Investing in Degree Attainment

A SYNTHESIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES, PROGRESS, AND EMERGING TRENDS

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

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Delivering America's Promise

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

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Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025. For more information on Lumina, visit: www.luminafoundation.org.

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Introduction

Concerns about lagging college degree attainment among adults in the United States and low graduation rates among postsecondary students led President Obama in 2009 to establish a national goal to increase the percentage of Americans with a college degree or certificate. In response to this national goal, Lumina Foundation articulated **Goal 2025**: "To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60% by the year 2025."[1] This goal and call to action was ambitious since about 38 percent of adults had earned a degree or certificate at that time.[2]

To meet this goal, states, private organizations, policymakers, colleges, and universities have taken a number of actions. For example, nearly 500 public colleges and universities pledged to boost college completion by 3.8 million students as part of Project Degree Completion, an initiative organized by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in 2012.[3] Complete College America, an alliance of 34 states has set goals to increase the number of students completing college and regularly monitors states' progress towards meeting those goals. Additionally, private organizations and foundations have funded or led efforts that advocate for changes in public policy or improvements to programs at colleges and universities that would lead to increased student success.[4]

> The Lumina Foundation's Goal 2025: "To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60% by the year 2025."

Despite the committed focus on degree attainment, at the current pace, 48 percent of US adults will possess a postsecondary degree by 2025 — far short of Lumina's attainment goals.[5] While there is a better understanding of the resources and

1   President Obama's goal focused on increasing completion for 25 to 34 year olds, while the Lumina goal focused on 25 to 64 year olds. Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan 2013–2016. http://www.luminafoundation.org/advantage/document/goal_2025/2013-Lumina_Strategic_Plan.pdf

2   Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan 2013–2016, p.2.

3   Project Degree Completion, 2012, http://www.aplu.org/page.aspx?pid=2529

4   Russell, A. *A Guide to Major U.S. College Completion Initiatives*. American Association of State Colleges and Universities Higher Education Policy Brief, October 2011. http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/policymatters/2011/collegecompletion.pdf

5   A Stronger Nation through Higher Education: An Annual Report from Lumina Foundation, 2014. http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A_stronger_nation_through_higher_education-2014.pdf

support needed to ensure students complete degree or certificate programs, there is concern that those efforts tend to be dispersed and not synchronized, or even well-understood, across organizations. As a result, promising ideas and programs are seldom disseminated in a systematic way that could enable implementing successful practices more widely. The lack of communication and understanding likely decreases the overall impact of each organization's activities and slows the pace of change being sought. There is a critical need for better collaboration and information sharing across the organizations, state agencies, and postsecondary systems leading these efforts.

To better understand what is known about investment in degree attainment, APLU and AASCU conducted a synthesis of information related to existing and past efforts devoted to degree attainment.[6] This synthesis was based on a review of literature on degree attainment efforts, a survey of organizations leading efforts, and feedback from stakeholders working in this area. Survey responses were received from 28 private organizations, associations, or foundations representing 46 efforts and 15 state higher education agencies, board of regents, or university systems representing 23 efforts. These efforts have received about $65 million from a range of sources. Although these initiatives do not reflect all the work underway to increase degree attainment, the survey results combined with feedback given by stakeholders during an April 2014 meeting provide a broad look at degree attainment efforts. This paper summarizes this synthesis, specifically:

- Primary goals and actions taken to reach degree attainment goals.

- Common and emerging areas of focus among efforts and gaps to be addressed.

- Methods for measuring progress and challenges to be addressed.

Primary Focus Areas of Degree Attainment Work

Degree attainment efforts have been underway for several years, but a surge of action has occurred in the last five years in response to national attainment goals. Among the efforts reviewed for this synthesis, about $65 million has been invested to increase degree attainment. Funding for the degree attainment efforts has come from foundations, state agencies, and other private organizations. These investments have reached all sectors of higher education; however, most of the work has involved public two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

These efforts have focused on increasing the total number of students earning degrees, as well as for particular student groups less likely to complete a degree

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6   See Appendix A for a detailed description of the methodology used for the synthesis.

program. For example, six efforts are working to increase retention and completion among first-generation college students by providing colleges funding to ensure these students stay enrolled and complete their degrees. One of these efforts—the Council of Independent Colleges' **CIC/Walmart College Success Awards**— provided competitive grants to member colleges and universities to strengthen campus efforts aimed at helping first-generation students succeed in college and to develop networks so these colleges could share effective practices. Another effort— the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and Excelencia in Education's **Growing Knowledge about What Works for Latino Student Success** is working with five colleges to increase Latino student success and degree completion. Other efforts have focused on improving outcomes for underrepresented minorities, adult learners, veterans, and remedial students.

Some of the investment has also provided rewards or recognition of colleges and universities that have successful initiatives. For example, APLU's **Most Visible Progress** (**MVP**) **Awards** recognize universities that have made progress in effectively retaining and graduating students, including an award specifically for successful efforts focused on underrepresented populations. The Aspen Institute's **College Excellence Program** recognizes community colleges with positive student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students.

In the past several years…about $65 million has been invested to increase degree attainment.

Degree attainment efforts have focused on three common areas to achieve their goals:

1. Providing support to colleges and universities to develop or enhance programs or plans that support student success.

2. Changing institutional or statewide policies to reduce barriers to degree completion.

3. Building leadership capacity at the institution level to affect change.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Most of the reviewed efforts provided some financial resources or tools to colleges and universities to develop or enhance student success programs, such as:

- assistance in creating plans for increasing retention and completion,

- grant funding to enhance support services for first-generation students,

- teaching campus staff how to analyze data to make data-based decisions that would lead to increased student completion, or

- mapping pathways or linking student learning outcomes to degree completion.

There were many accomplishments cited by the organizations and state agencies leading these efforts, such as increased collaboration across institutions and implementation of actions on campus that have led to positive changes in student retention and completion.

AAC&U has a number of efforts that are focused on helping institutions implement high impact practices that deepen student learning and provide clear pathways between mastery of competency and degree completion. For example, AAC&U's *General Education Maps and Markers* is partnering with public and private colleges to develop and pilot a framework for general education that aims to deeply engage students in their own learning and map learning experiences with degree requirements.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED: Despite the positives noted, several organizations cited inadequate funding as a key challenge to sustaining these institutional programs. Additionally, leaders of these efforts noted that staff turnover, limited institutional capacity, and difficulty obtaining buy-in on campuses, particularly for efforts that were voluntary, were challenges that had to be addressed.

CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL OR STATEWIDE POLICIES

Changing institutional or statewide policies to reduce barriers to degree completion has been another common focus area. Changes in state level policies have focused on making the transfer process seamless, giving colleges flexibility from state remedial education requirements, or simplifying the process for adult learners to return to campus and complete their degrees. Through another effort, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education partnered with the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California to align Colorado's higher education policies with concrete, equity-focused actions at the institutional level. This was done through a state policy audit and analysis and in-depth work at three public institutions that involved creating and integrating benchmarked completion and equity targets.

Investments have also been made in changing institutional level policies that may hamper student success. For example, the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education's *Foundation of Excellence* program has worked with 256 two-year and four-year institutions to analyze their actions for first-year and transfer students and then created and implemented a plan to improve performance. Through this work, they cited significant increases in first-to-second year retention rates among participating institutions.

Stakeholders involved in efforts to change policies or programs also cited the need to gain buy-in at the campus level for changes in programs and addressing "initiative overload." For state-level efforts, it was also challenging to build buy-in across multiple

campuses. According to representatives of one state-level effort, they were successful in building buy-in and engagement in their work by including faculty and staff in the planning process, meeting regularly with these constituencies to gain feedback, hosting weekly informational webinars, maintaining a website that detailed the effort's progress, and providing a dedicated email for gaining input.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED: Stakeholders generally agreed that there has been a lot of work on changing policies and programs and some of these efforts could be scaled up. To do so, it would be important to bring together organizational and institutional staff to discuss how best to make investments in effective policies and practices. Stakeholders suggested practices that could help in meeting degree attainment goals, such as funding linked to outcomes, incentives to increase the number of students completing in four years rather than six years, and the promotion of the benefits of statewide completion.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AT INSTITUTION LEVEL

Providing information and resources to campus leaders has been used as a mechanism for improving institutions' ability to reach degree attainment goals. These resources include guidance on gathering, analyzing, and using data to develop retention and completion plans. Additionally, these efforts bring together leaders to identify how best to implement models, strategies, and best practices for increasing student success. For example, the National Association of College and University Business Officers and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges are leading the ***Institutional Aid Metrics Project***, which is helping campus leaders develop metrics that link aid distribution to student success; ultimately learning how to monitor the linkage between aid and student success. This enables more strategic decisions about institutional aid.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED: Although there are a number of efforts focused on building the capacity of leaders to make data informed decisions, stakeholders suggested that additional training for leaders is needed. The training should not just focus on one campus leader, but should have staff across academic disciplines and departments participate as a team. Training could include both pre- and in-service components so that multiple cohorts could be served—aspiring leaders and current leaders.

> Training is needed to build the capacity of colleges and universities to make data informed decisions.

Stakeholders also discussed a need for quality assurance and control over the training to ensure that it is effectively preparing leaders for change management.

Emerging Areas of Focus

There are some key focus areas emerging among degree attainment efforts. While these areas hold promise for helping to meet degree attainment goals, investments have just begun and information is still being gathered to determine what is most effective.

USING OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The use of educational technologies on college campuses to create online or alternative learning pathways has existed for some time. However, in the past two years the emergence of open educational resources, such as massive open online courses (also called MOOC), has prompted a "reexamination of many of the conventions of higher education, including the role of faculty and the institution, accreditation, and criteria for awarding credit."[7] An effort led by the American Council on Education, ***MOOCs as Game Changers,*** is examining how to incorporate MOOCs into degree programs. The work has included a meeting of 14 college and university presidents to discuss the role of technology (including MOOCs) in higher education change and transformation, development of a tool for assessing design features of MOOCs, and applying a course review and credit recommendation process to MOOCs. Through this process, ACE has recommended five MOOCs for college credit.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED: The potential for using open educational resources to help meet degree attainment goals is encouraging. Stakeholders view such resources as a promising tool to reach students who may not be successful in college or encourage adult learners to finish their degrees. However, there are unanswered questions about who takes these courses, how to validate student learning, and how best to use these resources as a vehicle for completing a degree. Stakeholders suggested more work is needed on how to evaluate and credential open resources, collaborate with faculty for integrating these resources into curriculum, and determine the links to degree programs to ensure that using these resources will lead to degree completion.

DEVELOPING NEW OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL MODELS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Changes in the financial and operational landscape of higher education has led to efforts that are developing ideas for new business and financial models that support degree attainment. For example, the APLU and Coalition of Urban Serving Universities' ***Transformational Planning Grants*** will support a cohort of seven public urban research universities in developing new business models that can increase access,

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7   Educause. *Seven Things You Should Know About MOOCs.* Educause Learning Initiative. June 2013. https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7097.pdf

improve success rates, find greater cost efficiencies and build networks for scaling strategies. The effort began in the summer of 2014 and will last for one year.

Additionally, state policymakers and legislatures are taking actions to encourage universities and colleges to adopt practices that will increase the number of students earning degrees. For example, Indiana, New York, and Tennessee have developed structured course schedules for use at community colleges. Using this approach students take courses in a pre-determined pattern, thus providing more predictability in planning their education and a greater likelihood in completing.[8]

Additional work is also focused on redesigning how financial aid is awarded to students and modifying regulations to allow courses that may not be tied to the "credit hour" requirement. Many of the ideas related to using open educational resources are also intertwined with new business models because of the possibility for using these resources to deliver education in a different, and potentially more efficient, manner.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED: Efforts to develop new models for higher education are in their infancy, with action still occurring on a small scale. Stakeholders discussed the importance of learning which models are both affordable for students and viable for institutions. One of the key areas still to be addressed is how best to include faculty in conversations about new models since new models may impact how instruction is delivered. Stakeholders leading current efforts focused on improving instruction or changing how it is delivered noted that constant communication and engagement with faculty has been important to moving their projects forward. Stakeholders also discussed that accreditation requirements or regulations for awarding financial aid can impact any changes in delivering education. Nonetheless, some of the ideas being developed could revolutionize higher education. In addition, stakeholders acknowledged that new models for education have the potential to attract students to a product (college) that they find unaffordable.

STRENGTHENING LINKAGES BETWEEN K–12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Ensuring that high school graduates are fully prepared to enroll and succeed in college is not a new idea. While states and the federal government have been working in this area, degree attainment efforts are taking a more concerted approach to link K–12 education and the transition to college with completion.[9] Two efforts—the State University of New York's *Cradle to Career*, and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities' *Action Summit on K–12 + University Partnership*—are

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8   Complete College America. *The Game Changers: Are States Implementing the Best Reforms to Get More College Graduates?* October 2013. http://completecollege.org/pdfs/CCA%20Nat%20Report%20Oct18-FINAL-singles.pdf

9   The federal government has made investments in building partnerships between colleges, universities, and middle/high schools to increase enrollment of low income students through the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) since 1998.

focusing on building collaborations between K–12 systems and local colleges and universities. The efforts are developing plans and actions to better prepare students for college and increase collaboration across sectors.

Ten states received a ***Core to College*** grant to build collaboration between postsecondary and K–12 systems. One key aspect of Core to College is using the Common Core State Standards and associated assessments as a way to determine college readiness, "ultimately increasing the rates of enrollment and completion."[10] In Colorado the Core to College grant is also being used to develop an interactive, online college admissions and application assistant tool that will be used by incoming students, high school counselors and families to help students determine and understand the institutions for which they are best suited academically. These efforts have faced common challenges in getting stakeholders to commit time and resources to effectively coordinate their work.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED: Stakeholders agreed that creating partnerships between K–12 and higher education is important; however there is little information on what is most effective in bridging these sectors. Given the local control of K–12 school districts, a more local and regional focus may be most effective. While the adoption of the Common Core State Standards has prompted more collaboration between K–12 and postsecondary education, this is a focus area where more demonstration and pilot investments could be made to develop greater linkages.

> Creating partnerships between K–12 and higher education is important. More information is needed on what is most effective in bridging these sectors.

Measuring Progress Toward Goals

While efforts have stated goals that are related to degree attainment, the use of metrics to measure progress varied. Almost all of the state-led efforts and just under a half of the privately-led efforts use metrics to measure their progress. Among the state-led efforts, almost all have multiple metrics on enrollment, retention, and completion. For example, metrics measuring progress toward degree completion include the number of students who earn degrees or certificates including for various subgroups; across the

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10   The state of Colorado was the only state to report its Core to College initiative in our survey. Additional information can be found at: http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news_releases/2011-12-19.html.

state, regionally, or by institution. These efforts also include interim progress measures towards degree completion, such as year to year persistence or the number of students taking 15 credit hours.

Among the privately-led efforts, the use of metrics was less common. For those efforts that do measure their progress they are doing so for students at the institutions involved in the effort or for specific subgroups of students, such as:

- **ACCESS TO SUCCESS** collects data annually from 22 state university systems. These data include enrollment, retention rates, progression rates, graduation rates, and degrees awarded at each campus and are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, underrepresented minority status, Pell grant recipient status, enrollment status, and if student is a transfer. (http://www.edtrust.org/issues/higher-education/access-to-success)

- **PLUS 50 COMPLETION** collects data annually from 18 colleges on students aged 50 and over. These data include number receiving prior learning credit, course enrollment, participation in advising and career development workshops, degree or certificates earned, and employment. Some efforts have multiple metrics focused on enrollment, retention, & completion. (http://plus50.aacc.nche.edu/aboutplus50/pages/default.aspx)

- **GATEWAYS TO COMPLETION** works with participating institutions to develop a plan for increasing student success in high risk gateway courses and uses data on those students' retention and completion outcome to monitor success. (http://www.jngi.org/g2c/)

A consistent challenge cited by many organizations is obtaining high quality data to measure progress, particularly for efforts that rely on institutions to provide student-level data. Either data were unavailable or it took considerable time to find reliable and valid student-level data that align with the metrics being used. Additionally, organizations noted that it was difficult to build consensus around metrics necessary for measuring degree attainment.

During the stakeholder meeting there was much discussion about how to best identify effective practices at individual campuses and bring those practices to scale system-wide, statewide, or nationally. Many of the efforts have been sharing best practices through meetings, workshops, or creating tools to share information publicly. However, stakeholders generally agreed that it can be difficult to determine a reliable metric for establishing a best practice and think this is an area for additional work.

Moving Forward

In the last few years there have been modest increases in the percentage of adults earning degrees across all racial groups and the number of degrees and certificates awarded. However, there are still large gaps in degree attainment among student subgroups that are not narrowing and large numbers of adults who have some college credit but have not earned a degree.[11]

While the progress toward degree attainment goals is encouraging, more work is needed to meet national attainment goals. There have been a number of promising practices but few have been brought to scale in such a way that could lead to more students earning degrees. With several years of work completed, now is the time to take effective practices and implement them more broadly. Doing so will require adequate funding and a plan for sustainability once the funding ends.

Additionally, these investments must include metrics that measure how the investment will increase degree attainment and impact national goals. Moreover, investments in degree attainment should include campus stakeholders to maximize impact. As one stakeholder noted, "faculty involvement is the key to real and lasting change in higher education." A well-defined plan for implementing effective practices on a large scale basis can lead to the nation reaching its goal.

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11   At the April 28, 2014 the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems presented *Degree Attainment Goals: Progress to Date and What We Need to Do to Get There*. www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=5564

Methodology

APLU and AASCU contracted with Laurium Evaluation Group to conduct the synthesis. A survey was sent to 52 private organizations, foundations, and associations that were identified as leading or funding work related to degree attainment and higher education agencies/boards or postsecondary systems in all 50 states.[12] The survey collected information on each effort's goals, activities, funding, participants, metrics, accomplishments, challenges, and future plans. Survey responses were received from:

- 28 private organizations, associations, or foundations representing 46 different efforts and

- 15 state higher education agencies, board of regents, or university systems representing 23 efforts.

Among the 15 states included in our survey results, 12 states are part of the Complete College America alliance. The state survey responses received included efforts that are not only funded by the state, but also receive funding from the federal government or other external sources. Additionally, some states completed one survey that encompassed all their efforts related to degree attainment, while other states completed a separate survey for each effort. Table 1 highlights characteristics of degree attainment efforts for which surveys were completed and thus were included in the synthesis.

Privately-Led Efforts	State Level Efforts
• Total efforts: 46	• Total efforts: 23
• 13 efforts began in 2013 or 2014	• Seven efforts began in 2013 or 2014
• 40 efforts still active	• All 23 efforts still active
• 40 received funding	• 16 received funding from the state or an external source
o Total funding reported: $49 million	o Total funding reported: $16 million
o 11 efforts were funded by multiple foundations or organizations	o 5 efforts were funded by multiple sources
o Amount of funding ranged from $21,000 to $6 million per effort	o Amount of funding ranged from $29,000 to $5 million per effort

Note: Some survey respondents reported that the effort received funding but did not provide a dollar amount.

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12 Organizations whose primary work on degree attainment is to conduct research or policy development and advocacy, rather than directly providing services or funding to colleges or students, were excluded from the survey sample.

APLU and AASCU also held a meeting of stakeholders on April 25, 2014 where 43 public and private sector stakeholders representing a variety of degree attainment efforts discussed how they are working towards meeting degree attainment goals. The stakeholders reviewed current research related to degree attainment and discussed areas where the community could improve to help reach national attainment goals. The synthesis incorporates stakeholder comments provided during that meeting.

List of Degree Attainment Efforts With Survey Responses

Name of organization	Project Title
American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)	Plus 50 Completion
American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)	Red Balloon Project
American Council on Education (ACE)	MOOCs as Game Changers
American Indian Higher Education Consortium	Walmart Foundation, AIHEC, HACU, and NAFEO Student Success Collaborative
Aspen Institute	College Excellence Program & New College Leadership Project
Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)	Developing a Community College Student Roadmap
	General Education Maps and Markers (GEMs)
	LEAP States Initiative
	Preparing Critical Faculty for the Future (PCFF)
	Quality Collaboratives: Assessing and Reporting Degree Qualifications Profile Competencies in the Context of Transfer
	Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility
	Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES)
	VALUE: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education
AAC&U and Democracy Commitment	Bridging Cultures to Form a Nation: Difference, Community, and Democratic Thinking
AAC&U and Excelencia in Education	Growing Knowledge about What Works for Latino Student Success
AAC&U and University of Southern California	Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success
Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)	Trustees for Student Success
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)	MVP Awards
APLU and Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) in Partnership with Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)	Transformational Planning Grants

Name of organization	Project Title
APLU and Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) in Partnership with Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)	Urban Universities for HEALTH
Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities	Action Summit on K–12 + University Partnership
Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)	CIC Community College Transfer Project
	CIC Degree Qualifications Profile Consortium
	CIC/Walmart College Success Awards
	CIC/Walmart Foundation Symposium on First-Generation Students
	Consortium for Online Humanities Instruction
	The Future of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges
Excelenica in Education	Ensuring America's Future by Increasing Latino College Completion
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities	Wal-Mart MSI Student Success Collaborative
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)	Project Win-Win
John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education	Foundations of Excellence
	Gateways to Completion
	Retention Performance Management (RPM)
National Association of College and Business Officers (NACUBO) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges	Institutional Aid Project
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)	Building Blocks to 2020
National College Access Network	Member programs
State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)	Complete College America data collection & reports
	Moving the Needle: How FA Policies Help Completion
	Win-Win (SHEEO subcontract)
The Education Trust	Education Trust Analytics (College Results Online)
The Education Trust, National Association of System Heads (NASH), U.S. Education Delivery Institute	Access to Success (A2S) Initiative
The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust	Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership
UNCF Institute for Capacity Building	Enrollment Management Program
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)	Adult College Completion Network
	Equity in Excellence
Yes We Must Coalition	Yes We Must Coalition

State or System-Led Efforts	
Name of organization	**Project Title**
Arkansas Department of Higher Education	No title provided
Colorado Department of Higher Education	Colorado Challenge
	Performance Based Funding
	Reverse Transfer/Degree within Reach/Credit Where Credit is Due
	Supplemental Academic Instruction
	Core to College
Kansas Board of Regents	Foresight 2020
Ohio Board of Regents	Complete College Ohio
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education	Complete College America (OK)
State University of New York	Open SUNY
	Credit When It's Due
	Degree Audit and Planning
	Seamless Transfer Requirements
	Cradle to Career
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)	Closing the Gaps by 2015
University of Maine System	Adult Baccalaureate Completion Distance Education
University of Hawaii System	Hawaii Graduation Initiative
University of North Carolina – General Administration	Our Time, Our Future—Strategic Directions 2013–18
University of West Florida	Complete Florida
University System of Georgia Board of Regents	Complete College Georgia
Utah System of Higher Education	Board of Regents' Completion Initiatives
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission	DegreeNow
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education	Stronger by Degrees—2011–2015 Strategic Agenda

Summary of Survey Results

Elements of Degree Attainment Efforts	Trends Among Efforts	
Specific Activities		Number of efforts
	Hold Convening	55
	Conduct Research	47
	Provide Services or Tools to Colleges	44
	Obtain Commitments from Colleges to Take Specific Action	39
	Advocate Changes in Policy	40
	Provide Funding to Colleges	31
	Provide Scholarships to Students	6
Participants in Effort Activities	Primarily public 2-year colleges, public 4-year colleges and universities, or private, independent colleges Other participants include for-profit colleges, students, state agencies	
Student Focus	Twelve efforts focus on specific student groups, such as underserved minority, low-income, first-generation, adult learners, transfers and veterans.	
Funding	**Privately-Led Efforts** ● 40 received funding ● Total funding reported: $49 million ● 11 efforts were funded by multiple foundations or organizations ● Amount of funding ranged from $21,000 to $6 million per effort	**State level efforts** ● 16 received funding ● Total funding reported: $16 million ● 7 efforts were funded by multiple sources ● Amount of funding ranged from $29,000 to $5 million
Timeframe	Half of the efforts started in 2010–12 20 new efforts in last two years Most efforts are still active	
Use of Metrics	40 efforts have metrics to measure progress towards goals. 19 of the 23 state-led efforts 21 of the 45 private organization and foundation led efforts	