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An Overview and Data Report on College Application Month 2015

Background

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC), launched by the American Council on Education (ACE), is a national effort implemented in 50 states whose primary focus is to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. ACAC highlighted research studies that found students are either not applying to college or not applying early enough in their senior year, not applying to colleges that are a good fit, and are not applying to enough colleges. Findings included: a) positive correlations between the number of colleges high school students apply and their likelihood of four-year college enrollment (*College Board Advocacy and Policy Center Research Brief, October 2011*); and 2) only a small number of high-achieving, low-income students apply to colleges that resemble their achievement's like their counterparts (*Hoxby & Turner, 2013*). Also, the research indicated that providing college application "coaching" to high school seniors increased postsecondary enrollment (*Carrell & Sacerdote, 2013*), and the decision to not apply to college suggests that decisions are made before high school graduation (*Hahb & Price, 2008*).

As a proactive response to the findings, the national effort aims to assist high school seniors in navigating the college admissions process and to ensure that each participating student submits at least one college admissions application.

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) staff, in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education, met with North Carolina/GEAR UP in 2009 to study the College Application Day model and possibly implement a program in South Carolina. SC joined ACE in 2009 as the fifth state to implement CAM events statewide. With additional support from community and business leaders, volunteers and college admission professionals, CAM has transitioned from a month into a "season" which includes September, October, and November each year. South Carolina is among 50 states that actively participate in the national college application effort.

Program Model: College Application Month

In 2015, 215 high schools across the state hosted College Application events in the fall (September – November) during regular school business hours in academic spaces such as computer labs or classrooms utilizing laptops/desktops/tablets. Depending on the needs/space/time available at the individual high school, events were held during a full class period, full day, two-day or for an entire month to allow for flex-scheduling for appointments with seniors by the school counselor. During these events, high school seniors were provided with the opportunity to receive one-on-one college application assistance from the community, school volunteers and college admissions professionals. In addition to the assistance received, many college admission professionals, as approved by their respective institution, provided application fee waivers to students to be validated either on that specific event day or during the length of CAM. **(Attachment I)**

Sustainability

CAM 2009-2014 was funded by the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG), a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the CACG grant was to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Due to the inability to meet the maintenance of effort requirement from the State to fund higher education, which was a required component of CACG, grant funding was not awarded in FY 2015. After careful evaluation of the program, estimated costs to host basic CAM events statewide, is approximately \$5,500. CAM 2015 was funded through efforts and contributions from current partners, including the SC Chamber of Commerce and the SC Department of Education. Moving forward, CHE will continue to evaluate additional funding sources and resources to support CAM, including absorbing the cost into the agency's budget. With the additional assistance of an eight member College Application Month Sustainability Committee which consisted of college admissions officers and high school counselors, CHE staff created interactive materials that were made available online via www.sccango.org, such as the Site Coordinator Toolkit, Student Resource Manual, CAM flyer and poster templates, and the "Step 1 Step 2 College" brochures. Each of the items are available on the website and are print and email responsive. Current partners of CAM events consist of CHE, SC Department of Education, and the SC Chamber of Commerce.

CAM 2015 also saw the introduction of an additional partnership with the Carolina Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (CACRAO). CACRAO is the professional organization that represents the Admissions and Recruitment officers at the State's higher education institutions. A large part component of the CAM effort is the presence of college and university representatives at the CAM events in each high school to assist with application and admissions questions. In previous years, the feedback from the higher education institutions was that CAM represented an opportunity for greater collaboration coordination amongst the institutional Admission's departments and CHE. To address this opportunity, CHE and CACRAO developed a partnership that would introduce preferred weeks for high schools to hold their CAM events in 2015. In the agreement, high schools would be encouraged to hold their events during specific weeks, based on their geographic region of the state. If a high school held their CAM event during their preferred week, CACRAO could guarantee college representation for their CAM event. While a high school could still register for an event outside of that preferred week, they would do so without a guarantee of having a college representation at their CAM event. The feedback from the higher education institutions and high schools indicate that the partnership between CHE and CACRAO was successful in its first year and will likely continue for CAM 2016.

Evaluation of the Data

In 2015, 215 South Carolina high schools (public, charter, virtual and adult education centers) participated in CAM events. Originally, 218 high schools registered for CAM, however three schools notified CHE staff that they were unable to hold their 2015 events. These high schools consisted of approximately 45,828 high school seniors who had the opportunity to participate in a CAM event at their respective high schools. Of the total number of high school seniors, 21,904 (47%) signed-in to a CAM event. 6,595 (30%) of the signed-in high school seniors completed and submitted an online student survey during an event. According to the student survey data, 9,662 applications were completed by students who completed the survey. Based on these numbers, an estimated 32,090 college applications were completed and submitted by all high school seniors who signed-in to a CAM event. Moving forward, CHE will work with the CAM Sustainability Committee to determine how to encourage more students to complete the survey, as the estimation of completed applications is directly impacted by the survey response rate. **(Attachment II)**

The online student survey (n=6,595) produced data from areas that focused on gender, race/ethnicity, first in family status, application assistance, promotional efforts (where did the student about CAM), application completion and institutions the student applied to during a CAM event. The survey presented the following results: 55% of the participating high schools seniors were female and 45% were male; of the students that self-identified in a specific race/ethnicity category, 46% reported Caucasian, 44% reported Black or African American, and 8% reported Hispanic or Latino. Thirty-two percent reported that they were the first in their family to go to college, 96% reported they learned about CAM events from their school counselor, teacher or friend, and 86% reported they received college application assistance mainly from their school counselor and a college representative. Seventy-nine percent reported they plan to attend a College Goal South Carolina event in the spring of 2016.

Fifty percent of the students completed one college application, 20% completed two, 16% completed three or more and 13% reported they did not complete a college application during CAM. Lastly, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, and Winthrop University received the highest number of applications as reported by the students who participated in the student survey. **(Attachment III)**

Three Step Process

Once high school seniors complete and submit college applications during CAM (Step 1), the second step for high school seniors is to seek sources to help pay for postsecondary education. For several students in SC, timely completion and submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an essential part of this process. College Goal SC (Step 2) is funded by the National College Access Network, administered statewide by CHE staff and supported by the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

College Goal SC is an annual event during the month of February which provides assistance to students and families/guardians who are completing the FAFSA. Additionally, the FAFSA can be a prerequisite for qualifying for the SC Need-based grant and private awards. Students receive professional financial aid assistance in completing and submitting the FAFSA during a College Goal SC event. Students are also provided information on state scholarship programs, as well as information about the state's two and four-year higher education institutions.

This spring (2016), CHE will add a third step to the college access process, College Decision Day. College Decision Day is a part of the First Lady's Reach Higher Initiative, and is being implemented on a national scale this spring. College Decision Day can take various forms, depending on the high school in which the event takes place, however the purpose is constant in every school. The purpose of College Decision Day is to celebrate the academic achievements of high school students, and their decision to attend a post-secondary institution upon high school graduation, much in the manner that high school athletes are celebrated on their College Signing Day. High schools are asked to place emphasis on a high school junior's decision to attend college and a college senior's decision on which college they wish to attend upon high school graduation. High schools will be able to access promotional materials to support their College Decision Day event through the SCANGO website.

Attachment I

College Application Month 2015 Event Sites

** Final End of Event Reports for these College Application Month events were not submitted by the site coordinator by the deadline 1/30/16.*

School	Date	Start Time	# of Signed in Students
Abbeville High School	9/22/2015	10:00AM	82
AC Flora High School	9/21/2015	9:00 AM	204
Academy for Technology and Academics	10/16/2015	8:30 AM	89
Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology	11/18/2015	9:00 AM	73
Aiken High School	11/17/2015	8:30 AM	55
Airport High School	10/6/2015	9:00 AM	90
Alfred Rush Academy		9:00AM	5
Allendale-Fairfax High School	9/16/2015	8:30 AM	50
Andrew Jackson High School	9/30/2015	9:00 AM	125
Andrews High School	10/29/2015	1:30 PM	60
Ashley Ridge High School	11/5/2015	8:00 AM	142
Aynor High School	10/28/2015	8:30 AM	*
Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School	9/22/2015	8:00 AM	*
Baptist Hill Middle High School	11/5/2015	8:00 AM	54
Barnwell High School	9/17/2015	8:00 AM	25
Batesburg-Leesville High School	9/3/2015	10:00 AM	*
Battery Creek High School	9/24/2015	8:00 AM	72
Beaufort High School	9/24/2015	8:00 AM	239
Beaufort-Jasper Academy for Career Excellence	10/9/2015	8:30 AM	15
Belton Honea Path High School	10/8/2015	8:30 AM	195
Berea High School	10/20/2015	11:00 AM	138
Berkeley High School	11/6/2015	8:30 AM	75
Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School	9/16/2015	8:30 AM	40
Blacksburg High School	10/16/2015	8:00 AM	91

Blackville-Hilda High School	9/14/2015	9:00 AM	25
Blue Ridge High School	10/1/2015	9:00 AM	108
Bluffton High School	10/1/2015	8:00 AM	33
Blythewood High School	9/24/2015	8:30 AM	120
Boiling Springs High School	10/1/2015	8:30 AM	*
Branchville High School	10/30/2015	9:15 AM	*
Brashier Middle College Charter High School	10/9/2015	11:30 AM	66
Brookland Cayce High School	9/11/2015	9:00 AM	*
Broome High School	9/24/2015	8:30 AM	213
Buford High School	10/22/2015	2:00 PM	80
Burke High School	10/1/2015	9:00 AM	25
C. E. Murray High School	11/4/2015	9:00 AM	56
C.A. Johnson High School	10/29/2015	9:00 AM	*
Calhoun County High School	10/30/2015	9:00 AM	90
Calhoun Falls Charter School	10/22/2015	9:00 AM	22
Cane Bay High School	10/9/2015	8:30 AM	162
Carolina Forest High School	11/3/2015	8:00 AM	206
Carolina High School	10/30/2015	9:00 AM	68
Carvers Bay High	10/13/2015	8:00 AM	73
Chapin High School	10/26/2015	8:30 AM	350
Chapman High School	9/3/2015	8:30 AM	194
Charleston Charter School for Math and Science	11/3/2015	9:00AM	Cancelled Event
Cheraw High School	10/23/2015	8:30 AM	*
Chesnee High School	10/21/2015	8:00 AM	153
Chester High School	10/1/2015	8:00 PM	91
Chesterfield High School	10/22/2015	8:00 AM	110
Clinton High School	9/23/2015	8:30 AM	89
Clover High School	10/2/2015	10:00 AM	180
Colleton County High School	11/9/2015	8:30 AM	92
Columbia High School	10/28/2015	9:00 AM	*
Conway High School	10/29/2015	8:30 AM	202
Creek Bridge High School	11/6/2015	8:30 AM	22
Crescent High School	10/27/2015	8:00 AM	118
Crestwood High School	11/16-20/2015 ENTIRE WEEK	9:00 AM	237
Darlington High School	10/13/2015	8:00 AM	208
Denmark-Olar High School	9/24/2015	8:30 AM	40
Dillon High School	10/14/2015	9:00 AM	237
Dixie High School	9/3/2015	8:00 AM	66
Dreher High School	10/9/2015	8:00 AM	176
Dutch Fork High School	10/9/2015	8:00AM	69
Easley High School	9/11/2015	9:00 AM	8

East Clarendon High School	10/14/2015	8:30 AM	39
Eastside High School	9/30/2015	8:45 AM	180
Eau Claire High School	9/18/2015	8:30 AM	109
Edisto High School	9/23/2015	8:00 AM	115
Emerald High School	10/1/2015	9:00 AM	117
Estill High School	10/14/2015	8:00 AM	40
F.E. DuBose Career Center	9/10/2015	12:00 PM	20
Fairfield Central High School	10/14/2015	9:00 AM	141
Fort Dorchester High School	10/1/2015	7:30 AM	163
Fort Mill High School	9/24/2015	8:30 AM	123
Fox Creek High School	10/9/2015	9:00 AM	98
Gaffney High School	11/6/2015	8:00 AM	275
Garrett Academy of Technology	10/29/2015	9:00 AM	62
Georgetown High	10/27/2015	11:00 AM	57
Georgetown County Adult Education	10/27/2015	12:00PM	21
Gilbert High School	10/1/2015	8:30 AM	51
Goose Creek High School	10/1/2015	8:30 AM	89
Great Falls High School	9/8/2015	12:00 PM	43
Green Sea Floyds High School	9/1/2015	8:00 AM	39
Greenville High School	9/30/2015	11:30 AM	85
Greenville Tech Charter High School	10/28/2015	10:00 AM	19
Greenwood High School	10/13/2015	8:30 AM	66
Greer High School	10/7/2015	10:15 AM	121
Greg Mathis Charter High School	10/30/2015	9:00 AM	15
Hanahan High School	10/23/2015	8:30 AM	52
Hannah-Pamplico High School	11/4/2015	8:00 AM	*
Hartsville High School	10/28/2015	8:00 AM	255
HCS Early College High School	10/9/2015	8:00 - 2:00 (24th) 11-2:20 (25th)	84
HCS Scholars Academy	11/16/2015	12:00 PM	3
Hemingway High School	11/17/2015	8:30 AM	86
Heyward Career and Technology	10/26/2015	9:00 AM	*
Hillcrest High School	10/26/2015	9:30 AM	*
Hilton Head Island High School	10/28/2015	8:00 AM	83
Horry County Schools Adult Ed - Conway Education Center	9/3/2015	10:00:00 AM	51
Horry County Schools Adult Ed - Myrtle Beach Family Learning Center	10/14/2015	9:00:00 AM	65
Hunter-Kinard-Tyler High School	10/28/2015	9:30 AM	*
Indian Land High School	10/27/2015	9:00 AM	102
Irmo High School	9/14/2015	8:30 AM	300
J.L. Mann High School	9/30/2015	8:45 AM	158
James F Byrnes High School	10/29/2015	8:00 AM	379
James Island Charter High School	10/15/2015	8:30 AM	135
Kingstree Senior High School	10/21/2015	8:30 AM	102

Lake City High School	10/13/2015	8:15 AM	135
Lake Marion High School and Technology Center	10/23/2015	9:00 AM	141
Lakewood High School	9/18/2015	9:00 AM	*
Lamar High School	9/10/2015	8:00 AM	46
Lancaster High School	9/16/2015	8:30 AM	160
Landrum High School	10/1/2015	8:30 AM	90
Latta High School	10/20/2015	8:00 AM	95
Laurens District 55 HS	10/6/2015	9:00 AM	157
Lee Central High School	9/22/2015	8:30 AM	90
Legacy Charter School	9/9/2015	9:00 AM	*
Lewisville High School	10/15/2015	8:15 AM	62
Lexington High School	10/2/2015	9:00 AM	78
Liberty High School	9/30/2015	8:00 AM	75
Lincoln Middle High School	10/7/2015	9:00 AM	20
Loris High School	11/3/2015	10:00 AM	84
Lower Richland High School	10/27/2015	8:30 AM	222
Manning High School	10/14/2015	8:30 AM	165
Marion High School	10/8/2015	8:30 AM	144
Marlboro County High School	11/18/2015	8:30 AM	*
Mauldin High School	10/7/2015	9:00 AM	50
McBee High School	10/12/2015	9:50 AM - 2:15 PM	70
McCormick High School	11/18/2015	12:30 PM	32
Mid Carolina High School	9/28/2015	8:30 AM	*
Midland Valley High School	10/8/2015	8:00 AM	111
Midlands Middle College	9/16/2015	12:30 PM	44
Midlands Technical College TRIO Program	10/31/2015	9:00 AM	*
Military Magnet	10/21/2015	9:00 AM	*
Mullins High School	11/16/2015	8:30 AM	100
Myrtle Beach High School	10/13/2015	6:00 PM	*
Nation Ford High School	10/1/2015	9:00 AM	207
Newberry High School	9/25/2015	8:30 AM	103
Ninety-Six High School	9/25/2015	8:25 AM	100
North Augusta High School	9/15/2015	8:30 AM	102
North Charleston High School	10/14/2015	9:00 AM	45
North Middle High School	9/18/2015	10:00 AM	*
North Myrtle Beach High	10/30/2015	8:25 AM	210
Northwestern High School	9/30/2015	11:30 AM	173
Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School	9/16/2015	8:00 AM	129
Olympia High School	10/30/2015	8:30 AM	*
Palmetto High School	10/6/2015	7:45 AM	20
Palmetto Scholars Academy	11/5/2015	9:00AM	Canceled Event
Paul M. Dorman High School	10/15/2015	8:30 AM	425
Pelion High School	10/8/2015	12:00 PM	27

Pendleton High School	10/8/2015	8:30 AM	97
Pickens County Career & Technology Center	10/26/2015	8:00 AM	15
Pickens High School	10/5/2015	9:00 AM	210
Powdersville High School	10/7/2015	9:00 AM	45
Provost Academy	10/16/2015	9:00 AM	10
RB Stall High School	11/5/2015	6:00 PM	114
Richland Northeast High School	9/29/2015	9:00 AM	250
Richland One Middle College	10/29/2015	9:00 AM	Cancelled Event
Ridge Spring-Monetta High School	9/18/2015	8:30 AM	43
Ridge View High School	10/5/2015	9:00 AM	197
Ridgeland Hardeeville High School	11/10/2015	9:00 AM	103
Right Choices High School	9/24/2015	12:00PM	8
River Bluff High School	10/21/2015	8:00 AM	262
Riverside High School	10/14/2015	10:00 AM	60
Rock Hill High School	9/29/2015		155
Saluda High School	10/14/2015	9:00 AM	84
Scott's Branch HS	10/27/2015	8:30 AM	40
Seneca High School	Enitre Month of October	8:15 AM	177
Silver Bluff High School	9/15/2015	4:30 PM	43
Socastee High School	10/1/2015	9:00 AM	233
South Aiken High School	10/14/2015	8:00 AM	75
South Pointe High School	10/1/2015	10:00 AM	275
Southside High School	10/14/2015	8:30 AM	58
Spartanburg High School	10/28/2015	8:30 AM	340
Spring Hill High School	10/22/2015	8:30 AM	159
Spring Valley High School	10/1/2015	9:25 AM	548
St James High School	10/28/2015	10:00 AM	118
St. John's High School	9/1/2015	9:00 AM	25
Stratford High School	11/3/2015	8:40 AM	51
Sumter County Adult Education	9/8/2015	8:00 AM	14
Sumter High School	10/29/2015	9:00 AM	243
Swansea High School	9/1/2015	8:30 AM	81
Tamassee-Salem High School	10/19/2015	8:30 AM	34
Timberland High School	10/15/2015	8:45 AM	66
Timmonsville High School	10/14/2015	8:00 AM	38
TL Hanna High School	10/6/2015	8:30 AM	419
Travelers Rest High School	10/23/2015	9:00 AM	31
Union County High School	10/20/2015	8:00 AM	257
W. J. Keenan High School	10/14/2015	8:45 AM	114
Waccamaw High School	10/26/2015	9:00 AM	98
Wade Hampton High School (Greenville)	10/2/2015	8:00 AM	116
Wade Hampton High School (Varnville)	10/9/2015	9:00 AM	*
Wagener Salley High School	9/15/2015	9:00 AM	42

Walhalla High School	10/9/2015	8:00 AM	52
Wando High School	11/6/2015	9:00 AM	250
Ware Shoals High School	10/7/2015	8:30 AM	43
West Ashley High School	10/1/2015	8:30 AM	250
West Florence High School	10/13/2015	8:30 AM	166
West-Oak High School	10/5/2015 (ENTIRE WEEK)	9:15 AM	157
Westside High School	10/6/2015	9:00 AM	277
Westwood High School	10/6/2015	9:40 AM	302
Whale Branch Early College High School	9/24/2015	8:00AM	94
White Knoll High School	9/23/2015	8:30 AM	155
Whitmire Community School	9/25/2015	8:30 AM	31
Williston-Elko High School	10/2/2015	8:30 AM	73
Wilson High School	10/8/2015	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	150
Woodland High School	10/8/2015	11:00 AM	118
Woodmont High School	10/8/2015	8:45 AM	145
Woodruff High School	10/1/2015	8:45 AM	*
Wren High School	10/5/2015	8:00 AM	*
York Comprehensive High School	10/21/2015	8:30 AM	150
York Preparatory Academy	10/1/2015	8:30 AM	31
TOTAL			21,904

Attachment II

Results of CAM 2009-2015

N/A = information was either not collected or requested by ACE during that specific program year

**There are ~293 public high schools and ~207 private high schools in South Carolina*

***191 out of 215 End of Event reports were submitted to CHE following CAM events by the deadline (1/30/16)*

****Total # of high school seniors who signed-in to a CAM event divided by # of signed-in high school seniors who completed the Student Survey multiplied by the # of completed college applications reported by high school seniors who completed the Student Survey/sign in sheet.*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total # of Participating High Schools	12	57	121	152	186	214*	215*
Total # of high school seniors reported by site coordinators	1,000	15,000	20,820	32,178	39,358	43,931	45,828
Total # of volunteers and college representatives who assisted with CAM events.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,763	2,240	854
# of high school seniors who signed into a CAM event	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20,262	20,416	21,904**
# of signed in high school seniors that	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,958	8,302	8,505	6,595

completed the Student Survey							
# of students who completed the Student Survey self-reported as "First in Family"	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,475	2,088
# of completed college applications reported from high school seniors who completed the Student Survey/sign in sheet	N/A	N/A	N/A	8,638	14,497	26,907	9,662
Estimated # of completed college applications for all high school seniors who signed into a CAM event	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	35,382	64,598***	32,090***

Attachment III

Student Survey Results (n=6,595) from College Application Month 2015

1. **Gender:** 55% (female), 45% (male)
2. **Race/Ethnicity:** 46% (white), 44% (Black or AA), 8% (Hispanic or Latino), 2.0% (other - included two or more races), 1% (Asian), .1% (American Indian or Alaska Native), and .5% (Native Hawaii or other Pacific Islander).
3. **First in Family:** 32% (Yes), 68% (No)
4. **Application Assistance:** 58% (School Counselor), 28% (College Representative), 8% (Other), 4% (Teacher), 1% (Community Volunteer), .8% (Parent), .2% (Business Leader), and .09% (Principal).
5. **Promotional Effort:** 68% (School Counselor), 15% (Teacher), 14% (Friend), 1% (Parent), .9% (Other), .7% (Flyers/Posters), .2% (News/Media), .2% (Social Media).
6. **Completion of Applications:** 50% (one), 20% (two), 22% (three or more), and 13% (Did not complete an application).
7. **Top 10 Applications:** Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Winthrop University, University of South Carolina/Columbia, Francis Marion University, Greenville Technical College, University of South Carolina/Upstate, Clemson University, South Carolina State University, and Charleston Southern University.

Student Comments from the 2015 Student Survey (n=6,595)

Students were asked to comment on their experiences and provide insight on improvements during CAM. Very similar to last year, the responses on how to improve CAM centered on having additional time to participate in the CAM events. "More time" was categorized in two ways: longer class time during the event or allowing for multiple days to host the event. An additional areas that were recommended was to simplify or shorten the application for the colleges. This area will be listed along with a review of the student comments provided in the survey as an action item when collaborating with CACRAO to plan for CAM 2016. Overall, the general student response communicated in the survey was positive towards CAM. Collectively, the responses provided an overall feeling that CAM was successful and the students appreciated the opportunity to receive assistance in completing the college application process.