



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



STUDY OF INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS TO BACCALAUREATE DEGREE ATTAINMENT

The Advisory Committee is launching a three-year study to identify innovative programs and strategies that increase the likelihood that students from low- and moderate-income families attain a baccalaureate degree. Over the course of the study, we will produce a series of reports that highlight creative and promising approaches to ensure that students who aspire to such a degree move through the access and persistence pipeline in an efficient, effective, and timely manner. These reports will be designed to encourage federal, state, and institutional policymakers to embrace the strategies that, over time, have the promise of narrowing income-related gaps in baccalaureate degree completion.

In conducting the study, we will focus on ways to eliminate major structural barriers—academic, institutional, and financial—facing students and families from middle school through college. Given the Advisory Committee’s charge from Congress, this study will focus on only those programs that have the ultimate goal or effect of increasing the number of low- and moderate- income students who earn a baccalaureate degree.

Primary areas of focus will include, but are not limited to:

Middle School and High School

- Academic Preparation: Alignment of Standards and Access to a College-Prep Curriculum
- Early Financial Aid Information

Transition from K-12 to Higher Education

- Credit-Based Transition Programs
- Secondary School Counseling and Mentoring
- Improvements to Need-Based Financial Aid
- Simplification of Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

Higher Education

- Academic Preparation: Remediation
- The Role of Community Colleges
- Strategies for Non-Traditional Students
- Student Support Services at Two- and Four-year Institution

The study’s design, execution, and reporting will include broad consultation with Congress, the Department of Education, the higher education community, state agencies, school districts, and early intervention organizations. Our technical approach will include focus groups, regional hearings, site visits, interviews, literature reviews, and data analysis where possible.