



Program Descriptions of 2010 Walmart College Success Award Winners

Thirty institutions have been selected to receive the 2010 CIC/Walmart College Success Awards. Twenty institutions will receive Awards of \$100,000 and ten institutions will receive \$50,000 Awards. The ten \$50,000 Awards have been designated for worthy projects that have a smaller scope of impact or are more experimental in nature.

- **\$100,000 Award Recipients**
- **\$50,000 Award Recipients**

\$100,000 Award Recipients

- Alma College (MI)
- Alverno College (WI)
- Berea College (KY)
- Catawba College (NC)
- College of Notre Dame of Maryland
- Clark Atlanta University (GA)
- DePaul University (IL)
- Elizabethtown College (PA)
- Franklin College (IN)
- Guilford College (NC)
- Lynchburg College (VA)
- Mars Hill College (NC)
- Mercyhurst College (PA)
- Mills College (CA)
- Notre Dame de Namur University (CA)
- Rosemont College (PA)
- Stetson University (FL)
- Stevenson University (MD)
- Thomas College (ME)
- University of St. Francis (IL)

Alma College (MI) will launch the First-Generation Connections program to expand previous efforts to provide first-generation students—who comprise approximately 40 percent of all incoming first-year students—with academic and social support. The program will include an extensive mentoring program that matches first-generation students with both faculty members and peers for frequent dinners and other forms of informal interaction. Participating students will serve as peer mentors for the next group of incoming first-generation students. In addition, the program coordinator will ensure that these first-generation students receive intensive guidance finding and using academic and other support services and that their parents will receive periodic newsletters addressing issues of particular interest to the families of first-generation students. Finally, the college will reach out to the students to assist them with

career development and choosing majors during their second year at the college. All students in the First-Generation Connections program will be eligible for financial incentives for participating in the program, including funds for books and grants to participate in a travel course or summer research project.

Alverno College (WI) has an undergraduate enrollment that includes 74 percent first-generation students. The college has been successful retaining first- and second-year first-generation students but is looking to improve the retention and graduation of upper-level students. Students at this level frequently encounter difficult “life issues” and financial challenges that account for the majority of students who drop out of college. The college’s Promise Scholars program will assign students to a counselor for frequent advising and counseling. In addition, a special financial aid fund will provide emergency financial assistance to Promise Scholars. Each year, the Scholars will receive recognition, ranging from letters from the president to annual awards dinners, for their success.

Berea College (KY) admits only students with academic promise but limited economic resources. Most are first-generation college students from Appalachia. The CIC/Walmart College Success Award will allow for an expansion of current services and interventions and will specifically assist students from counties considered “distressed” by the Appalachian Regional Commission. First-generation students from these counties generally have lower retention and graduation rates as well as lower first-term grade point averages than other students. Berea will implement a peer-mentoring program to help students integrate the academic, work, and residential aspects of life on campus. Participating first-generation students also will be paired with a faculty or staff mentor. In addition, incoming students will be assessed for levels of self-efficacy on tasks essential to success in college so that students will receive immediate individualized guidance on ways to improve areas of deficiency.

Catawba College (NC) will use its CIC/Walmart College Success Award to create the NextGen Project that will focus on building cultural and social connections for first-generation college students by building on successful programs already in place. The college also will implement a new program to prepare faculty and staff members who work with first-generation students through a summer workshop led by an expert consultant. In addition, the college will create a NextGen First-Year Seminar (FYS) section—an expansion of the college’s highly successful FYS initiative—that will be taught by a faculty member who was a first-generation student, assisted by peer mentors who are themselves first-generation students. The seminar will include content that will help students take advantage of campus resources such as the Writing Center, the Career Center, and the Academic Resource Center. These students also will participate in a trip to Washington, DC during the winter term. Catawba students who travel as part of an academic or co-curricular program consistently report their experience as one of the most significant parts of their college education. First-generation students, particularly those who

come from low-income families, often find it difficult to participate in these types of programs. The NextGen Project also will assist parents of first-generation college students through participation in specifically designed orientation activities and regular contact with faculty and staff members.

College of Notre Dame of Maryland will implement the Trailblazer Scholars program, an expansion of a cohort program already in place. The Trailblazer Scholars will be comprised of first-generation students and will focus on providing “high-impact” experiences—identified by George Kuh and other researchers as especially beneficial for first-generation students—intended to strengthen the interactions with faculty members and peers. Accordingly, all Trailblazer Scholars will engage in a service opportunity in their first year and take part in a substantive research project in a later year. They also will be given peer mentors, regular advising and counseling by staff members, experiential learning opportunities, additional social and educational workshops, and an alumnae speaker series that targets first-generation issues. Scholars will be eligible for \$1,000 incentive grants for research or internships upon successfully completing the first year of the program. Finally, a web portal for the Trailblazer Scholars will provide discussion boards, workshop materials, and information on scholarships for first-generation students.

Clark Atlanta University (GA), a historically black university, will create a program to assist first-generation students enrolled in the first-year seminar classes in the natural sciences and business. This strategy will be used to alleviate two problems: 1) students often fail to maintain good academic standing during the first year because of poor performance in the introductory “gateway” courses in the sciences; and 2) more first-generation students major in business than in any other major. The participating first-generation students will have received special advising and tutoring and will be assigned peer and faculty/staff mentors. All students will be encouraged to participate in campus organizations and activities and will be required to participate in a service-learning project related to their major or career area of interest. Students will also attend workshops on life skills, study skills, and career exploration and preparation. Finally, these first-generation students will be eligible for financial awards based on their program participation.

DePaul University (IL), building on a successful pilot program, will establish the Internship Plu\$ project to serve first-generation students with financial need during their sophomore and junior years. The CIC/Walmart College Success Award will provide financial awards to students who undertake unpaid internships related to their field of academic study or intended career, thus making it financially feasible for students to experience the close relationship between education and career goals, find professional role models, and have opportunities to network in their intended career field. Internships in the liberal arts and sciences will be emphasized. Participating students will receive four hours of credit and be able to use the internship to fulfill the university’s

experiential learning requirement.

Elizabethtown College (PA) will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to improve the retention of African American, Asian, Latino, and Native American first-generation students. The college will offer a summer bridge program for participating students to introduce useful campus resources and to increase their interaction with faculty and staff members. During the academic year, students will receive enhanced levels of advising to supplement work with their assigned academic advisors. The Award will also fund professional development activities for faculty and staff members as well as peer tutors who will be working with this group of first-generation students. Because male first-generation students at Elizabethtown are the most likely group to drop out, they will be heavily recruited to participate in the first-generation program.

Franklin College (IN) will focus on family and campus support for first-generation students through the Franklin First Scholars and Franklin First Families program. Students will be selected from two first-generation populations that are in particular need of assistance: students of color and students from Johnson County and contiguous counties. Students and their families will be assigned a mentor who is an alumnus, alumna, or friend of the college. The students, families, and mentors will participate together in an intensive summer orientation and an academic experience that incorporates service learning. During their first year, students will be assigned to two special sections of the college's New Student Leadership Seminar—the college's first-year transition course—which will be designed to address the particular needs of first-generation students. Mentors will help students and families negotiate the first years of college and provide networking opportunities as students establish career goals. In addition, families will be invited to participate in webinars and two on-campus events during their student's first academic year.

Guilford College (NC) will use the Award to implement the Center for Continuing Education Gateways program to address issues facing adult first-generation students. New adult first-generation students will meet with counselors to learn about the college and the services it provides. They will also be invited to a social event and interact with other students and faculty members. Upon enrollment, high-risk adult first-generation students will be paired immediately with trained peer mentors with whom they will meet regularly. In addition, all adult first-generation students will attend workshops and seminars on topics that address adult first-generation student needs and have an opportunity to attend networking events with a wide range of faculty members, administrators, and other students.

Lynchburg College (VA) will establish Expanding Your Horizons, a multi-faceted program designed to strengthen existing services for first-generation students. First-year first-generation students will engage in community service activities and will also participate in a two-day retreat, enroll in two courses that feature motivational strategies for college

success and career development, be assigned a peer mentor, and participate in a leadership and adventure experience. College faculty and staff members will communicate with parents of these students. In the sophomore year, participating first-generation students will be provided with a range of experiential learning opportunities, such as international and community service-learning projects, internships, study abroad, research projects with faculty members, and professional conference participation.

Mars Hill College (NC) will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to establish Research FIRST, a program that expands upon a successful undergraduate research program. At Mars Hill, many students engage in original research, working with dedicated faculty mentors. Through this activity, students develop writing and speaking skills; they gain experience in budgeting and project management; and they acquire a deepened understanding of ethics and responsibility in leadership, all of which promote self-confidence. Research FIRST will expand the undergraduate research program at the college by increasing the numbers of first-generation student researchers. In addition, approximately 40 first-year first-generation students will enroll in a course that introduces them to many of the skills they will need to undertake a student-faculty research project, including attending the State of North Carolina Research and Creativity Symposium. Peer mentors will assist students with writing grant proposals for the college's grant writing competition that is used each year to select student researchers.

Mercyhurst College (PA) will establish the Dean's Fellowship—Steps to Success program that will include a mentorship program for students at Mercyhurst North East (MNE)—a two-year degree-granting branch of the college—who transfer to the main campus to complete a baccalaureate degree. Peer mentors will be older first-generation students at Mercyhurst. During the spring semester of their first year on the main campus, first-generation student graduates who are now employed in the local business community will be recruited to meet with the Dean's Fellowship students. In their final year, the students will participate in networking events during which they will be able to interact with regional business and industry employees who were also first-generation college students. The progress of Dean's Fellowship students will be monitored carefully so that struggling students will receive appropriate and timely assistance.

Mills College (CA) will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to initiate the Walmart Academic Communication Program that will serve first-generation students who are non-native English speakers. Students will enroll in courses that focus on written and oral English proficiency. In addition, they will be mentored and advised by a faculty member who is well-educated on the needs of first-generation students. They will also be given peer academic support. Through this process, first-generation students will learn how to engage with and succeed in an academic community. Finally, the Award will fund the training of faculty members

who will teach courses for and advise non-native English speaking first-generation students.

Notre Dame de Namur University (CA) will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to inaugurate the Gen I Program. All participants will live on campus and become members of a living/learning community. Students in the community will be offered sessions on time management, financial literacy, stress management, and other similar skills needed to succeed in college as well as recreational and social activities. All participating Gen I students will work regularly with a staff member during the first two weeks of the academic year to gain a better understanding of their academic skill levels. Gen I students will receive guidance in course selection based on the assessment. A peer mentor program also will be put in place. Students who successfully complete the Gen I Program and finish their first year with at least a 2.5 grade point average will receive a scholarship toward tuition for their sophomore year. The final component of the program will be a family outreach. Parents of Gen I participants will receive a newsletter several times each year. The newsletter will be made available in English and Spanish.

Rosemont College (PA) has seen its number of first-generation college students increase from approximately one third to more than half of the undergraduate population over the past decade. Building on the week-long Success and Motivation summer bridge program for students admitted conditionally to the college because of low academic performance in high school, the CIC/Walmart College Success Award will allow Rosemont to expand its program to include more first-generation students. During the academic year, these students will enroll together in a First Year Connections Seminar. The instructor will also serve as the program coordinator and advisor to the students. Bi-weekly study sessions, support sessions, and academic workshops will be held throughout the year. In addition, a special four-day session will take place over spring break when students will participate in a series of reading, writing, and college readiness sessions for which they will receive one academic credit. The Success and Motivation Program will also include opportunities for the families of first-generation students during the summer bridge program, the fall break, and in early January to meet with senior staff members at the college to learn about the demands of academic life and the familial transition of sending a student to college. Finally, Rosemont will draw upon its large number of successful first-generation alumni to provide students with opportunities to interact with former first-generation students who have been successful in their professional lives. Alumni will make presentations and meet informally with students throughout the year.

Stetson University (FL) will expand programming for first-generation students through the establishment of a new Office of Student Advocacy and Student Success. This office will oversee a three-part plan to assist first-generation students in the weeks leading up to the fall semester, during the first year, and in the transitions into the sophomore, junior,

and senior years. The pre-college program will feature online and social media mentoring within a multi-generational network of first-generation staff members, faculty members, and alumni who will engage with the students when they arrive on campus and throughout the first year. Community service will be central to the network members' interaction with the students throughout the first year. Upper-level students will serve as mentors for small groups of students who will meet throughout the year, which will help students to maintain a sense of solidarity and receive additional support. In addition to meeting with students in their own cohort, program participants also participate in cross-cohort dinners, allowing them to meet other students as well as faculty and staff members who will attend dinners held in the homes of alumni. Junior year first-generation students will have the opportunity to become part of a steering group for the program and earn stipends while working together to develop programs to assist the incoming first-generation students. In addition, junior first-generation students will participate in a "life plan" seminar to guide them as they move toward graduation. They will also mentor local high school students as part of their leadership experience and conduct community-based research on first-generation student experiences at Stetson, research best practices at other institutions, and study the relevant scholarly literature.

Stevenson University (MD) will initiate the Generation One (Gen1) Project that will engage participating first-generation students in sustained support programs throughout their years in college. A mentoring program will pair faculty members who were themselves first-generation students with the Gen1 students. These mentors will work with their students throughout their time at Stevenson. Students and mentors will have the opportunity and financial support to participate in academic, social, and cultural activities together. Faculty mentors will receive specialized training about first-generation student issues. A peer support system will also be implemented to connect Gen1 students academically and socially with other students who may have had similar experiences adjusting to college life. The Gen1 Project additionally includes a parent orientation program for parents of Gen1 students. The program will familiarize parents with the university as well as with the financial aid process and resources available to them and their sons and daughters. They will be given the opportunity to interact with parents of students who are not first-generation students so that they can build a sustained support network.

Thomas College (ME) currently has a student population consisting of 72 percent first-generation students. The college will build on two successful initiatives, a quantitative literacy course and an academic coaching program. The quantitative literacy course promotes the development of mathematical and statistical skills critical to success in the first year of college. Academic coaching provides individualized academic support to students with identified academic needs. In the past, both initiatives have increased the retention of first-generation students significantly. The CIC/Walmart College Success Award will allow the college to offer a one-

week summer pre-college program—when participating students will complete a quantitative literacy course and attend a series of workshops—followed by ongoing individualized coaching by a staff member of Retention Services at the college. Each student who successfully completes the pre-college element of the program will be eligible for a book scholarship.

University of St. Francis (IL) will implement the University Success Scholars Program (USSP) to enable first-generation students to understand college expectations, meet academic and social demands, participate in engaging experiences, and prepare for a life of leadership. These goals will be achieved through four program components over the students' first two years at St. Francis. Students will attend the university's five-day summer academy, which allows them to live on campus and experience college-level coursework through a one-credit, multidisciplinary course. This program permits students to make mistakes and learn from them before their first semester begins. A mentoring program will provide peer and faculty mentors and offer tutoring workshops, cultural field trips, social events, and informal meals with faculty members. In addition, USSP students will participate in the university's Leadership Institute, which will allow them to develop and hone leadership skills. Financial assistance will also be offered to low-income USSP students in the form of book vouchers to offset textbook costs.

\$50,000 Award Recipients

- Cardinal Stritch University (WI)
- Chaminade University of Honolulu (HI)
- Defiance College (OH)
- Emmanuel College (MA)
- Eureka College (IL)
- Heritage University (WA)
- McKendree University (IL)
- Saint Augustine's College (NC)
- Wabash College (IN)
- Woodbury University (CA)

Cardinal Stritch University (WI) will focus efforts on retaining first-generation students studying in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields by implementing the STEM Student Retention and Success (SSRS) program. The program addresses three key problem areas for first-generation students: financial difficulty, academic challenges, and loss of interest. SSRS scholarships will be made available for first-generation STEM students to alleviate their need to work many hours while enrolled as a full-time student. The SSRS program will also help students improve their math and data analysis skills early in the curriculum through a First Year Experience (FYE) course. This initiative is in response to the direct correlation between students with low math skills

and first-generation status. All new SSRS scholarship students will be required to enroll in an FYE course developed specifically to improve these skills. In addition, opportunities to receive peer tutoring in science will be made available to these SSRS students. The CIC/Walmart College Success Award will also make it possible for the university to address students' loss of interest and engagement in the university community. Studies have shown that students who interact with scientists, as well as their peers who are interested in science develop a more positive self-image as scientists. SSRS will provide these students opportunities for interaction with faculty members outside the classroom and involvement in a variety of activities, including opportunities to hear STEM experts speak; trips to various museums with STEM-related exhibits and activities; and visits to science-related businesses (which in some cases will include career shadowing experiences for SSRS students). In addition, SSRS students will be grouped together in campus residences to create a learning community and to make group study more likely to occur.

Chaminade University of Honolulu (HI) will focus its project on recruiting and retaining Native Hawaiian, Pacific Island, and other first-generation students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college. The university will use its CIC/Walmart College Success Award to fund tuition assistance grants for first-generation students to attend the university's summer bridge program and cover some of the tuition expenses for the academic year. In addition, peer tutoring will be expanded for the gateway courses, making it more accessible to a larger number of first-generation students. The final component of Chaminade's program is to educate families about the university and the educational process that their sons and daughters will experience. Because of its location, Chaminade must reach out to parents who speak ten different languages. Therefore, a mandatory New Student and Family Orientation Program will be developed for the first-generation families. In addition, throughout the year parents will be involved in the process of monitoring the academic progress of their sons and daughters and they will be invited to visit the campus to meet with university staff members involved with the program. Parents will also have access to a website designed specifically for them and where their most common questions can be answered.

Defiance College (OH) will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to connect first-generation students with peers as well as with faculty and staff mentors through the Student Connection Program (SCP). During orientation, each participant will meet with a team comprised of a presidential cabinet member, a faculty member, a staff member from Student Affairs or Admissions, an alumnus of the college, and a coach (if the student is an athlete). After the student has taken the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the team will work with the student to create a "Personal Success Plan," which will continue to be revised and refined during the First Year Seminar. In addition, each student will work with a support team—a faculty mentor, peer mentor, and four fellow first-generation students—throughout their first two years at Defiance. These

support teams will meet every two to three weeks in the first semester for student-directed discussions related to the challenges of adjusting to college life, relationships with peers and faculty members, and other areas of concern. The peer mentors will organize social activities for their teams that will take place outside of the scheduled support meetings. The entire SCP group will also participate in nearby cultural activities, and during the first semester, students will attend monthly workshops designed to address four key areas: academic preparation, behaviors for success, career/major exploration, and social/cultural activities. Students will learn skills in such areas as note-taking, study strategies, and listening skills in these workshops as well. A textbook voucher will be given to students who excel in the program.

Emmanuel College (MA) will implement the Road to Intellectual Success at Emmanuel (RISE) program, which will begin with a pre-semester orientation program for first-generation students. During this three-day orientation, participants will live on campus and be introduced to the college community. They will learn how to use academic, career, and social support services and participate in cultural activities. In addition, students will identify their academic strengths and challenges and spend time each day writing about their experiences during orientation. The resulting journals will help inform faculty mentors—who will be assigned to groups of five or six RISE students—of the support each student will need throughout the year. RISE students will be divided into groups according to their interests so that faculty mentors can conduct activities during the academic year that will engage students in the academic and cultural life at Emmanuel and in the greater Boston community. Students will be encouraged to shape their own learning through internship opportunities and service learning. More senior Emmanuel students will serve as preceptors and work with faculty mentors to offer additional academic support.

Eureka College (IL) will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to ensure that first-generation students become engaged and connected members of the liberal arts college community. First-generation students often arrive intending to pursue “practical” majors such as business. This program consists of five components that introduce students to the value of the liberal arts. The first is an “early college” humanities and arts program that will take place over four days in July. Unlike most summer bridge programs that focus on academic skills, the Eureka program will help students explore the humanities and arts. Through this exposure to the humanities, students will come to understand better how a liberal arts education prepares them for their careers. In workshops, small group discussions, and group meals, the students will interact with faculty members in the humanities and arts to discuss questions about the human condition, spirituality, and creative and expressive responses to the world around them. The next three components will take place during the academic year. Participating students will work with a peer mentor; come together for bi-annual dinners during which new first-generation students will meet members of the college community who were first-

generation students themselves, and attend a series of cultural events. Finally, parents will be invited to participate in an orientation tailored specifically for parents of first-generation students.

Heritage University (WA) has an undergraduate population composed primarily of Hispanic and Native American students, 80-85 percent of whom are first-generation students. The university has an all-commuter student population and, as a result, many of its students do not readily form a mentoring relationship with members of the campus community who could help bolster their confidence and help them to achieve their goals. Heritage will use the CIC/Walmart College Success Award to implement an extensive mentorship program that will match students with mentors drawn from the faculty, administration, or surrounding community. All mentors will be trained to be effective mentors for first-generation college students and will be expected to advocate for and coach their students as well as serve as a confidante, friend, colleague, guide, and role model.

McKendree University (IL) will launch the McKendree Firsts program, designed to expand academic support services into an online environment so that non-traditional first-generation students who are away from the main campus can benefit from online tutoring. The program will serve students in rural communities and military bases as well as other students taking classes online. The university will increase the number of academic tutors, particularly those who were first-generation students themselves. McKendree Firsts will also include a website devoted to the needs of first-generation students (both on and off campus) that will provide video commentary from successful students, links to relevant social networking sites, and lists of upcoming events. The site will include definitions of academic terminology such as gen. ed., FERPA, and capstone course and explain academic processes such as advisement, registration, and career counseling. McKendree will also create an online network where faculty and staff members, students, and alumni who were first-generation students can communicate with each other. Finally, the program will make available scholarships that will be awarded on the basis of both merit and financial need.

Saint Augustine's College (NC), a historically black college, will create the Saint Augustine's Walmart Summer (SAWS) Professional Externship program—an expansion of the college's Academic Achievers program—that will introduce first- and second-year first-generation students to career and professional development opportunities, provide experiential learning opportunities, and prepare first-generation students to hold professional positions upon graduation. Specifically, students will be encouraged to learn about and eventually work in industries where racial minorities tend not to have a large presence. The partner organizations will be those that are generally more difficult for minorities to enter or organizations that provide long-term career paths but tend to be limited in their ability to pay students for internships and externships. Students will be given eight-week summer externship opportunities. Placement will

correlate with the students' fields of study and the externship will be eligible for college credit. Participants will receive scholarships to cover the cost of summer housing and meals on campus and a stipend to offset some of the lost wages the students would have earned during the eight-week program.

Wabash College (IN) will implement a multi-faceted program that includes an Engagement Alert System (EASy) that provides early information about student academic and social progress that will improve the faculty advising process and bolster student engagement with support systems, mentors, and peers. Wabash will develop an alumni mentoring system that will connect successful first-generation alumni with participating first-generation students and provide each student with personal support, career development opportunities, and individual guidance for academic success. The mentor and mentee together will attend a fall workshop that launches the mentoring relationship, sets expectations for both individuals, and provides time for mentor and mentee to get to know each other. The workshop will be led by a national expert on mentoring. The alumni will also mentor or supervise the students in a summer internship following their first year of college or in a work-study position. Wabash will recruit students who are at-risk, first-generation students who require academic and financial assistance as well as a wider network of social support.

Woodbury University (CA) will offer a four-year program in which first-generation undergraduate business students will follow a curriculum that is tailored to their specific needs. Data show that the university's first-generation students begin college with high aspirations but that daunting obstacles frequently stand in the way of their success. One major obstacle is a lack of understanding about the careers students will pursue, in part because careers are part of the intergenerational knowledge that first-generation students lack. This deficit of understanding makes it difficult for first-generation students to appreciate the relevance of their coursework to the world of work. During their first year, students participating in the Woodbury program will enroll in a section of the introductory business course that will be altered to address some of these first-generation issues. In particular, students will be taught to understand the link between courses and career, and they will develop an initial career plan. During the sophomore year, students will take a course to prepare them for a junior-year internship. During junior year, the students will participate in an expanded version of the program's current internship course. Additional classroom meetings will give students time to reflect on their experiences in order to recognize those characteristics that will help them succeed. In the senior year, career center staff and business faculty members will add a career component into the existing business capstone course that will help students forge professional connections and plan for a successful transition from university to workplace.
