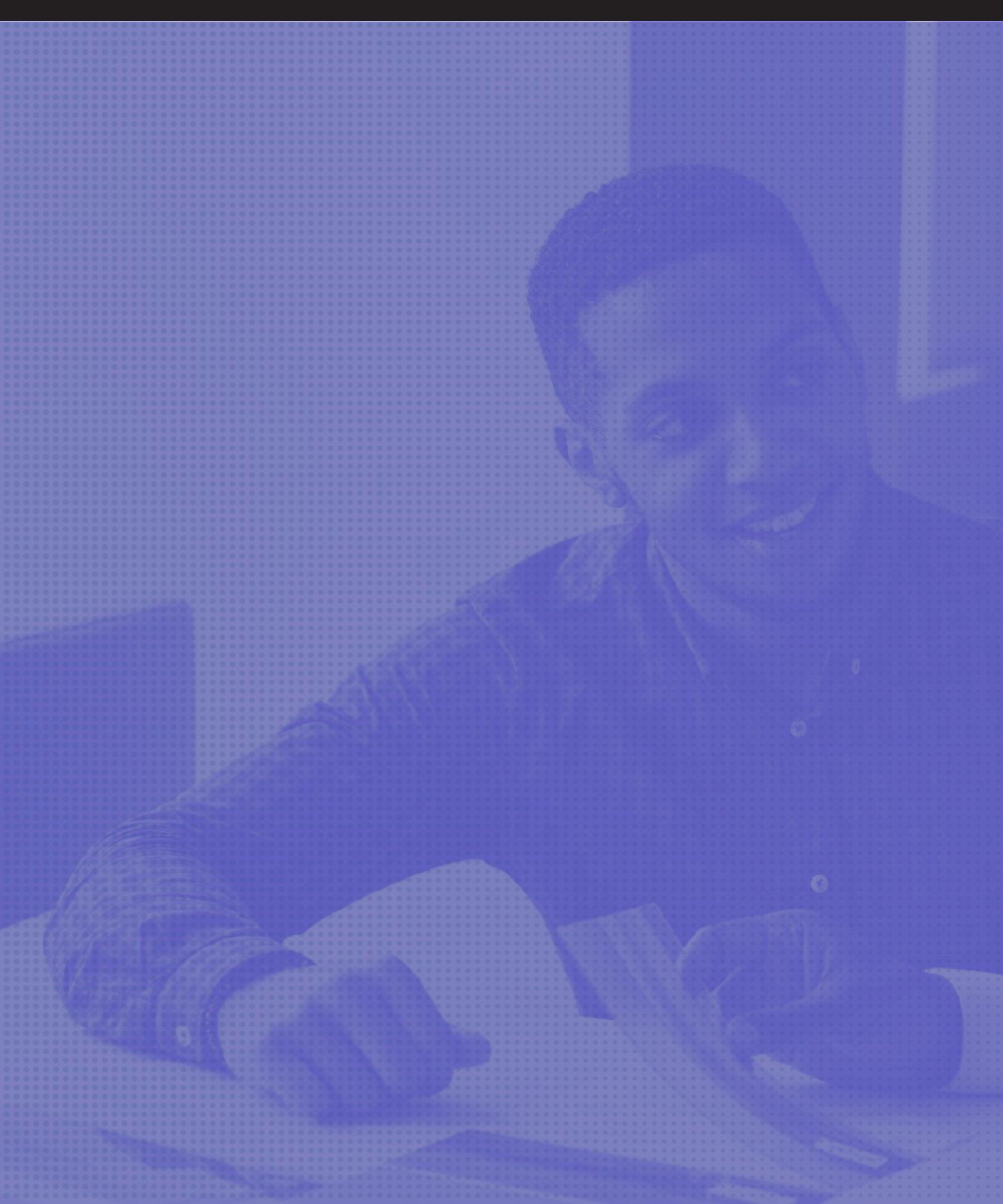


NO ROOM FOR DOUBT

Moving Corequisite Support
from Idea to Imperative





This publication is copyrighted by Complete College America. Complete College America grants this limited license for the following uses of this publication: (1) you may copy and redistribute the material in digital or paper format for noncommercial use, (2) you may adapt this publication by transforming it or building upon the material for any noncommercial use. These licensed uses are granted on the condition that you must give appropriate credit to Complete College America, include a copy of this license language, and indicate if changes were made. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain. No warranties are given. This license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use.

Citation: Complete College America. No Room for Doubt: Moving Corequisite Support from Idea to Imperative (2021). completecollege.org/noroomfordoubt

Why Corequisite Support?

A STRONG START IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE. Early barriers prevent students from building momentum that can propel them to complete their degree. This is particularly true for students who may need to brush up on academic skills through developmental education. This is also true for adults attending college while balancing work and family. It's imperative that we design pathways that ensure they get early academic wins in the form of credit and progress towards their degree.

We've known for nearly a decade that traditional prerequisite remedial education is a barrier to momentum. Students get "stuck" in sequences of non-credit bearing courses and too often stop out before making it to essential gateway courses. As we work to dramatically improve college completion rates by redesigning programs and pathways, developmental education must be central to our work. Success begets more success, building confidence and affirming students' identity as capable college-level learners.

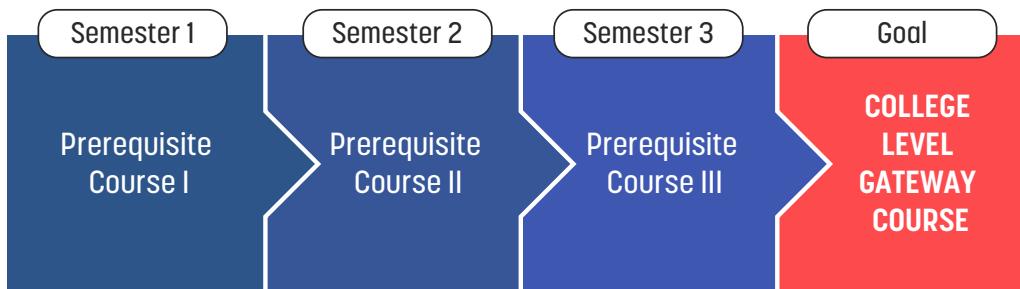
While we've seen much progress with corequisite support as an alternative to traditional remedial education, there is much more work to do. Gateway course completion is still tragically low, especially for racially minoritized students and adult learners. This report is focused on both introducing corequisite support to institutional leaders looking for new approaches to addressing remediation and offering new insights that can deepen practice for those who are already at work implementing the model.

As always, we must act with urgency. Every student enrolled in a development education program that is not built with the intention of removing barriers to success is one student too many. It's on us as institutional leaders to create the conditions that lead to early academic momentum - and lay the foundation for college and career success.

New to Corequisite Support? Here's a Quick Overview:

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION WAS DESIGNED AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH combining adult learning and developmental psychology to help incoming students who did not meet institutional placement standards to succeed in college courses. In traditional remedial education models, however, colleges enroll and require students to pay for prerequisite courses that are based on a deficit-minded approach focused on gaps of perceived student knowledge and skills. These courses do not count towards a degree, add additional time to the degree pathway, do not recognize the strengths that students possess, and do not follow demonstrated best practices that lead to academic success. Attrition rates in this model are high, leading otherwise committed and qualified students to stop out of their degree program.

Traditional Prerequisite Remedial Model



In a corequisite support model, students are immediately enrolled in credit-bearing, college level courses while receiving additional support to ensure their success. This approach balances pacing and active learning to build student confidence as they earn important early credits towards their program of study. While this may seem like a simple change, it is actually a profound paradigm shift that leads to campus-wide reform and a fundamentally new approach to how colleges see and serve students.

Corequisite Support Model



A black and white photograph of a woman with curly hair, smiling and holding an open book. She is wearing a dark t-shirt. The background is slightly blurred.

WHAT'S INSIDE

I. THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: Corequisite Support Works

8

In 2012, CCA joined impatient reformers across the country sounding the alarm about long sequences of remedial education. Since then, we've urged states and institutions to change their mindset and change their model—so that students can gain momentum rather than be expected to adapt to inequitable approaches that stifle graduation rates. And it's working: Students enrolled in corequisite programs are far likelier to succeed in college.

II. COREQUISITE AT SCALE: A Student Success & Equity Imperative

14

Nearly ten years after the release of CCA's Bridge to Nowhere report, corequisite has gone from a novel idea to the norm in many states and institutions. But it's not enough. Given the clear impact of the corequisite model, we must ensure this is the rule and not the exception if we want to guarantee that every student graduates.

III. GOING DEEPER WITH COREQUISITE: Building Programs That Work for All Students

20

Our work across the nation proves what we've always known: corequisite support is a critical approach for states, systems, and institutions committed to student success and racial justice. Drawing on years of experience advancing corequisite models, we highlight best practices for shifting policy, creating conditions for change, implementing proven strategies, and refining those approaches over time.

Shifting Policy

22

State leaders should use policy to set a clear vision and accelerate momentum while empowering faculty and institutional leaders to implement an approach that best meets the needs of their students.

Creating Conditions for Change

32

States, systems, and institutional leaders must create the conditions that make change possible by ensuring all stakeholders agree that the work is important, understand how efforts are progressing, and recognize what they can learn from one another.

Implementing & Refining Proven Strategies

37

Implementing the corequisite model is an ongoing process that requires continued refinement. CCA's efforts to scale corequisite support in more than a dozen states and the subsequent nationwide evaluation point toward a comprehensive set of recommendations that provides even the most ardent reformers with new ways to deepen their efforts and ensure more students succeed.

A NEW NORMAL: COREQUISITE SUPPORT

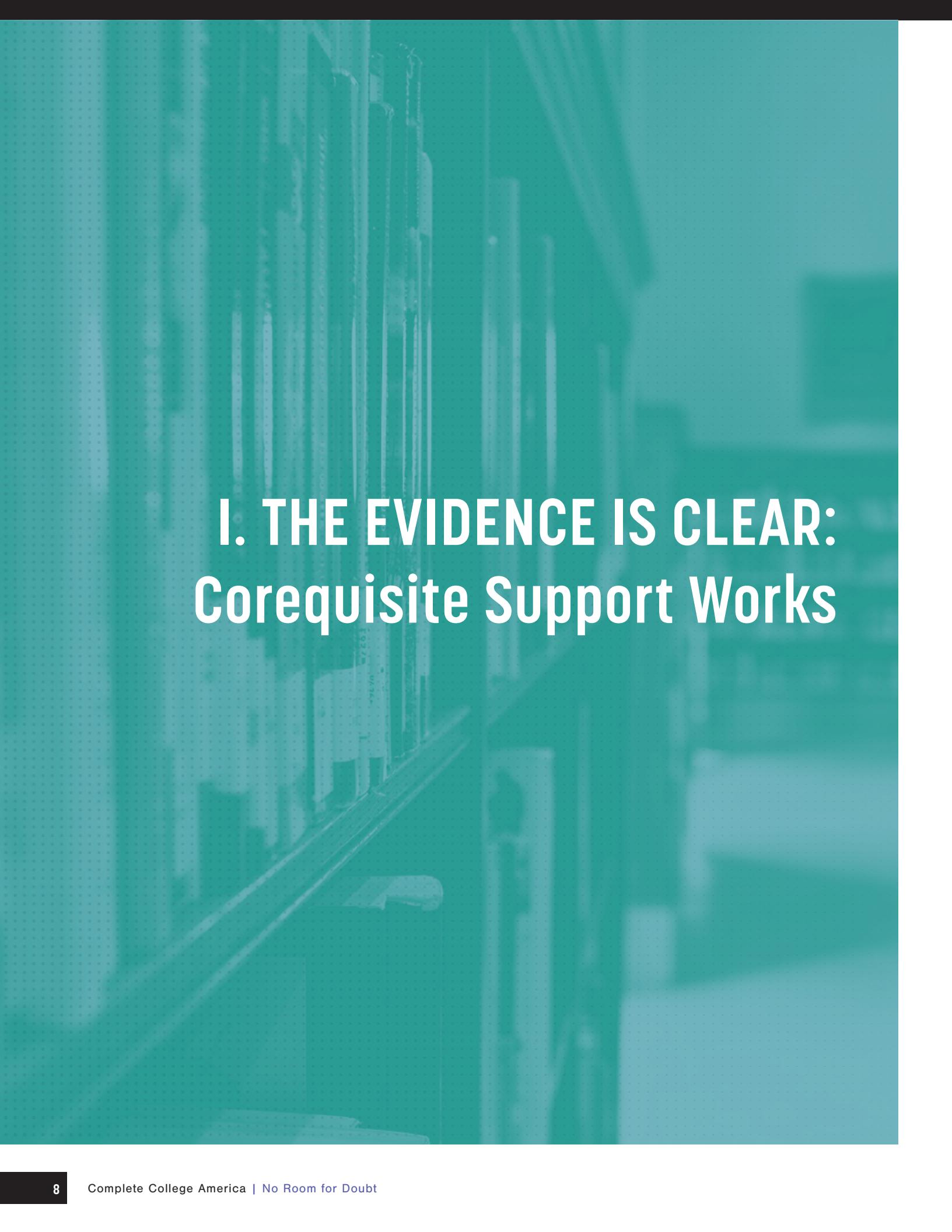
44

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

46

Corequisite works and it's gaining momentum across the nation. It's time for our entire field to assess what we've learned, recognize where we're still falling short, and double down on our efforts to ensure every student succeeds in college—not just those we deem "prepared."

If you're looking to get started with corequisite or go deeper with your implementation, CCA stands ready to help you identify where to focus next. Reach out to your Strategy Director today at info@completestatecollege.org.



I. THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: Corequisite Support Works

The Failure of Traditional Remediation Sequences

IN 2012, Complete College America joined impatient reformers across the country sounding the alarm about long sequences of remedial education with its groundbreaking report *Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere*. Although remediation programs were designed to increase graduation rates by preparing more students for college-level classes, students enrolled in long sequences of prerequisite remedial classes rarely graduate. Although these students may gain valuable knowledge, too few go on to complete subsequent college-level (gateway) courses, stopping out before they ever earn college credit. This is especially true for students who place multiple levels below college-level. Colleges and universities disproportionately place African American, Latinx, and low-income students into traditional remedial courses. These failures inspired reform-minded leaders to rethink remediation and develop new corequisite models that provide critical support while enrolling students in credit-bearing courses from day one.

A Clearly Better Approach

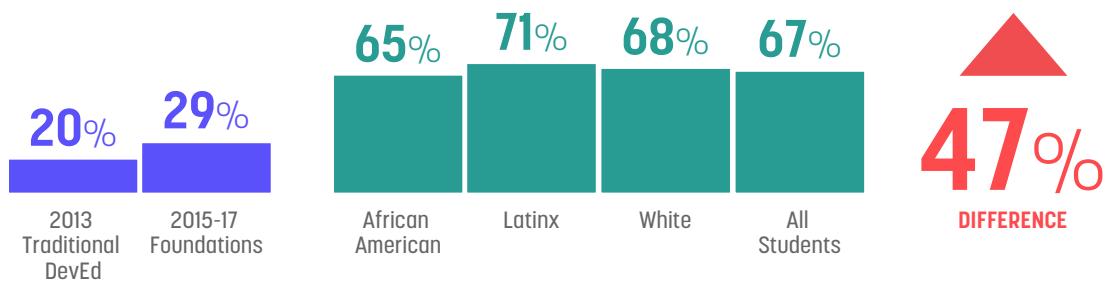
DATA ON COREQUISITE'S UNDENIABLE IMPACT on college-level course completion and graduation rates—especially among low-income students and racially minoritized students—has fueled its rapid adoption as a clear alternative to traditional remediation. From pilot projects to statewide efforts, from 2-year colleges to 4-year colleges, from math courses to English courses, the data consistently reveal significant benefits for both students and institutions. The following stories highlight the impact of corequisite remediation on gateway course completion, likelihood of graduation, and ROI to institutions.



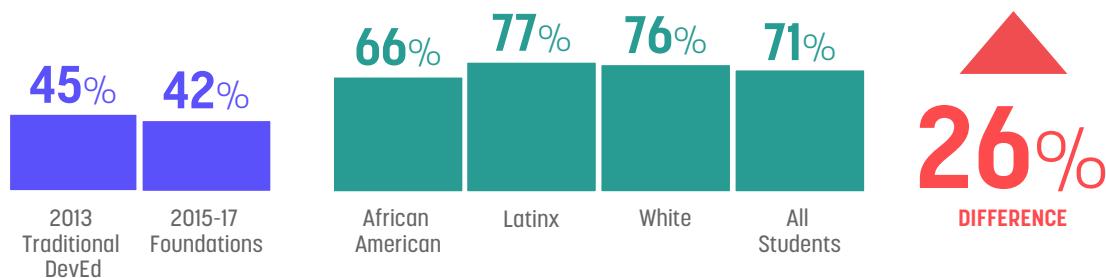
Georgia Doubles Completion of Gateway Courses

In 2015, the University System of Georgia abandoned traditional remedial approaches in favor of new models that could dramatically improve student outcomes. Campuses initially launched a Foundations model that compressed remediation into a single semester while also introducing corequisite sections. Students showed small improvements, but Georgia believed more was possible. In 2018, institutions adopted full corequisite models for both math and English development education. And it had a dramatic effect: Georgia doubled the percentage of students who completed gateway courses for all students, regardless of race or entrance exam scores.

University System of Georgia Comparison of Gateway Math Course Completion



University System of Georgia Comparison of Gateway English Course Completion



CUNY Increases Graduation Rates by

| 50%

The City University of New York identified 907 students who were required to take remedial elementary algebra, even though college algebra was not required for their intended majors. As part of a randomized controlled trial, students were assigned to one of three course types: traditional remedial elementary algebra; traditional remedial elementary algebra plus a weekly workshop; or introductory college-level statistics with a weekly workshop (corequisite support). In the three-year period following the experiment, close to 50% more corequisite statistics students graduated in comparison to traditional remedial students.

Source: Logue, A. W., Douglas, D., & Watanabe-Rose, M. "Corequisite mathematics remediation: Results over time and in different contexts." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 41, 294-315 (2019).



ROI: Corequisite Students Go on to Take More Courses

Although many institutions are concerned with the costs associated with developing new corequisite courses, new evidence suggests that increased persistence—and the additional revenue that comes with students enrolling in more college-level courses—can outweigh the cost. More to the point, by investing in corequisite courses, institutions are redirecting critical resources from developmental education with mixed results towards college-level courses.

CCA worked with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission to understand the financial impact of corequisite in the 2015-16 school year, as the state was beginning to implement the model at a select number of schools. The study found students whose first math or English class was corequisite instead of prerequisite attempted an average of more than three credits—at least one more course—during their time in any public college in West Virginia. At the beginning of its corequisite work, the state saw a \$54,000 increase in tuition revenue.

This is evidence of the potential for increases in student persistence to replace, and eventually surpass, the tuition revenue that comes from the cost of traditional remedial courses.

As a result, assumptions about lost revenue need to be examined in light of the long term potential for corequisite to positively impact both student success and institutional financial health. Moreover, for institutions in states that have performance funding mechanisms in place, increases in gateway course completion and student persistence can lead to additional resources.

Our research also reveals that concerns about increased expenses appear to be misplaced. In responses from academic leadership throughout West Virginia, almost all colleges running corequisite courses saw negligible or no increases in instructional hours, largely due to offsets in savings from running few traditional remediation courses.

Financial concerns are important, practical considerations. But let's be clear: Colleges and universities should look for every opportunity to do what's in the best interest of students, even if that requires rethinking our financial models to make new strategies viable. We must continue to be student-first and mission-first.

Source: *Serving the Equity Imperative: Intentional Action Toward Greater Student Success* (2016).

Total 2015-2016 Revenue Generated for West Virginia Community Colleges That Used Corequisite Instead of Prerequisite Models

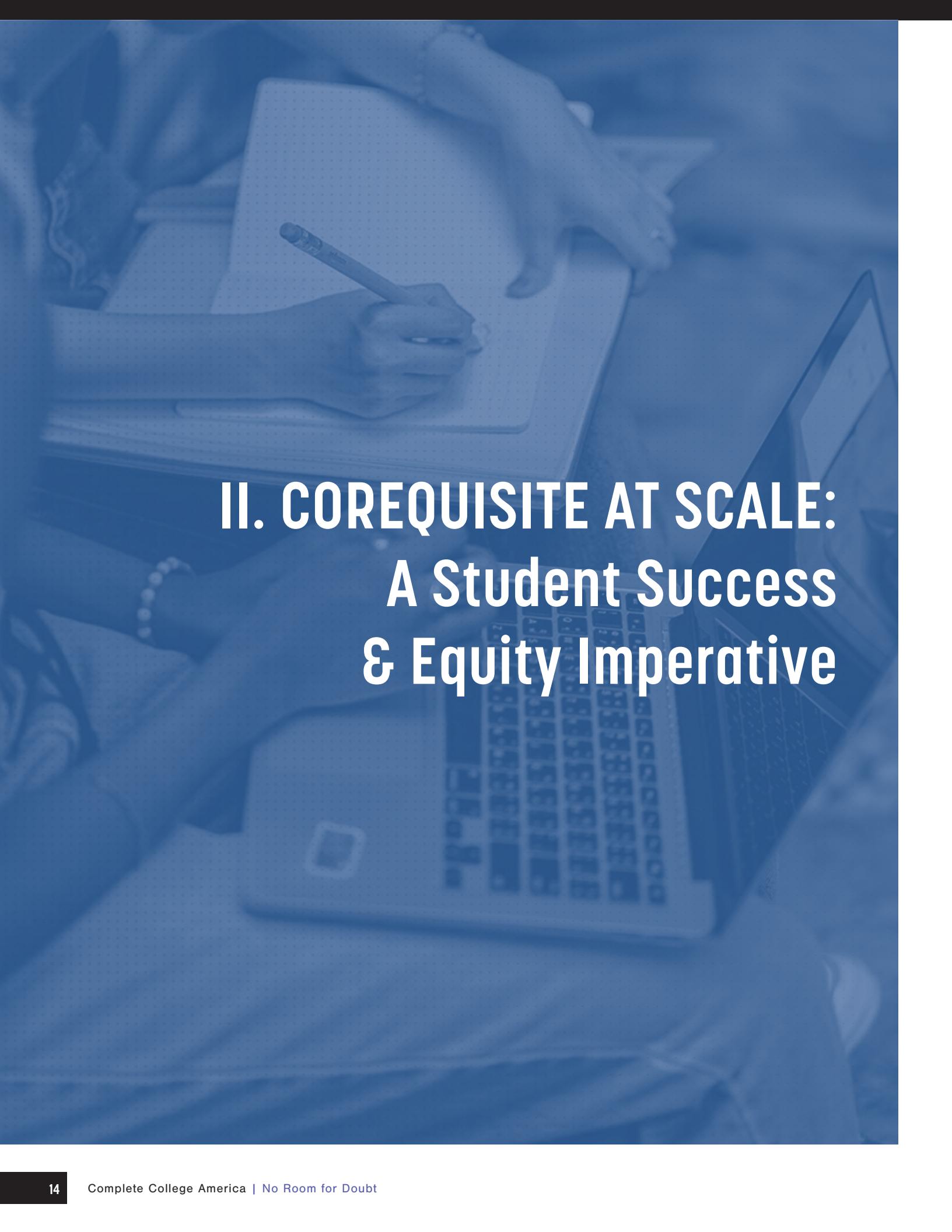


Based on per-credit tuition rates from 2015-2016, and then subsequent credits attempted, covers Math, English, expressed in today's dollars.

A New Model Driven by a New Mindset

WITH RESULTS LIKE THESE, it's easy to see why corequisite support has emerged as a better alternative to the traditional remediation model. Instead of requiring students to spend time and money on long sequences of remedial courses that don't provide any college credit, the corequisite model allows students to enroll in college-level gateway courses while receiving the just-in-time support they need to master the subject. Ultimately, the remedial approach focuses on the perceived shortcomings of students while the corequisite approach focuses on addressing the shortcomings of the structures in higher ed. Corequisite support gives students agency and signals institutional confidence in their ability to succeed - with additional structured support opportunities. That nuance is leading institutions to reconsider their role and is leading students to reconsider their abilities: Rather than being labeled as something short of "college material," students need to see that they don't have to be perfect to be perfectly qualified.





II. COREQUISITE AT SCALE: A Student Success & Equity Imperative

Making Corequisite the Rule, Not the Exception

GIVEN THE CLEAR IMPACT OF COREQUISITE REMEDIATION, colleges and universities across the country are leaving traditional remediation behind—leading to increased gateway course completion and graduation rates. But frankly, it isn’t happening quickly enough. If our goal is to ensure every student succeeds, the corequisite model needs to become the rule, not the exception. Giving all students the opportunity to enroll in corequisite support is the best way for colleges and universities to address persistent institutional performance gaps that disproportionately affect first-generation students, low-income students, and racially minoritized students, who are overrepresented in developmental courses at higher rates. If you’re not actively scaling and refining corequisite support strategies, then you can’t truly say equity is a top priority.

Defining Institutional Performance Gaps

Complete College America intentionally describes differences in outcomes across racially minoritized student populations as *institutional performance gaps* rather than *achievement gaps* or even *equity gaps*. In doing so, we aim to remind everyone that the responsibility to address these gaps lies with higher education systems and institutions—not students.

Source: Estela Bensimon, Ph.D., Emeritus at USC Center for Urban Education



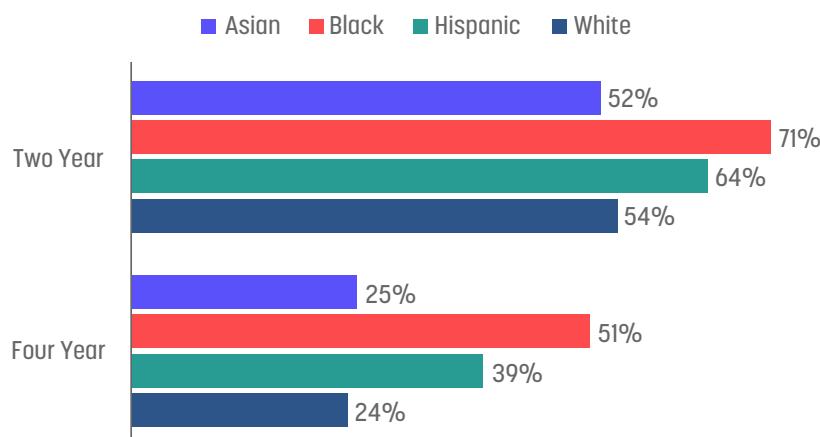
Too Few Institutions are Applying the Corequisite Model

DESPITE WIDESPREAD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS, corequisite support has yet to be fully scaled across all institutions and courses. In *Hitting Their Stride*, a 2020 study of over 2,000 administrators and faculty at 2-year and 4-year institutions, 40% of survey respondents reported that their institution was not implementing systematic developmental-education reforms. Of the 60% of participants who reported that their institution was at scale or in the midst of implementing reforms, 23.5% also reported that multi-semester (remedial) course sequences were still being used for more than half of their math courses—and 14% reported the same for English courses. In short, over half of those surveyed still rely on traditional remedial sequences that lead students to stop out from college, having taken on debt with no college credit to show for it.

Missed Opportunities to Address Inequities

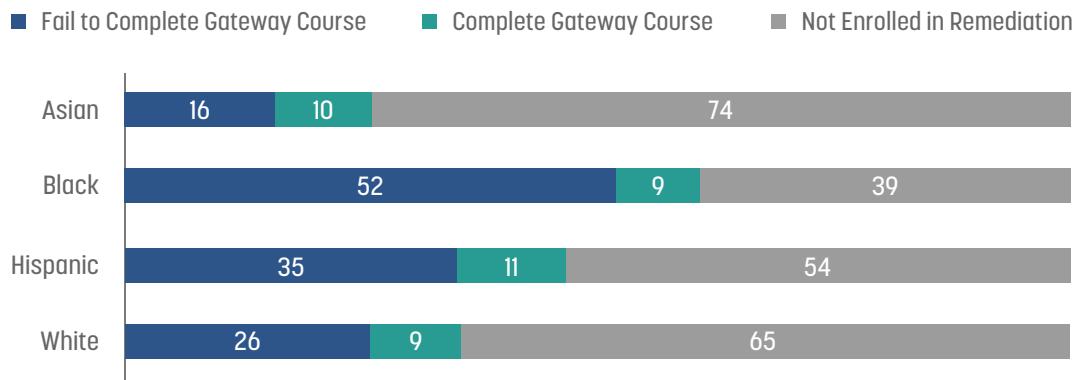
WHILE THE SLOW ADOPTION OF COREQUISITE MODEL creates barriers for all students who are placed into remediation, it's a particular challenge for Black and Latinx students who are enrolled in remedial courses at higher rates. Simply put, too many racially minoritized students are placed in course sequences that rarely lead to gateway course completion, creating costly non-credit barriers to gaining critical early momentum in the journey toward a degree.

Percent of First Time Students Enrolled in Remediation



Source: SHEEO and CCA. *Serving the Equity Imperative: Intentional Action Toward Greater Student Success* (2016).

First Year Pipeline for 100 Entering Students of Each Race



Note: Total length of bars (navy + teal) represents the number of students who start in remediation; the remaining students (out of 100) were not enrolled in remediation.

Source: SHEEO and CCA. *Serving the Equity Imperative: Intentional Action Toward Greater Student Success* (2016).

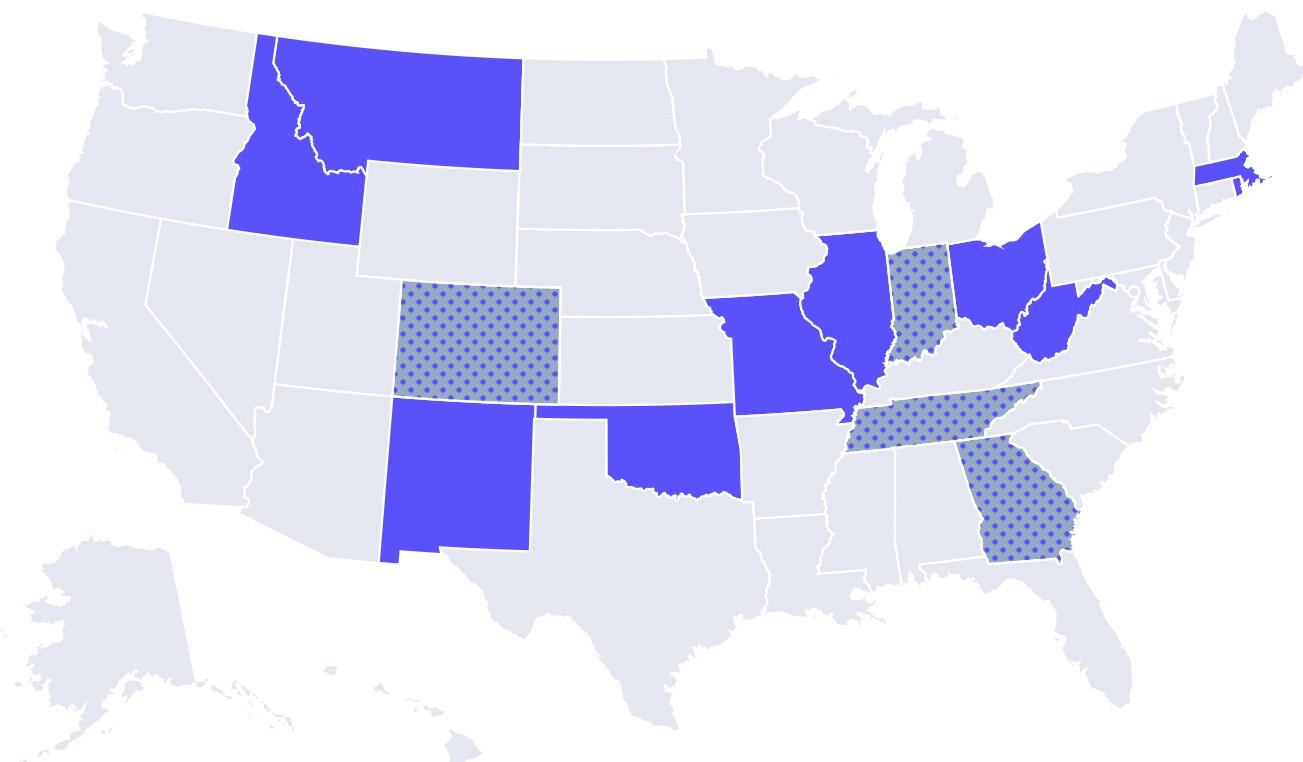
Corequisite support offers a clear solution to addressing institutional performance gaps that disproportionately affect Black and Latinx students. By not pursuing these reforms, institutions are forgoing a proven intervention that dramatically improves a student's likelihood of success. Given persistent inequities, we can no longer afford inaction.

What's Needed Next

HAVING ALREADY IDENTIFIED THE NEED to replicate early learnings from corequisite implementation, CCA launched the Corequisite at Scale Initiative in 2015, with support from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, to advocate for reform and to give states the technical assistance they need to design and implement strategies to scale the corequisite model statewide. In 2020, after helping more than a dozen states scale corequisite support through the initiative, CCA audited corequisite implementation, interviewing more than 70 state- and institution-level stakeholders across the participating states as well as four other states recognized as national corequisite leaders.

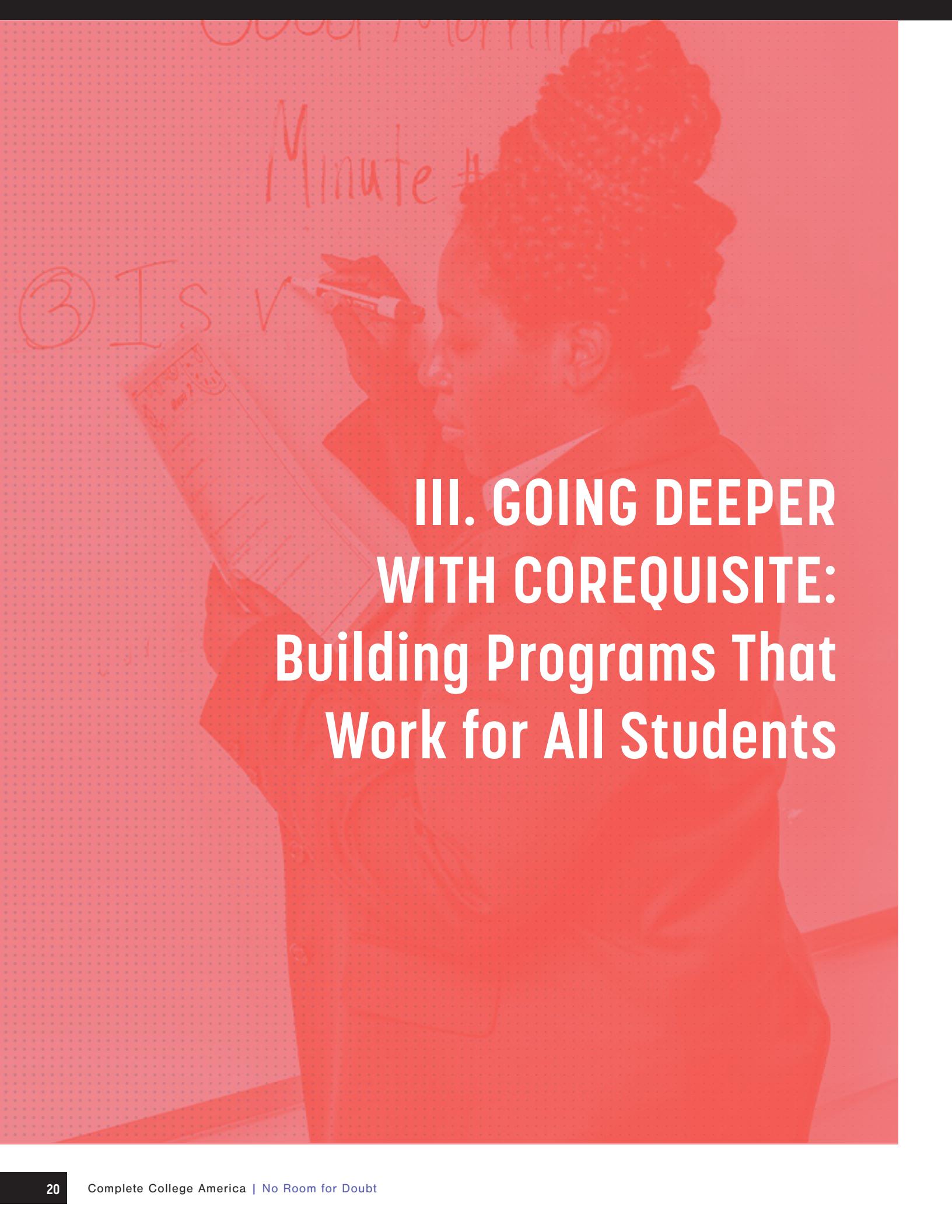
A Nationwide Movement

From sounding the alarm to supporting statewide implementation of the corequisite model to gathering best practices from the field, CCA has been at the forefront of a national movement to scale corequisite support in service to more equitable outcomes.



The findings leave no room for doubt: As corequisite support spreads across the country, thousands more students are being given the opportunity to enroll directly into college-level gateway classes with the support they need to build momentum toward graduation. But the findings also reveal that even with the implementation of corequisite courses, numerous other factors such as outdated and discriminatory placement practices, inconsistent pedagogy, racial bias within the classroom, and a lack of coordination with other student-success reforms can hamper efforts to improve student outcomes and close institutional performance gaps. And that means there are plenty of opportunities to scale effective corequisite reforms, which is precisely why we've written this report—and precisely what we've spelled out in the next chapter.





III. GOING DEEPER WITH COREQUISITE: Building Programs That Work for All Students

TO SCALE COREQUISITE SUPPORT AND ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY, states and institutions must treat it as a critical component of more holistic efforts to transform the culture of learning and address institutional performance gaps. In order to bolster those reforms, we've worked with leaders across the country to identify best practices that support the implementation of the corequisite model. This section is the result of that work and offers guidance for leaders implementing the corequisite model for the first time or those who are looking to deepen their practices to address challenges that stand in the way of student success.

How to Use This Guide

We've identified three areas of action that, when pursued together, lead to institutional transformation: shifting policy, creating conditions for change, and implementing proven strategies. When combining these priorities with a focus on continuous improvement, states, systems, and individual colleges and universities can create the cultural and programmatic changes that close institutional performance gaps.

For each of these three action areas, we outline specific priorities and tasks that can advance an agenda that address the shortcomings of traditional remediation. To make this toolkit easy to use, we lead off each section with a checklist that quickly summarizes the priorities and tasks for each action area. Each checklist is followed by detailed guidance and examples that support implementation and continuous improvement.



1. SHIFTING POLICY

// CREATING MOMENTUM FOR REFORM

CCA's learnings, as well as surveys conducted by [Tyton Partners](#) and the [Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness](#), reveal the importance of both state policy and faculty input in effectively scaling corequisite support strategies. Given these findings, CCA recommends that state, system, and institutional leaders advance policies that motivate educators to implement the corequisite model, remove barriers to its implementation, and establish guidelines and expectations—providing clear vision and momentum while empowering institutional leaders and faculty to drive corequisite implementation.

CHECKLIST: Shifting Policy



VISION: Making a Clear Case for Reform

- Define the “Why” driving reform.
- Identify the key shifts at the center of reform.
- Set clear goals and specific deadlines to drive action.



FUNDING: Align Incentives & Fully Fund Change Efforts

- Change funding formulas to reward the completion of gateway courses instead of completion of remedial coursework.
- Create targeted rewards for the retention and completion of equity populations, such as racially-minoritized and Pell-eligible students.
- Offer institutions financial support for implementation, including technical assistance, faculty release time, professional development and related travel, and provision of essential corequisite materials.



GUIDELINES: Start With a Solid Foundation

- Make college-level gateway courses the default placement for all students.
- Use multiple placement measures, including high school GPA, to place students into corequisite courses and identify additional students who may benefit from corequisite support.
- Create state-level math and English faculty groups to develop guidelines for institution-level corequisite models.



VISION: Making a Clear Case for Reform

DEFINE THE "WHY" BEHIND REFORM

Recent [scholarship](#), as well as CCA's own evaluation, reveals that schools and students benefit when institutions make a philosophical shift from producing "college-ready students" to creating "student-ready colleges." How states, systems, and institutions communicate the importance of this shift will impact expectations for students, faculty, and staff members—making it important to codify these underlying beliefs as a unifying guide for reform.

CCA recommends the following philosophical foundations:

Remedial courses do not represent access to college—and **should not be used to measure progress** toward closing institutional performance gaps.

Traditional remediation focuses on the academic skills and milestones students haven't achieved. **Corequisite looks for opportunities to build on existing skills** by providing **critical supports that enable success**, especially for racially minoritized students who make up most developmental enrollments.

Students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or familial educational achievement, have equal opportunities to access and complete a college education or credential of value because postsecondary institutions, policymakers, and systems of higher education welcome, invest in, and support these students through and to an on-time completion.



By evaluating how well-intended, but outdated, systems and regulations affected student outcomes, and recognizing that those structures—and not our students—were broken, creative solutions emerged effortlessly.

// MATT GIANNESCHI *Chief Operating Officer & Chief of Staff, Colorado Mountain College*

IDENTIFY THE KEY SHIFTS AT THE CENTER OF REFORM

An examination of those states successfully scaling the corequisite model reveals the importance of marrying faculty-led implementation with clear, evidence-based principles to guide those efforts. To that end, Complete College America joined with Strong Start to Finish and leading organizations across the field to define and refine seven [Core Principles for Transforming Remediation Within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy](#):

- 1 Every student's postsecondary education begins with a well-designed process that empowers them to choose an academic direction and build a plan that starts with passing credit-bearing gateway courses in the first year.
- 2 Placement of every student is based on multiple measures, using evidence-based criteria, instead of through a single standardized test.
- 3 Campus communities transform policies and practices to ensure that every student is provided with high-value learning experiences and the supports needed to remove barriers to success—especially students from historically underrepresented, disenfranchised, and minoritized communities.
- 4 Program-appropriate college-level math and English courses are offered to every student through evidence-based, integrated support models designed to accelerate gateway course success.
- 5 Every student is provided access to multiple pathways, such as statistics and data science, that integrate rigorous math appropriate to different disciplines and to the well-paid professions of today and tomorrow.
- 6 Every student is supported in staying on track to a postsecondary credential through the institution's effective use of early momentum metrics and mechanisms to generate, share, and act on finely disaggregated student progression data.
- 7 Efforts to improve the student experience, meet the evolving needs of students, and remove barriers to student success are visibly prioritized by the institution through the use of mechanisms that elevate the voices and lived experiences of students—and the entire campus community.

Source: Strong Start to Finish. [Core Principles for Transforming Remediation Within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy](#) (2020).

SET CLEAR GOALS & SPECIFIC DEADLINES TO DRIVE ACTION

Beyond championing cultural shifts and providing clear guidelines for reform, policy also creates a sense of urgency and sustains momentum by setting clear goals and deadlines for the implementation of the corequisite model.

CCA recommends state, system, and institutional leaders:

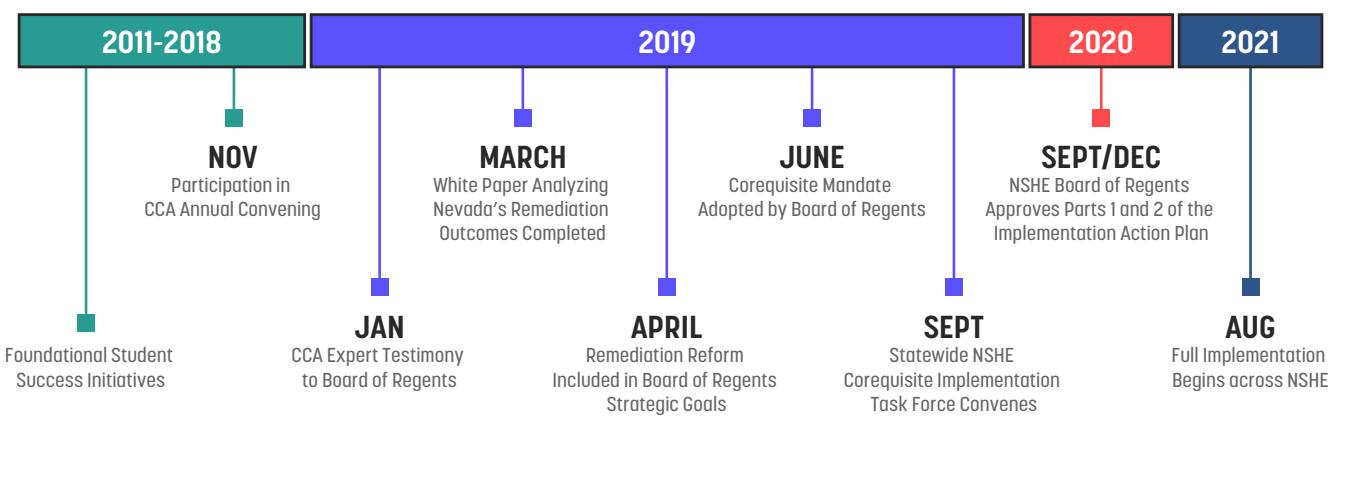
Set specific, numeric goals to define the scale of implementation.

Set a target date by when policy requirements must be in place, typically one to three years from enactment of the policy.

Outline how to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and use data to modify and drive subsequent action (see the Data section on page 32 for more guidance).

From Idea to Execution in 3 Years

How Nevada moved from recognizing the need for reform to adopting a statewide corequisite policy.





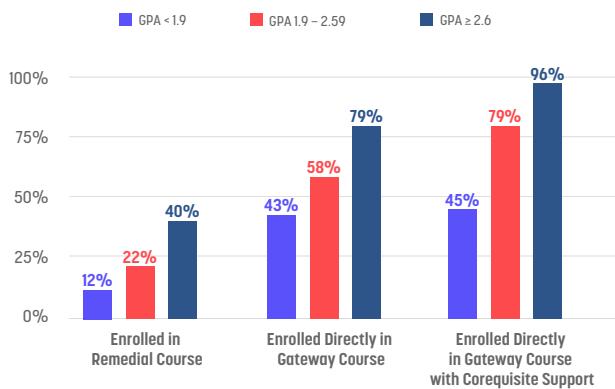
GUIDELINES: Start with a Solid Foundation

COLLEGE-LEVEL GATEWAY COURSES AS THE DEFAULT

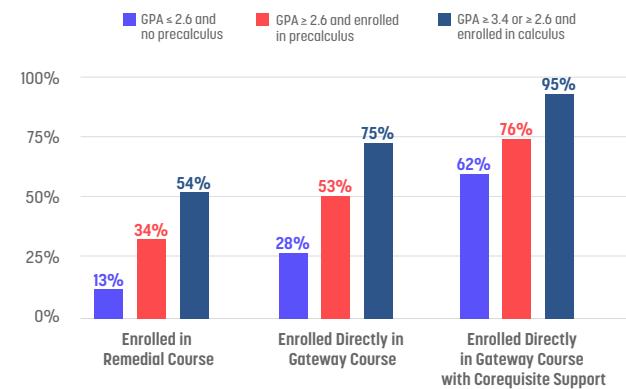
There is a misconception that remediation is the only way for students to succeed in college-level gateway courses, and that the corequisite model only helps students who narrowly missed meeting defined measures of college-readiness. But multiple studies, including research from the Multiple Measures Assessment Project highlighted in [a recent CAP study from California](#), show that enrolling students directly in a gateway course—with or without corequisite support—increases their likelihood of completing the gateway course across multiple subjects and all levels of academic preparedness.

Gateway Course Completion at California Community Colleges

Percent of Students Completing
Gateway English Course



Percent of Students Completing
STEM Math Course



Source: [Campaign for College Opportunity and the California Acceleration Project. Getting There II: A Statewide Progress Report on Implementation of AB 705 \(2019\)](#).

Leaders we spoke to noted that implementation of traditional prerequisite remedial approaches hinders implementation of the more effective corequisite support model, while the CAP study states that “continuing to offer [remedial] classes opens the door to implicit bias, as certain students are steered to take them, while other students are perceived as ‘college material.’”

CCA recommends state, system, and institutional leaders address these challenges by setting clear defaults and expectations for reform, for instance:

Enrollment in college-level gateway courses should be the **default placement** for all students.

Students needing or requesting additional support should be provided assistance as a corequisite, not a prerequisite, within the context of the gateway course.

Completion of a set of gateway courses is a **critical measure of success** toward college completion.

The content in required gateway courses should **align with a student’s academic program of choice**, especially in math.



MULTIPLE PLACEMENT MEASURES AND HIGH SCHOOL GPA

In a model where college-level gateway course enrollment is the default, multiple-placement measures that evaluate more than just standardized test scores—[a practice shown to increase completion of college-level gateway courses](#)—can be used to place students into corequisite courses and identify additional students who may benefit from corequisite support. Students who place directly into a college-level gateway course without corequisite support could still opt into this model without feeling stigmatized if they prefer to have the extra time and support. This creates a culture where an institution offers additional just-in-time support that address the needs of students while they are completing work in credit-bearing courses.

CCA recommends state, system, and institutional leaders champion this vision by codifying the following expectations for reform:

Placement is used to enroll students in college-level gateway courses with corequisite support.

Placement of every student is based on multiple measures, using evidence-based criteria rather than relying solely on standardized tests.

High school GPA is included in any multiple-measures placement process because it's a better predictor of success than test scores.



Sample Policy Language

A postsecondary institution shall not require students to enroll in remedial English or mathematics coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree unless placement research that includes consideration of high school GPA and coursework shows that those students are less likely to succeed in gateway courses in English and mathematics than in remedial coursework.

Multiple-measures placement shall apply to all students in such a manner so that any of the following may occur:

- ❑ Low performance on one measure may be offset by high performance on another measure.
- ❑ The student can demonstrate preparedness and thus bypass remediation based on any one measure.
- ❑ When high school transcript data are difficult to obtain, difficult to make use of, or not available, a postsecondary institution may use self-reported high school information or guided placement, including self-placement for students.

FACULTY-DEVELOPED GUIDELINES

CCA recommends that state-level math and English faculty groups be formed to develop guidelines for institution-level corequisite models.

In doing so, CCA recommends that the following key factors be considered:

- Latest research and institutional best practices** from states achieving the best student outcomes.
- Credentials and experience** of existing instructors.
- Classroom availability** and student-friendly scheduling.
- Subject-specific** best practices.
- Credit-hour considerations** in relation to academic maps and transfer guidelines.



POLICY SPOTLIGHT: California State University

At the California State University, student success has been a long-held, long-term focus. The CSU's Graduation Initiative 2025 is implementing system-wide changes to increase graduation rates, eliminate equity gaps in degree completion, and meet California's workforce needs. Executive Order 1110 (EO 1110), a policy adopted by the CSU Chancellor's Office in 2017, is a critical step in this effort. EO 1110 requires all CSU campuses to eliminate non-credit developmental courses in Written Communication and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning, changes how students are placed into courses, and improves how we support students.

A recent study conducted for the CSU by WestEd shows that EO 1110 is working: Students in the 2018 cohort completed their requirements and earned more baccalaureate-level credits in their first year of enrollment than their peers from the 2017 cohort. The findings also show that there is more work to be done to increase retention over the long-term and close equity gaps between racially minoritized students and their peers. Addressing these challenges will require both analysis and action and should remind all of us that student support policies and programs do not operate in a vacuum.

The CSU leads by example, and we know that CCA shares this sense of responsibility. From highlighting corequisite issues in a 2016 convening to enabling institutions like the CSU to share best practices and lessons-learned with others, CCA is supporting student success and equity work across the country at a time when this work is more important than ever. Every higher education institution is grappling with massive changes wrought by the pandemic, but now more than ever, we must all remain committed to the work of ensuring students have the support needed to accomplish their academic goals.

// DR. JAMES MINOR

Assistant Vice Chancellor & Senior Strategist, California State University



FUNDING: Align Incentive & Fully Resource Change Efforts

In many states, performance-funding systems predate the implementation of the corequisite model and do not create incentives to use corequisite over traditional remediation.

CCA recommends state and system leaders consider the following when working to refine financial incentives:

Rather than funding institutions based on the number of students who complete remedial coursework, **reward institutions for the number of students who complete college-level gateway courses** within the first year of enrollment.

Created targeted rewards for the retention and completion of equity populations, such as racially-minoritized and Pell-eligible students.

Conversations and surveys with practitioners reveal that a little state funding to support roll-out and implementation of the corequisite model can go a long way. In the absence of state funding, institutions will be forced to rely on their own funding, causing further harm institutions with large proportions of racially minoritized students who are disproportionate targets of remediation.

CCA recommends state, system, and institutional leaders prioritize funding to support:

Technical assistance

Faculty release time

Professional development and related travel

2. CREATING CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE

Scaling corequisite support requires state leaders and educators to collaborate at a deep level. To create the conditions that make this change possible, all stakeholders must agree that the work is important, understand how efforts are progressing, and recognize what they can learn from one another.

CHECKLIST: Creating Conditions for Change



COMMUNICATION: Getting the Message Right

- Frame corequisite as a foundational element in addressing institutional performance gaps.
- Present the issue as a structural one rather than the result of student or instructor shortcomings.
- Continually reiterate the equity imperative and guiding principles driving this work.
- Frequently communicate progress to every operation on campus, not just those directly involved.
- Identify key concerns across specific stakeholder groups and work to address those concerns, while making the financial case for corequisite as needed.



DATA: Using Evidence to Make Change

- Use data from your own state and institution to make the case for corequisite support.
- Prioritize comparisons between the gateway course outcomes of an institution's remedial students with the gateway course outcomes of peer institutions' corequisite students.
- Always present data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to discover trends, highlight inequities, and track progress.
- From the start, ensure all parties are aligned on the quantitative and qualitative data the institution will track and how that data will be used to evaluate success.
- Collect and share data regularly with all stakeholders.
- Use data to drive action for continuous improvement.



ENGAGEMENT: Bringing the Right People Together

- Create groups of institution level math and English faculty and staff - including leadership - to lead and refine implementation in alignment with guidelines provided by state level working groups.
- Train stakeholders from all areas of the institution so they understand why the corequisite model is being implemented and how it impacts each operation on campus.
- Find, support, and elevate institution level corequisite champions.
- Regularly convene cohorts of faculty, institution leaders and staff to share data, best practices, and lessons learned.
- Provide training for corequisite instructors on the pedagogical approaches best suited to the corequisite model.



COMMUNICATION: Getting the Message Right

Many state- and institution-level leaders working to implement the corequisite model have told CCA that it's important to communicate corequisite is not simply the "flavor of the day" or a "flash-in-the-pan" initiative, but a foundational part of broader efforts to address institutional performance gaps that have existed for far too long. This framing focuses the narrative on what is best for students, helps individuals understand how corequisite fits into the big picture, and helps ward off "initiative fatigue."

Those leading reforms suggest that it's important to frame the issue as a structural challenge rather than the result of student or instructor shortcomings—an approach that can also serve to unite stakeholders in efforts to serve students rather than prompt anyone to defend individual motivations and actions.

Stakeholders report that regular and consistent communication is also critical to maintaining momentum and preempting potential problems.

Because people often need to hear something many times before shifting their behaviors, CCA recommends that state, system, and institutional leaders:

Continually reiterate the equity imperative and guiding principles driving this work.

Frequently communicate the status of implementation to every operation on campus, not just those directly involved.

Identify key concerns across specific stakeholder groups—faculty, advisors, registrars, recruiting and enrollment managers, institutional leadership—and proactively and consistently work to address them, making the financial case for corequisite as needed.



DATA: Using Evidence to Make Change

Corequisite leaders participating in our evaluation consistently highlighted the value of data when making the case for reform and shaping the ongoing development and refinement of corequisite support models.

CCA recommends state, system, and institution leaders join the Postsecondary Data Partnership, which will bolster their ability to:

From the start, ensure all parties are aligned on the quantitative and qualitative data the institution will track and how that data will be used to evaluate success.

Use your state and institution's own data to make and sustain the case for the corequisite model

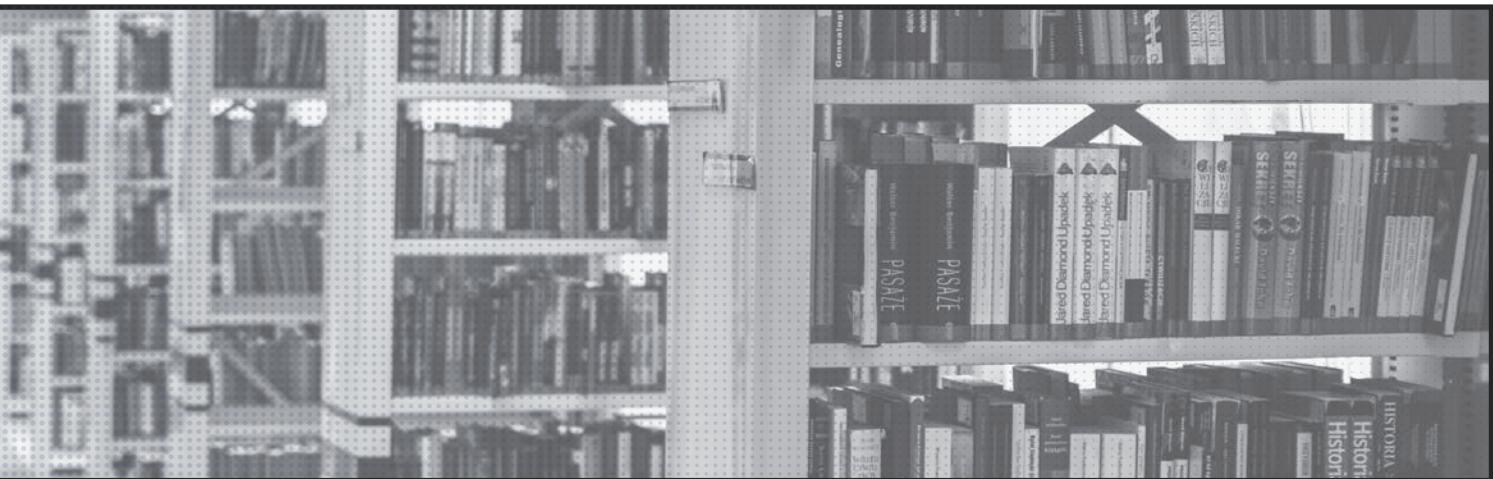
Prioritize comparisons between the gateway course outcomes of an institution's remedial students with the gateway course outcomes of peer institutions' corequisite students.

Always present data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to discover trends, highlight inequities, and track progress.

Collect and share data regularly with all stakeholders.

Use data to drive action for continuous improvement.

Use data as talking points, but do not enter the conversation from a deficit perspective, as many institutions serving the most minoritized groups have promising stories and practice to share.



Recommended Metrics

- 1 Gateway course enrollment, performance and completion (overall and within the first year)
- 2 Corequisite section performance and completion (overall and within the first year)
- 3 Performance and completion of other courses while enrolled in the gateway course
- 4 Persistence
- 5 Performance and completion of subsequent coursework in the gateway course subject area
- 6 Degree completion and transfer (overall and within specified timeframes)



Recommended Data Disaggregations

- 1 Remedial enrollment (historic) vs. gateway enrollment vs. gateway enrollment with corequisite
- 2 Gender
- 3 Age
- 4 Race/Ethnicity
- 5 Level of academic preparation (in alignment with placement measures)
- 6 Pell-eligible vs. non-Pell eligible
- 7 English learners vs. native English speakers
- 8 Degree type
- 9 Gateway course
- 10 First-generation vs. non first-generation
- 11 Military veteran or service member vs. civilian
- 12 First-time student vs. returning adult



ENGAGEMENT: Bringing the Right People Together

Don't overlook the importance of faculty- and staff-driven implementation, professional development opportunities, and the widespread communication of best practices and lessons learned among stakeholders.

CCA recommends that state, system, and institution leaders:

- Create institution-level math and English faculty groups** to lead and refine implementation in alignment with guidelines provided by state-level working groups.
- Provide training to help stakeholders across the institution** understand why the corequisite model is being implemented and how it impacts each operation on campus.
- Find, support and elevate** institution-level corequisite champions.
- Regularly convene cohorts** of faculty, institution leaders and staff to share data, best practices, and lessons learned.
- Provide training for corequisite instructors** on the pedagogical approaches best suited to the corequisite model.
- Develop communities of practice** to discuss unique institutional and cultural nuances in strategy implementation with minority-serving institutions, community colleges, and regional campuses.



3. IMPLEMENTING & REFINING PROVEN STRATEGIES

Implementation of corequisite support strategies is an ongoing process that requires states, systems, and institutions to continually monitor student success measures and revise aspects of each course to better serve students. Following CCA's recent conversations across the field, we've generated a set of recommendations that provide even the most ardent reformers with new ways to deepen their efforts and ensure more students succeed.

CHECKLIST: Implementing & Refining Strategies



INTEGRATION: Connect Corequisite to Other Student Success Strategies

- Help students build early momentum by requiring them to complete college-level gateway math and English as a part of full-time 15 credit hour enrollment.
- Connect Concurrent Enrollment and corequisite strategies, prioritizing the alignment of relevant high school curriculum and college-level gateway courses to determine appropriate use of corequisite support.
- Implement corequisite support and Math Pathways in tandem by connecting gateway courses to the skills students need for their chosen program of study.
- Align Academic Maps & Milestones with decisions regarding corequisite support and Math Pathways.
- Ensure Returning Adult Outreach highlights your institution's commitment to being a student-ready institution and addresses concerns students may have about placement.
- Recognize that students' needs extend beyond the additional academic support corequisite provides—from financial aid to mental health to food and housing—and work to ensure Student Basic Needs are being met.



PEDAGOGY: Design Effective Learning Experiences

- Use a just-in-time teaching model for corequisite sections that focuses on helping students acquire and re-engage the knowledge and skills specifically required to succeed in the gateway courses.
- Support the advancement of student-centered and culturally-responsive teaching practices that ensure all students are empowered and inspired by their course experience.
- Consider equity implications and emerging best practices when designing online offerings, including the use of a flipped classroom approach.



INTEGRATION: Connecting Corequisite to Other Student Success Strategies

Although corequisite support can be implemented as a standalone strategy, its impact is multiplied when integrated with efforts to provide students with the purpose, momentum, structure, and support they need to complete their education. Corequisite support is an essential part of efforts to address systemic barriers that lead to inequitable outcomes for racially minoritized students. It's also an important part of improving outcomes for adult learners who especially benefit from the time and cost savings afforded by this strategy. In all cases, the corequisite model both enables successful pathways to a degree or credential and contributes to workforce outcomes by getting students to graduation and into a career more quickly.

PURPOSE

When done well, the implementation of the corequisite model contributes to a shift in institutional culture from producing “college-ready students” to creating “student-ready colleges.” The ways that students experience an institution and are presented with information about corequisite will inform the extent to which they believe in their own ability to succeed, feel supported on their journey, and recognize how corequisite support gets them closer to their ultimate goal.

That’s why it is critical that admissions efforts, especially those aimed at engaging returning adults, highlight an institution’s commitment to being a student-ready institution and address concerns students may have about placement. Similarly, efforts to develop a consistent First Year Experience should be aligned with the technical requirements of corequisite and the cultural shifts embodied by the reform.

MOMENTUM

Although the corequisite model has been proven to increase the percentage of students completing college-level gateway math and English courses, students are often influenced to enroll in developmental courses. Doing so stalls academic progress and increases the likelihood that students, especially those at community colleges, will stop out as they face unfulfilled, often daunting, requirements at the end of their degree. As a result, efforts to help students build early momentum (e.g., 15 to Finish/Stay on Track) must be built on a foundation that ensures students pass college-level gateway math and English courses in their first year.

Similarly, while Concurrent Enrollment strategies are a proven way to help students build early momentum, institutions must consider the relationship between concurrent enrollment and corequisite offerings. High school students should be encouraged to complete relevant high school courses before enrolling in college-level gateway math and English courses.

That way multiple placement measures, including grades in relevant high school courses as well as GPA, can be used to determine whether concurrent enrollment students would benefit from corequisite support.

STRUCTURE

Implementation of the corequisite model provides a valuable opportunity for math leadership and faculty to work with other departments to implement Math Pathways, which enrolls students in gateway math courses aligned with their chosen program of study.

Foundational college-level courses for all Math Pathways should be paired with their own corequisite support courses. Considering the relationships between these strategies allows faculty to refine gateway courses in a more holistic manner, ensuring course content is better aligned with what's necessary for future academic success. Similarly, efforts to create Academic Maps & Milestones should factor in decisions regarding corequisite and Math Pathways to provide students with a clear path to graduation.

SUPPORT

Although implementing the corequisite model often focuses on course content and delivery models, corequisite support isn't a silver bullet that will erase institutional performance gaps and increase degree completion. Corequisite support must be aligned with institution-wide efforts to better support students on their journey to graduation. This is particularly important as it relates to efforts to provide Proactive and Purpose-Driven Advising, as staff in these roles can and should play an integral part in how students think about, prepare for, and prioritize corequisite courses.

It's also critical that institutions meet students' basic needs—from financial aid to mental health to food and housing. Without this assistance, no amount of additional academic support will be enough to address longstanding inequities.



Typically, [student affairs and academic affairs] have little to do with each other. The student affairs staff offers their programs to whatever random group of students appears at their doorstep. The academic affairs division offers its courses to whatever random group of students enrolls. There is no effort made to see that the neediest students get the best instruction or the most support. This must change in order to attain the objectives of the college completion agenda.

// COLLEGE COMPLETION: FOCUS ON THE FINISH LINE

By Hunter R. Boylan, Barbara J. Calderwood & Barbara S. Bonham



PEDAGOGY: Design Effective Learning Experiences

The impact of corequisite model reforms will be limited if not paired with pedagogical best practices tailored to the needs of corequisite students.

JUST-IN-TIME TEACHING

Corequisite support doesn't mean teaching or re-teaching all content and skills that a student learns in high school or a typical remedial sequence. Instead, corequisite support should focus on helping students acquire and re-engage the knowledge and skills specifically required to succeed in the college-level gateway course.

CCA recommends using a just-in-time teaching model for corequisite courses to:

- review background knowledge** and scaffold learning
- preview upcoming topics** for the gateway course
- support** the gateway course instruction
- answer student questions** about the gateway course content
- extend opportunities** to practice and interact with course concepts
- provide students opportunities** to reflect upon their own learning
- address non-cognitive factors** that may affect student learning; and
- build student confidence and capacity** and reflect on the learning process.

While gateway courses should maintain the same depth, rigor, and expectations as all other college-level courses, corequisite courses allow for more flexibility in structure and pacing to provide the support that students need to succeed. Instructors must be able to adapt their lesson plans in the moment and should employ many different methodologies focused on active learning, which may include on-demand instruction; frequent, brief exercises; group work; and inquiry-based learning. Class sessions should include time for Q&A on gateway course concepts as often as possible.

STUDENT-CENTERED & CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

While the corequisite model tackles critical structural inequities, it does not automatically address issues of equity or culture within the classroom.

To ensure all students are empowered and inspired by their course experience, faculty should be provided with professional development opportunities to support their advancement of student-focused and culturally-responsive teaching practices that:

- recognize** and avoid implicit bias and microaggressions
- create** a more inclusive classroom environment
- include** more culturally relevant materials
- build** all students' sense of self-efficacy and confidence in themselves
- connect** learning to prior experiences and related careers
- provide** individualized and differentiated instruction
- increase cultural awareness** and assessment of cultural values in teaching practices; and
- draw on the expertise of institutions**, especially MSIs, that have deep experience with cultural pedagogy



If [racially minoritized students] are still experiencing microaggressions and racism in the classroom because you're not paying attention to pedagogy, you won't see the results you're hoping for in spite of curricular reforms. To do it right, you need the structural reforms and changes to classroom dynamics that value students' cultural wealth and affirm their capabilities as learners.

// ELENA QUIROZ-LIVANIS

*Assistant Commissioner for Academic Policy & Student Success and Chief of Staff,
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education*

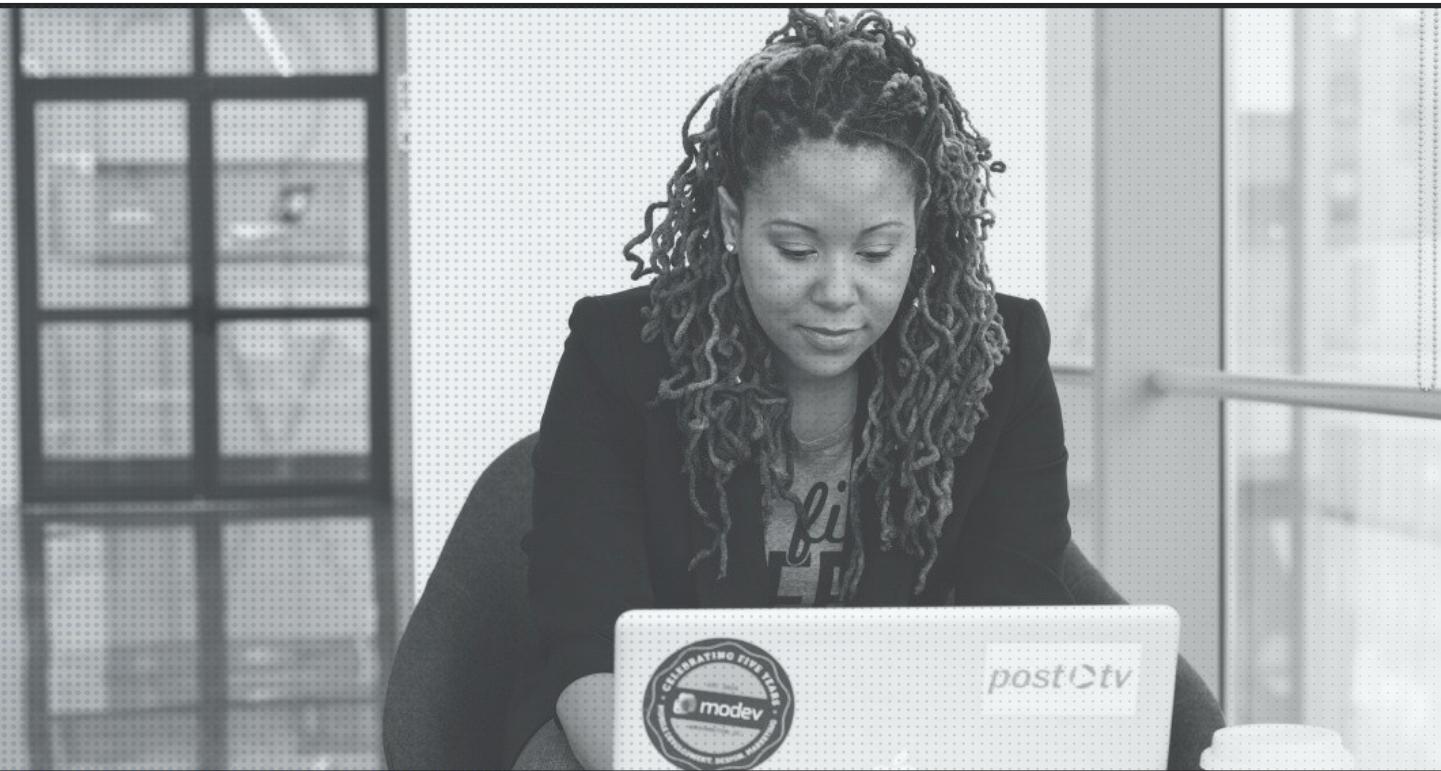
ONLINE LEARNING

As institutions evaluate the ways that online learning can offer students additional corequisite support, it's critical that educators consider the equity implications of the following factors:

Rural and low-income students are less likely to have reliable access to a computer and/or internet.

Although synchronous instruction may allow for more tailored support, **low-income and adult students** are less likely to have consistent access to a quiet place where they can participate.

Students' level of familiarity with technology and the specific digital tools is likely to differ widely.





While data and lessons from the field are ongoing as more and more institutions have been forced to adopt online instructions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges must adopt the following best practices:

Implement a flipped-classroom approach, providing gateway course content through asynchronous instruction and follow-up corequisite support through synchronous instruction.

Ensure all synchronous sessions are recorded and documented in extensive notes.

Prioritize the development of community and support networks through dialogue, breakout rooms, efforts to connect study partners, etc.

Provide students with laptops and WiFi hotspots as needed or connect them to other available programs.

Ensure all courses begin with training on the online tools being used and make an effort to encourage and normalize technology-related questions.

Provide instructional design support and guidelines to help faculty migrate their courses online.

Invest in professional development to support the pedagogical adjustments required within an online setting.

A black and white photograph showing a group of diverse students sitting together, possibly in a classroom or study area. In the foreground, a young woman with short hair and a cross necklace is visible, looking down at a book. Behind her, a young man with glasses and a dark t-shirt is smiling and looking towards the camera. Other students are partially visible in the background, also engaged with their work.

A NEW NORMAL: COREQUISITE SUPPORT

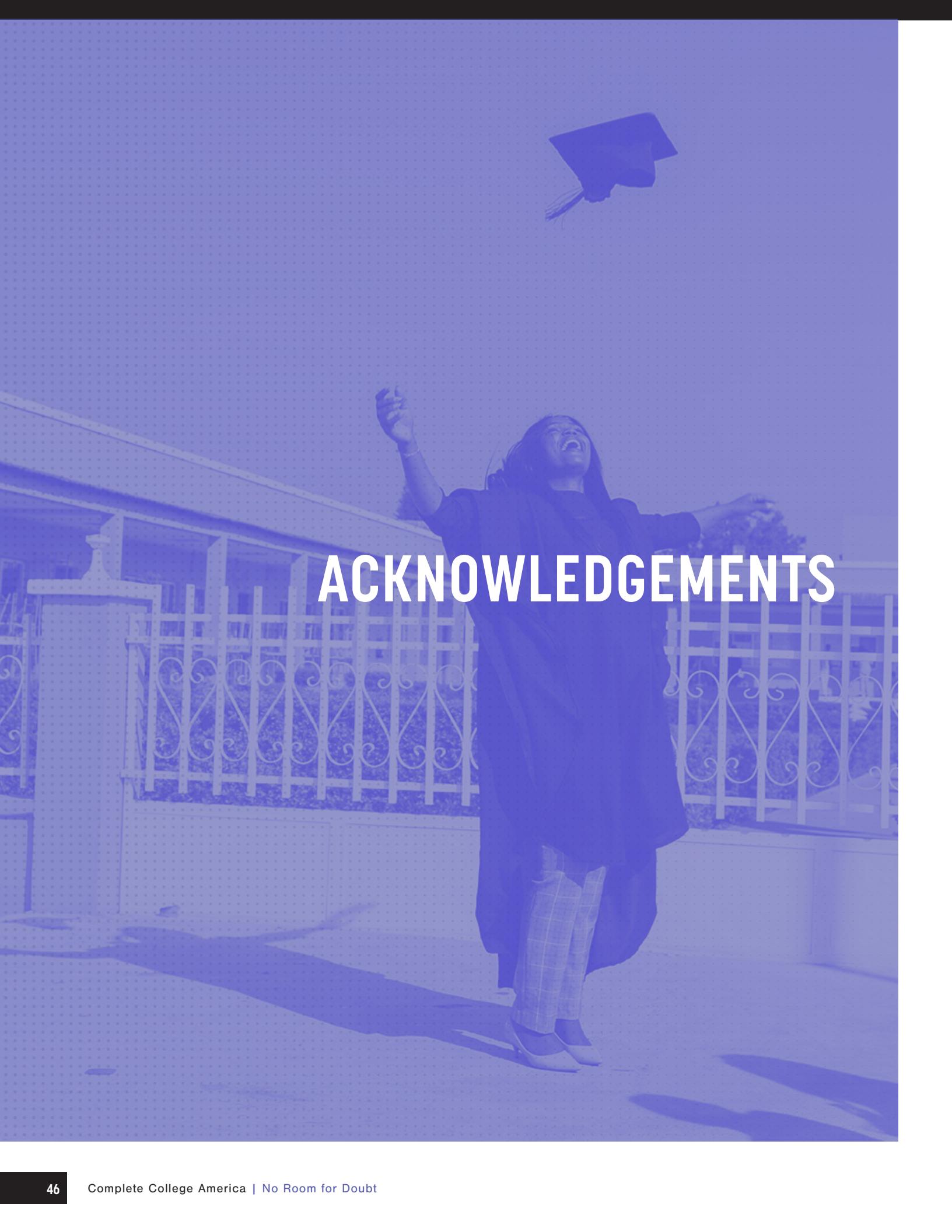
THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR. Corequisite support works — and it's gaining momentum at institutions across the country. It represents the kind of student-centered changes that dramatically improve success by making simple, common-sense improvements to the design of essential academic programs and pathways. It's our hope, and the hope of thousands of reform-minded higher education leaders that corequisite support becomes the rule and not the exception.

Going forward, we must commit to continually assess what we've learned, recognize where we are falling short, and double down on our efforts to ensure every student succeeds in college.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Corequisite support is the new standard that builds academic momentum and results in improved student outcomes.**
- **The benefits of the corequisite support model includes increased gateway course completion, increased graduation rates, and clear financial returns in the form of additional tuition revenue.**
- **While the corequisite model is gaining momentum across the country, more institutions need to scale their implementation of this proven strategy for student success.**
- **Corequisite support is an equity imperative with dramatic positive impacts on racially minoritized students and adult learners, serving as a strategy to dismantle systemic inequalities.**
- **A comprehensive approach to corequisite support includes reforming policy, creating the conditions for success, and understanding the details of implementing and scaling this strategy in a way that meets the needs of all learners.**

CCA is ready to help you get started or go deeper with corequisite support, and identify where to focus your efforts. Reach out to your Strategy Director today at info@completecollege.org.

A black and white photograph of a young woman in a graduation gown and cap, cheering with her arms raised. She is standing in front of a building with ornate wrought-iron gates. A graduation cap is flying through the air above her. The background shows a city skyline with several buildings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FUNDERS

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

Strong Start to Finish

ECMC Foundation

CCA STAFF

Yolanda Watson Spiva, Ph.D. | President

Dhanfu Elston, Ph.D. | Chief of Staff & Senior Vice President for Strategy

Nia Haydel, Ph.D. | Vice President for Alliance Engagement & Institutional Transformation

Charles Ansell, M.S. | Vice President for Research, Policy, and Advocacy

Melanie Harris, M.Ed. | Strategy Director

Nikolas Huot, M.A. | Strategy Director

Brandon Protas, Ed.D. | Strategy Director

CCA FELLOWS AND CONTENT EXPERTS

CONTRIBUTORS

California State University System

Education Commission of the States

Nevada System of Higher Education

University System of Georgia

Tyton Partners

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Zinth Consulting, LLC

REVIEWERS

Estela Bensimon, Ph.D. | Director Emeritus, University of Southern California Rossier School of Education and Center for Urban Education

Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D. | Director Emeritus of the National Center for Developmental Education and President Emeritus, National Organization for Student Success

Gwenn Eldridge, Ed.D. | Assistant Vice President for Academic Transitions & Support, Ivy Tech Community College

Katie Hern, Ed.D. | Co-founder, California Acceleration Project and instructor, Skyline College

Andrew Howard, M.F.A., M.A. | English Program Coordinator, University of the District of Columbia

Alexandra Logue, Ph.D. | Research Professor, the Center for Advanced Study in Education of the Graduate Center of The City University of New York

Heidi Loshbaugh, Ph.D. | Educational Consultant

Elena Quiroz-Livanis, M.P.A. | Chief of Staff and Assistant Commissioner for Academic Policy & Student Success, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Nadrea R. Njoku, Ph.D. | Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, UNCF

LaToya Owens, Ph.D. | Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, UNCF

Adrian Trinidad, M.P.P. | Dean's Fellow, Urban Education Policy PhD program at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education

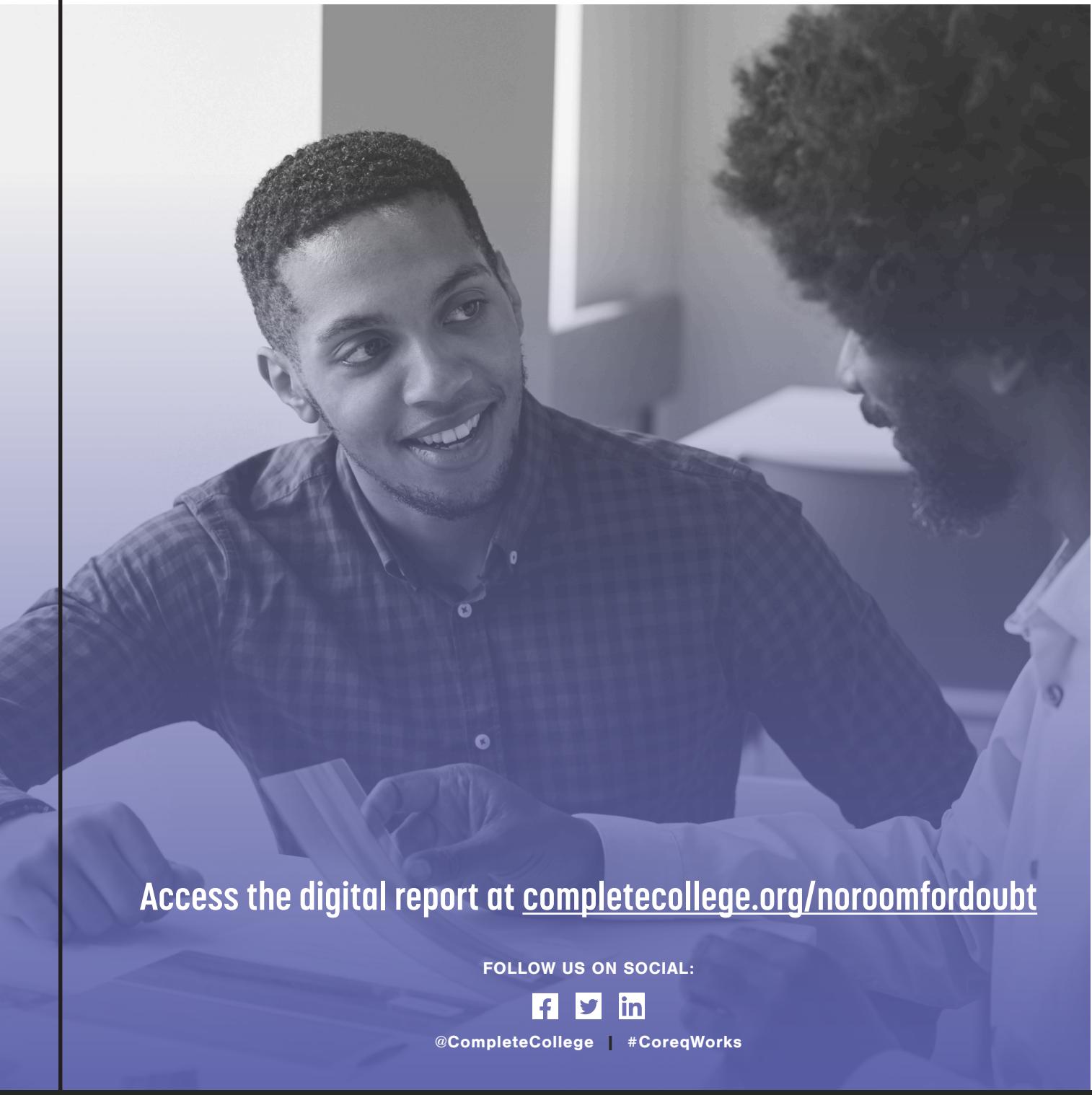
Joyce Walborn, M.Ed. | Mathematics Instructor, Helena College

Katie Zaback, M.P.A. | Data Strategy Consultant

COMMUNICATIONS PARTNERS

Friday

Weathers Strategy Group



Access the digital report at completecollege.org/noroomfordoubt

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL:



@CompleteCollege | #CoreqWorks

**COMPLETE
COLLEGE
AMERICA**

Supported by:



ECMC
Foundation

Established in 2009, Complete College America is a bold national advocate for dramatically increasing college completion rates and closing institutional performance gaps. We are committed to college success for every student, recognizing that barriers to degree attainment—rooted in structural racism and inequality—have a disproportionate effect on Black, Latinx, first-generation, adult, and low-income learners. Our work focuses on advancing strategies that give all students the purpose, momentum, structure, and support they need to build on their talents and succeed in college and beyond.