

## Student Parent Success Initiative (SPSI) Update

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With the school year beginning, the SPSI team is kicking into high gear, preparing to release several new reports in the coming months and planning a vibrant line-up of in-person and remote events to greet the fall. In addition, with the reveal of the American Jobs Act, the SPSI team is keeping a watchful eye on Washington, monitoring important policy developments that relate to the needs of student parents and their families. Stay tuned for more news on these fronts as the season progresses.

Some highlights from this month's update include:

- An upcoming SPSI report on low-income women, student parents and opportunities for STEM at community colleges;
- An update on the implications of the American Jobs Act for community colleges;
- A survey for administrators and staff about community colleges, online learning and student parents;
- A new study of the impact of postsecondary education and occupation choice on lifetime earnings.

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.

## Activities & Publications of the Student Parent Success Initiative

- **Forthcoming Student Parent Success Initiative report, Opportunities for Low-Income Women and Student Parents in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math at Community Colleges, coming this fall!** More details about the report -- and the accompanying release event -- to come.
- **Hear IWPR's Executive Director, Barbara Gault, discuss student parent support as part of CompletionMatters.org's web series "Conversations on College Completion."** To watch the interview, please click [here](#). To view other interviews in the series, please click [here](#).

## Student Parents and Supports in the News

- [Parity in STEM Faculty](#). *Inside Higher Ed*, August 23, 2011.
- [College of the Desert Child Care Center Receives National Accreditation](#). *KPSP Local 2 News*, August 22, 2011.
- [Strengthen Economy by Investing in Community Colleges](#), *Chicago Sun-Times*, August 19, 2011.
- [More Colleges Seeing Increased Amount of Nontraditional Students](#). *WFMY News 2*, August 16, 2011.
- [Center Raises Hopes for Teen Moms](#). *San Antonio Express-News*, August 11, 2011.
- [Grants to Help Impoverished Adults Prepare for College](#). *The Monitor*, August 5, 2011.

## Student Parent Activities and Events of Interest



- **If you were unable to attend "Know Your Rights: A Conference Call for Pregnant and Parenting Students,"** sponsored by the National Women's Law Center last month, the call recording is available for download [here](#).
- **Survey on Online Learning for Student Parents:** Dr. Mary Gatta, a senior scholar at Wider Opportunities for Women, is currently conducting a survey for community college faculty, administrators and/or staff about community colleges' use of online learning as a support for student parents. To participate in the brief 15-minute survey, please click [here](#). For more information about her research or to participate in a phone interview, please contact Dr. Gatta by e-mail ([mgatta@wowonline.org](mailto:mgatta@wowonline.org)) or by phone (732-492-4393).
- **Student Parents Unite at Kirtland Community College,** a schedule of fall semester events sponsored by the Kirtland Community College Campus Parent Coalition in Rosscommon, MI. For more information, click [here](#).

# Policy and Legislative Round Up



- President Obama recently unveiled the American Jobs Act, outlining proposed steps to increase economic growth and spur job creation. About \$60 billion of the legislative package would be directed at education, with \$30 billion dedicated to modernizing K-12 and community college facilities. See the links below for more details about the proposal's effect on community colleges as well as a more comprehensive rundown of the Act.
  - [Obama's Jobs Proposals Include \\$5-Billion for Community College Facilities](#). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 8, 2011.
  - [American Jobs Act: Fact Sheet and Overview](#). White House, September 8, 2011 .
- Representatives Jared Polis (D-CO) and Susan Chu (D-CA) introduced H.R. 2617, the Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act, a bill to ensure that states provide necessary resources and supports to student parents enrolled in high school and entering postsecondary education. For further information and updates on the status of the bill, please click [here](#). To download the full text of the bill, please click [here](#).

## Other Research and Resources

- [Staying on Track: Early Findings from a Performance-Based Scholarship Program at the University of New Mexico](#), MDRC, August 2011.
- [Pregnant and Parenting Students' Rights: FAQs for College and Graduate Students](#), National Women's Law Center, July 2011.
- [Characteristics of Low-Income Single Mothers Disconnected from Work and Public Assistance](#), The Urban Institute, August 2011.
- [Promoting Educational Opportunity: The Pell Grant Program at Community Colleges](#), American Association of Community Colleges, July 2011.
- [Unequal Aid: Discriminatory Treatment of Gay and Transgender Applicants and Families Headed by Same Sex Couples in the Higher Education Financial Aid Process](#), Center for American Progress, August 2011.
- [The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings, Center on Education and the Workforce](#), Center on Education and the Workforce, August 2011.
- [Using Community Colleges to Build a STEM-Skilled Workforce](#), The National Governors Association, July 2011.

# Student Parent Programs in the Spotlight

*In each issue, we'll showcase a different program responsible for serving student parents in some way. Please feel free to submit your suggestions!*

Located at each of Central New Mexico Community College's five campuses, CNM Connect provides personalized, wraparound service designed to meet the needs of the college's largely low-income, minority student population, while serving as a centralized "one stop shop" for institutional resources. Although open to all enrolled, student parents are one of Connect's target populations, making up almost 55% of the students served through the centers. The student team success leaders and achievement coaches that staff each Connect center are trained to address the concerns of student parents. In addition to providing academic, financial aid and career coaching, Connect team members provide work supports to parents, helping them to identify and apply for scholarships, additional financial aid and traditional work support programs. Connect also works with SingleStop and Tax Help New Mexico to provide parents with access to external economic supports such as public assistance and tax credits. CNM Connect also provides parents with child care referrals, information about child care subsidies, and one-on-one legal counseling and financial coaching. "We just encourage students to come see us if they're having a problem," said achievement coach Chioma Heim. "We never want students to feel like they've come to the wrong door when they've come to our office."

For more information about CNM Connect, please click [here](#).

## 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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