P. MICHAEL STURLA, CHAIRMAN
414 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202096
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2096
PHONE: (717) 787-3555
FAX: (717) 705-1923

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE
www.pahouse.com/PolicyCommittee
Policy@pahouse.net
Twitter: @RepMikeSturla

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING
Topic: Act 101 Program
Drexel University – Philadelphia PA
May 26, 2015

AGENDA

2:00 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks

2:10 p.m. Panel from Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency:
- Christine Zuzack, Vice President, State Grant and Special Programs
- Ashley Ruth, Technical Assistance Specialist, State Grant and Special Programs

2:50 p.m. Panel Two:
- Antoinette Torres, Associate Vice Provost of Enrollment Management, Drexel University
- Robert Miedel, Act 101 Director, La Salle University
- Donna Dickinson, Act 101 Director, King's College
- Thomas Thomas, Act 101 Director, Wilkes University

3:30 p.m. Panel Three:
- Jerome Dean, Graduate, Shippensburg University
- Zakiyyah Chase, Student, La Salle University

4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Pennsylvania House Democratic Policy Committee
Public Hearing on Act 101
Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA
Tuesday, May 26, 2015 - 2 p.m.

Christine A. Zuzack, Vice President, State Grant and Special Programs, PHEAA
Ashley J. Ruth, Technical Assistance Specialist, State Grant and Special Programs, PHEAA

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, on behalf of the PHEAA Board of Directors, we thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony with regard to the Commonwealth-funded Education of the Disadvantaged (Act 101) Program, which assists academically and financially disadvantaged students in successfully starting and completing their postsecondary education.

This topic is especially important to us given that PHEAA's primary mission, since its inception in 1963, is to create affordable access to higher education.

Historical Perspective

Under the visionary leadership of the late Honorable K. Leroy Irvis, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act of 1971 (Act 101) became a reality to address existing social inequities. A portion of that legislation targets the needs of at-risk students who, without additional support, may not be able to take advantage of the rich postsecondary educational opportunities offered in Pennsylvania. Thus, the Education of the Disadvantaged Program, or Act 101 Program, established funding for institutions to provide the necessary services and support to students who are academically or economically at risk.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education administered the Act 101 Program from its creation until June 2011. The 2011-12 fiscal code enacted by the Pennsylvania General Assembly transferred responsibility for administering Act 101 from PDE to PHEAA, where it continues today.

Act 101 Program Services

Many students with academic potential are not college-ready at the completion of high school. They may need additional assistance with academics such as reading, writing and mathematics or guidance in navigating the higher education landscape, as many are first-generation college students. Simply enrolling in remedial classes to address these academic deficiencies does not often result in college success. These students need guidance, support and mentoring in a nurturing environment to lay the pathway for their success.

The Act 101 Program does not provide direct financial aid awards to students. Instead, the program supports students on multiple fronts through the provision of study skills, time management, academic advising, personal counseling, lending libraries, honor societies, leadership opportunities, career exploration, and cultural enrichment.

Research has indicated that developmental education programs, such as Act 101, that address all of these multifaceted needs of the students provide them with the best chance for success. Our Pennsylvania Act 101 Program is certainly laying the foundation for our at-risk student to succeed.

Funding

From $9.32 million in 2004-05, the current appropriation for the Act 101 Program stands significantly reduced at $2.24 million, a decline of 76 percent. With this reduction in funding came a reduction in the number of participating institutions, as well. At its peak, 75 colleges and universities participated in the Act 101 Program across Pennsylvania. Today, that number has declined to 33 institutions.

Our most recent annual report on the Act 101 Program illustrates the excellent success rate of these students in spite of the many challenges that they face. Our neighboring states, New York and New Jersey, annually provide $66 million and $40 million, respectively, to support developmental education for their students. While the Pennsylvania Act 101 Program provides approximately $540 per student to provide these needed support services, schools in New York receive about $3,000 per student while schools in New Jersey receive approximately $4,100. As noted by Pennsylvania and Philadelphia statesman Benjamin Franklin, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." We view a commitment to these students to be an excellent investment in the future of Pennsylvania.

Act 101 Program Information

PHEAA provides annual reports on the Act 101 Program to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education at their November meeting to apprise this group of the accomplishments of these students and school programs. In addition, an *Act 101 Program Annual Report* is posted on PHEAA's webpage making that information accessible to all. We have also provided committee members with copies. Student testimonials are available on You Tube, sharing personal stories from the participants themselves about the positive and long-lasting impact of Act 101.

I would now like to turn to Ashley Ruth who will share some particulars about the Act 101 Program outcomes.

Act 101 Program Outcomes

As Ms. Zuzack indicated, PHEAA produces an Act 101 Annual Report with relevant outcomes data received from each participating postsecondary institution. PHEAA regularly evaluates reporting elements to ensure that collected data is comparable to data available on the national level. Our reporting from institutions has routinely focused on grade point averages, course completion rates, retention rates, graduation rates, and financial aid provided to students. This information allows PHEAA and our participating institutions to evaluate program performance and outcomes.

Retention of Act 101 students is a key indicator of the institutional effectiveness of supporting credential completion. The Fall 2011 cohort of Act 101 students had a first-year retention rate of 82.29 percent which exceeded the Pennsylvania average of 76.62 percent. The retention rate for the Fall 2012 cohort was 70.88 percent, which exceeded the national average of 65.8 percent.

Course completion rates from the 2012-13 and 2013-14 Academic Years illustrate that Act 101 students have been successful in both remedial and college-level coursework, as their completion rates closely mirror those of regular students. The grade point averages for Act 101 students during this same period are also commendable as they are reflective of their successful course completion rates.

During the 2013-14 Academic Year, Act 101 students received almost $85 million in financial aid with an average of $20,295 per student. Approximately 64 percent of these awards were grants and scholarships from federal, state and institutional resources. Student employment and educational loans also enabled Act 101 students to remain enrolled and to continue their pursuit of a college education.

Students in these programs face academic and financial barriers and are at the greatest risk of percent out. Many times, it is the support of the Act 101 Program that keeps these students engaged and enrolled in higher education. Within the next 2 years, PHEAA will also have graduation data for these recent cohorts. We look forward to sharing that data with legislators, policy makers, schools, and your constituents.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes our remarks. We want to thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony here at Drexel University. We welcome any questions you may have.

# # #

Pennsylvania Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act of 1971

ACT 101 PROGRAM

2013-14 Annual Report

PHEAA

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION 3

ACT 101 SERVICES 3

INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENT PROFILES 4

STUDENT RETENTION 6

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE 8

FINANCIAL AID FOR ACT 101 STUDENTS 10

ACT 101 INSTITUTIONS: 2013-14 PROGRAM YEAR 12

ACT 101 APPROPRIATIONS HISTORY 13

PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1971
ACT 101 PROGRAM
2013-14 ANNUAL REPORT

The Higher Education of the Disadvantaged (Act 101) Program – administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) – provides support services to undergraduate students with economic and educational disadvantages so they can succeed in higher education. Act 101 has been dedicated to enhancing student success since the Pennsylvania General Assembly created the program through the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act of 1971.

This annual report highlights how Act 101 helped at-risk students reach their potential during the 2013-14 program year. The report provides an overview of program funding, participation, and financial aid among Act 101 students. It also focuses on program effectiveness, measured by student retention rates, course completion rates, and grade point averages.

FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION

With a Commonwealth appropriation of $2,246,000, PHEAA disbursed funds to 35 Act 101 programs at 33 institutions in 2013-14. Each program must serve between 50 and 300 students although programs may opt to serve additional students. The total number of students served for 2013-14 was 4,187.

To ensure an equitable and transparent process, PHEAA distributes funds through a per capita awarding system. The per capita award is determined by dividing the total number of Act 101 students served by the total available resources for the year.

Institutions are required to provide a "match" of at least 15 percent of the total budget for new Act 101 programs or a minimum "match" of 25 percent of the total program budget for continuing programs. These financial contributions supplement the allocation to foster program innovation and ensure that Act 101 students can take advantage of the most in-demand services.

ACT 101 SERVICES

While participating schools are able to tailor the services they provide, each Act 101 Program must provide some form of academic advising, tutoring, and counseling services. Other types of funded services and supports include:

- Summer Bridge programs that help students adjust to college life, build studying skills, and potentially earn academic credits.
- Free lending libraries that provide access to textbooks, laptops, and other educational equipment and supplies.
- Student educational travel, campus events, and cultural enrichment activities.
- Student orientations, peer mentoring programs, honor societies, and career and academic exploration workshops.

To provide program guidance, each Act 101 Program has an advisory board comprised of institutional staff, students, and community representatives.

2013-14 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PHEAA's overview of the Act 101 Program for the 2013-14 Academic Year has four main components:

1. Institutional and student profiles
2. Student retention
3. Student academic performance
4. Financial aid for Act 101 students

These sections use feedback from all 35 Act 101 programs based at 33 Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions. These sections also compare 2013-14 Act 101 data against Pennsylvania, national, and 2012-13 Act 101 values. Please note that several institutions had restated some of their 2012-13 data. For this reason, 2012-13 comparative figures used in this year's report differ in some instances from what was reported in last year's annual report.

INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENT PROFILES

During the 2013-14 Academic Year, the Act 101 Program provided services to 4,187 credential-seeking undergraduates throughout the 35 active programs. In comparison, the 38 active programs in 2012-13 served 4,092 students. Below are institutional characteristics for the 2013-14 programs and a brief socioeconomic profile of their 4,112 participating students who had accessible student-level information (Tables 1 & 2 and Chart 1).

Table 1 • Characteristics of Institutions Serving Act 101 Students • 2013-14 Academic Year

Institutional Sector	Programs	Enrolled Act 101 Students	% of Total Act 101 Population
Four-Year	24	3,023	73.52%
Private Colleges and Universities	17	1,319	32.08%
PASSHE Universities	6	1,646	40.03%
State-Related University	1	58	1.41%
Two-Year	11	1,089	26.48%
Private Colleges	2	267	6.49%
Community Colleges	7	700	17.02%
Business, Trade, and Technical Schools	2	122	2.97%
TOTAL	**35**	**4,112**	**100.00%**

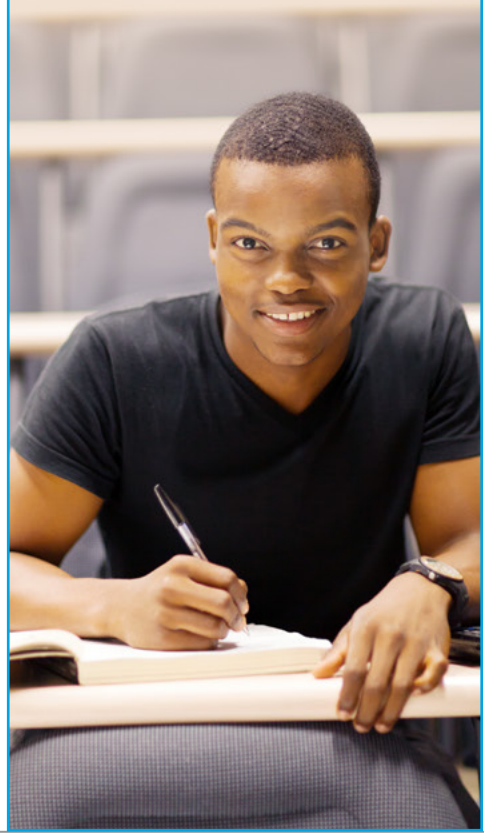
Act 101 Institutions At-a-Glance

- At the 24 four-year college and university programs
  - » The programs served 3,023 participants (73.52 percent of the total).
  - » The programs served an average of 126 students. Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities had the highest average at 274, and the single state-related university had the lowest at 58.
- At the 11 two-year college and business, trade, and technical school programs
  - » The programs served 1,089 participants (26.48 percent of the total).
  - » The programs served an average of 99 students. Private colleges had the highest average at 134, and business, trade, and technical schools had the lowest at 61.
- The 35 programs, overall, served an average of 117 students.

The Act 101 Program served 4,187 students in 2013-14.

The Act 101 Program serves both full-time and part-time students who meet initial eligibility standards. Students must be:

- Academically at risk – predicted to have a first-year grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or less on a 4.0 scale. The participating institutions are responsible for predicting a student's GPA.
- Economically disadvantaged – those with an annual family income equal to or less than 200 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For 2013, the federal poverty guideline for a family of four was $23,850.
- Pennsylvania residents
- Enrolled in a program leading to an undergraduate credential



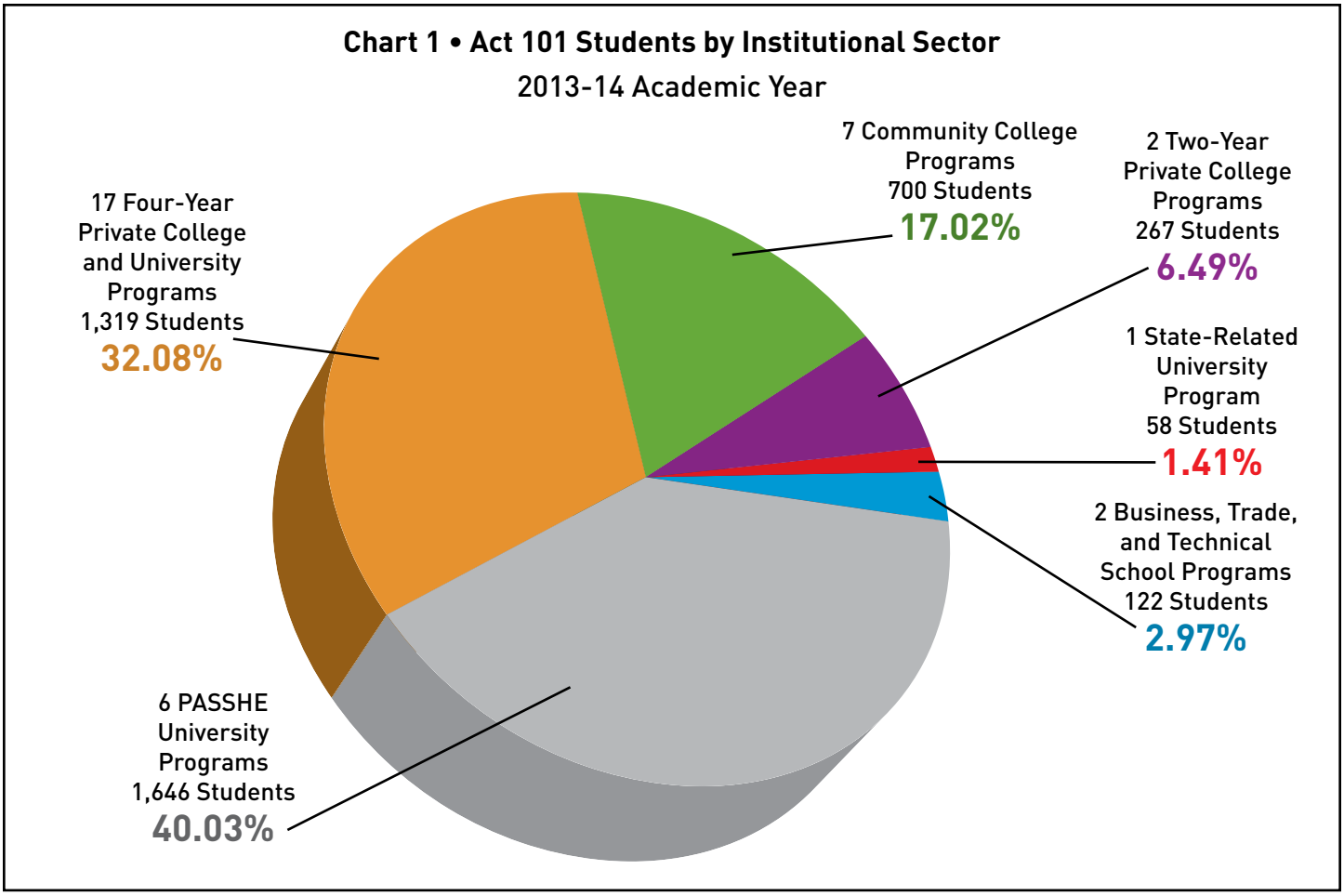


Table 2 • Characteristics of Act 101 Students – 2013-14 Academic Year

Characteristic	Act 101	Pennsylvania	United States
Median Family Income*	$20,381	$66,522	$64,030
Average SAT Total Score** (Range - 600 to 2400)	1273	1480	1498
Home Address - % Urban‡	80.76%	78.7%	80.7%
Gender - % Female**	59.17%	56.05%	56.79%

*2013 Pennsylvania and U.S. median family incomes are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2013 American Community Survey.

**Data for Pennsylvania and the United States are from Fall 2012 files from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Fall 2012 remains the most recent year available for these characteristics.

‡Urban county designations and population percentages were derived using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 data, the most recent available for urban/rural status.

Act 101 Students At-a-Glance

- The median family income for Act 101 students was approximately one-third of the Pennsylvania and U.S. median family incomes.
- About one-fifth of Act 101 students (20.62 percent - data not shown) are from households that participate in one of the following federal means-tested benefits: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, National School Lunch Program, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
- By SAT total score, which includes the mathematics, reading, and writing sub-scores, the more than 200-point difference between average scores for Act 101 and other Pennsylvania or U.S. undergraduates is an expected reflection of their academically at-risk status.
- By urban/rural living status and by gender, Act 101 students are similar to overall Pennsylvania and national undergraduates.

Act 101 Student Family Finances

As previously mentioned, one criterion for initial Act 101 eligibility is that students have an annual family income equal to or less than 200 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines. However, after the first year, student finances are not an eligibility criterion unless a student transfers schools, as improved family finances do not alter a student's academic at-risk status within his or her entering cohort.

Still, participating Act 101 students must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. The U.S. Department of Education uses the applicant-provided FAFSA information to produce an Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This value is an index of a family's ability to contribute to the student's education from family financial resources. For the 2013-14 Academic Year, EFC values had a range of 0 through 99999, with Federal Pell Grant eligibility ending at an EFC of 5082. Among the population of Act 101 students, 92.62 percent were Pell Grant eligible. Because the Pell Grant Program targets students with very high financial need, using the Pell Grant cut-off as a reference value clearly indicates that the Act 101 Program participants are at economical risk.

Based on the most recent annual report for the Federal Pell Grant Program for the 2012-13 award year, 66.4 percent of all Pell award recipients had an EFC of 0, and 77.7 percent had an EFC no greater than 1000. In comparison, 65.71 percent of 2013-14 Act 101 participants had an EFC of 0, and 77.99 percent had an EFC no greater than 1000.

Even though some of the measures in this section have clearly shown participants' at-risk status, the success of participants – as measured by retention and course completion rates covered in later sections of this report – is evidence of the effectiveness of Act 101 Program services.

STUDENT RETENTION

Retention of full-time undergraduate students in postsecondary programs of study of at least two years' duration from one fall term to another is a key indicator of institutional effectiveness at supporting credential completion. Students in these programs are at the greatest risk of stopping out before the start of the second academic year, and students who stop out early are less likely to graduate. For students enrolled in four-year degree programs, stopping out after the second year also reduces the probability of credential completion.

Table 3a provides the first-year retention rates for the Fall 2012, Fall 2011, and Fall 2010 Act 101 full-time cohorts. While the rate for the Fall 2012 cohort was the lowest among these three cohorts, this rate (70.88 percent) exceeded the national first-year retention rate for the same time period. According to the 2013 American College Testing (ACT) annual report on first-year retention rates, the national average retention rate among college students at two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 was 65.8 percent.

The 70.88% first-year retention rate for Act 101 students from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 exceeded the national average rate of 65.8%.

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reports the most recent state-level data on first-year retention rates at two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions. According to IPEDS, the Fall 2011 to Fall 2012 Pennsylvania full-time, first-year retention rate was 76.62 percent. The Fall 2011 Act 101 cohort exceeded the Pennsylvania average with a first-year retention rate of 82.29 percent.

Student retention is most commonly measured from the first year of enrollment to the second year. However, two-year retention rates provide another measure of institutional effectiveness at helping students toward degree attainment. Table 3b shows the two-year retention rates for the returning Fall 2011 and Fall 2010 Act 101 cohorts.

While the first-year retention rates for the Fall 2011 and Fall 2010 cohorts were 82.29 percent and 79.29 percent, respectively, the retention rates declined over a two-year span. The retention rates for the Fall 2011 and Fall 2010 cohorts declined to 64.29 percent and 69.53 percent, respectively.

Table 3a • First-Year Retention Rates for Act 101 Full-Time Students

Population	Initial Count	Number Still Enrolled	Valid Departures		First-Year Retention Rate*
			Confirmed Transfers	Credential Received	
Fall 2012 Cohort to Fall 2013	1,470	925	96	21	70.88%
Fall 2011 Cohort to Fall 2012	1,050	725	131	8	82.29%
Fall 2010 Cohort to Fall 2011	1,014	743	53	8	79.29%

*Still enrolled plus valid departures compared to initial count

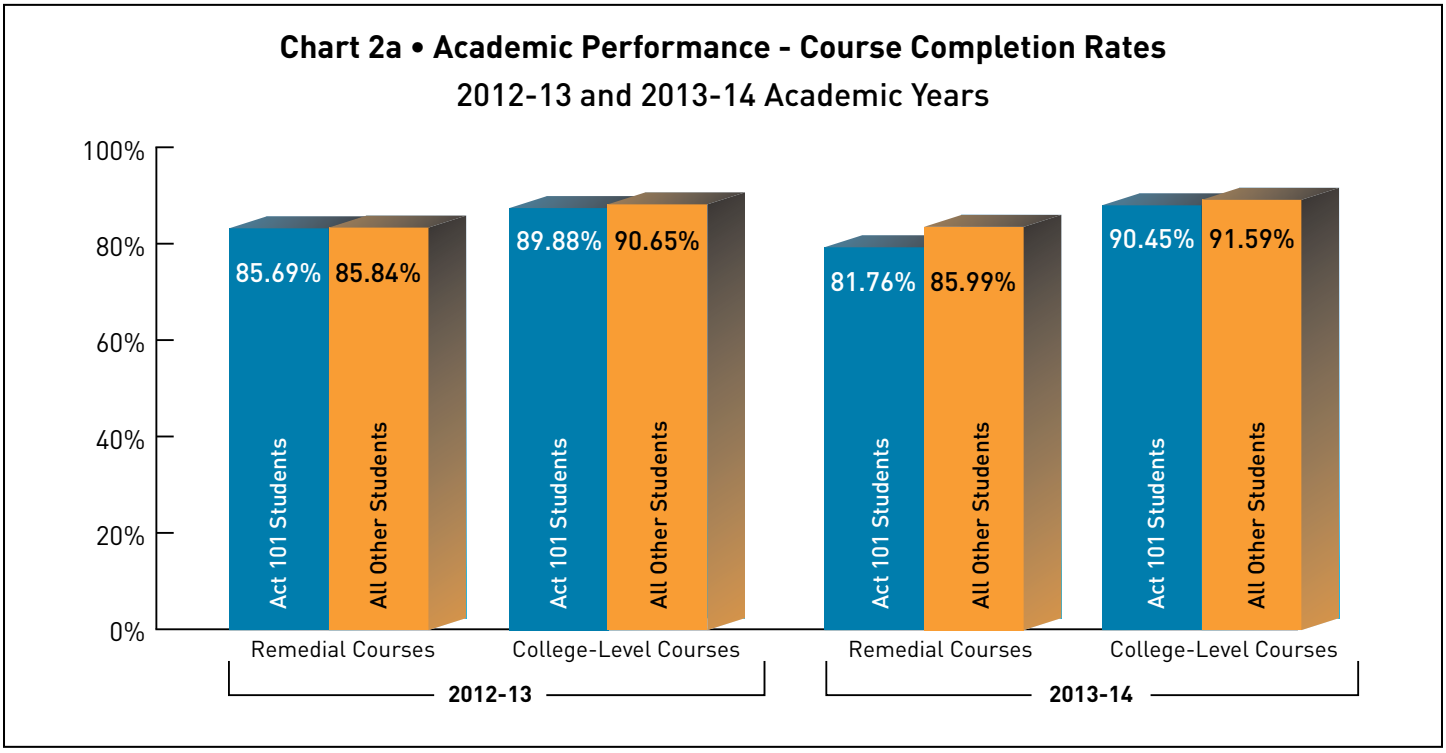
Table 3b • Two-Year Retention Rates for Act 101 Full-Time Students

Population	Initial Count	Number Still Enrolled	Valid Departures		Two-Year Retention Rate*
			Confirmed Transfers	Credential Received	
Fall 2011 Cohort from Fall 2011 to Fall 2013	1,050	436	166	73	64.29%
Fall 2010 Cohort from Fall 2010 to Fall 2012	1,014	572	90	43	69.53%

*Still enrolled plus valid departures compared to initial count

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Act 101 Programs reported data on two aspects of academic performance: success in remedial courses and success in college-level courses. Charts 2a and 2b compare the academic performance between Act 101 students and all other Pennsylvania-resident, credential-seeking undergraduates at the Act 101 schools for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 Academic Years.



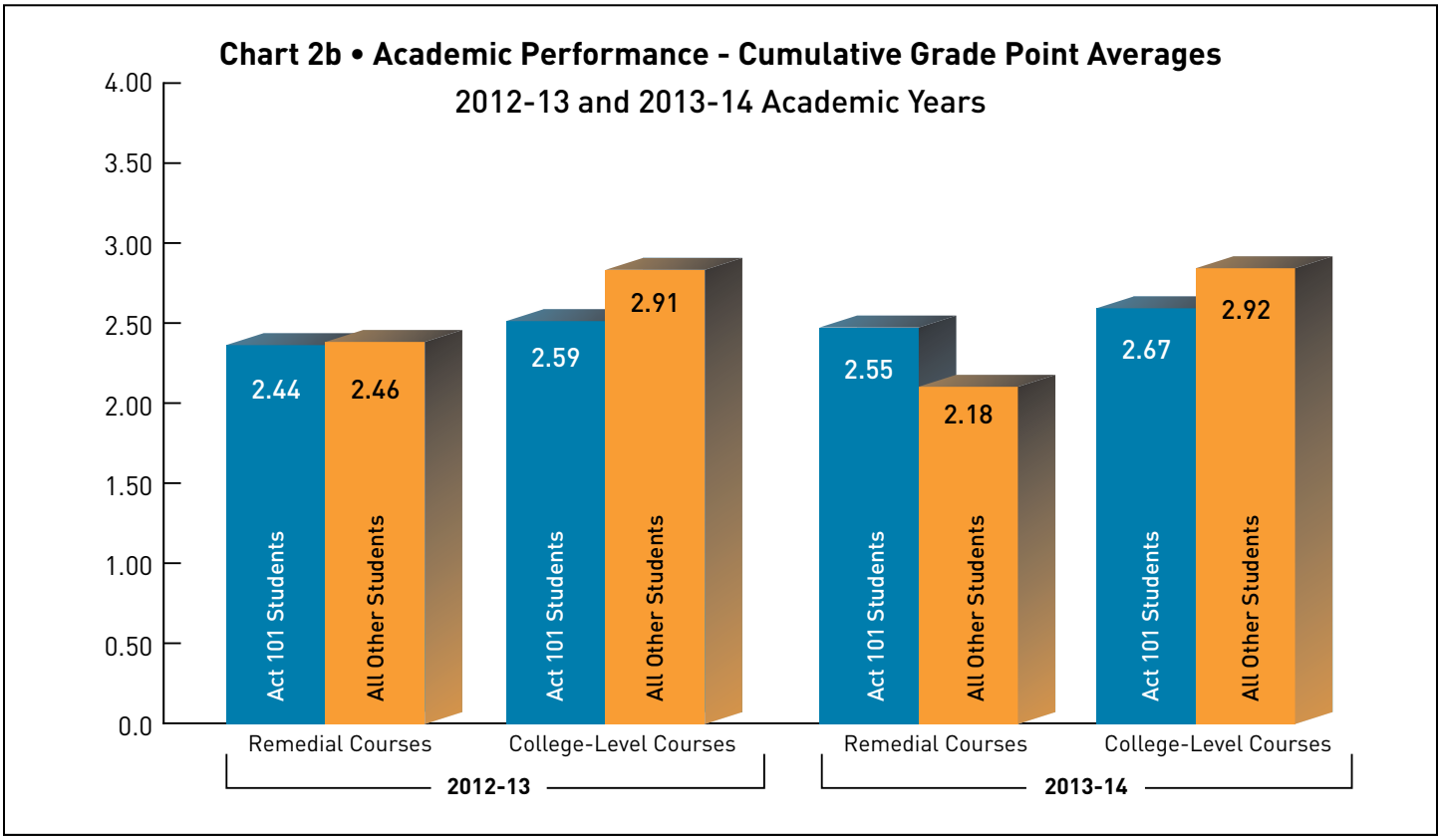
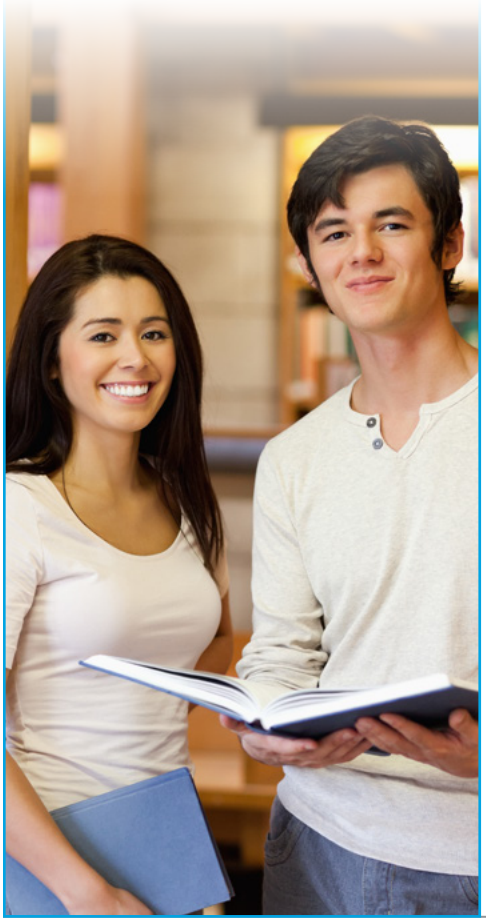


Table 4 • Academic Performance of Act 101 and PA-Resident, Credential-Seeking Undergraduates at Act 101 Institutions - 2013-14 Academic Year						
Remedial Course Taking and Performance - Students Taking at Least One Remedial Course During the Academic Year						
Population	**Headcount**	**Courses Attempted**	**Percent of Courses Attempted**	**Courses Completed**	**Course Completion Rate**	**Grade Point Average**
Act 101	1,123	2,407	6.17%	1,968	81.76%	2.55
All Other	19,410	36,633	93.83%	31,500	85.99%	2.18
Total	20,533	39,040	100.00%	33,468	85.73%	2.21
College-Level Course Taking and Performance During the Academic Year						
Population	**Headcount**	**Courses Attempted**	**Percent of Courses Attempted**	**Courses Completed**	**Course Completion Rate**	**Grade Point Average**
Act 101	4,187	41,415	3.58%	37,461	90.45%	2.67
All Other	n/a	1,116,798	96.42%	1,022,858	91.59%	2.92
Total	n/a	1,158,213	100.00%	1,060,319	91.55%	2.91

Remedial Courses

- In 2013-14, Act 101 students attempted 2,407 remedial courses. They completed 1,968 of these courses (81.76 percent), earning a 2.55 cumulative grade point average (GPA).
  - » Among Act 101 students in 2012-13, the remedial course completion rate was higher at 85.69 percent, but the cumulative GPA for remedial courses was lower at 2.44.
  - » All other Pennsylvania-resident, credential-seeking undergraduates at the Act 101 schools in 2013-14 had an 85.99 percent remedial course completion rate, with a 2.18 cumulative GPA for this coursework.



Act 101 students earned a higher cumulative GPA in remedial courses (2.55) compared to the general undergraduate population (2.18).

College-Level Courses

- In 2013-14, Act 101 students attempted 41,415 college-level courses. They completed 37,461 of these courses (90.45 percent), earning a 2.67 cumulative GPA.
  - » Among Act 101 participants in 2012-13, the college-level course completion rate was lower at 89.88 percent, and the cumulative GPA for college-level courses was lower at 2.59.
  - » All other Pennsylvania-resident, credential-seeking undergraduates at the Act 101 schools had a 91.59 percent college-level course completion rate, with a 2.92 cumulative GPA for this coursework.

FINANCIAL AID FOR ACT 101 STUDENTS

Research has demonstrated that financial aid – especially need-based grants – plays a critical role in reducing the economic barriers that especially affect initial postsecondary enrollment and continuation beyond the first year for those with limited resources.

During the 2013-14 Academic Year, Act 101 participants benefited from financial aid awards in three broad categories: grants, waivers, and scholarships; student employment; and student loans. Act 101 participants received almost $85.0 million from these combined sources in 2013-14, with an average of $20,295 per individual student. These amounts have increased from 2012-13 when Act 101 participants received almost $80.7 million from these sources, with an average of $19,721 per individual student.

Table 5 summarizes the financial aid information:

Table 5 • Financial Aid by Act 101 Participants – 2013-14 Academic Year

Type	Number of Awards/ Loans*	Total Value	Average Award/Loan	% Aid Value
Grants, Waivers, and Scholarships	11,396	$54,391,255	$4,773	64.00%
Federal Pell Grant	3,878	$18,020,549	$4,647	21.21%
Pennsylvania State Grant	2,665	$9,169,881	$3,441	10.79%
Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants	1,523	$1,152,414	$757	1.35%
Institutional Awards	1,765	$20,254,523	$11,476	23.83%
Other Awards	1,565	$5,793,888	$3,702	6.82%
Employment	965	$1,279,867	$1,326	1.51%
Federal Work-Study	646	$885,247	$1,370	1.04%
State Work-Study	176	$252,497	$1,435	0.30%
Other On-Campus/Institution-Funded Employment	143	$142,123	$994	0.17%
Loans	5,004	$29,304,557	$5,856	34.49%
Federal Direct Loans	3,464	$22,322,383	$6,444	26.27%
Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loans	357	$3,134,172	$8,779	3.69%
Federal Perkins & Other Federal Loans	905	$1,326,282	$1,466	1.56%
Alternative (Private) Student Loans	278	$2,521,720	$9,071	2.97%
TOTAL AID	17,365	$84,975,679	$4,894	100.00%

*Counts are duplicated since Act 101 students can receive more than one type of financial aid.

The financial aid received by students through the federal Pell Grant, Pennsylvania State Grant, and federal Direct Student Loan Programs varied by institutional sector.

Federal Pell Grants

- **Award Recipients**
  - State-related university students had the highest rate of award recipients at 98.31 percent (58 of 59), followed by PASSHE students at 95.67% (1,589 of 1,661).
  - Business, trade, and technical school students had the lowest rate at 76.56 percent (98 of 128).
- **Award Averages**
  - State-related university students received the largest average award at $5,313.
  - Business, trade, and technical school students received the smallest at $3,352.
  - The overall average of all Act 101 award recipients was $4,647; the overall average of all award recipients during the 2012-13 Academic Year (the most recent available) was $3,481 at Pennsylvania institutions and $3,579 nationally. For the 2013-14 award year, federal Pell Grants ranged from a minimum of $582 for full-time students with an EFC of 5082 to a maximum of $5,645 for full-time students with an EFC of 0.

Pennsylvania State Grants

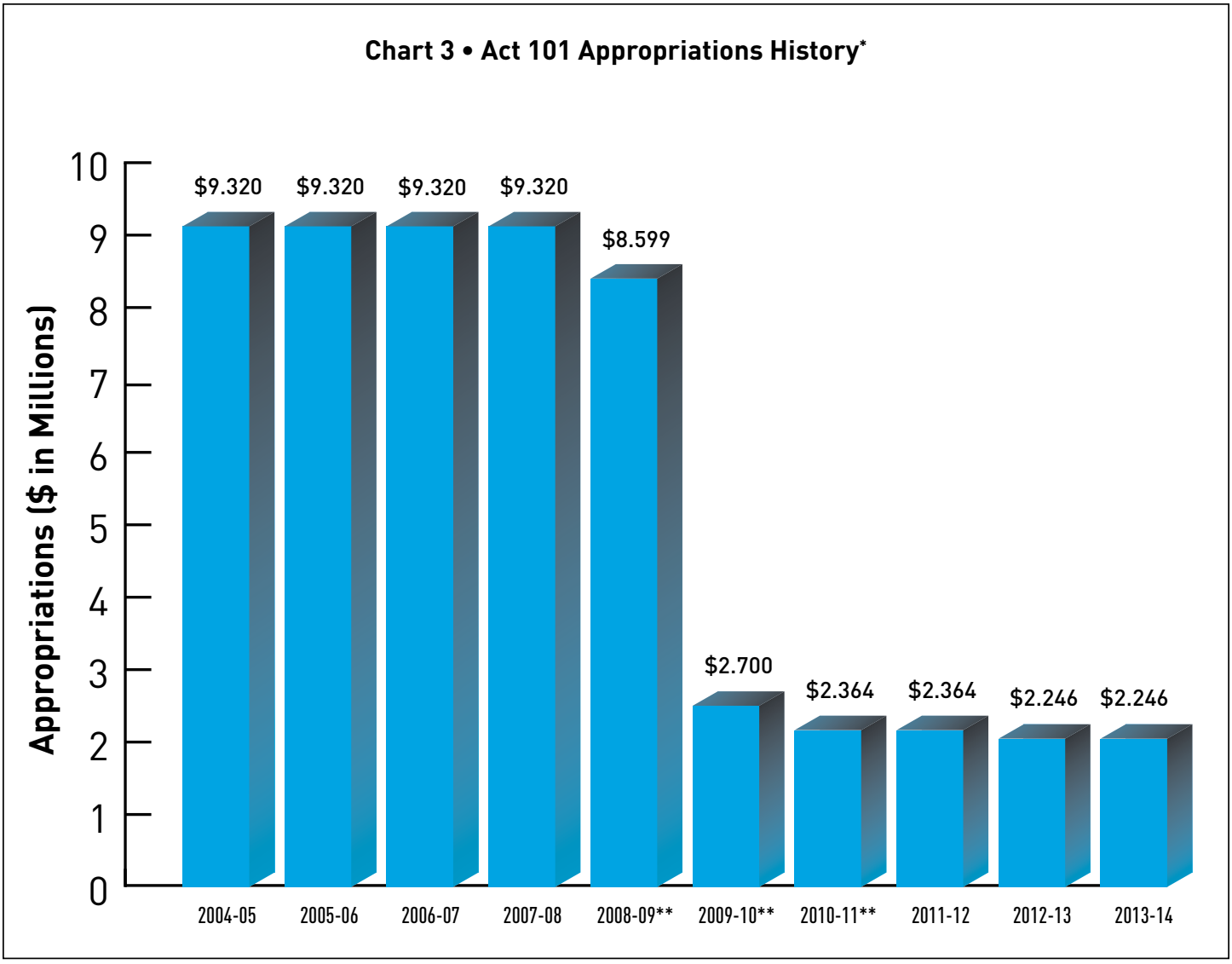
- **Award Recipients**
  - Four-year private college and university students had the highest percentage of award recipients at 81.38 percent (1,093 of 1,343 State Grant applicants).
  - Business, trade, and technical school students had the lowest percentage at 10.94 percent (14 of 128 State Grant applicants).
- **Award Averages**
  - Community college students received the smallest average awards at $1,562, a reflection of low attendance costs.
  - Four-year private college and university students received the largest at $3,965, a reflection of high attendance costs.
  - The overall average to all Act 101 award recipients was $3,441; the overall average award to all recipients attending Pennsylvania institutions was $3,152. For the 2013-14 award year, Pennsylvania State Grants ranged from a minimum of $500 to a maximum of $4,363.

Federal Direct Loans

- **Borrowers**
  - Business, trade, and technical school students had the lowest rate of borrowing at 38.28 percent (49 of 128).
  - State-related university students had the highest rate at 100.0 percent (59 of 59), followed by PASSHE students at 95.24 percent (1,582 of 1,661).
- **Annual Loan Averages**
  - Community college students who borrowed had the smallest average loan at $2,942.
  - State-related university students who borrowed had the highest at $8,216.

TABLE 6 • INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE ACT 101 PROGRAM 2013-14 PROGRAM YEAR

INSTITUTION	2013-14 FINAL ALLOCATION
Arcadia University	$36,822
Bloomsburg University	$193,800
Cedar Crest College	$36,176
Commonwealth Technical Institute	$32,300
Community College of Allegheny County	$34,884
Community College of Beaver County	$80,750
Delaware County Community College	$68,476
Delaware Valley College	$38,760
Drexel University	$43,928
Duquesne University	$98,192
Eastern University	$32,300
Gannon University	$32,946
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	$193,800
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania - Punxsutawney	$76,874
Keystone College	$40,052
King's College	$63,954
La Salle University	$87,210
Lincoln University	$39,406
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania	$62,016
Luzerne County Community College	$53,618
Montgomery County Community College	$76,228
- Montgomery County Community College - West Campus	$50,388
Orleans Technical Institute	$64,600
Pennsylvania Institute of Technology	$25,840
Robert Morris University	$100,776
Rosemont College	$32,946
Saint Francis University	$35,530
Saint Vincent College	$35,530
Shippensburg University	$73,644
Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology	$147,934
Thiel College	$32,300
Waynesburg University	$46,512
West Chester University	$147,288
Westmoreland County Community College	$59,432
Wilkes University	$49,742



*In June 2011, Act 26 transferred the administration of the Act 101 Program from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to PHEAA.

**During these fiscal years, state appropriations were decreased mid-year with the reduced amounts indicated.

NOTES:

Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has evolved into one of the nation's leading student aid organizations. Today, PHEAA is a national provider of student financial aid services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, outreach, and other student aid programs.

PHEAA's earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs, including administration of the Pennsylvania State Grant and other state-funded student aid programs. PHEAA continues to devote its energy, resources and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools, and taxpayers.

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing activities nationally as American Education Services (AES) and FedLoan Servicing.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Representative William F. Adolph, Jr.
Chairman, Springfield

Senator Wayne D. Fontana
Vice Chairman, Pittsburgh

Representative Matthew Bradford
Worcester

Representative Mike Carroll
Avoca

Representative Paul I. Clymer
Sellersville

Senator Edwin B. Erickson
Newtown Square

Senator Mike Folmer
Lebanon

Representative Jaret Gibbons
Ellwood City

Senator Vincent J. Hughes
Philadelphia

Representative Sandra J. Major
Montrose

Representative Michael Peifer
Greentown

Mr. D. Raja
Pittsburgh

Honorable Roy Reinard
Holland

Representative James R. Roebuck, Jr.
Philadelphia

Senator Joseph B. Scarnati, III
Jefferson

Chancellor Timothy R. Thyreen
Waynesburg

Senator Robert M. Tomlinson
Bensalem

Senator Sean Wiley
Erie

Senator John N. Wozniak
Johnstown

PA Secretary of Education

PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY

ACT 101 PROGRAM

1200 North Seventh Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444 · Phone: **717.720.2800**

These materials have been developed and paid for by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for informational purposes. Although the information contained in this document is believed to be accurate at the time of printing, PHEAA does not guarantee its accuracy. You should independently verify that this information is correct.

PHEAA
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

GR-ACTAR
102314

DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Office of
Academic Advising,
Retention & Diversity

Act 101 Testimonial by Antoinette Torres
Drexel University

In 1971 the Pennsylvania legislature passed the Higher Education Opportunity Program, ACT 101 to support to undergraduate students whose cultural, economic and educational experiences place them at risk for *degree access and completion* – not because of their intellectual or academic capacities, their motivation, work effort or potential, rather because of the educational inequities sustained by the hazards of their economic state – including a dearth of role models, paucity of rich and challenging high school coursework and experiences and implicitly, limited pathways to college.

Where the quality of high school education and resources matter to a young person's successful college entry (and *completion*), low SES students arrive at college inadequately prepared and under resourced on multiple levels. Although they are arriving at university thresholds among the best and brightest of their high school class, predictive measures of achievement often have ACT 101 participants *profiled* as "unlikely to succeed".

Well before concepts like resilience, grit and scholarly grit became part of the national dialogue regarding student success and degree completion, ACT 101 shaped strategies that would have us commit to and invest in capacity and potential, building on these inherent student qualities. Through ACT 101 we have created a demonstration proof that with the right kinds of interventions – that demystify student understanding of college going and transition, and that bolster readiness skills, college mindset and planning, low income students can achieve at levels commensurate with their peers and graduate. That their success is possible.

Drexel University has implemented critical program components of ACT 101 to create an institutional climate that leverages faculty and staff investment in student

potential, addressing gaps in academic preparation; and that foster academic and social integration. These include:

- **Dragon Scholars summer program** offering high demand courses in math, English and writing, centered on research. In context, students learn time management, problem-solving, and study skills and take part in social and cultural events. Dragon Scholars prepares participants for the new expectations and requirements of college courses, and fosters a close-knit peer group.
- **Assessment of incoming skills for placement** into first courses of "best fit" and co-curricular sections to close the readiness gap. Supplemental support emphasizes the development of critical reasoning skills often absent in students' K-12 preparation, fosters academic community and relationships with graduate students instructors and peer role models.
- Degree plans that lay out for ACT 101 students their path to timely degree completion, based on entering first term coursework. Academic advisors play a significant role in working with the ACT 101 team to monitor continuous enrollment and progress.
- **Academic Coaching** to develop goal orientation and fulfillment skills, including priority setting and time management.
- **First year seminars** to reflect on, contextualize and manage the first year experience and foster a like minded community. Peer mentors, faculty and staff engage with students to foster relationships, dialogue and students' integration with the University.

Our greatest source of pride in the program is that ACT 101 students have not only cultivated their sense of belonging at Drexel, they are contributors to a vital and diverse University. They are supporting their colleagues, engaging in the community as role models and mentors, and are fulfilling their academic and professional ambitions. The program has given proof that we can mitigate low prediction through mindful strategies that assume other strengths and "funds of knowledge" that are equally compelling.

LASALLE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AND LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES
Academic Discovery Program

TESTIMONY OF BOB MIEDEL, ACT 101 DIRECTOR, LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
5/26/15 HOUSE DEMOCRACTIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING

Thank you for allowing me to join my fellow Act 101 Directors in speaking before the House Democratic Policy Committee about the PHEAA/Act 101 program on our college campuses.

By way of background, I have served as a Director of the Act 101 program at La Salle University since 1985, and while regulations and policies have changed over the years, one thing has not changed: the mission of the Act 101 programs throughout the Commonwealth to assist talented college students who need academic and financial assistance so that they can succeed in their studies, learn skills that they will need in their lives, and compete in the work force after they graduate.

While each Act 101 program around the Commonwealth is unique, most offer tutoring, counseling, and advising. At La Salle, we also run a six-and-a-half-week summer program for Philadelphia students, offering these incoming freshmen seven college credits in Math and Integrative Studies (Writing, Critical Reading, and Study Skills). Although these courses and the seven credits are free to our students, the Act 101 program provides some of the funds for the summer faculty salaries. In addition to the formal summer classes, we offer workshops that help students adjust to their studies, and we have individual and group counseling sessions because we know that students need not only academic skills to succeed, but also emotional and social support too. I should also mention that a donor provides the English and Math texts for our students during the summer.

In the academic year, our freshmen take standard college courses but are required as part of the Act 101 program to take at least two hours of tutoring or Supplemental Instruction per week, again at no charge. In addition, Act 101 freshmen have their own advisor whom they see several times throughout the academic year. We also require the freshmen to meet for a minimum of twenty minutes per week with our Act 101 counselor, who helps them establish, in writing, goals for the semester, and if the students falter, the counselor and the students focus on how to re-establish themselves. The counselor also conducts once-a-month group meetings for the freshmen where they explore their strengths and their career interests. The Act 101 program at La Salle is a four-year program, so once the students make it through their freshman year, we stay with them until they graduate. The sophomores see the counselor every other week and meet with their ADP advisor for pre-registration or as needed while the juniors and seniors see the director, advisor, or counselor several times throughout their last years at La Salle as they prepare for entry into the working world.

The Act 101 program at La Salle is highly valued for a few reasons, one of which is that La Salle University has a long history of serving students who have needed academic and financial assistance, and in fact this is part of our mission. This call to service can be traced back to the original founder of the Christian Brothers, John Baptist de La Salle, who devoted his life's work in the late 1600's to serving those most in need. He and his "brothers" taught their students, abandoned by society, so that these young people could have solid educations and thus lead better lives. La Salle University continues that work and fully supports the Act 101 program at the university. Alumni have also recognized the benefits of the Act 101 program and have donated significant funds to support the students, providing money for occasional lunch tickets, trans passes, emergencies, and texts.

The second reason that La Salle values our Act 101 program so much is that our students perform really well, and their achievements reflect well on the university. For example, for the past two years we have had two of our freshmen win the Gus Amsterdam Leadership Award, sponsored by the Comcast Foundation—that award is offered to only two students each year from all of the Philadelphia public and charter schools. We also had two of our freshmen this year compete in California for a prize for their invention: a jacket with a solar patch that can charge smart phones. Our Act 101 students are academically competitive with the other non-Act 101 students at La Salle, and our students graduate at a higher rate than the national average for independent colleges. That's a lot to be proud of. To get a sense of how articulate our students are, google "PHEAA La Salle" to see a fairly recent YouTube clip of our students talking about La Salle's Act 101 program.

Finally, we know from our alumni how valuable the Act 101 program is. Many of our Act 101 alumni stop by to share their successes. One alumna from 1999 visited last week: she works for a social welfare agency and helps abused children. Another graduate (2009), who stopped by two weeks ago, works for Abington Hospital—she finished her MSW in one year at Bryn Mawr while working full-time at Einstein Hospital. Another graduate, Frank (graduated in 1985!) stopped by with his son this past fall. As his Act 101 advisor from 1981 to 1984, I still remember talking to Frank about his poor living conditions and his lack of spending money. Now, as a computer programmer at University of Pennsylvania, he is indeed a success, a taxpayer, and a good father, partially because of the opportunities afforded him through Act 101.

Please consider supporting and strengthening this wonderful program that has changed the lives of tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians since it began in 1971.

Testimony
For
House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing on Act 101
May 26, 2015

Donna Dickinson
King's College, 133 North River Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA. 18711

Good afternoon Chairman Sturla, Chairman Roebuck, Rep. Kinsey, and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee. My name is Donna Dickinson and I am the Act 101 Director at King's College. I am also the President-Elect of PADE (Pennsylvania Association of Developmental Educators) whose membership includes faculty, administration and staff of two and four year public and private institutions of postsecondary education.

I have worked in the Act 101 program at King's College for twenty years and experienced first-hand the positive impact this access and student support program has had on both the institutional and individual level. King's College was founded in 1946 to provide a Catholic education to the sons of coal miners, first-generation young men, in order to pursue careers which would help break the cycle of poverty. The college admitted women in 1970 to expand their mission of access.

In the fall of 1975 King's was approved for the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Act 101 grant. HB 1213 - The Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act aligned well with the college's mission to provide access to first-generation students with limited financial means so they may pursue a postsecondary education. The grant would now create a formal college department staffed by professionals whose primary responsibility was to increase both access to college and provide special support services to increase persistence and graduation rates.

In addition, Act 101 would assist the students in navigating the college system and understand the "language of academia."

Since 1975 our program has graduated over 1300 individuals who have added to the Commonwealth's tax base and have become teachers, lawyers, business managers, law enforcement officers and many more in the service industry. More importantly these graduates have become positive role models and mentors in their communities and families, making Act 101 a generational program. Act 101 is also a fiscally sound investment for the future economic development of the Commonwealth to keep us competitive in the global market. The Rand Corporation conducted a study some 5 years ago that stated, "graduating from college rather than ending schooling with some college, provides the largest impact on tax payments." Mr. K. Leory Irvis, PA Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1971, understood that denying such opportunities would harm the Commonwealth's economic and cultural growth. He drafted legislation to enact the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act. Act 101 is not a poverty program but rather stands out as a middle class initiative moving individuals up the socioeconomic ladder.

On our college level, increasing access to Act 101 students adds to the growth of a healthy, diverse, and culturally rich campus. Our alumni give back to the institution not only monetarily but also in service as panelists for our dedicated Act 101 career planning course and hosts to our job tour initiative. Our students enter the college raw and unpolished but their transformation into inquisitive, critical thinkers and confident graduates is dramatic. Because of the many challenges, be it financial inadequacies, language barriers, family nonsupport to name a few, these students have not only persevered but attained better than average graduation rates. Our six year average graduation rate of 68.2% is higher than the college's 65% rate. How does this happen?

On May 18th the Chronicle of Higher Education included several articles regarding the increasing numbers of first-generation students applying to college, their continued challenges, and the innovations colleges are initiating to increase persistence and graduation rates. A spokeswoman for Hamilton College stated: "It's not just about access. It's about equalizing the experience once students get to campus." Act 101 was created to fulfill that very goal—to guarantee all students an equal chance at success. The King's College Act 101 Program has always been, and continues to be, a laboratory for new innovations to increase student success. Such innovations include upper class peer mentors for our summer students; faculty/staff first-generation mentors for our 1st year students; a dedicated career planning course with a panel of Act 101 seniors and alumni; job tour with alumni for our sophomores, tuition-free summer bridge program earning up to seven credits; appreciative advising and course selection, dedicated first-year experience course co-lead by myself and an upper class Act 101 student; small group workshops on personal development issues such as self-esteem, relationships, value clarification; math and learning specialists. The King's Act 101 Program is a prime example of positive initiatives as found in The Chronicle of Higher Education's November 2014 Student Success Survey titled: "Building a Culture for Retention and Completion on College Campuses." The areas of "social integration, academic performance, career outcomes, course scheduling, affordability, and academic policies" prove to be paramount to student persistence. Other students do not receive these services and that is what makes Act 101 so valued at our institution.

The program can be measured quantitatively but more importantly it is what happens in the lives of our students and the relationships that are forged with our staff. I personally meet one-on-one with each incoming student to explain their financial aid package and billing procedure then assist them with following through on required paperwork or securing additional financial aid. Our counselor helps students "find their voice" in individual and

small group settings in addition to creating an individualized student plan each semester to focus on goals and action steps. Our staff provides student advocacy with faculty, academic standing committee members, financial aid counselors, the bursar & registrar to name a few. Our doors are always open, even after other college offices are closed. We listen when there is no one else willing to "dig deeper" and build a relationship of trust over time.

From our beginnings in 1975 the King's College Act 101 Program increased in student numbers from 49 to a high of 241. New initiatives to foster persistence were piloted and adopted as they proved successful. Our budget was robust enough to "dream big" and provide these initiatives. As the Pennsylvania Legislature continued to dramatically decrease the statewide budget from $9.3 in 2007-08 to $2.3 million today programs have suffered which in turn negatively affected our students' lives.

Take the student who doesn't have a computer at home, lives 75 minutes from campus and doesn't have a reliable mode of transportation. Act 101 funds were once used to purchase laptops for student use but with the drastic budget cuts this benefit is gone, leaving that student without means to adequately complete coursework. Or look at the science students who needed extra support outside the classroom in biology or chemistry, to "catch up" because they came from poor neighborhood high schools. Act 101 funds were used to pay a stipend for biology and chemistry faculty to offer supplemental instruction. Students who cannot afford each semester's cost of textbooks, which can run close to $500, were helped by our extensive lending library. Now, there are not enough funds to provide current editions. An annual regional legislative breakfast was a platform for Act 101 students to "tell their success stories" to Luzerne and Lackawanna County legislators. In addition, an annual statewide leadership conference was held to encourage student achievement and facilitate leadership workshops. Both of these student events have been eliminated.

Our Act 101 population has decreased by half because we need more staffing to adequately serve the academic, personal, and financial needs of our students. I have to turn away eligible students as each year more and more young adults apply to and attend King's College.

Act 101 is still the only access program in the Commonwealth to assist low-income students in pursuing a post-secondary education and "equalizing the experience."

I respectfully urge that the Pennsylvania Appropriations Committee increase Act 101 funding to a minimum of $6 million so that current Act 101 postsecondary institutions can enhance their equal opportunity programs and new Act 101 programs can be developed to meet the increased numbers of first generation, economically challenged students graduating from high schools throughout the Commonwealth. "Act 101 is a dream, an opportunity and an investment" that continues to help the Commonwealth remain economically competitive and produce an educated workforce generation after generation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna J. Dickinson

House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's Act 101 Program
Drexel University, May 26, 2015
Thomas J. Thomas, Executive Director, University College, and
Act 101 Program Director, Wilkes University

Chairman Sturla, Chairman Roebuck, Rep. Kinsey, and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee, I want to thank you for this opportunity to share with you the impact that the Act 101 Program has on students from low-income families at Wilkes University.

Act 101 Students at Wilkes University

Wilkes University has been host to the Act 101 Program since 1976 and has a history of making a college education accessible to first-generation college students. Last academic year, 54% of first-year students reported that neither parent had earned a bachelor's degree and 41% were eligible to receive a federal Pell Grant.

The students who participate in our Act 101 program are selected from those who were not "regular" admit students. Their SAT scores and other predictive measures place them in the bottom 20th percentile of our entering class.

Although academically underprepared, we generally find these students to be sufficiently motivated to achieve a college education. Despite the obstacles that may appear insurmountable at times, they have graduated from high school, taken the college entrance examinations, completed the college search and application process, filed for financial aid, and then taken that last but very emotional step of arriving on campus alongside their better-prepared peers. In short, they did everything asked of them in order to become productive citizens and to work their way into the economic middle class.

When they arrive on campus, it does not take long before they begin to confront the reality that they are not as prepared as most other students, they do not have the same level of family support and guidance, and they do not have the resources necessary to focus on their studies without financial worry. In addition to keeping up with higher academic demands than they have ever faced, their financial aid packages are incomplete, their bills are not paid, and they often do not have the funds to purchase all their books and supplies, let alone a personal computer.

Act 101 Support at Wilkes University

However, when these students attend our Act 101 Orientation, they learn that a program counselor will work to support their success. She will get to know them better than any other professional on campus, will assess their needs and develop an individualized plan of support.

Even before they arrived on campus, she has reviewed their course schedules and made key adjustments to prevent them from becoming immediately overwhelmed. She will serve as their academic advisor if they are in the process of choosing a major; she will serve as their secondary advisor if they have chosen a major.

She will introduce them to note-taking skills, time-management, test-taking and study strategies, both in small groups and one on one. In addition, she will arrange for the appropriate tutoring and supplemental instruction for their most challenging classes.

She will guide them through completion of the financial aid process, helping them to identify additional options for funding their education and explaining the obligations they will assume. She will also work to keep each student focused on maintaining "satisfactory academic progress" so they will not lose their financial aid.

When faced with making important decisions, she will coach them through the process, assuring they consider all options and understand the potential consequences. Here, she will work with them to resolve conflicts between their academic expectations and family obligations.

She will also advocate for their interests with their professors and other offices on campus. When possible, she will teach them how to communicate with professors and others to advocate for themselves.

But for many students enrolled in our Act 101 Program, they need support that goes beyond the obvious. To meet these "invisible" needs, our Act 101 counselor has gone beyond the office walls and taken a student to sign up for food stamps when she could not get support from parents; helped a student find a safe apartment to rent; attended a scholarship dinner in place of a parent to ease the fears of a disability student; helped numerous commuting students arrange for transportation to campus and to clinical assignments; arranged for clothing to be discreetly delivered to several students so they would be dressed appropriately for the cold weather, as well as for interviews; rehearsed with students for speech and business classes and helped students complete summer job applications. These and many similar tasks do not fit the job description for any other position on a college campus.

In a sense, this is also an Act 101 student success story, as our program counselor is a graduate of another Act 101 program, and therefore, has a unique understanding of the needs of our students.

Budget Limitations for Act 101 at Wilkes University

Unfortunately, at a time when the numbers of students from low-income families have been increasing, we have faced budget cuts that have severely hampered our ability to respond to their needs. In 2009, our program budget was decreased by 55%. The budget decreases continued through to 2012, when our program funding was 72% less than it was just four years earlier. All that permitted our program to survive was the support

from other departments at our institution and the fact that other programs around the state closed, making more funds available to us.

The result of the budget cuts was to decrease the number of students served from 115 to 50. We are no longer able to allocate time from other personnel to be devoted exclusively to the Act 101 Program, resulting in the loss of both clerical support and a learning specialist. We have no operating budget dedicated exclusively to Act 101, nor a budget to encourage cultural activities for our students. We also eliminated all professional development, student travel for Act 101 activities, our textbook loan program, as well as the regional and statewide student leadership conferences.

At Wilkes University and in colleges and universities across the Commonwealth, we have found that this comprehensive, well-designed program significantly increases the number of students from low-income families who are able to achieve a college education.

In 2009, the Pennsylvania Department of Education contracted with the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State University, to conduct a formal evaluation of the Act 101 Program. Among their findings is the following:

We conclude that these ìgood programsî refute dim predictions, perform exceptional work, and produce large numbers of college graduates who would not ìget thereî, in other words, would not get into these colleges, persist there, and graduate from there, were it not for the Act 101 program.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of our Act 101 students at Wilkes University. I welcome any questions you may have.

TESTIMONY OF ZAKIYYAH CHASE, ACT 101 STUDENT, LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
5/26/15 HOUSE DEMOCRACTIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING

I want to start off by introducing myself. My name is Zakiyyah Chase. I am a senior criminal justice major at La Salle University. I aspire to become a lawyer and later, a judge. Without the help of La Salle University's Act 101 program, I would not be here today.

I am a product of Philadelphia public schools. Though I graduated from high school at the top of my class, I was in no way prepared for college and what was to come. Initially, when I came in contact with Mr. Miedel, the Director of the Act 101 program at La Salle, I was drawn to the program because of what it could offer me financially. What I didn't know, however, was that I would receive much more than financial support.

In order to be admitted into La Salle through Act 101, I had to take summer classes. I finished that summer semester with a 4.0, and I went into my first year of college with an exceptional grade point average. Not only that, I was able to do so free of charge. I did not have to pay summer tuition. Nor did I have to pay for books. And I did not have to pay for the subject tutoring I received. I did not have to pay for anything. While my friends from high school were down the shore, on roller coasters at the local amusement parks, and barbecuing with their buddies, I was working hard to put myself in the right position for my college career. Doing so required discipline, which I would not have developed had I not attended college through an Act 101 program.

As a freshman at La Salle, I had not realized that about 95% of my tuition was covered until I made friends with students outside of La Salle's Act 101 program. While I was taking out small loans to cover what my financial aid package didn't, they were trying to get their parents to apply for parent plus loans, bank loans, and more. For once, I, an economically disadvantaged young mother from Northeast Philadelphia, was not the one struggling to keep everything together. But if I had not come to La Salle through the Act 101 program, I would more than likely be struggling to get those university bills paid as well.

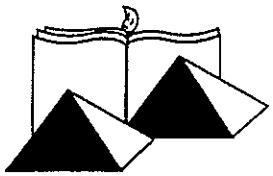
But it is not all about money. I became a member of the advisory board for Act 101 at La Salle. In addition, the program has a leadership council I once sat on as well as a peer-mentoring group that I collaborated with for two years. Through the Act 101 program I was able to get experience attending formal meetings, have my concerns heard by a variety of other board members, organize trips, student gatherings, and other events, and help underclassmen transition from high school to college. All thanks to Act 101.

I stand here today, as a product of Philadelphia public schools. I was once told nothing is expected of me, based solely on where I come from. Now I am proud to say I am a product of an exceptional Act 101 program, and I have the potential to go anywhere I want to go in life. Please continue enhancing and supporting Act 101, so that more underprivileged students like me can have a fighting chance to make something out of themselves!

Thank you for having me here today. I appreciate all that you and your colleagues in the Commonwealth's Legislature have done for me and others like me.

Zakiyyah Chase

SUBMITTED FOR RECORD OF 5/26/15 HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING



Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education, Inc. (PBCOHE)

May 18, 2015

Dear Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus Members:

The PA Black Conference on Higher Education, Inc. is proud that our organization contributed to and supported the vision of the late Speaker of the House of Representatives, The Honorable K. Leroy Irvis, for the inception of the Higher Education Opportunity Program – ACT 101 in 1971. For more than 40 years, this outstanding program has provided higher education opportunities and academic support services to countless deserving students. These students, categorized as economically and educationally disadvantages, have become success stories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and beyond.

Our organization does not have to search far for evidence of the success of this program, since many of our members are either proud graduates of or staff members of the ACT 101 Program. Beyond the testimonials of these individuals, a research of the relevant literature regarding developmental education programs indicates that a key factor in predicting the success of ACT 101-type students is a strong foundation, such as a respectable first-year grade point average. The data presented in the 2013-14 ACT 101 Program Annual Report notes that the first-year retention rate from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 was 70.88%, exceeding the national average rate of 65.8%. This finding provides evidence that the ACT 101 programs are achieving the objective of assisting its students in obtaining this important beginning foundation.

Further evidence is provided by the Penn State College of Education Center for the Study of Higher Education Report authored by Robert Reason, Ph.D., Dorothy Evensen, Ph.D., and Donald Heller Ed.D., entitled, "Evaluation of Pennsylvania's ACT 101 Program" completed in 2009. The report was funded by the PA Department of Education and focused on a review of five ACT 101 programs at Bloomsburg, West Chester, LaSalle and Temple Universities, in addition to Harrisburg Area Community College. The authors' concluding remarks were as follows: "The five ACT 101 programs investigated in the qualitative study, yield findings closely aligned with the major categories that structured our review of the literature. Each provide academic preparation, academic integration and social integration for a group of students for whom the prognosis for college, based on conventional indicators, is not good. We conclude that these "good programs" refute dim predictions, perform exceptional work, and produce large numbers of college graduates who would not "get there", in other words, would not get into these colleges, persist there, and graduate from there, were it not for the ACT 101 Program." We are delighted that this report has reached such an affirming conclusion.

Regrettably, the 2013-14 ACT 101 Program Report also notes a dramatic decline in Commonwealth funding from $9.320 million in 2004-05 to $2.246 million in 2013-14. This reduced level of funding has no doubt led to a decreased number of campus programs, decrease in students being afforded this opportunity, and a decrease in providing support services to enrolled students.

In our judgment, the impressive record of the ACT 101 programs warrants increased funding so that more deserving students can achieve success. We, the Executive Council of the PA Black Conference on Higher Education, respectfully request your support and advocacy for a funding increase to the ACT 101 Program to the levels near those of 2004-05.

Sincerely,

Sharon Stringer

Sharon Stringer, Ph.D.
President, PBCOHE