



Montana College
Access Gap
Analysis

Montana College
Access Network
2013

Montana College Access Gap Analysis 2013

Executive Summary

- Among the most important findings from the 2013 Gap Analysis was the lack of **awareness** of college access services available. When surveying Montana teachers and counselors many responded that they were poorly informed about the college access and success services available. Thus, although information and programs helping students to navigate college access and success are available, many students remain naive to them. To address this, our collective efforts need to focus on spreading awareness of services to teachers and counselors who work directly with students, and carefully tracking our progress.
- There is a need for a student to counselor ratio that allows more time for counselors to explain options available, application processes and do follow up with students. Counselors noted that there were too many students to adequately serve while maintaining their other job duties. *“My biggest roadblock is the local matter of limited contact time with the students. I am a K-12 Counselor with 400 students that I serve in my district.”* –Survey Respondent
- 32 high school districts, or 19.8% of all high school districts in Montana do not offer dual (i.e. high school and college) enrollment/credit opportunities.
- Students who were interviewed noted the important role that counselors, and adult mentors have played in helping them to gain access to and succeed in postsecondary education.
- Survey results show a 26% increase in parental involvement compared to the Montana College Access Network’s 2010 Gap Analysis.
- Eighty-six percent of school affiliates rated academic preparation as “very important,” while only 45% rated student empowerment as “very important.” Research has shown that students with high self-efficacy are more likely to graduate both high school and college. Thus, there is an increased need for educators to instill self-efficacy within their students.

Partner Organizations

Montana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Montana Campus Compact, Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Montana GEAR UP, Montana Post Secondary Educational Opportunities Council, Montana School Counselors Association, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, Office of Public Instruction, Student Assistance Foundation, TRiO Programs

Introduction

“In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a pre-requisite.” –Barack Obama (Obama, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to understand the state of college access in Montana and how professionals, parents, policy makers and community members can better meet the needs of young Montanans and the state as a whole. College access and success efforts will help improve the future economic stability of Montana and meet Governor Bullock’s goal of 60 percent degree or certificate completion by Montana students by 2025.

To gather information on college access services, the Montana College Access Network, or “MCAN,” distributed four different online surveys directed at the following demographics: school affiliates, college access programs, secondary education students (paper surveys available), and postsecondary education students (paper surveys available). School affiliate respondents primarily included teachers, counselors, and school administrators. College access program respondents were mainly individuals from financial aid services, Student Support Services (SSS), Upward Bound, Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), adult education, and at-risk youth services.

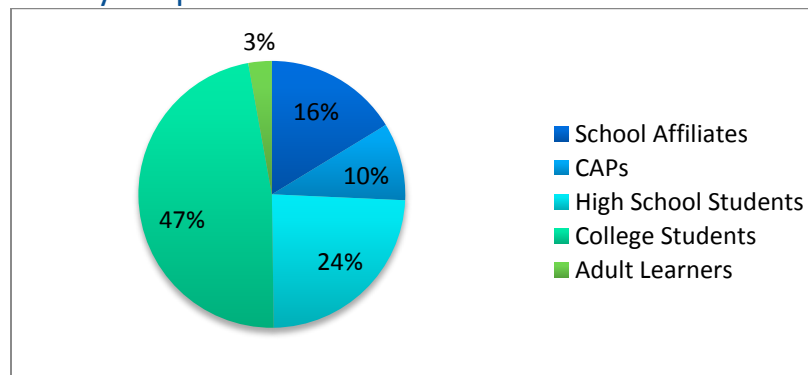
The surveys were active from Oct. 16, 2013 through Dec. 6, 2013. During this time, 669 surveys were submitted, of which 510 were completed. The surveys were distributed by way of the Montana College Access Network. Key stakeholders passed the surveys on to their respective organizations. Representatives from the Office of Public Instruction, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Student Assistance Foundation, GEAR UP, TRiO, Campus Compact, the Department of Labor and Industry, Montana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Montana School Counselors Association, and Montana Postsecondary

Educational Opportunities Council were invited to participate in the survey and pass the link on to other invested individuals.

For a deeper understanding of multiple perspectives on college access and success, one-on-one interviews were conducted. Interviewees included counselors, college access program providers, nonprofits, community college students, and high school students. Interviewees provided insight to successes, failures, limitations, recommendations, personal experiences, and thoughts on causes and solutions. Their answers provided supplemental information and potential explanations for some of the data acquired from the surveys.

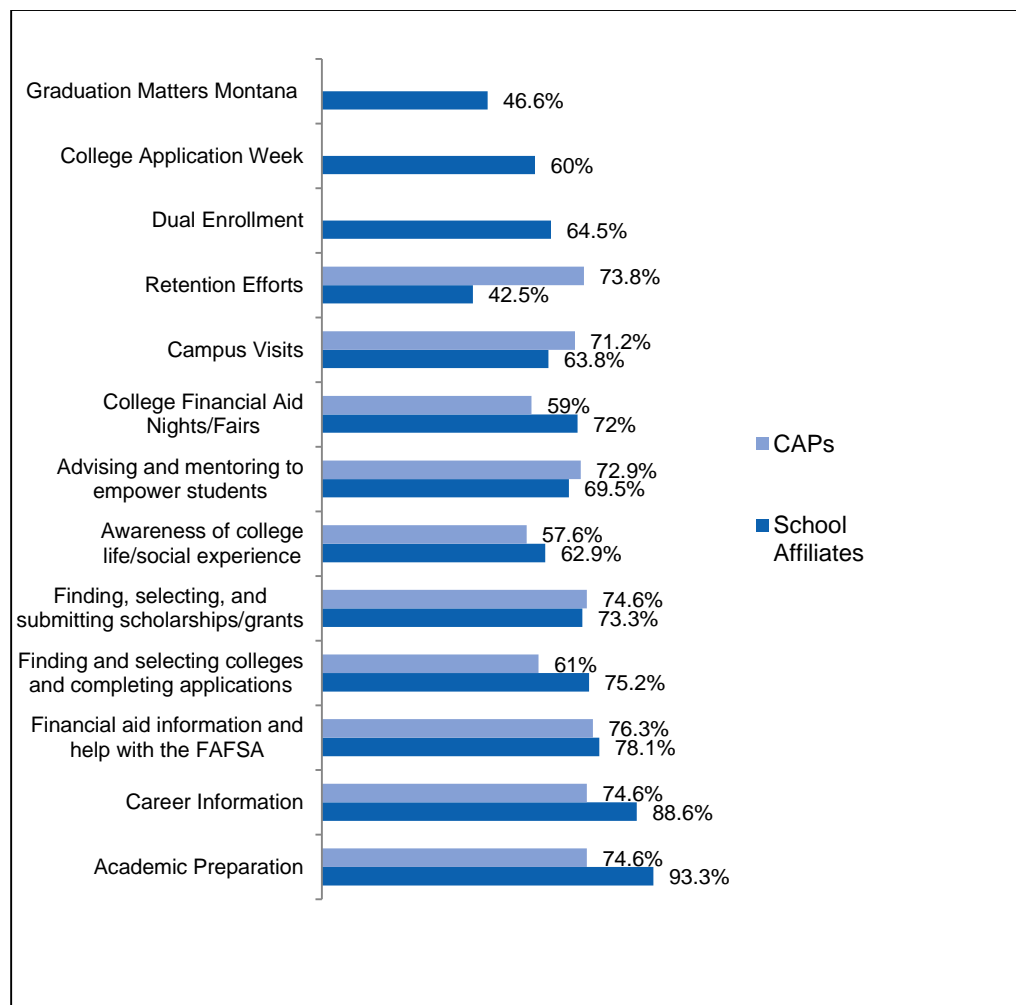
This study will provide insight into how to meet the governor’s 2025 education goal. Which will require collaborative partnerships between many organizations including K-12 schools, higher education institutions, businesses, government and college access program providers. Montana’s future economic stability will depend on the success of our actions today.

Survey Respondents



To acquire data on specific topics from multiple perspectives, survey questions for each demographic were kept as congruous as possible. The surveys can be found in Appendix B.

Activities and Services Offered



The above graph represents college access program providers and school affiliates that offer the above services.

Projects Getting Results

- Through the efforts of Graduation Matters Montana, 25 communities have been selected to receive up to \$10,000 to implement dropout prevention strategies. If these efforts are successful, the statewide dropout rate will be cut in half by 2014. Dropout rates from the 2012-2013 school year were at 3.6 percent, a vast improvement from the 5 percent dropout rate in the 2008-2009 school year.
- A California study concluded that “students who participated in dual enrollment as part of their career pathway were more likely than similar students in their districts to graduate from high school, enroll in four year colleges, and persist in college. They also accumulated more college credits and were less likely to take remedial classes.” Study participants were one-third first generation, 60 percent students of color, and 40 percent non-English speaking students (Hughes, Rodriguez, Edwards & Belfield, 2012).
- “The resources and opportunities for everyone to be served are available, but not everyone takes advantage of these opportunities. Life circumstances prevent some lower SES students from using the services and focusing on college.” -Guidance Counselor

How can we increase the number of students taking advantage of these services?

The Importance of Empowering Students

According to the Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, research on student-teacher relationships has provided evidence that students who feel a sense of attachment and belonging to their school and teachers are more likely to experience academic success and stay in school. Similarly, when teachers believed in the abilities of their students to improve students showed improvement. Conversely, when teachers lacked faith in their students to improve, students did not improve (Davis & Dupper, 2004). Eighty-six percent of school affiliate respondents rated academic preparation as “very important,” while only 45% rated coaching skills to empower students as “very important”. However, if students are academically prepared, but lacking passion and motivation, they are unlikely to succeed and vice-versa. Consider the theory of self-efficacy as framed by psychologist Albert Bandura: If an individual does not believe in their own ability, or expects a poor outcome they are unlikely to take action. In order to effectively progress students need positive affirmation in their actions, and they need to believe that their actions can make an impact (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002). A pilot study on postgraduate programs concluded that “the strength of a person’s efficacy beliefs will affect not only the magnitude of the goals set, but also the amount of effort expended to reach those goals, degrees of persistence and resilience...” (Ward & Dixon, 2014) Thus, the role of teachers and counselors must also encompass guidance through interpersonal development and self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy has been shown to increase graduation rates in secondary and postsecondary education. Many studies have been conducted to determine the reasons for students dropping out of high school. Among those are a lack of belief in one’s own abilities, lack of school-to-work force connection, discord between peers and teachers, unwelcoming school climate, and the feeling by students

that teachers did not care or believe in them. Other reasons included family responsibilities and expectations (Doll, Eslami & Walters, 2013). Educators may not be able to control external life factors, but school environment and support from educators are items that can be controlled. Professionals in education must remember that an educator’s job is more than just teaching students facts and equations. It’s about helping them discover their passions, skills, and confidence. It is about helping them to realize how their individual abilities can be utilized in the work force.

“There needs to be a more engaging way to learn. Instead of being taught to memorize facts and concepts, students need to be taught how to think critically, decipher fact from opinion, and reliable sources from unreliable sources. Inspired and engaged teachers can make a big difference...It would be great if there was a focus on the link between high school courses and the students’ desired career pathway.”
—Montana nonprofit vice president

During survey distribution for this study, several educators at the MEA-MFT (Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers) conference noted that they felt ill-equipped to complete the survey about college access services (see Appendix B for the surveys). Counselors commented on the need for increased awareness, training and outreach (see Appendix A). The unmet needs of teachers and counselors pose a problem for the successful transition of students from high school to postsecondary education. For many students who have an unstable home life (largely low-income students), school serves as the main source of personal skill development and confidence building (Davis & Dupper, 2004). School is society’s opportunity to empower students to capitalize on their potential. It can open doors unavailable to them in their home life. The student-teacher relationship as a means of sharing college access information is a widely untapped resource. It is up to educator support systems to provide knowledge about college

access to teachers, and make internship and job shadow opportunities available in our Montana cities.

Much of the responsibility for students' successful transition from high school to college is placed on counselors. They are expected to advise hundreds of students, and often do not know individual student's skills and strengths due to the high ratio of students to counselors. In addition, counselors must perform a wide range of other tasks related to behavioral issues, violence prevention, character education, organization and study skills, substance abuse, crisis intervention, connecting parents, teachers, administration, and community, etc.

"Counselors are expected to be involved in a variety of activities and initiatives in the education field and it takes away from time they have to spend with students. More and more keeps being added to their plates, but the plates aren't getting any bigger"—High School Counselor

"My biggest roadblock is the local matter of limited contact time with the students. I am a K-12 Counselor with 400 students that I serve in my district."—Survey Respondent

Ideally, the transition from high school to postsecondary education would be a collaboration between teachers, counselors, students, and parents. However, this is often difficult due to time and money constraints. College Access programs such as GEAR UP and TRIO are well-established resources for students to get information about college and to discover career paths, but these federally funded, and locally matched programs are limited in the capacity of participants they can serve. Thus, highly capable students are slipping through the cracks. Middle income students, and students earning an average GPA are often overlooked. Ultimately, every student could benefit from help navigating the road to postsecondary education. The future economic stability and well-being of Montana's young people depends, in large part, on the

support they receive during this transition period. Overall, additional one-on-one mentoring and structured learning is needed to aid students in this significant life transition.

Innovative Approaches to College Access

The Big Sky Pathways initiative is working to create a curriculum that better meets the needs of students today. It exists in varying degrees in all Montana public high schools. This program integrates workforce and economic development into secondary education curriculum. Career clusters, which provide a structure for career based curriculum and skill development, are created by a collaborative group of high school educators, postsecondary educators, industry professionals, and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Career clusters are then broken down into career pathways, which focus more heavily on transition from high school to career preparation (Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, and Office of Public Instruction, 2013). This program allows students to explore specific academic and career interests at an earlier age. The Pathways high school course work will better prepare students for college level curriculum and workforce demands. The hope is that with earlier exposure to careers, students are better prepared for postsecondary education and will change majors less frequently. Ultimately, this helps students to save money and utilize resources more wisely.

Another important element to consider is college-going culture. Much of college-going culture is based on family and cultural norms. Socioeconomic status is a strong indicator of the likelihood a child will attend college due to their knowledge of the financial aid system and the application process (Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011). Students need to be able to rely on teachers and counselors to help them navigate the system. To increase first-generation students' likelihood of continuing their education beyond high school, we must introduce the idea at an early age. Students need

to be aware that college is possible for them, regardless of their background and socioeconomic status if we are to meet the governor's goal of 60 percent degree/certificate completion by 2025. One way college-going-culture is being fostered in some communities is through the Adopt-A-College program in which K-5

classrooms partner with an institution of higher education. The classes participate in wearing their partner institution's colors once a month, following their sporting events, and classroom visits from the institutions mascot. Activities like this help to spread awareness and create a sense of community and belonging among students.

Dual Enrollment & Complete College Montana

In order to increase higher education attainment to 60 percent by 2025, Governor Bullock launched the Complete College Montana initiative. Increasing dual (high school and college) enrollment opportunities is one strategy that has been adopted by Complete College Montana. According to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (2014), from the spring of 2012 to the fall of 2013, the number of high school students enrolled in at least one college course increased by 53 percent. Enrolling high school students in college-level courses reduces the amount of time it takes to graduate, and reduces the cost of college attendance. It also gives high school students confidence in their ability to perform at the college level. Additionally, some high school students who engage in dual enrollment are able to obtain an associate's degree by high school graduation.

Other strategies included within the Complete College Montana framework include:

1. Performance Based Funding—linking funding resources to performance outputs
2. Co-Requisite Remediation—integrating remediation course work with core classes

3. Full-Time is Fifteen—changing full-time student status to 15 credits a semester to increase four-year graduation rates
4. Structured Schedules—offering courses in a predictable, and consistent schedule
5. Guided Pathways to Success—aligning secondary and postsecondary education course work, with industry and business needs through Big Sky Pathways and the Montana Career Information System (MCIS).

All of these strategies will help to increase retention rates in Montana schools, and increase certificates earned in a timely manner. One important component to the success of Complete College Montana will be the ability of program representatives to work with high schools to adequately inform students of their options, and help them to discover how their skill set will align in a career focused world.

The following page lists the high schools in Montana that offered dual enrollment/dual credit opportunities in fall of 2013 according to the MUS Data Warehouse (2014).

High Schools Offering Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Fall 2013:

1. Anaconda High School
2. Arlee High School
3. Augusta High School
4. Belt High School
5. Big Sandy High School
6. Big Sky High School
7. Bigfork High School
8. Billings Central Catholic Hs
9. Billings Christian Academy
10. Billings Senior High School
11. Billings West High School
12. Bozeman Christian School
13. Bozeman High School
14. Broadview High School
15. Broadwater County High School
16. Butte Central High
17. Butte High School
18. Capital High School
19. Cascade High School
20. Charles M Russell High School
21. Choteau High School
22. Circle High School
23. Conrad High School
24. Corvallis High School
25. Cut Bank High School
26. Darby High School
27. Drummond High School
28. Dutton Public Schools
29. Ennis High School
30. Fairfield High School Dist 21
31. Fairview High School
32. Frenchtown High School
33. Froid High School
34. Geyser High School
35. Granite High School
36. Grass Range High School
37. Great Falls Central Catholic HS
38. Great Falls Christian School
39. Great Falls High School
40. Hamilton High School
41. Hardin High School
42. Harrison High School
43. Havre Public High School
44. Heart Butte High School
45. Helena High School
46. Hellgate High School
47. Hobson High School
48. Hot Springs High School
49. Huntley Project High School
50. Jefferson High School
51. Joliet High School
52. Laurel High School
53. Lavina High School
54. Lincoln Public Schools
55. Lodge Grass High School
56. Lone Peak High School
57. Loyola-Sacred Heart HS
58. Madison Valley Cons/Ennis High
59. Manhattan Christian High School
60. Moore High School
61. Mt Helena Christian
62. MT-Forsyth High School
63. North Toole Co High School
64. Paris Gibson Education Center
65. Park City High School
66. Petra Academy
67. Plains High School
68. Plenty Coups High School
69. Poplar High School
70. Power High School
71. Red Lodge High School
72. Reedpoint High School
73. Roy High School
74. Seeley-Swan High School
75. Sentinel High School
76. Shepherd High School
77. Simms High School
78. Skyview High School
79. Stanford High School
80. Stevensville High School
81. Three Forks High School
82. Valier High School
83. Whitefish High School
84. Whitehall High School
85. Winnett High School

Perceptions of Services

School Affiliate's Perceptions of Service Importance					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	N/A
Academic preparation	1.1%	0.0%	11.7%	86.2%	1.1%
Career information	1.1%	2.2%	28.0%	67.7%	1.1%
Financial aid information	1.1%	0.0%	24.7%	73.1%	1.1%
Understand the application process	1.1%	3.2%	37.6%	57.0%	1.1%
Awareness of college life/social experience	1.1%	12.0%	54.3%	31.5%	1.1%
Coaching skills to empower students	1.1%	10.0%	42.2%	45.6%	1.1%

College Access Program Provider's Perceptions of Service Importance					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	N/A
Academic preparation	0.0%	1.8%	8.9%	87.5%	1.8%
Career information	0.0%	8.9%	28.6%	60.7%	1.8%
Financial aid information	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	87.5%	1.8%
Understand the application process	0.0%	1.8%	28.6%	67.9%	1.8%
Awareness of college life/social experience	3.6%	18.2%	41.8%	32.7%	3.6%
Coaching skills to empower students	0.0%	7.1%	37.5%	53.6%	1.8%

School Affiliate's Perceptions of Service Effectiveness					
	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	N/A
Academic qualifications	0.0%	12.4%	48.3%	33.7%	5.6%
Career information	0.0%	14.6%	55.1%	25.8%	4.5%
Financial aid information	0.0%	9.0%	47.2%	38.2%	5.6%
Understanding the college application process	0.0%	11.4%	51.1%	31.8%	5.7%
Awareness of college life/social experience	1.1%	23.0%	49.4%	19.5%	6.9%
Empowering students	0.0%	27.1%	44.7%	21.2%	7.1%

College Access Program Provider's Perceptions of Service Effectiveness					
	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	N/A
Academic qualifications	0.0%	25.0%	46.4%	16.1%	12.5%
Career information	0.0%	32.1%	44.6%	8.9%	14.3%
Financial aid information	0.0%	14.5%	45.5%	36.4%	3.6%
Understanding the college application process	1.8%	17.9%	44.6%	30.4%	5.4%
Awareness of college life/social experience	0.0%	28.6%	46.4%	12.5%	12.5%
Empowering students	1.8%	25.0%	48.2%	10.7%	14.3%

Perceptions of Services Continued

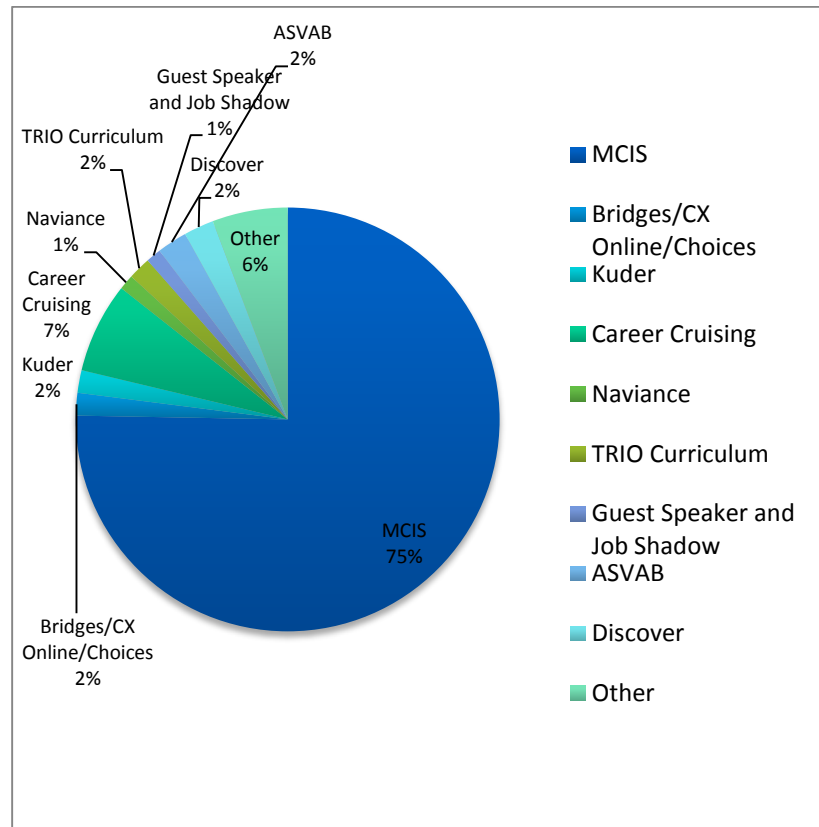
Secondary Education Students' Perceptions of Service Importance					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	N/A
Academic preparation	0.0%	7.0%	26.1%	66.2%	0.7%
Career information	0.0%	4.9%	43.7%	51.4%	0.0%
Financial aid information	0.7%	4.3%	36.9%	56.7%	1.4%
Understand the application process	0.0%	8.5%	38.3%	53.2%	0.0%
Awareness of college life/social experience	2.8%	17.7%	44.0%	35.5%	0.0%
Self-Empowerment	1.4%	10.8%	32.4%	54.0%	1.4%

Postsecondary Students' Perceptions of Service Importance--based on secondary education experiences				
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Academic preparation	1.2%	3.7%	42.0%	53.1%
Career information	1.9%	16.8%	50.9%	30.4%
Financial aid information	3.2%	10.1%	34.8%	51.9%
Understand the application process	2.5%	13.1%	45.6%	38.8%
Awareness of college life/social experience	9.4%	28.1%	36.9%	25.6%
Self-Empowerment	6.3%	17.0%	35.8%	40.9%

Secondary Education Students' Perceptions of Service Effectiveness					
	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	N/A
Academic preparation	1.4%	9.2%	51.1%	36.9%	1.4%
Career information	2.1%	23.1%	48.3%	25.9%	0.7%
Financial aid information	2.1%	28.4%	39.0%	28.4%	2.1%
Understanding the college application process	3.5%	21.1%	45.1%	26.8%	3.5%
Awareness of college life/social experience	5.6%	24.6%	40.1%	26.1%	3.5%
Advising in empowering students with their futures	1.4%	20.4%	43.0%	31.7%	3.5%

Postsecondary Education Students' Perceptions of Service Effectiveness--based on secondary education experiences					
	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	N/A
Academic preparation	3.7%	13.7%	47.8%	27.3%	7.5%
Career information	6.3%	21.3%	47.5%	19.4%	5.6%
Financial aid information	6.8%	20.5%	39.1%	27.3%	6.2%
Understanding the college application process	5.6%	19.4%	43.8%	25.6%	5.6%
Awareness of college life/social experience	6.2%	28.6%	43.5%	14.9%	6.8%
Advising in empowering students with their futures	6.8%	25.5%	37.3%	24.2%	6.2%

Career Information Delivery Services

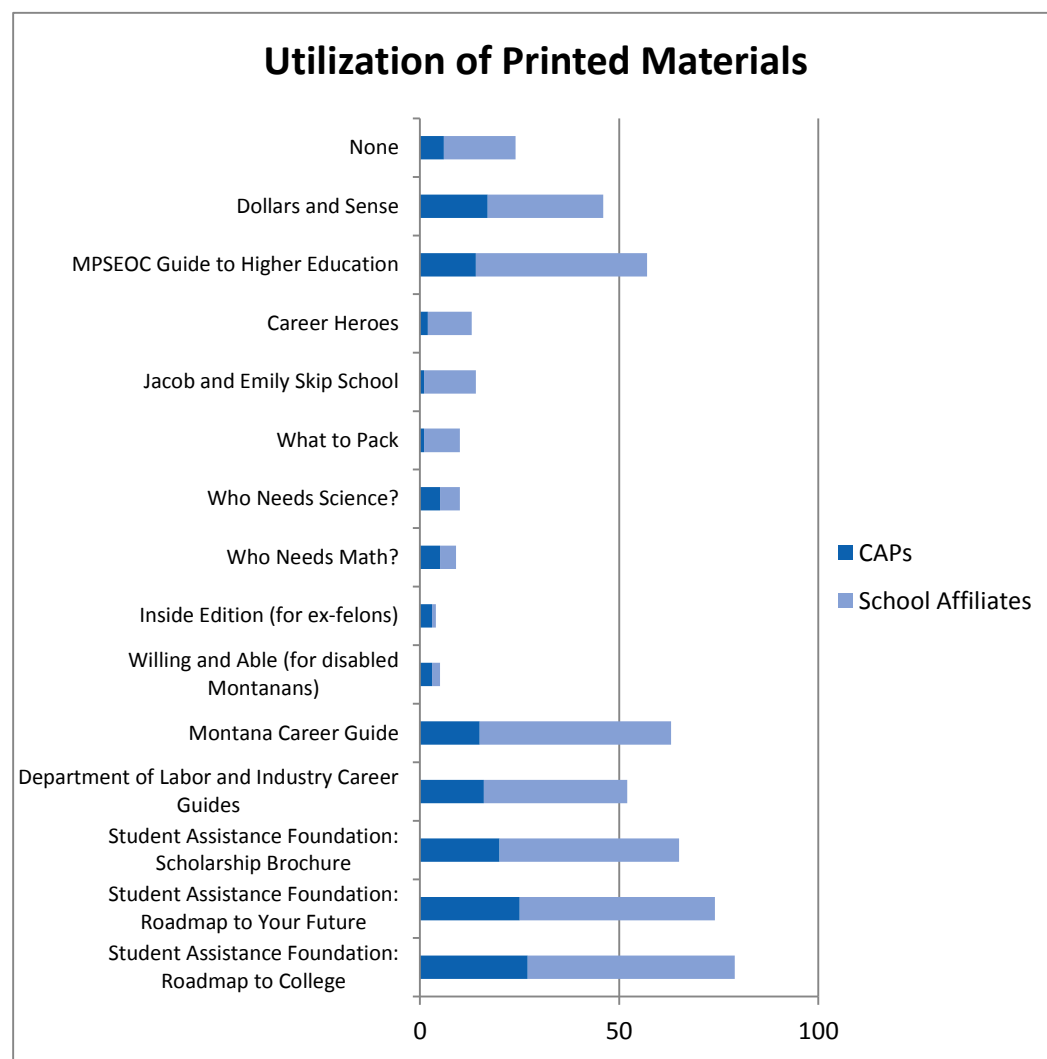


The above results are based on survey responses from college access programs/organizations and school affiliates.

“Montana has a history of industry in agriculture and labor fields. Much of which could be done straight out of high school, but Montana industry is changing.” –Nonprofit, Network Services Director

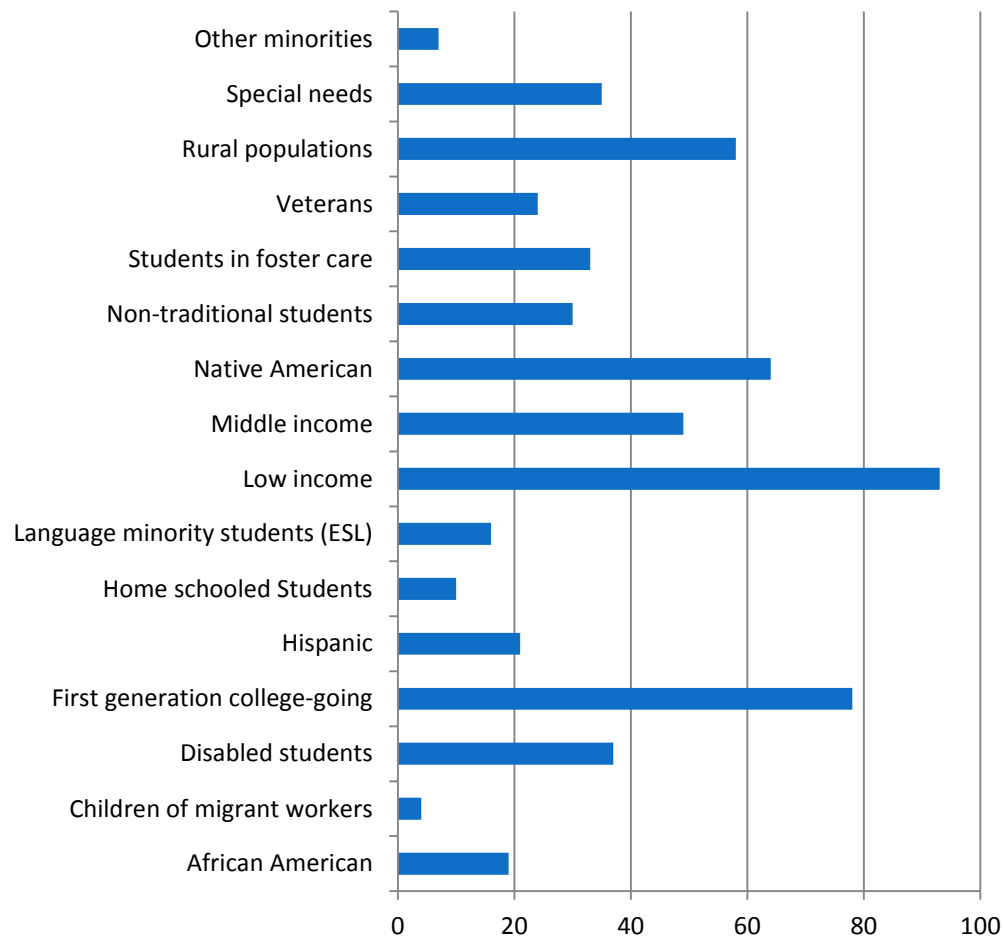
- Postsecondary education is becoming increasingly more important due to shifting economic demands. The Montana Department of Labor and Industry projected job growth at 1.5 percent per year from 2014-2021. Strong growth in construction (3.1 percent), health care (2.9 percent), business services (2.6 percent), and natural resources (2.3 percent) is expected to continue, while employment in manufacturing will start declining (-0.4 percent). “Overall, Montana’s workforce will need to become more educated to fill future jobs. Workers with a higher level of education will be in demand; while there will be an oversupply of workers with only a high school diploma.” (Wagner, 2011).
- According to survey results, 66.8 percent of secondary and postsecondary education students felt that the career information they received in preparation for postsecondary school was effective or very effective.
- According to survey results, 46.5 percent of current secondary and postsecondary students stated that they have received advising in pursuing postsecondary education.
- According to survey results, 61 percent of current students enrolled in postsecondary education rated their past advising experiences as effective or very effective.
- For students who choose an alternative route to college, **Job Corps** is a great option. “Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training.” Check it out at <http://www.jobcorps.gov>.

Printed Materials



The materials represented in the graph on the left provide useful and relevant information, but how much impact are they actually having on students? Consider receiving an informative brochure or booklet. You might browse through it and think about doing further research online in the future. But how likely are you to act on that information right away, or at all? Print and online college access materials might produce better results if used as a guidance manual during allotted class time. Additionally, students might be more engaged if an instructor guided them through the information, sharing personal knowledge, and answering questions. The college students who were interviewed for this analysis all noted the importance of having in-person guidance to navigate college access. Students can also learn a great deal from hands-on job experience and interviewing professionals. Consider the career you're in now. What made you choose this career path? A brochure? Job shadowing? Talking with professionals? Hands-on experience? Perhaps we need to give students engaging and diverse learning experiences to guide their future education and career choices.

Demographics targeted by college access programs



Survey Question:

What individuals or groups are not being served (but need assistance)?

Survey Responses:

- Individuals in transition
- Nontraditional students
- Students who are at risk, but not ready for the rigor of TRiO programs
- Undocumented students
- Shy students
- Home schooled students
- Students who have graduated high school, but need further academic skills to succeed in college
- Students with an average GPA
- Adults with dependents and a low paying job
- Foster care youth over 21 or 23 years of age
- Traditional students
- The opportunity exists for everyone, but not everyone takes it
- Low achieving, low motivated students who have the potential to perform at a higher level
- High achievers

Based on materials and services available we can conclude that help exists for all demographics, but not all students have access to this help. Whether each demographic is being served depends largely on variable circumstances such as: the counselor-to-student ratio, student's ambitions, geographic location, finances, family culture, etc. Furthermore, consider the effectiveness of the services provided to students in need. If the services you provide are not being utilized, why not?

Comparison with Previous Gap Analyses

Services Offered by Schools and College Access Program Organizations	2006 Gap Analysis	2010 Gap Analysis	2013 Gap Analysis
College Visits	65%	84%	66%
Financial Aid Night	65%	75%	67%
FAFSA Completion Assistance	73%	86%	77%
Career Information	87%	97%	83%
Parental Involvement	46%	36%	60%
Academic Preparation	69%	75%	86%

*Percentages reflect organizations and schools that offer these services, not the amount of participation in the services.

The above chart represents services organizations and schools make available. According to data comparisons of the previous two gap analyses, Montana has seen increases in parental involvement services, and academic preparation available to students. The percentage of high schools that offer college visits, financial aid nights, FAFSA completion assistance, and career information services have decreased. These decreases are not necessarily a negative reflection on college access services in Montana. Instead, it may mean that organizations have reduced duplication of services, or re-distributed aid in other areas of need. Decreases could also be attributed to awareness of individuals surveyed, or limitations of written questions. Another factor that might be influencing the results of the survey could be delayed effects of the 2008-2009 Recession, or sequestration, and other budget cuts. An area from the 2010 Gap Analysis that presented a need for increased attention was parental involvement. Research shows that parent-teacher relationships increase students' accountability for their actions. A united front of high expectations from parents and teachers often results in greater student investment in educational achievement (Davis & Dupper, 2004). We have seen remarkable growth in parental involvement, and it continues to be a focal point for college access organizations and K-12 schools throughout Montana. All in all, Montana is making huge strides to increase degree and certificate completion by the year 2025.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The past five years of deploying college access interventions have been heavily focused on leveling the playing field, with the philosophy that all Montanans should have equal opportunity to access postsecondary education. Tremendous progress has been made toward this goal through advising, scholarships, awareness and a focus on foster youth, first-generation, and low-income students. Today, the focus of college access efforts has shifted toward degree/certificate completion. Complete College Montana, which is an initiative to increase college completion, is implementing strategies including performance-based funding, co-requisite remediation, Full Time is Fifteen, structured schedules, guided pathways to success and dual enrollment. These strategies are being/or have been implemented in 34 other states across the nation with great success.

Through survey data and individual research, we can make a few conclusions to guide our actions in meeting the goal of 60 percent degree/certificate completion by 2025. One observation is that many teachers lack a base knowledge of college access/success services available at their schools. Teachers are the direct contact lines to students, and they need to be aware of current resources and services available. Secondly, school counselors want improved professional development and outreach related to awareness of available services. Service providers need to do a better job of making all counselors aware of services and resources in their specific geographic locations and beyond. Third, survey respondents working in education answered repeatedly that the student-to-counselor ratio is simply too high to be effective for all students. Finally, educators need to be aware of how their relationships with students are effecting student self-efficacy, and retention rates. Educators can increase degree and certificate completion by engaging students in relevant and empowering lessons that foster an interest in real world issues.

The good news from the 2013 Montana College Access Gap Analysis Survey is that there is *not* a gap in college access programs and resources in Montana. Unfortunately, a significant lack of awareness among teachers, counselors, administrators, students and parents about the resources available to help students plan for, and achieve, success in postsecondary education, does exist. Clearly, efforts to improve college access in Montana should focus on raising awareness of existing college access programs and resources.

To meet the governor's ambitious challenge of 60 percent of adult Montanans completing a degree or certificate by 2025, the Montana College Access Network's steering committee recommends the following:

- 1) Launch a campaign raising awareness of tools, resources and programs available to Montanans;
- 2) Increase and support deeper partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions, nonprofits and government agencies;
- 3) Implement college transition classes in high school;
- 4) Secure funding for increased numbers of school counselors, especially in districts where the counselor-to-student ratio exceeds 1:250 (the American School Counselors Association recommendation). The current mandated ratio in Montana is 1 counselor to 400 students (Board of Public Education, 2013).

Food for Thought

I am serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA, and through the course of my year of service I cannot tell you how many times I have been told *“we need more people on the ground to help support students in their journey from high school to a career path.”* Students are not receiving the one-on-one attention they need. We’ve established that teachers have other priority content they need to teach their students, and counselors have too many students to serve and an unrealistic load of responsibilities. My question after much reflection is: **What if there were a “What’s Next” class dedicated solely to helping high school students with this difficult transition?** This class could dedicate time to the important work of connecting students with the next steps in their education and careers. It would also address the content and time challenges teachers increasingly face. By assigning one teacher to be the resource for all things college and career ready, other teachers would not be saddled with this additional responsibility. Counselors would have more time to dedicate to their other job duties. And most importantly, students would be able to spend more time exploring possible degree, certificate and career paths. This consistent support would be especially crucial for first generation students who may not otherwise believe in their abilities to pursue further education.

Class description: Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the realities of money management and financial constructs while deeply exploring educational opportunities, career pathways and engaging in a service learning project.

Course Objectives:

1. Comprehensive understanding of:
 - scholarships, grants, FAFSA, cost of living, loans, insurance, credit, mortgages
 - post-high school graduation options: workforce, certificates, vocational schools, associates degrees, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree...etc.
2. Explore potential institutions, and career options, outlook, income, and job duties (compatible with skills, interests, and personality traits)
3. Service learning project- Internship, job shadow, volunteer work

This class could incorporate resources from all of the MCAN member organizations. For example, MTCC could help with the service-learning component. MPSEOC, and SAF could provide financial literacy resources, guides to higher education institutions, and networks. GEAR UP, TRiO, OPI, OCHE, and the Department of Labor and Industry could assist with curriculum development. OPI’s Big Sky Pathways program and Department of Labor and Industry’s MCIS would be a helpful guide for career exploration. Bringing all these organizations’ resources together under one umbrella would give students the most comprehensive education on college access/success available. The key component in this concept is having a teacher available to support and guide the students in this transition. Internet research can only get students so far, and is completely ineffective if students do not believe they are capable of success in higher education. Such confidence comes from experience, and trusting student-adult relationships.

Grant/Scholarship Opportunity Resources

Montana University System Scholarship information - <http://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Scholarships/>

This resource lists Montana school's financial aid offices which will direct viewers to the scholarships offered on that specific campus.

Governor's "Best and Brightest" Scholarship Program -

http://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Scholarships/Governors_Best_and_Brightest_Scholarship.asp

MUS Honor Scholarship –http://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Scholarships/MUS_Honor_Scholarship.asp

MCIS-Montana Career Information System <http://careers.mt.gov/>

Student Assistance Foundation - <http://smartaboutcollege.org/community/roadmap-to-financial-fitness.jsp>

TRiO Educational Opportunity Centers MSU Northern - <http://msun.edu/grants/eoc/scholarshipsearch.htm>

College Board Online - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>

College Scholarships, Colleges, and Online Degrees - http://www.college-scholarships.com/free_scholarship_searches.htm

CollegeNET - <http://www.collegenet.com/mach25/app>

Fastweb - <http://www.fastweb.com/>

Thanks to survey respondents, interviewees and MCAN affiliates for making this study possible!

Department of Labor and Industry, GEAR UP, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Montana Campus Compact, Montana Post Secondary Educational Opportunities Council, Montana School Counselors Association, Student Assistance Foundation, and TRiO

Appendix A

Recommendations- Survey Responses

Professional Development/Training

- More training for counselors
- Doing more class guidance on CAPs. The resources both print and online are easily accessible. The workshops get very little participation and I am unsure how to change that.
- Online Resources
- Just keep the counselors aware of what resources are out there for our diverse Montana populations.
- Training and workshops for CAP service delivery at the middle grades
- Reach out to new counselors in Montana. Many new counselors are not aware of the resources available to them.
- I feel the more I grow as a counselor with whatever materials that I can obtain will benefit me so that I can help my students succeed at the next level.
- Provide more workshops at each school directly. It would be nice to have college reps. come do the workshops.
- Increased professional development for school administrators
- We need to add Financial Literacy to all college access programming.

Increased Personnel

- Reduce counselor to student ratio at the high school level, 1 to 400 is just too many to reach.
- More money dedicated to hire professionals that can provide assistance to students one-on-one.
- More people on the ground, more resources financially, more overlap with the high schools
- More personnel in communities working on this
- More personnel in the schools addressing the issue
- More people in direct contact with students. Another program or another publication is absolutely NOT effective.

Collaboration

- Options other than 4 year programs. Contact support agencies that work with youth/adults who would benefit from college/vo-tech opportunities. Be realistic regarding the situations of some students by looking at their abilities and choices of education before setting 4 yr. college as a goal. Discuss school loan obligations realistically. Having kids take out loans w/o any understanding of their legal responsibilities to repay the monies is a financial burden for them and the institutions and programs that support them.
- I would like to learn about available resources (especially free resources!) in all of the areas of college preparation. The personnel from different programs also need to start working together and sharing information and resources!
- I would like to see the high school work more closely with the adult ed program, so that students can look at our program as a bridge to college as well as a high school equivalency program. We work closely with other agencies, and that has been very successful for our students.
- Consider utilizing the pre-established advisory groups to aid in the distribution of services.

Funding

- Increased funding would allow current CAPs to expand services. The relationships, space within the schools, etc. are already set up. Additional funding would allow more students to be served. Also, having more than one person in a school would be beneficial. If we had a team of professionals working together to reach some targeted group of students; everyone would benefit.
- Better funding for TRiO programs.
- With a greater budget, we could provide college visits to more than UM, and that would be a huge benefit for our target population

Awareness

- Public Service announcements
- Training/workshops parent involvement
- Raising awareness of the public, and approaching specific locations that work with populations of interest to increase partnerships
- Possibly more visibility on campus...more workshops for entire student body and include food and/or incentives (coffee counter cards :).
- increase awareness
- Presentations in High Schools
- It would be wonderful to have more college representatives make school visits.
- More college rep visits
- There needs to be more marketing to show/educate students/parents on these programs.
- Promoting two-year college programs
- Find a way to get students and parents to "regard college as an option" at any time in the life cycle.

Integrated curriculum

- Mandatory k-12 requirement to learn this information in the classroom; FAFSA should be filled in government classes for every
- concentrate more on college requirements that can help incoming students avoid remediation
- Making the information/training fun for the kids to listen to/learn about.
- Needs to be integrated into curriculum.
- Greater Integration of the workplace into the academic environment.

Other

- Affordable courses stream lined to incarcerated facilities
- Have more options of developing classes that the students see in the beginning of the college career.
- Colleges need to figure out how to go get that potential student who lacks the finances, time and transportation to go investigate for himself what is out there and take him on a realistic tour of campuses, show him when, where, and how to apply
- I feel all students are underserved when it comes to what we are doing to prepare them for the possibility of college. We should offer a semester long course on it and other important "life-skills."

Appendix B

Secondary Education Students Survey

MCAN1 STUDENTS

From this survey the Montana College Access Network hopes to acquire a more accurate understanding of college access services and their geographic distribution in Montana. The results will be published in a College Access Gap Analysis, and used to increase postsecondary educational attainment. Your answers are anonymous.

1. By completing this survey you are eligible to win a \$50 prize. Please provide a name and phone number/email by which we can reach you if you would like to participate in the drawing. This information will not be used in the College Access Gap Analysis in any way.

2. Have you received career information from your school/program? (Possible subject matter might include requisite skills, education requirements, potential income, career options, etc.).

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ No opinion/Don't know

3. How effective was the career information you received?

☐ Ineffective

☐ Weak

☐ Effective

☐ Very Effective

☐ I have not received career information services.

4. Have you used postsecondary advising services provided by your school/program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ No opinion/Don't know

☐ These services are not provided

5. Have you attended college financial aid night(s)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ No opinion/Don't know

MCAN1 STUDENTS

6. Have you attended a college fair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ No opinion/Don't know

7. Have you used college financial aid advisory services provided by your school/program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ No opinion/Don't know

8. Have you visited, or do you intend to visit a college/university to help in your postsecondary education decision making process?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ No opinion/Don't know

9. If you participated in College Application Week did you find it to be useful?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ This service was not offered.

☐ This service was offered, but I did not participate.

10. Please rank the following college access categories according to importance. Base your answers on what tools you think are necessary for success in college.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	N/A
Academic preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self Empowerment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

MCAN1 STUDENTS

11. Has your school/program effectively prepared you for higher education? Consider your experience with each of the following categories.

	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	No Opinion
Academic preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of the college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advising in empowering students with their futures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. What is the best way to reach students with information that will help them to access postsecondary education?

13. Please let us know a little bit about you. What is the name of your school/program and what county is it in?

14. What grade level are you enrolled in?

- ☐ 9th grade
- ☐ 10th grade
- ☐ 11th grade
- ☐ 12th grade
- ☐ Adult Education Program

Other (please specify)

Post Secondary Students

MCAN4 College Students

Please complete this survey based on your high school, or other secondary e...

From this survey the Montana College Access Network hopes to acquire a more accurate understanding of college access services and their geographic distribution in Montana. The results will be published in a College Access Gap Analysis, and used to increase postsecondary educational attainment. Your answers are anonymous.

Complete this survey ONLY if you attended secondary education in Montana. Thank you.

1. Was at least part of your secondary education (high school/adult education program) completed in Montana?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2. By completing this survey you are eligible to win a \$50 prize. Please provide a name and phone number/email by which we can reach you if you would like to participate in the drawing. This information will not be used in the College Access Gap Analysis in any way.

3. Did you receive career information from your secondary education institution (high school, or adult education program)? Career information could include requisite skills, education requirements, potential income, career options, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

4. How effective was the career information you received?

- ☐ Ineffective
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Very Effective
- ☐ I did not receive career information from my secondary education institution.

MCAN4 College Students

5. Did you use postsecondary advising/mentoring services provided by your secondary education institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know
- ☐ These services were not provided.

6. How effective were the advising/mentoring services in helping you to access postsecondary education?

- ☐ Ineffective
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Very Effective
- ☐ I did not use these services.
- ☐ These services were not available.

7. Did you and/or your guardian attend a college financial aid night?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know
- ☐ This service was not provided.

8. Did you and/or your guardian receive assistance completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or "FAFSA"?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know
- ☐ This service was not provided.

MCAN4 College Students

9. Did you use college financial aid advisory services provided by your secondary education institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know
- ☐ These services were not provided.

10. Did you visit your current postsecondary institution before deciding to enroll there?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. Please rank the following college access categories according to importance. Base your answers on which tools helped you to transition successfully into higher education.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Academic preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self empowerment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Did your secondary education institution effectively prepare you for postsecondary education? Consider your experience with each of the following categories.

	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	No Opinion
Academic preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of the college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advising in empowering students with their futures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. How would you recommend reaching more students with college access services/information?

MCAN4 College Students

14. What do you see as the greatest barrier to graduating from postsecondary education?

- ☐ Money
- ☐ Being academically prepared
- ☐ Selecting a major/career path
- ☐ unforeseen life circumstances

Other (please specify)

15. In what county did you attend secondary education?

School Affiliates

MCAN2 School Affiliates

From this survey the Montana College Access Network hopes to acquire a more accurate understanding of college access services and their geographic distribution in Montana. The results will be published in a College Access Gap Analysis, and used to increase postsecondary educational attainment. Your answers are anonymous.

1. By completing this survey you are eligible to win a \$50 prize. Please provide a name and phone number/email by which we can reach you if you would like to participate in the drawing. This information will not be used in the College Access Gap Analysis in any way.

2. What types of service does your school/program provide for students? (Select all that apply).

- ☐ Academic preparation
- ☐ Career information
- ☐ Financial aid information and help with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid "FAFSA"
- ☐ Finding and selecting colleges, and completing applications
- ☐ Finding, selecting, and submitting scholarships/grants
- ☐ Awareness of college life/social experience
- ☐ Advising and mentoring to empower students

3. What career information delivery systems do you use? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Montana Career Information System (MCIS)
- ☐ Discover
- ☐ Bridges/CX Online/Choices
- ☐ Kuder
- ☐ Career Cruising
- ☐ Naviance
- ☐ N/A

Other (please specify)

MCAN2 School Affiliates

4. Does your school provide college financial aid night(s) or college fairs specifically targeted at understanding financial aid and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid "FAFSA"?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No opinion/Don't know

5. Does your school provide college visits for students to experience or learn about life on a college campus?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No opinion/Don't know

6. To what degree are college access programs (CAPs) and schools meeting the needs of parents?

- ☐ Ineffective
☐ Weak
☐ Effective
☐ Very Effective

7. Does your school offer dual credit enrollment programs?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No opinion/Don't know

8. Does your school have any programs aimed at increasing retention in secondary and postsecondary education?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No opinion/Don't know

9. Does your school participate in:

	Yes	No	No opinion/Don't know
College Application Week	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduation Matters	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Montana	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

MCAN2 School Affiliates

10. Please rate the perceived impact of these programs on your school.

	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact	N/A
College Application Week	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduation Matters	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Montana	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. What printed materials do you use? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Student Assistance Foundation: Roadmap to College
☐ Student Assistance Foundation: Roadmap to Your Future
☐ Student Assistance Foundation: Scholarship Brochure
☐ Department of Labor and Industry Career Guides
☐ Montana Career Guide
☐ Willing and Able (for disabled Montanans)
☐ Inside Edition (for ex-felons)
☐ Who Needs Math?
☐ Who Needs Science?
☐ What to Pack
☐ Jacob and Emily Skip School
☐ Career Heroes
☐ MPBEOC Guide to Higher Education
☐ Dollars and Sense
☐ None

Other (please specify)

12. How engaged are you in providing college access program information to students and parents? In other words, do students or parents consider you a knowledgeable source for CAPs (College Access Programs)?

	Not Engaged or Active	Less than Active	Engaged	Actively Engaged
Degree of engagement.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

MCAN2 School Affiliates

13. Please rank the following college access program categories according to importance.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	N/A
Academic preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coaching skills to empower students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. In your opinion, how effective are college access programs in preparing students for postsecondary education? Consider the following categories.

	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	N/A
Academic qualifications related to college entry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empowering students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

15. What do you see as the greatest barrier for students in achieving postsecondary educational attainment?

- ☐ Money
- ☐ Academic preparation
- ☐ Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid "FAFSA"
- ☐ Applying to schools
- ☐ Knowing what they want to do
- ☐ NA

Other (please specify)

MCAN2 School Affiliates

16. Do the college access programs at your school/program identify and target the following demographics? (Select all that apply).

- ☐ African American
- ☐ children of migrant workers
- ☐ Disabled students
- ☐ First generation college-going
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Home schooled students
- ☐ Language minority students (ESL)
- ☐ Low income
- ☐ Middle income
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Non-traditional students
- ☐ Students in foster care
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Rural populations
- ☐ Special needs
- ☐ Other minorities

Other (please specify)

17. Who in your school is not being served that should be served? (Consider individuals or groups).

18. What recommendations do you have for improving college access program service delivery? Please consider and identify training, printed materials, online resources, workshops, etc.

MCAN2 School Affiliates

19. Which would best describe your primary role in the education system?

- ☐ My primary role is as a counselor.
- ☐ My primary role is as a teacher.
- ☐ My primary role is as an administrator.

Other (please specify)

20. What is the name of your school?

21. What county is your school in?

College Access Programs/Organizations

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

From this survey the Montana College Access Network hopes to acquire a more accurate understanding of college access services and their geographic distribution in Montana. The results will be published in a College Access Gap Analysis, and used to increase postsecondary educational attainment. Your answers are anonymous.

1. By completing this survey you are eligible to win a \$50 prize. Please provide a name and phone number/email by which we can reach you if you would like to participate in the drawing. This information will not be used in the College Access Gap Analysis in any way.

2. What types of service does your organization provide? (Select all that apply).

- ☐ Academic preparation programs
- ☐ Career information programs
- ☐ Financial aid information and help with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid "FAFSA"
- ☐ Finding and selecting colleges, and completing applications
- ☐ Finding, selecting, and submitting scholarships/grants
- ☐ Awareness of college life/social experience
- ☐ Advising and mentoring to empower students

3. What career information delivery systems do you use? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Montana Career Information System (MCIS)
- ☐ Discover
- ☐ Bridges/CX Online/Choices
- ☐ Kuder
- ☐ Career Cruising
- ☐ Naviance
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ N/A

Other (please specify)

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

4. Does your organization fund educational grants/scholarships?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

5. Does your organization provide college financial aid night(s) or college fairs specifically targeted at understanding financial aid and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid "FAFSA"?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

6. Does your organization provide college visits for students to experience or learn about life on a college campus?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

7. To what degree are college access programs and schools meeting the needs of parents?

- ☐ Ineffective
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Very Effective

8. Does your organization provide services aimed at increasing secondary and postsecondary retention rates?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

9. What printed materials do you use? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Student Assistance Foundation: Roadmap to College
- ☐ Student Assistance Foundation: Roadmap to Your Future
- ☐ Student Assistance Foundation: Scholarship Brochure
- ☐ Department of Labor and Industry Career Guides
- ☐ Montana Career Guide
- ☐ Willing and Able (for disabled Montanans)
- ☐ Inside Edition (for ex-felons)
- ☐ What to Pack
- ☐ Jacob and Emily Skip School
- ☐ Career Heroes
- ☐ Who Needs Math?
- ☐ Who Needs Science?
- ☐ MPSEOC Guide to Higher Education
- ☐ Dollars and Sense
- ☐ None

Other (please specify)

10. Please rank the following college access program categories according to importance.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	N/A
Academic preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness of college life/social experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching skills to empower students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

11. In your opinion, how effective are college access programs in preparing students for postsecondary education? Consider the following categories.

	Ineffective	Weak	Effective	Very Effective	No opinion/Don't know
Academic qualifications related to college entry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the college application process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness of the college life/social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empowering students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

12. What do you see as the greatest barrier for students in achieving postsecondary educational attainment?

- ☐ Money
- ☐ Academic preparation
- ☐ Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid "FAFSA"
- ☐ Applying to schools
- ☐ Knowing what they want to do
- ☐ NA

Other (please specify)

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

13. Do your College Access Programs identify and target the following demographics? (Select all that apply).

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Children of migrant workers
- ☐ Disabled students
- ☐ First generation college-going
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Home schooled students
- ☐ Language minority students (EL)
- ☐ Low income
- ☐ Middle income
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Non-traditional students
- ☐ Students in foster care
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Rural populations
- ☐ Special needs
- ☐ Other minorities

Other (please specify)

14. Given your organization's outreach, what individuals or groups are not being served (but who need assistance)?

15. What recommendations do you have for improving college access program service delivery?

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

16. Do you participate in a local college access network, collaboration, or group that seeks to improve high school graduation and college going?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

17. If you answered yes to the previous question, have you hosted a Montana Campus Compact VISTA to expand the groups impact?

- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

18. Have you completed a local college access network self assessment?

<http://www.mtcompact.org/index.php/aid/3248e0a5/fuseaction/mtcc-vista.main.htm>

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion/Don't know

19. With regard to your association with college access programs (CAPs), what might best describe your primary role?

- ☐ I am a counselor or serve in a similar capacity.
- ☐ My primary role is as an administrator.
- ☐ I work for a non-profit college access program.
- ☐ I work for a government agency.

Other (please specify)

20. What is the name of your organization? (Please note your response is confidential. We will aggregate replies, but not divulge names of specific organizations. Knowing your organization will allow us to generalize responses across organizational category).

MCAN3 College Access Programs/Organizations

21. In what county is your organization located?

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