



# GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

Creating a college-going culture in your school and community will take time. In addition to the great things you're already doing, we've gathered some resources, activities and ideas that will assist you in engaging students, parents and administrators in this important process. Here's a list of overall best practices for reaching families with college planning information.

## ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS

- ▶ Talk positively about higher education. Instead of saying, "If you go to college..." say, "There are many education opportunities beyond high school. Wherever you want to go, there's no one way to get there."
- ▶ Listen to the students. Take time to learn their interests, likes, dislikes and fears.
- ▶ Use examples that are relevant to them. Students need real-life examples of people they can relate to. Try to find previous graduates of your school or someone from your area to come in and talk about their experience with education and training after high school. Keep in mind that college students, especially those in fraternities and sororities, are usually looking for ways to give back to the community.
- ▶ Dedicate a common space outside of your office as the "college corner." Hang up scholarship postings, ACT/SAT information and event flyers, and display any resources you have about specific colleges, universities or career technology centers.
- ▶ Construct an "Ask a Question About College" drop box. Instruct students to drop any college-related questions in the box. Answer them weekly or monthly by posting them to your website or newsletter, or read them over the speaker system during morning announcements.
- ▶ Develop a college planning newsletter or section on your website. Include important information about grants, scholarships, and ACT/SAT tests. Adding links on your website to [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org), [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org) and [StartWithFAFSA.org](http://StartWithFAFSA.org) will put this type of information at their fingertips.
- ▶ Schedule meetings with your students. If possible, aim to see everyone in the junior and senior class at least once a semester.
- ▶ Use the [College Fair Best Practices](#) and [College Fair Worksheets](#) available at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org) to encourage students to attend — and make the most of — college fairs. They can find a listing of all Oklahoma college fairs at [GPACAC.net](http://GPACAC.net).
- ▶ Talk to students about campus tours. Encourage them to do firsthand research by touring their top picks. Virtual campus tours can be found at [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org).
- ▶ Show students how to use the *High School Checklists* to stay on track. These can be found at [UCanGo2.org/Publications.html](http://UCanGo2.org/Publications.html).
- ▶ Host a college event for juniors, seniors and their parents. If you'd like instructions on how to use our presentation tools and resources for your event, review our [Event Planning Checklist](#) or contact the UCanGo2 outreach team at [UCanGo2@ocap.org](mailto:UCanGo2@ocap.org).
- ▶ Register your school to participate in College Application Week each year. See [OKcollegeappweek.org](http://OKcollegeappweek.org) for more details.
- ▶ Partner with the local community. Ask for help mentoring kids or assisting in college planning events. Invite the local business community into the classroom to talk about careers.
- ▶ Encourage students to visit [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org) to compare campuses, explore degree programs and career interests, compare salaries and watch videos depicting a day-in-the-life of someone working in their career of choice.
- ▶ Let students work with other students. Connect those who are interested in the same college or similar majors. Let them help each other through the preparation process.
- ▶ Include financial literacy in your information for students. Weave basic money management — saving, budgeting, credit management — into your planning and paying for college message. Call Oklahoma Money Matters, OCAP's financial literacy program, at 800.970.OKMM or visit [OklahomaMoneyMatters.org](http://OklahomaMoneyMatters.org) to learn more.
- ▶ Don't forget about home-school students. Work with local organizations to provide these students with the information they need.

