



# *Advising and the Completion Agenda: Key Voices in Higher Education*

## **Web Event Handout**

**Panelists:**

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**Overview**

Higher education associations and national agencies are promoting President Obama's goal to increase the number of students who complete degrees, certificates, and other credentials by 2020. These associations and funding agencies are supporting institutions that promote degree completion. These efforts are not restricted to the United States but are part of the international higher education picture as well. In this Web Event, our panelists will provide an overview of the major issues that are a part of the Completion Agenda toward building a "Completion Agenda literacy".

**Definitions of Terms and Concepts**

**College Scorecard** – President Obama has focused extensively on higher education issues including issues pertaining to college affordability, degree attainment, achievement gaps, and strengthening community colleges in the U.S. One of the President's most important initiatives focuses on improving transparency around college costs and outcomes. The "College Scorecard" is designed to allow students and their families' access to accurate information about college costs, loans, degree attainment, and post-baccalaureate employability.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education>

**Completion Agenda** – An umbrella term that describes state and national policy initiatives that focuses on degree completion at two and four-year higher education institutions in the United States. This "agenda" encompasses a broad focus including but not limited to:

- Federal and state financial aid policies coupled with rising institutional costs;
- Institutional issues and barriers that impact student attrition, persistence, and degree completion;
- Attainment gaps that impact rising potential students;
- Policies and barriers that affect transfer students moving between two and four-year institutions;
- Remediation policies and courses which influences student persistence; and
- Institutional cultures which create barriers for students due to lack of intra or inter-institutional cooperation.

Source: NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising  
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Graduation-and-completion-resources.aspx>

**Completion by Design** – "A five-year Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation initiative that works with community colleges to significantly increase completion and graduation rates for low-income students under 26. The Gates Foundation has awarded competitive grants to three groups of community colleges to help transform their students' experience. The goal

of *Completion by Design* is to substantially increase completion rates for these students while holding down costs and maintaining access and quality.”

Source: *Completion by Design*: <http://completionbydesign.org/about-us>

**Goal 2020/Goal 2025** – The White House and other national voices have identified the crucial gap between degree/certificate attainment and job force needs that will occur by 2020. In 2009, President Obama set the goal that, to meet increasing market needs and to lead the world in having the highest proportion of college graduates, the U.S. needed to dramatically increase the number of college graduates. Many states and foundations have created their own Goal 2020 or Goal 2025, to address the issues raised and to work toward meeting these state and national goals. United States Department of Education: <https://www.isac.org/dotAsset/8469ef53-433f-4863-a827-56c131d5f79f.pdf>

**Performance or Outcomes-based Funding** – Appropriating state and national funding according to performance measures such as the number of students retained (and on-track for graduation) from first-year to second-year; improvement in the number of certificates or degrees awarded; improvement in the number of successful transfer students who earn their degrees in four-years; and other metrics that support *measurable progress* toward a degree. An additional example of performance-based funding would be to reward institutions that meet completion gains and goals for rising potential student populations such as low-income or under-represented students.

Source: NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Graduation-and-completion-resources.aspx>

## Post-Webinar Questions for Participants

1. How does your advising unit, academic department, college, or division define student success? Does that definition match the ways in which your institution defines student success? Why or why not?
2. Has your institution identified “Completion Agenda” goals that they are meeting? If so, which goals? If not, in what other ways is your campus working to improve measurable student success?
3. What is your role or your advising unit's role in meeting identifiable goals for student success?

## NACADA Resources and Links

**Degree Completion Resources** – Reports and articles from Complete College America, the Gates Foundation, the Lumina Foundation, Center for Public Education, American Association of Community Colleges, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Inside Higher Education* among other sources.

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Graduation-and-completion-resources.aspx>

**Retention-related Resources** – Links to articles and reports focusing on retention, persistence, attrition, and engagement from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Inside Higher Education*. <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Retention-related-articles.aspx>

## Additional National Resources

**Community College Research Center**, Teachers College at Columbia University: Focuses on policy and practice at US community colleges. CCRC houses two research centers which provide analyses of transition into, through, and out of two-year post-secondary education: The National Center for Postsecondary Research and The Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>

**Complete College America**: A national non-profit focused on working with states to increase degree and certificate attainment and address the achievement gap in higher education. CCA has formed an “Alliance of States” in order to set and meet completion goals, collect and report common measures of progress, and develop action plans to meet state and national goals.

<http://completecollege.org>

**Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce:** This independent research and policy institute focuses on issues and policy analysis related to education, the economy, the workforce, career readiness and qualifications. The Center produces outstanding reports on public policy as it relates to US labor markets, education, and workforce demands.

<http://cew.georgetown.edu/>

**John Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education:** The Institute focuses on improving institutional responsibility for student learning, persistence, and completion through guided self-studies, evaluations, surveys, and other research toward developing excellence in undergraduate education.

<http://www.jngi.org>

Available at <http://www.jngi.org/g2c-findings/>

- Gardner Institute's Gateways to Completion Gateway Course Baseline Data / Findings
- John N. Gardner & Andrew K. Koch's *Inside Higher Ed* "A Program is Not a Plan" View Piece
- Gardner Institute's Examples of Retention and Revenue Benefits Associated with High Implementation of Intentional, Evidence-Based, Student Success Plans
- Andrew K. Koch's "A Call to Action: Why High-Enrollment, High-Risk, Gateway Courses Require an Intentional Institutional Improvement Effort"

**Lumina Foundation:** A grant-funding research foundation that focuses on access to high-quality degrees and certificates, increased accountability in and outcomes-based improvements to higher education in the U.S. Lumina's central focus is on reaching Goal 2025 ("To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025") and to that end, awarded 96 grants for \$63 million dollars in 2013.

<http://www.luminafoundation.org>

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