



Student Parent
Success Initiative



Newsletter
October 2012

Student Parent Success Initiative (SPSI) Update

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As always, please feel free to forward this e-mail to interested friends or colleagues, or to [contact us](#) to share updates or information relevant to student parents, advocates, and service providers around the country.

Some highlights from this month's update include:

- Upcoming publications and events sponsored by IWPR's SPSI project;
- A forecast for the next Congress and the implications for higher education policy issues;
- Recent efforts to support student parents at a number of local colleges and universities; and
- A description of a college scholarship program for student parents in Connecticut.

Update from the Student Parent Success Initiative

- **New toolkit and related webinar on financing options for campus child care.**

The SPSI project, in cooperation with the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers, will publish a new toolkit at the end of November, highlighting various funding options and opportunities available to support on-campus child care. The toolkit's release will coincide with a webinar on the same topic. Stay tuned for more details.

- **Upcoming STEMtech conference presentation about student parents and STEM education.** Dr. Cynthia Costello, author of SPSI's recent report, *Increasing Opportunities For Low-Income Women and Student Parents in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math At Community Colleges*, will speak with Mimi Lufkin from the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity on gender trends in STEM programs of study at community colleges and promising approaches for increasing the proportion of women pursuing STEM majors. For more information on the

conference, [click here](#).

Legislative and Policy Round Up

- As part of their election coverage, *Inside Higher Ed* published this piece, "[Higher Ed in the Next Congress](#)," on October 10, allowing a variety of legislative professionals in the higher education arena to give their predictions for the outcome of the Congressional House and Senate races and the election's impact on pressing policy issues in the next Congress.
- In this September brief, CLASP experts detail the potential impact of budget sequestration on early childhood programs: [At Risk: Early Care and Education Funding and Sequestration](#).

Research and Resources □

- [Downward Slide: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2012](#), National Women's Law Center, October 11, 2012.
- [Getting Ready for Success: Bridging the Gap Between High School and College in Tacoma, WA](#), MDRC, June 2012.
- [Transfer: An Indispensable Part of the Community College Mission](#), American Association of Community Colleges, October 2012.
- [Debt, Jobs, Diversity and Who Gets In: A Survey of Admissions Directors](#), *Inside Higher Ed*, October 2, 2012.,"

Student Parents and Supports in the News

- [Ontario Community Colleges recognized for Excellence in Early Childhood Education](#), New Release: Canada Newswire, October 23, 2012.
- [GV Offers Resources to Students Who Are Parents, Pregnant](#), *Grand Valley Lanthorn*, October 14, 2012.
- [Fair Highlights Student- Parents](#), *Minnesota Daily*, October 10, 2012.
- [Student Parent Services Expands Into New Resource Center](#), *Portland State University Vanguard*, October 3, 2012.
- [Spread the Wealth: Make College Success a National Priority](#), Lumina Foundation, October 2, 2012.

Student Parent Programs in the Spotlight

[The Family Economic Security Program \(FESP\) Norwalk Community College, CT](#)

During 2008, in conjunction with the Fund for Women and Girls in Fairfield County and the Colleges'

Foundation, Norwalk Community College in Norwalk, CT launched the Family Economic Security Program (FESP), a scholarship program for students with children intended to help low- and middle-income families increase self-sufficiency through college degree attainment. FESP is based on the Center for Working Families (CWF) model developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the only program to focus exclusively on students with children on a college campus. The Center for Working Families approach seeks to provide at-risk families a central location to receive key economic support services, with the goal of increasing earnings and income, reducing financial transactions costs and building individual and community wealth.^[1]

Applicants selected to participate in FESP must be enrolled at Norwalk Community College and receive educational workshops, individualized coaching, and direct financial support, some of which are provided through contractual arrangements with area service providers and other community organizations, such as the Women's Business Development Council. Coaching topics vary depending on the scholar's needs, but, for example, common topics in the financial aid module often include financial aid application guidance, budgeting strategies and credit card management. Students who receive the academic scholarship also receive the academic or financial award component, which is based on the amount of credits student takes. The financial award helps to alleviate financial burdens related to housing, transportation, food, and other debt that can impede progress toward academic goals. One hundred students have been in the program over the last four years.

FESP reports a 90 percent retention rate for continued participation in the program, as well as a 31 percent graduation rate (with an Associate's degree) and a 64 percent transfer rate to four-year institutions. On qualitative assessments, FESP participants report feeling cared about and supported by the college and further, that this awareness reinforced their commitment to their educational goals. FESP is funded through private sponsors, including local foundations, a bank and a business-related member organization.

<http://www.ncc.commnet.edu/fesp/>

[1] Annie E. Casey Foundation, Centers for Working Families. <<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/CenterforFamilyEconomicSuccess/CentersforWorkingFamilies.aspx>> (October 23, 2012).

About Us

[The Student Parent Success Initiative \(SPSI\)](#), a project of the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#), is designed to improve supports and services for student parents seeking postsecondary education. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SPSI serves to initiate new research, raise awareness on the need for student parent supports, and foster communication and collaboration among advocates, policymakers, educators, and practitioners.

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