Promise Program

Sauk Valley Community College

Lori Cortez, Ed.D

January 2018

Abstract

Sauk Valley Community College's communities have a shared history, but each community continues to chart its own, and often separate, path. Our counties have also continued to lose population, a trend that started during the most recent recession. This trend has also endured in other Midwestern states that surround Illinois. School systems and colleges are struggling to stem the flow of families leaving the area. The goal is compelling for educational institutions and their communities to expand access and affordability of quality education, especially in the challenging economic realities in the state of Illinois. What better way of slowing or ending this talent drain in Illinois than providing supportive and effective services to help talented students and their families attain their goals of higher education and a better life in their communities?

In October of 2016, the US Department of Education published *America's College Promise Playbook*. The publication, based on research, developed theories to support "expanding the promise of a college education and economic opportunities for all students" (Education, 2016). The playbook notes best practices for establishing and sustaining a promise program. Noted as key steps include:

➢ Identify community needs and opportunities,

➢ Build a team and develop partnerships to strengthen educational quality,

➢ Design a high-quality program that serves both community and student needs,

➢ Develop a sustainable funding model, and

➢ Evaluate and assess program effectiveness to learn what works in order to promote quality improvement.

What follows in this report is based on the Department of Education's Playbook.

Introduction

Sauk Valley Community College's (SVCC) communities and surrounding regions have a shared history, but each community continues to chart its own, and often separate, path. As noted in the 2016 *Eaton Cummings Assessment Report*, a positive development mentioned by several area leaders is people are beginning to talk about Sauk Valley as a "region" instead of separate communities. For some, thinking regionally reinforced the sense that the area is starting to come back but as several observed, "It's difficult" (Eaton Cummings Group, 2016). The region in general has declined in population over the past decade and a half. Many of those interviewed for the Eaton Cummings Assessment Report expressed concern about the future of the regional economy. Many pointed to losing young people because of limited job opportunities. When pressed to identify the local resources and organizations most likely to exert a continuing, positive influence on the future economic growth and vitality of the region, SVCC was mentioned by many, either first or in conjunction with one or two other public or private agencies or organizations.

Identifying community needs and opportunities

Data from the *2017 Illinois School Report Card* provide a High School-to-College Success Report (see Table I). This report displays the percentage of students who graduated with a regular high school diploma from a public high school in Illinois and enrolled in a two-year or four-year college in the U.S. within 12 months. The state results were 69% while SVCC's service district high schools' rates ranged from a low of 30% to a high of 72% (Illinois State Board of Education, 2017). Overall, it is clear that the State of Illinois and SVCC's district have multiple severe challenges to raise the level of education and training for a highly qualified workforce and thriving communities. It

is imperative for SVCC to seek multiple ways to improve educational systems that are sustainable and meaningful.

Included in the *Illinois School Report Card* are the percentages of high school seniors who are considered "College Ready." This designation is determined by a combined score of at least 21 on the ACT. Obviously, further assistance and academic intervention are needed when too many of these students are not considered to be ready for college in their senior year.

Table I Illinois Report Card Data 2017[1]					
	Enrollment	% Low Income	% College Ready	% Freshman on track	% College Enrollment in 12 months
Amboy High School	216	23	45	97	67
Ashton-Franklin Center High School	222	35	22	95	70
Bureau Valley High School	330	41	41	93	60
Dixon High School	800	37	53	84	65
Erie High School	191	32	46	97	72
Fulton High School	296	29	38	100	58
Milledgeville High School	174	25	60	88	72
Morrison High School	280	27	61	87	68
Ohio High School	47	40	N/A	N/A	30
Oregon High School	445	40	61	97	60
Polo High School	185	37	60	82	57
Prophetstown High School	244	43	63	90	54
Rock Falls High School	658	50	43	90	58
Sterling High School	998	47	51	81	63
West Carroll High School	341	48	47	84	37
Illinois State Average		50	50	87	69

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[1] Illinois Report Card does not collect data from private or homeschools.

According to the 2009-2013 U.S. Census estimates, Lee (20.6%) and Whiteside (15.9%) counties show higher rates than the U. S. (15.6%) of adults aged 18-24 with no high school diploma or equivalency (US Census Bureau, 2013). In this same category of adults, the two counties have fewer adults 18-24 with some college or an associate's degree. It makes sense that the two counties would also have a lower Per Capita Income than that of the country as a whole. As demonstrated in Table II, our region has historically suffered from lower family incomes and minimal college attainment by adults. Our counties have also continued to lose population, a trend that started during the most recent recession. This trend has also endured in other Midwestern states that surround Illinois. School systems and colleges are struggling to stem the flow of families leaving the area. What better way of slowing or ending this talent drain in Illinois than providing supportive and effective services to help talented students and their families attain their goals of higher education and a better life in their communities?

Table II—Lee-Whiteside County Community Profile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 Quick Facts with U.S. Census 2014 Estimates)			
	Lee County	Whiteside County	U.S.
Population (Estimate 2014)	34,735	56,876	318 million
Population percent change (2010-2014)	-3.6%	-2.8%	3.3%
18-24 with no HS diploma or equivalency	20.6%	15.9%	15.6%
18-24 with some college or an associate's degree	38.1%	38.2%	45.5%
Adults with 4-year degrees	16%	16.2%	28.8%
Age 16+ in the labor force	60.7%	63.1%	63.8%
Per capita income	$25,409	$24,525	$28,155
School-age children (Persons under 18 years, 2013)	20.6%	22.8%	23%

The goal is compelling for educational institutions and their communities to expand access and affordability of quality education, especially in the challenging economic realities in the state of Illinois. The recent recession has resulted in a multi-year decline in Illinois' full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. The twelfth annual State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) study of state support for higher education reports that Illinois decline in FTE since the recession is the highest in the country at 16.6% (The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association , 2014). This trend has created severe budgeting uncertainty for the state's community colleges. One real consequence of this uncertainty is that in the last few years state appropriations for many of Illinois' community colleges have been repeatedly late or nonexistent, causing these institutions to cut budgets and look for ways to provide all of the critical services students need to succeed.

The state's K-12 school systems have also suffered from declining enrollments and state budget cuts since the recession. The *Plenary Packet* from the Illinois State Board of Education Meeting (April 15, 2015) reported that due to the State's FY2015 budget shortfall of $1.6 billion, PA 99-0001 was approved, which reduced the majority of the State Board's FY2015 appropriations by 2.25% (Illinois State Board of Education, 2015). The purpose of PA 99-0001 is to distribute a supplemental appropriation to school districts in financial distress. However, every district's anticipated FY2015 State funding was decreased, thus further requiring the potential for non-certified staff reduction and/or obtaining additional debt to make ends meet.

Many of these problems are described in a publication titled *Advance Illinois— Funding Expectations*. This study reports that Illinois introduced reforms in recent

years to improve instruction for the 2 million students in public schools: "Yet the drain of state resources threatens to derail progress, hamstring academic opportunities and unravel the basic education needed to prepare Illinois students for today's world. Illinois confronts a financial crisis that further threatens its solvency" (Advance Illinois, 2013). According to the report, the state's financial constraints and resulting budget cuts have pushed some school districts to the brink. The report also states that two-thirds of school districts in Illinois are currently deficit-spending and that districts have dismissed at least 6,400 educators and aides: "The financial strain is worse in disadvantaged districts with little local wealth and large concentrations of low-income students. Nearly half of Illinois students are economically disadvantaged, and for the first time, more than half of schools serve 40 percent or more low-income students" (Advance Illinois, 2013).

These persistent problems for the educational systems in Illinois threaten the dreams and goals of many students. Due to these circumstances, these students face a world very different from the one navigated by their parents. Many are potentially first-generation college students, seriously underprepared for postsecondary education and dealing with challenging economic conditions. Their chances of college entry and success are slim; their schools cannot provide targeted, holistic intervention; over-taxed counselors have little time to guide and inform; financial plans do not exist; and parents cannot serve as role models.

The budgetary challenges are very real for students and their families. Our institution, Sauk Valley Community College, is currently exploring the feasibility of a promise program to help change the future for students and their families in our service district.

Sauk Valley Community College
District Map

Historical Perspectives and Research

Table III *Number and Percentage of At Risk Students at SVCC*			
Total SVCC Enrollment/ Percent	**First Gen.**	**Low Income**	**Low Income & First Generation**
2,508 100%	2,031 81.00%	1,817 72.40%	1,529 61.00%
Source: Office of Information Services, SVCC, 2014-15 data, October 2015			

As indicated in Table III, a high number (2,031) and a high percentage (81%) of the students who enrolled during 2014-2015 at SVCC are first-generation college students (Sauk Valley Community College, 2015). The designation of low income and first-generation college student is important because these students' parents often cannot provide guidance in preparing for college by scheduling preparatory courses during middle- and high-school, selecting a college that is the right fit, coping with college life, and providing advice on career planning and program of study. In fact, many of these parents did not prosper in school and feel a sense of unease just thinking about this critical preparation. Other college-related challenges that middle- and high-school counselors previously had the time for, but often can no longer provide, include

helping students with personal financial planning, filling out applications, searching for financial aid, navigating the application process, transferring to a four-year institution, and meeting personal development challenges.

In addition, low income and first-generation college students often experience a type of culture shock. Their families may have difficulty understanding the kinds of challenges they encounter. These students often lack the kind of knowledgeable support networks that are available to students with college-savvy parents.

Another critical process for students in our service region is completion of the FAFSA as a component of applying to a variety of colleges or universities during a student's junior year in high school. Three of our targeted schools are well below the 62% state average for FAFSA completion: Dixon at 50%, Rock Falls at 54%, and Sterling at 55% (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2016). Again, high school counselors have little time to assist students with this process along with providing information and support in applying for scholarships. Each year, a percentage of high school students who would have been eligible for Federal Financial Aid do not know that these opportunities exist or how to prepare the applications if they do discover them.

Build a team and develop partnerships to strengthen educational quality

Regional Impact

An indicator of low academic achievement is the rate of enrollment in programs of postsecondary education by our high school graduates vs the State of Illinois -69% and the U.S -68%: Rock Falls HS – 58%; Sterling HS – 63%; and Dixon – 65% (Illinois State Board of Education, 2017). It has been widely reported that the level of education has multiple impacts on individuals and families over time. Table IV is strong evidence

of why college enrollment is vital to attaining successful careers and higher life-long

earnings (US Census Bureau, 2013).

Table IV				
Mean annual earnings of Illinois adults ages 16-64. U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 Quick Facts with U.S. Census 2014 Estimates				
Educational Attainment	No HS diploma or the equivalent	With only HS diploma or the equivalent	With some college or an associate's degree	With a bachelor's or higher
% of Illinois Population	12.7%	27.1%	28.7%	31.5%
Distribution of those at poverty level by educational status	28.2%	32.6%	26.4%	12.8%
Annual Earnings by educational status	$20,962	$28,242	$34,638	$51,864 $68,489 for graduate +

Organizational Change and Emerging Issues

Historically, SVCC has partnered with local schools and continually explores

ways to strengthen these valuable partnerships. In our collective discussions and

strategic planning efforts, we regularly keep our students' needs in the "center of our

thoughts." It is paramount that all of our educational systems must leverage our

multiple resources and creativity to push changes and improvements in our shared

districts and communities. Collectively we have a history of serving academically and

economically disadvantaged students.

Working with area superintendents and the Whiteside Area Career Center

(WACC), SVCC leadership has brainstormed and implemented new high demand

technical programs that hold the interest of many of our students. Each high school is

linked to programs that are mapped and cover the four years of pathways at the high

school and the two years at SVCC. This link is valuable for those overextended high school counselors because it shows a clear six-year educational roadmap.

Another collaboration program is the Dual Credit program, which allows students to take courses that provide them with both high school and college credit. This program is very popular with students and families and can provide an important secure entrance into a new level of academic achievement.

In terms of technical programs coupled with Dual Credit, WACC allows local high school students to receive instruction in career/technical programs tied with dual credit options. These dual credit and articulated credit programs include nursing, welding, criminal justice, and graphic design.

These vital partnerships provide educational options for students who often have very few options. However, the continual financial challenges that are shared by the public schools and SVCC sometimes tie our hands when working collectively to serve our students. Fortunately, the challenges promote regular brainstorming sessions that generate the identification of strategies for sustained funding measures. Indeed, the decision to embark on researching the feasibility of a promise program originated from these conversations. This research seeks to explore types of sustainable funding over time that can truly make a difference in our successful efforts to support student learning.

Design a high-quality program that serves
both community and student needs

Program Design

The following program design is modeled after the Harper Promise Scholarship Program in Palatine, IL. Tyler Junior College in Tyler, TX replicated the Harper model

and has experienced great success. Both colleges presented and shared their programs at the Council for Advancement in Secondary Education Community College Conference in Fall 2017 (CASE, 2017).

Both colleges developed an impact study, similar to what you are reading here. The impact study assessed the feasibility and impact of a promise program and investigated fundraising efforts and program design.

From the aforementioned data, it is clearly evident that SVCC's service region lags behind state and national data in terms of educational advancement and per capita earnings. It is also evident that SVCC has formed a positive reputation in the community as a source of quality, affordable, and accessible education. What is needed is a catalyst for encouraging all students in our region to pursue their education, to capitalize on their abilities.

Building a promise program requires careful financial planning, including an examination of the program's spending philosophy. The term "first-dollar program" means that College Promise funds are provided to students *first*, or before any other grant or awarded funding. By contrast, the term "last-dollar program" means that students draw upon any available public funding *before* being awarded College Promise funds. Both models administer funds to eligible students that cover the direct costs of being a student, such as tuition and fees.

In a "first-dollar program," the amount of College Promise funding awarded to an eligible student does not take into account any additional funding or grants that the student is eligible for, like a federal Pell Grant. Therefore, a "first-dollar" College Promise program covers the direct costs of being a student and has the potential to

reduce the associated costs that come with being a student, such as transportation, childcare, school materials, and other costs.

In a "last-dollar program," the amount of College Promise funding awarded to an eligible student takes into account any additional public funding or grants the student is eligible for, like a federal Pell Grant. The total amount of "last-dollar" College Promise funding a student receives to cover the direct costs of being a student varies depending on other public funding for which the student is eligible. Unlike "first-dollar programs," "last-dollar programs" do not have the potential of reducing the associated costs that come with being a student, such as transportation, childcare, school materials, and other costs (The Association of Community College Trustees , 2017). "Results indicate that the Promise program alone or in combination with Pell grants and Stafford loans is a predictor of persistence" (Mendoza & Mendez, 2013).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 74% of SVCC students receive on average $4,465 in federal aid every year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016) . The cost of attendance at SVCC for 30 credit hours and fees a year is $4,190. Most of our students have enough aid to cover their tuition and fees – keeping in mind these are the students who apply for and receive Federal Financial Aid.

The last dollar program is a best practice among many community colleges such as Harper Community College, Tyler Junior College, and the Kalamazoo Promise Program (Miller-Adams, 2015). These promise program pay for tuition and fees after all other funds (e.g., Pell, external scholarships, and MAP) have been expended. A last dollar program is more sustainable and teaches students to be proactive in pursuing their educational endeavors. SVCC's Promise Program would mandate that all recipients

complete and submit the FAFSA and apply for additional community, state, and national scholarships.

Most Promise Programs extend eligibility to students who register and partake in program activities beginning in their eighth-grade year within the college's tax district. The application process must be simple (online if possible) and include parental involvement[2]. In the eighth-grade year, students are accepted into the program. While there is no obligation for the student to attend SVCC, if they drop out of the program, there exists no possibility for readmission into the Promise Program. Colleges like Harper and Tyler make acceptance into the program a "big deal." They tell their students that they have been admitted to college, that they are now college students. Students and parents are given promise gear (e.g., shirts, key chains, hats, and car decals). As Tyler Junior College's Advancement Director, Mitch Andrews noted, one student ran out to her mom's car on a rainy day gleefully exclaiming "MOM, I WAS JUST ACCEPTED INTO COLLEGE!!!" This practice cements the college-going culture in the community.

Other program activities for students include completing X amount of community service hours a year, graduating on time, maintaining a cumulative 2.5 GPA, submitting the FAFSA, and applying to at least two scholarships. To further advance the college going culture, Champion City Scholars Promise Program implemented a mentoring component. At the admission of every new student, that student was paired with two mentors who would meet with the student once a month until high school graduation. This mentoring component required a five-year monthly commitment from

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[2] Harper and Tyler colleges require a $25 fee per student, per year to cover administration costs.

mentors. The mentors were college educated community leaders, Foundation Board Directors, College Trustees, and College Alumni. The goal of the mentoring program was to meet with the student and "have conversations that they were not having at home." In one video testimony, a low income first generation college student who was a Champion City Scholar and is currently in a medical residency program at Johns Hopkins noted that his mentors made it possible for him to be where he is today. This promise student did not mention the funding but made it known that his mentors meant the world to him. While a mentoring program is a high impact practice, it does require a major time commitment, communication, and coordination.

When students attend the college, the program activities included developing an educational development plan, meeting with their academic advisor once a semester, and remaining in good academic standing to maintain promise program eligibility. A Promise Program department was created to work with parents, high school counselors, mentors, and financial aid offices.

Marketing was vital in creating buzz about the program and fundraising efforts and included installing signs on the city limits indicating that their town was a "Promise Program City." The tax districts of Harper and Tyler colleges found an influx of people moving into the area to enroll their students in the Promise Program. Real estate agents advertised homes as "Promise Program" eligible. Ongoing marketing initiatives include publishing a yearly impact study sent to all homes and businesses in the college's tax district. This publication includes student stories/testimonies along with quantitative data and donor recognition.

Harper and Tyler colleges saw enrollment increases, 20% and 14%, respectively (CASE, 2017). Tennessee community colleges saw a 25% increase in enrollment of first-

time freshmen and the technical colleges experienced 20 percent growth, according to the state's higher education commission report (Smith, 2015).

Develop a sustainable funding model

Methodology

The following methodology is based on historical data along with a 20% projected increase in high school senior enrollment.

Table V below shows enrollment data from all of the area high schools within Sauk Valley Community College's tax district (Sauk Valley Community College, 2017).

Table V SVCC Tax District High School Senior Enrollment Data					
	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
Amboy High School	13	12	20	13	12
Ashton-Franklin Center High School	20	16	11	12	10
Bureau Valley High School	8	11	11	8	13
Dixon High School	69	58	55	60	56
Faith Christian School-Dixon	3	2	6	4	2
Fulton High School	8	3	0	6	3
Home School	5	3	12	6	10
Milledgeville High School	5	4	12	6	7
Morrison High School	19	13	15	23	14
Newman High School	13	25	14	13	18
Ohio High School	6	3	2	2	3
Oregon High School	11	15	12	9	14
Polo High School	19	19	17	17	21
Prophetstown High School	22	15	18	17	9
Rock Falls High School	62	51	43	50	52
Sterling High School	79	93	87	88	56
West Carroll High School	0	8	2	6	3
Yearly Total	362	351	337	340	303
Average Enrollment		339 students			
Source: Office of Information Services, SVCC, December 2017					

If SVCC were to move forward with the development of a Promise Program that includes only most recent high school graduates, based on historical data and with a projected 20% increase in enrollment, SVCC should expect to provide a promise program for 406 students in year one and 812 students in every subsequent year to allow for the sophomore class.

As noted by the National Center for Educational Statistics, 74% of SVCC students receive on average $4,465 in financial aid every year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). The cost of attendance at SVCC for 30 credit hours and fees a year is $4,190.

If we are to assume, based on historical trends, 74% (600 students) of first time freshman receive $4,465 in financial aid on a yearly average, the Promise Program would have no balance for these students. However, when we take into consideration the other 26% (212 students) who have no source of financial aid, their annual bill based on 30 credit hours is $888,280. To sustain this model (in other words, keep our promise), an endowed fund is highly encouraged. Based on a 5% annual yield in investments, a $18 million endowment is reasonable and will yield $900,000 a year.

Raising funds for a promise program varies widely. Harper's Promise Program allotted $6 million from the College's operating fund. Tennessee's and Kalamazoo's promise programs levied additional taxes to raise funds. Tyler Junior College funded its $20 million endowed Promise Program based entirely on donations. While Harper's Promise Program may not be feasible for SVCC's budget and a tax increase on our already low-income region does not make a tax increase likely, donations may be the best option for Sauk's Promise Program. With the guidance of consultants, Sauk Valley College Foundation could launch a five-year promise campaign. The first year could be a

silent phase where SVCF solicits major gifts from "usual suspects." These usual suspects include:

- Local philanthropists

- Strongly established Sauk business partners

- Current and former Foundation Directors

- Current and Former College Trustees

- Former SVCC presidents

- Current and Former Donors

- Alumni with a high rate of disposable income

- College retirees

- Major employee campaign

These solicitations for these "usual suspects" could take place during a one year silent phase.

  In the following years, a campaign for public support can be launched to employer establishments. According to the US Census Bureau 2016, there are 1950 employer establishments in Lee and Whiteside Counties and 2192 employer establishments in Bureau, Carroll, and Ogle Counties (US Census Bureau, 2016). If half of all employer establishments in Lee and Whiteside counties (975 businesses) and 25% of Bureau, Carroll, and Ogle county businesses (548) commit to a five-year monthly donation of $200 a $18,276,000 million-dollar endowment can be raised in five years.[3]

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[3] Rationale for county division is based on the fact that SVCC serves all of Lee and Whiteside counties and approximately half of Carroll, Bureau, and Ogle counties.

Other best practices for promise campaigns include raising the College's Foundation administrative fee and shifting existing and incoming Foundation and community scholarships and endowments to the Promise Program. To build further support, inviting regional business partners (e.g., health, agriculture, and manufacturing) to breakfast, lunch, or dinner with the President would help to paint the picture of the campaign. Additionally, designating 10-12 campaign chairs who can identify 8-10 people that could give at the $10,000 level or beyond could yield results by offering naming rights as a catalyst for major gifts.

All aspects of the campaign will require significant time and attention of College leadership. Best practice indicates that the Foundation Director never embarks on a request for funds alone (Heaton, 2015). The President brings prestige to the cause and effect, and Vice Presidents build the connections and legitimacy of the campaign. Leadership may require training in the art of the ask, which requires willingness and time. A campaign can inspire leadership, motivate and empower staff, and create a culture of philanthropy.

Pre-Campaign:

- Hire a consultant group for feasibility study and lay the ground work
- Hire a Foundation staff person for donor cultivation, stewardship, and marketing
- Solicit internal and external feedback with surveys and focus groups
- Create a case for support with Foundation Board of Directors and College Trustees
- Create a case for support with local educators (Superintendents, Principals, HS Counselors)

- Create a case for support for donors

- Designate campaign chairs

- Amend Foundation's Budget to Support Campaign (e.g., marketing, personnel, travel, meals, and events)

- Data mine using BlackBaud Target Analytics

- Develop a strategic usual suspects list

Year One:

- Silent Phase

- Solicit funds from usual suspects

Year Two:

- Employee pledge campaign

- Solicit remaining balance from businesses within SVCC's tax district

Year Three:

- Continue to solicit remaining balance from businesses within SVCC's tax district

Year Four:

- Continue to solicit remaining balance from businesses within SVCC's tax district

- Hire Promise Program Coordinator

Year Five:

- Donor Recognition

Evaluate and assess program effectiveness

to learn what works in order to promote quality improvement

Creating a data collection and analysis process will ensure that our Promise program continues to improve. The continuous data collection and analysis process will also help to create meaningful policies and procedures that will help students access an affordable college education and graduate more students prepared to pursue careers and any additional education goals: "Program evaluation and assessment can assist in determining whether the programs are addressing identified community needs and inform any necessary design adjustments" (Education, 2016). Strong research designs and partnerships with academic researchers can help communities build evidence on what works to help sustain these programs, identify best practices to inform other communities' program designs, and scale what works.

Designers of programs' evaluations and assessments consider the following:

Student Outcomes-Related

- Are more students graduating from high school college-ready and enrolling in college?

- How do programs affect enrollment patterns?

- Are more students completing the FAFSA and accessing the financial aid for which they are eligible?

- Are fewer students taking remedial classes in college?

- During college, are more students able to supplement their learning by participating in related extracurricular activities, internships, or other experiences?

- During college, are more students able to access the supports and resources necessary to focus on academics?

- During college, are students accumulating more credits?

- Are more students graduating on time with high-quality associate degrees, and/ or transferring credits to a four-year institution where they graduate with bachelor's degrees?

- Are more students becoming employed in jobs that provide good wages and benefits?

- Are more students repaying their student loans successfully?

Community Outcomes and Program Implementation-Related

- Is the region in which the community college is located filling more jobs?

- What kinds of meaningful partnerships are community stakeholders building with the school?

- How are policymakers taking note of and responding to the college's successes and needs?

- Among eligible students, what percentage accepts the scholarship?

- How much of the cost of attendance are financial aid dollars covering for participating students?

- What are annual per-student costs for the program?

Conclusion

As noted in the University of Arkansas working paper series, "We find positive effects of Promise Programs on community development, K-12 academic outcomes, and postsecondary outcomes. The evidence is suggestive that all program designs produce positive community development impacts, that universal and merit-based first-dollar programs produce positive K-12 academic impacts, and that universal and merit-based as well as first-dollar and last-dollar designs produce positive postsecondary impacts" (Swanson, Watson, Ritter, & Nichols, 2016). SVCC would benefit from a continued discussion on the impact of a promise program for our tax district students to improve educational and labor outcomes in our region.

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