



Evidence Document

for Higher Learning Commission Reaccreditation

Document Title: College Access Initiative

Office of Origin: Division of Student Affairs

Document Summary:

College Access Initiative seeks to help students prepare for college and increase diversity at the University of Arkansas through programs such as the Academic Enrichment Program and Safe Zone Allies.

College Access Initiative (CAI) is an academic diversity outreach program designed to improve college readiness and college access among Arkansas students, encourage college going, contribute to the diversity recruitment efforts of our institution, and help empower students who want to attend the University of Arkansas to earn admission and achieve success here. Because ACT performance presents a widespread barrier to college entrance and funding among socioeconomically underserved and underrepresented students, CAI extends ACT training to students and teachers in schools and organizations statewide. The program also serves as a resource regarding college preparation, readiness, access and admissions Through frequent school and community workshops, teacher trainings and campus programs, CAI aims to help improve ACT scores, build a stronger college-going culture in the state and increase diversity at the University of Arkansas.

COLLEGE READINESS OUTREACH

In Northwest Arkansas, CAI facilitates ACT training and college counseling serving area high schools throughout Northwest Arkansas and the River Valley, including **Bentonville, Gentry, Gravette, Decatur, Pea Ridge, Siloam Springs, Rogers High, Rogers Heritage, Springdale, Har-Ber, Fayetteville, Haas Hall Academy, and Fort Smith Northside.**

CAI partners with ALPFA, the largest Latino association for business professionals and students, to provide ACT training, college access information and parent outreach to NWA Latinos. The program also collaborates with ESL programs and educators, Latino student academies in Northwest Arkansas schools, and other Latino-serving school groups and community organizations.

In Central Arkansas, CAI facilitates ACT and other workshops in **all Little Rock public and charter high schools** and for Pulaski County Youth Services. The program has built new and growing partnerships in Pine Bluff, through which CAI provides community-based workshops to more than 200 students before each national ACT date. The new Early Access Academy, funded by Simmons Bank Foundation, is a pilot college pipeline and summer program serving junior highs of Pine Bluff.

In East Arkansas, College Access facilitates the University of Arkansas / Delta Schools College Completion Consortium is designed to increase college readiness, improve college access and encourage success and retention among students from consortium schools who ultimately make the U of A their college of choice. Consortium schools benefit from targeted ACT training, assistance with admissions and financial aid processes, and priority consideration for college preparatory summer programs. The Consortium comprises **KIPP Delta Collegiate, Barton-Lexa, Marvell, Clarendon,**

Forrest City, Lee Co. (Marianna), Cross County, West Memphis, Rivercrest and Osceola high schools. CAI also has college counseling and readiness collaborations with KIPP Delta Public Schools, Teach for America and Arkansas Works

College Access hosts **ACT Academy**, a 5-day residential ACT intensive that exposes students to college academics, campus life and improves their college readiness. CAI can currently serve 250 students across two sessions each summer; on average, students see score improvements of two points.

ACADEMIC RETENTION

Together with the Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education and La Oficina Latina, College Access hosts a **summer bridge program** for entering freshmen who are first-generation college students, ethnic minorities, or who represent underserved communities; its academic components prepare students for college-level reading and writing, and participants are connected to campus support and resources and encouraged to engage early in the UA community.

College Access provides professional mentoring and academic coaching to scaffold for academic persistence and achievement for those students who ultimately make the U of A their college of choice. Students are encouraged to join the **Academic Enrichment Program**, the formal retention structure of the Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education, where they receive free tutoring (provided in the Center by CLASS+) and academic supplies, targeted workshops (on navigating syllabi, studying for tests, engaging in critical reading, etc.), and mid-term academic performance reviews. Students who fall below a 3.0 partner with a staff member and an individualized academic recovery plan.