



What We Need to Succeed: PCC's Student Advisory Council's Perspectives on Campus Supports

Agenda

Overview of the Student Advisory Council Interview Project

- Project Scope & Design
- Findings
- Recommendations

Project Reflections

Next Steps

Questions

Speakers



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Senior, Theater &
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Partnership for College Completion

PCC champions policies, practices, and systems that increase college completion and eliminate degree completion disparities for low-income, first generation, and students of color in Illinois – particularly Black and Latinx students.

Student Advisory Council

The PCC Student Advisory Council (SAC) is a cohort-based council intended to develop and empower Illinois undergraduate students to thrive and succeed on their campuses and in their respective spaces, and also promote advocacy efforts that advance equitable outcomes for Black, Latinx and students from low-income households.

The SAC cohort equips students with skills that will enable them to advance their college careers to completion, while learning the importance of engaging decision makers in conversations that will improve the higher education system of Illinois.

2022-23 SAC Interview Project

Students developed focus areas and interview questions and led interviews with other SAC students.

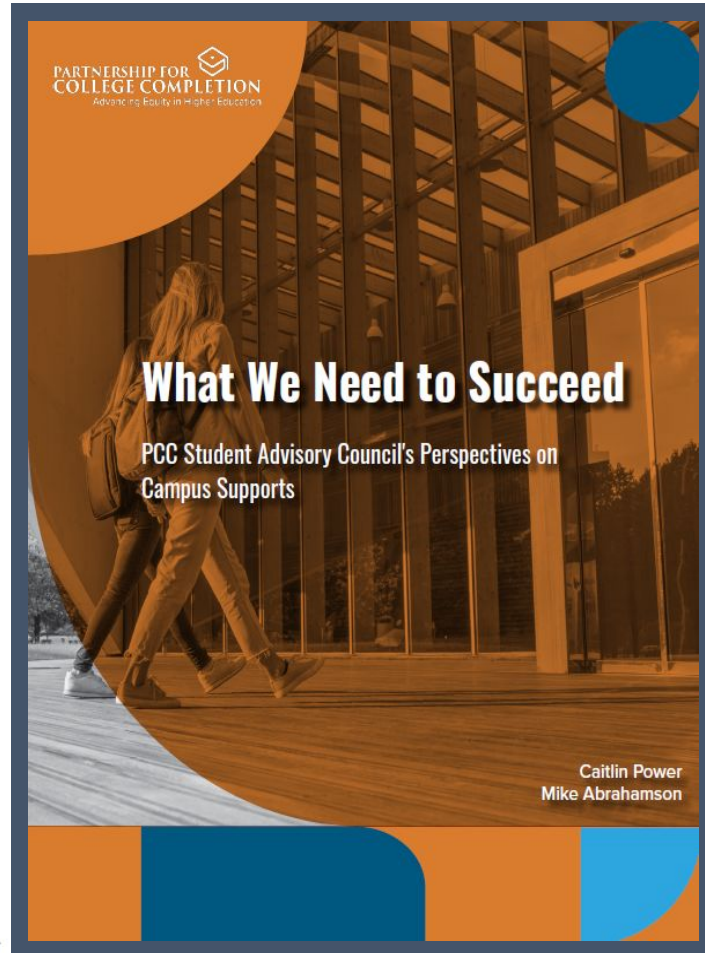
1. Student sense of belonging
2. Mentorship & support services for students:

Applications

- **Approach:** Can be used again for student, community voice
- **Policy:** Funding inequities exacerbate affordability & persistence barriers, many solutions require investment to implement
- **Practice:** Campus-level challenges and student solutions can inform our College and University Partnerships team initiatives

2022-23 SAC Interview Project

Report



Podcast



Emerging Themes

Barriers to accessing support, resources, and sense of community

1. **“There’s always a catch”** Lack of clear or accurate information about campus resources prevents students from accessing support
2. **“It made it harder for me to make that connection”** Limited office hours and last-minute changes make it difficult for students to get assistance
3. **“I’m just trying to do everything myself”** Previous negative experiences with school resources may lead students to look for support elsewhere

Emerging Themes

Needs from advisors and mentors

1. **“She gave me the confidence I needed to keep pushing forward”** Recognize the needs, backgrounds and goals of students
2. **“The staff who had my back were the Black faculty and staff”** Advisors and mentors with shared identities and experiences positively contribute to students’ college experiences
3. **“I’m a lot more unprepared than I thought I would be”**
Students need mentorship from people with recent, relevant experience in careers that interest them

Emerging Themes

Role of students in providing information access and support

1. **“Not every person feels comfortable with a faculty member”** Peers play an important role in connecting students to resources or community and often fill gaps in communication from schools, especially for students of color
2. **“I took on the university’s job”** Institutions benefit from unpaid labor students of color do to fill gaps in services which can have consequences for their mental health

Recommendations

Institutional Leaders

Empower students as essential decision-makers on campus.

Invest in programs and interventions that increase the presence and well-being of people of color on campus.

Facilitate opportunities for students to cultivate community.



State Policymakers

Distribute funding equitably to institutions serving more students of color, first generation students, and students from low-income backgrounds.



PCC

Align policy priorities and legislative agenda with student needs and demands.

Develop ongoing opportunities for student-driven projects and inquiry.



Project Reflections

- Accessible and flexible opportunities to participate
- Staffing and funding considerations
- Student-driven and student-led
- Peer to peer interactions across sectors, institutions, and personal experiences

Next Steps

This report:

- Presenting findings and sharing with key stakeholders
- Incorporating findings into coaching strategies, policy priorities, and other organizational learnings

Student voice at PCC:

- 2024/2025 Student Advisory Council
- Transfer Report

Questions

Download the full report and podcast at

<https://partnershipfcc.org/publications/what-we-need-to-succeed/>

KEEP CONNECTED!

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