

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, the resources, activities and ideas in this kit 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,” have conversations about “when you go to college.” Constantly hearing about going to college helps reinforce it's a possibility for your students.
- » 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 his or her college experience. 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 opportunities, ACT/SAT information and event flyers, and display any resources you have about specific career technology centers, colleges or universities.
- » Create an ask-a-question-about-college program. Construct a drop box and instruct students to drop any college-related questions in the box. Answer them weekly or monthly by posting them to your website, in your newsletter or read them aloud over the speaker system.
- » Develop a college planning newsletter or section on your website. Include important information about grants, scholarships and ACT/SAT tests.
- » Schedule meetings with your students, if possible. Aim to see everyone in the junior and senior class at least once a semester.



- » Encourage students to attend college fairs and use the [College Fair Best Practices](#) list and [College Fair Worksheet](#) on your supplemental CD.
- » Talk to students about campus tours. Encourage them to do first-hand research by touring their top picks.
- » Show students how to use the [High School Checklists](#) to stay on track.
- » Host a college event for juniors, seniors and their parents. Invite a speaker to talk about the planning process and hand out UCanGo2 materials. If you'd like to request a UCanGo2 representative to speak at your event, call 405.234.4239 or 866.443.7420.
- » 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.
- » 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.
- » Don't forget about financial literacy. 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 to learn more.
- » Don't forget about home school students. Work with local organizations to provide these students with the information they need.

Working with administrators and teachers

- » Work with teachers and other administrators to create a college-going culture. Provide them with resources they need to talk to students about higher education and work with them regularly to brainstorm new ways to reach students and parents in your community.
- » Post college preparatory and event flyers and posters in the classroom.
- » Encourage teachers to use videos or games about financial aid, careers and college prep in the classroom.
- » Ask teachers to use college-related examples and scenarios in their lesson plans. For example, an English teacher may consider assigning an essay about choosing a career or college.



- » Work with teachers to encourage students in areas they're naturally gifted. Ask the teacher to start conversations about careers/majors that may be a good fit for the student's natural abilities.
- » Develop a flyer or worksheet about college planning to send home with parents who attend Parent/Teacher Night. Or, ask teachers to direct parents to your office to talk about their child's future.
- » Consider asking your administration to allow students a few excused absences each year for them to tour colleges.
- » Let your colleagues know that you're available to speak to classes or school groups about higher education. Encourage them to use the college planning games enclosed in this kit.

Working with parents

- » Request a copy of the Parent Workbook. Consider passing these out during events and one-on-one meetings with parents.
- » Host a FAFSA event for parents in your community. This program will answer questions parents have about the federal financial aid process and demystify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). All the event planning tools you need are located in this kit. If you'd like to request a UCanGo2 representative to speak at your event, call 405.234.4239 or 866.443.7420.
- » If you're planning a college informational session for parents to attend, try holding the event in the evening after working hours and advertise the event with flyers, ads and notes sent home from school. Sample announcements are enclosed in this kit.