

Breaking Down Barriers to Access in Higher Education:

Perspectives for Regional and State College Promise
Stakeholders and Policy Makers – Data Brief



Jeff DeFranco, Lake Tahoe Community College

Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Conference

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STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS FROM STUDENT ACCESS TOWARD COMPLETION

✓ SUMMARY

Opportunities and disparities in education continues to run deep across varied dimensions of the learning journey for students from access to high quality completion. As College Promise programs continue to scale throughout states and across the country, ongoing understandings and contributions are glaringly more imperative to capture innovative contextualized program design, wrap-around service deployment efficacies and efficiencies, and impact assessments to yield evidence-based practices and research. In light of workforce needs amidst the fourth industrial revolution, partnership frameworks across industry sectors, policy-makers and academic ecosystems must also continue to be involved in the conversation.¹

✓ KEY ASPECTS AND CONCEPTS OF THE COLLEGE PROMISE MOVEMENT

Emerging tools and best practice experiences are rapidly shaping national conversations on student engagement, education reform and education policy.^{2,3}

Local, state and national-based policy forums increasingly highlighting its innovation and importance to fuel students access **toward completion** across academic communities around the country.^{4,5,6,7}

College Promise continues to thrive^{8,9} state-wide and scale throughout the country-increasing need for more sophisticated understanding of design, implementation and impact toward an organizational framework.¹⁰

A holistic approach is needed for addressing dimensions of **student access concerns¹¹ toward quality completion**, including considerations for economic, social, education, and workforce future-ready needs.^{12,13} Thus, capturing high quality data is essential to gain deep contextualization of deployments across organizations and College Promise typologies to recognize complexity of national and local challenges.^{15,16}

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Table 1: Emerging College Promise Typology.
Source Perna & Leigh.

PROGRAM TYPE	NUMBER
Place-Based	42
Last-dollar Community College	113
First-dollar Community College	16
State Need-Based Aid	89
State Merit-Based Aid	90
Universal Eligibility	95
Four-Year Institutions	48
Uncategorized	17
Unknown	2
Total	416*

As educators, institutions, policy makers and other supporters are coming together, the real change sparked by College Promise is that of spread, scale, and equity to bring about real systems change. According to Sprout Fund, for instance, “no one institution has the mandate or resources to take on massive, systemic issues like transforming education”¹⁷ and thus a coordinated effort¹⁴ is needed to spread the innovations happening statewide around the country.

*The value used for total College Promise Programs is curated and cross-referenced from various sources (College Promise; Perna & Leigh; Kelchen, 2017). Based on these sources, there are approximately 414 College Promise Programs as of March 2019 (College Promise). However, findings also suggest a total of 2 possible additional programs are classified with College Promise Typology (Perna & Leigh), which brings a possible total to 416.

Figure 1: 416* College Promise Programs in the United States

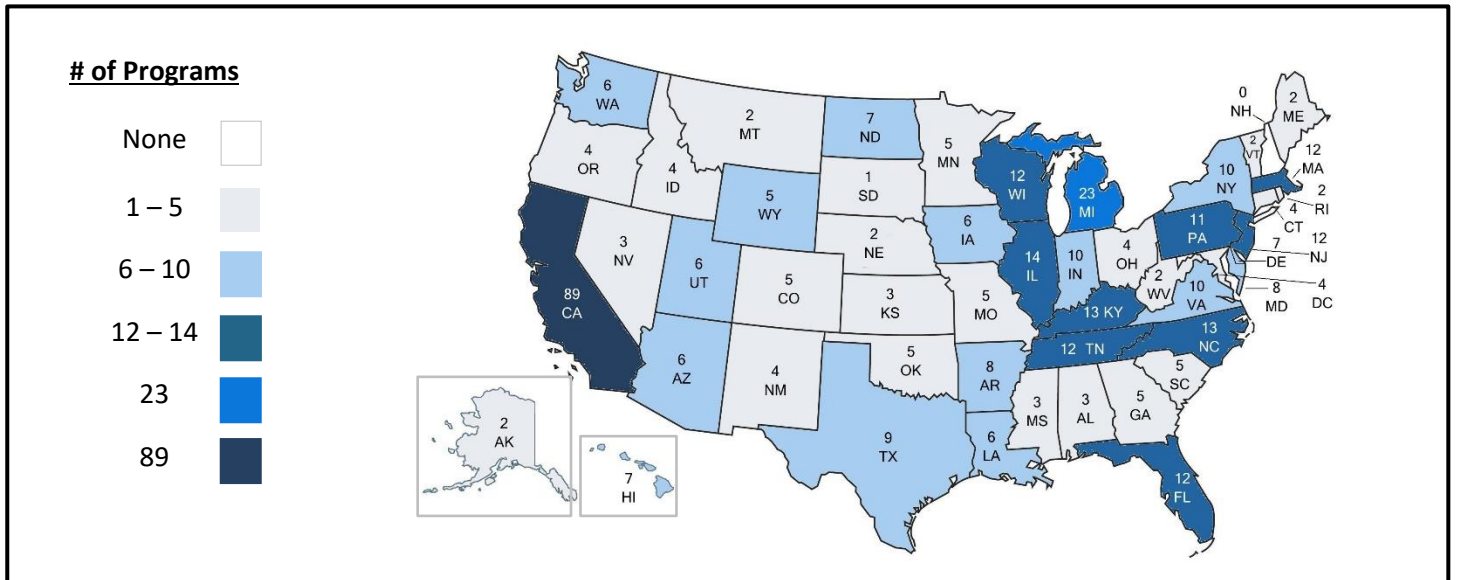


Figure 2: Last-dollar First-dollar Community Colleges



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¹ DeFranco, J. & Fraizer, L. (March, 2019). *Considering beyond student access toward completion: Social, political, economic, legal, intercultural and technical perspectives—SPELIT Power Matrix (working paper)*. Lake Tahoe, CA: Lake Tahoe Community College.

² Kanter, M. & Armstrong, A. (May 2019). *The Community College Promise Movement: Opportunity, Affordability, and Success*. Rowman & Littlefield.

³ League for Innovations in Community College. (January, 2019). *Insights into ideas that are transforming the community college world*.

⁴ Cloud, R., Crawford, C., Lopez, R. Norman, A. (March, 2019). *Fulfilling the promise of talent*. SxSw EDU. Retrieved from <https://schedule.sxswedu.com/2019/events/PP102997>

⁵ DeFranco, J. (2019). *Breaking Down Barriers to Access in Higher Education: Perspectives for Regional and State College Promise Stakeholders and Policy Makers*. 44th Association for Education Finance and Policy Conference. Kansas, MO: March 21-23.

⁶ Lederman, D. (2019). *Scenes from innovations in 2019*.

⁷ Kelchen, R. 2017. *A Review of College Promise Programs: Evidence from the Midwest*. University of Michigan, School of Education National Forum. Retrieved from https://www.mhec.org/sites/default/files/resources/mhec_affordability_series2_20170724.pdf

⁸ Kanter, M. & Cloud, R. (March, 2019). *Dallas county promise gains national attention for innovation in college access*. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/civiconation/2019/03/06/dallas-county-promise-gains-national-attention-for-innovation-in-college-access/#2c5416cb51ce>

⁹ California Promise. (November, 2018). *California College Promise. Program Characteristics and Perceptions from the Field*. Retrieved from <https://californiacollegepromise.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/College-Promise-Landscape-Scan-2018.pdf>

¹⁰ Perna, L. W. & Leigh, E. W. (2018). Understanding the Promise: A Typology of State and Local College Promise Programs. *Educational Researcher*, 47(3), pp: 155-180. Doi: 10.3102/0013189X17742653

¹¹ DeFranco, J. (2019). *California College Promise: A Policy Brief. First Time, Full Time, Tuition Free*. Lake Tahoe, CA: Lake Tahoe Community College.

¹² Fraizer, L. (2018). *Developing Lifelong Changemakers, 2nd Edition - A Special Edition for the United Nations*.

¹³ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (March, 2019). *Job openings and labor turnover summary*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>

¹⁴ Erfuth, P. (February, 2016). *Policy brief: Policy Coordination Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UNDESA*. p. 6.

¹⁵ Perna, L.W., & Leigh, E.W. *Database of college promise programs*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy. Retrieved from <http://ahead-penn.org/creating-knowledge/college-promise>.

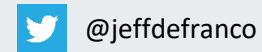
¹⁶ Berendt, B. et al. (2017). *Big Data for Monitoring Education Systems*. European Commission.

¹⁷ Sprout Fund. (n.d.). *Remake Learning*.

ABOUT JEFF DEFRANCO



Jeff DeFranco, Superintendent/President of Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC), began serving as the CEO of the organization in January 2017. Prior to his current role, he served as the Vice President of Administrative Services at LTCC. As a lifelong educator committed to supporting quality instructional programs and student success, he has worked in multiple educational settings including K-12, community college, and at four-year institutions. Jeff has taught leadership courses for four-year universities and has presented at numerous conferences on the topics ranging from change leadership to strategic planning. Jeff received his BA from CSU Chico and his Masters from University of Oregon. He is completing a Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change from Pepperdine University.



✓ LAKE TAHOE COLLEGE PROMISE

In Fall 2018, LTCC launched the Lake Tahoe College Promise (ltcc.edu/promise). The program provides first-time, full-time students to attend college tuition-free. The Promise is for all California residents, and for any Nevada resident of the Tahoe Basin living along the lake. In addition to a free year of tuition, LTCC's Promise students also receive access to the textbook lending library, unlimited bus rides on the South Shore with the Tahoe Transportation District, free tutoring and academic counseling, and priority consideration for LTCC Foundation's emergency book fund. The program is poised for expansion in 2019. LTCC recently received the Promise Scholars Program Replication grant to expand wrap around services for LTCC promise students in an effort to increase 3-year completion rates.



Recently, in an effort to draw national attention to the recently implemented Lake Tahoe College Promise, Jeff wrote persuasively about a unique situation and made the case for more colleges thinking in terms of service their communities as they actually exist, regardless of borders. His piece was shared in the *Forbes* Education blog. The program has been expanded to include both sides of the California-Nevada border. With this expansion, LTCC becomes the only college in the country to offer a bi-state College Promise program.



The flags of California and Nevada illustrating the bi-state promise service area around Lake Tahoe.

Forbes column, December 2018
bit.ly/ForbesTahoePromise

✓ LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Geographically isolated from the rest of the State of California by the Sierra Nevada mountains, LTCC has served South Lake Tahoe and the surrounding community since 1975. One of California's 115 community colleges, the institution is a single college district serving nearly 2,000 full-time equivalent students each year. Approximately 35% of attendees are first generation students. Recently, the Lisa Maloff University Center was opened, a 7,000 square foot space designed as the hub for access to advanced degrees. As a standalone facility at LTCC, student can access competitively priced degree options that can be earned on the college's South Shore campus. This inaugural milestone enables community members to earn advanced degrees, BA, Masters, teaching credential, doctoral, without having to relocate. For additional information visit: www.ltcc.edu.

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