South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

June 2, 2016

Overview and Data Report on College Goal South Carolina 2016

Background

In the summer of 2006, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) was awarded a three-year grant from the Lumina Foundation, a non-profit education policy foundation committed to increasing the number of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials, to implement College Goal Sunday in South Carolina. College Goal Sunday, which aims to increase the number of college-bound students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), was initially piloted in South Carolina along the I-95 corridor (17 counties) which stretches from Jasper County to Marlboro County.

This year, College Goal South Carolina (CGSC) received a one year grant from the National College Access Network an organization that supports initiatives that focus on preparing students for post-secondary access. CGSC is administered statewide by CHE staff and supported by the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SCASFAA). CGSC has evolved into a true statewide effort and is the second step in the "Step 1-Step 2-Step 3" college access process. This process includes three important steps to accessing higher education: Step 1 (applying to college) Step 2 (paying for college) and Step 3 (celebrating the selection of a college to attend).

CGSC is an annual event hosted during the months of February-March which provides one-on-one 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 other state and private financial assistance. Students receive assistance from financial aid administrators at SC's public and independent colleges and universities in completing and submitting the FAFSA during these events. Students are also provided information on state scholarship programs, as well as information about the state's public and independent two and four-year higher education institutions.

Program Model: College Goal South Carolina

Higher education institutions, high schools and libraries around the state register to host CGSC events each year through CHE. Each individual site consists of an event team that includes: 1) a site coordinator (a financial aid professional employed at the hosting site and/or SCASFAA member, a school counselor or SC GEAR UP graduation coach employed at the hosting high school, or a counselor employed by a SC TRiO program); 2) financial aid staff from higher education institutions in the state and; 3) community business volunteers (professionals in tax preparation and/or financial aid).

Similar to the College Application Month model, students and parents/guardians who attend these events receive one-on-one assistance from financial aid professionals and community business volunteers in an effort to assist with case-by-case questions pertaining to filling out and submitting the FAFSA form during a CGSC session. These sessions are hosted during the months of February and March each year. Some are hosted after school hours during the week but the standard model that is used at several sites is hosting the event during one Saturday from 10:00am – 2:00pm in February or March. Several sites will host additional events at satellite locations to provide additional opportunities for students and parents/guardians in their community to receive assistance with their FAFSA form. The other sites will have appointment times during the period to ensure their students/families who were unable to attend an event had the opportunity to receive assistance during the school day. Once a student and parent/guardian is finished with their CGSC session, they complete the participant survey in order to provide information about completion of the FAFSA during the CGSC event.

Overall Results of College Goal SC 2016

During February and March 2016, CGSC events were hosted in 46 higher education institutions, and high schools throughout S.C. A total of 923 students and parents/guardians participated in these statewide events (reported by sign-in sheets from each location). Out of the total number or participants, 380 completed the College Goal South Carolina 2016 Student Survey. From those 380 who completed the participant survey, 295 (78%) reported as a college-bound student or current senior in high school and 251 (66%) students reported they completed and submitted a FAFSA form.

I. Participants

A total of 923 individuals attended College Goal South Carolina programs during February and March of 2016. Of these attendees, 380 responded to the student survey. Appendix A (p. 12) provides a more detailed overview of the attendance and response rates for each of the 46 College Goal South Carolina sites.

Target Audience
The 2015 College Goal South Carolina Report provided by the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) at Indiana University provided a new definition for the target audience. For purposes of maintaining consistency, this same definition has been retained for use in the 2016 report. The target audience will be determined based on responses to the student survey for College Goal South Carolina 2016 which identify those respondents that are: underrepresented minority students, low income families, and first-generation college students.

Underrepresented minorities are respondents who selected any "yes" response to the question of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity and/or indicated that they identify as Black/African American/African, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian. Multiracial students will only be included if one of the races with which they identify is listed above.
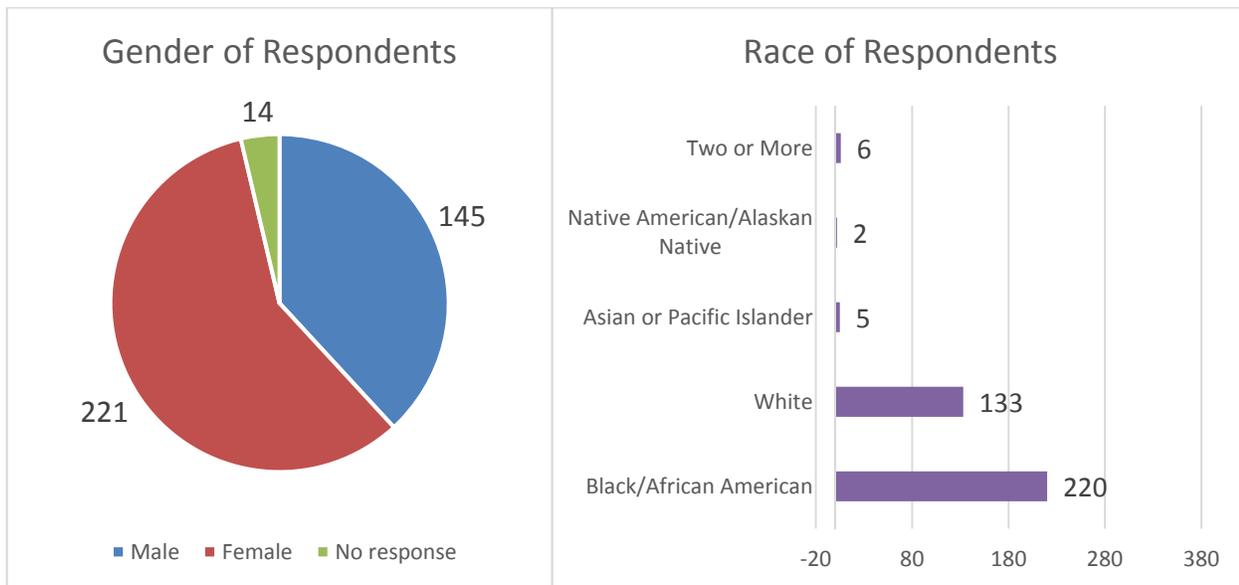
Qualifying as a low income family has been derived from responses to the survey question related to gross income. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) uses a net income level test of 100% of the poverty level and a gross income test of 130% of the poverty level. Therefore, using the 130% level for gross income, the contiguous 28 states and Washington, D.C. will include families with net income less than $30,000 as low-income.

Responding students will be included as first-generation college students if neither parent completed a certificate or degree, even if they had attended college. While not every question will have separate data for total respondents vs. the target audience, there will be charts provided to compare this sub-section of the total respondents, for informational purposes. This information on the target population will serve useful in determining how effective College Goal South Carolina has been with regards to serving

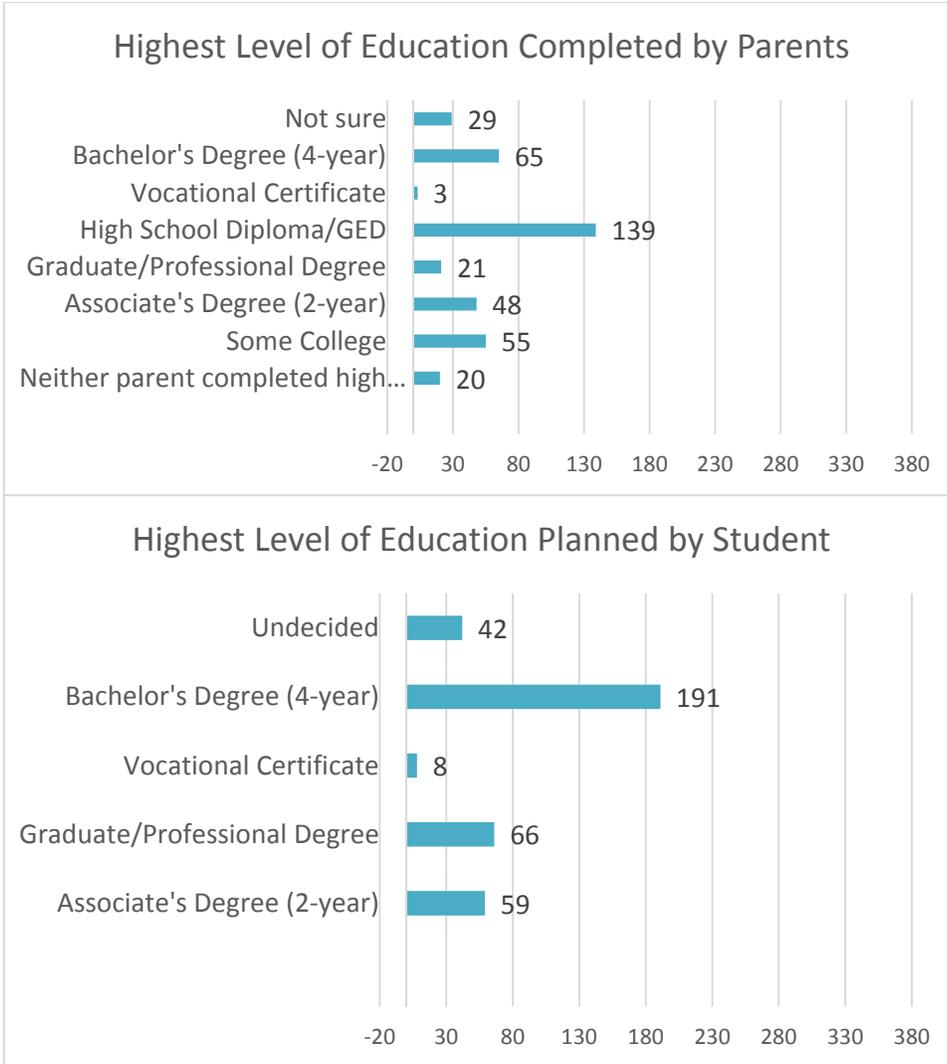its neediest population. For 2016, 145 (38%) of the 380 respondents met the definition of the target audience.

Demographics

Questions in the student survey were asked to capture the composition of the respondents with the hope that the data provided will give the reader a snapshot of type of family and student the College Goal South Carolina Program is serving. The data show that of the 380 participants, 221 (59%) were female and 145 (38%) were male. Most respondents were either 18 or 19 at the time of the event. When asked whether they identify as Hispanic or Latino, 30 (7.8%) respondents indicated that they did identify in this manner. When asked to self-identify within a racial category, a large majority, 220 identified as Black, while 133 identified as White. In summary, 233 of the 380 respondents are considered minority students. The diagrams below provide a visual description of the demographic composition of the respondents.
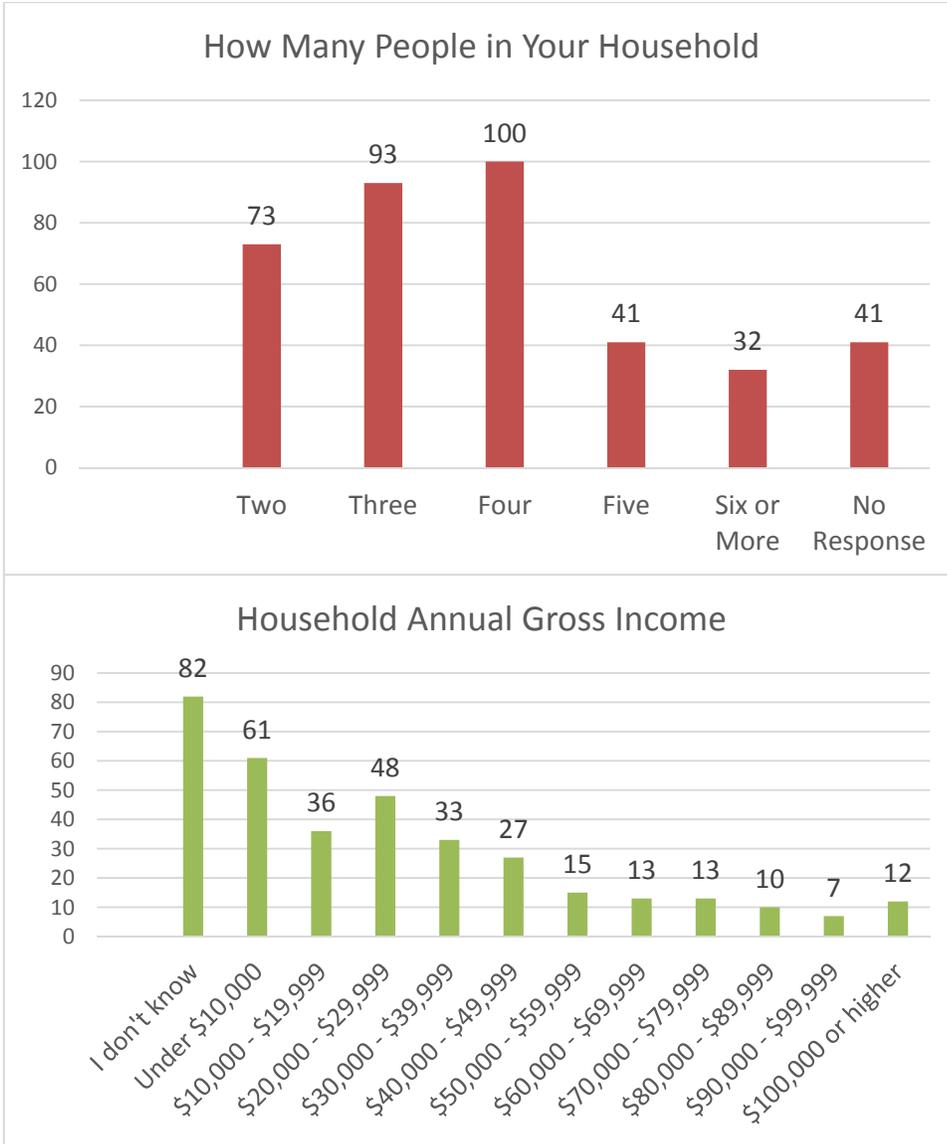
Gender of Respondents

- Male: 145
- Female: 221
- No response: 14

Race of Respondents

- Two or More: 6
- Native American/Alaskan Native: 2
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 5
- White: 133
- Black/African American: 220

Educational Background and Aspirations

The next set of questions from the survey inquired about educational background or aspirations of the parents and student respondents. Respondents were asked to identify their parents' highest level of academic completion, as well as their own post-secondary plans towards degree completion. Students whose parents had not completed at least a degree or certificate after high school are considered to be potential first-generation college graduates, which is also one of the characteristics of the target population College Goal South Carolina, and other FAFSA Completion programs, seek to serve. Participant responses to questions regarding educational background and aspirations are provided below. As the data show, 56% of the respondents indicated that neither of their parents have not completed at least a degree or certificate (High School Diploma/GED – 139 respondents, Some College – 55 respondents & Neither Parent completed high school – 20respondents), which qualifies them to be included in the target population. A positive aspect of the student responses is found in the chart indicating the education aspirations of the respondents. Data show that 67.6% of the respondents intend to obtain a bachelor's or graduate degree.

Highest Level of Education Completed by Parents

Category	Value
Not sure	29
Bachelor's Degree (4-year)	65
Vocational Certificate	3
High School Diploma/GED	139
Graduate/Professional Degree	21
Associate's Degree (2-year)	48
Some College	55
Neither parent completed high...	20

Highest Level of Education Planned by Student

| Category	Value
Undecided	42
Bachelor's Degree (4-year)	191
Vocational Certificate	8
Graduate/Professional Degree	66
Associate's Degree (2-year)	59

Respondent Household Income and Size

The next set of questions were designed to provide demographic information on the income level and household size of the attendees. Respondents were asked to report an estimate of the household's annual income and the number of members in their household. The median gross income of South Carolina households is currently $44,779, according to the latest U.S Census data (United States Census Bureau). Of the 380 respondents, only 18% were in households of at least $50,000 in gross income (self-reported information). The threshold of $30,000 was used as the poverty line for the project, as it is determined by the United States Census Bureau to be the poverty threshold for the State of South Carolina. Using this $30,000 threshold, 38% respondents qualify as "households below the poverty line" based on income. This would place these respondents in the target audience as well. The threshold is based on an income for a four member household, which is appropriate based on the responses provided. The breakdown of income and household size are provided in the charts below. On the average, most homes reported households of 3 to 4 members.

4

How Many People in Your Household

Category	Count
Two	73
Three	93
Four	100
Five	41
Six or More	32
No Response	41

Household Annual Gross Income

Category	Count
I don't know	82
Under $10,000	61
$10,000 - $19,999	36
$20,000 - $29,999	48
$30,000 - $39,999	33
$40,000 - $49,999	27
$50,000 - $59,999	15
$60,000 - $69,999	13
$70,000 - $79,999	13
$80,000 - $89,999	10
$90,000 - $99,999	7
$100,000 or higher	12

Foster Care Identification

Participants were asked to identify involvement in foster care. Their responses are provided in the figures that follow. The chart describing the foster care identification illustrates that the majority of the respondents have never been in foster care.

Currently or previously in Foster Care

- No Response 4%
- Yes 2%
- No 94%
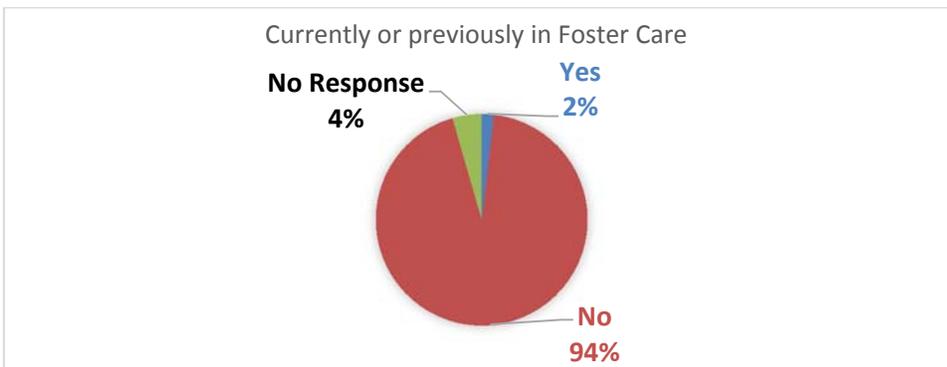
## II. Promoting College Access through FAFSA Completion

Addressing the mission of the CGS program, specific questions within the survey were focused on completion of the FAFSA application. The data within this section show how respondents as a whole responded to the survey. This allows for the ability to compare the experiences of the target audience to the respondents as a whole. It is important to note that the target audience data is included within the data provided for all participants, so they are not two distinct groups.

Completion and Submission of the FAFSA

Participants were asked to respond to the statement "while you were here, did you complete the FAFSA?" Their responses are described in the figures below. The response of "Completed and Submitted" represented 66% (n=251) of the total respondents. Of the respondents in the target population, the 63% (n=91) indicated completion and submission as well. This indicates that the majority of respondents completed and submitted their FAFSA application while participating in CGS.
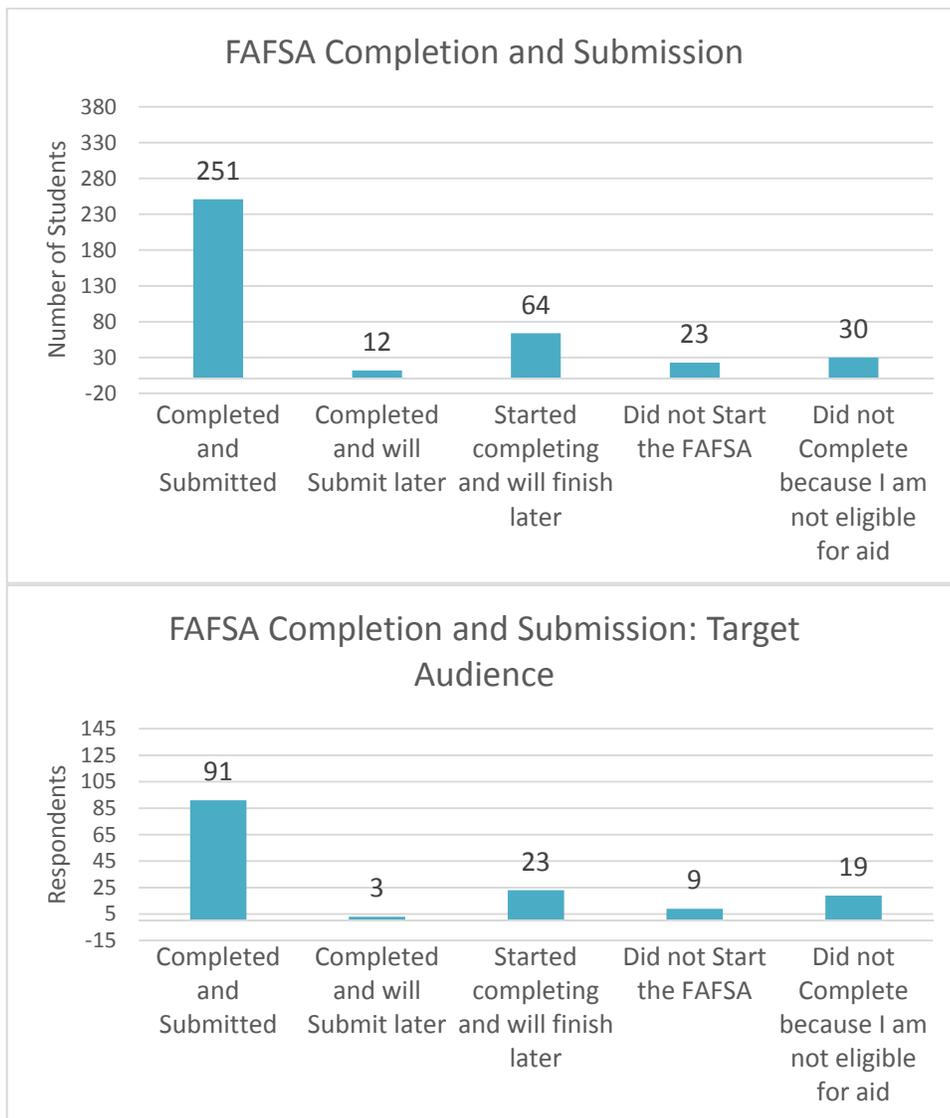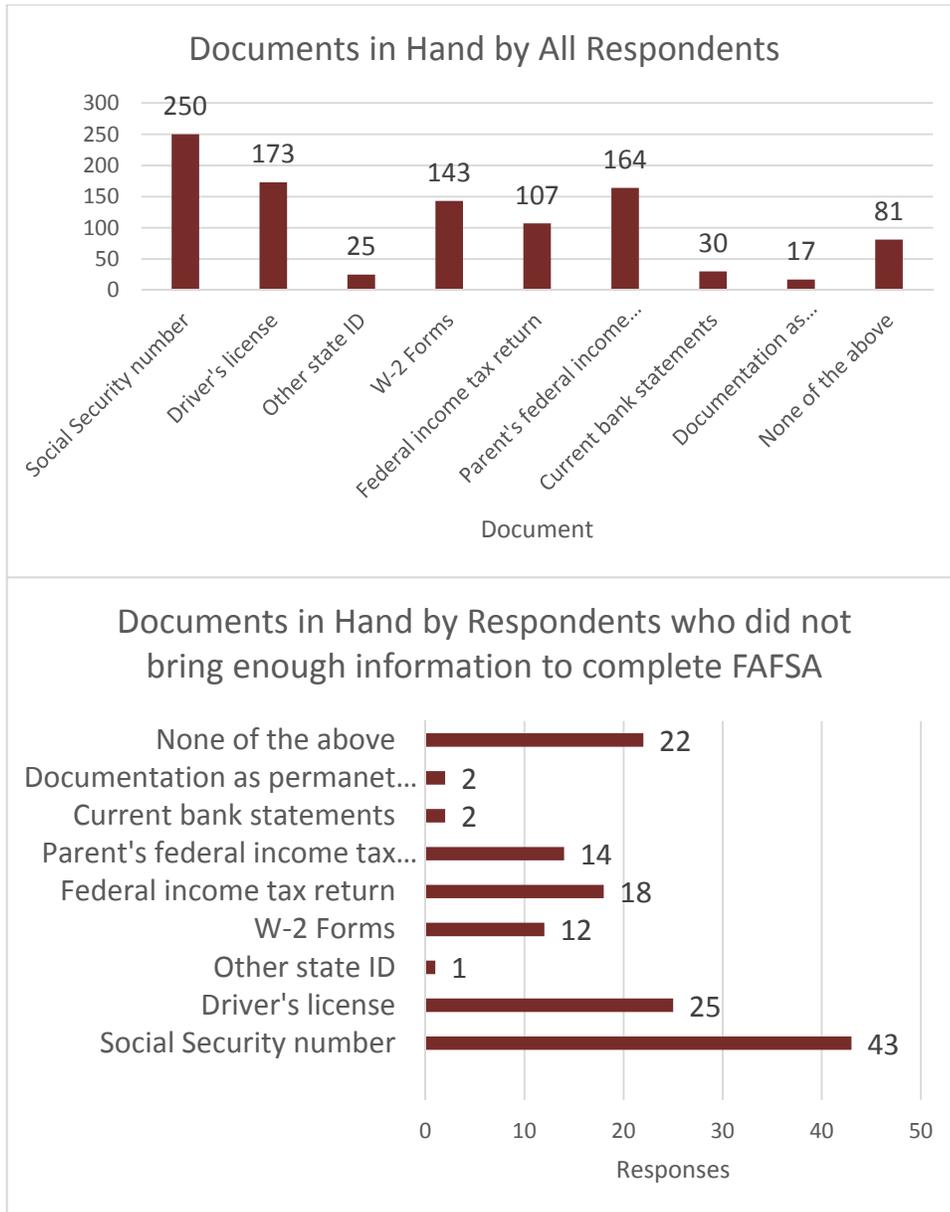
Another area of concern for College Goal Administrators is the reasons for not completing the FAFSA at the event, or barriers to completion. To gain a better understanding of why FAFSA wasn't completed, the survey asks respondents for data on some of the more common reasons for not completing the FAFSA at their College Goal Event. It is hopeful that those barriers that are able to be addressed at the site level (i.e., not enough time, confusion about the process) can be eliminated. The question of whether or not computer access is available at home was asked as well, as many students simply don't complete the FAFSA at the event because they know they have access to the form at home. The majority of responders indicated they were unable to complete the FAFSA at the event due to not bringing enough information to complete the FAFSA on that day. This is an area that can be addressed by continuing to make families and students aware through event announcements and promotional materials of the necessary items to bring with them to College Goal South Carolina events.
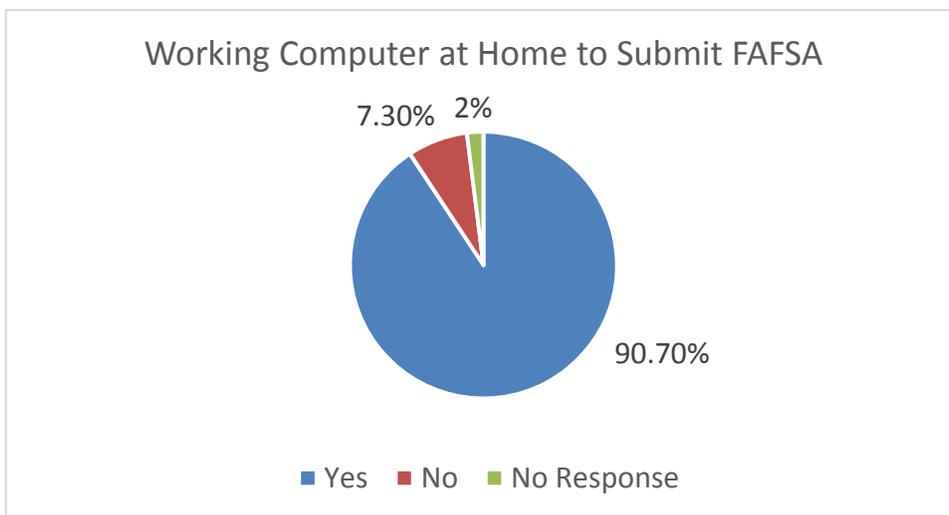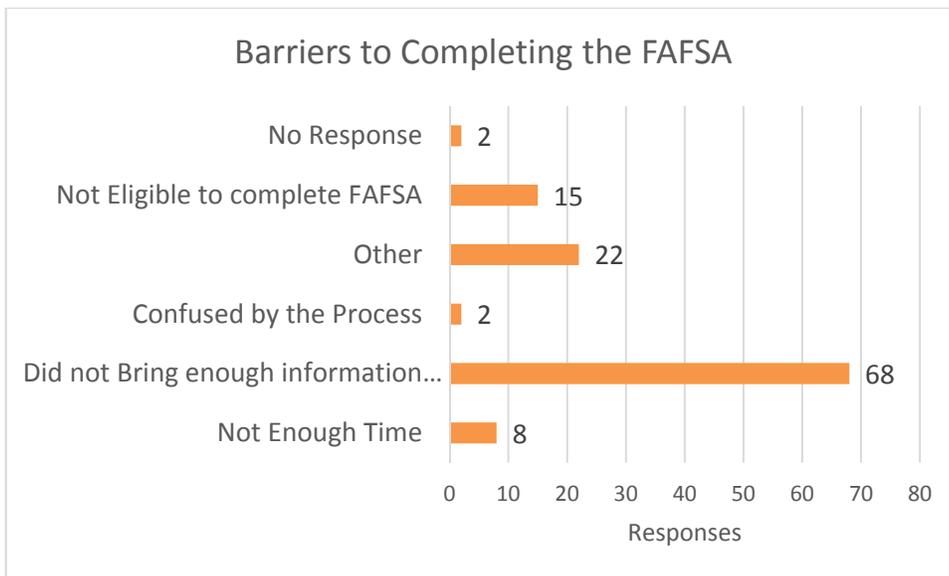
Proper and Sufficient Information

As indicated previously, one of the most challenging barriers to the completion and submission of the FAFSA is that the information brought with the student was either inadequate or insufficient to complete the application properly. The chart below illustrates the information brought to the College Goal South Carolina events by respondents. The data point that illustrates a possible lack of information being provided to attendees prior to the event is that fewer than half of the respondents (164) brought

their parent's income tax forms with them. With the high number of high school students completing the FAFSA in the number of respondents, the likelihood of independent students attending the event that would not need parental tax information is low. Sixty-eight respondents identified in the section above that a barrier they experienced to completing the FAFSA was not bringing enough information below. The second chart below shows the documents that section of respondents did bring to their College Goal event. As indicated in the table below, very few of the non-completers brought their parents financial information or tax information, which is an essential part to FAFSA completion.

Documents in Hand by All Respondents

Document	Responses
Social Security number	250
Driver's license	173
Other state ID	25
W-2 Forms	143
Federal income tax return	107
Parent's federal income...	164
Current bank statements	30
Documentation as...	17
None of the above	81

Documents in Hand by Respondents who did not bring enough information to complete FAFSA

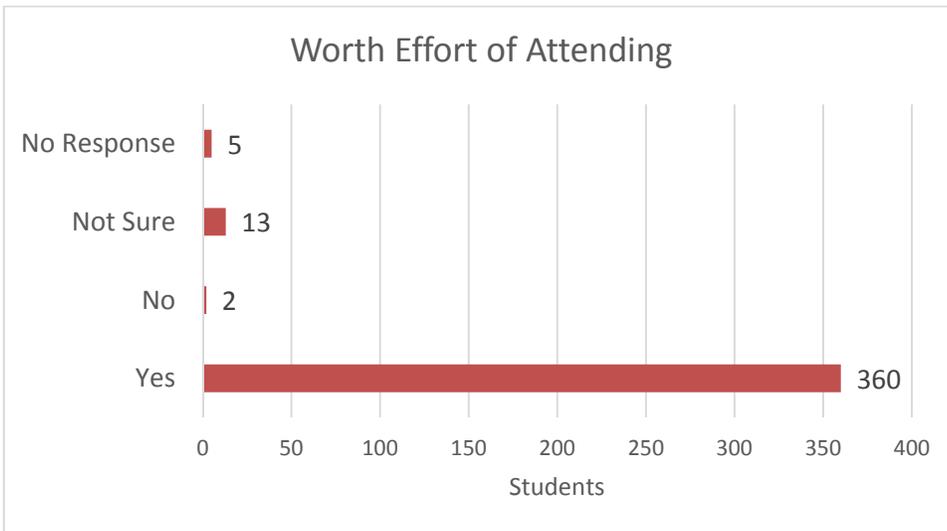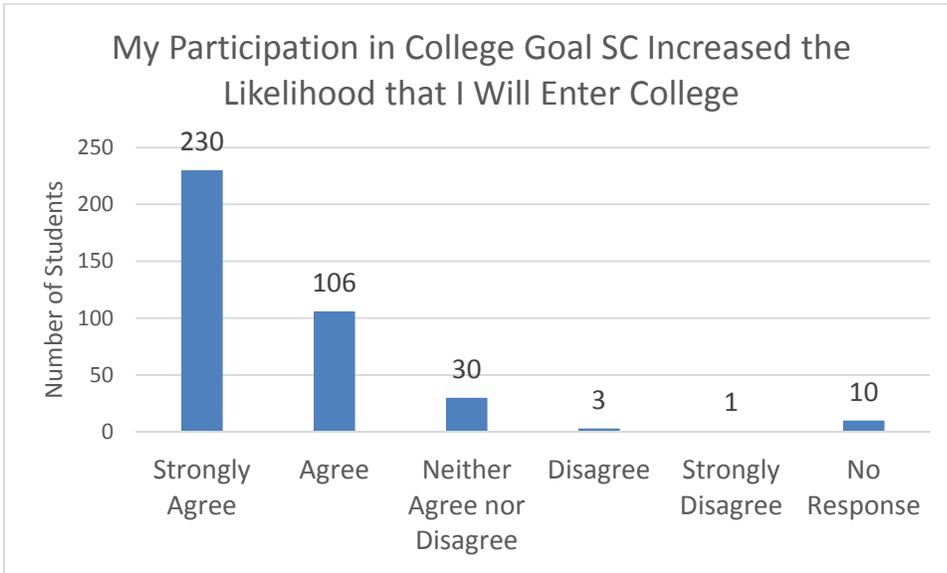| Document	Responses
None of the above	22
Documentation as permanet...	2
Current bank statements	2
Parent's federal income tax...	14
Federal income tax return	18
W-2 Forms	12
Other state ID	1
Driver's license	25
Social Security number	43

III. Program Evaluation

Questions from the student survey provided information to determine the effectiveness of the College Goal South Carolina program. The information in this section should provide useful information regarding the marketing and management of future programs within South Carolina.
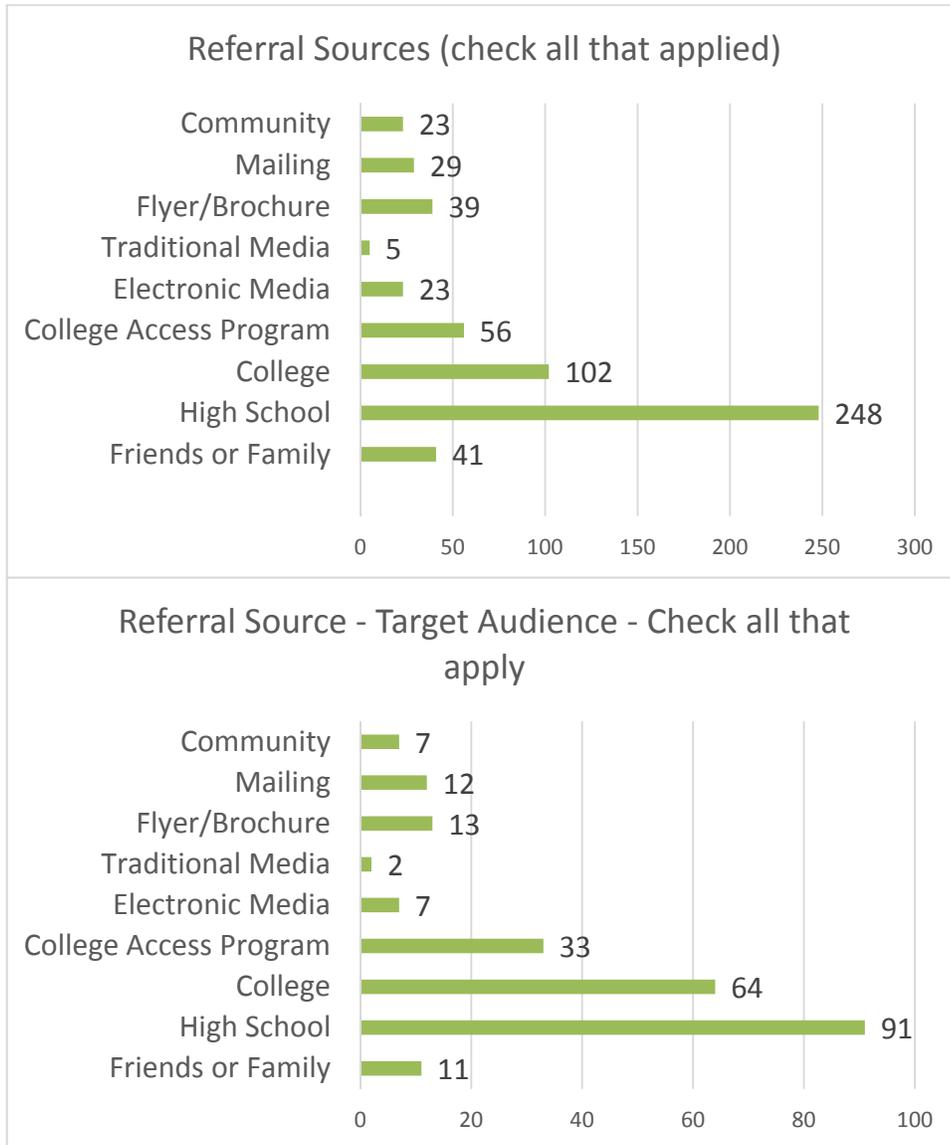
Promoting the College Goal

     The following diagrams possible impact of the College Goal South Carolina Program on educational aspirations. The diagram represents the whether participation in College Goal Sunday increased his or her likelihood of enrolling in a college or vocational school within the next year. The respondents overwhelmingly agreed that participation in College Goal Sunday increased their likelihood of enrolling in college in the near future. In fact, 88% (230 "strongly agree" and 106 "agree"- total of 336) indicated that they will likely enroll in college in the next year at least in part because they now have completed a FAFSA at a College Goal South Carolina event.

Chart title: My Participation in College Goal SC Increased the Likelihood that I Will Enter College. Y-axis: Number of Students. Values: Strongly Agree 230, Agree 106, Neither Agree nor Disagree 30, Disagree 3, Strongly Disagree 1, No Response 10.

Chart title: Worth Effort of Attending. X-axis: Students. Values: No Response 5, Not Sure 13, No 2, Yes 360.

Referral Sources

     Respondents were asked to indicate any and all sources from which they learned about the College Goal South Carolina program. Their responses are provided below. The most often reported method of referral source for both members of the target audience and respondents as a whole was from the high school. A secondary source appears to be college and college access programs. This is likely a function of the increase in SC Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (SC GEAR UP) sites for 2016. Flyers/brochures and Friends/Family are the other sources that were cited by

either group. This information indicates that the best method for members to receive information was through the high schools which is helpful in determining where future resources should be applied.

Referral Sources (check all that applied)

Source	Value
Community	23
Mailing	29
Flyer/Brochure	39
Traditional Media	5
Electronic Media	23
College Access Program	56
College	102
High School	248
Friends or Family	41

Referral Source - Target Audience - Check all that apply

Source	Value
Community	7
Mailing	12
Flyer/Brochure	13
Traditional Media	2
Electronic Media	7
College Access Program	33
College	64
High School	91
Friends or Family	11

Staff Assistance

Participants were asked a few questions regarding the assistance they received from College Goal South Carolina staff. They were asked whether they felt there were enough volunteers, whether they received assistance from a translator, as well as to generally rate the assistance they received. This information is most helpful when provided to the College Goal Site Coordinators across the state, as it will help direct and structure the programs for next year. The FAFSA can be an intimidating process, and so a goal of the sites should be to ensure the comfort and satisfaction level of attendees, which in turn could ease the stress of the FAFSA experience. Over 95% of respondents felt there were enough volunteers. Additionally, over 94% of respondents rated the assistance they received as excellent or very good. The most common translation service provided was American Sign Language.

Were There Enough Volunteers at your College Goal Event?

1.50% 3%

95.50%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ No Response

Translator Assistance

Category	Students
No Reponse	6
Yes for another Language	1
American Sign Language	7
Spanish	4
No	362

Students

Satisfaction with Staff/Volunteer Assistance

Rating	Students
Excellent	267
Very Good	76
Good	15
Fair	4
Poor	0
No Response	9

Students
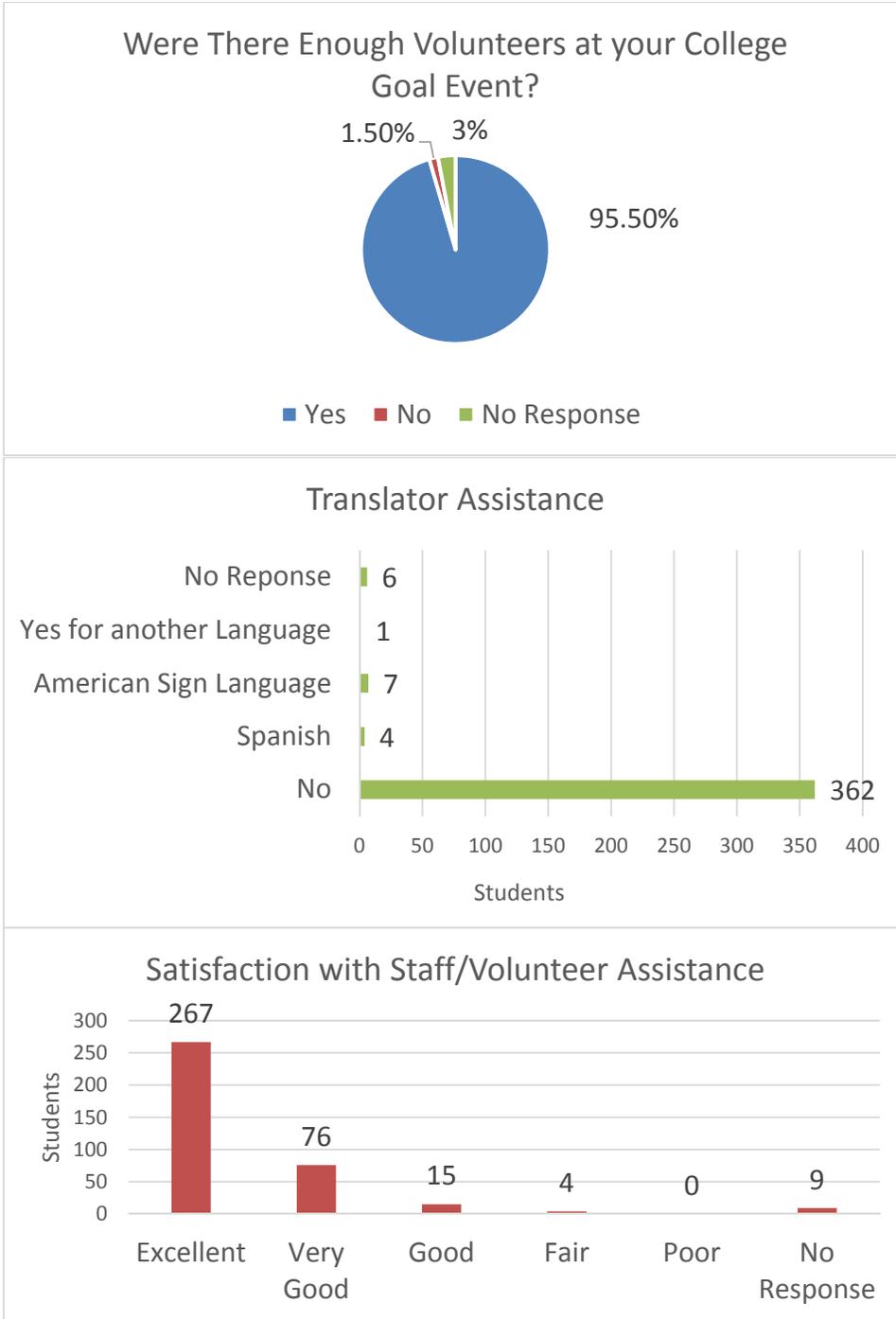
Appendix A: Attendance and Response Rates

Table 1: *Attendance, responses, and response rates* Site Name	Total Attendance	Responses	Response Rate
Aiken Technical College	15	23	153% *
Battery Creek High School (SC GEAR UP)	11	8	72%
Bluffton High School (Technical College of the Lowcountry event)	13	2	15%
Bob Jones University	5	2	40%
CE Murray High School (SC GEAR UP)	39	38	97%
Central Carolina Technical College (Four Campuses)	61	29	48%

Claflin University	6	0	0%
Colleton County High School (SC GEAR UP)	18	0	0%
CreekBridge High School (SC GEAR UP)	5	4	80%
Darlington High School (SC GEAR UP)	20	8	40%
Dillon High School (SC GEAR UP)	124	3	2%
Edisto High School (SC GEAR UP)	19	5	26%
Estill High School (SC GEAR UP)	8	6	75%
Francis Marion University	12	10	83%
Hemingway High School (SC GEAR UP)	6	6	100%
Horry-Georgetown Technical College (Conway Campus)	60	25	42%
Horry-Georgetown Technical College (Georgetown Campus)	41	15	37%
Lamar High School (SC GEAR UP)	0	0	0%
Lee Central High School (SC GEAR UP)	5	2	40%
Loris High School (SC GEAR UP)	16	13	81%
Marion High School (SC GEAR UP)	83	0	0%
Midlands Technical College/USC TRIO	26	16	62%
Military Magnet Academy (SC GEAR UP)	15	0	0%
Mullins High School (SC GEAR UP)	22	1	5%
Northeastern Technical College	9	0	0%
Presbyterian College	3	1	33%
Richland Northeast High School	20	0	0
Ridgeland-Hardeeville High School (SC GEAR UP)	14	10	71%
Scott's Branch High School (SC GEAR UP)	8	1	13%
Spartanburg Community College (Cherokee Campus)	24	17	71%
St. Johns High School (SC GEAR UP)	4	2	50%
Tri-County Technical College (Pendleton Campus)	30	13	43%
Trident Technical College (Berkeley Campus)	17	12	71%
Trident Technical College (Main Campus)	22	3	14%
University of South Carolina - Lancaster	4	16	400% *
University of South Carolina - Upstate	6	16	266% *
Waccamaw High School	6	3	50%
Wade Hampton High School	10	0	0%
Williamsburg Technical College	64	45	70%
Wilson High School (SC GEAR UP)	13	6	46%
Woodland High School (SC GEAR UP)	2	0	0%
York Technical College	37	19	51%

indicates a response rate higher than 100% due to the fact that FAFSA's were completed at the college at a time outside of the CGSC event, but student survey was still completed

Survey and Sign-In Sheet Development

The 2016 College Goal South Carolina survey was derived from the 2015 survey last edited by the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) at the IUPUI School of Education. That survey was used for the College Goal Sunday events across the nation in 2015. For 2016, College Goal Sunday oversight was shifted to the National College Access Network. During the transition year, it was decided that no standardized survey or data collection would be done, with an intent on bringing back national data collection in 2017. For the 2016 cycle, states were responsible for collection of their own data and generation of all state reports. CHE staff has contacted the CUME center to discuss acquiring their assistance with the 2017 data collection and report.

Survey and Sign-In Sheet Distribution and Data Collection

The student survey was distributed by two means: online and on paper. Each site coordinator received a hyperlink to the state survey through the SC CANGO website, as well as paper copies for distribution in case of a computer error on the day of the event.

Upon completion of each state's final event, the individual site coordinators provided end of event reports to CHE electronically with attendance and volunteer totals for each site, description of marketing plans and other relevant information. Paper surveys were transferred to the online survey by site volunteers. Once received, CHE staff processed and analyzed the data. Though there were minimal discrepancies in the reporting of the data, Responses that were determined to be invalid were removed.

Training of State Coordinators

To ensure standardized processes and procedures for handling both attendance and survey administration, Regional trainings were held in December 2015 for all site coordinators. These trainings discussed how to properly use the attendance sheets and surveys, as well as how important it would be to acquire the data. The completion of surveys online, prior to students leaving the event was stressed. Promotional materials were provided to new sites and other sites were trained on how to access the site materials and FAFSA through the SC CANGO website.