

COLLEGE RATES SOAR IN COMSTOCK, AS YOUNG ADVISERS HELP SENIORS NAVIGATE PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

- [The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo](#) and the [College and Career Access Network \(CACAN\)](#) helped fund an innovative program at Comstock High School that places a recent college grad on-site as a full-time college adviser.
- The goal: Help **low-income, 1st-generation and underrepresented students** access post-secondary education.
- CACAN aims to boost post-secondary enrollment for low-income students in Kalamazoo County from 53% to **68%** by 2020.
- Advisers are members of the the [MSU College Advising Corps \(MSU CAC\)](#), a partnership between Michigan State University, [AmeriCorps](#), The [National College Advising Corps](#), the [Michigan College Access Network \(MCAN\)](#) and community partners.
- Building on Comstock's success, The Learning Network has funded another adviser at [Galesburg-Augusta High School](#), starting this year.

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL: 4 YEARS IN, BEATING STATE & NATIONAL TARGETS



82: Percent of students in district who qualify for the reduced or free lunch program

2012-2013: First school year using MSU College Advising Corps

R E S U L T S

Comstock seniors in 2014 earned an average of \$15,736 in scholarships, compared to:

- \$11,384 among all MI students in MSU CAC
- \$8,923 among national CAC programs.

The number of Comstock seniors completing at least one college application rose from 86% in the 2012-2013 school year to 100% in 2014-2015, and the number accepted to at least one college rose from 80% to 100%.

49% of Comstock seniors submitted a deposit to a college in 2014, compared to:

- 40% of MI seniors in the MSU CAC program
- 26% among national CAC programs.

Seniors graduating in 2014 were:

- 11% more likely to visit a college campus
- 27% more likely to attend a financial aid workshop
- 22% more likely to submit their FAFSA
- 16% more likely to apply to one or more colleges
- 13% more likely to apply to three or more colleges
- 18% more likely to be accepted to one or more colleges

GALESBURG-AUGUSTA HIGH SCHOOL: BRAND NEW TO MSU CAC THIS YEAR



- Small, rural school
- 56% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch.
- 2016 senior class = 64 students.
- 20% would be first-generation college enrollees.

EARLY PROGRESS:

By the end of College Application Week in October, **80%** of Galesburg-Augusta seniors had completed at least one application, and **35%** of those seniors applied to three or more.




ANOTHER LOCAL EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION IN COLLEGE ADVISING: WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY


The Learning Network is not alone in local efforts to improve college access. WMU has become a nationally recognized advocate for college advising and a leader in advising scholarship.

- Michigan's first institute of higher education to implement a college-readiness training course for master's degree students in school counseling. The course led to WMU President [John M. Dunn](#) attending the White House College Opportunity Day of Action.
- Publisher of the *Journal of College Access*, a peer-reviewed, academic, online journal focusing on how students aspire to, gain access to and persist in higher education. Co-founded by Dr. Christopher Tremblay, associate provost for enrollment management.
- Winner of MCAN's [Steward Award](#) for "dramatically contribut[ing] to increasing the skills, talent and knowledge of college-access professionals in Michigan." One of six "outstanding" college access advocates, including Gov. Rick Snyder.
- Dr. Ming Li, dean of the College of Education and Human Development, serves with Dr. Mary L. Anderson, associate professor of counselor education and counseling psychology, on MCAN's Michigan College and Career Readiness School Counseling Task Force.

BACKGROUND



 In Michigan, 65% of jobs will require some college education by 2020

 BUT: Only 38% of MI residents over age 25 have a college degree

\$ LOW-INCOME GAP \$
Just 48% of high school grads who qualified for subsidized lunch went to college 6 months after graduating, compared to 70% of those who didn't qualify.

HIGH COUNSELOR-TO-STUDENT RATIO
MI averages just 1 counselor per 706 students, one of the highest ratios in the nation



CURRENT SITUATION

- For Michigan's economy to thrive, more residents need to attain degrees or certification after high school. The [Michigan College Access Network](#) (MCAN) has set a goal for the state to achieve 60% educational attainment by 2025.
- Michigan has one of the highest student-counselor ratios in the nation, according to [Bridge Magazine](#). The [American School Counselor Association](#) recommends a 250-to-1 ratio of students to counselors; Michigan's is 706-to-1.
- Navigating the path to college or post-secondary education can be daunting, especially for students in families without college-going experience.
- The [MSU College Advising Corps](#) (MSU CAC) provides advisers for both [Comstock](#) and [Galesburg-Augusta](#) High Schools in Kalamazoo County. MSU CAC is a partnership between Michigan State University, [AmeriCorps](#), the National College Advising Corps, MCAN and community partners
- Today, the U-M and MSU College Advising Corps collectively hire 42 college advisers serving 52 high schools and **36,000 students** (59% of whom qualify for free-and-reduced lunch).
- But that still meets only a fraction of the need. To expand services to more of Michigan's high-need schools, MCAN recently launched [AdviseMI](#), partnering with 12 Michigan colleges to recruit, hire, train and support additional advisers. Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo is one of the partner schools, and [four WMU grads](#) are among the 40 AdviseMI counselors who started serving 51 Michigan high schools this fall. (See page 1 for more about WMU.)

ADDRESSING THE NEED: College Advising Corps

- The [National College Advising Corps](#) places recent college graduates in underserved high schools as full-time college advisers, helping low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students access post-secondary education. The young advisers can relate to high school seniors and know the college application process from recent experience. They receive extensive training before placement.
- Since 2010, MCAN has partnered with the National College Advising Corps to establish college advising programs at the **University of Michigan** and **Michigan State University**.



The MSU College Advising Corps exceeded national CAC benchmarks in all six key categories for the 2013-2014 school year: College applications, college acceptances, parent meetings, college tours, seniors served and FAFSA completion.

About The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo

The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo brings community together to increase cradle-to-career educational success for everyone in Kalamazoo County. We track key education measures, facilitate action networks (including the College and Career Action Network) that drive educational readiness and adult learning, and rally resources and support for improved learning. Learn more and stay connected at www.thelearningnetwork.org.

SOURCES/RESOURCES

[MLive report](#): "Michigan college-going rate dips, and 8 other facts on college enrollment."
MSU Advisers' blog: <https://msucollegeadvisingcorps.wordpress.com/>
[MSU CAC Dean's Council Presentation 2014](#)