New Approaches to Improving College Access, Persistence, and Success:
Three Exemplary Postsecondary Opportunity Programs

PROMISINGPractices
What *Works* in the Midwest

A report from the
Wisconsin Center for the Advancement
of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE)
and the
MHEC Promising Practices Series

January 2010

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MHEC

WISCAPE

Wisconsin Center for the Advancement
of Postsecondary Education

WISCAPE aims to inform and improve postsecondary education policy, research, and practice through the creation and exchange of knowledge. In pursuit of this goal, WISCAPE conducts and supports research projects, sponsors public programs, produces and distributes publications, and fosters communication among key stakeholders.

About the Midwestern Higher Education Compact

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) is a nonprofit regional organization established by compact statute to assist Midwestern states in advancing higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing. MHEC seeks to fulfill its interstate mission through programs that:

- Enhance productivity through reductions in administrative costs;
- Encourage student access, completion, and affordability;
- Facilitate public policy analysis and information exchange;
- Facilitate regional cooperation;
- Encourage quality higher education programs and services; and
- Encourage innovation in the delivery of educational services.
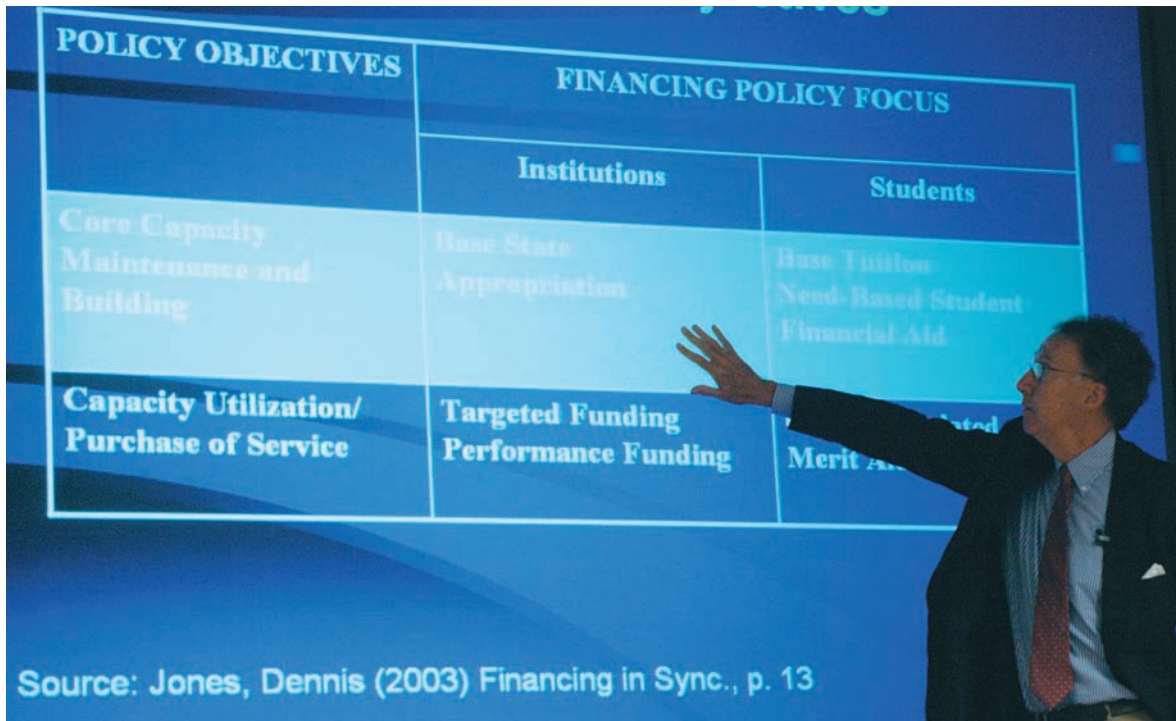
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This is the second in an occasional series called *Promising Practices: What* Works *in the Midwest*. The series was launched to showcase innovative initiatives and effective ways to address common challenges and unique opportunities in higher education. The series emerged from a partnership between the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and the Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office on the *Education to Workforce Policy Initiative*, which aimed to promote regional economic growth through stronger, more seamless links among education, training, and the workplace.

MHEC has since entered into a partnership with the Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE) designed to leverage the strengths of each organization to conduct applied and translational research aimed at improving public policy and enhancing the public good throughout the region. A key element of the partnership is to identify and communicate innovative and effective practices, policies, and collaborations in postsecondary education and how they might be applied in the Midwest.
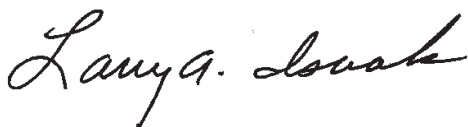
An early result of the partnership is this second report in MHEC's *Promising Practices* series, *New Approaches to Improving College Access, Persistence, and Success: Three Exemplary Postsecondary Opportunity Programs*. Written by WISCAPE staff, the report describes three initiatives—in Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan—aimed at promoting postsecondary access and degree attainment through efforts at the institutional, state, and local community levels, respectively.

Promising practices enable educators and policymakers to compare and benchmark themselves to peer institutions and states and in the process learn more about their own needs, values, and unique context.

This report provides examples of what is working, how it is working, why it works, and obstacles that have been overcome to achieve success. Reflection and analysis of lessons learned can motivate and inspire further ideas and insights, leading to creative "breakthrough" practices. At the same time, avoiding the pitfalls and detours suffered by others saves not only time and money but also conserves energy to focus on other areas needing attention.

We are pleased to offer this report as a product of the partnership between MHEC and WISCAPE. We welcome input on how future reports within the series can be focused to best meet your needs.

Sincerely,

Larry Isaak
President
Midwestern Higher Education Compact

Noel Radomski
Director
Wisconsin Center for the Advancement
of Postsecondary Education

Transferring knowledge gleaned from "best" or promising practices has become a staple of educational and economic development efforts. While significant innovations can and do result from this exchange, a superficial or incomplete transfer of knowledge causes many efforts to fail. Once the initial excitement of discovery has faded and the reality of attempting to replicate the success in another context becomes apparent, implementation is often abandoned. Similar results can occur when a practice is quickly adopted without consideration of its suitability for replication in a different setting.

Other promising practices are dismissed due to 1) an "all or nothing" approach, wherein one aspect is deemed unfeasible, thereby making the entire idea seemingly unworkable, or 2) a premature assessment that "it would just not work here." However, careful analysis and adaptation of part or all of an idea to a new environment can bring very positive results.

Introduction

Many factors prevent individuals from enrolling in college and pursuing a postsecondary degree, including rising college costs, a lack of *college knowledge*, and the absence of a pervasive *college-going culture*.[1] Underrepresented students, such as first-generation, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and racial minorities, find these barriers even more difficult to overcome. As a result, admissions applications, enrollments, and graduation rates fall short of desired levels, and this deficit impairs economic and community viability. This problem is especially pressing in the Midwest, where lagging economies and low degree attainment rates hinder community development efforts.

In response, concerned stakeholders throughout the region have established *postsecondary opportunity programs* (POPs). These state, county, municipal, institutional, and private programs and partnerships aim to increase educational attainment by confronting barriers to postsecondary access, persistence, and success. Many of these programs identify educational attainment as a means to economic and community development.[2] They exist under many names, including promise programs, compacts, covenants, and commitments.

To be classified as a POP, a program must

1. Have dedicated funds available only to students enrolled in the program to provide full or partial financial assistance for postsecondary education expenses;

2. Be need-based, a combination of need- and merit-based, or universally accessible; and

3. Provide or facilitate non-monetary benefits or leverage other programs providing these benefits, which include at least one of the following:[3]

   a. Precollege support services;
   b. College knowledge
   c. Guaranteed enrollment at a postsecondary institution
   d. College support services.

In addition, POPs participants must fulfill certain eligibility requirements to access program benefits.

In conducting research on POPs, the Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE) focuses on the past 20 years. Within this time frame, student demographic shifts, increased emphasis on access and completion, rising college costs, and more recently, a deep recession, have altered significantly the postsecondary education landscape. POPs have emerged and evolved to confront these issues in three overlapping phases. First, states looked to provide POPs for their residents, beginning with the Indiana Twenty-First Century Scholars program in 1990. Second, institutions began to craft programs designed to help increase access for particular student groups, such as

the 2004 Carolina Covenant at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Third, cities, counties, and school districts adopted the POPs framework to increase the educational attainment of residents and jumpstart economic growth. The Kalamazoo Promise, started in 2005, stands as the leader among these programs.

POPs are becoming increasingly prevalent; and while a great deal of policy innovation has occurred in recent years, no clear definition of these programs has emerged. WISCAPE has constructed the POPs definition to help researchers and policymakers describe, compare, analyze, and evaluate these programs. Further, WISCAPE has created a database of programs that might be classified as POPs. The database contains more than 130 municipal, county, state, and institutional programs—more than 50 of which fit the POPs definition above—that aim to enroll and graduate students at two- and four-year institutions. Of the more than 50 POPs across the country, 19 are located in the Midwest—the most of any region in the United States.[4]

This report focuses on three exemplary programs: the Illinois Promise at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; the state-run All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship; and Campus and Community: Together for Good, a partnership between Finlandia University and Hancock Public Schools in Hancock, Michigan.[5] The following sections include brief descriptions of the programs and discussion about why they stand out as promising practices. The report concludes with a summary of the lessons learned from these programs.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement: The Illinois Promise

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) designed the Illinois Promise, or I-Promise, to increase access for high-achieving, low-income students. This POP began in 2005 as an initiative of Chancellor Richard Herman who, as a first-generation student himself, put this program on the fast track. He let UIUC's Office of the Provost and Office of Student Financial Aid work out programmatic and implementation details. This top-level support for the I-Promise helped jump-start fundraising, gave the program high visibility, and shortened the time it took I-Promise to move from idea to practice.

The university implemented I-Promise in 2004, and their first cohort graduated in 2009. The program has expanded from 129 students in the 2005-2006 academic year to 620 in 2009-2010. Sixty-seven percent of participating students are first-generation college students, which is an indication that the program reaches traditionally underrepresented students at UIUC.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the I-Promise, students must

- Be Illinois residents (parents must also be residents);
- Be admitted as a new freshman or transfer student;
- Have an expected family contribution (EFC) of $0 as determined through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- Have a family income at or below the federal poverty level;
- Have less than $50,000 in total family assets; and
- Be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours during fall or spring semesters.

In order to maintain their eligibility, I-Promise students must complete an annual FAFSA, remain in good academic standing, and be employed approximately 10-12 hours per week under the Federal Work-Study Program. UIUC's Office of Student Financial Aid determines student eligibility for I-Promise and considers all admitted students who complete a FAFSA for the program.

Benefits

I-Promise covers the cost of tuition, fees, room and board, books, and supplies through grants and scholarships. Students are eligible for four years of funding for fall and spring semesters with the possibility of funding for summer courses or a fifth year, subject to special approval.

Funding

A combination of federal support, state funds, institutional resources, and individual and corporate donations fund I-Promise. However, financial support continues to be a challenge. While UIUC administrators hope to make the program self-sustaining in the near future, they currently rely on donors and matching grants for the bulk of the funding.

Promising Aspects

I-Promise excels because of UIUC's commitment to continuous improvement. Since its inception, the I-Promise staff has adapted the program to better fit students' needs. They have also implemented a rigorous evaluation component in order to better judge the program's effectiveness.

Student Support Services

The addition of student support services to the I-Promise shows UIUC's commitment to continuous improvement. When the program began in 2005, it only offered a financial aid package. The I-Promise team decided not to include special support systems for participating students, opting instead to partner with existing programs to avoid replication and minimize costs. UIUC officials also wanted to minimize the appearance of singling these students out in order to avoid the stigma attached to the label "low-income student."

However, UIUC administrators realized these students might thrive with more support and within a community of other I-Promise students. In 2008, Susan Gershenfeld, a new employee with the Provost's Office, met with I-Promise students. The students themselves articulated a need for targeted support beyond financial aid to ensure their success. Gershenfeld took these concerns to UIUC administrators, who made her the I-Promise student services director. In this position, she has worked to create a community of I-Promise students, and the program is now a registered student organization. I-Promise students take part in a variety of programs designed to enrich their college experience, including financial literacy training, community service, and leadership opportunities. During the 2009-2010 academic year, Gershenfeld will pilot a mentorship program, which will match new students, based on career interests, with either upper-class peers or adult mentors from the campus or community. Program staff developed this component as a way to ease the transition to university life for the program's incoming students and to bridge current I-Promise participants with new cohorts.

The addition of targeted support services has strengthened I-Promise by confronting the fact that participating students most likely need help beyond funding to succeed. Research shows that underrepresented students who receive support beyond financial aid have a higher probability of enrolling and excelling in postsecondary education.[6] Program staff now assist students by serving as advocates for student needs, creating an open environment, and building a supportive community of I-Promise participants. These actions, whether individual gestures or systematic changes, have helped I-Promise scholars succeed.

Rigorous Evaluation

I-Promise further demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the addition of rigorous evaluation. For the first few years, UIUC administrators evaluated this POP by tracking students' grades, credits completed, and other outcomes and

comparing this data to averages for the general study body. After reviewing the program's assessment strategy, Gershenfeld and others saw that the current assessment data, while helpful, did not give a clear or complete picture of the program's effectiveness. To acquire this understanding, UIUC needed to compare I-Promise students to other students with similar demographics. Using three comparison groups—Pell-eligible students, students who complete the FAFSA but are not Pell-eligible, and students who did not complete the FAFSA—researchers will evaluate differences in outcomes between I-Promise students and the student body while controlling for race/ethnicity, ACT composite scores, gender, cohort, and first-generation status. The following data will be tracked:

- Years taken to graduate (including credits earned)
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Debt load
- Field of study
- Other support from campus programs (such as participation in the President's Award Program or Educational Opportunities Program from the Office of Minority Student Affairs)

Researchers will also assess outcomes for I-Promise students who dropped out and did not return to UIUC.

With initial preparation for the study complete, UIUC intends to begin gathering data in October 2009. The analysis will be ongoing, and results will be reported annually. This type of statistical evaluation will help the program develop internally, increase its attractiveness to potential donors, and provide a strong foundation for future improvement.

Lessons from the Illinois Promise

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of I-Promise is the staff's willingness to adapt and improve over time. The addition of student support services and rigorous evaluation has strengthened this POP and created a culture that accepts and encourages innovation. For these reasons, the Illinois Promise exemplifies a promising practice.

Leveraging Existing Resources: The All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship

The All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship (AIOS) emerged as a gubernatorial campaign plank to provide more college aid to Iowa students. Governor Chet Culver proposed this POP and developed it in conjunction with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. The scholarship passed the Iowa General Assembly in time for the incoming postsecondary cohort of 2007-2008.

The College Student Aid Commission administers AIOS. In its first two years, 820 students received AIOS awards, totaling more than $3.9 million.

Table 1: All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship Recipient Numbers[7]

	2007-2008		2008-2009	
	Recipients	Total Dollars	Recipients	Total Dollars
Regent Universities	89	$525,848	239	$1,392,155
Community Colleges	61	$187,438	258	$829,202
Private Colleges and Universities	30	$168,992	143	$841,544

Eligibility

To be eligible for AIOS, students must

- Graduate from an Iowa high school;
- Earn a minimum high school GPA of 2.5 on a four-point scale;
- Enroll in an eligible postsecondary institution within two years of high school graduation;
- Enroll in a minimum of three semester hours (or equivalent) in a degree-oriented program;
- Complete the FAFSA; and
- Complete any application requirements established by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

Though the scholarship is awarded as one-time aid to begin postsecondary studies, students attending community colleges can reapply for a second year if they meet their institution's standards for satisfactory academic progress.

Benefits

AIOS provides a first-year, need-based scholarship to attend any Iowa postsecondary institution. The scholarship amount is limited to the average tuition and fees for students at Iowa's three public universities: the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the

University of Northern Iowa. Once dispersed, students can use the funds for any costs associated with postsecondary attendance, such as tuition and fees, school supplies, day care, transportation, or housing.

Funding

Each budget cycle, the Iowa General Assembly renews AIOS's budget with money from the state's general fund.[8] The budget renewal affects the number of available scholarships, particularly the availability of funds for attending private institutions.[9]

Promising Aspects

The promise of AIOS rests in its highly effective leveraging of existing departments, established support services, and common financial aid structures to increase efficiency and avoid redundancy. This effectiveness emerged from three crucial decisions.

Capitalizing on Experience and Expertise

The decision to place AIOS under the management of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission was significant. Early administration of AIOS required the construction of a framework for assessing financial need and granting priority. The commission was able to meet both of these objectives efficiently and effectively, thanks to its overall ability to liaise with the state's postsecondary education stakeholders.

After initial planning and implementation, the successful administration of AIOS would depend on getting information to the right people. The commission has an established framework for communicating opportunities to the K-12 sector, assessing need, establishing priority among aid applicants, and working directly with the General Assembly.[10] Therefore, designating the commission to manage this POP capitalizes on existing statewide agencies and maximizes the use of available resources rather than implementing new and perhaps costly administrative structures.

However, placing AIOS under the commission's oversight would be only the first step. Two of the commission's major decisions helped shape AIOS into a clear, targeted, and promising POP: awarding priority to students already involved in K-12 TRIO programs (i.e., the most at-risk students) and using EFC from the FAFSA to determine need.

Building on TRIO

Giving priority to TRIO students leverages effective, non-monetary support services already in place instead of attempting to establish new, redundant programs. This POP looked for an opportunity to partner with an organization that already had success in reaching these students, and TRIO made sense given the statewide context. This arrangement contributes to the program's administrative efficiency and political feasibility by allowing AIOS funds to flow directly to students rather than to costly new services.

Relying on FAFSA

Using an applicant's EFC from the FAFSA is perhaps the most effective, efficient, and logical means for assessing financial aid at the commission's disposal. Turning to the FAFSA allows the commission to utilize financial aid structures already in place, streamline AIOS applications and awards process, and avoid creating additional bureaucratic barriers to college aid. It is also worth noting that FAFSA completion in any context is a positive step toward college access. By requiring FAFSA, AIOS joins other efforts developing across the country that recognize its importance for at-risk students.

Lessons from the All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship

Under the right circumstances, POPs can capitalize on effective, well-established services and application processes to reduce replication and increase transparency. As a state-wide program, AIOS demonstrated the promise of administering programs within well-positioned, experienced departments or agencies; leveraging successful service programs when appropriate; and tapping need-based assessments already functioning within the postsecondary landscape. A longitudinal assessment will be required to demonstrate the long-term impacts of this particular program on college persistence and completion in Iowa.[11] However, the structure and management of AIOS provide relevant and promising guidance for successful implementation of POPs.

Creating an Innovative Model: Campus and Community

In March of 2008, the public school district in Hancock, Michigan, planned to replace the existing middle school by adding a middle school wing to their high school, leaving a vacant building in the center of town. Meanwhile, Hancock's Finlandia University wanted to increase student enrollment and improve the stature of its NCAA Division III athletic programs but lacked the facilities and space to do so. To address these problems, the university and Hancock Public Schools developed an innovative solution—a unique, public-private partnership called Campus and Community: Together for Good. Finlandia would receive the existing middle school and nearby athletic fields, and Hancock Public Schools secured tuition waivers at Finlandia for students in at least the next 12 graduating classes from Hancock Central High School.

Campus and Community's designers aimed not only to solve the facilities issues, but to revitalize Hancock's lagging economy and encourage families to move to town and stay. Finlandia and Hancock Public Schools began the partnership with the district's graduating class of 2009. Twenty-six students—more than half of the first eligible graduating class—enrolled at Finlandia. These 26 students also represent a significant portion of Finlandia's student population of about 500.

Eligibility

To receive Campus and Community funds, students must

- Graduate from Hancock Central High School after attending for at least one full year;
- Earn a minimum high school GPA of 2.0 on a 4-point scale;
- Be admitted to and enroll at Finlandia University; and
- Complete the FAFSA.

Benefits

Campus and Community includes a last-dollar scholarship that covers the gap between federal aid received and tuition costs at Finlandia University. Students receive up to four years of funding if they maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Funding

Due to its unique building-transfer agreement, this POP does not involve any operational funds. Instead, tuition is simply waived for eligible students. The university covers the cost by reallocating existing general funds. To continue beyond its initial 12-year lifespan, the program will likely require funds from private philanthropic sources or other arrangements.

Promising Aspects

Campus and Community features an innovative model; and its designers convinced the community of its high potential for success by focusing on community development through increased access to four-year college, retaining local students in the community, and focusing on Hancock's need for growth.

Innovative Model

Many communities have attempted to establish programs in the mold of the Kalamazoo Promise, but they often struggle to find adequate financial resources.[12] Hancock's leaders avoided this difficulty through a facilities-for-scholarships model rather than attempting to directly copy Kalamazoo's endowment and scholarship system. The Hancock Public Schools turned to existing, non-monetary resources to increase postsecondary access, thereby transforming an idle, expensive building into a source of funding for dozens of scholarships each year.

Campus and Community is proof that not all POPs need to follow the same model. In this case, the specific needs and resources of the district and the university complemented one another, allowing both Hancock and Finlandia to resolve significant problems and create a scenario that benefits all parties involved. The results: expansion for Finlandia, reduced financial burden for the Hancock School District, direct benefits for students, and the increased value of a more educated community.

Focus on Community Development

A focus on community development accounts for the Campus and Community program's success and promise for the future, illustrated in three major ways. One, this POP reaches students who would not have the opportunity to attend a four-year college. Nearly every postsecondary access program aims to do this; but in Hancock, a town with a decreasing population and a significantly lower average household income than the Michigan state average, this goal is especially salient and timely. Of the 26 students currently receiving Campus and Community scholarships, few come from the very top of their graduating class, economically or academically. Initial observations and analyses suggest that Campus and Community does not benefit students who would attend a four-year college without the scholarship. The program prompted some students who planned on attending a community college elsewhere to seek a four-year degree at Finlandia instead, increasing both individual educational opportunities and the number of highly educated individuals in Hancock.

Two, the partnership focuses on the benefits of retaining and educating local students. From the beginning, Hancock Central High School Principal John Sanregret and Finlandia University President Phillip Johnson were clear about their dual goals for the program and how they could meet at least some of the community's needs. First, the program would ensure that more of Hancock's youth would have opportunities for postsecondary education. Second,

by providing local opportunities, high school graduates remain in town longer and are more likely to stay after graduating from college, whether out of community pride and loyalty, closeness of family, or the pure convenience of not relocating. This kind of retention provides the benefit of an immediate increase in college students contributing to the local economy and a long-term increase in employable college graduates. Campus and Community gives Hancock a significant competitive advantage over neighboring communities, drawing new families to town with the promise of educational opportunities and creating an attractive business environment with a loyal, locally based, and educated workforce.

Three, Campus and Community focuses on community interests, values, and needs. The creators of the program emphasized and capitalized on the idea that the city of Hancock makes education a priority for all citizens. Civic leaders wanted the old middle school to remain an educational building, due in part to its central location and prominence in the community. By committing one of the city's major land resources to an institution of higher education, Hancock's leaders showed a commitment to education and the community's youth. In addition, Finlandia now offers community education programs at this prominent downtown facility. All of these benefits relate directly to the varying forms of community development—educational opportunity, economic growth, and civic identity.

Lessons from Campus and Community

The most important lesson to learn from Campus and Community is that communities and universities should take advantage of all available opportunities and resources, regardless of how unconventional the arrangement might seem. Hancock Public Schools and Finlandia University have demonstrated that not every POP must follow a conventional model. Other, unique solutions, such as an exchange of capital and human resources, may achieve the same educational and economic results as a more conventionally structured and funded local POP.

Conclusion

POPs are spreading throughout the country as policy mechanisms for addressing postsecondary education attainment and community development. With so many POPs having been developed in the Midwest, it comes as no surprise that the region has spurred a number of promising practices. The Illinois Promise, the All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship, and Campus and Community each offer an important lesson.

First, POPs should strive to continually improve through adaptation and self assessment. Now in its fifth year, I-Promise has made changes in an effort to enhance its effectiveness. The decision to add targeted support services for I-Promise students and the creation of a rigorous evaluation project exemplify how UIUC has continued to reassess how the program can help students gain access to postsecondary education and succeed. All POPs should consistently reflect on their current practices as well as what changes can be made to strengthen their programs.

Second, POPs should increase efficiency and avoid redundancy by leveraging existing services and agencies when appropriate. AIOS's centralized administration, prioritization of TRIO recipients, and use of EFC to assess need all rely on existing practices and agencies to make the process run smoothly and reduce the demand for staff time and resources. For a state-level program, this kind of non-redundant administrative structure is a critical option to be considered first.

Third, POPs should consider innovative models that break from conventional POPs models. Campus and Community brought together two community institutions—Hancock Public Schools and Finlandia University—in a facilities-for-scholarships trade that allowed both to operate more effectively. This partnership sends a strong message to the community about the importance of education and the need to work collaboratively to solve problems. Communities, institutions, and governments looking to create POPs should consider all available options because the best idea may yet be untested.

Notes

[1] *College knowledge* refers to an understanding of the steps students need to take to prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education, including the application process and the utilization of financial aid. See Joel H. Vargas, *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College* (Boston, MA: The Education Resources Institute, 2004), http:www.teri.org/pdf/research-studies/CollegeKnowledge.pdf. *College-going culture* refers to "the environment, attitudes, and practices in schools and communities that encourage students and their families to obtain the tools, information, and perspective to enhance access to and success in postsecondary education." For more information, see *College Tools for Schools*, http://collegetools.berkeley.edu/resources.php?cat_id=6.

[2] For more information on POPs, see Elizabeth Stransky Vaade, *Postsecondary Opportunity Programs: Defining and Improving an Educational Policy Innovation*, WISCAPE Policy Brief. (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education, 2009), http://www.wiscape.wisc.edu/publications/PublicationDetails.aspx?id=321.

[3] Postsecondary education research suggests that students who receive support beyond financial aid have a higher probability of enrolling and excelling in postsecondary education; this is particularly true for under-represented students. See Donald E. Heller, *Condition of Access: Higher Education for Lower Income Students*, ACE/Praeger Series on Higher Education (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002); Vargas, *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College*; David T. Conley, *College Knowledge: What It Really Takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008); and Jennifer Engle and Vincent Tinto, *Moving Beyond Access: College Success for Low-Income, First-Generation Students* (Washington, DC: The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008), http://faculty.soe.syr.edu/vtinto/Files/Moving%20Beyond%20Access.pdf.

[4] For a list of selected POPs, see Vaade, *Postsecondary Opportunity Programs: Defining and Improving an Educational Policy Innovation*.

[5] We conducted case studies of each program, reviewing program materials and conducting interviews with program staff and other interested parties between August 13, 2009, and October 15, 2009. A full list of individuals interviewed and questions asked is available upon request.

[6] See Heller, *Condition of Access: Higher Education for Lower Income Students;* Vargas, *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College;* Conley, *College Knowledge: What It Really Takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready;* and Engle and Tinto, *Moving Beyond Access: College Success for Low-Income, First-Generation Students*.

[7] Data courtesy of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

[8] Iowa's K-16 education budget is established by a unique Joint Committee on Education in the General Assembly, which helps avoid the need for significant reconciliation of differing Senate and Assembly education budgets.
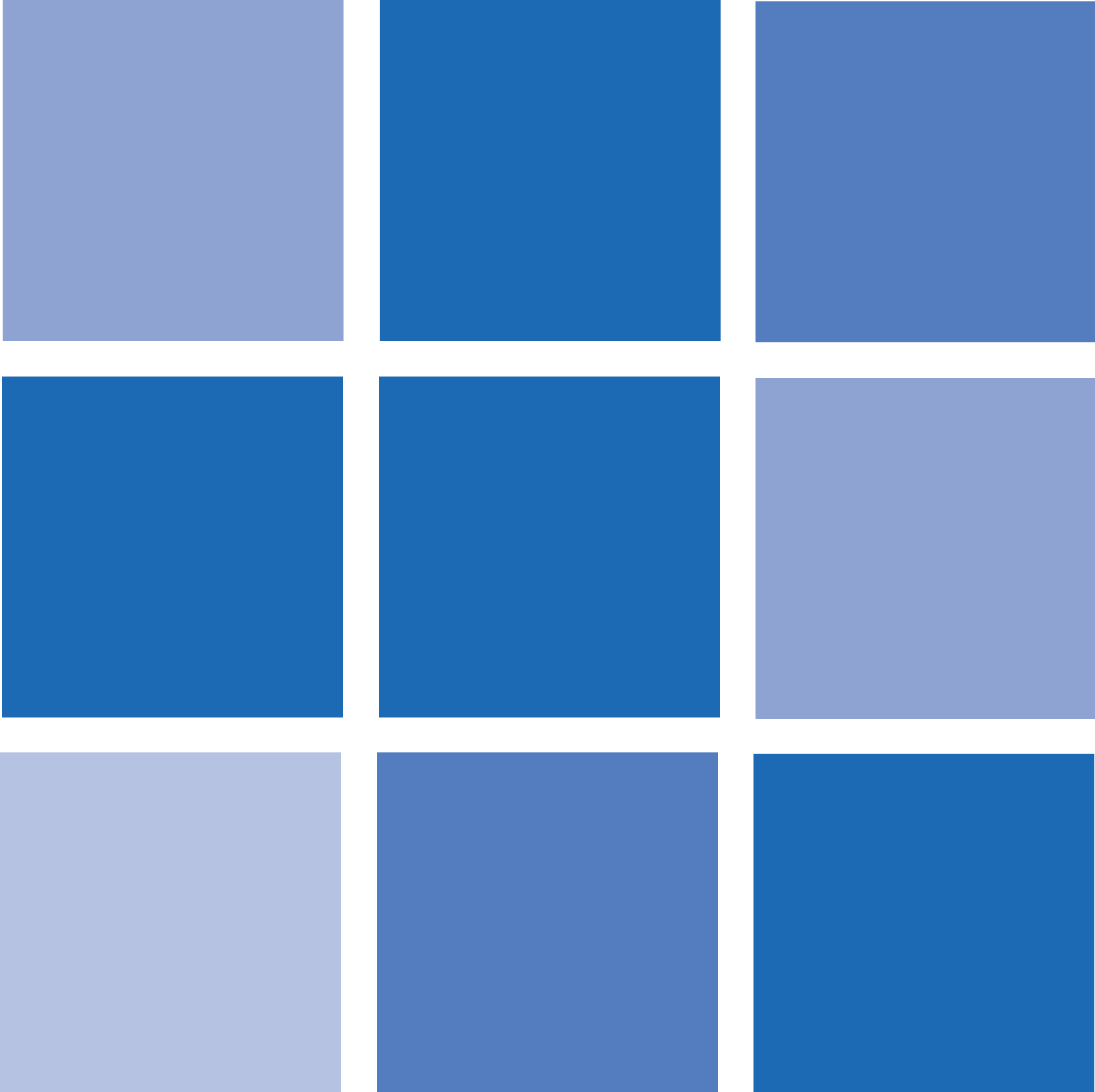
[9] Eligible postsecondary education institutions are described as the state's public institutions. However, if enough funds are appropriated by the Iowa General Assembly, a certain portion of the AIOS monies may be used to attend private institutions.

[10] The commission, similarly, is uniquely positioned to work with the Joint Committee on Education. This allows two centralized bodies to work on the AIOS rather than attempting to coordinate several state agencies or legislative committees. For example, the law authorizing AIOS originally required that one third (approx $500,000) of AIOS funds be awarded to foster children. This emerged from the General Assembly itself—in light of the effort to target especially at-risk students—and was not originally proposed as a specific component of the governor's campaign platform or the language sent to the General Assembly. However, on the recommendation of the commission, this requirement was revised for the 2008-2009 academic year. That year, the All Iowa Foster Scholarship was separated from the AIOS, allowing the commission to administer these programs independently and keep the award decisions less complex. Funds for foster children would remain available, but the commission no longer had to factor foster status into award decisions for the AIOS. This is seen by many as the most significant change to the AIOS in its two years of operation and a definitively positive move toward ensuring better management of the program and its funds. This change exemplifies the ability of specific, experienced agencies to capitalize on established relationships across the state and ensure efficient and effective implementation of policies such as the AIOS.

[11] Interviews with staff from the Iowa College Student Aid Commission indicate that such an assessment is under consideration.

[12] The Kalamazoo Promise is funded by a $100 million endowment from a small group of anonymous donors. The size of the endowment likely ensures that the program will continue into perpetuity. See Michelle Miller-Adams, *The Power of a Promise: Education and Economic Renewal in Kalamazoo*. (Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2009).

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