Promising Pathways
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence

Sheila Radford-Hill, PhD Team Leader
Dominican Equity Team
Anne Deeter, Angela Frazier, Gema Ortega, PhD, Norah Collins Pienta, Paul Simpson, and Tina Taylor-Ritler, PhD
Anne Arundel Community College
California State University-Northridge
California State University-Sacramento
Carthage College
Clark Atlanta University
Florida International University
Governors State University
Lansing Community College
Morgan State University
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
Pomona College
Wilbur Wright College
Illinois: Access, Affordability, and Attainment

- $9b deficit in annual total state spending
- $16b in unpaid bills
- $9b in unfunded pension benefits
- Junk bond status
- Taxpayers fleeing the state
- Net exporter of college students

- One of 4 states that cut funding of higher education over the last two fiscal years.
- The cost of college has far outpaced the amount of state aid available for low income students.
- Black and Latinx enrollment has steadily increased over the past decade, however, on average, only 33.7% of African-American students earn a bachelor’s degree within 6 years.
- Wealthier students are twice as likely to graduate in 6 years than low-income students.

Unequal Opportunity in Illinois, Partnership for College Completion, 2017
“Our theory of change relies on the power of practitioner inquiry that is structured using critical action research protocols as a driver of change.”

Alicia C. Dowd and Estela Mara Bensimon, Center for Urban Education.
Equity-minded Inquiry Model

- Use institutional data to assess equity gaps
- Identify institutional strategies to eliminate inequities
- Implement strategies to eliminate inequities
- Study and use results to improve strategies

Study and use results to improve strategies

Identify institutional strategies to eliminate inequities

Implement strategies to eliminate inequities

Use institutional data to assess equity gaps
Targeted intervention to benefit Freshman students

- Equity Team
- Community of Practice
- Data Analysis and Monitoring
- Guided Pathway Development
- African-American First Generation/low income students
- Enhanced First Year Seminar
- Holistic Advising
Promising Pathways Components

• Enhanced freshman seminar experience
  • The Examined Life
    1. Holistic advising
       • Individual and group advising
    2. Guided Pathway Development
       • Guided Pathway Workbook
    3. Success Workshops including time management, study and exam-taking skills
    4. Psychosocial Interventions
       • Success check-ins
       • Brain Plasticity Workshops
       • Student Panel (5 diverse junior/senior students - personal experiences matter, everyone struggles in college, university resources can help)

• Spring 2017 Elective Workshops and Experiences
What are the intended outcomes of the enhanced Freshman Seminars in the Promising Pathways Initiative?

- Students will be able to identify multiple strategies, practices, and on-campus resources to achieve academic success.
- Students will demonstrate a developing sense of themselves as learners and feel confident in responding to new contexts.
- Students will develop a four-year plan of action for pursuing those academic and experiential learning opportunities to meet identified civic, professional, and intellectual goals.
- Students will indicate an increased sense of community belonging and awareness of High-Impact Practices available to them at Dominican University for their individualized pathway.
Five Steps Toward Success

• Step 1. Who are you? Unpack your goals.
• Step 2. Explore your personal pathway.
• Step 3. Connect your personal pathway to opportunities at Dominican.
• Step 4. Begin building your four-year plan.
• Step 5. Draft a plan for your future.
Summary themes in PPI outcomes

- Despite entering with more risk factors, the PPI intervention students demonstrated impressive Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall retention with GPAs and CHs earned nearly equal to the comparison group.
- Equity gaps still remain.
Fall 2016 to Fall 2017 Retention by PPI Intervention Group: Cohort One

- Comparison: 79.3%
- Honors: 85.0%
- Intervention w/out Transitions: 91.0%
- Transition: 62.1%
- All Freshmen FA16: 80.8%
PPI Cohort 2: Fall 17 to Spring 18 Retention by PPI Group

- All Freshmen: 92.1%
- Intervention: 89.2%
- Intervention without Transitions: 88.6%
- Transitions: 93.1%
- Honors: 100.0%
- All Others: 92.7%
PROMISING PATHWAYS SCALE-UP PLAN

• Year One
  • 6 Seminars = 108 students

• Year Two
  • 12 Seminars = 206 students

• Year Three
  • 18 Seminars = 324 students
The Impact of Promising Pathways

• Focus on equity results in a **$2.75M DOE award under Title V**. Dominican is only Midwestern university to receive the award in 2017.

• **New Division for Student Success and Engagement** incorporates PPI as a model for the Freshman Seminar series for all students.

• **Office of Institutional Effectiveness** develops annual equity and inclusive excellence report; a move toward equity scorecard.

• New Faculty Academy for Inclusive and Responsive Teaching.
“I just want everyone to know that I spent years looking at the absolute worst of America. . . . But in the end, I never lost faith. . . . that the terror or racism would one day end.”