," on Wednesday, April 24, 2013. I appreciate your participation.

I have enclosed an additional question for inclusion in the final hearing record. Please provide a written response no later than June 19, 2013. Responses should be sent to Amy Jones, Brian Melnyk or Emily Slack of the committee staff who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you again for your important contribution to the work of the committee.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA FOXX, *Chairwoman,*
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.

During the hearing, you mentioned a study that looked at the effects of providing better information about the full range of college-going opportunities to low-income, high-achieving students. Could you please provide the committee with a copy of that study and an explanation of whether or not it is evidenced based and data driven? If it is not evidence based and data driven, do you know of any studies that are which show similar results?

Dr. Hurd's Response to Questions Submitted for the Record_

COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS

Recommended Reading on Access

Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2002). Access denied: Restoring the nation's commitment to equal educational opportunity. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.*

Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2002). Empty promises: The myth of college access in America. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.*

Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2006). Mortgaging our future: How financial barriers to college undercut America's global competitiveness. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.*

Beasley, Sarah and Neal Holly. (2013) To improve completion, remember the countryside. *http://chronicle.com/article/To-Improve-Completion/139183/*

Bowen, W.G. and Bok, D. (1998). The Shape of the River: Long-term consequences of considering race in college and university admissions. Princeton University Press.

Bowen, W.G., Chingos, M.M., McPherson, M.S. (2009). Crossing the Finish Line: Completing college at America's Public Universities. Princeton University Press.

Bowen, W.G., Kurzweil, M.A., Tobin, E.M. (2005) Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education. University of Virginia Press.

Castleman, Benjamin L. and Lindsay S. Page. (2009). Stemming the summer flood: An experimental study of college counselor intervention the summer after high school graduation on low-income students' college enrollment.

Ibid. (2010). A trickle or a torrent? Understanding the extent of summer "melt" among college-intending high school graduates.

Ibid. (2012). The forgotten summer: Does the offer of college counseling the summer after high school mitigate attrition among college-intending low-income high school graduates?

Clinedinst, Melissa E., et al. (2011). 2011 State of Admissions (National Association for College Admissions Counseling). *http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/Documents/2011SOCA.pdf*

College Cost and Financial Aid Handbook. (2006). College Board Publications.

College Counseling Sourcebook: Advice and Strategies from Experienced School Counselors, 6th edition. College Board Publications.

Corwin Z., & W. Tierney. (2007). Getting there and beyond: Building a culture of college-going in high schools. Los Angeles: Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.

Cushman, Kathleen. (2005). First in the family: Advice about college from first-generation students; Your High School Years. (Vol. 1). Providence, RI: Next Generation Press.

Cushman, Kathleen. (2006). First in the family: Your college years: Advice about college from first-generation students. (Vol. 2). Providence, RI: Next Generation Press.

Dowd, A.C., E. M. Bensimon, G. Gabbard, S. Singleton, E. Macias, J. R. Dee, T. Melguizo, J. Cheslock, and D. Giles. 2006. Transfer access to elite colleges and universities in the United States: Threading the needle of the American dream—The study of economic, informational, and cultural barriers to community college student transfer access at selective institutions. *http://*

www.jkcf.org/grants/community-college-transfer/research/transfer-access-to-elite-colleges-and-universities-in-the-united-states-threading-the-needle-of-the-/

Heller, D., ed. (2002). The condition of access: Higher education for lower income students. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Hoxby, Caroline and Sarah Turner. (2013). Expanding college opportunities for high-achieving, low income students.

Kozol, Jonathan. (2005). The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Kravets, Marybeth &Wax, Imy. (2007). The K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) 9th Edition. Random House, Inc. NY.

Lerner, J. B. Brand. (2006). The college ladder: Linking secondary and postsecondary education for success for all students. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Lumina Foundation, The. (2012). A stronger nation through higher education: How and why Americans must achieve a Big Goal for college attainment. *http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A_stronger_nation_through_higher_education.pdf*

Mathews, Jay. (2003). Harvard Schmarvard: Getting beyond the Ivy League to the college that is best for you. Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing.

McPherson, M. S., & Schapiro, M. O. (Eds.). (2006). College access: Opportunity or privilege?. New York: The College Board.

Meece, Judith, et al. Educational aspirations of rural adolescents. *http://www.nrcres.org/Research%20Briefs/HSA/HSA%20Educational%20Aspirations%20brief.pdf*

Pope, Loren. (2006). Colleges that change lives: 40 schools that will change the way you think about colleges (Rev. Ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

Ramsey, J. (2008). Creating a high school culture of college-going: The case of Washington State achievers. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Roderick, M., et al. (2008). From high school to the future: Potholes on the road to college. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. *http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/CCSR_Potholes_Report.pdf*

Rugg, Frederick. (2007). Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges, 24th Edition.

Sacks, Peter. (2007). Tearing down the gates: Confronting the class divide in American education. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sherwin, Jay. (2012). Make me a match. Helping low-income and first-generation students make good college choices. *http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief_24.pdf*

Smith, Jonathan. (2011). Can applying to more colleges increase enrollment rates? *http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/11b_4313_College%20App%20Research%20Brief_WEB_111026.pdf*

Stephan, Jennifer L. and James E. Rosenbaum. (2012). Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis: Can high schools reduce college enrollment gaps with new counseling model? *http://epa.sagepub.com/content/35/2/200*

Suskind, Ron. (1998). A hope in the unseen: An American odyssey from the inner city to the Ivy League. New York: Broadway Books.

The College Admissions Data Hyper-Handbook. Wintergreen Orchard House. *www.wintergreenorchardhouse.com/wgoh_hyper_handbook.html*

Tierney, William G., et al. (2009). Helping students navigate the path to college: What high schools can do. *http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/higher_ed_pg_091509.pdf*

U.S. Department of Education. (2011). College Completion Tool Kit. *http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/college_completion_tool_kit.pdf*

Wyner, J.S., J. M. Bridgeland, J. J. Diiulio Jr. 200y. Achievement trap: How America is failing millions of high-achieving students from lower-income families. *http://www.jkcf.org/news-knowledge/research-reports/*

NOTES

*The first three reports can be found at *http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfa/edlite-publications.html.*

Another helpful site is the Pathways to College Network, an online library of access practice and research: *http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/PCNLibrary/ListTopics.aspx.*

For literature related to specific populations, check out Excelencia in Education (*http://www.edexcelencia.org/),* which has reports on serving Hispanic/Latino students, and the Institute for Higher Education Policy (*http://www.ihep.org/),* which has a report on increasing higher education access for immigrant students.

The Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA) at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education has an excellent repository of online papers about college access and financial aid: *http://www.usc.edu/dept/chepa/papers_publications.html.*

[Whereupon, at 11:34 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

○