



Campaign for Free College Tuition

The Higher Ed Challenge: Path to Pitching National Promise Scholars

Milestone 2: Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: If college is free, more high school students will graduate and enroll in college.

Assumption(s): People want the opportunity to go to college and succeed.

How to test: Compare college enrollment rates of high school students who are eligible for a Promise scholarship and compare that rate to similarly situated high school students who are not eligible to receive free college tuition upon graduation.

Hypothesis 2: College completion is the key to economic mobility.

Assumption(s): In today's economy, a college degree is necessary for economic mobility. Your degree is directly connected to your income.

How to test: Track people's incomes based on their education level and degree attainment.

Hypothesis 3:

Assumption(s): Making college tuition free will encourage a college going culture so more people will become educated and attain a higher education degree.



How to test: Check the college enrollment and completion rates in communities that have promise programs pre-promise and post-promise to see increases and effects.

Hypothesis 4: If we make college tuition free, more people will get an education, improving our economy.

Assumption(s): College is the key to economic success, mobility, etc. More people with degrees will lead to an increase in economic mobility, therefore an increase in spending and the overall economy.

How to test: Make college tuition free in a community to test the effects on the local economy and the students' economic mobility.

Hypothesis 5: Free college tuition will help decrease economic inequality nationwide.

Assumption(s): Income inequality is directly tied to people's inability to attain a higher education degree based on their socioeconomic status.

How to test: Track income inequality levels in areas that currently have promise scholarships and compare them to communities that do not have those programs.

Hypothesis 6: Creating local and state based promise programs will lead to government action for a national free-college program.

Assumption: After communities and states have created programs, there is a tipping point where there are enough people benefiting that there is a call for a national call for free-college programs.

Test: Look at how local promise programs have affected the call for statewide promise programs, or growth of promise programs, in surrounding areas.



Milestone 3: A Promise Scholar Story

David Mann is one success story of many that have come out of Promise Programs nationwide.

David Mann was born in raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His parents would have had a difficult time paying for college had he lived in any other city. Now a Ferris State University student and offensive tackle for the school's football team, David's family encouraged him to attend college and pursue his sports marketing dreams. But it wasn't until the fall of 2005, when the Kalamazoo School District unveiled the Kalamazoo Promise, that that dream became a reality.

The Kalamazoo Promise is a pledge by the district to pay the college tuition for any graduate who got accepted at a Michigan state college or university. Made possible by a generous donation from a group of anonymous, local philanthropists, the Promise offered to pay 100% of tuition for students who went through its entire school system and a proportional amount for those who attended fewer grades.

Upon hearing about this program, David's parents were ecstatic over this unexpected offer that would have such a positive impact on their family's future. David tells the story:



“I remember my mom being in tears, crying, because she did not know how she was going to pay for me to go college, and my parents didn't really know how they were going to do it, and then when it was announced, they realized, ‘Wow, I'm not going to have to make so many sacrifices for you to go to school.’”

David Mann with his mother Judy Markusse

David's mother was elated because she would not have to assume the majority of the financial burden in order for her son to attend college. Her moving words demonstrate the positive and immediate impact the Kalamazoo Promise had on its



community. How often can you say a government program has brought you to tears because of the awesome fruit it will bear in your life?

Now that college was a given, all David had to do was succeed in high school in order to make sure that he was able to capitalize on the Kalamazoo Promise. In fact, the program encouraged all of David's classmates to do their best in high school because they knew there was an avenue for them to pursue higher education regardless of cost: "I know friends back home that are going to community college that wouldn't be going to college if it wasn't for the Promise."

The Kalamazoo Promise has allowed thousands of its community's children to pursue higher education and advanced technical skills training by eliminating the cost of paying for education as a determining factor as to whether or not attending college is realistic.

We owe every student in every generation the same chance David Mann got. Just because one generation has gone to college is no guarantee that the next will be able to attend as well.

David's father, Greg Mann, a retired official from the Michigan State Legislature, had attended college and acquired his degree. Growing up, Greg served as a role model and resource to help David navigate the journey to higher education.

When Greg was David's age, he took advantage of the Evans Scholars Foundation, a scholarship fund set up for golf caddies to attend college. "Sponsored by the Western Golf Association," says Greg, "the Evans Scholars Foundation has helped more than 10,600 caddies attend college since its creation in 1930." This special program for golf caddies allowed David's father to pursue his dreams of higher education at a time when the cost of college was more reasonable (Greg's tuition was less than \$400 a semester). Because of this program, Greg was able to move from his working class background into the American middle class.

Greg and David Mann are an intergenerational example of how both private scholarship funds and public programs can help Americans achieve their dreams of a college education. Whereas Greg was able to take advantage of a program designed for people in his profession, David was lucky to be born in a forward thinking city that was making an investment in its economic future by making sure that it would have a skilled and educated labor force.



Milestone 5: NPS Users

Name: Nathalie

Age: 15

Level: High school Sophomore

Socio-Economic Group: Middle Class

Why they are going to college: Wants to become a professor

What is her study: Anthropology

Where does she want to go: University of Michigan

Resources/advantages:

Challenges: Cannot afford to go to a university or college full-time because her family makes too much to qualify for grants but makes too little to pay out of pocket.

Nathalie has been working and going to school full time for the last year in order to try and save money for college.

Current Situation:

Nathalie has been working as a hostess full-time after school and on weekends in order to save up for college. This has limited her opportunities for extracurricular activities, community service, and her grades. When Nathalie learned that the National Promise Scholarship would cover her tuition she was relieved knowing that she can prioritize being a student. Nathalie is now able to focus on her educational goals and does not need to work full time. Nathalie is able to engage in other extracurricular activities and volunteer with her favorite local non-profit, Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

Senior Year of High School:

Because Nathalie and her family knew that she would be receiving free college tuition, Nathalie was able to focus on her studies. Her grades significantly increased and she will be graduating as Salutatorian of her class with a 3.8 GPA. She was also able to take advantage of concurrent enrollment and AP classes. She is graduating with a semester's worth of college credit. Her work with Big Brothers Big Sisters helped her attain community based scholarships which she will use to help her with other college expenses including books and supplies. She has been accepted, and enrolled to the University of Michigan. She is excited to begin her college career.



National Promise Scholars

Provide Free College tuition to in-state students to a public college or Univ. through a 2yr or 4yr scholarship



Name: Joe

Age: 18

level: Graduating Senior

Wants to Study: Biology / Chem

Wants to do: Work in pharmaceuticals
Help cure diseases.

Challenge: 1st Gen. Student no knowledge
of college process. Working class
family with limited resources

NPS Helps:

1: Presents Higher Ed as a possibility.
NPS creates a college going culture in
promise communities so Joe will be
aware of his options

2: Free College Tuition will dramatically
ease the financial barrier Joe faces.
With free tuition, any scholarships Joe
receives can go towards other college
expenses. ie. living.



National Promise Scholars

Provide Free College tuition to in-state students to a public college or Univ. through a 2-year

Receive Scholarship

Joe was accepted to Arizona State Univ.
He then received an NPS-4 Scholarship.

He has enrolled and will begin school
in the fall now that he knows his
tuition will be covered.

He will be taking Biology 101A,
Chemistry 2b, and Ethics 3.



National Promise Scholars

Provide Free College tuition to in-state students to a public college or Univ. through a 2-year plan

College Completion

After 4-years at ASU

Joe has attained his B.S. in lab science
Biology with a Minor in Chem.

Because of the NPS he received,

Joe will be graduating without debt and is able to continue his education. He is the first in his family to graduate and will soon be applying to a Pharm D. Degree program.

Name: Joseph



Age: 21

What they want to study: undecided

Where they want to go to school: Northwest Arkansas Community College

Maria graduated from Arkansas High School at the age of 18. She decided to do a service program for the two years following graduation. She has now returned home and wants to go back to school. She knows she wants to give back to her community but is still unsure about her field of study. She is planning on going to a community college for 2-years and then transferring to a State University. Because the National Promise Scholarship is available for 10 years post high school graduation Maria is still eligible to go to college tuition free.

Name: Janice

Age: 24

Study: Architecture Engineering

Janice is a single mother to a 2-year-old boy. She has spent the past three years focusing on her child and working full time as a receptionist at a local hotel. However, her true passion is engineering. Her dream was to design and help build new buildings. She has one year of higher education completed at the University of Maryland, but had to drop-out when she had her son because she could not afford to pay for tuition and living expenses. Janice recently learned that she qualifies for the National Promise Scholarship and is excited to go back to school to fulfill her dream and provide for her family. She is currently applying to re-enroll at the University of Maryland and continue her education.

Milestone 7. Business Model

CFCT's business model flows directly from our strategy: to get Congress to pass our National Promise Scholarship plan by building a groundswell of support community by community, state by state, based on residents experiencing the benefits of free college tuition for their youth. We raise funds from foundations and individuals to support our online and in person organizing efforts. We also offer our consulting services to those seeking to establish Promise programs at the local or state level. Last year we raised over \$300,000 in support of this work. We are also actively pursuing other, more sustainable sources of funding as we contemplate the need for a major D.C. presence in another year or two.



Milestone 8: Live Prototype

Our Live Prototype is the Kalamazoo Promise.

The Kalamazoo Promise has been in existence for over 10 years. Since then we have been able to research, study, and see the real effects of the promise on the KPS school district and students. The Kalamazoo Promise has no merit or financial need requirements. The requirements are only place based. Students must reside in the district, be continuously enrolled in a Kalamazoo Public School (KPS) since the beginning of 9th grade, and graduate from a KPS. The Promise pays for up to 130 credits, just above the number typically needed for a bachelor's degree. The Promise pays up to 100 percent of tuition and fees at any public community college or university in Michigan.

The anonymous donors' purpose was to enhance Kalamazoo's economic development by attracting parents and businesses while increasing the supply and retention of college graduates. The application for the promise scholarship is a straightforward one pager, whose simplicity has contributed to the high rate of participation.*

*This information was obtained from the UpJohn Institute (attached in OpenIDEO presentation)

The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research recently released the first major study observing the long-term effects of the Kalamazoo Promise Program, and conclusively found that Kalamazoo's program "significantly" helped increase college enrollment, college completion rates, and produced substantial economic benefits. In the decade since the program's implementation, enrollment in local Kalamazoo Public Schools has increased, wages and salary employment have been the best of the 14 Metropolitan Statistical Areas in Michigan, and the population has even begun to increase. Kalamazoo has been reenergized and revitalized by the Kalamazoo Promise Program.

The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research found the following results in their extensive study of the Kalamazoo Promise. All of this statistics and data were obtained by their paper, "The Effects of the Kalamazoo Promise Scholarship on College Enrollment, Persistence, and Completion" found attached to our OpenIDEO submission. Below, we have summarized and highlighted the main points.



- “The chance of students enrolling in any college within six months of high school graduation increases by 14 percent, and the chance of students enrolling in a four-year college is estimated to increase by 34 percent”
- “Promise increases the percentage of students earning any postsecondary credential by 12 percentage points, from a pre-Promise baseline of 36 percent to 48 percent; this represents a proportional increase in credential attainment of one-third.”
- 80% of this boost is due to more students earning Bachelor’s degrees.
- Promise effects are at least as great and often greater for nonwhite students than for white students.
- Bartik and Lachowska (2013) find evidence that the Promise had increasing effects over time on improving student behavior, and on increasing African American students’ GPA
- Students enrolled in a higher ed institution are taking more classes.
- enrollment has increased in Kalamazoo Public Schools
- College Completion Rates have gone up between 9-12% looking at a six-year horizon, since it takes most over 4 years to obtain a Bachelor’s degree today. (“Over a six-year horizon, point estimates are positive and large. The Promise effect on attainment of any credential as of six years is between 9 and 12 percentage points.”)
- The estimates represent an increase in credential attainment of 25-34 percent.
- Percentage boost between 23 and 33 percent in the likelihood of earning a bachelor’s degree. Meaning that most of the Promise effect on degree attainment comes from increasing Bachelor’s attainment.
- “Low-Income students’ attendance at four-year colleges increases by more than 50 percent (about twice the percentage increase for higher income students), credits attempted within two years jumps 23 percent (17 percent for higher income students), and bachelor’s completion within six years rises (imprecisely) by 57 percent (22 percent for higher-income students). These results suggest that the Promise does not benefit only students from relatively well-to-do families but reaches broadly across the economic spectrum.”
- 34 percent increase from baseline for non-white students in college enrollment and credits attempted.
- “it is clear that Promise effects are considerably larger for women than for men. The Promise boosts women’s baccalaureate attainment by 45%.”
- “The Promise has led to intensive effects, by both KPS school officials and many in the Kalamazoo community, to encourage a more “college-going culture” among students and their parents and guardians.”



Milestone 9: Our Market

Expanding college promise programs nationwide will have an immediate impact on college affordability for millions of students. Currently, 13.3 million students are enrolled in public colleges and universities across the country. That number is expected to rise to approximately 14.8 million by 2024. In addition, we would expect a significant increase in college enrollment by would-be students who are currently priced out of a college education. For example, the Kalamazoo promise program in Michigan has seen a net increase in college enrollment of 8 percentage points since the program launched in 2005. Tennessee has seen a 24.7% increase in enrollment in their community colleges in the first year of their Promise program. Given the proven track record of promise programs throughout the country, we expect a nation-wide promise program expansion to be scalable nationwide if sufficient resources were devoted to the effort.

Source: [Department of Education](#), [Upjohn Institute](#) 15, and CFCT Calculations

