



2010  
Annual  
Report

**GATEWAY**  
*to*  
**COLLEGE**  
NATIONAL NETWORK



## 2011 Board of Directors

“ Gateway prepares you for the real world and pushes you to become a better person.”

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# A Message from Our Leadership

Rapid change is a given in education, and the shifting economic landscape has made many recent changes abrupt and difficult. In 2010, Gateway to College National Network continued to evolve to meet these challenges and opportunities. We brought Gateway to College (GtC) to new communities and enrolled over 3,600 students in the 2009/2010 school year. This fall GtC will be open at 30 colleges in 16 states. We worked in new ways, developing direct partnerships with school districts and state departments of education. And we launched two new models—the Innovation Collaborative and Project DEgree—that bring the lessons we have learned working with high school dropouts in the college environment to even more young people who need support to persist and succeed in college. These models benefit underprepared high school graduates who must begin their postsecondary experience in remedial courses. Yet through all these changes our commitment to continuous improvement remains the same, as we work to maximize our impact through rigorous evaluation, new research projects, policy and advocacy agendas, and media outreach.

Despite a very tough economy affecting all of our school district and college partners, we are proud to work side-by-side with so many education leaders who have stayed the course and made a difference in the lives of students who need the most help. Now more than ever, a high school diploma plus a postsecondary credential is critical to having the kind of future we all want for every student, including the most at-risk. With deep gratitude to our funders who make our work possible, we look forward to new and exciting developments in the coming year.

Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is for Dr. Nan Poppe, and the signature on the right is for Laurel Dukehart. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Nan Poppe  
*Chair, Board of Directors*

Laurel Dukehart  
*President*

# Highlights from 2010

“The program is very helpful in motivating you to get a high school diploma and continue in higher education.”

In January of 2010, Gateway to College National Network announced a \$13 million, three year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the

Foundation to Promote Open Society, and The Kresge Foundation. This funding provided impetus for an ambitious work plan that included several new initiatives during 2010. To support these efforts and position ourselves for continued growth and scaling of the Gateway to College model, we significantly increased our staff capacity in the areas of data collection and evaluation, partner support, policy analysis, and strategic planning and fund development. These additional hires demonstrate our commitment to grow with quality and continue to provide outstanding support to our partner programs.

Following are the National Network's most significant accomplishments during 2010.

## Continued Expansion of Gateway to College

The National Network awarded start-up grants in 2010 to help four colleges implement the Gateway to College program. These new partners, including Camden County College (Camden, NJ), El Paso Community College (El Paso, TX), Highline Community College (Des Moines, WA), and South Texas College (McAllen, TX), will begin serving students in fall 2011.

With these new partners, Gateway to College is now operating at 30 colleges in 16 states. Interest in Gateway to College remains strong, and many communities across the country would greatly benefit from our unique dual credit model. Therefore, over the next few years, the National Network will lay the groundwork for Gateway to College's continued growth.

We achieved an important first step in 2010 when Gateway to College was included as a main component of Massachusetts' successful application for the federal High School Graduation Initiative (HSGI) funds.

Gateway to College National Network will collaborate with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to select three colleges to replicate Gateway to College using HSGI funds. Not only will this result in a strong network of Gateway programs in Massachusetts, but it also will allow us to pilot a new way of training and supporting Gateway programs in partnership with an existing Gateway program in the state.

## Successful Launch of Project DEgree

During 2010, the National Network launched a model to serve a new student population and extend our strategies and techniques across network member institutions. Project DEgree is designed for high school graduates who are not yet academically prepared to take college-level courses, a significant and increasing percentage of the community college-going population (nationally 40% to 70%). Project DEgree provides students with individualized academic and social supports, offers an engaging project-based curriculum within a learning community, and helps students structure their lives so they can build and maintain the momentum necessary to complete a college credential.

Project DEgree was piloted at Portland Community College in the spring of 2010. Four additional colleges—Broward College (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), Durham Technical Community College (NC), Owens Community College (Toledo, OH), and Spokane Falls Community College (WA)—began serving students in fall 2010. Another four colleges—Essex County College (Newark, NJ), Georgia Perimeter College (Atlanta metro area, GA), Phoenix College (AZ), and San Antonio College (TX)—were selected in 2010 and began serving students in January 2011.

The National Network is conducting a return on investment analysis, with a comparison group and an experimental group at each college, to establish the efficacy of Project DEgree.



## Design of the Innovation Collaborative

The National Network is launching a new initiative for colleges interested in innovative approaches to increasing student success in developmental education. The Innovation Collaborative will help participating colleges create and scale learning communities and engaging pedagogy within their developmental education departments. The initiative draws on significant learning gained through the national replication of Gateway to College National Network's education models and uses many of the same instructional and student support strategies designed to promote persistence and completion.

We are offering twelve grants in the amount of \$25,000 to cover faculty planning time, airfare and travel costs for teams to attend trainings, and other costs associated with project implementation. Participating colleges will also receive support from a coach and access to online resources available only to National Network partner colleges.

In 2010, we selected the following six colleges to participate in the initiative: Chattahoochee Technical College (Marietta, GA), Community College of Philadelphia (PA), Hinds Community College (Raymond, MS), Mesa Community College (Mesa, AZ), Pima Community College (Tucson, AZ), and Scottsdale Community College (AZ). Another six colleges will be identified in spring 2011.

## Strengthening Our Data Collection and Communication Systems

From the beginning, the National Network placed strong emphasis on collecting and analyzing performance data related to our programs. In 2010, we took a major step forward by transitioning from a database tool that was housed locally at each Gateway program to a centrally managed database system, which allows us to collect program data faster, cleaner, and in real time. This has significantly reduced the resources required for data collection and analysis, while positioning our data management for continued scale-up of the network.

We also developed a powerful vehicle for communicating with our partner programs. *Gateway Live!*, an enterprise wiki and social networking platform launched in 2010, allows us to collaborate on projects, disseminate best practices, and share tools and resources across the network. As the number of partner programs continues to grow, *Gateway Live!* will allow us to communicate efficiently and build an even stronger community.

“ Gateway is the best thing that’s ever happened to me. I have learned and grown so much!”

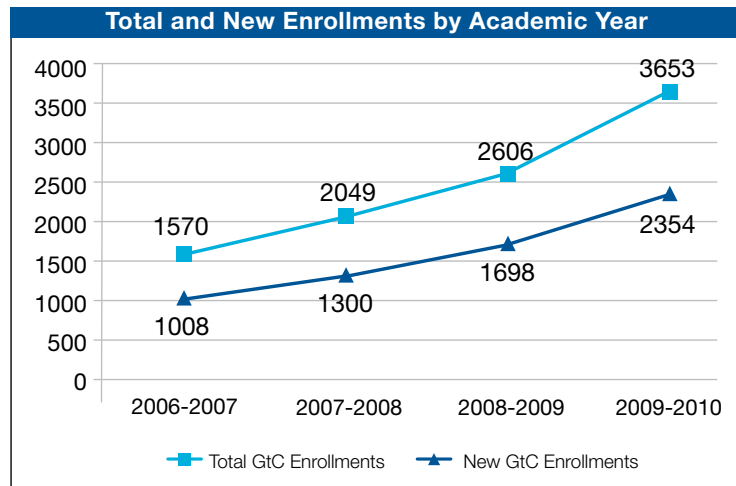
# Gateway to College Impact & Results

Students are attracted to Gateway to College's dual credit structure, wrap-around support, flexible schedule, high expectations, and mature environment.



## Enrollment

Enrollment in the Gateway to College program increased substantially during the 2009/2010 academic year, as seven new programs began serving students.



## Who We Serve

Gateway to College students have encountered a range of challenges that shaped their experiences in high school and contributed to their decision to enroll in Gateway. In addition to academic struggles, Gateway to College students have faced considerable challenges related to their socioeconomic background, health status, and home and family circumstances. Many of these non-academic challenges persist for our students.

- 58% of students have received public assistance at some point in time
- 18% have at least one parent who has not earned a high school diploma
- 29% have moved residences frequently and 10% have experienced homelessness

- 53% report problems with their family or household
- 26% have encountered health problems
- 15% have experienced issues with substance abuse
- 9% are parents
- 30% have jobs to support themselves and family members

## Gateway to College Students at a Glance

*The following data pertains to students enrolled during the 2009/2010 academic year.*

**Gender:** 48% male, 52% female

**Students of Color:** 63% (26% African American, 31% Latino, 6% other minority)

**Average Age at Entry:** 17.7

**Average High School GPA at Entry:** 1.57 on a 4 point scale

**Average High School Credits Completed at Entry:** 40% of credits needed for a diploma



## 2009/2010 Performance Highlights

### Attendance

Despite struggling with very poor attendance in high school, Gateway to College students have an average attendance rate of 81%.

### Academic Achievement

Nearly all courses offered to Gateway to College students are standard college courses. During the 2009/2010 academic year, Gateway students enrolled in almost 19,000 courses and earned a C or better in 69% of those courses.

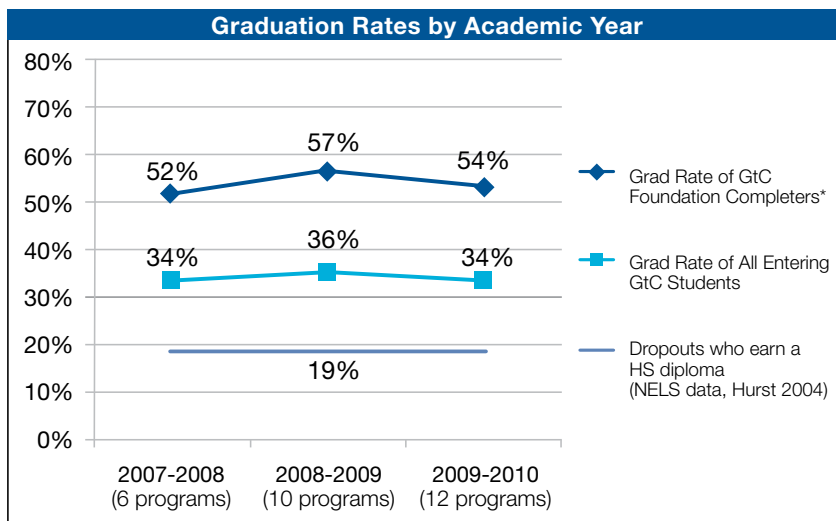
### Graduates

Students graduate from Gateway to College once they have completed their high school diploma requirements. It typically takes students one to three years to complete the program, depending on how many credits they need.

- 341 students graduated from Gateway to College during the 2009/2010 academic year, a 62% increase over the previous year.
- On average, these graduates also accrued 37 college credit hours, putting them well on their way to earning a college credential.

Many Gateway to College students have dropped out at least once, and some were out of school for several years before enrolling in the program. Despite such academic deficits, more than 50% of Gateway students who complete the Foundation (first term experience) successfully graduate from the program with their high school diploma. Without Gateway, only 19% of students nationally who drop out of high school go on to earn a high school diploma within eight years of their initial projected graduation date.<sup>1</sup>

“The supportive instructors go above and beyond their normal job duties. Everyone is accepting and genuinely wants to see you succeed.”



\*The Gateway to College Foundation (first term) experience consists of developmental courses in reading, writing, and math, plus other courses that vary by location.

1. Hurst, Kelly, & Princiotta (2004). Educational Attainment of High School Dropouts 8 Years Later. *Issue Brief*, US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences NCES 2005-026.

# Early Data from Project DEgree

Project DEgree was first implemented at Portland Community College in spring 2010, and four additional colleges began serving students during fall 2010. Early results are very promising. Measured against comparison groups at each college, fall to spring persistence, course completion, and credit accrual rates are moderately to significantly higher among Project DEgree students. In addition, college faculty are noting higher attendance rates, reporting that students are forming stronger bonds with each other, and noticing that students are regularly making connections between course material from different subjects.

Following is demographic information about Project DEgree students enrolled during the fall 2010 term.

- **Total Student Enrollment:** 139
- **Gender:** 38% male, 62% female
- **Average Age at Entry:** 19.8
- **Students of Color:** 60% (36% African American, 14% Latino, 10% other minority)
- **Employment Status:** 35% of students were employed upon entry into the program
- **Financial Aid:** 80% of students are receiving financial aid to pay for their education



“Project DEgree has given me a chance not only to succeed but to be part of a community.”

“If it wasn't for Project DEgree, I would probably be out of school now.”

Gateway to College National Network and our partner programs are committed to continuously improving our pedagogy and student support structures so that our students have the best possible chance of success. Our culture is marked by an emphasis on data-driven decision making, highly collaborative work teams, peer learning, and ongoing training and professional development. Following are just a few of the many services and supports we offer to our network partners.

### **Peer Learning Conference**

The National Network's sixth annual Peer Learning Conference was held July 26 - 28 in Keystone, Colorado. More than 250 people attended, including faculty and staff from Gateway to College and Project DEgree programs; K-12 and college leaders; Gateway students; and National Network funders, board members, and staff—making it our largest conference yet. The conference theme, *Committed to Excellence!*, inspired participants to strive for the best in their programs and partnerships. The conference was sponsored in part by the Walmart Foundation.

### **Gateway to College Demonstration Sites**

We awarded travel stipends to five Gateway partner programs in 2010 to help support visits to our demonstration sites at Riverside City College and San Antonio College. During these visits, participants had an opportunity to observe best practices in teaching, curriculum design, student support, and program administration. In 2010, San Antonio College hosted six visits and Riverside City College hosted four visits.

### **Instructional Coaching**

The National Network offered instructional coaching services to 13 Gateway to College programs and 9 Project DEgree programs during 2010. Our coaches provide customized, hands-on support to participating programs, with particular emphasis on integrated learning communities, project-based learning, and increased use of active learning methods in the classroom. Coaches are a key component to scaling Gateway to College National Network's teaching and learning initiatives broadly across the network.

### **Second Annual Directors' Convening**

Program directors from 25 Gateway programs met in Orlando in December for a two-day convening, during which participants received important updates from the National Network, shared ideas and expertise with one another, and continued to build a community of practice. Directors discussed topics including strengthening relationships with K-12 partners and other key stakeholders (especially during tough economic times), launching professional learning communities among Gateway directors, and applying the peer consultancy model to address program-related challenges.

### **Planning for External Evaluation**

During 2010, we began working with national evaluation firm MDRC to increase the rigor of our evaluation efforts and strengthen our evidence base. Over the next few years, we hope to conduct a small-scale random control trial of Gateway to College, followed by a large-scale random control trial that will scientifically assess the efficacy and impact of Gateway to College.

# Continuous Improvement

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## Advocacy & Media

In 2010, Gateway to College National Network worked with multiple state departments of education to increase dual-enrollment opportunities for high school students who have previously struggled academically or dropped out of school. The National Network also began work on an effort to encourage more state departments of education to use extended-year graduation rates for accountability purposes. Standard practices only allow school districts to claim credit for high school diplomas earned within four years. Therefore, school districts are not recognized for their efforts to serve students who take five years to graduate or who re-enroll after previously dropping out. Although the US Department of Education allows states to apply for the use of five- and six-year graduation rates, only 8 states had done so through 2010. The National Network also submitted policy briefs to the US Department of Education and to members of the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions recommending increased resources and responsibility for serving previously dropped out students. This work will continue in 2011.

In 2010, more than 100 articles about Gateway to College National Network and its partner programs were published in newspapers across the country. National Network staff and board members delivered presentations during the Association of Community College Trustees annual congress and an American Youth Policy Forum panel on Capitol Hill. Staff also spoke about our work to the Kentucky Reforming High School Education Task Force and the US Department of Education.

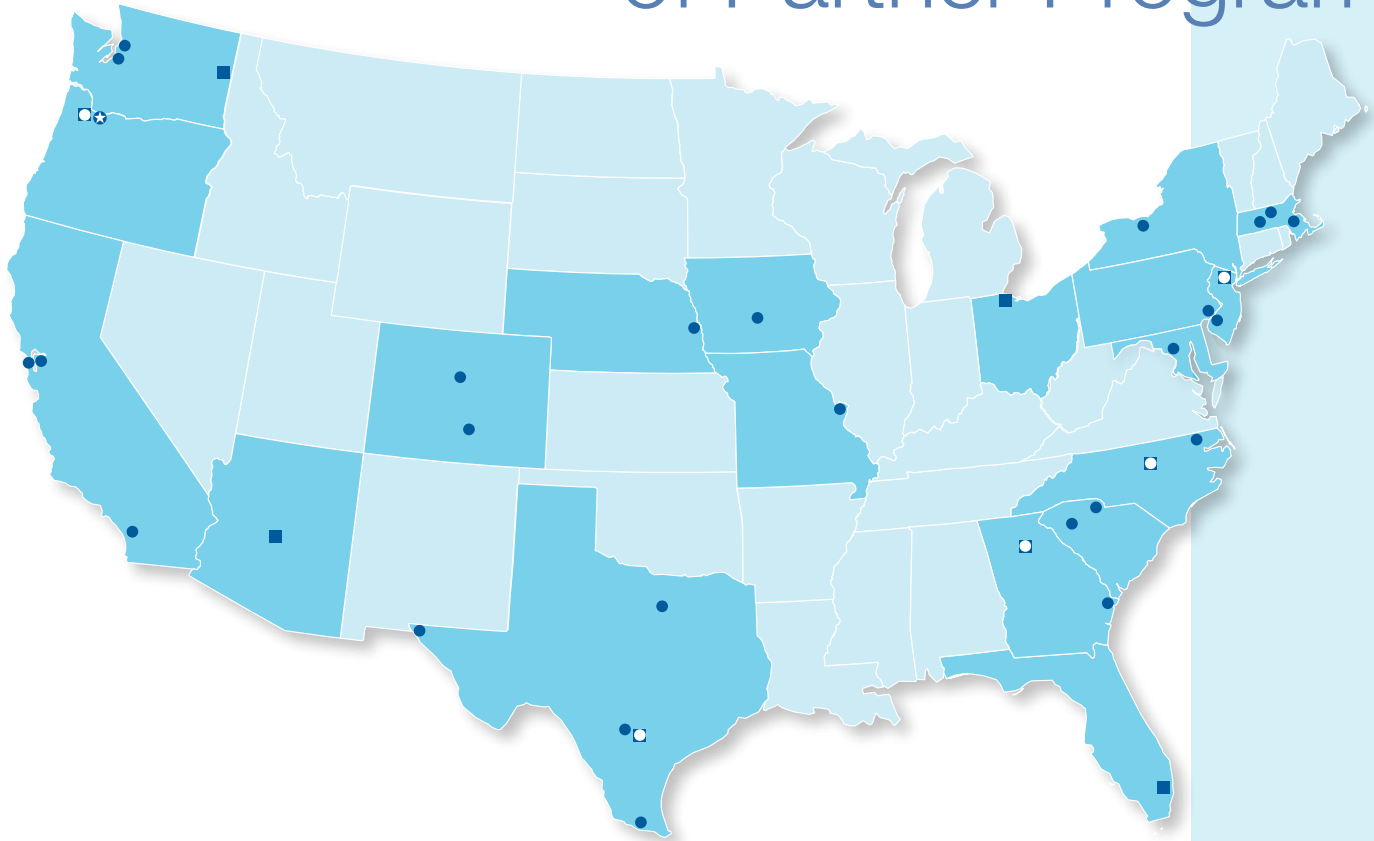


## Financial Information

Gateway to College National Network's audited financial information is available upon request. Please contact Michael Wildfeuer, Vice President of Finance & Administration, at [mwildfeuer@gatewaytocollege.org](mailto:mwildfeuer@gatewaytocollege.org) or (971) 634-1206.

“My experience in Gateway has been challenging but well worth it. I feel like I can face anything that comes my way now.”

# Our Network of Partner Programs



- Gateway to College partner
- Project DEgree partner
- ◻ Gateway to College and Project DEgree partner
- ★ Gateway to College National Network Office



## **About Us**

Gateway to College National Network is a national nonprofit organization that is tackling the dropout crisis and catalyzing change across developmental education in college. Our strategies include: creating and replicating innovative programs, building partnerships, influencing systems, conducting research and sharing what we know, helping effect policy and regulatory changes, and providing customized consulting services. We also provide ongoing technical assistance, data and evaluation services, and professional development opportunities to our partner programs across the country. In some cases, we offer start-up grants or local fundraising assistance to help community and technical colleges implement our programs.

### **Gateway to College National Network**

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