



CASTLETON UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE
LYNDON STATE COLLEGE
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Testimony, Senate Education Committee
“Does Free College Achieve Desired Outcomes”
February 1, 2017

State Investments to improve outcomes...

How can limited state resources be spent on higher education to have the biggest impact on enrollment and completion?

Should dollars be used to:

- reduce the sticker prices students face, or
- to increase institutional expenditures that affect the experience they receive once they enroll?

What challenges does “free college” attempt to address?

- Affordability
- Aspiration and Continuation
- Degree/Credential Completion

Affordability

Average net cost for Vermonters, after all federal, state, and institutional grant aid is awarded, for students in the bottom quintile of family income (\$0-30,000):

From US College Scorecard: <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>

Vermont Tech	\$15,069
Johnson	\$13,943
Castleton	\$13,276
Lyndon	\$12,736
UVM	\$10,742
Community College of Vermont	\$9,962

Cost of College = tuition + living expenses

Affordability & Aspiration

VSAC's senior survey (Special Report on Class of 2012):

- 91% believed at one time that they would continue to college.
- 75% believed they would continue to college while seniors in high school.
- 60% actually enrolled in the fall after HS graduation.

<http://www.vsacnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-special-report-Class-of-2012-Highlights-and-challenges-for-pursuing-a-postsecondary-education1.pdf>

Affordability = Time to Focus on Learning

- Living expenses are significant for low-income students (about half of total cost in VSCS), whether they live at home or on campus.
- Students resort to working longer hours (more than 20 hours/week) to cover unmet costs, resulting in part-time enrollment, risks to academic success, and prolonged time to graduation.

Affordability & Completion

Total cost of a college degree, including student debt, is a function of the length of time it takes to earn a degree.

Students who require additional semesters to complete have higher student debt burdens.

Affordability: an exponential challenge for low income families

College affordability is a challenge for the majority of families today, but burden as a proportion of household income is most significant for low-income families.

Vermont families pay the highest family share of college costs in the nation.

Highest & Lowest Family Share of Total College Costs (Public)

Highest Family Share	
Vermont	82%
New Hampshire	81%
Delaware	73%
Colorado	73%
Pennsylvania	72%
Rhode Island	70%
Michigan	70%
Alabama	64%
South Carolina	63%
Ohio	63%

Young Invincibles' Analysis of State Higher Education Executive Officers' SHEF Report

Lowest Family Share	
Wyoming	15%
California	22%
Alaska	26%
New Mexico	32%
North Carolina	34%
Hawaii	34%
Florida	35%
New York	36%
Nevada	36%
Idaho	38%

Young Invincibles' Analysis of State Higher Education Executive Officers' SHEF Report

Affordability & Equity

- More affluent (and academically prepared) students attend more selective institutions, which typically receive more public and private funding.

Source: VSAC Special Report:
<http://www.vsacnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-special-report-Class-of-2012-Highlights-and-challenges-for-pursuing-a-postsecondary-education1.pdf>

Table 4. Student profiles at Vermont's public postsecondary institutions (n=1,442)

Demographic	Castleton	Johnson	Lyndon	UVM	VTC	CCV	Total
Male	44%	26%	45%	46%	63%	35%	43%
Female	56%	74%	55%	54%	37%	65%	57%
First gen	58%	68%	67%	28%	66%	66%	52%
Not first gen	42%	32%	33%	72%	34%	34%	48%
Male, first gen	21%	15%	25%	12%	36%	20%	19%
Female, first gen	37%	53%	42%	16%	30%	46%	33%
Male, not first gen	24%	11%	19%	33%	25%	15%	24%
Female, not first gen	18%	21%	14%	39%	9%	19%	24%
HS GPA B or better & Algebra II	85%	71%	65%	97%	83%	60%	80%
Intended degree							
Bachelor's	92%	88%	85%	97%	47%	40%	76%
Associate's	3%	6%	7%	1%	52%	35%	15%
Other or not specified	5%	6%	8%	2%	1%	25%	9%
Fall 2012 enrollment							
Full time	99%	95%	98%	96%	n/a	34%	81%
Part time	1%	4%	2%	3%	n/a	54%	15%
Less than half time	0%	1%	0%	1%	n/a	12%	4%

Note: Enrollment intensity for Vermont Technical College was not reported in the NSC records.

Focusing State Higher Ed Investment on Outcomes

A January, 2017 Brookings Institute study (The Impacts of Price and Spending Subsidies on U.S. Postsecondary Attainment) concludes that:

There are “large effects when state funds are used to increase institutional expenditures...” on student supports.

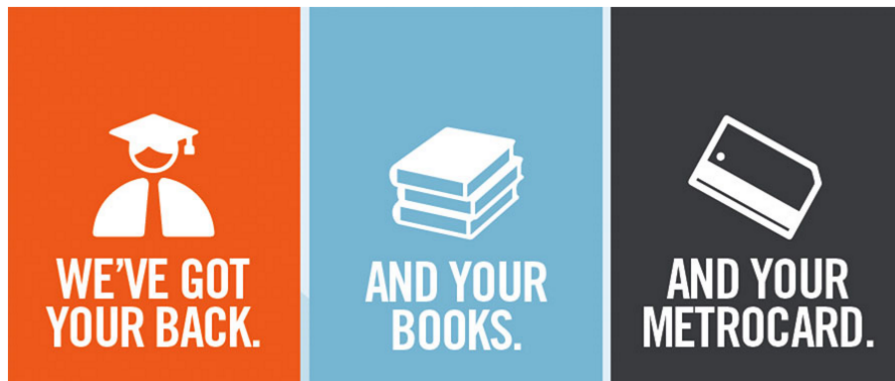
(http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/ddeming/files/demingwalters_higheredspending_jan2017.pdf)

Focusing State Higher Ed Investment on Outcomes: A best practice



CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) assists students in earning associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports:

- personalized advisement,
- career counseling,
- tutoring,
- waivers for tuition and fees,
- MTA MetroCards, and
- financial assistance for textbooks.
- special class scheduling options to ensure that ASAP students get the classes they need and to accommodate their work schedules.



Focusing State Higher Ed Investment on Outcomes: A best practice



outcomes

Finding #1

ASAP students earned their associate degrees at higher rates than non-ASAP students, even when a longer timeframe was considered.

Finding #2

ASAP students earned their associate degrees more quickly than non-ASAP students within a six-year timeframe.

Finding #3

ASAP students transferred to baccalaureate programs at higher rates than non-ASAP students and earned their bachelor's degrees at higher rates.

Finding #4

Six years after entering, ASAP students were more likely to have earned undergraduate degrees than non-ASAP students.

Best Practices: Veteran Students at CCV

	Veteran Students at CCV	Veteran Students Nationally
2009-2010	72%	60%
2010-2011	77%	61%
2011-2012	69%	60%
2012-2013	83%	63%
2013-2014 (partial data available)	73%	69%

Full-time students who complete a credential or persist to a second year, either at same or transfer institution. Source: VA records.



Best Practice: Tennessee Promise

- Boosting enrollment through free tuition: increase of 10% in enrollment in the program's first year.
- Boosting retention rates: 80.6% in 2016.

Making a college degree more attainable

- Direct funds to enable free tuition to boost aspirations and enrollment.
- Direct resources to financial aid supports that increase low-income students' ability to attend full-time, e.g. grant aid to support books, fees, and living expenses.
- Direct funding to institutions to target high-risk populations with additional institutional supports for student persistence and on-time graduation.