

Development of a Student Tracking System for ACAN Participants

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DEVELOPMENT OF A STUDENT TRACKING SYSTEM FOR ACAN PARTICIPANTS

One of the Ray Marshall Center's responsibilities under the TG2011 Staying Powers grant was to work with the Austin College Access Network (ACAN) partner organizations to develop a tracking system for their program participants. The specific deliverable from this work is the development of a FERPA-compliant data collection approach that could be used either for program evaluation purposes or for monitoring college enrollment and persistence for ACAN participants.

Ray Marshall Center researchers conducted the following set of activities over the past nine months in order to develop a FERPA-compliant student tracking system:

- Discussed the overall purpose of the project with all ACAN organizations at an ACAN team meeting and gave them a list of the types of information that the Ray Marshall Center would need to gather about their current data systems
- Scheduled follow-up individual meetings with each ACAN director and program manager to learn more information about each program, collect key information about each program's data system and discuss the legal documents that would need to be executed for each program to share its participant information with the Ray Marshall Center
- Executed formal data-sharing agreements with each ACAN partner organization
- Collected information about the file layout of each data system
- Collected FERPA-protected program participation records for each ACAN program, and
- Assessed the feasibility of using the collected data for program evaluation purposes.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from this analysis are summarized in the following three tables:

- Table 1 contains key characteristics of the programs offered by each of the three ACAN organizations
- Table 2 gives a written description of each data system used to collect data on program participants
- Table 3 analyzes each data system on a set of key criteria that are important to understand for program evaluation purposes.

This analysis shows that all three ACAN organizations maintain data systems that are suitable for use in program evaluation for the classes of 2010 and beyond. All data can be linked with other data sources available to the Ray Marshall Center through its Central Texas Student Futures Project database and have been used to create the preliminary matching cohorts needed for future evaluation work. However, none of the three systems currently maintain a formal mechanism for archiving their data systems other than through written case notes and all three data systems currently overwrite some types of student data variables that could be useful for program evaluation purposes. It would be helpful for these organizations to implement either a monthly or quarterly data archiving system so as to improve the capacity to retain full information that could be useful for future program evaluation purposes.

It also should be noted that it is necessary to link with other data sources to determine the college enrollment and persistence of both ACAN program participants and any comparison groups developed for program evaluation purposes. It is currently feasible to do this with the privately-collected and maintained postsecondary enrollment and employment databases that the Ray Marshall Center uses for its Student Futures Project; however, the continued ability to do this depends upon continued funding and data collection for that work. Although it should be theoretically possible to also conduct such an analysis by linking ACAN program data to data housed in the Texas Education Research Center (ERC), current ERC operating procedures prohibit linking outside data files to the data maintained within the ERCs. Due to these ERC limitations, the Ray Marshall Center currently plans to track college persistence for ACAN postgraduates through its Student Futures Project database.

Table 1. Key Characteristics of the Austin College Access Network (ACAN)

Program Information Collected	Breakthrough Austin	College Forward	Con Mi MADRE
1. List of specific services offered to students (e.g., mentoring, tutoring, assistance with college applications, assistance with FAFSA, etc.):			
a. Pre-college services:	Intensive summer program for 7th - 10th graders; school year support and advocacy; Saturday and afterschool programming; high school placement and transition; early college start enrollment; college exploration and preparation.	Encouraging students to enroll in more rigorous coursework, such as AP, IB, and dual credit programs; familiarizing students with performance based metrics such as ACT and SAT diagnostic tests, as well as regular Progress Reports sent home to families; "translating" the statewide College and Career Readiness Standards into highly engaging, interactive classroom activities, with particular emphasis on the Cross-Disciplinary Standards. After school curriculum that includes college exploration, ACT/SAT test preparation, applying to college, and financial aid and college persistence strategies. College Tours (local and statewide), parent support services, community service hours (mandatory), student leadership development.	College and career readiness conferences and workshops, campus meetings, individual and family case management, senior advising, college visits/academies, academic support, service learning opportunities, parent engagement series, healthy living program. Scholarships, financial assistance for ACT/SAT college testing fees, college application fees, AP tests fees, tutoring referrals, recognition ceremonies
b. College services:	College counseling and guidance; college persistence	College transition support (housing, registration, financial planning, and summer bridge programs); Virtual advising by AmeriCorps coordinators via social media; Financial Aid renewal and intervention; Student leadership Development; Peer Networking and Reunions; Career development (internships, resume/interview workshops, job hunting guidance)	Provided in partnership with College Forward; Hermanas Unidas alumnae network via social media; Provides counseling and guidance to students about issues. Holds two workshops during school breaks each year for alumni.
2. Program Eligibility Criteria:			
a. Age at entry:	~12 yrs old (early middle school)	17 - 23 years (Junior in High School through college age)	11 yrs old to 18 yrs old (6th-12th grade)

Program Information Collected		Breakthrough Austin	College Forward	Con Mi MADRE
b.	Screening criteria:	First generation college student, mostly A's and B's in school, passing scores on TAKS	Junior students attending selected high schools in the Austin area who want to earn four-year college degrees are invited to apply to the College Forward program if they are in the top 60% of their high school class and either qualify for the National School Lunch Program or would be the first in their families to graduate from college.	Hispanic female, 6th - 12th grade student, GPA of 2.5 (85) or better, enrolled in a targeted school, commitment from student and mother (or other adult role model/guardian)
c.	Schools and school districts served:	Recruit students from AISD, Manor, KIPP and East Austin College Prep. Also serve students who later attend St. Stephens, San Juan Diego, St. Andrews, Del Valle, Manor and other schools. And in other Austin school district and charters.	The program currently assists students at the following high schools in Central Texas: Connally High School, Crockett High School, Del Valle High School, Georgetown High School, Jack C. Hays High School, Lehman High School, Lyndon B Johnson High School, Manor High School, Reagan High School, Stony Point High School, Travis High School, Manor New Tech High School. The program also serves students in the Greater Houston area at these schools: Eisenhower High School, Robert E. Lee High School	AISD: Middle School-Ann Richards, Bailey, Bedichek, Covington, Fulmore, Martin, O.Henry, Paredes. Pearce, Small, Webb High School-Akins, Austin, Bowie, Crockett, LASA, LBJ, Reagan, and Travis Note: If a student moves to a non-targeted school, that student is still eligible to be part of the program.
3. Dates that you began offering services:				
a.	Types:	Austin affiliate founded in 2002	September 1, 2003	1992
4. Number of students enrolled in each program:				
a.	At point in time:	approximately 387	2150	870 mother/daughter teams
5. Characteristics of existing participant enrollment data system:				
a.	File layout available?	File layout can be obtained from a download of all system data into an Excel spreadsheet.	No	Yes, for all participant data in the Apricot database.
b.	Identifying information collected: (e.g., name, SSN, PEIMS number, DOB, etc.)	Student School ID, Name, Date of Birth, School	SSN (no student school ID), Name, Date of Birth, School	Student School ID, Name, Date of Birth, School

Program Information Collected	Breakthrough Austin	College Forward	Con Mi MADRE
c. Beginning and ending services dates: (by type of service if available)	Program attendance is tracked on a spreadsheet. All events are listed at the top of the spreadsheet with dates. Names are listed on the rows, and attendance is indicated in the spreadsheet if the student attended. BT is planning to move this attendance tracking to Salesforce.	Attendance by high school students to CoFo events, programs, training sessions, etc. are recorded in spreadsheets. There is not one start date and end date. The students participate in the programs starting with their junior year and end in their senior year.	Attendance hours and dates are tracked for all events, volunteer activities, and campus activities in spreadsheets. There are separate spreadsheets for middle school, grades 9-11, and grade 12. The spreadsheets are created for each school year and they keep all historical spreadsheets. Future plans are to enter this data into Apricot.
d. Types of information collected if person applied but didn't enroll:	Applicant data has been entered into Salesforce since 2010. Applicant statuses are also being tracked: not accepted, eligible, not eligible, waitlist (values can be customized in their system)	All applicants are entered into a spreadsheet. If they qualify, they are entered into Naviance.	Applicant data is entered into Apricot. Applicants are pre-screened before their parents fill out an application form. Usually all students are accepted.
e. Types of information collected if person enrolled but dropped out prior to completion:	Students no longer participating in the program are flagged as inactive. The reason is also stored in the system in a separate field. Deactivation date is stored in the case notes.	Inactive students are flagged as inactive. No reporting is available on inactive students. Can only view the inactive students on the screen. No deactivation date data element.	Students no longer participating in the program are flagged as inactive. The date and reason are also stored in separate fields.
f. Types of information collected if person completed program:	Participant data, participation in program events, milestones, grades, colleges applied, colleges accepted, postsecondary institution attended.	Participant data, all events/milestones completed.	Participant data, participation in program events, volunteer activities, and campus activities. Postsecondary- number of colleges accepted to, college/university attending, amount of financial aid and scholarship awarded
g. Archiving data vs. overwriting data procedures:	Changes to participant data overwrites previous data. History of participant data is maintained in paper files. Case notes history is maintained in the system.	Historical participant data is not stored in the system.	Participant data is maintained in Apricot. Changes to participant data overwrites previous data. History of participant data is maintained in paper files
6. Legal process for providing individual-level participant data to RMC:			
a. Signed data release?	Yes	Yes, for participant data only.	Yes

Table 2. Austin College Access Network (ACAN) Data System Summary

	Breakthrough Austin	College Forward	Con Mi MADRE
System Used	<p><u>Salesforce:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: CRM software (Customer Relationship Management) • Internet based • Meets their needs and allows customization on values of the data elements and potentially data elements. • Salesforce stores all college prep activities and persistence activities. • All case notes and communications with the students are stored in Salesforce as well. • Number of hours/minutes are tracked and can be reported on. • Started using Salesforce in 2009. 	<p><u>Naviance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: A system used by high school counselors to prepare students for post secondary education. • Internet based • There are some limitations since the system is designed for a slightly different purpose. • There also appears to be very little to no customization available. • Naviance is used only for high school students. Once they enter college, spreadsheets are used for persistence activities. • All system reports are canned and cannot be modified. • The database cannot be modified as well. 	<p><u>Apricot:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Non-Profit Database Software and Outcomes Achievement™ software for small to mid-size non-profit organizations. • Internet based customized database • Previously used MS Access • Started using Apricot in July 2011 • Completely customizable. • HIPPA compliant
Applicant Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entered into Salesforce since 2010. • Applicant statuses: not accepted, eligible, not eligible, waitlist (values can be customized) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applicants are entered into a spreadsheet. If they qualify, they are entered into Naviance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant data is entered into Apricot. • Applicants are pre-screened before their parents fill out an application form. Usually all students are accepted.
Participant Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant data is maintained on Salesforce. Changes to participant data overwrites previous data. History of participant data is maintained in paper files. • Students no longer participating in the program are flagged as inactive. The reason is also stored in the system. Deactivation date is stored in the case notes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified students are entered into Naviance • Inactive students are flagged as inactive. • No reporting is available on inactive students. Can only view the inactive students on the screen. • No deactivation date data element. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant data is maintained in Apricot. Changes to participant data overwrites previous data. History of participant data is maintained in paper files • Students no longer participating in the program are flagged as inactive. The date and reason are also stored.
Identifying Data Collected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School ID, Name, Date of Birth, School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSN (no school ID), Name, Date of Birth, School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School ID, Name, Date of Birth, School
Program Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program attendance is tracked on a spreadsheet. All events are listed at the top of the spreadsheet with dates. Names are listed on the rows, and attendance is indicated in the spreadsheet if the student attended. BT is planning to move this attendance tracking to Salesforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance by high school students to CoFo events, programs, training sessions, etc. are recorded in spreadsheets. There is not one start date and end date. The students participate in the programs starting with their junior year and end in their senior year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance hours are tracked for all events, volunteer activities, and campus activities in spreadsheets. There are separate spreadsheets for middle school, grades 9-11, and grade 12. The spreadsheets are created for each school year and they keep all historical spreadsheets. Future plans are to enter this data into Apricot.

Table 3. Key criteria for the Analysis of the Austin College Access Network (ACAN) Data Systems

	Breakthrough	College Forward	Con Mi MADRE
Ability to calculate number of students enrolled			
At point in time	by cohort (inactive students are flagged with no deactivation date)	by cohort (inactive students are flagged with no deactivation date)	Yes (deactivation date stored in system)
Over time	by cohort	by cohort	by cohort
Lists specific services offered to students			
Pre-college services	Yes	Yes	Yes
College services	Yes	Yes	N/A
Types of students included			
Applicants	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enrollees	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enrollees who didn't complete	Yes	Yes	Yes
Completers	Yes	Yes	Yes
Identifying information collected			
Name	Yes	Yes	Yes
SSN	No	Yes	No
PEIMS number	Yes	No	AISD only
DOB	Yes	Yes	Yes
Address	Yes	Yes	Yes
Beginning and ending service dates			
By service type? (Y/N)	Yes	Yes (CoFo participants complete milestones during 11th and 12th grade without particular dates associated to them. Begin date would be 11 th grade, end date would be 12 th grade)	Yes
Archiving vs. overwriting procedures			
Types of data archived	Case Notes	Case Notes	Case Notes
Types of data overwritten	Student Data	Student Data	Student Data
Method of archiving (within system or offline)	system, spreadsheets, paper files	system, spreadsheets, paper files	system, spreadsheets, paper files