

# COLLEGE COUNSELING

for Latino and  
Underrepresented  
Students



National Association for  
College Admission Counseling



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## Contents

Introduction	4
Executive Summary	6
Section I: Literature Review	9
Section II: Case Studies	12
Section III: Survey Findings	26
Conclusion	41
References	43
Appendix A	46
Appendix B	48
Appendix C	49
Appendix D	53





# Introduction

## Context

Access to postsecondary education in the United States is one of the keys to economic and social well-being. As policymakers, educators, students and their families consider what it means to promote college access and success broadly, they must consider the supports needed to navigate the transition into postsecondary education. For students whose families have attended college, the transition, while perhaps stressful, is not without precedent and, in most cases, an expectation. Accordingly, supports for students in higher income schools, both public and private, for the transition to postsecondary education are often more comprehensive than in schools serving large populations of students for whom the transition may not, in fact, be an expectation, and where the college application process itself is a challenge.

Such school settings serve a broad and diverse population of students. One key subset of students that we examine in this report is the large and diverse population of Latino students in the U.S. While representing a growing share of postsecondary students in the U.S., Latino students are still underrepresented on four-year college campuses, as much of the growth in Latino student enrollment has taken place at two-year institutions. Such growth is encouraging, and suggests that there are key successes in providing access to higher education. However, Latino students, as a subset of underrepresented students in postsecondary education, continue to face obstacles that other students do not face. As such, there are policy and practice considerations that are to be addressed if we are to ensure equitable access to postsecondary education.

## Impetus

*Excelencia* in Education and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) are organizations with an interest in supporting college access and success for all students. The missions of both organizations include a commitment to ensuring equitable access to postsecondary education, and to supporting the policies and practices that encourage access and success. As organizations that spend a great deal of time observing the transition to postsecondary education, *Excelencia* and NACAC recognize that an integral part of solving broad challenges—in this case, how to improve college access and success for under-represented students—is understanding the practical mechanics of the process. One such practical consideration involves providing the support needed, outside of regular classroom instruction, to navigate the process of planning, searching, applying, choosing, and paying for college.

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In the past, the conversation about support for the college transition ended in one place—the school counseling office. Over the past three decades, the number of individuals and entities outside of the school building engaged in college counseling has multiplied exponentially. Well-known are community based organizations (CBOs), the National College Advising Corps (NCAC), and Department of Education initiatives to educate students on the college transition.

Foundations have supported social marketing efforts to reach underrepresented students, Web-based campaigns to offer resources on college planning, and research into what students need and/or feel they are not getting from school to help plan for college.

These efforts have come about, in large part, due to the lack of investment in school-based college readiness counseling. While many of these organizations and initiatives have become more closely tied to schools, their rapid growth has filled a void left by the declining willingness of policymakers to invest in school-based services for students.

This report deliberately focuses on the role of the school counselor in assisting Latino and other underrepresented students through the transition to college. Even with the trend toward more external college counseling activities, public high schools throughout the U.S. continue to emphasize the importance of postsecondary planning in their school counseling departments. School counselors are uniquely positioned to combine their knowledge of students' educational and personal experiences to provide high quality college readiness counseling. As such, their role in expanding postsecondary educational access for underrepresented populations is critical.

We hope the research recommendations provided in this report will serve not only the students and counselors in high schools, but also the professionals working in organizations outside of schools. We believe the focus on schools is important, since that is where students *are*, and where a student's academic path can most successfully be merged with his or her plans for life after high school.

### Framework for report

This report incorporates several methods to assemble information for the purposes of informing policy and practice. The first section of the report contains a **literature review** to identify relevant themes and findings specifically with regard to counseling Latino students. In the second section of the report, we provide a summary of **site visits** conducted in schools in New York City, Denver, and Los Angeles to gain anecdotal information about challenges and success in schools serving large populations of Latino students. The third

and final section of the report offers results from a nationwide **survey** into counseling practices in high schools serving large numbers of underrepresented students. The purpose of this data analysis is to identify findings that may be relevant to the larger set of underrepresented students, while also identifying elements that may also be parallel to those identified in existing research on Latino students.

We offer recommendations for policy and practice in the conclusion of the report.

*Excelencia* in Education accelerates Latino student success in higher education by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latinos, and by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support their academic achievement. A not-for-profit organization founded in 2004 in Washington, DC, *Excelencia* in Education has become a trusted



information source on the status of Latino educational achievement, a major resource for influencing policy at the institutional, state, and national levels, and a widely recognized advocate for expanding evidence-based practices to accelerate Latino student success in higher education. *Excelencia* is also building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and for civic leadership. More information about *Excelencia* is available at [www.EdExcelencia.org](http://www.EdExcelencia.org).

NACAC is an Arlington, VA-based education association of more than 14,000 secondary school counselors, independent counselors, college admission and financial aid officers, enrollment managers, and organizations that work with students as they make the transition from high school to postsecondary education. The association, founded in 1937, is committed to maintaining high standards that foster ethical and social responsibility among those involved in the transition process, as outlined in the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice. More information about NACAC is available at [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org).



## Executive Summary

**T**he US Census Bureau estimates Hispanics represented 17% (53 million) of the US population in 2012 and are projected to represent 31% of the population by 2060. Hispanic representation is even larger within younger segments of the population. Hispanics now represent more than 25% of all children under the age of five, and almost one quarter (23%) of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public schools. Hispanics also represent 17% of students enrolled in college, and the US Department of Education projects Latino postsecondary enrollment will grow by 27% between 2011 and 2022—the largest rate of increase of all racial and ethnic groups. (ACT, Condition of College Readiness, 2013)

In an effort to better understand the role of school counselors in preparing Latino and other underrepresented students for the transition to college, NACAC and *Excelencia* in Education conducted a national survey and observed counseling practices at six US high schools that were successfully supporting underrepresented populations during the college application process. Results from the study indicate that compared to high schools with majority white, non-Hispanic populations, high schools serving predominantly racial/ethnic minority students differ in school counseling characteristics that may affect college enrollment rates.

### Existing Academic Research

Existing academic literature on the role of school counselors in college access and success for Latino students was instructive to the study and informs recommendations that stem from this report:

- School counselor involvement with Latino students can be a catalyst for developing college aspirations, charting a college preparatory academic course and imparting ‘college knowledge’ to assist students and families with the college application process.
- Cultural fluency among school counselors can be an important asset in bridging the communications gap between schools and families of Latino students.
- Well-known barriers, such as lack of school/ personnel resources, limited cultural fluency, and challenges related to family involvement, prevent intensive college counseling for many Latino students. Such barriers limit school counselors’ ability to spend sufficient time with students and families on college planning and application.
- School context is an important component to improving college access and success measures for Latino students. A college-going culture and positive attitudes on the part of school counselors are critical contextual factors in supporting individual involvement with Latino students and families.

**Results from the study indicate that compared to high schools with majority white, non-Hispanic populations, high schools serving predominantly racial/ethnic minority students differ in school counseling characteristics that may affect college enrollment rates.**



**Site Visits:** *Key Personal and Structural Challenges to Providing College Readiness Counseling to Latino Students*

- In addition to issues like college affordability and lack of familiarity with the college application process, personal challenges faced by Latino students include the daunting prospect of attending college far away from family, families that resist having high-achieving students leave home for college, working long hours to support family and potentially precluding college attendance, and, for some, additional challenges due to undocumented status.
- Structural challenges in schools serving large numbers of Latino students include the distance families must travel to participate in college readiness planning at schools, the lack of cultural fluency on the part of school staff, and attitudes on the part of some faculty and staff at some schools that Latino students are not ‘college material.’

**Site Visits:** *School Approaches to Overcoming Challenges to Providing College Readiness Counseling to Latino Students*

- Counselors and administrators foster a ‘college-going culture’ through a variety of activities, many of which were consistent among schools, including one-on-one advising for students, campus visits, an emphasis on relationship building between school counselors and college admission officers, and exclusive programming related to the completion of applications for admission.
- Schools also developed programs exclusively aimed at building trusting and convenient relationships with Latino families, including arranging meetings between parents and admission recruiters and offering extra credit to students when families participate in various college awareness activities, among other activities.

**National Survey Results**

- The frequency of individualized college counseling activities had a positive effect on four year college enrollment in both the majority white, non-Hispanic and majority non-white models. This means that when counselors more frequently conducted college planning activities focused on individual needs, more students—especially those at majority non-white high schools—enrolled at a four-year college.
- At schools with majority non-white student populations, counselor time spent on occupational counseling and time spent on teaching were negatively related to two-year enrollment. This is unexpected because students interested in entering a career following high school (those we would expect to see the counselor for occupational advising) would be more likely to attend a community or technical college for certification. The counselors that spent more time on occupational counseling either advised students that a four-year degree is necessary to achieve career goals, or spent this time working with students who did not attend college at all. Because community colleges are a potentially effective, low-cost path to postsecondary education and careers, we will further explore this finding to ensure that counselors, students and families have good information about community college options.
- The frequent use of individualized counseling activities was positively related to total college enrollment at majority non-white schools. Our study suggests that the way counselors’ time is divided and the frequency of counseling activities influence college going, not simply the size of the counselor caseload. In order to improve college enrollment in schools with extremely large student-to-counselor ratios, counselors must be given the latitude to prioritize postsecondary admission advising and allowed the time to conduct individualized admission counseling activities.

## Recommendations for Improving College Counseling, Access and Success for Latino/a students

- Administrators and policymakers must **allocate sufficient resources toward hiring, training and equipping school counselors** to serve Latino students in pursuit of college access and success.
- **Increase the visibility of colleges for high school students:** Providing more campus visit opportunities and more occasions for college representatives to speak directly with students in school were all cited as effective mechanisms for engaging students in the college preparation process.
- **Start planning early:** For high schools, beginning the college planning process in 9th grade allowed students and families time to factor in academic, financial, and family considerations on the path to college.
- **Focus on personal contact:** Affording students and families the opportunity to work in one-on-one or small group settings with a counselor in school was an effective mechanism to bring students into the college pipeline and keep them on track. Moreover, ensuring comprehensive outreach to and involvement of families in the conversation about college should be a priority for programs serving Latino students.
- **Build and maintain a college-going culture:** Consistent with a growing body of research, students and practitioners confirmed that a college-going culture was an effective way of helping Latino students and families enter the college pipeline. An important part of the college-going culture in high school includes cultural fluency for Latino students and families.
- **Provide comprehensive financial aid counseling:** As the academic literature suggests, students and counselors believed that additional financial aid counseling an important component to service Latino/a students and families given the added challenges presented by barriers such as language, socio-economic status, immigration status, and being the first in a family to attend college.
- **Offer college planning activities designed for both students and families:** Again complementing the findings from the academic literature, students and counselors confirmed that including families in the college planning process was an important and necessary part of a successful college transition for Latino/a students.
- **Seek opportunities to partner with higher education institutions that currently serve large populations of Latino and other under-represented students:** School counselors should be encouraged by administrators to reach out to higher education institutions that serve large numbers of Latino and other under-represented students to identify good practices in counseling and advising, ensure a continued pipeline of educational opportunities for students, and learn from colleges and universities about student supports that work in the postsecondary environment.



**Administrators and policymakers must allocate sufficient resources toward hiring, training and equipping school counselors to serve Latino students in pursuit of college access and success.**





## Section I: Literature Review

**L**atino/a currently represent about 16 percent of the U.S. population and are the fastest-growing racial/ethnic group in the U.S. (Passel, 2010). Further, Hispanics represent over 22 percent of the school-age population (Santiago, 2012). As a result, the number of Hispanic children in America's public schools has changed the face of education across the country. Although the percentage of Latinos in public schools is increasing, and the number of white non-Hispanics in public schools is decreasing, a smaller percentage of Latino students enroll in post-secondary institutions than white non-Hispanic students (College Board, 2011; Marsico and Getch, 2009).

### Counselor Involvement: A Key Catalyst for Latino/a Students

Latino students are more likely to be the first in their family to attend college compared to white non-Hispanic peers; and the literature indicates that first-generation college students tend to have less access to knowledge about preparing for college, college opportunities, accessing college, and financing a post-secondary education (Marsico and Getch, 2009; Vela-Gude et al, 2009; Kimura-Walsh et al, 2008). Research shows that counselors can positively influence students' postsecondary educational knowledge, aspirations, choices and achievements (McDonough, 2005; Smith, 2011; Radford and Ifill, 2013). Although Latino parents of first-generation college students have high expectations for their children to pursue a post-secondary education, many lack sufficient "college knowledge" thereby limiting the information they can

provide their children (Marsico and Getch, 2009; Vela-Gude et al, 2009; Kimura-Walsh et al, 2008; Torres et al, 2006). Clear, correct information about career options and requirements from school counselors can help students successfully navigate the career decision-making process by enabling them to plan appropriately for academic requirements of desired professions (College Board, 2011). Further, active support from a counselor in preparing for college, as opposed to simply disseminating information, has been shown to have a direct, positive impact on a student's chances of enrolling in a four-year college (McDonough, 2005). A 2001 study found that increased guidance received at the high school boosted the likelihood that a student attended a four-year postsecondary institution as opposed to never enrolling by about 27 percent (Plank & Jordan, 2001). There is also evidence that poor experiences with the school counselor are associated with delayed college entrance and questionable higher education choices (Johnson & Rochkind, 2010). Student populations that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education (low-income, racial/ethnic minority, first-generation college goers) tend to see even greater benefits from college counseling in high school compared to more privileged peers (King, 1996; McDonough, 2005; College Board, 2011). Therefore, the role of school counselors in creating awareness and providing "college knowledge" to Latino students is critical for postsecondary success.

**Latino students are more likely to be the first in their family to attend college compared to white non-Hispanic peers**

## Counselor Involvement: Cultural Fluency

The literature identifies several counseling strategies that help Latino students access postsecondary education. For example, counselors that familiarize themselves with the Hispanic culture, as well as become more culturally responsive can more effectively serve Latino students in their post-secondary aspirations (Lee, 2001; Delgado-Romero, Matthews, and Paisley, 2007; Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007; Flores et al, 2006; Eckenrod-Green & Culbreth, 2008). In a study conducted by Eckenrod-Green & Culbreth (2008), Latino students reported a “need for Hispanic counselors, or, for the school counselor to speak Spanish” in order to better communicate with Latino students and parents. Providing Latino parents with information, in both English and Spanish, on preparing for college, college opportunities, accessing college, and financial aid so they can also be a resource for their child has been shown to improve access to higher education (Castillo et al, 2010; Hurtado & Gauvain, 1997; Marsico and Getch, 2009; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

## Barriers to Counselor Involvement

Many Latino students on the path to higher education lack this vital counselor support (Marsico & Getch, 2009). This may be due to high caseloads and other responsibilities that prevent counselors from providing meaningful college planning services (Vela-Guide et al, 2009; Kimura-Walsh et al, 2008). Lower student to counselor ratios (smaller caseloads) are associated with more early college preparation and increased college attendance rates (McDonough, 1997). In addition, the number of counselors at a school and frequency of student contact were found to be significant predictors of college application rates (Bryan et al, 2011). According to the American School Counselors Association, the maximum recommended student to counselor ratio is 250:1. However, most school counselors are responsible for caseloads well above the recommended size. Data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics indicate the U.S. average was 471 students per counselor for the 2009-10 school year.

Research also found that much of a school counselor’s time is occupied by non-academic

counseling activities resulting in the inability of counselors to meet the college advising expectations of students and families (Perna et al, 2008). According to NACAC’s 2012 Counseling Trends Survey, school counselors spend about 32 percent of their time on college counseling while 21 percent is spent on high school course scheduling, 19 percent on personal needs counseling, 12 percent on academic testing, and four to five percent each on job placement counseling, teaching and non-counseling activities. Perna and colleagues (2008) found that overburdened counselors were more likely to rely on students and their families to initiate college-related assistance. This can disrupt the college admission process, especially among underrepresented students who are the least likely to seek out the school counselor for college information (Bryan et al, 2009).

Low counselor expectations were also identified as a barrier to post-secondary access for Latino students (Vela-Guide et al, 2009; Marsico and Getch, 2009; Kimura-Walsh et al, 2008; Flores et al, 2006; Eckenrod-Green & Culbreth, 2008; College Board, 2011). Research shows that the individual beliefs or expectations of a school counselor regarding the academic potential of students affect those students’ college admission aspirations and outcomes (Gandara, 2001). Public school students who perceived that the counselor expected them to pursue options other than college, or felt counselor expectations were unclear or “neutral” were less likely to seek college information than those students who believed the school counselor expected them to attend college (Bryan et al, 2009). This is significant, considering one study found that school counselors tend to perceive students from low SES backgrounds as having less promising futures and lower math abilities (Auwarter & Arguete, 2008). Lower counselor expectations can lead underrepresented students to less rigorous high school courses and ultimately lower rates of postsecondary enrollment (Gandara, 2001). School counselors that encourage Latinos to take a more challenging curriculum can positively affect a student’s post-secondary success and planning (Vela-Guide et al, 2009; Ohrt et al, 2009). Promoting college aspirations, ensuring academic preparation, and providing adequate college counseling and information to Latino students are vital roles of the school counselor.

## Context for Counselor Involvement

Research confirms that students who attend high schools that regularly provide resources and a culture of direct assistance in the college application process are more likely to aspire to attend, apply to, and enroll at a college compared to those whose schools provide admission information only (College Board, 2011). A study of Chicago Public Schools found that students attending schools in which teachers reported a strong college climate were 13 percent more likely to be accepted into and 14 percent more likely to enroll at a four-year postsecondary institution (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2008). McDonough (2005) also identified four aspects of the high school climate that can significantly increase college attendance rates: a college prep curriculum, a college-going culture, staff who are committed to supporting all students in college pursuits, and resources allocated for college counseling. Several sources provide research-based program suggestions, implementation advice and guidelines that school counselors have used to develop and promote a college-going culture. These practices further demonstrate the connection between school culture and college admission outcomes (College Board, 2011).

There is limited research regarding college-going culture development and smooth high school to college transition strategies in schools with large Latino populations, but there is evidence that any school strategy should incorporate outside-of-school support sources. A study by Kimura-Walsh, et al (2008) showed that Latino students “accessed college preparatory programs offered outside of their school” in order to supplement the lack of information they received at school, so collaboration between schools and community organizations designed to maximize the exposure Latinos have to “college knowledge” may be one strategy to build college-going readiness. A study conducted by Perez & McDonough (2008), showed that Latino students also relied on resources outside of school and community organizations such as siblings, peers, relatives, and parents for knowledge about college planning. Latino students also looked to these sources when deciding on which college to attend, decisions that were heavily influenced by their parents and by family and friends who had previously attended college (College Board, 2011; Nora, 2004; Perez & McDonough, 2008).

Making sure Latino students are academically prepared, helping them understand the personal changes ahead, and working with students’ families can also ensure a successful transition from high school to college (College Board, 2011; Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007). The use of role models/mentors who are also Latino, and who have attended or are currently attending a postsecondary institution, can help students feel comfortable with the transition from high school to college and overcome perceived barriers (Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007; Torres et al, 2006). Counselors that encourage Latino students to visit college campuses, and both counselors and parents that encourage Latino students to attend a college that fits their needs can foster a smooth transition from high school to college (Nora, 2004; Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007).

A small amount of research has focused on the variation in counseling services offered based on school and student characteristics. In general, literature suggests the quality, consistency, accessibility and perception of counseling services are more favorable for students of higher socioeconomic backgrounds that attend more affluent schools compared to their less advantaged peers (College Board 2011; Gandara, 2001). Not only are students in large, high-poverty schools offered fewer and lower-quality college counseling services, these students are less likely to seek a counselor for college information (Bryan et al, 2009). This may be due to the complex and time-consuming caseloads dealing with poverty, violence, high mobility, low achievement and lack of resources that counselors at large urban schools are more likely to face (College Board, 2011). The gap in college counseling services is especially problematic because for many underserved students and their families, the school counselor is the single most important supplier of the social capital necessary to navigate the college search process (Bryan et al, 2011; National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 2007; Grothaus & Cole, 2010).

The existing literature suggests that student to counselor ratio, counseling task prioritization, and school climate influence the rate at which high school students, especially those of underrepresented populations, enter postsecondary institutions. Subsequent portions of this study aim to assess the role of the school counselor in the college application process at public high schools in the United States, especially those schools with large under-represented and particularly Latino student populations.



## Section II: Case Studies

### IN THIS SECTION:

- Introduction
- Student, Counselor, Parent and Administrator Perspectives
  - Challenges to Providing College Readiness Counseling to Latino Students
  - The Role of the School Counselor in Helping Latino Students Get Ready for College
- School Approaches to Surmounting Challenges in Counseling Latino Students for College Readiness
  - Counseling program structure
  - Approaches to encouraging a college-going culture
  - Engaging Latino families in helping with college planning
  - Support for counselors from school, district administrators

### Introduction

#### *Overview of high schools visited*

**T**he NACAC-*Excelencia* team visited six high schools in three cities—Denver, Los Angeles and New York—with higher than citywide average Latino/a student

enrollment rates, high school graduation rates, and college going rates (See Appendix A for site selection details). More than 50% of the students were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)

at all the schools except one in New York where 38% were FRPL eligible. The Denver and New York high schools included magnet schools and so enrolled students from across the city as well as the community in which the schools were located.

The Los Angeles high schools were large, comprehensive schools, each enrolling approximately 3,000 students in grades 9–12.

During the visits, the study team conducted small focus groups with 33 Latino 12th graders from every high school except one Denver school, where the 12th graders were taking final exams for the community college courses they were completing. Prior to the focus group discussions, the students completed a short survey gathering some background information. The survey responses indicated that all the students except one had completed AP, IB or honors courses. 73% came from families where neither parent had completed a bachelor's degree and 39% from families where the parents did not speak English. All the students said they had talked with a school counselor about their college plans, data that were not surprising since the counselors had selected them for the focus groups. Parents, teachers, siblings, and friends followed closely after counselors as people with whom students discussed college planning.

**More than 50% of the students were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) at all the schools except one in New York where 38% were FRPL eligible.**



In addition to the student survey and focus groups, the NACAC-*Excelencia* team interviewed two or more counselors and either the principal or an assistant principal at each high school. This report discusses the similarities and differences found across the schools on the range of topics explored by the interviewers. Highlights of the interviews and focus groups at each school are summarized by role—students, counselors, and administrators.

#### *Summary of student conversations: Why students are going to college*

The reasons students planned to go to college were consistent across the high schools. Students at every school first and foremost emphasized the importance of a college education for acquiring the professional skills necessary to get a good job and achieving their career goals, a finding consistent with large-scale studies

of first-year students enrolled at four-year institutions nationwide. (Egan, et al, 2013) Students at four of the five schools also spoke about college as the key to success in life, by which they meant achieving greater economic and social stability than their parents had. Equally important to them was helping their families by providing financial support and setting an example for younger siblings. Students at three of the five high schools indicated their parents wanted them to go to college. Finally, students described college as an opportunity to expand their knowledge and grow as a person.

#### *Counseling Services Organizational Structure*

The ways in which high schools structured their counseling services varied considerably, depending on the school's enrollment, budget, and leadership. The table below summarizes these differences.

**Table 1. Counseling services organizational structure**

<i>School</i>	<i>Number of counselors and primary duties</i>	<i>Caseload</i>
<b>Denver High School #1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 guidance counselors—do everything except discipline</li> <li>• Part-time counseling interns from local universities</li> </ul>	200/1
<b>Denver High School #2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 guidance counselors—do everything, including attendance and tardiness and excluding proctoring tests</li> </ul>	225/1
<b>Los Angeles High School #1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.5 FTE guidance counselors who schedule students, provide academic advice, monitor their progress toward meeting graduation requirements</li> </ul>	640/1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 college counselor—works mostly with 12th graders on all aspects of college counseling; administers the AP tests</li> </ul>	670/1*
<b>Los Angeles High School #2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 guidance counselors—schedule students, provide academic advice, monitor their progress toward meeting graduation requirements</li> </ul>	500/1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 college counselor—takes care of all aspects of college counseling for 12th graders</li> </ul>	750/1*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student peer counselors—12th graders trained to provide college planning info to their peers</li> </ul>	

*Continues.*

<b>New York High School #1</b>	• 6 guidance counselors, one for each grade, one for ESL students, one for IEP students—deal with emotional issues, crisis intervention	216/1
	• 4 grade advisors, class room teachers—scheduling, academic advising and referrals	300/1
	• 2 college advisors, teachers with two courses—all aspects of college advising	600/1*
	• Student peer counselors—12th graders trained to provide college planning info to their peers	
<b>New York High School #2</b>	• 4 grade advisors—scheduling, academic advising and referrals	400/1*
	• 1 college advisor—all aspects of college advising	412/1

\* These ratios reflect the total number of 12th graders at each school and do not include students in earlier grades for whom the college advisors organize early college awareness presentations, campus visits, and other activities.

Generally, as student/counselor ratios varied, so did the responsibilities of guidance counselors. The Denver counselors, who had smaller caseloads, handled a range of issues, including scheduling, college advising, social and emotional issues, proctoring tests, and attendance, while the counselors with large caseloads focused primarily on scheduling and helping students meet graduation requirements. The large high schools all had counselors who worked exclusively on college advising and application assistance. While they worked mostly with 12th graders, they also organized group presentations for younger students and served as the school's contact for teacher and parent questions about all aspects of college planning. Their caseloads were much larger than those of other counselors, making it impossible to provide the one-on-one guidance and support with college planning needed by students whose parents never attended college need.

### Challenges to Providing College Readiness Counseling to Latino Students

Students and counselors described two types of challenges related to getting ready for college: challenges created by the cultural, economic, and social circumstances of students' lives; and, challenges related

to the delivery of college counseling services at their high schools. The challenges described are remarkably similar across the schools visited; they did not vary by a school's size or geographic location.

#### *Academic, Social and Cultural Challenges for Latino Students*

Case studies yielded remarkably consistent responses to questions about the challenges faced by Latino students in pursuit of college access. As Table 2a suggests, the list of challenges includes those faced by the broader under-represented student population, including low-income and first-generation students in general, as well as those faced more specifically by Latino students (**bold**).

**Students and counselors described two types of challenges related to getting ready for college: challenges created by the cultural, economic, and social circumstances of students' lives; and, challenges related to the delivery of college counseling services at their high schools.**

**Table 2a. Personal challenges providing college readiness counseling for Latino students**

<i>Academic, cultural, economic, and social challenges</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Counselors</i>
Having enough money to pay for college	✓	✓	✓
Fear of borrowing for college costs	✓	✓	✓
Lack the academic preparation and study skills needed for college course success	✓		
Not being admitted to the college they want to attend	✓		
Attending a college without family nearby to help them—being on one's own	✓		
Parents resist having their children leave home, even when students are high academic achievers and want to attend selective institutions that fit well with their abilities and interests and offer generous financial aid packages	✓	✓	✓
Students' families lack college knowledge	✓	✓	✓
Students have to work long hours to support their families mean parents don't have time to attend college planning workshops or meet with students' college counselor at their high school	✓	✓	✓
Finding a well-paying job after graduating from college	✓	✓	
Undocumented students: limited affordable college options and concern about sharing financial information	✓	✓	✓

The case study results are consistent with findings from academic research included in the literature review, and are thus considered continuing evidence that addressing such challenges remain a priority for local, state and federal educators and policymakers interested in improving college access and success. A profile of school practices adopted at case study schools to address these challenges is included below.

#### *Challenges in the Delivery of College Advising for Latino Students*

In addition to personal challenges, structural challenges present barriers to improving college access for under-represented student populations. Table 2b includes a list of structural challenges that surfaced consistently at the high schools visited, including those that are particular to Latino students (**bold**).

**Table 2b. Structural challenges providing college readiness counseling for Latino students**

<i>Challenges re high schools' delivery of college advising services</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Counselors</i>
High student/counselor ratios resulting in limited time for one-on-one advising and outreach to lower achieving students; and leaving students' to manage the college planning process on their own	✓		✓
High schools located a long distance from where families live and hard to get to	✓	✓	✓
Counselors who are not fluent in Spanish and so cannot communicate with LEL parents	✓	✓	✓
Non-Latino counselors who exhibit prejudice toward Latino students in their discussions of college options	✓		

As noted in the literature review, cultural fluency appears to be an important structural challenge that could be better addressed in schools serving large numbers of Latino students. In fact, student suggestions that counselors and other staff who exhibit prejudice toward Latino students in their considerations of which students are ‘college material’ are particularly important to address in the education community. A profile of school practices adopted at case study schools to address these challenges is included below.

### Perspectives on the Role of the School Counselor in Helping Latino Students Get Ready for College

During site visits, students, counselors and administrators were asked about the role of school counselors in various aspects of college readiness preparation for Latino students. In general, the three groups held similar views of the role of counselors in helping students get ready for college. Table 3 summarizes how each group viewed the counselor role and where differences in perception exist.

**Table 3. Role of school counselors**

Prepare students academically for college	<i>Students</i>	<i>Counselors</i>	<i>Administrators</i>
Advise students on courses needed for high school graduation, college admission, and career goals	✓	✓	✓
Push students to take challenging courses and support them in doing so	✓	✓	✓
Monitor student’s progress toward meeting high school graduation requirements	✓	✓	✓
Prepare individual education plans for students		✓	
Assist students with the college planning process			
Provide students with college knowledge that their parents don’t have	✓	✓	
Meet individually with students to guide them through the college planning process, advise them on which colleges to apply and finding a college that is a good match, and assist them with completing and submitting applications	✓	✓	✓
Identify scholarships for which students can apply	✓		
Explain college readiness and financial aid issues to parents	✓		
Help students understand financial aid award letters		✓	
Provide students with social and emotional support			
Serve as a confidant	✓		
Be readily accessible to talk with individual students	✓	✓	✓
Demonstrate genuine concern and caring for students	✓	✓	
Teach students to advocate effectively for themselves		✓	
Perform college readiness related administrative functions			
Schedule students’ courses	✓	✓	✓
Organize campus visits, college fairs, admissions and financial aid workshops; coordinate admissions representatives’ school visits	✓	✓	
Encourage a college-going culture in the high school		✓	
Administer AP testing		✓	



As the table indicates, perspectives of all three groups converged on core counseling components that are common to many high school settings—setting and monitoring progress toward educational goals (including scheduling classes), meeting with students to initiate college planning activities in general, and being accessible to students who have questions about the process.

Counselors articulated their roles more comprehensively than administrators. This could reflect the simple phenomenon that administrators manage staff, while counselors develop and implement programs and resources, which suggests that managers may not be familiar with every detail of his or her staff's programs. It is also possible that administrators may not be aware of the complexity of college counseling as a function, which suggests the need for further education and information for senior administrators.

Additionally, students identified expectations of counselors that counselors did not identify, suggesting an area for increased attention from counselors serving large numbers of Latino students. Specifically, students maintained an expectation that counselors could provide assistance with financial aid and scholarships, and could serve as confidants in the process. While both activities are well-established expectations of most counselors in their work, the emphasis on these activities by the site visit students could suggest an area of added emphasis in practice for counselors working with Latino students. In addition, counselors at the site visits indicated that financial aid advising was an area of their practice that they would like more time to conduct, and suggested that additional training was also desirable.

## **School Approaches to Surmounting Challenges in Counseling Latino Students for College Readiness**

### *Counseling Program Structure and Orientation*

#### ***College Readiness Counseling as a Priority***

At the schools with dedicated college counselors, postsecondary advising was their clear priority. Scheduling, discipline, and crisis counseling were priorities of the general counselors. The counselors at the schools in Denver had more comprehensive

responsibilities but still made postsecondary advising a priority, especially in the Fall when college applications are being completed. All the counselors mentioned that priorities shift throughout the school year with the steps in the admission process. For example, completing applications is the focus at the beginning of the school year, then completing the FAFSA and looking for scholarships, then deciding where to enroll in the spring. Counselors at several schools explained that college and career counseling is always priority but other issues like personal crises, dealing with absences, or academic problems come up that need to be handled immediately. In these cases, postsecondary planning must take a temporary back seat.

#### ***Counselor Caseload Management***

Counselors used various approaches to managing their caseloads. Everyone relied on group meetings such as classroom presentations and workshops to address generic information that all students needed. People indicated such group meetings were the primary way they reached students in grades 9-11. Two schools reported finding Naviance ([www.naviance.com](http://www.naviance.com)), a web based platform that helps students and schools manage the college planning process, a valuable resource for dealing with the numbers of students for which they had responsibility. Both found particularly helpful the system's feature that allows them to email all the students on their caseloads at once with important information on scholarships, deadlines, upcoming events, and other issues. Two schools utilized 12th graders as peer college advisors, trained to provide basic information to other students, answer common questions, and remind them to meet deadlines for admissions and financial aid applications and test registration. The peer student advisors also tracked down students counselors needed to see but were having difficulty finding. One school also created a college planning web site with instructions and links for enabling students to research colleges and scholarships independently. Another school took a different approach to peers helping peers. With encouragement from school leaders, the student government organization created a Facebook page for each grade level that students use to get information about college planning and other topics to their peers.

### ***Availability of Spanish speaking counselors and Spanish language materials***

Despite the fact that more than 50 percent of the students attending all of the schools visited were Latino, Spanish-speaking counselors and Spanish language college planning materials were not widely available. Only three of the six schools had counselors who spoke Spanish fluently. At one additional school, the guidance office secretary spoke Spanish and translated for parents with limited English fluency. Yet another school had staff members in other offices whom the counselors called when they needed someone to translate. All of the schools provided college admissions and financial aid workshops for parents in English and Spanish and at least one translated notices sent home to parents into Spanish. As for Spanish-language college planning resources, the schools had little, if any, such material. Counselors noted that most often, students translated information for their parents.

While the majority of the students in the Los Angeles and New York high schools were Latino, the schools served large numbers of immigrants from Asia, African, and Arab countries, and faced the challenge of finding speakers of many languages to communicate with parents. The staff of one school spoke 28 different languages, making it easier for them to manage this problem.

Counselors at all the schools reported that because their Latino students spoke English fluently, they relied on them to translate college planning information for their parents. The counselors interviewed appeared to be comfortable

with this approach. Students also seemed comfortable doing so, except in the case of financial aid information. A student at one high school questioned whether even Spanish-language materials would be adequate to explain financial aid to parents because the types of aid and process for applying are so complicated. In a similar vein, a counselor in Denver noted that a number of her Latino parents had not finished high school and so had difficulty reading and understanding materials in Spanish.

### ***Approaches to encouraging a college-going culture***

**“[Making a college going culture happen] starts with the principal very clearly communicating that mission to the staff, and then it just seeps out into so many directions from there. From freshman teachers, doing projects with kids, taking trips, lots of school pride...this has been an evolution over years and years, and it’s constantly growing...”**

***Vice Principal, New York high school #1***

All the schools focused their academics on preparing students for postsecondary education, offering AP and concurrent enrollment courses. Except for one instance, the schools had college-going rates in the 70-75% range. (The college-going rate at the outlying school was 65%, which was somewhat higher than the district’s average rate.) Beyond this, the schools approached encouraging a college-going culture somewhat differently. The thumbnail sketches below capture some of these differences as described by students, counselors, and administrators with whom the study team spoke.

### **Denver High School #1**

As described by the counselors, this school’s efforts to encourage a college-going culture focus on encouraging students to **view themselves as change agents** with the ability to make the world a better place. The school’s staff not only talks with students about their potential to change things, but also engages students in learning about and actively working on real world problems and projects. They have found that such experiences broaden students’ perspective and help them understand the importance of a college education to making a difference.

Other activities that contribute to a college-going culture at the school are **campus visits** starting in 9th grade, developing **education plans** for each student, a **college readiness boot**

### Denver High School #2

This school's affiliation with three public higher education institutions means that a college-going culture is by definition an integral part of everything the school does. Within its 22 career focused areas, the school **makes explicit the connection between the preparation for that career and postsecondary education**. Every career area has a formal tie to **at least one local college that students in that area visit every year**.

Another important component of CEC's college going culture is a **12-15 week "senior support"** class that every 12th grader takes. In this class, students research colleges by career cluster, the outlook for jobs in that cluster, and the postsecondary requirements for a certificate or degree. They use this information to plan their senior schedule, which is likely to include several concurrent college level courses. CEC also offers an array of **workshops related to applying for admission and financial aid**. All students are required to apply to at least one postsecondary institution, and the school celebrates every postsecondary acceptance, regardless of the type of

### Los Angeles High School #1

While this school takes pride in offering more AP courses than any other high school in the district the school's approach to creating a college-going culture not as formally articulated as the other high schools visited. Neither the counselor nor the assistant principal articulated a guiding set of beliefs for how the school imbued students and teachers with the expectation that all students are capable of college-level work and will be prepared to succeed in college when they graduate. The college counselor organized the typical array of college planning workshop, college and career nights, and other activities. Because she is the only person at the school responsible for college planning activities, she works almost exclusively with 12th graders and is able to meeting individually with only 300 of nearly 700

### Los Angeles High School #2

All students at the high school take a college preparatory curriculum, and **all counselors are trained to provide students with college advising**. The expectation that every student is college bound is conveyed through **individual meetings that the counselors have with each student** starting in 9th grade to discuss California's A-G high school graduation/four-year college admissions requirements, explain the multiple paths to college, and help him/her determine the path to take based on their goals and academic performance. Even if students say they want to go to a community college, counselors encourage them to take extra math and foreign language courses so that they will have the option of attending four-year public college if they change their mind later. Because parents don't have the time to take students on college visits, the **counselors place a high priority on college representatives visiting the school** as a way of introducing students to institutions besides UCLA and UC Berkeley, which typically are the only ones they know about. Each year **75-80 admissions representatives come to the school**.

### New York High School #1

This school's college-going culture permeates every aspect of students' experience there, starting with 8th graders coming for tours of the school. Students hear that the mission of the school is to get them ready for college from all the adults at the school—the principal and assistant principals, teachers, counselors, and coaches. 9th and 10th grade teachers engage students in various college awareness activities such as learning about different types of colleges and **writing letters to those in which they are interested**. College visits begin in 9th grade and continue through 12th grade. Starting in 11th grade, students attend small group sessions with peers who have similar interests and GPAs, and **meet individually with the college advisors** in the school's college center. 12th graders who have been trained as peer college advisors lead some of the 11th grade meetings, which focus on students learning how to build a list of colleges that fits their needs and interest—what to look for and how to use the resources on the college planning web site that the counselors created to do their research. Counselors talk to all students about four-year colleges, emphasizing the opportunity within the City University of New York system to transfer from a two year to a four-year institution. Completing college applications is the focus of 12th grade, culminating with **“College Application Day,”** the Friday before Thanksgiving, when all 12th graders have to dress professionally and hand in envelopes with their completed applications and a checklist of what they have done and what they still need to do. This happens in the school's main lobby, so the 9th–11th graders can appreciate the importance of what the seniors have

### New York High School #2

This school takes a comprehensive approach to cultivating a college-going culture, with an emphasis on the importance of rigorous academics to college readiness. The principal stated that, “Part of my vision is to create an environment in which students are college-ready, truly ready, [that they have] learned to write well, developed good critical thinking skills and other skills for discussing their ideas.” He supports this vision by having small class sizes in English—10-12 students instead of 30—and requiring students in the lower third of their class to take a critical reading/writing course. Counselors work with grade-level cohorts that they follow for the four years of high school, increasing the likelihood of them getting to know the students for whom they are responsible. They begin talking about college in 9th grade, explaining the process of getting ready for college and the academic preparation required for admission to a four-year selective college. They reiterate this information for 10th and 11th graders to keep students focused on how the academic achievement needed to qualify for college. Students are strongly encouraged to visit college during their summer vacations and to fill their free time with extra-curricular and other enrichment activities that will strengthen their college applications. Another factor contributing to the school's college going culture is the **working relationship the college counselor has established with the admissions offices at four-year institutions**. These relationships, combined with the students' academic readiness, undoubtedly account for the significant number of graduates who go to highly selective colleges and receive Gates Millennium and Posse Foundation scholarships.



### *Engaging Latino families in helping with college planning*

“I see that Latino immigrant students are very on task because they are trying to live the American Dream. Parenting is one of the biggest forces to a student’s success. The more parent involvement, the more success.”

*Assistant Principal, Los Angeles High School #2*

All the high schools visited offer activities aimed at engaging parents in helping students prepare and plan for college. Virtually all of these activities are held at the school, limiting parent attendance because of the long distances between the school and where students live. Well-attended activities include **FASFA nights** where parents get help completing the FASFA and **college fairs held on back-to-school nights** when parents come to pick up their children’s report card. One of the Denver high schools holds monthly celebration nights recognizing student achievement into which they incorporate college and career information. Two schools offer workshops on how to navigate high school, explaining course offerings, high school graduation requirements, and the information on a high school transcript. Two high schools reach parents outside the school building: one school takes parents on college visits, while another school’s counselors organize and staff college information tables at Latino community events.

Counselors at all the schools visited indicated that while they encourage parents to come to the school for individual conference, parents rarely do. They attribute parents not coming for meetings because of the long hours they work, family responsibilities, and the distances they must travel to get to the school.

Without exception, school leaders and counselors believe they could—and should—do a better job of involving parents in supporting their children through the college preparation and planning process. Based on their experiences, they suggested the following strategies for engaging parents:

- Make special efforts to **make parents feel welcome** when they visit the counseling office. This includes taking time to talk with parents, whether or not they have an appointment.
- **Talk with students about the important role their parents play** in the college planning process and encourage them to bring their parents to back-to-school events and parent meetings about college and financial aid. One high school **gives students extra academic credit when their parents attend college admissions and financial aid nights.**
- Build **trusting relationships with parents**, recognizing that, “If parents aren’t actively involved, it’s not that they don’t care,” (Denver high school #1 counselor). Trust is particularly important for parents to be comfortable sharing information about their immigration status and their finances as required to apply for financial aid.
- Help parents of academically qualified students develop an understanding and appreciation of the ways in which their children will benefit from attending selective colleges and universities outside the immediate geographic area. Counselors spoke about wanting to find ways for parents to go on college visits with their children. **Arranging for parents to meet with admissions recruiters** in the evenings when they are in town provides another opportunity for parents to become familiar and comfortable with such institutions. Counselors also could work with recruiters to introduce parents to local alumni, particularly those from similar backgrounds, from whom parents could learn about their college experience and ask questions about living arrangements, safety issues, managing college costs, and other concerns.
- Partner with the school’s parent coordinator to organize **college planning workshops**. Parent coordinators typically have close relationships with families and so can be highly effective in getting parents to come to such activities. (Two schools have parent coordinators.)



### *Support for counselors from school, district administrators*

The study team explored several different aspects of the extent to which counselors receive support from high school and district leaders for counseling activities; the extent to which schools coordinate activities across counselors, teachers, and school leaders; and the professional development opportunities offered to counselors. These findings are summarized below.

### *School and district leadership support*

Counselors at four of the six schools described the principal and assistant principals as supportive of their work. What they seemed to mean by “supportive” was that the school leadership let them focus almost exclusively on academic and college counseling and gave them time to do so, including being able to pull students out of class as needed. Counselors at two small high schools meet regularly with the assistant principal overseeing their work. At two of the schools, the school leadership appeared less supportive. One school requires that the college advisor responsible for administering AP exams, which takes the entire months of April and May, substantially reducing the time available for college counseling.

### ***Coordination across counseling, instruction, and leadership***

Counselors and administrators at two schools described examples of coordination across school staff related to helping students get ready for college. Once school’s counselors serve on the “sit team” that meets weekly to review students on academic watch. At another school, such coordination is embedded in the structure of the school by reducing the course loads of selected teachers so they can serve as grade advisors and college advisors. Staff at the other schools visited did not provide examples of such coordination.

### ***Professional development***

The approaches to professional development varied by district and high school. In Denver the district provides professional development for counselors, while on the school level, counselors participate in the same professional development activities as teachers. Counselors in Denver also are given time to attend

conferences and go on college visits. Most of the professional development offered to counselors in the New York high schools is organized and offered internally. The principal of one school believes it is important for the college advisor to have strong working relationships with college admissions staff and so underwrites the cost of her visiting colleges on a regular basis. Professional development for counselors on the district level is provided by the City University of NY (CUNY). In Los Angeles, the assistant principal at one Los Angeles high school to whom the counselors report considers professional development essential to effective college counseling. He observed, “The more my counselors know, the better they can bridge the [college advising] information gap.” Counselors here participate in a variety of professional development activities at both the school and district levels as well as counselor days organized by local colleges and universities.

### *Involvement of community and higher education partners*

Students and counselors at all the high schools spoke of community organizations and/or higher education institutions that provided assistance with getting students ready for college.

### ***Community based organizations***

Most of the community organizations mentioned were non-profits whose mission was to help students make successful transitions from high school to college. Some organizations placed staff members or volunteers in schools to advise students on academics, college admissions, and financial aid. They also offered test preparation workshops, campus visits, career exploration experiences, and assistance with completing applications. Examples of these organizations that people mentioned include federally-funded Talent Search and GEAR UP programs, the Denver Scholarship Foundation, the Harlem Center for Education and Mind Over Matter in New York, and CollegePath LA. Other organizations offer similar services away at non-school sites during after-school hours and summer vacation along with academic and cultural enrichment activities.

One school counselor expressed concern about the fact that each of the community-based college access programs has its own concept of which students it wants

to serve and what services it wants to provide, without regard to the needs of the school. She believes that students would be better served if organizations worked with the counselors to assess their needs within the school context and then offered services to address these needs.

### ***Higher education institutions***

Higher education partners provide students essentially the same after-school and summer college access programming as the community organizations. The fact that most of these activities take place on the campuses of the sponsoring institution has the added benefit of familiarizing students with a campus setting. In addition, students at all of the high schools are able to enroll concurrently in community college courses for which they receive both high school and college credit

### ***Other topics***

#### ***College fairs***

Students discussed attending two types of college fairs—those organized annually by their high schools on back-to-school nights and attended by students and parents in grades 9-12; and those organized by organizations that are open to students citywide. Students spoke more often about the fairs held at their high school than the citywide fairs. They found it helpful more to be able to talk with admissions representatives personally than to visit colleges' web sites. They also appreciated the opportunity college fairs provided for their presents to learn about different types of college options and the admissions process. At one of the New York high schools, teachers staffed the booths of the colleges they attended if the institution did not send a representative to the college fair, a feature that students there particularly enjoyed.

#### ***Counselor involvement in curricular planning***

Except for the principal of one of Denver high schools, administrators and counselors did not mention involvement in curricular planning as one of the responsibilities or priorities of counselors. The principal indicated that he wanted his counselors to challenge

**Higher education partners provide students essentially the same after-school and summer college access programming as the community organizations.**

the school's academic departments to offer courses they knew higher education institutions were looking for students to have taken in high school.

### ***Data and sources of information for counselors***

Counselors were the only people interviewed that the team asked about sources of data and information about Latino/students that they either used or would find helpful in their work. They had little to say about this topic. They mentioned having access to two sources of data—information about colleges provided by college admissions representatives and information about the post-graduation plans of 12th graders gather through an exit survey administered just before graduation. They did not consider either source of data reliable or useful. *Regarding data they would find helpful, counselors indicated they would like to have data on the college experiences of their graduates and information about the support services different colleges provide about which they could advise their students.* It appeared that none of the schools has access to National Student Clearinghouse data. A counselor at one of the schools with Naviance thought that there was a way to track graduates using this system, but had not tried it.

### **Recommendations for improving college readiness counseling for Latino/a students from Students, Counselors and Administrators**

The promising practices and recommendations for improving college readiness counseling for Latino/a students listed below represent both current school activities that students indicated made a difference to them, and what students, counselors, and administrators recommended when asked about other college counseling services they would like their schools to offer.

**Table 4. Table 4. Promising Counseling Strategies**

	<i>Students</i>	<i>Counselors</i>	<i>Administrators</i>
Develop students' understanding of a wide array of college options by taking them to <b>visit more campuses</b> , organizing campus visits for parents at times that are convenient and accommodate family needs, and <b>increasing the number of college representatives visiting the high school</b> .	✓	✓	✓
<b>Start the college planning process in 9th grade</b> , making students aware of the importance of the courses they take in H.S. and their GPA in the college admissions process, and; the different types of postsecondary options, including proprietary schools and the advantages and drawbacks of each option.	✓	✓	✓
<b>Provide college counselors sufficient time to work with 11th and 12th graders individually and in small groups</b> , helping them navigate step by step through the college exploration and application process. Counselors interviewed suggested three ways for doing this: 1) reduce the student/college counselor ratios by hiring additional college advising staff; 2) provide teachers with time and training to do college advising; and 3) establish a peer college advising program with 12th graders providing basic college planning information and encouragement to 9-11th graders.	✓	✓	✓
<b>Develop a strong college-going culture</b> , one in which the administrators, teachers, and counselors throughout the school convey the expectation that all students will go to college, including those who are under-performing.	✓	✓	✓
Offer <b>comprehensive financial aid counseling</b> , including help finding scholarships and completing aid applications; and understanding aid award letters and the trade-offs involved in deciding which college is the best fit for a student.	✓	✓	
Offer college planning activities designed for <b>both students and their parents</b> , and incentives for students to get their parents to participate with them in such activities	✓	✓	
Tap <b>Latino/a alumni</b> who have completed college, work in varied fields, and serve as positive role models to help students the challenges and benefits of postsecondary education, the career options open to people with college degrees, and what they can do in high school to prepare for college success		✓	✓
<b>Communicate forcefully to school district leaders the critical importance of increasing the college counseling capacity</b> of high schools with high Latino/a populations, emphasizing the fact that students who are first in their families to go to college have a greater need for such assistance from their school than students whose parents are college graduates.		✓	



There was remarkable consensus among students, counselors and administrators regarding promising college readiness counseling practices. Students, counselors, and administrators agreed that the following activities presented promise:

- More campus visits;
- Increasing the number of college representatives visiting high schools;
- Allowing sufficient time for one-on-one or small group meetings between students and counselors, particularly in 11th and 12th grade; and
- Creating and maintaining a college-going culture.

Students and counselors agreed that the following activities were effective:

- Comprehensive financial aid counseling; and
- College planning activities designed for both students and families.

Finally, counselors believed that developing near-peer relationships with Latino/a alumni to help current students.



**Arranging for parents to meet with admissions recruiters in the evenings when they are in town provides another opportunity for parents to become familiar and comfortable with such institutions.**



## Section III: Survey Findings

The site visits illustrated that the experience of students, counselors and administrators in the Latino/a student college preparation process aligns closely with the academic literature. In this final section of the report, we examine national survey data to explore trends in college counseling in public high schools nation-wide.

Data collected from NACAC's 2012 Counseling Trends Survey suggest there are significant differences in school climate and counseling department characteristics between public schools with large multicultural student populations and high schools with predominantly white, non-Hispanic student populations. In this analysis we compare schools with majority non-white populations to schools with majority white, non-Hispanic populations.

As is outlined in the academic literature and explored in the site visits associated with this study, we examine the survey results pertaining to effects on college preparation in three topic areas: (1) school climate, (2) counseling department structure and function, and (3) counseling practices. The purpose of combining this survey data with school case study data is to examine ways in which the student experience aligns with survey research describing potential challenges to counseling Latino/a students, as well as potential means to overcoming those challenges.

In this section of the report, we first analyze descriptive statistics to illustrate general differences in school attributes, then present the results of an analysis of the influence of school and counseling factors on indicators of college access.

### Descriptive Statistics

#### *School climate*

Several school characteristics help shape counseling practices and college-going, including enrollment size, average socioeconomic status (SES), and rigor of curriculum. On average, in 2012 schools with majority non-white student populations enrolled 215 more students than majority white, non-Hispanic schools (1098 versus 883 students). Research has found that students in large high schools (especially those with greater than 900 students) achieve slower growth in reading and math test scores than students in medium (600-900 students) sized schools. Further, the influence of school size has a stronger effect on learning in schools with lower SES students and also in schools with high concentrations of minority students (Lee, V.E. & Smith, J.B., 1997).

**The influence of school size has a stronger effect on learning in schools with lower SES students and also in schools with high concentrations of minority students**

Student eligibility for the National Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program was used to estimate socioeconomic characteristics of respondent schools. Students of families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free lunches. Students with family incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-priced meals. In 2012, those schools with majority non-white populations reported substantially larger

proportions of students who were eligible for FRPL. Of the total sample of public schools, about 39 percent of students were eligible for FRPL. At the average majority non-white school, well over half (63 percent) of the students were eligible for the program. As shown in Table Five, this is more than double the average FRPL eligibility rate at public majority white, non-Hispanic schools (31 percent). Research has shown that students

from lower-SES backgrounds enroll in college—especially selective institutions—at significantly lower rates compared to similarly-qualified higher income cohorts (Carnevale, A.P. & Rose, S.J., 2003). One reason for this may be the lack of college application information that more affluent peers receive from families and social networks. (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2008).

**Table 5: School Climate**

	<i>Total, all public schools</i>	<i>Majority white, non-Hispanic</i>	<i>Majority non-white</i>
<b>School Characteristics</b>			
Percent FRPL eligible	39.29	31.04	63.15
Total enrollment	944.19	883.43	1098.12
AP offered	82.4	83.3	79.9
Percent enrolled in AP	20.4	19.91	21.31
Enriched Curriculum offered	79.1	78.9	79.8
Percent enrolled in Enriched Curriculum	27.24	28.77	26.56
Dual enrollment offered	87.3	89.0	83.0
Percent enrolled in Dual enrollment	12.97	14.24	10.29
Percent of students who took SAT	31.96	30.45	36.90
Percent of students who took ACT	34.79	36.58	32.58
<b>Counselor Attitudes (Percent Responded “Strongly Agree”)</b>			
Staff in my school expect most students to go to college	41.4	42.4	38.8
School staff help students plan for college outside of class time	19.4	20.4	16.7
My school’s curriculum is focused on helping students get ready for college	46.3	49.2	38.8
School staff feel it is an important part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college	39.5	41.2	35.1
Many of my school’s students plan to go to college	50.4	51.7	47.1
Many of my school’s students are well-prepared for college	34.0	37.2	25.9

NOTE: Italics represent differences between majority white, non-Hispanic and majority non-white schools that are statistically significant,  $p < .01$

Source: NACAC 2012 Counseling Trends Survey

Completing advanced coursework in high school is also associated with higher academic achievement in college (Adelman, C., 2006). A large majority of survey respondent schools offered advanced coursework in three different ways: Advanced Placement, enriched curriculum (including honors or other college preparatory coursework), and courses at an institution of higher education (dual/early enrollment). About 82 percent of all schools surveyed offered AP courses, 79 percent offered enriched curriculum, and 87 percent offered dual enrollment. There were no significant differences in the likelihood to offer advanced coursework between majority non-white and majority white, non-Hispanic schools. Similarly, at schools where advanced courses were offered, the proportion of students enrolled in these courses did not differ significantly between majority white, non-Hispanic and majority non-white schools. Previous research confirms our finding that Advanced Placement courses are offered at equivalent rates at both predominantly minority and white high schools. However, previous studies have found that underrepresented minority students enroll in AP courses at much lower rates, a trend that was not observed in our survey data. (Klopfenstein, K., 2004; Ndura, E., Robinson, M. & Ochs, G., 2003).

### ***Counselor Attitudes***

The NACAC 2012 Counseling Trends Survey asked counselors whether or not they agreed with six statements regarding college-going and school climate. Half of the respondents “strongly agreed” with the statement: Many of my school’s students plan to go to college. Another 44 percent “agreed.” This is consistent with research that found most high school students have high postsecondary aspirations (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2008).

An overwhelming majority of counselors also reported that they agree or strongly agree with the following statements: My school’s curriculum is focused on helping students get ready for college (46.3 strongly agree, 46.6 agree), school staff feel it is an important part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college (39.5 percent strongly agree, 49.8 agree), staff in my school expect most students to go to college (41.4 percent strongly agree, 45.5 agree), and many of my school’s students are well-prepared for college (34.0

percent strongly agree, 49.5 agree). A slightly smaller majority of respondents reported they strongly agree or agree that school staff help students plan for college outside of class time (19.4 percent strongly agree, 51.1 percent agree).

Compared to respondents from majority non-white schools, staff at schools with predominantly white, non-Hispanic students were more likely to strongly agree that, many students are well-prepared for college, the school’s curriculum is focused on helping students get ready for college, and school staff feel it is an important part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college (See Table 5). Despite these small differences, the vast majority of both groups of counselors had positive outlooks about their college advising role, their school, and their students.

### ***Counseling department structure***

#### ***Staff roles***

School counseling departments at public high schools vary by staff size, structure and experience. About 31 percent of public schools surveyed had at least one counseling staff member whose duties were dedicated exclusively to college admission counseling. Schools with majority non-white populations were much more likely to have a dedicated college counselor (47 percent) compared to majority white, non-Hispanic schools (25 percent).

#### ***Student to counselor ratio***

Despite this difference in department structure, there was no significant difference in the student to college counselor ratio between both types of schools (See Table 6). This means that students at both predominantly white, non-Hispanic and predominantly non-white schools have about equal access to college advising—either from a counselor dedicated only to college admission or a counselor responsible for several duties. On average, college counselors reported caseloads of 354 students, significantly higher than the ASCA recommended 250 students to one counselor ratio. This is a concern because previous research indicates lower student to counselor ratios are associated with more early college preparation and increased college attendance rates (McDonough, P., 1997).



**Table 6. Counseling Department Structure**

	<i>Total, all public schools</i>	<i>Majority white, non-Hispanic</i>	<i>Majority non-white</i>
<b>School counseling department characteristics</b>			
<b>Student to College Counselor Ratio</b>	<b>353.85</b>	<b>351.19</b>	<b>358.83</b>
<b>Has counselor that speaks Spanish</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>
<b>Has other staff that uses Spanish</b>	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>76.5%</b>	<b>87.4%</b>
<b>Has counselor that speaks foreign language</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>
<b>Number of Hispanic/Latino counselors</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.55</b>
<b>Require postsecondary professional development for counselors responsible for college counseling</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>38.4%</b>
<b>All Postsecondary professional development costs are covered</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>24.9%</b>
<b>Provide staff development about college planning for under-represented student populations</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>44.2%</b>

NOTE: Italics represent differences that are statistically significant,  $p < .01$

Source: NACAC 2012 Counseling Trends Survey

### ***Staff demographic characteristics***

Not surprisingly, counseling staff reported greater capacity to communicate with populations for whom English is not the first language at schools with more diverse student populations (See Table 6). Counseling departments at majority non-white schools were much more likely to employ a counselor that spoke foreign languages. About 43 percent of these departments included at least one counselor that spoke a foreign language, while only about 13 percent of majority white, non-Hispanic schools did so. Prior research has suggested that employing a culturally representative counseling staff is important because students have reported a need for counselors of similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds to make communication easier. (Eckenrod-Green, W. & Culbreth, J.R., 2008).

### ***Professional development***

Professional development participation among counselors at public schools surveyed was relatively low. Only one-third (33 percent) of public schools required counselors responsible for college counseling to complete professional development regarding

college/postsecondary counseling. This may be because only 29 percent of schools surveyed covered all costs of postsecondary professional development activities. Thirty-two percent of schools reported offering staff development focused on college planning for underrepresented student populations. This specialized professional development was offered at 44 percent of majority non-white schools and 27 percent of majority white, non-Hispanic schools.

### ***Counseling Practices***

#### ***Counseling Department Goals***

Counselors were asked to rank the following department goals from 1 (Most Important) to 4 (Least Emphasis):

- Help students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school;
- Help students with personal growth and development;
- Help students plan and prepare for postsecondary education, and

- Help students with their academic achievement in high school.

On average, counselors ranked helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary education as their second-most important goal. Helping students with personal growth and development and helping students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school were ranked third and fourth most-important, respectively. Counselors from predominantly non-white schools reported the same rankings as colleagues from majority white, non-Hispanic schools.

### ***College Planning Services Provided***

Public school counselors reported providing a variety of specialized services aimed at helping underrepresented students transition from high school to college. The most popular among these services was hosting

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion events. Table seven shows that 82 percent of survey respondents hosted FAFSA completion programs conducted in English and 36 percent hosted these programs in Spanish. Majority non-white schools were more likely to host FAFSA programs in both English (92 percent) and Spanish (57 percent). A majority of high schools also offered flexible hours to accommodate family meetings (77 percent). Translation services at college planning events and college planning materials in Spanish were offered by 31 and 45 percent of public high schools, respectively. Schools with majority non-white student populations were more likely to offer these services (56 offered translation and 61 offered materials in Spanish). Very few high schools reported offering transportation for families to (13 percent) and childcare during (7 percent) college planning events.

**Table 7: School Counseling Practices**

	<i>Total, all public schools</i>	<i>Majority white, non-Hispanic</i>	<i>Majority non-white</i>
<b>Goals (Percent Responded “most important goal”)</b>			
Help students plan and prepared for their work roles after high school	9.9%	9.4%	11.3%
Help students with personal growth and development	13.4	13.1	14.1
Help students plan and prepare for postsecondary education	27.1	27.8	25.2
Help students with their academic achievement in high school	50.3	50.0	51.0
<b>Services Provided</b>			
Transportation for families to college planning events	12.7%	10.2%	20.3%
Translation services for college planning events	30.7	21.7	56.1
College planning materials in Spanish	44.9	38.4	61.4
Flexible hours to accommodate family meetings	76.6	76.4	79.7
Childcare during college planning events	6.9	4.8	9.8
FAFSA completion initiatives in English	82.1	78.8	92.4
FAFSA completion initiatives in Spanish	36.0	27.8	57.4
Other specialized support for under-represented students	51.7	43.3	77.2

*Continues.*

Programs			
Partner with CBO to improve college access	40.1%	33.7%	56.9%
Coordinate college planning for underrepresented students among various school staff	42.8	33.7	68.8
Encourage underrepresented students to plan for college/career after high school	71.9	68.1	82.7
Inform families of underrepresented students about postsecondary opportunities	69.1	65.4	80.9
Use peer-to-peer mentoring for college planning	23.2	21.1	30.6
<b>Activities (Percent Responded “frequently conducted”)</b>			
Group counseling about PS education	34.5%	29.6%	46.0%
Individual meetings to discuss PS options	78.9	79.5	77.7
Meeting with parents to discuss PS options	32.6	31.5	34.1
PS financial aid/scholarship counseling	33.6	30.7	43.7
Advice on standardized testing	25.3	23.6	29.7
Proofing applications (including essay)	31.2	27.3	38.3
Electronic communication about PS education	39.9	40.6	37.7
Organized tours of PS campuses	10.1	7.9	16.6
Hosting colleges reps at HS	67.0	70.0	58.9
Working with school leadership to develop curricula	31.6	29.7	34.5
Actively represent students to college	39.8	39.0	42.3
<b>Counselor Workload (percentage of time)</b>			
Help students choose and schedule HS courses	24.18%	23.81%	24.35%
Postsecondary admission counseling	22.81	22.52	22.86
Academic testing	12.93	12.83	13.78
Occupational counseling/job placement	6.85	6.90	6.57
Personal needs counseling	21.80	22.13	21.27
Teaching	4.56	4.96	3.55
Other non-counseling activities	4.73	4.62	5.22

*Continues.*

Counselor Attitudes (Percent Responded “Strongly Agree”)			
Staff in my school expect most students to go to college	41.4%	42.4%	38.8%
School staff help students plan for college outside of class time	19.4	20.4	16.7
My school’s curriculum is focused on helping students get ready for college	46.3	49.2	38.8
School staff feel it is an important part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college	39.5	41.2	35.1
Many of my school’s students plan to go to college	50.4	51.7	47.1
Many of my school’s students are well-prepared for college	34.0	37.2	25.9

NOTE: Italics represent differences that are statistically significant,  $p < .01$

Source: NACAC 2012 Counseling Trends Survey

### ***Programs Offered***

A number of high schools offered students the opportunity to participate in special college planning programs. About 72 percent of schools implemented a program to encourage underrepresented students to plan for college/career after high school. Most schools (70 percent) had programs to inform families of underrepresented students about postsecondary opportunities. A smaller proportion of schools coordinated college planning efforts for underrepresented students among various school staff (43 percent) or partnered with community based organizations (CBO) to improve college access (40 percent). Less than one-quarter of public schools surveyed used peer-to-peer mentoring for college planning.

Majority non-white schools were more likely to offer each of these specialized programs compared to majority white, non-Hispanic schools (See Table 7).

### ***Frequency of Counseling Activities***

Counselors were asked how frequently they conducted various postsecondary counseling activities. A large majority of counselors (79 percent) reported that they frequently held individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary options. A majority of counselors (67 percent) frequently hosted admission representatives from colleges at their high school. On average,

counselors reported that they “Occasionally” (mean rating of 3 on a scale of 1= Never to 4= Frequently) conducted each of the following activities: group counseling sessions about postsecondary education, meetings with parents to discuss postsecondary options, postsecondary financial aid/ scholarship counseling, advice on standardized testing, proof reading of student applications (including essays), collaboration with school leadership to develop college preparatory curricula, and actively representing individual students to colleges. Counselors reported that they “Infrequently” (mean rating of 2 on a scale of 1= Never to 4= Frequently) organized tours of postsecondary campuses for students. Counselors at schools with a majority non-white population were more likely to organize these college campus tours (mean rating 2.55 versus 2.04 at majority white, non-Hispanic schools). Counselors at majority non-white schools more frequently provided postsecondary financial aid/ scholarship advising but less frequently communicated electronically with students compared to counselors at majority white, non-Hispanic schools (See Table 7).

### ***Counselor Workload***

Survey results indicated that school counselors divide their work time among many responsibilities. On average, counselors spent the largest portion of their time on helping students choose and schedule high



school courses (24 percent of workload), providing postsecondary admission counseling (23 percent), and delivering personal needs counseling (22 percent). About 13 percent of counselors' time was spent conducting standardized testing. Relatively little time was spent on occupational counseling/ job placement (seven percent), teaching (five percent), and other non-counseling activities (five percent). There were no significant differences in workload division between counselors at majority non-white and those at majority white, non-Hispanic schools.

### *Summary of Descriptive Statistics*

These findings about school counseling practices show that postsecondary admission counseling is one of several tasks that all public school counselors fulfill to meet student needs. As part of their overall counseling strategy, a majority of public schools offer a variety of services, programs and activities to support students as they transition from high school to college and career. It is encouraging that schools with traditionally underrepresented (non-white) populations are more likely to offer specialized support that encourages students who traditionally lag in college enrollment to plan for postsecondary education.

## **Analysis: School Counseling's Role in College Enrollment**

Having reviewed the varying structures, policies and practices among high school counseling offices, this section of the report examines how these characteristics influence the rate at which a high school's graduates enroll in college. We use six multivariate linear regression models to assess how school, student body, and counseling department characteristics affect the percentage of students from each high school who attend two- and four-year postsecondary institutions immediately after graduation. We also compare results between public high schools with majority non-white and majority white, non-Hispanic student populations.

This analysis will help answer the following research questions:

- Does the rate of college enrollment vary between public high schools of different ethnic/racial composition?

- What is the relationship between school counseling practices and college enrollment?
- Do counseling characteristics and other school characteristics explain why college enrollment varies by school?
- How does the relationship between counseling factors and college enrollment rates differ among schools of different ethnic/racial composition?

Literature has found that frequent contact with school counselors may have a positive effect on college enrollment, holding school and student characteristics constant (Bryan, J., Moore-Thomas, C., Day-Vines, N.L. & Holcomb-McCoy, C., 2011; Belasco, A.S., 2013). However, there is little research that examines the types of counseling practices and activities that are most effective in helping students transition from high school to college. This analysis shows which specific counseling activities are most prevalent in high schools that report high college enrollment rates. We also examine whether or not these counseling activities differ between schools with predominantly white, non-Hispanic and those with predominantly non-white student populations.

## **Dependent Variables**

The analysis focuses on three types of college going. Preliminary correlation analyses indicated that several counseling factors had inverse relationships with four-year compared to two-year college enrollment rates. For example, public schools that implemented partnerships with Community Based Organizations to improve college access were likely to have lower four-year enrollment and higher two-year enrollment rates. This divergence makes interpreting counseling activities' effect on total college enrollment (counting all students that enrolled at either a four-year or two-year postsecondary institution) difficult. For this reason, total, four- and two-year college enrollment rates were examined separately.

- On average, public high schools reported that 49 percent of their graduates enrolled in a four-year college and 30 enrolled in a two-year college the fall following high school graduation.
- Schools with majority white, non-Hispanic student populations reported higher four-year and lower two-year enrollment compared to majority non-white schools.

First, the descriptive statistics for each dependent variable (four-year, two-year, total college enrollment) are presented. On average, 49 percent of high school students attended a four-year institution the fall following graduation and 30 percent attended a two-year institution. Thus, about 79 percent of the graduates from schools surveyed enrolled in any college immediately after high school graduation. These results are slightly higher than the immediate college enrollment rates reported by the US Department of Education. Nationally, 68 percent of all high school graduates (from private and public high schools) enrolled in college in the fall of 2011, directly following high school graduation. Forty-two percent of graduates enrolled at a four-year institution and 26 percent enrolled at a two-year institution in 2011, according to the Department of Education.

Schools with a majority white, non-Hispanic student body reported higher four-year enrollment (52 percent) and lower two-year enrollment rates (28 percent) compared to majority non-white schools (43 percent of graduates attended four-year institutions and 34 percent attended two-year colleges). There was no significant difference in the total (four-year plus two-year) enrollment rate between the two types of schools.

The average college enrollment rates differed by FRPL eligibility, total enrollment, strength of curriculum, and standardized admission test-taking. This is consistent with the literature that shows a relationship between college going and these school characteristics. (Engberg, M.E. & Wolniak, G.C., 2010; Oseguera, L., 2013).

In addition, the average college going rates at public high schools differed by school counseling characteristics. As reported in Appendix C, the levels of time school counselors spent on different counseling tasks were associated with varying college enrollment rates. It is important to note that public schools where counseling activities (like individual meeting with students, meeting with parents, advice on standardized testing, reviewing applications, electronic communication, hosting college representatives, and representing students to colleges) were conducted more frequently averaged higher overall and four-year enrollment but lower two-year enrollment rates.

Four-year and total college enrollment differed by counselor attitudes. Schools where counselors agreed that most students will go to college, staff helped students plan for college outside of class time, the curriculum was focused on college preparation, the staff felt it was an important part of their job to help students succeed in college, many student planned to and were well-prepared to attend college reported higher four-year and total college enrollment rates (See Appendix C). This finding supports previous research that suggests positive counselor attitudes improve student outcomes (Gandara, 2001. Bryan et al, 2009).

## Independent Variables

The independent variables in the regression models included both school environment and counseling practice variables. We used school poverty level, total enrollment, advanced college preparatory curriculum participation, and standardized entrance exam (SAT/ACT) participation to estimate school environment, as previous research has found relationships between these factors and college access (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2013; Oseguera, L., 2013). School poverty level was measured by the percentage of students that were eligible for the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program. Advanced curriculum participation was measured by three variables: the percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the percentage of students enrolled in enriched coursework (including honors or other college preparatory curriculum), and the percentage of students taking courses at an institution of higher education (through dual or early enrollment). The entrance exam participation was measured by the percentage of students who took the most popular of the two tests at the school. For example, if a school reported that 90 percent of the students took the SAT and 20 percent took the ACT, the 90 percent was entered into the regression.

Student to college counselor ratio, the availability of specialized college planning programs and services, the percentage of time counselors spent on various counseling tasks, the frequency that counselors performed individualized college counseling activities, and counselor expectations were included in the

regression analysis to explore how counseling factors are related to college enrollment.

Several of the counseling variables examined were condensed into factors to build a stronger regression model. The 11 activity variables (from descriptive statistics table) were reduced using factor analysis into a “frequency of individualized counseling activities” variable. The individual variables with the strongest loadings on this factor were: actively representing students to college admission offices, reviewing/proofing student applications (including essays) for postsecondary admission, advice and education to students and families on standardized testing, meeting with parents to discuss students’ postsecondary options, electronic communication with students or parents about postsecondary admission, and individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary options (See Appendix B).

The survey asked high schools to report whether or not they offered ten different specialized programs and services.<sup>1</sup> Individually, only three of the ten variables showed a statistically significant correlation with college enrollment and the Pearson correlation values were relatively small ( $<.150$ ). The *sum* of services and programs provided was more strongly correlated with college enrollment rates.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that no singular program has an overwhelming impact on college going, but a supportive counseling structure comprised of several specialized services and programs may be influential. For this reason, the sum of specialized programs and services was included as one, continuous variable in the regression modeling. On average, public

schools offered six of the specialized programs or services in 2012.

Similarly, the counselor attitude variables were not significant factors when entered into the model individually. This is most likely because they were closely correlated with each other and there was not a lot of variation in each variable. For these reasons, the attitude variables were combined into one “very positive counselor attitude” variable. This variable is a dummy variable that equals one if the counselor answered “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to all six expectation survey questions.<sup>3</sup> About 55 percent of the sample fit the criteria for “very positive counselor attitude.” Counselors at majority white, non-Hispanic high schools were more likely to have very positive attitudes (58 percent compared to counselors at majority non-white schools (47 percent).

Some counseling variables that were measured in the survey were not at all correlated with the school college going rate, so these variables were not included in the final regression models. These variables include counseling department goal rankings (helping students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school, helping students with personal growth and development, helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary education, and helping students with their academic achievement in high school).

## Regression Models

Our analysis used six models to compare school and counseling factors that influence college enrollment rates at high schools of different racial/ethnic student

<sup>1</sup> Services listed in the survey include: Transportation for families to college planning events or meetings, Translation services for college planning events or meetings, College planning publications and materials in Spanish, Flexible hours to accommodate meetings with families, Child care during college planning events or meetings, FAFSA completion initiative (in English and Spanish). Programs listed in the survey include: Partner with CBOs to improve college access and success, Use peer-to-peer mentoring/counseling for college planning, Coordinate college planning efforts for under-represented students among various staff, Encourage under-represented students to plan for college/career after high school, Inform families of under-represented students about postsecondary opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> Correlation between the sum of specialized services and programs and: percentage of graduates from majority white, non-Hispanic schools attending college ( $-.137$ ) and percentage of graduates from majority non-white schools attending college (.262),  $p < .01$

<sup>3</sup> Survey questions included: Staff in my school expect most students to go to college, School staff help students plan for college outside of class time, My school’s curriculum is focused on helping students get ready for college, School staff feel it is an important part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college, Many of my school’s students plan to go to college, Many of my school’s students are well-prepared for college.

bodies. The 17 independent variables were entered into the model in six blocks.

The R-squared value represents the proportion of variation in the dependent variable (college enrollment rate) that can be explained by the model. The four-year enrollment models were the strongest because they had the largest R-squared values (.510 for majority white, non-Hispanic and .441 for majority non-white models). The two-year enrollment models had considerably smaller R-squared values (.192 for majority white, non-Hispanic and .196 for majority non-white models) suggesting there are factors other than the included school and counseling variables that explain the variation in two-year enrollment rates. The total college going variable is a combination of the four-year and two-year rates, so as expected the total college enrollment model had an R-squared value between those of the four- and two-year models (.337 for majority white, non-Hispanic and .327 for majority non-white).

## Limitations

Regression analysis does not allow us to make causal inferences, but it does allow us to investigate how a set of counseling and school climate variables is associated with college enrollment at public high schools.

In addition, compared to all public secondary schools in the United States, schools with larger enrollment and larger proportions of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch were overrepresented in the survey sample (See Appendix A).

There may be additional factors that influence average college enrollment rates at public high schools. The survey data used covers many aspects of the school environment and counseling services, but there may be additional variables significantly related to college-going that have been omitted from the analysis. For example, counselor experience or certification may be associated with the quality of college planning services provided, but we did not collect such information in the survey. Additionally, student academic achievement levels in high school are certainly related to college enrollment, but our dataset does not include student achievement information. Although we could not include these variables in our analysis, our study is based on the premise that there is still value in analyzing the counseling factors that influence schools' college going rate.

## Results

### *Four-year enrollment*

**Key finding:** The frequency of individualized college counseling activities had a positive effect on four year college enrollment in both the majority white, non-Hispanic and majority non-white models. The standardized coefficient was actually nearly as large as that for FRPL eligibility in the majority non-white model. This means that when counselors more frequently conducted college planning activities focused on individual needs, more students—especially those at majority non-white high schools—enrolled at a four-year college.

### *Additional findings include:*

- FRPL eligibility is negatively associated with four-year enrollment in both majority white, non-Hispanic and majority non-white public high schools.
- The proportion of students who took the ACT or SAT was positively associated with four-year college enrollment rates.
- At majority white, non-Hispanic schools, AP and enriched curricula participation were also positively associated with four-year college enrollment rate.
- Non-counseling factors had larger effects on four-year college enrollment than the counseling factors. For majority white, non-Hispanic schools, FRPL was the variable with the largest impact while entrance exam (SAT/ACT) taking was the largest for majority non-white schools.
- Schools where counselors reported more frequently conducting individualized counseling activities were likely to have higher four-year college enrollment.

The percent of students eligible for FRPL, the percent of students taking the SAT/ACT, and the frequency of individualized counseling activities were the variables with the largest, most significant relationship with four-year college enrollment. The standardized coefficient for the percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) in the model for majority white, non-Hispanic schools is -.299 (See Appendix Table D). This means that holding all other variables constant, a one standard



deviation increase in FRPL-eligible percentage would result in a .299 standard deviation decrease in four-year enrollment rate. FRPL has the largest magnitude standardized coefficient in the majority white, non-Hispanic model, so it has the most influence on four-year college enrollment compared to the other variables in the model. The percentage of students taking the SAT or ACT and the percentage of students enrolled in AP courses also have relatively large standardized coefficients. For every standard deviation increase in SAT/ACT participation, four-year enrollment increased by .188 standard deviations. In the majority non-white model, the standardized coefficient of SAT/ACT taking is even larger (.303). It even outweighs that of FRPL eligibility (-.275).

Previous research has also found that high schools with large proportions of FRPL-eligible students are likely to have lower rates of four-year college enrollment. (Walpole, M. (2003; Cabrera, A.F. & La Nasa, S.M., 2001). Just as in our model, schools with lower SAT/ACT participation have been reported as having lower college enrollment (McDonough, 1997; Hurwitz, M. & Smith, J., 2012). The percentage of students enrolled in AP or enriched curricula are also positively related to four-year college enrollment rates at white, non-Hispanic schools. These coefficients are positive for the majority non-white model as well, but because of the smaller sample size are not statistically significant. Many studies have found that advanced coursework in high school predicts college enrollment and success. (Adelman, C., 1999; Adelman, C., 2006).

In the majority white, non-Hispanic model, four counseling factors were significantly related to four-year college enrollment. The percentage of time counselors spent on postsecondary admission counseling had a positive effect on the four-year enrollment rate. This was the only significant counselor workload variable in either four-year model. This suggests that in terms of encouraging four-year college enrollment, college admission counseling is the most productive way counselors can spend their time.

Predominantly white, non-Hispanic high schools with counselors that reported positive attitudes towards their school and students were likely to have higher four-year college enrollment rates. This supports previous research that counselor expectations can

improve college aspiration and enrollment. (Gandara, 2001. Bryan et al, 2009) However, this variable was not significant in the majority non-white high school model.

Interestingly, the total number of specialized programs and services offered was negatively associated with four-year college enrollment rates at majority white, non-Hispanic schools. Specialized programs and services are designed to support underprepared students, and are most likely only offered at schools with significant proportions of underprepared students and traditionally low college participation rates. Offering a larger number of specialized college planning programs and services had a positive (although not significant) association with four-year enrollment in the majority non-white school model.

### *Two-year enrollment*

**Key Finding:** At schools with majority non-white student populations, counselor time spent on occupational counseling and time spent on teaching were negatively related to two-year enrollment. This is unexpected because students interested in entering a career following high school (those we would expect to see the counselor for occupational advising) would be more likely to attend a community or technical college for certification. The counselors that spent more time on occupational counseling either advised students that a four-year degree is necessary to achieve career goals, or spent this time working with students who did not attend college at all.

### ***Additional findings include:***

- Several of the variables that were positively associated with four-year enrollment rates were negatively associated with two-year enrollment rates.
- FRPL eligibility and dual enrollment were positively associated with two-year enrollment and enriched curriculum participation was negatively related with two-year enrollment at predominantly white, non-Hispanic high schools.
- The only significant non-counseling factor in the majority non-white school model was SAT/ACT taking, which was negatively related to two-year enrollment rate.

- At majority white, non-Hispanic schools more counselor time spent on postsecondary admission counseling and more time spent on non-counseling activities were related with lower two-year enrollment rates.

The school and counseling factors used in the regression analysis had notably different relationships with two-year enrollment compared to four-year enrollment. In the majority white, non-Hispanic model, the proportion of FRPL-eligible students was again a significant predictor of college enrollment, except in the opposite way: higher FRPL eligibility was associated with higher two-year enrollment. This is consistent with the literature as underrepresented students are more likely to enroll in community colleges compared to four-year institutions (Perna, L.W., 2006; Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2008).

The proportion of students taking the SAT/ACT was significant in the majority non-white, two-year college enrollment model only. Again, the opposite effect was observed compared to the four-year model. For every one standard deviation increase in the proportion of students who took the SAT/ACT, the rate of two-year college enrollment decreased by .174 standard deviations (See Appendix Table D). This may be because many two-year institutions have open enrollment policies and do not require standardized exams to enroll.

Two additional school characteristics were significant predictors of two-year college enrollment rates for graduates from majority white, non-Hispanic schools. The larger the percentage of students enrolled in an enriched curriculum, the lower the two-year enrollment rate. However, high participation in dual enrollment programs was associated with higher two-year enrollment rates. The dual enrollment literature contains evidence that dual enrollment increases overall college enrollment. The few studies that differentiated between four-year and two-year enrollment found an increased likelihood of enrollment in four-year colleges. (Community College Research Center., 2012; Karp, M., Calcagno, J., Hughes, K., Jeong, D., & Bailey, T., 2007). Our models control for AP and enriched high school curricula, so the dual enrollment findings may reflect the students who take career/technical courses in high school and continue to technical field study at a two-year institution.

However, more research is needed in this area to confirm technical training enrollment patterns.

The counseling factors that were related to two-year enrollment differed between the majority white, non-Hispanic and the majority non-white school models. For the schools with majority white, non-Hispanic students, the amount of time counselors spent on postsecondary admission counseling as well as the time spent on non-counseling activities were negatively related to two-year enrollment. As seen in the four-year model, when counselors spend more time on college admission counseling, students were more likely to enroll at a four-year institution. Counseling likely helps some students better navigate the admission process to a four-year college when they may have attended an open enrollment community college without the counselor support.

#### *Total college enrollment*

**Key Finding:** The frequent use of individualized counseling activities was positively related to total college enrollment at majority non-white schools. Our study suggests that the way counselors' time is divided and the frequency of counseling activities influence college going, not simply the size of the counselor caseload. In order to improve college enrollment in schools with extremely large student-to-counselor ratios, counselors must be given the latitude to prioritize postsecondary admission advising and allowed the time to conduct individualized admission counseling activities.

#### *Additional findings include:*

- For both majority non-white and majority white, non-Hispanic high schools, the percent of FRPL eligible students is the largest predictor of total college enrollment. Schools with more FRPL eligible students are likely to have a lower total college enrollment rate.
- The percentage of students who took the SAT or ACT was positively associated with college enrollment rate at both types of schools. AP participation was also positively related to college enrollment at majority white, non-Hispanic schools.
- More counselor time spent on non-counseling activities at majority white, non-Hispanic schools was related to lower college enrollment rates.

- The only factor that had an opposite effect on college enrollment at majority non-white schools compared to majority white, non-Hispanic schools was the total number of specialized programs and services offered. More programs and services was related to higher total college enrollment at majority non-white schools but associated with lower college enrollment at majority white, non-Hispanic schools.

The patterns identified in the four- and two-year models are reflected in the total (four- plus two-year college) enrollment rate model. For both types of high schools, the percentage of students eligible for FRPL has the largest effect on college enrollment. The schools with more FRPL-eligible students reported lower total college enrollment rates.

Entrance exam taking was positively related to total college enrollment in both types of high schools. This is expected; as more students intend to enroll, more take

likely to be lower. Non-counseling activities limit the access students have to college advising.

Positive counselor attitudes were associated with higher college going rates at majority white, non-Hispanic high schools. This supports evidence from previous research that suggests high counselor expectations can encourage students to pursue postsecondary aspirations. (Gandara, 2001. Bryan et al, 2009).

The only counseling variable that had the opposite effect on college enrollment at majority non-white compared to majority white, non-Hispanic schools was the total number of specialized services and programs offered. For an increase of one standard deviation in services/programs, total college enrollment increased by .213 standard deviations at majority non-white schools but decreased by .120 standard deviations at majority white, non-Hispanic schools (See Appendix Table D).

**Entrance exam taking was positively related to total college enrollment in both types of high schools. This is expected; as more students intend to enroll, more take the ACT/SAT. The percentage of students enrolled in AP classes was also positively associated with total college enrollment for schools with a majority white, non-Hispanic student body.**

the ACT/SAT. The percentage of students enrolled in AP classes was also positively associated with total college enrollment for schools with a majority white, non-Hispanic student body. Again, this is consistent with literature that finds more rigorous high school coursework is related to college enrollment (Adelman, C.,1999).

The frequency of individualized college counseling activities variable was a significant predictor of a school's total college enrollment for the majority non-white model. This shows that individualized counseling is effective in helping underrepresented students transition to postsecondary education, whether they enroll in a two-year or four-year program.

The time counselors spent on non-counseling activities was related to college going at majority white, non-Hispanic schools. This model indicates that when school counselors spend more time on non-counseling activities (like hall or lunch supervision, substitute teaching, or bus duty) the college enrollment rate is

Several of the services and programs measured by the survey are designed for non-English speaking students and families. These services are therefore likely to be more helpful for non-white student populations and less prevalent in majority white, non-Hispanic schools.

#### *Student to counselor ratio*

The student to college counselor ratio variable did not have a significant effect on college enrollment in any of the regression models. The student to college counselor variable was used because it best represents a student's access to college admission information and guidance. To calculate the student to college counselor ratio, we calculated the total number of FTE counselors at each school that reported providing any college counseling among their duties. We then divided this total by the number of students enrolled at the school.

We included the student to college counselor ratio in our regression models because the literature regarding the effect of counselor caseload on student outcomes

consistently linked smaller student to counselor ratio with better student outcomes. In fact, several studies suggest that lower student-to-counselor ratios are associated with more early college preparation and increased college attendance rates (McDonough, P., 1997; Hurwitz, M. & Howell, J., 2013).

Our study suggests that the way counselors' time is divided and the frequency of counseling activities influence college going, not simply the size of the counselor caseload. In order to improve college enrollment in schools with extremely large student-

to-counselor ratios, counselors must be given the latitude to prioritize postsecondary admission advising and allowed the time to conduct individualized admission counseling activities. That said, the average counselor must split their time between a number of responsibilities and often cannot feasibly give the individual attention each student needs. Additional counseling staff and smaller caseloads would be helpful in allowing counselors to appropriately prioritize tasks that are necessary to achieve high college enrollment rates.



**In order to improve college enrollment in schools with extremely large student-to-counselor ratios, counselors must be given the latitude to prioritize postsecondary admission advising and allowed the time to conduct individualized admission counseling activities.**





## Conclusion

**T**he US Census Bureau estimates Hispanics represented 17% (53 million) of the US population in 2012 and are projected to represent 31% of the population by 2060. Hispanic representation is even larger within younger segments of the population. Hispanics now represent more than 25% of all children under the age of five, and almost one quarter (23%) of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public schools. Hispanics also represent 17% of students enrolled in college, and the US Department of Education projects Latino postsecondary enrollment will grow by 27% between 2011 and 2022—the largest rate of increase of all racial and ethnic groups.

Given that gains in postsecondary access have been concentrated in two-year institutions, achieving long-term gains in access to both two- and four-year institutions will require a multi-faceted effort on the part of administrators and policymakers to address structural needs in schools. As a result of the research conducted in this study, we recommend the following steps for improving college counseling, access and success for Latino/a students.

### **Recommendations for Improving College Counseling, Access and Success for Latino/a students**

- **Administrators and policymakers must reduce significant barriers to college readiness counseling:** High student-to-counselor ratios and resource shortages, caused by diminished funding for school counselors and college readiness counseling resources, must be addressed at the local, state, and federal levels. The student population—particularly those students who come from under-represented racial/ethnic or socio-economic populations—will only grow as time progresses. Budget reductions have severely restricted the capacity of schools to provide meaningful college readiness counseling to students. Administrators and policymakers must find ways to hire, train, and equip those who help students with the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

**Given that gains in postsecondary access have been concentrated in two-year institutions, achieving long-term gains in access to both two- and four-year institutions will require a multi-faceted effort on the part of administrators and policymakers to address structural needs in schools.**

- **Increase the visibility of colleges for high school students:** Providing more campus visit opportunities and more occasions for college representatives to speak directly with students in school were all cited as effective mechanisms for engaging students in the college preparation process.
- **Invest in professional development for school counselors in serving Latino and other under-represented students:** Administrators at the district and state level could encourage effective college readiness counseling for Latino and other under-represented students by providing professional development opportunities, as well as the funding and time-off need to attend, in serving these subgroups of students. As noted in this report and subsequent recommendations, the need for additional services is critical if substantial gains in college access and success are to be achieved for these students.
- **Start planning early:** For high schools, beginning the college planning process in 9th grade allowed students and families time to factor in academic, financial, and family considerations on the path to college.
- **Focus on personal contact:** Affording students and families the opportunity to work in one-on-one or small group settings with a counselor in school was an effective mechanism to bring students into the college pipeline and keep them on track.
- **Build and maintain a college-going culture:** Consistent with a growing body of research, students and practitioners confirmed that a college-going culture was an effective way of helping Latino students and families enter the college pipeline.
- **Provide comprehensive financial aid counseling:** As the academic literature suggests, students and counselors believed that additional financial aid counseling an important component to service Latino/a students and families given the added challenges presented by barriers such as language, socio-economic status, immigration status, and being the first in a family to attend college.
- **Offer college planning activities designed for both students and families:** Again complementing the findings from the academic literature, students and counselors confirmed that including families in the college planning process was an important and necessary part of a successful college transition for Latino/a students.
- **Seek opportunities to partner with higher education institutions that currently serve large populations of Latino and other under-represented students:** School counselors should be encouraged by administrators to reach out to higher education institutions that serve large numbers of Latino and other under-represented students to identify good practices in counseling and advising, ensure a continued pipeline of educational opportunities for students, and learn from colleges and universities about student supports that work in the postsecondary environment.



In order to offer these to services in a meaningful way, administrators and policymakers *must ensure a sufficient commitment to hiring, equipping, and training school counselors*. Such commitments are likely to be rewarded with improvements in outcomes focused on postsecondary access and success.

**Consistent with a growing body of research, students and practitioners confirmed that a college-going culture was an effective way of helping Latino students and families enter the college pipeline.**



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## Appendix A: Methodology

### NACAC's Counseling Trends Survey

The purpose of this survey is to collect information from secondary school counselors and counseling departments about their priorities and work responsibilities, particularly in relation to their roles in helping students transition to college; their students' academic options and experiences; and their practices in communicating with students, parents and colleges.

In April 2012, NACAC distributed its annual Counseling Trends Survey to a total of 10,000 secondary schools in the United States—2,120 public and private schools that are members of NACAC and a random sample of 7,880 public high schools. The list of public high schools was identified using the US Department of Education's Common Core of Data. Each counseling department received a paper survey form that also included a link to an online survey, providing respondents with two options for completing the survey. Responses were collected through the end of June 2012. NACAC received a total of 996 responses—a 10 percent response rate.

NACAC survey respondents were 68 percent public, 20 percent private, non-parochial, and 12 percent private, parochial making the sample over-representative of private schools and under-representative of public schools. NACAC respondents were representative of all secondary schools in the percentage of students who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch programs. However, NACAC respondent schools reported substantially larger enrollments (See Table A).

For this analysis the survey sample was limited to public schools only. The survey responses included very few (40) private schools with majority non-white student populations. The focus of this study is comparing schools of different racial/ethnic makeup, so with the small sample of private, diverse schools, we decided to use only public schools in our analysis. A total of 621 public schools were included.

### Site Visits

NACAC conducted a series of high school site visits to enhance the quantitative data gathered through the survey with qualitative information from staff and students. The purpose of these site visits was to get a detailed look at the practices of the counseling department at high schools with large Latino student populations and above average graduation and college enrollment rates. NACAC selected five urban school districts with large or growing Latino student populations. These districts included Los Angeles, Denver, Austin, Miami and New York. We worked with district administrators to identify high schools within the district with higher than citywide average Latino student enrollment rates, graduation rates, and college going rates that would be willing to host a visit from two researchers. We submitted IRB proposals to each of the five districts and received approval from Denver, Los Angeles and New York. Two high schools were selected in each city: Denver Center for International Studies and Career Education Center Middle College in Denver, John Marshall High School and North Hollywood

High School in Los Angeles, and Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics and the High School for Telecommunication Arts & Technology in New York.

At each of the high schools two researchers conducted small group interviews with 11th and 12th grade students. We asked the counselors to nominate a

group of college-bound Latino 11th and 12th graders to be interviewed. We also interviewed counseling staff members responsible for college admission advising as well as the principal or assistant principal in charge of counseling at each school. In total, 34 students, 16 counselors, and seven administrators were interviewed.



**NACAC conducted a series of high school site visits to enhance the quantitative data gathered through the survey with qualitative information from staff and students.**



## Appendix B: Factor Loadings

Initial analysis showed correlation among the 11 survey items measuring the frequency that counselors conducted college planning activities. We used factor reduction with Varimax rotation to convert these 11 items into one factor. The survey items used, along with their factor loadings are listed below.

The variables with the largest loadings were: Actively representing students to college admission offices, Reviewing/ proofing students applications (including essays) for postsecondary admission, Advice and education to students and families on standardized

testing, Meeting with parents to discuss students' postsecondary options, Electronic communication with students or parents about postsecondary admission, and Individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary options. We combined these variables in to a single factor scale labels "Frequency of Individualized Postsecondary Counseling Activities." This factor scale was reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of .744. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of scale reliability and a value of .7 or higher is considered by social scientists to have good internal consistency (Kline, P., 1999).

**Table B. Factor Analysis**

<i>Frequency of counseling activity variables</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>
Group guidance/counseling sessions with students about postsecondary education	0.505
Individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary options	0.606
Meeting with parents to discuss students' postsecondary options	0.649
Postsecondary financial aid/scholarship counseling for students	0.465
Advice and education to students and families on standardized testing	0.650
Reviewing/proofing student applications (including essays) for postsecondary admission	0.676
Electronic communication with students or parents about postsecondary admission	0.639
Organized tours of postsecondary educational institutions for students	0.201
Hosting college representatives who visit high school	0.465
Working with school leadership (including principals and teachers) to develop curricula aligned with postsecondary requirements	0.465
Actively representing students to college admission offices	0.678

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax*



## Appendix C: Dependent Variables for Regression Equations

	<i>Four-year enrollment rate</i>	<i>Two-year enrollment rate</i>	<i>Total college enrollment rate</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.32</b>	<b>29.86</b>	<b>79.18</b>
<b>Student Racial/Ethnic Demographics</b>			
Majority white, non-Hispanic	51.7	28.26	79.96
Majority non-white	43.43	34.47	77.90
<b>Percent FRPL</b>			
0 to 25% eligible	63.35	23.36	86.71
26 to 50%	44.49	32.94	77.43
51 to 75%	39.53	34.27	73.80
76 to 100%	34.57	35.03	69.60
<b>Total enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 500 students	41.89	33.13	75.02
500 to 999	46.89	30.04	76.93
1000 to 1499	58.62	26.3	84.92
1500 to 1999	56.6	27.14	83.74
2000 or more	55.68	28.15	83.83
<b>Strength of Curriculum</b>			
Less than 15% Enrolled AP	42.82	32.24	75.07
More than 15% Enrolled AP	56.00	27.44	83.43
Less than 20% Enrolled Enriched Curriculum	43.56	32.77	76.33

*Continues.*

More than 20% Enrolled Enriched Curriculum	55.19	26.9	82.1
Less than 5% Dual Enrollment	50.78	28.6	79.37
More than 5% Dual Enrollment	47.63	31.23	78.87
% Take SAT/ACT			
0-50%	34.17	34.27	68.45
51-75%	50.07	31.56	81.63
76-95%	64.09	22.44	86.53
96-100%	51.45	30.03	81.48
Student to college counselor ratio			
100 or fewer	41.21	32.21	73.42
101 to 200	50.12	29.01	79.13
201 to 300	52.52	28.03	80.55
301 to 400	47.21	32.24	79.44
401 to 500	44.48	32.90	77.38
500 or more	50.90	28.83	79.73
Specialized Programs and Services Offered			
0-3	52.04	28.86	80.9
4 to 6	49.76	29.08	78.84
7 to 8	47.51	28.9	76.42
9 or more	46.44	33.63	80.07
Counselor Workload			
Less than 20% time spent scheduling HS courses	50.50	28.86	79.36
More than 20% time spent scheduling HS courses	48.18	30.76	78.94
Less than 20% time spent on postsecondary admission counseling	43.58	31.65	75.24
More than 20% time spent on postsecondary admission counseling	56.73	27.40	84.13
Less than 10% time spent administering academic testing	51.93	28.76	80.69
More than 10% time spent administering academic testing	44.90	31.57	76.46
Less than 5% time spent on occupational counseling	49.59	29.77	79.36
More than 5% time spent on occupational counseling	49.11	29.78	78.88

*Continues.*



Less than 20% time spent on personal needs counseling	48.27	29.81	78.08
More than 20% of time spent on personal needs counseling	50.97	29.72	80.69
Up to 1% time spent teaching	50.17	30.08	80.24
More than 1% time spent teaching	48.38	29.38	77.76
UP to 1% time spent on non-counseling activities	51.84	29.11	80.95
More than 1% time spent on non-counseling activities	46.84	30.47	77.30
<b>Frequency of College Counseling Activities</b>			
Frequently conduct group counseling sessions	51.91	29.30	81.21
Infrequently conduct group counseling sessions	48.01	30.14	78.15
Frequently conduct individual meetings with students	51.74	29.31	81.05
Infrequently conduct individual meetings with students	40.26	31.91	72.18
Frequently meet with parents	58.54	25.01	83.55
Infrequently meet with parents	44.97	32.13	77.11
Frequently conduct financial aid counseling	49.09	30.61	79.69
Infrequently conduct financial aid counseling	49.44	29.49	78.93
Frequently advise on standardized testing	59.84	25.28	85.13
Infrequently advise on standardized testing	45.85	31.37	77.22
Frequently review applications	54.54	27.73	82.28
Infrequently review applications	47.08	30.77	77.85
Frequently conduct electronic communication	58.49	26.29	84.78
Infrequently conduct electronic communication	43.33	32.19	75.52
Frequently organize tours of college campus	42.85	31.52	74.38
Infrequently organize tours of college campus	50.01	29.68	79.69
Frequently host college reps	51.07	29.48	80.55
Infrequently host college reps	45.84	30.61	76.45
Frequently work with school leadership to develop curricula	51.78	28.52	80.30
Infrequently work with school leadership to develop curricula	48.19	30.47	78.66
Frequently represent students to colleges	54.36	27.64	82.00
Infrequently represent students to colleges	46.09	31.28	77.37

*Continues.*

Counselor Expectations			
Agree: Staff expect most to go to college	52.07	29.32	81.39
Disagree: Staff expect most to go to college	30.56	33.07	63.63
Agree: Staff help plan for college outside of class time	50.77	29.80	80.56
Disagree: Staff help plan for college outside of class time	45.91	29.96	75.87
Agree: Curriculum focused on college prep	50.59	29.50	80.08
Disagree: Curriculum focused on college prep	32.87	33.93	66.8
Agree: Staff feel important part of job is helping students succeed in college	51.05	29.18	80.23
Disagree: Staff feel important part of job is helping students succeed in college	34.66	35.13	69.79
Agree: Many students plan to go to college	50.62	29.91	80.53
Disagree: Many students plan to go to college	24.55	27.68	52.23
Agree: Many students well-prepared for college	52.61	28.52	81.12
Disagree: Many students well-prepared for college	33.05	36.18	69.23

NOTE: Italics represent differences between categories that are statistically significant,  $p < .01$

Source: NACAC 2012 Counseling Trends Survey



## Appendix D: Regression Results

Variable		Percentage enrolled in four-year college immediately following high school graduation (standardized coefficient)		Percentage enrolled in two-year college immediately following high school graduation (standardized coefficient)		Percentage enrolled in any college immediately following high school graduation (standardized coefficient)	
		Majority white, non-Hispanic	Majority non-white	Majority white, non-Hispanic	Majority non-white	Majority white, non-Hispanic	Majority non-white
School Variables	Percent FRPL	-0.299 ***	-0.275 **	0.147 *	0.095	-0.26 ***	-0.249 **
	Total enrollment	0.073	-0.069	-0.057	0.105	0.043	0.010
	% Enrolled AP	0.179 ***	0.102	-0.101	-0.148	0.142 **	-0.007
	% Enrolled Enriched	0.078	0.126	-0.167 **	-0.093	-0.06	0.071
	% Enrolled Dual	-0.04	-0.042	0.108 *	0.156	0.054	0.088
	% Take SAT/ACT	0.188 ***	0.303 ***	-0.023	-0.178 *	0.233 ***	0.210 *

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

*Continues.*

Variable		Percentage enrolled in four-year college immediately following high school graduation (standardized coefficient)		Percentage enrolled in two-year college immediately following high school graduation (standardized coefficient)		Percentage enrolled in any college immediately following high school graduation (standardized coefficient)	
		Majority white, non-Hispanic	Majority non-white	Majority white, non-Hispanic	Majority non-white	Majority white, non-Hispanic	Majority non-white
Counseling Variables	Student to college counselor ratio	-0.047	0.090	0.055	-0.107	-0.009	0.015
	Programs and Services Offered	-0.105 **	0.088	0.012	0.092	-0.132 **	0.188 *
	% Workload scheduling HS courses	-0.011	-0.019	-0.139	-0.048	-0.154	-0.065
	% Workload postsecondary admission counseling	0.142 *	0.019	-0.182 *	-0.004	0.011	0.019
	% Workload occupational counseling	-0.022	0.140	0.006	-0.260 **	-0.025	-0.059
	% Workload teaching	0.072	0.142	-0.059	-0.335 ***	0.04	-0.124
	% Workload academic testing	-0.059	0.040	0.011	-0.173	-0.069	-0.104
	% Workload personal needs counseling	0.062	-0.066	-0.121	0.040	-0.036	-0.044
	% Workload non-counseling activities	0.025	0.041	-0.165 *	-0.010	-0.131 *	0.041
	Frequency of Individualized College Counseling Activities	0.106 *	0.251 **	-0.051	-0.108	0.093	0.209 *
	Positive counselor attitude	0.111 **	0.071	-0.043	0.034	0.108 *	0.116
	R-squared	0.510	0.441	0.192	0.196	0.337	0.327

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001







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