

Leading for Impact

American Council on Education Women's Network: Michigan (MI-ACE)

Pascale Charlot, Managing Director

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

June 17, 2025

Our Mission

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to strengthen higher education leadership and practice to improve student outcomes—with the ultimate goal of advancing economic mobility and developing talent for the good of all people and society as a whole.

CEP: How We Work

ELEVATE EXCELLENCE IN OUTCOMES

We use data to unearth and recognize the excellence of student-centric institutions, painting a clear picture of what's possible and how to get there.

INVESTIGATE EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

We conduct extensive research to deeply understand what improves student outcomes and how institutional leaders scale and sustain reforms.

EQUIP THE FIELD TO REPLICATE WHAT WORKS

We provide institutional leaders and their teams with open access frameworks and tools to ground their pursuit of excellence in proven strategies for reform.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT COLLEGE LEADERS

We deliver professional development to a diverse cadre of college leaders and their teams who are aiming to scale strategies, capacities, and partnerships that advance post-completion student success.

Develop and Support College Leaders

How we support leaders at all levels and with key stakeholders

Presidential Fellowships

ASPEN PRESIDENTIAL
FELLOWSHIP
aspen institute

63% of all fellows across all cohorts in both programs are women

Leadership Academy

COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM
aspen institute

106 participating colleges
69% of participants are women

Unlocking Opportunity

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITY
aspen institute

Presidents are **57%** women
Project leads are **88%** women
VPAA/provosts are **69%** women

Transfer Intensive

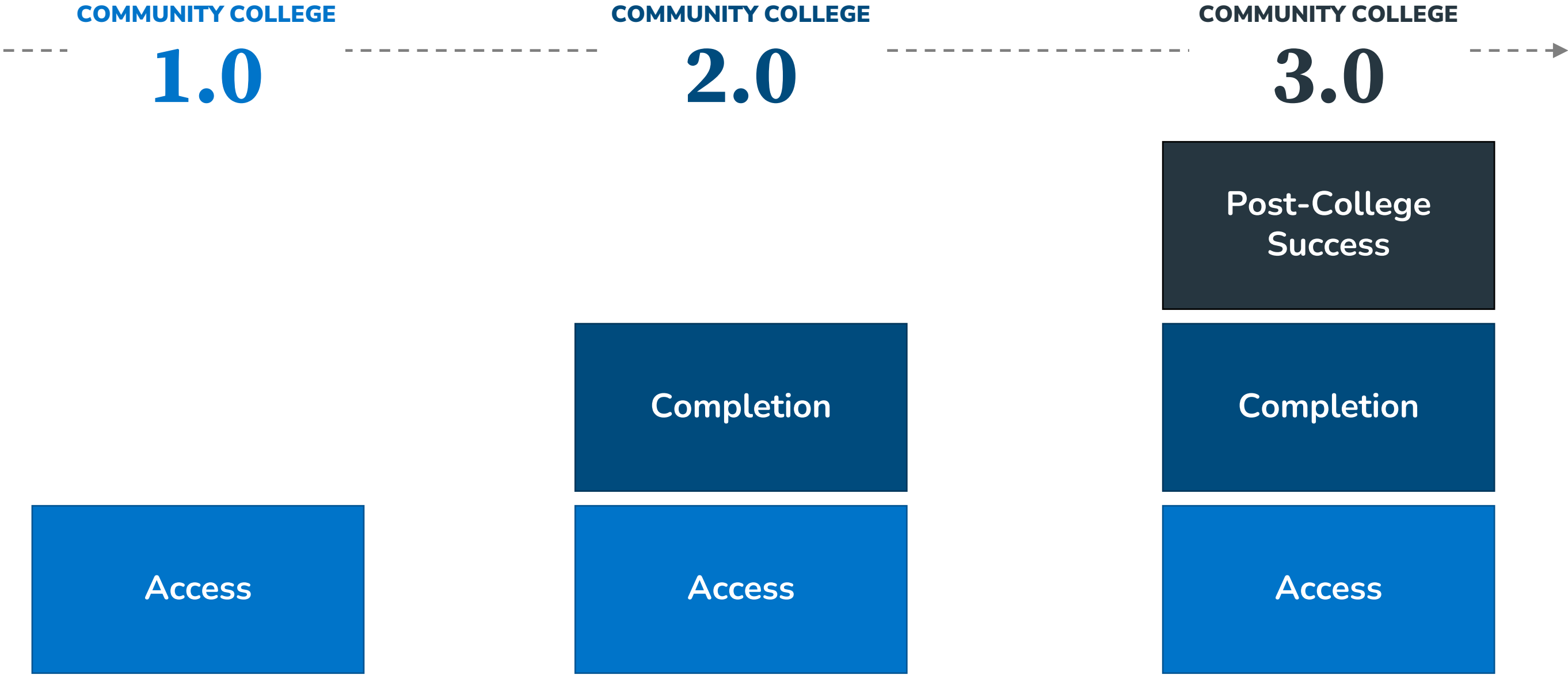
MARYLAND TRANSFER INTENSIVE
aspen institute

64% of college presidents are women

Leading for Impact: Delivering More Value

Delivering Value to Our Students

How can institutions and educators help deliver value so our students can thrive?



Student Outcome Framework

Success in community college.

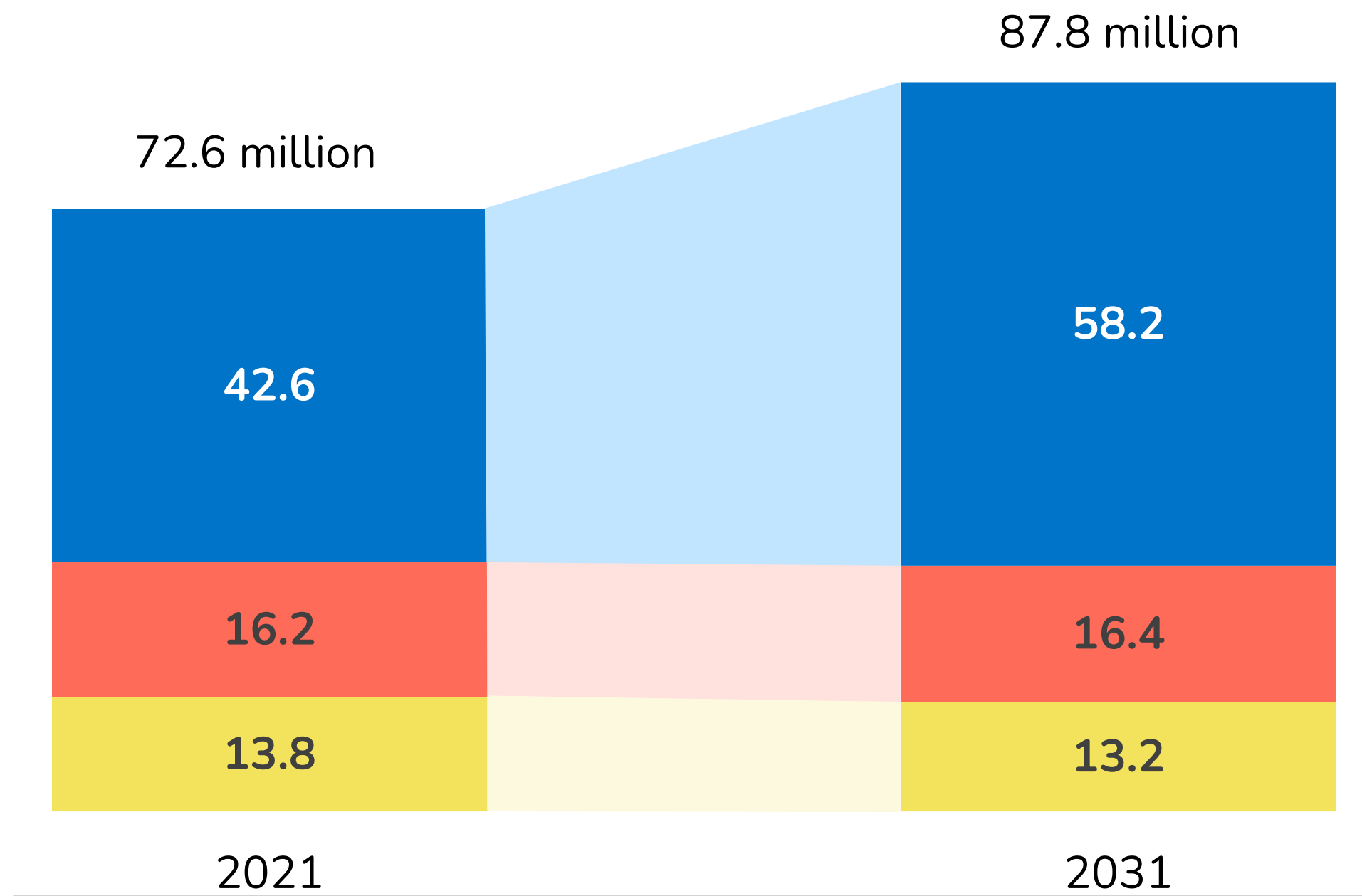
- Students learn
- Students complete

Success after community college.

- Students get good jobs
- Students transfer and attain bachelor's degrees

Access and success for all.

- Enrollment reflects service area
- All students have access to programs of value
- Strong learning, completion, transfer, and workforce outcomes as a whole and when data is disaggregated



The number of good jobs for workers on the bachelor's degree pathway will grow by more than 15 million net new jobs, while the number of good jobs on the high school pathway will decline by nearly 600,000.

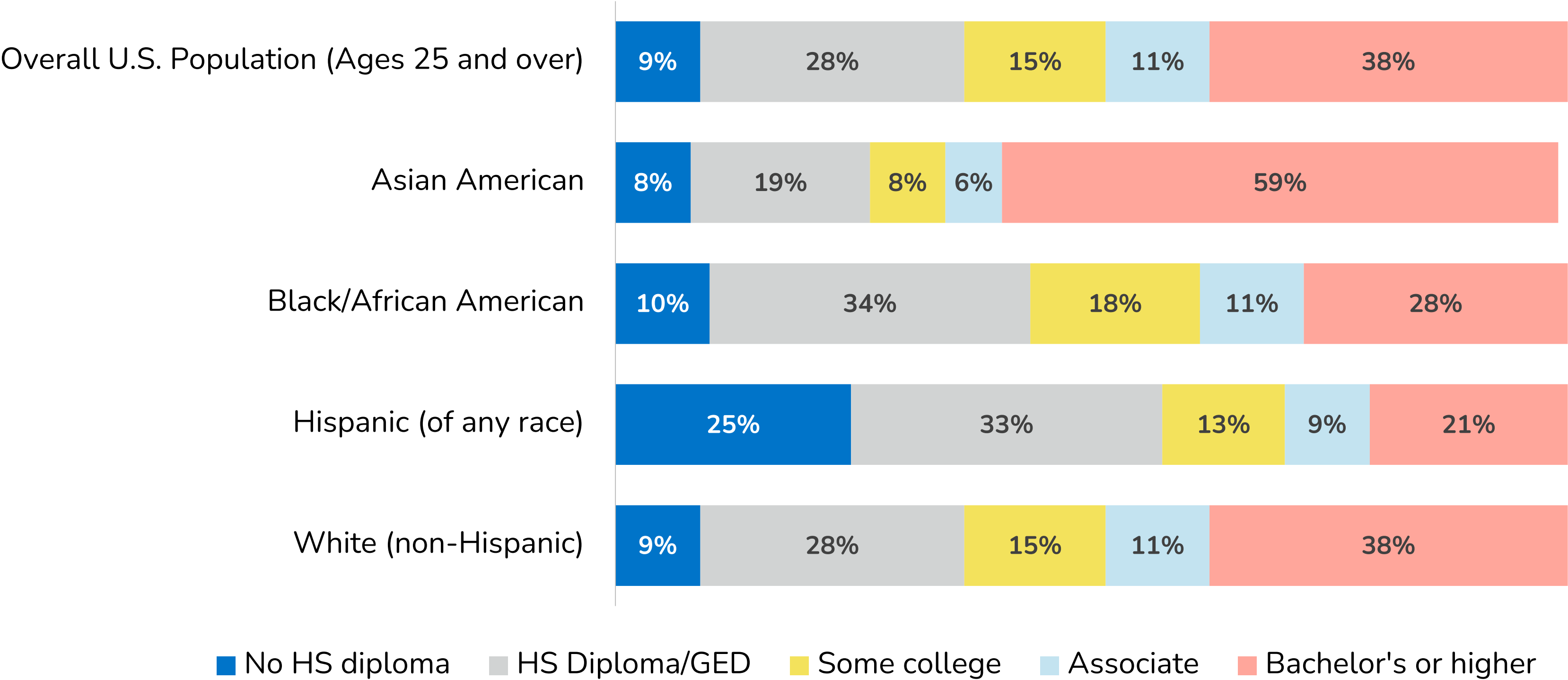
■ High school pathway ■ Middle-skills pathway ■ Bachelor's degree pathway

Number of good jobs (in millions)

Source: [Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce](#)

Jeff Strohl, Artem Gulish, and Catherine Morris. *The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2024. cew.georgetown.edu/goodjobsprojections2031.

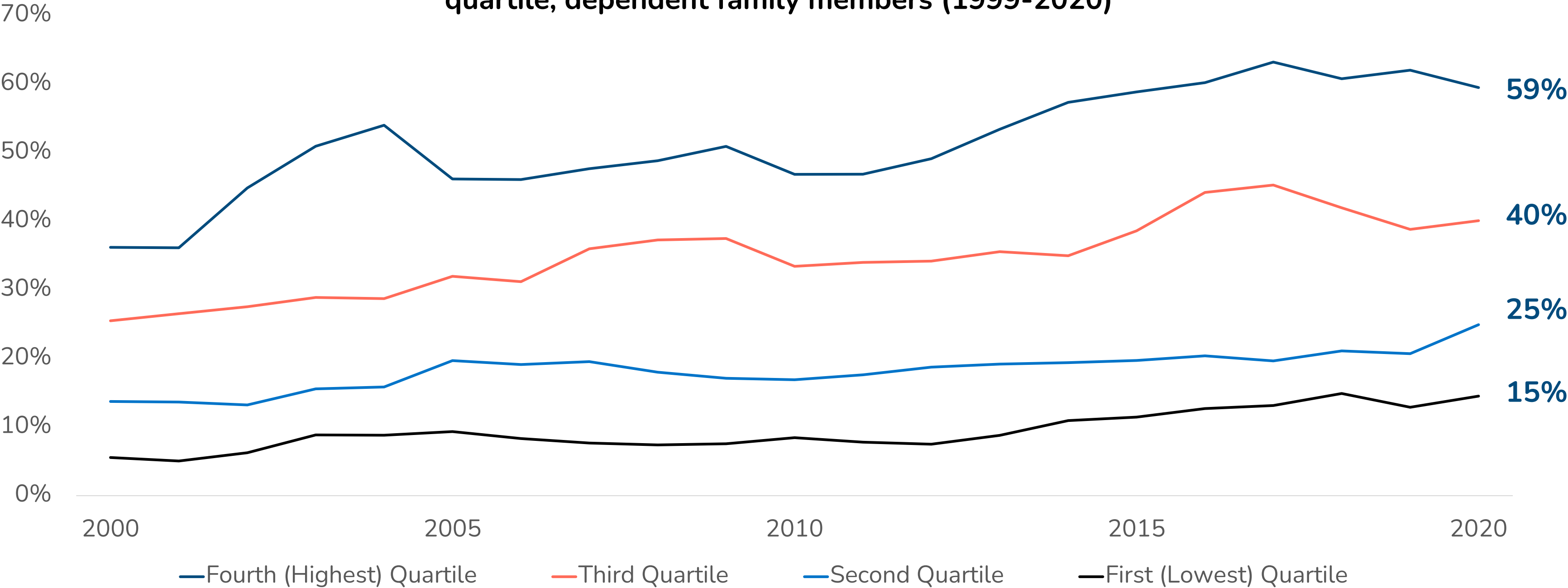
Bachelor's attainment varies by race/ethnicity.



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

Bachelor's attainment varies by income level.

Bachelor's degree attainment rate by age 24 by family income quartile, dependent family members (1999-2020)



Cahalan, Margaret W., Addison, Marisha, Brunt, Nicole, Patel, Pooja R., Vaughan III, Terry, Genao, Alysia & Perna, Laura W. (2022). Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: 2022 Historical Trend Report. Washington, DC: The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), and Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy of the University of Pennsylvania (PennAHEAD).

We Can Deliver Value for Our Students.

Despite Obstacles, Our Value Proposition Holds True

Only 33% of Americans have confidence in four-year colleges (down from 57% in 2015)

Source: Gallup

66% of good jobs will require at least a bachelor's degree by 2031

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce

The earnings premium for workers with a BA is 90% compared to those without a degree

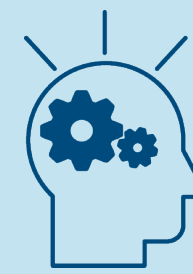
Source: Aspen Economic Strategy Group

Leading for Impact: Qualities of Transformational Leaders

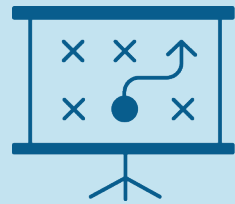
Qualities of Transformational College Leaders



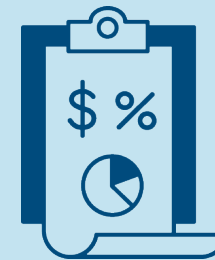
Deep commitment to student access and success with excellence



Ability to enact a strong, bold strategic vision for the college and its students reflected in external partnerships



Willingness to take strategic risks to advance student success



Ability to align resources to student success



Ability to create lasting change within a college

Adapted from Aspen Presidential Fellow Self-Assessment and Reflection: Presidential Qualities Aligned with Transformational Leadership, 2025.

Qualities of Transformational College Leaders

Quality: Deep commitment to student access and success with excellence

3.0 Leader: Effective leaders are driven to create scaled and systemic change in student success at the college and in economic mobility and talent development in the community.

- What motivates me to want to lead in my current role?
- What have I done to measurably improve student success within my role?
- How can I deepen my commitment to student access and success to deliver more value?

Adapted from Aspen Presidential Fellow Self-Assessment and Reflection: Presidential Qualities Aligned with Transformational Leadership, 2025.

Qualities of Transformational College Leaders

Quality: Willingness to take strategic risks to advance student success

3.0 Leader: Effective leaders are able and willing to courageously champion and implement large-scale, systemic changes that significantly improve student success outcomes.

- Am I interested in strengthening my capacity to take strategic risks regardless of whether I am risk-averse, risk-tolerant, or risk-taking?
- How will I ensure the risks I take will increase student success? How will I learn from the experience regardless of the outcome?
- What conditions are needed for me to take strategic risks in my context to be impactful?

Adapted from Aspen Presidential Fellow Self-Assessment and Reflection: Presidential Qualities Aligned with Transformational Leadership, 2025.

Qualities of Transformational College Leaders

Quality: Ability to create lasting change within a college

3.0 Leader: Effective leaders strategically lead institutional reform by implementing a limited set of bold student success reform strategies while, at the same time, developing key institutional capacities.

- To what extent have I developed or contributed to strategies that led to college-wide improvements in student success?
- What implementation plans have I helped lead or contributed to that have resulted in scaled and sustainable improvements in student outcomes?
- What experience do I have securing and maintaining buy-in from different stakeholders to support and advance change initiatives?

Adapted from Aspen Presidential Fellow Self-Assessment and Reflection: Presidential Qualities Aligned with Transformational Leadership, 2025.

Qualities of Transformational College Leaders

Quality: Ability to enact a strong, bold strategic vision for the college and its students, reflected in external partnerships

3.0 Leader: Effective leaders possess a vision that extends beyond the college to achieve broader aims of student success that the college could not achieve alone, and the capacity and commitment to build and sustain scaled strategic partnerships to achieve that vision.

- How do I actively listen to different stakeholders (internal and external) to understand what student success means for their work? How have I used what I have learned to deliver better student outcomes in partnership with them?
- What experience do I have (directly or indirectly) communicating the importance of a change initiative (at any scale) to secure support either internally or externally?
- To what extent do I have the capacity to lead long-term change that requires securing and maintaining buy-in from others to see the effort through until the end?

Adapted from Aspen Presidential Fellow Self-Assessment and Reflection: Presidential Qualities Aligned with Transformational Leadership, 2025.

Qualities of Transformational College Leaders

Quality: Ability to align resources to student success

3.0 Leader: Effective leaders raise substantial resources from multiple sources and work to strategically align revenue acquisition and resource allocation to student success goals.

- Have I ever aligned and managed resources to a strategic vision for a project, department initiative, or college-wide priority? Was I effective? Why or why not?
- How have I strategically ensured the sufficiency of resources for projects and/or operations in order to fulfill the objectives?
- How have I aligned fundraising and resource development with student success goals? And if I have not had the opportunity to gain this experience, am I interested in learning more about this capacity to resource a vision?

Adapted from Aspen Presidential Fellow Self-Assessment and Reflection: Presidential Qualities Aligned with Transformational Leadership, 2025.

Leading for Impact: Qualities in Action

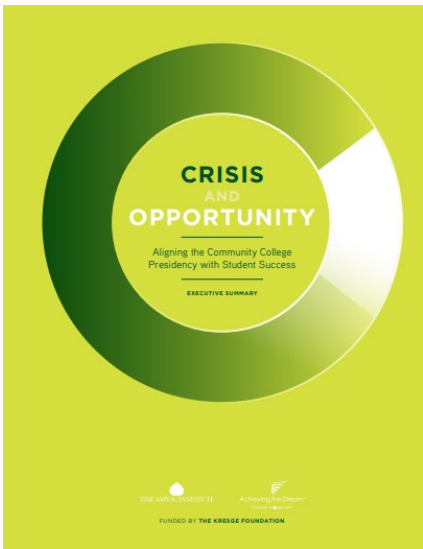
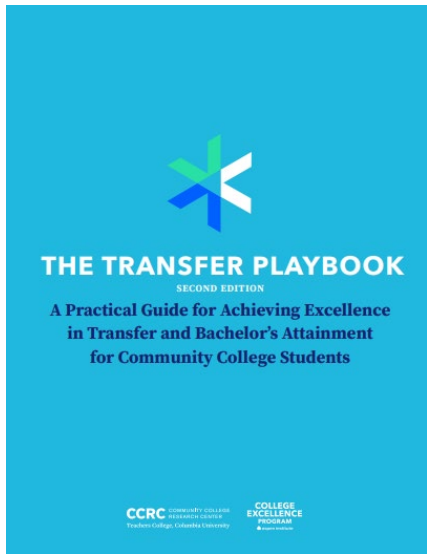
Qualities in Action: What is next for me?

How can I build my capacity to lead in order to deliver more value to students and the community?

- **Purpose:** Commit to knowing your purpose and using it to motivate you
- **Persistence:** Work strategically and relentlessly with intention
- **Patience:** Understand that change takes time, but know that impatience is often needed (and that patience without persistence is an excuse)
- **Boldness:** Make hard and smart choices on behalf of students to deliver more value
- **Collaboration:** Remain aware that many decisions should be made collectively, with a plan to secure buy-in internally and externally as needed
- **Candor:** Openly acknowledge areas for improvement in strategic ways
- **Continuous Improvement:** Adopt a growth mindset to have courage and learn
- **Inspiration:** Inspire yourself and others to do the hard work
- **Reflection:** Recognize you are strengthening your capacity to lead change and dedicate time to reflect on your progress to take the next steps

Additional Resources

[The Transfer Playbook 2.0 \(Link\)](#) [The 2025 Aspen Prize Report \(Link\)](#) [Crisis and Opportunity \(Link\)](#)



[College Excellence Program Website \(Link\)](#) [Unlocking Opportunity \(Link\)](#)



Thank You



CEP.Info@aspeninstitute.org



@AspenHigherEd



highered.aspeninstitute.org