

Looking At The ISSUES

March 9, 2007

For Your Information

Promoting College Success: Stark Receives One of Five State Grants

State and national reports have talked a lot lately about college access, making a college education available and affordable to more and more students. Members of the Stark County P-16 Compact have been hard at work as chronicled in previous editions of ISSUES.

Access, however, is only half the battle. Once students get to college, they need to persist and finish a degree within a reasonable amount of time. It is here that Ohio's scorecard has not been very good. For every 100 ninth-graders in the state, only 79 graduate from high school on time, 40 will enter college, 26 will still be enrolled for after their freshman year and 20 will graduate from college within six years.¹

Figures like these underscore Ohio's standing as 39th in the nation on four year degrees. While Stark County has been doing better than the state average on high school graduation, college going, and student persistence with three of our colleges at 90% and above, it's still not good enough for members of the Compact. Stark County leaders know that if the community is to meet the challenges of the future, every one of its college enrollees must be supported to enable their success.

Fortunately, this awareness is now also shared at the state level where last week the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) and the Student Access & Success Coordinating Council of Ohio (SASCO), has announced \$10,000 planning grants to five communities to tackle this problem. Stark's award came for a new project called the Stark County P-16 College Success Partnership that will bring together high school and college practitioners, those who deal first hand with access and persistence issues to identify barriers to student success and best practices for student support. The purpose of the grant is to plan new strategies to strengthen college success based both on local research and a review of additional best practices across the nation.

Success partners will gather to analyze data on student support systems, summer bridge activities and early warning systems now in place and meet with three 2006 Success Partnerships in Ohio.

At the end of the planning period the Stark County P-16 will move forward to support additional plans. In addition, OCAN will consider additional funding for implementation of best practices.

Lumina Foundation has joined with the American Council on Education and the Ad Council to launch a new campaign dedicated to raising awareness among low-income students about the critical steps they need to take to get to college.

The campaign, KnowHow2Go, encourages students to take these steps and connects them with helpful information and resources. Finding someone to help is the first and most important step.

Visit the web site at:
www.KnowHow2Go.org



¹Johnson, Galen, Midwest Manager, ACT, Inc. PowerPoint presentation. 2006