



New Council Aims to Boost Students' College and Career Readiness

Nine organizations have joined forces to form the Council of National School Counseling and College Access Organizations, with the goal of supporting every United States student with college and career preparation, access, and success. Through this collaborative council, the member organizations that reach almost 20 million professionals, students and families will develop competencies and identify priorities for professionals who support students in their transition to college and careers.

The organizations comprising the new council are the American Counseling Association (ACA), ACT, American School Counselor Association (ASCA), College Advising Corps (CAC), The College Board, Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), National College Access Network (NCAN), and The Southern Regional Education Board's Go Alliance (SREB).

The new Council of National School Counseling and College Access Organizations was created following the second White House Convening in November 2014 at San Diego State University to support the [Reach Higher Initiative](#) launched by First Lady Michelle Obama. Reach Higher seeks to motivate students to complete their education beyond high school, whether they attend a professional training program, community college, or four-year college or university.

“Having these nine organizations come together will make a powerful difference in realizing the promise of the Reach Higher Initiative to support all students in the United States in taking charge of their futures,” said Eric Waldo, executive director of First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative.

According to the council's statement of purpose, the member organizations “believe in the right of every student to have access to counseling and advisement for postsecondary (career and college) preparation, access and success.” The statement also acknowledges that many different professions serve students in this regard, including school counselors, advisors, and other professionals, each with different specialized training, skills, and competencies.

The council's member organizations have identified common prerequisites for the effective delivery of counseling and advisement for postsecondary preparation, access, and success, including:

1. A commitment to collaboration among professionals in service to students.

2. Cultural competence and the ability to work with all students, including students who are currently underserved and underrepresented.
3. Proficiency in the use of data to assist in identifying, designing, implementing, and evaluating policies and practices related to counseling and advising students for postsecondary access and success.
4. Training in both the theory and practice of advising students for postsecondary access and success.

“The First Lady’s Reach Higher initiative has inspired our organizations to tap into our collective expertise to provide assistance and resources for school counselors and college access professionals,” noted Joyce Smith, CEO of NACAC. “In so doing, we hope to better equip our members to help all students achieve their educational and professional aspirations.”

The new organization plans to conduct a comprehensive asset map across organizations and institutions identifying competencies, knowledge and skill set requirements, and resources for advising students for postsecondary access and success. The council will also identify other concrete priorities including advocacy, research, and communication to policymakers and administrators on behalf of counseling and advising professionals.

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