College Now
Greater Cleveland

PREPARATION. ASPIRATION. COLLABORATION.

Report to the Community 2013

A MESSAGE FROM
WILLIAM KOEHLER AND LEE FRIEDMAN

PREPARATION.

ASPIRATION.

COLLABORATION.

Dear Friends of College Now:

To us, three words that represent what it takes for students to enroll, have success in and graduate from college are ***preparation, aspiration*** and ***collaboration.*** Students need to be ***prepared*** for college – academically, culturally, socially and financially. They need to set challenging goals for themselves and ***aspire*** to achieve them. And the community must ***collaborate*** to support students in their pursuit of higher education.

Preparation. Aspiration. Collaboration. These three words also describe the scope of College Now's work over the past year. In 2012, College Now partnered with a number of organizations to launch new programs to better ***prepare*** students for college. As you will read in this report, programs like Rockin' the 216 and Upward Bound are working to improve college readiness among the students that College Now serves. And the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars and the Early Action initiatives are challenging students to ***aspire*** to set their sights higher than they ever dreamed possible in terms of the postsecondary opportunities that are available to them. And finally, the College Now Mentoring Program and the work of the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland demonstrate the ***collaborative***, community-wide effort to ensure that Greater Cleveland students are not only enrolling in college but also are being supported in a way that ensures greater success in finishing college with a degree.

The stakes have never been higher for our community. In just a few short years, the Lumina Foundation predicts that more than 60 percent of jobs will require some kind of postsecondary education; and according to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 26 percent of Northeast Ohioans ages 25 and over have earned at least a Bachelor's degree. Our community's future success is directly correlated to its ability to produce enough college graduates to fill that gap. The challenge is clear, our work is exciting, and progress is being made. We thank you for your continued partnership as we work together to increase college attainment in Northeast Ohio.

Sincerely,

William R. Koehler
Chair, Board of Directors

Lee A. Friedman
Chief Executive Officer

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COLLEGE NOW

AT A GLANCE

22,000+

number of individuals served by College Now in the 2011-12 academic year, a 9% increase over the last two years

$150 MILLION

amount of financial aid the more than 10,000 current college students served by College Now have received

$57 MILLION

amount of scholarships awarded to Greater Cleveland students since inception

$60,000

average amount of financial aid per student over four years of college resulting from a $500 investment in College Now advising services

$2.5 MILLION

amount of need-based scholarship dollars awarded to 1,500 students in 2011-12

90%

First- to second-year retention rate among College Now scholarship recipients, compared to 58% nationally for students from low-income backgrounds

$2.8 BILLION

economic boost to Northeast Ohio with each 1% increase in college attainment

100+

number of Northeast Ohio venues – including schools, community centers, businesses and the downtown Resource Center – where College Now provides its services

College Now's mission is to increase college attainment in Greater Cleveland through college access and success advising; financial aid counseling; and scholarship and retention services.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

For the Year Ending July 31, 2012

Foundations	$ 3,144,235
Corporations	831,277
Individuals, Organizations, Other	433,442
Federal, Local	729,893
Fee for Service	948,660
TOTAL	**$ 6,087,507**

EXPENSES

For the Year Ending July 31, 2012

Scholarship Awards	$ 2,725,260
Advising and Counseling Services	2,047,684
Scholarship Services	729,380
General Administration	260,235
Fundraising	321,073
TOTAL	**$ 6,083,632**

PREPARATION.

COLLEGE NOW IS

Rockin' the 216 is a program administered by College Now in partnership with the Cleveland Public Library, made possible through two 21st Century Community Learning Center grants from the Ohio Department of Education. The program, launched in Fall 2012, is designed to enhance math and reading proficiency, improve students' ACT scores and develop technological capabilities through video and recording arts training.

This year, nearly 100 students will participate in one of the eight-week sessions, during which they spend their evenings after school at two Cleveland Public Library branches (Harvard-Lee on the East side and Rockport on the West side of Cleveland) working with College Now advisors and representatives from the Reading R.A.M.M. (Recording Arts, Music & Media) program to sharpen their math and reading skills through coursework and reinforce them through the use of technology. Reading R.A.M.M. is a program started by DJ Edward "Phatty" Banks that specializes in mentoring students and using music and recording arts as a way to make subjects like math and English interesting to students. Two Reading R.A.M.M. facilitators work closely with College Now advisors Heather Beasley and Stephanie Niskey to develop a curriculum that will help students to better position themselves for success in college.

Students come from a variety of academic backgrounds – some from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and others from suburban, parochial and private high schools. Rockin' students also vary in where they are in their college-

going process, as the program welcomes students in grades 9-12. Students are assessed when they begin the program by taking a PLAN test, the precursor to the ACT. The goal is to move students toward PLAN scores of at least a 19 in math and 17 in reading, which ACT has identified as threshold scores for college readiness. Students spend two days a week on ACT/PLAN prep work that includes 20 minutes of reading and responding to writing prompts, similar to those found on the ACT, as well as a lesson in math or English topics that students can expect to see on the exam. After the lesson, College Now advisors work one-on-one with students to help them master the concepts in which they need extra help. Students also participate in college visits. Last fall, Rockin' students visited the University of Akron and the College of Wooster.

Using what they've learned from College Now advisors about the ACT and the college-going process, Rockin' students work with Reading R.A.M.M. two days a week to produce informational videos and songs using state-of-the-art video and recording equipment. Topics include ACT "mishaps," college admissions presentations and "introduction" videos, in which students learn how to "sell" themselves in an interview.

At the end of the eight-week program, students receive a $100 stipend for attending at least 90 percent of the sessions as well as an ACT prep book, so they can continue to practice and improve their scores. Additionally, students who have successfully completed the program have an opportunity to stay on for the next session as paid "interns" who help College Now and Reading R.A.M.M. deliver the curriculum for the next group of students, improving their soft employment skills. Keyshla Mercado, a student at John Hay School of Architecture and Design and a Rockin' participant, credits the program with improving her test-taking skills and familiarizing her with the ACT. But the benefit was not just academic. Keyshla says that "in addition to improving my scores in math and reading, it allowed me to make strong connections with different people."

Rockin' the 216 is not just for students, though. The program has a built-in parent engagement piece, which gives parents the opportunity to see the media projects their students are working on, attend college visits and learn for themselves about the things they can be doing to help their children prepare for college. Parents appreciated the opportunity to participate in the program with their children, and they were thrilled with the results. One parent said that her daughter became "more sociable and was eager to put in her college applications," and another that her son now knew "which areas he needs to work hard in for the ACT, and he loved the video recording as well."

Students and parents aren't the only ones benefitting from the program. The Cleveland Public Library branches have been terrific community partners and have really rallied the neighborhoods they serve around the students. So much so, that students participating in the program at the Rockport branch have been asked to get involved with the Bellaire-Puritas Community Development Corporation, teaching them early on about the importance of being engaged in their communities.

And we think that ROCKS!

EAST CLEVELAND SHAW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE UPWARD BOUND!

Upward Bound is a Federal TRIO program designed to help low-income, first-generation students get to and through college, and the funding is notoriously challenging to secure for new grantees. In 2012, nearly 800 grantees across the United States were awarded Upward Bound funding, and only eight percent (or 62 grantees) were new. College Now was thrilled to be chosen as one of the new Upward Bound grantees and is using the funding to implement intensive, after-school college access advising to 60 students in grades 9-11 at East Cleveland's Shaw High School.

Working with College Now advisor Anthony Battaglia, students have begun to take advantage of tutoring, cultural trips and college visits, parent meetings, ACT preparation, individualized college and career planning and will attend a six-week summer program at Cleveland State University focused on academics and college access activities. Anthony has access to information like students' grades, attendance, extracurricular activities and college and career aspirations that helps him provide them with advising that is tailored to their specific needs. To participate, students and parents committed to participate in the Upward Bound programs that will make the students college ready. The effectiveness of the program will be measured by the number of students with a GPA of 2.5 or better; student performance on standardized tests; promotion to the next grade; on-time graduation; post-secondary enrollment; and post-secondary completion.

ASPIRATION.

CLEVELAND FOUNDATION COLLEGE NOW SCHOLARS RECEIVE NEARLY $1 MILLION IN MERIT-BASED AID FOR FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE

The first year of the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars initiative was, by all accounts, a huge success. The program was conceived in an effort to expand the educational and financial aid opportunities available to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's (CMSD) highest-achieving students and ensure they enrolled in a college that is the right fit for them – academically, culturally, socially and financially.

To accomplish this, 52 CMSD seniors from the Class of 2012 who had achieved a 3.0 GPA and a score of 23 or higher on the ACT were assigned to College Now advisor, Martha Basile, who was tasked with providing them with the intensive, personalized college access and financial aid counseling found in many suburban and private schools. Additionally, Martha worked to market the students to highly selective schools that they might have perceived to be out of their reach academically and financially – schools that are actively trying to recruit low-income, first-generation students and have the resources and support structures in place to best position them for degree completion.

Students and their families participated in individual and group sessions throughout the year, focusing on topics like the Common Application and completing the FAFSA. They also had the opportunity to visit a number and range of colleges to which they otherwise might not have been exposed, including the University of Michigan and Denison University.

Results for the Scholars Class of 2012 were outstanding, with 44.2 percent of students enrolling in "highly competitive" or "most competitive" schools, compared with 26.3 percent of the top students from the CMSD Class of 2011 (who did not have the program). And nearly one-third of the Scholars enrolled in out-of-state institutions, compared with 18.5 percent of the top students in 2011, demonstrating a broadening of "what's possible" among Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars. 2012 Scholars enrolled in a number of elite schools, including Harvard University, Stanford University, Skidmore College, Bryn Mawr College and Cornell University, in addition to highly competitive local schools, Case Western Reserve University and Oberlin College.

Not only did Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars get accepted to and enroll in highly selective colleges, but as importantly, they received a significant amount of merit-based, institutional aid from those colleges, as well as need-based scholarships from College Now, totaling nearly $1 million for their first year of college. And 13 of the Scholars were fully-funded, meaning they secured enough institutional, merit-based aid that they did not need to take out loans to finance their education.

Members of the 2012 Scholars class returned in December to meet with the 2013 Scholars class, which had just finished working with Martha on completing their college applications. The 2012 Scholars served as panelists on a discussion about what they wished they had known or been prepared for when they arrived on campus, and they provided valuable insights for the Class of 2013 as they finish high school and prepare for college. Also at this time, both classes of Scholars had the opportunity to meet with local employers that were hand-picked because of their strong internship programs. Representatives from Deloitte, Rosetta, Cleveland Clinic, Hyland Software, NEOIntern (a program of the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education) and Collection Auto Group provided career advice and information about their internship programs to the students. And the students impressed, with employers requesting additional chances to interact with the Scholars and representatives complimenting the students for being more polished than many students they meet on college campuses.

The Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars initiative is working hard to make sure that Cleveland's best and brightest get degrees from the colleges that are the best fit for each of them and that they see the many opportunities that are available to them right here in Northeast Ohio – and it's off to a great start!

COLLEGE NOW EARLY ACTION INITIATIVE INCREASES ACT SCORES AMONG CMSD STUDENTS

A 21 on the ACT is widely recognized as the benchmark for a student being considered "college ready," and it is often the threshold that students must meet to receive merit-based financial aid for college. And increasing ACT scores – by even one or two points – increases the potential amount of financial aid for which a student is eligible. And for first-generation students and students from low-income backgrounds, those extra dollars can mean the difference between a student enrolling and not enrolling in college.

That's why KeyBank Foundation and the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation have partnered with College Now on an Early Action initiative, designed to provide Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) rising seniors who have achieved a 2.5 GPA and a 21 on the ACT with extra resources that will better position them for success in the college application and financial aid process. One hundred and four students were identified and invited to participate in a three-week summer boot camp held at Cleveland State University in July 2012. Thirty-four students took advantage of the opportunity to learn how to increase their ACT score and position themselves well on college applications.

The Early Action boot camp entailed three to four hours of ACT preparation coursework daily, the opportunity to visit three local colleges and two local employers and the chance to complete sample college applications and write college essays that were reviewed by an outside panel of educational professionals. Students who completed all of the program requirements also received a stipend of $335 at the end of the boot camp to help replace money they would have earned working at summer jobs. The results of the boot camp were dramatic. Among the students who have retaken the exam since participating in the Early Action program, ACT scores increased by an average of 2.45 points, from a 21 to a 23!

COLLABORATION.

COLLEGE NOW REMOVES BARRIERS TO MENTORING AND YIELDS IMPRESSIVE FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RESULTS

College enrollment rates have steadily increased for many years, but retention and completion rates lag behind, especially among low-income, first-generation students, who face unique obstacles as they pursue their degrees and steep consequences if they drop out - specifically, non-dischargeable student loan debt that they are likely less able to repay without a college degree. Having a resource, like a mentor, who can help students overcome the obstacles they face on their way to a degree, has been shown to increase the likelihood of college completion. In fact, *The American Prospect* reported that students who participated in a mentoring program at the University of North Carolina had a 17 percent higher graduation rate than those who did not. College Now has found this to be true, as well, among its scholarship recipients; students who receive a Malone Scholarship from College Now also receive intensive mentoring from Jimmy Malone and have a 90 percent college graduation rate, significantly higher than the 64 percent graduation rate among all College Now scholarship recipients (a rate which already far exceeds the 11 percent graduation rate for low-income, first-generation students).

In an effort to continue to improve retention and completion rates among College Now scholarship recipients, last year, we piloted a new mentoring program that matched 50 freshman scholarship recipients attending Cleveland State University, John Carroll University, Kent State University and Notre Dame College with Northeast Ohio business professionals using a web-based mentoring platform, iMentor. Mentors and mentees were paired using an algorithm similar to those used on dating sites, to make matches based on things such as career aspirations, school affiliation, geographical location, etc. The beauty of a program like this is that it can be done any time of day from anywhere in the world because communication is primarily done online. Additionally, College Now and iMentor have worked together to develop a mentoring curriculum for college students that includes communications prompts to guide mentors and mentees toward high-quality, high-impact relationships.

And the relationships are working. Of the mentees that participated in the pilot year, 98 percent (49 of 50) enrolled for a second year of college! And a mid-year survey of current freshman mentees shows that in addition to the iMentor platform, mentors and mentees communicate by phone, text, Skype and email, in some cases as often as once or twice a week. Seventy-one percent of mentee respondents feel they have gotten to know their mentors well, and 77 percent said their mentors have been helpful to their success in college so far.

Based on the success of the pilot year, the Mentoring Program made more than 150 additional matches for incoming freshman scholarship recipients in Fall, 2012, and will match 300 more for the 2013-14 academic year, as we move closer to our five-year goal of pairing every College Now scholarship recipient with a mentor. The business community has rallied around this initiative, with mentors representing more than 130 local companies. Participating in the program is an easy sell for employers, as it provides them civic engagement opportunities for their employees and a pipeline of future talent. The variety of employers represented also demonstrates the many opportunities available to students in a wide range of industries in Northeast Ohio once they've completed their degrees, showing them that they don't have to go to other major cities to find success in their chosen professions– they can pursue their career goals right here. Through the mentoring program, they've already got Cleveland connections. And that's a win for the entire community.

COLLEGE NOW MENTORS PROVIDE NEEDED GUIDANCE

Freshman scholarship recipient Antaysha Hickerson and her mentor, Debra Lemak, were matched in the College Now Mentoring Program last August. Antaysha had just graduated from Jane Addams High School and was preparing to begin her first year at Kent State University. Debra, a Manager of Graphic Production Operations at BrandMuscle, became a mentor because she wanted to give a student the guidance she never received while attending college. The two met for the first time at the Annual Mentoring Kickoff in August and hit it off. Throughout her first semester, Antaysha and Debra exchanged emails and got together in person regularly to discuss Antaysha's future career plans and how school was going. Through these regular interactions, the pair was able to get to know one another. Antaysha says that the program has given her "an awesome mentor" and is very happy to have Debra's guidance.

Debra says she's enjoyed getting to be a "fly on the wall" of Antaysha's college journey. "She is a very inspiring young woman with a lot of bright plans for her future," notes Debra. "She may seem shy when you first meet her, but if you spend some time with her, you quickly learn that she is a very warm, welcoming and caring individual."

Antaysha returned for her second semester at Kent State University in January, 2013. As a result of her hard work in high school, she graduated with not only her high school diploma, but also an Associate's degree, and is now working towards her Bachelor's degree. Following her passion for working with deaf individuals, Antaysha is studying Psychology and American Sign Language at Kent. Both Antaysha and Debra are excited for what the future semesters and years have in store.

RAISING THE BAR FOR CLEVELAND STUDENTS

HIGHER EDUCATION COMPACT OF GREATER CLEVELAND

In 2010, City of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson asked civic leaders, educators and college and university presidents what the community could do to increase the number of youth enrolling in and graduating from college. In response, the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland (the Compact) was formed in 2011 as a pledge to the community and its students to do what it takes to remove obstacles that prevent Cleveland youth from going to and succeeding in college. The Mayor, the County Executive, the CEO of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), the leaders of 15 Ohio colleges and universities, as well as area foundations and organizations came together to implement an unprecedented community-wide effort to set goals, align work, develop metrics and report annually on their progress toward significantly increasing the number of students who successfully complete college. College Now is a lead partner in this effort, as working to increase college attainment is what we do every day in schools, in our Resource Center and in many community-based settings.

The work done in year one – in terms of the scope of work and the actual amount of work completed – was staggering. Compact partners came together to develop and implement strategies and measurements to improve progress toward college completion, including:

- The CMSD implemented: new teacher development and evaluation systems; the common core standards for mathematics and English Language Arts; and the Cleveland Education Plan for Transforming Schools. The collective impact of these school reforms will be improved teaching and learning in classrooms which will translate to increased college readiness among CMSD students.
- Compact community partners aligned their goals to those of the Compact and are working together with the CMSD and using Naviance – an online college and career readiness platform – as an advising tool to reinforce usage and help students meet college-going benchmarks.
- Compact colleges and universities developed a Strategic Outcomes Report to track CMSD graduates within their institutions and are implementing proactive intervention plans to remove barriers to student success.
- The Compact launched its first Financial Aid Awareness Month, a community-wide campaign to promote the importance of completing the FAFSA and the many resources available to students and families. The campaign resulted in FAFSA completion rates among CMSD students increasing from 47 percent in 2011 to 59 percent in 2012.
- Compact partners hosted a Best Practices Symposium in June 2012 focusing on college readiness, bringing in national, state and local experts on the topic to share strategies for improving college readiness in Greater Cleveland with more than 300 practitioners attending.
- The Compact presented its first College Success Dashboard in December 2012, which compiled data from the CMSD, as well as the 15 colleges and universities and other Compact partners on a number of college readiness, access and persistence indicators.

The momentum that has been built around the Compact and the amount of work that partners produced in the first year demonstrates the importance of educational attainment to the community and the collective commitment to improve outcomes for students and for Greater Cleveland, and College Now is proud to be a partner in such exciting work.

COLLEGE NOW DONORS

This list reflects cash payments and multi-year pledges from January 1–December 31, 2012. We have made every effort to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the information in this report. If an error or omission has occurred, please accept our sincere apologies.

$1,000,000 AND ABOVE

The Cleveland Foundation

$500,000 – $999,999

The John Huntington Fund for Education

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IN MEMORIAM GEORGE M. HUMPHREY, II

Long-time Board Member George M. Humphrey, II passed away at the age of 70 on November 26, 2012. Born and raised in Cleveland, George attended Yale University and the University of Michigan Law School before entering the Marines, from which he retired as a Captain in 1970. George worked for many years at the Hanna Mining Company, as well as at Russell Reynolds Associates, Philips Container Company and Extrudex. His civic life included serving 27 years as a Board Member of University Hospitals, as well as on the Boards of Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and University Circle, Inc. He served as a Board Member of Cleveland Scholarship Programs (now College Now) for over 30 years, including six years as Board Chair. During his time as Board Chair, total scholarships awarded on annual basis grew from $2.3 million to $2.8 million. Likewise, during George's long involvement with College Now, our work with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District expanded beyond grades eleven and twelve to serve students throughout high school and, at that time, in middle school as well. George was a tireless fundraiser for us, as he was for so many other organizations throughout Northeast Ohio. George's contributions to College Now were many, and he will be deeply missed.

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