P116M220012 Florida International University

THE FIU SCALING COMPLETION INITIATIVE

College completion is critical for students to access high-wage careers and improve their social mobility. Focusing on supporting students that have stopped out, or are at risk of stopping out, helps to address the college completion crisis. Students that take on debt, but never receive a degree, are unable to achieve the same return-on-investment as their college graduate counterparts. At FIU, 11.6 percent of students that attended FIU stopped out, out of 138,399 distinct students during 2017-2021. Further, there are currently 1,267 enrolled FTIC and transfer students with over 90 credit hours that currently have a high unmet financial need of over $11,000.

The proposed project aims to meet the needs of students that have stopped out during COVID with more than 90 credits earned, and those students that are close to graduation but may be at risk of stopping out due to financial concerns. The project will develop an actionable outreach initiative for students that have stopped out, as well as scale existing efforts for current students at risk; pairing students in both groups with funding if needed, as well as a College Life Coach. The project will use both a Quasi-Experimental Design as well as a Randomized Control Design to add to existing literature that meets What Works Clearinghouse standards.

FIU is adeptly positioned to successfully lead and execute the tasks of this project as FIU is an urban, top-tier public research university located in Miami-Dade County, Florida's largest population center. With over 49,693 degree-seeking students (Fall 2021) (76 percent underrepresented minority students), and 48 percent of students that are Pell-eligible, FIU has demonstrated success in developing strategies to holistically support students that may be at risk of stopping out. With this grant, FIU can further scale and develop new initiatives that will produce additional evidence to better serve students nationally.

P116M220021 Austin Community College

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS (ACCESS)

Austin Community College District (ACC) is among the nation's largest community colleges experiencing significant student stopping-out before the completion of an academic credential, which has increased since the COVID pandemic. Its annual stop- out rates from AY2017 through 2021 are provided below.

Stop-out rates for ACC students AY2017-AY2021

AY2017-18	AY2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
56.44 percent	57.30 percent	55.94 percent	58.03 percent	59.43 percent

In response to this steady increase since 2020, ACC proposes to implement the **ACC E**nsuring **S**tudent **S**uccess (ACCESS) project over a two-year period with a $770,765 grant from the Postsecondary Student Success Program. In Year 1, ACCESS will provide outreach and re-enrollment coaching delivered by InsideTrack to 7,000 students nearing completion of their who stopped-out after 2020 in, along with evidence-based intensive, comprehensive, and relationship-focused Effective Advising services delivered by its own Student Success Services' professional advisors to enrolled students nearing completion but at high-risk of stopping-out in Years 1 and 2, including stop-outs served by InsideTrack who re-enroll. The project evaluation proposes an experimental (RCT) design to test three hypotheses: H1: Stop-outs who receive InsideTrack outreach and counseling services re-enroll at ACC in higher proportions than stop-outs who do not receive these services; H2: Still-enrolled students at high-risk of stopping-out who receive evidence-based, intensive, and relationship-focused Effective Advising services from ACC's professional advisors persist in their courses of study and complete their academic credentials at higher rates than students at high-risk of stopping out who do not receive these services; and, H3: Stopped-out students served by InsideTrack who re-enroll and receive evidence-based, intensive, and relationship-focused Effective Advising from professional advisors persist at higher rates than students served by InsideTrack who re-enroll but do not receive Effective Advising. The specific advising services planned for delivery to students at risk of stopping-out and those who stopped-out but re-enroll include providing both groups with seamless access to a broad range of free or low-cost academic, financial, personal, social, family, and technology incentives, resources and supports, including childcare, transportation vouchers, textbooks, digital devices and peripherals, tutoring, money management supports, and personal counseling. The InsideTrack coaching intervention is based on evidence that meets What Works Clearinghouse's standards for student retention, without reservations; the Effective Advising intervention is based on evidence-based recommendations in the WWC's *Effective Student Advising Practice Guide*. The proposed evaluation methodology incorporating the four federal performance measures meets WWC's standards for RCTs. A participant in many state- and nation-wide partnerships and collaborations focused on promoting student retention and credential completion in higher education, ACC will disseminate the final evaluation results to postsecondary institutions, particularly community colleges, and other educational and workforce development organizations in Texas and beyond working collaboratively to improve student outcomes in these areas of high institutional concern.

P116M220030 Passaic County Community College

Applicant: Passaic County Community College (PCCC)

Project Title: PCCC Targeted Support for Stop-Out Students (PCCC-TSSS)

Population(s) to be served: The project will serve 200 stop-out students and 200 part-time students who are currently at risk of leaving the institution. The program will serve underserved populations such as low-income, minority, non-traditional adult students, parenting students, and undocumented students. PCCC faculty and staff will be trained on evidence-based Inside Track success coaching methodology to meet the needs of stop-out and at-risk part-time students. The program will build the College's capacity to support non-traditional, low-income, culturally and linguistically diverse students in earning postsecondary credentials.

Services and Proposed Activities: The project will implement a 10-point plan for re-engaging and supporting stop-out students and currently enrolled part-time students, who are at risk of educational failure: 1) Personalized Outreach; 2) Student Re-Engagement Plan; 3) Priority Registration; 4) Student Success Coaching; 5) Financial Incentives; 6) Academic Support Services; 7) Basic Needs Services; 8) Workforce and Career Readiness; 9) Credit for Prior Learning; and 10) Financial Waivers.

Anticipated Results: One major program goal and four corresponding objectives will guide program implementation. The program's goal is to "Re-engage stop-out and part-time students and support them in earning valuable postsecondary credentials needed for employment and further education". Among its objectives, the program will: 1) Provide 400 former stop-out and currently enrolled part-time students with success coaching, financial incentives, and academic support services; 2) Achieve a 90 percent program retention rate; 3) Ensure that 80 percent of program participants either complete their postsecondary credential or earn additional 20 credits towards degree completion; and 4) Ensure that 50 percent of program participants either secure employment in their field of study, or transfer to a four-year college or university.

Absolute Priority Addressed: Yes, the project's Inside Track Success Coaching component is designed to improve postsecondary student outcomes and is supported by evidence that meets the conditions in the definition of "promising evidence" (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)). Researchers found that the coaching model increased students' persistence in college and degree completion which are also included in the logic model for the proposed project. The study has promising evidence because it is an experimental design, the lotteries are well-executed randomized controlled trials with low attrition, there is at least one statistically significant positive finding and at least one finding shows strong evidence of effectiveness. Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. B. (2014). The Effects of Student Coaching: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Advising. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 36(1), 3-19. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/SingleStudyReviews/wwc_studentcoaching_080712.pdf)

Invitational Priority Addressed: Yes, PCCC is a Community College.

Annual percentage of Stop-Out Rates: 2017: 26.8 percent; **2018**: 26.1 percent; **2019**: 24.8 percent; **2020**: 25.0 percent; **2021**: 25.2 percent *(PCCC Institutional Research, 2022)*

Percentage of degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who are Pell grant recipients: 61 percent *(PCCC Institutional Research, Fall 2020 IPEDS data)*

P116M220080 Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College

Project Name: **Re-engagement And Completion Experience (RACE) to Finish** Applicant
Organization Name: Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (OCtech) Project Director:
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The **RACE to Finish** project is designed to promote retention and completion for students who are
currently enrolled at OCtech, as well as students who are close to completion (50 percent or more
credits earned) who stopped-out because of challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A
total of **$952,262** is requested for the two-year project. The stated goal is to: *Increase OCtech*
student completion, graduation, and placement to help students gain a sustainable wage and
support families in Orangeburg and Calhoun counties who faced challenges due to the COVID-
19 pandemic. To accomplish this goal, the College has established the following objectives:

1. *Increase the number of Black students that re-enroll who stopped-out during the*
   COVID-19 pandemic beginning in Spring 2020.
2. *Increase the completion rate of Black students who stopped-out during the COVID-19*
   pandemic beginning in Spring 2020 and are re-enrolled.
3. *Increase the Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate of Black students enrolled in OCtech AAS*
   degree and related certificate programs.

OCtech is a two-year public Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) that serves Orangeburg and
Calhoun counties, an area that is 72 percent rural and 62 percent African-American. The College's
annual percentage of stopped-out students for academic years 2017-2021 is as follows: 2017-35.27
percent; 2018-37.63 percent; 2019-33.24 percent; 2020-37.46 percent; 2021-35.94 percent. The
College's percentage of degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who are Pell grant
recipients for the 2020-21 AY is 59.95 percent.

The **RACE to Finish** project addresses both the absolute and invitational priorities and will focus
on two main improvement strategies. The first is a First-Semester Experience initiative that
encompasses college-wide activities, rather than the traditional first- year/first-semester experience
course, including expanded college-wide orientation activities; a revamped advising process and a
designated advisor for each division to provide appreciative advising and manage new student
registration and free up faculty advisors so they can focus on coaching; an online course success
tutorial; and community-building activities. The revamped advising process will be the basis for
the evaluation study. Project activities related to advising will serve as promising evidence for the
study and the *What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide on Effective Advising for Postsecondary*
Students will provide replicable best-practice recommendations. The second strategy will be to
expand and strengthen a campus-wide flexibility initiative that includes creation of two seven-week
terms in Fall and Spring semesters with increased hybridization and simulation, as well as the
addition of the Weekend Warrior College program to provide working adults with open labs on
Fridays and Saturdays.

P116M220102 Claflin University

Claflin University is requesting fund in the amount of $1 million to support a project entitled *Innovative Access to Success Pathway Project*. The proposed project will target at least 300 stop-out and at-risk students each year for participation- a total of 600 students. Selected individuals will have access to hybrid learning opportunities, credit for prior learning, a learning community, re-engagement coaches, stop-out convening sessions, early alert systems, co-curricular excursions, academic support, and professional preparation to accelerate degree completion. The proposed project represents an innovative, empirically based, student outcome-focused approach that will be tested and measured by a quasi-experimental design to meet the *What Works Clearing House* evidence standard. The project will also address *the absolute priority*. CU plans to investigate whether re-engagement coaching is effective in moving the needle on completion among stop-outs and at-risk students in an HBCU environment. The overarching goal of the project is to implement an innovative accelerated pathway to completion program for stop-out, at-risk, and underrepresented students to increase the number of the target population who complete by 2025 to address equity gaps and upward mobility.

Claflin University Stop-Out Trends 2017-2021	
Year	Percent/Raw Number
2017	5.8 percent /124
2018	4.8 percent/160
2019	5.1 percent/106
2020	7.5 percent/154 (pandemic year)
2021	3.4 percent/64
Total	5.3 percent/608

Objectives:

- Recruit at least 300 stop-outs (150) and at-risk (150) students each grant year.
- At least 88 percent of participants to persist each year.
- At least 60 percent of prospective completers to complete certificate and/or degree each year.
- At least 20 percent of participants will be placed in an experiential learning opportunity each year.

Expected Outcomes:

- 600 re-entry and at-risk students will be served by the project by 2025.
- At least 88 percent of participants to persist by 2025.
- At least 60 percent of participants to complete certificate and/or degree by 2025.
- At least 85 percent of participants who complete will be placed in a career by 2025.