EXPLORE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES IN:

1. Athletics
2. Career Connections
3. Community Engagement
4. Consortial Arrangements
5. Cost Containment
6. Curricular Reform
7. New Academic Programs
8. NEW STUDENT POPULATIONS

A REPORT BY

THE COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Read the full report at www.cic.edu/InnovationsReport.
About this Report

The signature activity of the Council of Independent Colleges’ initiative, *Securing America’s Future*, was a series of eight workshops hosted by CIC member presidents on campuses across the nation in 2016–2017. The goals of these workshops were to help member colleges and universities prepare for the future more effectively and become more engaged in promoting the value of the liberal arts and of independent colleges and universities. These gatherings brought together teams of presidents, chief academic officers, other administrators, and faculty leaders to explore key trends in higher education and society, the pressures that individual colleges and universities face, and potential solutions that can be pursued by their institutions. Approximately 500 campus leaders from more than 120 CIC member institutions participated in the workshops.

This module is part of a larger report, *Innovation and the Independent College: Examples from the Sector*. As a whole, the report presents an overview of the major points of discussion held during the workshops and references hundreds of examples of mission-driven innovations shared by the colleges and universities that sent teams to the workshops. Each module of the report is designed to be useful on its own, however, as a description of innovations in a particular area. I encourage you to distribute this module to trustees, faculty and administrative leaders, campus planning committees, and other constituents who might be aided in their efforts to lead change on campus—and then share the rest of the report. The full report and the other modules are available from the CIC website at [www.cic.edu/InnovationsReport](http://www.cic.edu/InnovationsReport).

CIC staff members and I are well aware that many additional CIC institutions are improving the quality and efficacy of education in imaginative ways. I encourage CIC institutions to send these innovations to [http://bit.ly/CICinnovates](http://bit.ly/CICinnovates). These examples will be added to the online version of the report so that others may learn about these promising projects, too.

Richard Ekman
President
Council of Independent Colleges
March 2018
Increase or maintain enrollment while diversifying the student population

The demography of those who enroll in college is changing in many ways. Historically, the majority of college students in America were young people, 18–22 years old, who matriculated directly after high school graduation and completed a degree in four years. Today, approximately 40 percent of college attendees are 25 years old or older. They may be completing degrees begun years earlier, updating skills for the workplace, or seeking intellectual enrichment after retirement. Before the civil rights and feminist movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, the majority of college students were white males. Today, the majority of students are female, and students of color are a substantial presence. International students, who have long been attracted to graduate study in the United States, now enroll as undergraduates as well. Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), students with disabilities also have become more likely to matriculate. In addition, digital developments in distance learning enable college study for those remote from any campus, such as active-duty military personnel.

CIC colleges and universities are reaching out in new ways to previously underserved student populations, whether to boost enrollments, develop new sources of revenue, honor a commitment to social justice, or respond to population changes in their region.
CHALLENGES: This opportunity helps address several challenges for independent higher education: declining numbers of high school graduates, lack of student diversity, failure to meet enrollment goals, and shifts in the concentrations of some student populations.

Most of the following examples were provided by CIC member institutions and the expert presenters who participated in Securing America’s Future workshops in 2016–2017. These examples represent distinct but replicable responses to common challenges facing other independent colleges and universities. The examples are grouped by specific student populations, but many of the approaches could be adapted to attract other groups of students.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Some CIC institutions, notably colleges founded as women’s colleges, have had well established transfer and articulation agreements to serve community college transfer students since the early 1970s. By that time, the proportion of the nation’s female undergraduates who attended a women’s college had dipped to 2 percent, so the colleges began to recruit a new population of adult women who—inspired by the women’s movement—were returning to college to complete their undergraduate degrees. Many of these women had performed well in community colleges and became attractive prospective four-year college students. Examples of this continuing trend include Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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Today, many additional institutions are developing new transfer-friendly policies and procedures. Alvernia University in Reading, Pennsylvania, recruits approximately 100 transfer students every fall, a success rate that campus officials attribute, in part, to a major change in how transfer credits are counted: The institution now accepts up to 90 credits (out of a required 136–140) for graduation.

LEARN MORE:
**Augsburg University** in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is committed to access and diversity and is building pipelines to community college partners and developing curricula that align the two types of institutions. Augsburg understands the importance of transfer students not losing academic credit, so the university teams with regional two-year institutions to develop transfer articulation agreements. The faculty members have found that tightly constructed curricula improve the community college graduation rate.

**Mount Saint Mary's University** in Los Angeles, California, has created community college transfer pathways specific to nursing and criminology.

The **Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas Foundation** (ICUTF) worked with the Texas Success Center at the Texas Association of Community Colleges and College Consortium, a leading higher education technology company, to launch a new initiative accelerating completion and reducing the cost of bachelor’s degrees. The ICUTF Transfer Portal will use an extension of College Consortium’s academic sharing platform to connect associate degree-earners with transfer-friendly degrees at private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Texas, some of which will accept up to 90 credit-hours.

**Point Loma Nazarene University** in San Diego, California, began a 2+2 bachelor of business administration program in partnership with a local community college that is offered on the Point Loma campus.

**Texas Lutheran University** near San Antonio has transfer articulation agreements with three large community colleges in the region. It has a dozen clearly articulated degree pathways, which became easier to implement after the state adopted a common curriculum for the public system. The university also offers reverse articulation to enable bachelor’s degree students to earn an associate’s degree.

**LEARN MORE:**
LEARN MORE:
• Texas Lutheran Transfer FAQs, http://bit.ly/2BXA5QA
• Articulation Agreements, http://bit.ly/2BYbDP0

Through its “Pathways Promise” program, the University of Redlands in Redlands, California, is embedding faculty members and recruiters on community college campuses, building inter-institutional relationships, making transfer seamless, and creating strong partnerships between community college and university counselors.

LEARN MORE:

Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio, reduced the number of required credits from seminars in the core curriculum to promote the smoother matriculation of transfer students.

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VETERANS

California Lutheran University (Thousand Oaks, California), New England College (Henniker, New Hampshire), and the University of Charleston (Charleston, West Virginia) are three of many independent colleges and universities that offer “yellow ribbon” scholarships for veterans.

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University of Charleston is a military-friendly institution in other ways, beyond scholarships for veterans. It has made the education of Navy SEALs a particular focus. Thanks to its strong connections to the military, the institution now has more than 1,000 online students it probably would not have enrolled otherwise.

LEARN MORE:

Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, has become one of the largest nonprofit providers of education to military personnel. It offers classes in more than 30 cities throughout the United States, on 39 military installations, and in many cities outside the country. The university also offers online courses for military personnel. Webster also is consistently ranked as a “Best for Vets” college.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**Drew University** in Madison, New Jersey, developed a pathway program that brings international students to campus for two years to help build their language and academic skills before continuing to a degree program at a U.S. institution; many of the participants continue at Drew for the remainder of their American education. A newer program offers a five-semester program with an emphasis on English-language skills for international students who want to start earning credits toward a bachelor’s degree.

**LEARN MORE:**

**St. Edward’s University** in Austin, Texas, places a high priority on expanding global learning by offering programs that attract international students from 55 countries to its main campus while developing international partnerships with 24 universities in 17 countries. This is a practical extension of the university motto, “Take on Your World.”

**LEARN MORE:**

**Webster University** brings courses to American and international students on satellite and partner campuses in more than 60 cities and eight countries across the world.

**LEARN MORE:**

Since 2011, students at the Hartsville High School, the Governor’s School for Science and
Mathematics, and Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina, have been learning Mandarin Chinese from the same instructors. The college also houses Chinese exchange students who attend a private high school in the community—all of which generates revenue as well as supporting the college’s undergraduate Chinese program.

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STUDENTS OF DIVERSE FAITHS

According to St. Edward’s University Executive Vice President Sr. Donna M. Jurick, the university is “a Holy Cross Catholic institution that is very welcoming to people of all or no faiths. For example, the university has Muslim students from the Middle East studying there who feel fully embraced and welcomed.” Other examples of institutions with strong faith traditions that have stretched to recruit students from very different religious backgrounds include Benedictine University, Dominican University (Illinois) and Valparaiso University (Indiana), which is redefining itself to become “a Lutheran institution rather than an institution for Lutherans.”

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UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

Bluefield College in Bluefield, Virginia, offers a Pathways tuition plan, an alternative to institutional financial aid, to help meet the national call for making a high-quality education affordable for those in the lowest socio-economic levels. Participating students pay a reduced tuition rate.

LEARN MORE:

McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland, instituted an initiative to attract more students of color from nearby Baltimore that includes a specially designed retention program, held prior to student orientation each fall, and an orientation for parents that is held on weekends in Baltimore. The college also has created its own “Posse program” by forming groups of students from the same geographic area. The theory is that students will feel more comfortable
going to college with people they know or who are from a similar background; once enrolled in college, they form support groups that enhance retention. Between 2007 and 2017, applications from Baltimore high school seniors rose from 13 to 335 (and enrollment deposits increased from two to 42).

**LEARN MORE:**

**California Lutheran University** instituted the Public Price Promise, which offers a matching tuition price—and all the advantages of a small private college—to any student who has been admitted to one of the six top public universities in California. The program has led to an increase in the number of students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and it is open to nearly any applicant, including incoming freshmen, transfer students from other colleges or universities, out-of-state students, and international students.

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**St. Edward’s University** welcomes 35 children of migrant workers as new first-year students each year through its College Assisted Migrant Program (CAMP).

**LEARN MORE:**

Changing demographics have given independent colleges an impetus as well as better opportunities to hire Hispanic faculty and staff and become more “culturally competent.” **Dominican University** in River Forest, Illinois, is a Hispanic-serving institution that graduates Hispanic students at the same rate as non-Hispanic students. The college promotes this metric actively and takes every opportunity to tell the success stories of individual Hispanic students. It also prints admissions materials in Spanish and offers a successful bridge program for Hispanic high school students.

**LEARN MORE:**

**OLDER STUDENTS**

**University of Redlands** has for more than 40 years actively recruited “mid-life students” who return to college to complete a degree or change careers, and it welcomes the opportunities for intergenerational interaction these students provide.

**LEARN MORE:**
Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, offers bachelor’s-level courses at the First Presbyterian Church of Jefferson City for adults who previously completed 90 hours of coursework. The plan is for adults to complete five courses each year for two years through a combination of classroom and online coursework.

LEARN MORE:

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Many CIC institutions have dual enrollment programs through which high school students take and receive college credit upon successful completion of courses, including Hood College, Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Southern New Hampshire University.

LEARN MORE:
• Nebraska Wesleyan’s Dual Credit Program, http://bit.ly/2BXEjaU

Young Harris College, in the southern Appalachian Mountains of Georgia, recently has expanded its Early College program through which high school students take courses to receive transferable college credits while still earning credit toward high school graduation. The online courses are free to the students because the costs of tuition, campus fees, and books are supported by the State of Georgia.

LEARN MORE:

NEW POPULATIONS WITHIN EXISTING POPULATIONS

Many institutions are reaching out to a new population of students—enrolled students who are at risk of dropping out prior to graduation. A few examples include:

In addition to its outreach to community college students, Texas Lutheran University has a bridge program for local high schools, their students, and the students’ families.

The focus of the project is a summer bridge program with coursework in Mexican American studies designed to help the high school students “understand they have a place within the university.” The institution has had other programs to connect high schools with the university for over a decade.

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**Malone University** in Canton, Ohio, has instituted “intensive mentoring” for students who are “probationary admits.” The program has had a high success rate in retaining mentored students and is being expanded.

LEARN MORE:

**Saint Michael’s College** in Colchester, Vermont, has instituted special efforts to retain students classified as “at risk.” The college also is making efforts to stay in touch with students on leave and has reached out to non-completing students who are close to meeting graduation requirements.

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**Virginia Wesleyan University** in Virginia Beach recently established Opus, a summer work program for current students with financial need to help them remain enrolled at the university.

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**OTHER OUTREACH**

**Benedictine University** in suburban Chicago, Illinois, decided to embrace new and more diverse student populations by “going where the students are” and building satellite campuses and programs across the state (in Springfield and elsewhere), across the nation (in Mesa, Arizona), and across the world (in China and Vietnam). The new students, who come from a diversity of religious backgrounds, are encouraged to take a common course on Catholic and Benedictine traditions as an introduction to the university’s mission.

LEARN MORE:
- Benedictine’s Campus Locations, [www.ben.edu](http://www.ben.edu)

**Stetson University** in central Florida also opened satellite campuses and undertook geographically-specific initiatives, such as a new Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience. Increasing the “geographic diversity” of the campus in four separate cities helped attract new place-bound students while centralizing the university’s administrative activities and student support services helped reduce costs.

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OTHER IDEAS AND ADVICE

William Zumeta, professor of public policy and higher education at the University of Washington, has suggested that CIC institutions partner with public systems to increase the number of transfer student to private colleges and relieve the pressure on overburdened public universities.

From 2008 to 2012, CIC partnered with the Walmart Foundation and 50 member colleges and universities to identify, strengthen, and share programs to recruit, retain, and graduate first-generation college students. Lessons from this initiative were gathered in a final report, *Making Sure They Make It! Best Practices for Ensuring the Academic Success of First-Generation College Students*. Many of these best practices can be adapted to the recruitment of other student populations.

LEARN MORE:

A recent report written by one of the CIC presidents who offered case studies of innovations undertaken at their institutions, Edwin H. Welch, president of the University of Charleston, expands on the remarks he made in a new publication, *Embedded Creativity: Building a Culture of Innovation*. His case study crosses many of the major areas of opportunity included in this report on campus innovations.

LEARN MORE:

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

• Are there specific populations of new students—such as men at a women’s college, or students from different religious backgrounds at a faith-based institution, or working adults at a primarily residential college—that might challenge or stretch the traditional mission of the institution?

• What new resources or strategies may be necessary to support new student populations once they enroll?

• How are changes in current political or economic conditions likely to affect your institution’s access to new populations of students? For example, economic conditions and new government policies have both reduced the number of international students who apply to enroll in American colleges.
ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

CIC’s Securing America’s Future: Workshops for Leaders of Independent Colleges and Universities marked the final phase of an effort that included two earlier initiatives. The first initiative was Securing America’s Future: The Power of Liberal Arts Education, a public information campaign to highlight the effectiveness of study in the liberal arts and the contributions of the independent higher education sector. The second was a Project on the Future of Independent Higher Education, which brought together a steering committee of 22 CIC presidents to consider the challenges faced by the entire sector and fresh approaches for the future, in light of the particular qualities and missions of independent colleges and universities.

After two years of fact-finding and deliberation, the steering committee of the Project on the Future specifically called for a series of workshops around the country, viewing this step as “the most effective mobilization strategy.” The activities in 2016–2017 closely followed the plan the steering committee envisioned. This report draws upon both the formal presentations and informal exchanges that took place during the Securing America’s Future workshops.

CIC would like to thank the representatives of more than 120 colleges and universities who participated in the Securing America’s Future workshops. They provided most of the examples of innovation included in this report, through their comments at the workshops or in subsequent evaluation surveys. Whenever possible, all innovations have been independently confirmed using public sources. Any misstatements of fact or inadvertent mischaracterizations are the responsibility of CIC.

Generous support for the Securing America’s Future workshops and the preceding initiatives has been provided by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Endeavor Foundation, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Jessie Ball DuPont Fund, Lumina Foundation for Education, National Endowment for the Humanities, Teagle Foundation, and TIAA Institute.

ABOUT CIC

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of 767 nonprofit independent colleges and universities, state-based councils of independent colleges, and other higher education affiliates, that works to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of independent higher education’s contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on services to leaders of independent colleges and universities and state-based councils. CIC offers conferences, seminars, publications, and other programs and services that help institutions improve educational quality, administrative and financial performance, student outcomes, and institutional visibility. It conducts the largest annual conferences of college and university presidents and of chief academic officers. Founded in 1956, CIC is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.cic.edu.

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