

## How does ProjectED work?

### III. Universities as Implementation Partners

Insights and Learnings from a conversation with [Steven Schechter](#), Executive Director of Government and External Affairs, Brooklyn College, CUNY – Jan. 8, 2016

*I met with the Executive Director of Government and External Affairs of Brooklyn College to get feedback on ProjectED, and to gain insights into the needs of the college and it's students, as one example of a public university. Brooklyn College has historically served low income and immigrant students and it continues to do so.*

#### Profile -- City University of New York Senior Colleges, (CUNY)

Average Student Age – 24 years

51 % of the students receive Pell Grants  
31 % of household incomes < 20,000/year  
36% - 1st Generation Students  
42% of households – primary language is other than English

30% attend part – time  
30% work > 20 hours/week

84% retention rate at 1-year  
47% retention rate at 6 years

About half of full time students attend tuition free. They receive Pell Grants and TAP.  
About 25% of graduates have federal loan debt.

For the past 5 years tuition has increased every year by \$300. State revenue has decreased by 5% since the recession. (This is low in comparison to other states where the decrease has been as high as 30-40%. State funding has only recovered to where it was before the recession in two states. As public colleges become more costly, it's harder for low-income students to finish a degree. This affects minority students disproportionately in many states.)

#### [Cuts to Higher Ed Since the Recession](#)

<http://hechingerreport.org/25368-2/>

**Brooklyn College - Pain Point** - Tuition has increased by \$300 / year since 2009. State revenue has decreased. For students who are eligible for maximum TAP, the college makes up the difference in tuition. “We forego the revenue/provide a tuition credit for students that are eligible for the maximum TAP award. Given that the max TAP does not cover all of tuition we cover about \$1600 per student in this category.” To offset decreased revenue administrative cuts have been made. If this continues other college services might be in jeopardy.

#### **What services are available at the college to support student success for 1st generation and low-income students?**

*Mentoring Programs - Keeping students on target to graduate via close mentoring, advising and tutoring, etc. Funding for advisement and mentoring programs can address student needs.*

## Examples:

SEEK

### CUNY Black Male Initiative

ASAP - On the Community College level

At CUNY, the three-year graduation rate for freshmen in associate programs is 17 percent. For CUNY students enrolled in ASAP, the three-year graduation rate increased to 57 percent in 2014.

**What unmet needs do students have that might impede their success?** (Student costs include tuition plus fees, and other essential items.)

- 1) **Metrocards** - *“If you give students metro cards attendance might increase.”*
- 2) **Books** are expensive. Providing grants for books to students, and for the library budget would help. Textbooks purchased for the library can be available for student use.
- 3) **Food insecurity.** *70% of students surveyed reported food insecurity.* The college plans to establish a food bank on site. They are currently looking for local organizations to partner with such as *City Harvest*.
- 4) **Emergencies** – There are crisis situations that arise that can cause students to fall off track quickly. The college has an emergency fund, The Petrie Fund, to assist students. *“There is always a need.”*

[Here is an example in which a California State University crowd funded specifically to raise funds for their Student Emergency Fund.]

[Student Emergency Fund](#)

**How might the college administer these benefits if funding was available?**

*“Either through the financial aid office or the Brooklyn College Foundation.”*

**Regarding the huge issue of food security reported by students: Would approaching a corporate sponsor in the food Industry be a way to get funding for this project and it’s recipients, and draw attention to this issue of food insecurity?**

*“Yes, I think this would work. Pepsi pays CUNY for pouring rights so there may be a corporate connection there. Other campuses work with big food vendors who run the cafeteria etc.” “Also, Pepsi has posted CUNY signage on their trucks.”*

**A Final Note:**

**An interesting observation about young alumni engagement and how ProjectED may potentiate it** – *“This is a personal perception of the fundraising at BC and don’t know if it is true here or across CUNY. We focus attention on the older wealthier alums who can make larger gifts and not as much attention on younger alumni. This may be a function of our limited fundraising capacity so we focus our attention on where the money is. Also, we are weak on technology on the fundraising side, so I think something that would make it easier for younger alums to donate and connect might be successful. And if those alums become more successful as they grow in their careers they will have a stronger connection to their alma mater.”*