

**BRIEF**

# **Report shows wraparound services' impact on community college student success**

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**Dive Brief:**

- Another study offers evidence that wraparound supports for community college students can improve their chances of persisting, in this case nearly doubling their retention to the next term and leading to a 35% increase in full-time enrollment.
- Preliminary results from an eight-year study by the University of Chicago Poverty Lab show the impact of academic, personal and financial supports from the nonprofit One Million Degrees (OMD) on some 730 students in Chicago-area community colleges. Those include regular meetings with a counselor, a performance-based stipend and last-dollar scholarships.
- High school students who accepted the offer to participate with OMD were about 27% more likely

to enroll in college and 35% more likely to do so full-time than students in a control group. The majority of participants were African American or Hispanic, and half worked at least part-time.

### **Dive Insight:**

OMD's battery of services is similar to that of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) initiative from the City University of New York, which has been duplicated elsewhere. ASAP provides advising from counselors with low caseloads, and it offers financial support for tuition and other expenses, summer enrollment opportunities, consolidated course schedules and job placement services. It also structures some remedial classes in a way that reduces students' time and financial burden.

Community colleges have been in the spotlight recently, especially as lawmakers tout the idea of free college and many states roll out such programs.


With that attention, a number of approaches have surfaced to tackle the stubborn problems of engaging and retaining these students — who are often older and balancing family and work needs along with their education — that tuition waivers alone can't.

There has been some agreement that the use of guided pathways, for instance, can improve outcomes by making a student's progress through college more efficient and better informed. The Aspen Institute, which recognizes the nation's top community colleges, pointed to such frameworks among the winners of its biannual award announced in April.

Other recommendations include tailoring instruction to workforce needs, replacing remedial education with credit-bearing courses that include extra supports and offering assistance with personal issues. Better communication with students has helped those who dropped out return to school and has kept others on track by "nudging" them to meet deadlines.

Lower student-to-adviser ratios and more accessible and individualized support have also proven beneficial, according to a Brookings Institution report out last fall. A study on first-generation student success had similar recommendations, including the use of cohort-based programs, celebrating key student milestones and offering mentorship opportunities.

### **Recommended Reading:**

 The University of Chicago Poverty Lab Poverty Lab partnership with nonprofit shows improvement in enrollment, persistence [↗](#)