SCALING COMPLETION

2023 PROGRESS REPORT

APRIL 2024
Complete College America (CCA) builds movements for scaled change and transforms institutions. Specifically, CCA drives systemic change that leads to better college completion rates; more equitable outcomes; and greater economic and social mobility, especially for historically excluded students. CCA operates at the federal, state, and institutional levels and works with its national network of forward-thinking state and higher education leaders. Since its founding in 2009, CCA and its network have introduced bold initiatives that help states and institutions implement data-driven policies, student-centered perspectives, and equity-driven practices.

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It has been 15 years since the founding of Complete College America (CCA). In this report, we not only highlight the progress we have made in the past year but also reflect on the remarkable scaling of the college completion movement over the past decade and a half. Together, our Alliance members and partners, our network of Fellows and staff, our Board members, and our funders have built a movement and worked to transform institutions, improving outcomes for millions of students across the nation.

Our Alliance has grown to 51 members. In 2023, the State University of New York and the state of New Jersey joined our group of impatient reformers that are boosting completion rates and closing institutional performance gaps. We also forged new partnerships with organizations such as T3 Advisory and The Ada Center, and we welcomed three new board members and eight new staff members to broaden our expertise and support for campus, system, state, and federal leaders. Through the CCA Alliance of states and postsecondary systems and our nationwide network of funders and other like-minded organizations, we can scale our strategies and impact. We are both a nationwide strategy lab and a respected voice to amplify the value of college completion.

The launch of the Complete College Accelerator in August marked a new phase in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s ambitious Intermediaries for Scale initiative. With more than 80 institutions across 11 states participating in this four-year project, we have an opportunity to build capacity to implement, sustain, and scale statewide evidence-based practices that will improve college completion rates for all students.

During the past year we also released several new resources that build on our learning from the past 15 years and set the stage for the next steps in this work. Highlights include two landmark CCA publications:• Ending Unfunded Mandates in Higher Education: Using Completion-Goals Funding to Improve Accountability and Outcomes outlines a bold new approach to funding higher education—one that provides essential funding for the transformational change required to increase college completion rates up front rather than after the improvements have had an impact.

• Attainment with AI: Making a Real Difference in College Completion with Artificial Intelligence and its companion policy paper provide concrete actions institutions and policymakers can take to harness the power of this technology to improve outcomes for students.

1,000 people registered for Future Ready—the largest number ever for a CCA gathering. We look forward to continue building on this enthusiasm next year when we bring our Annual Convening home to Indianapolis, where Complete College America started.

As we look to the next 15 years, we are proud of the work that has been done and excited about the future. The incredible energy and commitment we saw at this year’s Annual Convening in Las Vegas was palpable. More than 1,000 people registered for Future Ready—the largest number ever for a CCA gathering. We look forward to continue building on this enthusiasm next year when we bring our Annual Convening home to Indianapolis, where Complete College America started.

You, none of this would be possible. Together, we can and will achieve our goal of ensuring that every student gets the education they need to succeed in college, the career of their choice, and life.
Complete College America envisions a nation in which postsecondary institutions, policymakers, and systems of higher education welcome, invest in, and support students through and to on-time completion so that every student—regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or familial educational achievement—has equal opportunity to access and complete a college education or credential of value. To turn this vision into reality, we work to shift policy, perspective, and practice through both systemic and institutional change.
CCA’s annual convening featured the Future Ready Hub, where attendees tried different artificial intelligence (AI) prompts, talked to students about their experiences with AI, and received one-on-one support for using AI in their college completion work.

**LEADING the Field**

rates, particularly for historically excluded students. The organization has not

This deep expertise and experience give us a unique viewpoint to build on what we have learned to evolve strategy and plan for new innovations that will shape postsecondary education and the college completion movement in the years to

**Ending Unfunded Mandates in Higher Education: Using Completion-Goals Funding to Improve Accountability and Outcomes**

Today’s performance-based funding models require colleges to increase completion rates, but they do not provide colleges essential funding until after

The accompanying modeling tool includes baseline data for every college in the country, States, systems, and colleges can view the data and run different funding scenarios to see how various choices affect outcomes.

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Equity Paper and Playbook**

With more than 30 percent of students already using AI in the classroom, the
designed to help institutions embrace the positives of AI. Our paper on AI and equity in higher education lays out the potential of using AI to equalize and scale access to

to use the technology to scale proven strategies that increase college attainment while closing racial and socioeconomic institutional performance gaps.
In May, we held our first annual event on Capitol Hill, bringing together members of Congress and leaders from 24 Alliance members to discuss federal policy priorities such as increasing funding for college completion; requiring a student unit record data system; and reauthorizing the Higher Education Act to support CCA’s Pillars of Transformation (Purpose, Structure, Momentum, and Support).

Intermediaries for Scale Sensemaking Sessions
As part of the Intermediaries for Scale initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CCA brought together leaders on 20 campuses for Sensemaking sessions. During the sessions, leaders discussed results from their Institutional Transformation Assessment and other institutional data. The Sensemaking sessions are continuing in 2024.

Scaling Completion: 2023 Progress Report
Future Ready
A record number of leaders from institutions, states, like-minded organizations, funders, and offices of elected officials attended our Annual Convening in Las Vegas in December. Participants heard from presidents of institutions that are poised to meet the needs of students now and in the future. They also participated in sessions on creating coalitions and partnerships, equity and inclusion, college cost and affordability, technological alignment, policy, and advising and coaching.

87% of participants were extremely or somewhat satisfied with the main stage panels and presentations.

I loved how this conversation remained positive despite discussing... —Annual Convening participant

I added humor, and the presentation had actual tangible steps, as opposed to simply opining about a topic. Action, action, action! —Annual Convening participant

Excellent research and best practice base and impressive example of a specific institution. I’m from a four-year [institution] and found much to bring back to my own institution. —Annual Convening participant

Stan Jones Legacy Award

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, has implemented numerous CCA strategies that degree production in 2022. The state has also seen gains in completion that stand out against national averages, with a system, compared to a national average of 43.4 percent.
Spring 2021 BUILDING Capacity

Community Colleges and Historically Black Community Colleges, a first-of-its-kind collaborative of institutions supporting students of color in partnership with The Ada Center and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the resource is focused primarily on Minority-Serving Institutions but can be adapted by others.

This guidebook and tools help faculty, staff, college leadership, and policymakers understand and use measurement systems—and this five-part curriculum builds on six years of insight to help institutions establish and maintain a technology ecosystem that supports their broader student success and equity goals. Developed in partnership with The Ada Center and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the resource is focused primarily on Minority-Serving Institutions but can be adapted by others.

Using a Measurement System to Strengthen Student Success Reforms

Institutions establish and maintain a technology ecosystem that supports their broader student success and equity goals. Developed in partnership with The Ada Center and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the resource is focused primarily on Minority-Serving Institutions but can be adapted by others.

Predominantly Black and Historically Black Community Colleges Network

In August, we launched the Complete College Accelerator with 80-plus colleges in partnership with The Ada Center and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Intermediaries for Scale initiative, we are working with colleges to eliminate barriers to student success.

Through the four-year project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Intermediaries for Scale initiative, we are working with colleges to eliminate barriers to student success.

Scaling Completion: 2023 Progress Report
Building Internal Capacity

As CCA's work to scale the college completion movement and help states, higher education systems, and campuses build their capacity continues to expand, we are also working to improve our own capacity. In 2023, we hired eight new staff members with diverse backgrounds and expertise to support our work. We also welcomed six new CCA Fellows.

CCA Staff

- Dorothy Styles, B.A.
  Vice President for Operations & Organizational Development
- Nichole Mann, M.A.
  Alliance Engagement Director
- Cassie Walizer, M.Ed.
  Strategy Director
- Kate Derrick, M.Ed.
  Communications Director
- Akilah Martin, Ed.D.
  Strategy Director
- Hallie Schachinger, M.A.
  Data Analyst
- F. Janelle Hannah Jefferson, Ph.D.
  Alliance Engagement Director
- Grace Mukupa, Ph.D.
  Policy Director

CCA Fellows

- Nicola Blake, Ph.D.
  Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Stella and Charles Guttman Community College
- Margaret Montgomery-Richard, Ph.D.
  Retired Chancellor, Louisiana Technical College
- Lance Bolton, Ph.D.
  President, Pikes Peak Community College
- Jose Luis Santos, Ph.D.
  Senior Deputy Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
- Susan Elkins, Ed.D.
  Chancellor, University of South Carolina Palmetto College
- Mary Lee Vance, Ph.D.
  Director, Disability Access Center, CSU Sacramento
Our Impact Is Growing ...

Nationwide, the movement led by CCA is supporting completion of postsecondary credentials by more students at public institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>4-Year Institutions</th>
<th>2-Year Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*100% time; four-year data includes bachelor’s degrees only

Participation in our Annual Convening has grown more than fivefold:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCA THROUGH THE YEARS

Alliance members gather at a Completion Academy in 2011.

Alliance members discuss the Game Changers at a Completion Academy in 2014.

CCA President Yolanda Watson Spiva speaks at the 2019 Annual Convening.
In the coming year, we will build on this progress. Our work will include:

**Convening the new Complete College America Council on Equitable AI in Higher Education,** which will include a diverse group of higher education stakeholders who have been historically excluded from conversations about postsecondary policy and funding decisions. The Council will consult with large technology companies to foster partnerships with institutions that are often overlooked when rolling out new technologies.

**Releasing two reports that build on Ending Unfunded Mandates.** Upcoming reports on strategic budgeting and strategic enrollment management will help colleges better connect these processes to completion goals.

**Highlighting the need for increased capital funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) as part of the Digital Learning Infrastructure Initiative.** This funding will allow HBCUs to invest in technology to maintain the structured, supported, superior student experience that leads to graduation rates for Black students that are 11 percentage points higher than at other colleges and universities.

**Strengthening the connection between college completion and civic learning for democracy engagement (CLDE) by integrating CLDE into credential programs and investigating whether specific educational attainment goals can bolster democracy and civic learning.** This research will lead to clear CLDE objectives for broad educational attainment and help stakeholders advocate for necessary support from state and federal entities. It will also clarify the current state of the CLDE movement within the context of student success while breaking down the false dichotomy between workforce and democratic postsecondary education aims.

**Outlining the next steps that institutions need to take to build on the work they have done to implement math pathways and ensure that all students, particularly students interested in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields, have access to and are provided the necessary support to succeed in designated gateway courses.**

**Expanding and strengthening the Predominantly Black and Historically Black Community Colleges network.** In addition to the groundbreaking convening in early 2024, CCA will elevate the resources and support for these Minority-Serving Institutions.
We thank our generous funders for their support and commitment to the college completion agenda.

Note: May not add to 100% due to rounding.
CCA’s Board members provide a wide range of perspectives; lived experience; and professional expertise across the education, government, and nonprofit sectors to guide our work.

Robert L. Bauman
Board Secretary and General Counsel
Attorney and founding member of Gambs, Mucker & Bauman

Estela Mara Bensimon, Ph.D.
University professor emeritus at the University of Southern California and founding director of the Center for Urban Education

Barbara Damron, Ph.D.
Chief government relations officer and associate professor at the College of Nursing and School at The University of New Mexico

Joe Garcia, J.D.
Chancellor of the Colorado Community College System

Maggie George, Ph.D.
Owner of education consulting firm Indigenous Research Associations and past president of Diné College

Jim Geringer*
Director of policy and public sector and past president of Diné College

Adrian K. Haugabrook, Ed.D.
Executive vice president and managing director for the Social Impact Collective at Southern New Hampshire University

Vistasp M. Karbhari, Ph.D.
Professor and immediate past president of the University of Texas at Arlington

Robin Martin, Ph.D.
Board Chairman
Former deputy director of strategy, planning and management for the Postsecondary Success team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Gary McGaha, Ph.D.
Past president of Atlanta Metropolitan State College

Edward Smith, Ph.D.
Senior policy advisor of Education Counsel

Yolanda Watson Spiva, Ph.D.
President of Complete College America

*Board member emeritus

In Memoriam
Latrisha Stewart Jemison, who served as senior vice president/regional community development manager for Regions Bank, was a champion of higher education and relentless community advocate. During her time as a member of the CCA Board, we valued her insight and will miss her commitment to the mission of increasing college completion rates and ensuring equitable outcomes.