



Guidebook for Affiliates

2014-15

August 2014

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Checklist of Steps for Success..... | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| I. Build and Develop Your Organization..... | 6 |
| #1: Recruit a team of students | 6 |
| #2: Find an advisor | 8 |
| #3: Develop and update a strategic plan | 8 |
| #4: Implement an organizational structure and support your team | 9 |
| #5: Prepare to transition leadership | 10 |
| II. Assess Your Campus | 12 |
| STEP 1: Check the Statistics | 12 |
| STEP 2: Research Campus Programs and Policies | 13 |
| STEP 3: Meet with Campus Administrators | 14 |
| STEP 4: Assess Your Campus with a Survey | 16 |
| III. Foster Awareness | 17 |
| A Note on Inclusion | 17 |
| Ways to Think About Class on Campus | 18 |
| Pass a Student Government Resolution..... | 19 |
| Build and Use a Mailing List | 21 |
| Forums & Speakers..... | 21 |
| Dialogues, Workshops & Conversations | 22 |
| School-Wide Surveys..... | 23 |
| Other Ideas | 23 |
| IV. Improve Campus Policy & Programs | 24 |
| How to Engage in Policy & Programs | 24 |
| Promote Access | 25 |
| Fight Sticker Shock: Include financial aid info in admissions tours, brochures and mailings, and improve financial aid calculator | 26 |
| Expand Student Ambassador Program..... | 27 |
| Search and Recruit at More Geographically Diverse High Schools | 27 |
| Partner with QuestBridge or the Posse Foundation | 28 |
| Promote Pipeline Programs with Community Colleges | 29 |
| Increase Financial Aid: Implement Full-Need Funding Financial Aid Programs, If Possible.. | 29 |
| Socioeconomic Affirmative Action | 30 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Advocate Against Legacy Admissions Programs..... | 31 |
| Need-Blind Admissions | 31 |
| Support for Students: Academic Programs | 32 |
| Implement First Year Programming for Lower-Income Students, Including Orientation Programs | 32 |
| Work with your University's TRiO Program..... | 33 |
| Support for Students: Financial & Holistic Programs | 33 |
| Investigate the full impact socioeconomic diversity has on your institution..... | 33 |
| Financial Aid Transparency: Hold workshops for current students and provide additional information | 34 |
| Expand financial aid program to cover <i>all</i> student expenses, including extracurriculars..... | 35 |

Checklist of Steps for Success

Build your organization

- Recruit a team of students
- Find an advisor
- Implement an organizational structure and support your team
- Develop a strategic plan

Assess the state of socioeconomic diversity on your campus

- Research key statistics about your school
- Identify campus programs & policies
- Develop relationships with key administrators
- Perform a survey of your school's student body

Foster awareness

- Publish your survey in a report and on UFUSED's website
- Pass a student government resolution
- Build and effectively use a mailing list
- Hold a campus forum
- Co-program conversations & workshops

Improve access to your campus

- Improve financial aid information for prospective students
- Advocate for admissions efforts to reach & recruit lower-income students: expanded student ambassador programs, recruitment at more socioeconomically diverse high schools, pipeline programs with community colleges
- Push to set a campus plan for socioeconomic diversity

Foster dialogue and awareness

- Support lower-income students' academic transitions with pre-orientation and first-year programming
- Ensure that financial aid includes all essential student expenses, like travel
- Program financial aid workshops for current students
- Provide for cultural and social opportunities for lower-income students, including aid for extracurricular activities

Introduction

What's the Guidebook? This Guidebook is an annually published resource for student groups and student governments affiliated with U/FUSED, United for Undergraduate Socio-Economic Diversity. It includes five main sections: I) Build and Develop Your Organization, II) Assess Your Campus, III) Improve Access, IV) Ensure Support and Success, and V) Foster Dialogue and Awareness. The Guidebook was crafted from the experiences of our affiliate organizations, academic research and other relevant resources. The purpose of the Guidebook is to help you lead a U/FUSED affiliate organization by providing in-depth guidance on topics like organizing students or working with administrators.

What's U/FUSED? U/FUSED is a national coalition of student groups and student governments that work in issues of socioeconomic diversity and class. For example, we write resources like this Guidebook and set up regular meetings between our affiliated student leaders. We also have a Board of Directors composed of recent graduates, current college students and a high school student, as well as a Board of Advisors composed of national experts.

What's Young Invincibles? During the summer of 2014, U/Fused transitioned into a branch of Young Invincibles' Student Impact Project. Young Invincibles is a national nonprofit policy and advocacy organization that works on economic opportunity issues for young adults. We divide our work into three main buckets – health care, higher education, and jobs. A large part of our higher education work is concentrated in the [Student Impact Project](#), a campaign to increase public college and university access and affordability by equipping students with knowledge of how their schools are funded and providing them the resources and tools to advocate effectively in their state legislatures.

What's the point of U/FUSED? We're committed to ensuring that America's colleges and universities actually serve as engines of social mobility. We believe students should have equal opportunities to pursue higher education regardless of their family income. We believe all students should think critically about issues of equity, inequality, class and diversity. We work with college students to foster change in three primary areas:

- **Expand access** of prospective students to all colleges they are capable of attending (e.g., by increasing recruitment at high schools with more lower-income students).
- **Promote success** in college by developing academic, cultural and financial support systems for students (e.g., financial support programs for extracurricular activities).
- **Fostering dialogue** on the topic of socioeconomic diversity and social class with students, faculty and staff (e.g., hosting a panel discussion on class at college).

How did U/FUSED start? We were initially founded in March 2010 by the student governments of St. Louis University, Duke University and Washington University in St. Louis. We've quickly expanded since then to work with students at 20+ colleges and universities.

What can U/FUSED do for me? Every student group affiliated with us has a U/FUSED liaison. We've worked with issues of socioeconomic diversity on campuses for multiple years. We'll continually touch base with you and connect you with resources, including our regular affiliate meetings over conference call.

I. Build and Develop Your Organization

A stable organization with a committed team, helpful advising, and a solid plan is the only way to foster lasting, effective change. We've learned what works to organize effectively around issues of class on campus.

In this section, we cover five essential steps:

- #1: Recruit a team of students
- #2: Find an advisor
- #3: Develop and update a strategic plan
- #4: Implement an organizational structure and support your team
- #5: Prepare to transition leadership

#1: Recruit a team of students

First, it's fine to start small. You'd rather have a smaller group of students who can work together than a large group without structure. That said, recruitment is the lifeblood of any sustained, stable organization. We've assembled some tips for recruitment.

- **Personally invite students to join.** Never underestimate the power of word of mouth. Ask your friends for any students they know who might be interested, or your group members for potential new members, and personally email or speak to them. Personal contact with 5-10 prospective members is better than sending a Facebook invite to 100 students.
- **Recruit at events.** If you have an event, put out a sheet and attendees to sign up. Then, add them to your mailing list (see Part III for more on building and using your mailing list).
- **Develop a youth movement.** If you're an upper-class student, particularly one starting a U/FUSED member organization, it can be easy to invite many people your age that you already know. There are many ways to reach out to younger students—ask RAs

to speak briefly at floor meetings, participate in pre-Orientation or Orientation programs, or ask professors to speak before large lecture classes relevant to issues of diversity.

- **Hold open meetings with a discussion topic.** ASA (Alliance for Socioeconomic Awareness) at Dartmouth, for instance, has found success choosing a topic to discuss at each meeting. Doing so can help new members immediately join in and share their thoughts and feelings on relevant issues.
- **Co-program events with other campus groups.** Putting up flyers, sending emails, and advertising through Facebook certainly helps. Getting out there on campus helps even more. Approaching dialogue- or diversity-focused student groups to host speakers, workshops, or faculty panels can widen your potential membership.
- **Facilitate discussions among student groups.** Hosting workshops or facilitating discussions among other student groups offers the opportunity to spread awareness and foster dialogue, and to introduce your group to potential new members. Reach out to leaders of other student groups that might be interested in holding a brief dialogue or workshop on class. (A Guide on facilitation is forthcoming.)
- **Approach TRiO leaders & members.** If your school has a TRiO program, students who are members may be particularly interested in joining your U/FUSED group. (TRiO programs are federally funded programs to support first-generation and lower-income students as well as students with disabilities. They're usually part of your school's academic support office).

And, some tips for your messaging for recruiting:

- **Focus on equity and opportunity.** Social mobility in the United States is declining while economic inequality is on the rise, and colleges often help replicate existing class divides instead of breaking them down. Your group is an opportunity for students to make a difference on these issues on your campus.
- **Put your work in context.** Make the issues relevant to students' day-to-day lives. Cite personal stories—for example, how students have felt excluded because they can't afford to fully participate in campus culture, such as going out to dinner with their friends or participating in Greek life. Data can also help: how does your college compare to its peers in terms of socioeconomic diversity? In Part II below, we detail some helpful ways to assess your school.
- **Campus organizing works.** Students around the country working with U/FUSED have collaborated with their administrations to implement effective change, from new financial literacy programs to more effective admissions strategies. The administration includes not only the university president. Connect with lots of administrators; for example, connect with your Financial Services and Development offices to see if and how your school advocates for financial aid. They will likely welcome your partnership.

#2: Find an advisor

Every U/FUSED group should strive to have a faculty or staff advisor. Advisors can help in many ways:

- Connecting you with other interested students, staff or faculty
- Helping you plan for your group and address any organizational issues that come up
- Informing you about programs, policies and other issues on your campus, and in particular other initiative focused on socioeconomic diversity
- Giving your group legitimacy with students and administrators just by being associated with you
- Providing long-term stability for your group and helping to bring along future leaders for your organization

There are a few places you should look to find an advisor.

- Your campus student activities department—a member of their staff should also be available to help you find an advisor for your organization, too.
- Faculty members that work in issues of class, college access or success—some departments to look at include education, sociology, and economics;
- Your campus residential life or student support services departments;
- A campus center focused on social equity, social change, or civic leadership.

Whomever you choose as an advisor, though, should meet a few key criteria.

- 1) They are **available** to help on a regular basis and to **meet regularly with you** because a professor who can't make much time for you might be better as an ally or partner, for example, than an advisor;
- 2) **Connected** to relevant people and programs on- and off-campus;
- 3) **Knowledgeable** about issues relevant to your group, such as issues of class, college access and success, or student leadership.

#3: Develop and update a strategic plan

In general, it makes sense to develop and update your strategic plan regularly. It should be a **living document**, not just something you put together once and forget about afterward. The most effective groups use in-depth, regularly updated plans. They help get everyone in your group on the same page, figure out steps you need to take to achieve your objectives, and make sure you're maintaining progress. You should:

- **Annually** produce a new draft with the help of your group's campus advisor and your U/FUSED liaison.

- **Mid-year**, consider any major changes you should consider to the plan based on events over the year or information you've learned (for instance, your college launches a new financial aid initiative!)
- **Weekly or biweekly**, update the plan to reflect progress you've made or information you've learned.

Our *Planning Materials for Affiliates* document includes templates and charts to help you develop your strategic plan. As you go through this process, you should consider a few key steps:

- 1) **Review the rest of the Guidebook and consider your long-term objectives.** Your assessment of your campus should serve as a guiding point for your strategic planning. The proposals we've listed for policy change and for fostering awareness are also great starting points—though we encourage you to think outside the box!
- 2) **Set a timeline for accomplishing your objectives.** Your liaison can help you determine what makes sense.
- 3) **Divide your objectives into action items.** For example, planning a workshop requires such things as inviting speakers, reserving a room, and arranging publicity. Identify each of these individual steps and figure out when they need to be done. It can be particularly helpful to plan backwards from the end. For instance, if you want to start publicizing two weeks before an event, you can plan enough time to get your flyers or materials ready before then.
- 4) **Assign action items to team members if possible.** It's usually best for people to volunteer for or be assigned specific tasks, with deadlines. Otherwise, key steps tend to slip through the cracks.

#4: Implement an organizational structure and support your team

So, you have a solid team of people... Now, how do you organize them? Every group has its own unique interests. Your strategic plan should inform how to get things going and get your members involved.

First, you should consider models for your organization outside of the typical student group setup (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.). Depending on your strategic plan, you might want to **divide into teams**—for example, one team focuses on policy advocacy and the other team focuses on fostering awareness. Or, you might choose a few projects to focus on and make smaller working groups for each project. Whatever you choose, **be sure to assign tasks to individuals or small 2-3 person teams with explicit deadlines, and to meet regularly.**

You also should consider ways to **give away power**. Students are more invested when they can play a role in guiding the organization's direction. For instance, empower a group member to lead a facilitation exercise, or take the lead on planning an event. At the same time, it's critical

to provide group members with support and guidance when they take on these projects—remember continually to check in with your teams

A few more suggestions for organizational management:

- **Consider members' interests and focus on their development.** You should have an open dialogue from the time you develop your initial strategic plan. What speaks to each member of your group? How do they hope to develop as leaders and advocates? You should consider finding time to connect with each of your group members individually, such as over coffee.
- **Check in outside of meetings.** Texts, brief emails or best of all in-person check-ins help keep people on task—and let them know that you care about them and their involvement.
- **Remind your team of your accomplishments and what's on deck.** Go back to the strategic plan often in meetings to recall what you've done and where you're going. Continually update and revise your strategic plan, recording your progress.
- **Start meetings with a question or statistic.** You could share a fact you read recently and ask people to respond. For instance, it might be interesting to [compare the zip codes](#) of your college with nearby areas.

#5: Prepare to transition leadership

It is essential to ensure there's an effective transition of leadership in your group when you step down or leave. While you're leading your group, here are a few tips to ensure you'll transition out smoothly:

- **Foster new leaders.** Actively recognize the contributions of young leaders in your group and help them develop their advocacy, management and planning skills.
- **Identify potential leaders for your group early.** It happens too often on campuses: leaders step down without anyone to take their place. Mention to these potential leaders that you think they should consider seeking to lead the group next. Don't just pick one person: make sure your group will have options (sometimes, things fall through!)
- **Encourage potential leaders to run/apply for leadership positions when it's time.** A short email, text, or (best of all) conversation with potential leaders can make all the difference.
- **Overlap with your new leader.** After they're elected, a short "lame duck" period can allow you transition them smoothly.

- **Keep track of your progress.** It's much easier to write a transition guide when you've been keeping track of what's going on so far.

Be sure to write a transition guide for potential new leaders (and pass it on to anyone running/applying if you think it's appropriate). It should include:

- **Immediate action items:** What specific things do they need to do? Some of these probably include strategic planning for the next year; reserving rooms; and meeting individually with members of your organization.
- **Records of what your group accomplished:** If you've been strategic planning and keeping track of your efforts, this will be easier. Also, note initiatives you started but didn't work out, and explain what happened (and what they could do differently). Explain why and how you made major decisions, such as focusing on specific policies to advocate.
- **What's in progress:** What did you leave unfinished? What do they need to do to complete it?
- **A list of contacts:** List all of the administrators, faculty and students you've worked with, with their contact information. Explain how they've worked with your group.
- **Recommendations:** What could the group do better? What do you wish you had done differently?

Once there are new leaders, you should:

- **Introduce them to us! This is critical.** It's hard for us to help them if we don't know who they are! Vice versa is true—an introduction from you makes the process go more smoothly than if we email them (and they don't know whom we are).
- **Introduce them to campus leaders.** Send an email to campus administrators, faculty or students who your new leader will be working with.
- **Stay involved.** Even if you're graduating, don't totally check out—attend meetings and be there to help your new leader if they need it. Don't watch over their shoulder, but be available to help.

II. Assess Your Campus

There are quite a few ways to address issues of socioeconomic diversity on your campus. It's hard to prioritize, though, unless you understand what's going on. There are a few different ways to look at your institution's current socioeconomic diversity: 1) the statistics; 2) the programs and policies your campus has; 3) meeting with administrators; and 4) a survey of your school's student body.

Our *Planning Materials for Affiliates*, the companion document to the *Guidebook*, includes an assessment sheet you can use to track what you've learned.

STEP 1: Check the Statistics

[The Education Trust's College Results](#) site offers detailed, comparative evidence that provides context for your school compared to its peer institutions. To access comparative information, **enter your school's name at the front page of the College Results site and then choose the "Similar Colleges" tab.** The schools listed are those with similar selectivity, size and type as your school. Take a look at the following stats:

- **Percentage Pell Recipients among First-year Students**, under the "Main" tab. This is the best publicly available statistic to compare colleges' socioeconomic diversity. Pell Grants are federally funded grants for students of household incomes generally under \$50,000, and most often under \$20,000. If your school enrolls fewer Pell recipients than peer schools, this might reflect a lack of institutional focus on attracting lower-income students to apply and enroll. It also might reflect an issue with your campus's climate surrounding social class.
- **6-Year Grad Rate:** The higher, the better.
- **Percentage Underrepresented Minority:** This stat provides info on your school's racial and ethnic diversity for comparison. (While U/FUSED focuses on socioeconomic diversity, we believe that many other types of diversity are important and closely related.)
- **Average Net Price after Grants** (under "Cost and Financial Aid" header): This stat is useful to know, but be careful to read too much into it. A high Average Net Price After Grants could mean that many students come from wealthy backgrounds and pay sticker price at your school, or that your school offers comparatively less financial aid.
- **Average Net Price for Low-Income Students (\$0-30k)** (under "Cost and Financial Aid" header). The lower the price, the better. This is a very important statistic to see if your school actually does support low-income students financially. Note, however, that this student does not account for many students who may identify as working-class or middle-class because their family incomes are above \$30k—how a school assists those students is also important.

Also, check out stats from [CollegeInsight](#), maintained by the Institute on College Access and Success (TICAS), for more detailed statistics on socioeconomic diversity at your school:

- **Average percentage of need met of full-time undergraduates** (under “Financial Aid – Undergraduates). While this statistic is malleable based on schools’ own interpretations of students’ need, if your institution meets close to 100% of students’ need, it is making a significant effort to support the students its admissions office has accepted.
- **Percentage of Full-time undergraduates with financial need** (under “Financial Aid – Undergraduates). This statistic is also malleable, but shows how many students your school thinks should not pay its sticker price.

STEP 2: Research Campus Programs and Policies

The [Center for College Opportunity’s \(CSO\) CollegeCenter](#) offers an excellent starting point to assess the programs and policies at your school that address socioeconomic diversity (Matt Rubinoff, CSO’s Executive Director, is a member of the U/FUSED Board of Advisors). **To find your school, click the top “SearchNow” tab.** From there, select your school’s state from the list, and click the “Submit Now” button at the bottom. The CSO doesn’t include all schools in the list. If your school is there, click on its name and then look at the “Programs” page. For listed schools, the CSO provides detailed information on programs for access, opportunity and success, such as fly-in programs for prospective applicants, or diversity-focused freshman orientation programs.

You should also review whether your school has the following programs or policies:

- **TRiO Student Support Services Program:** TRiO is a federally funded program to support students from lower-income or first-generation backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities. TRiO programs provide academic and social supports, such as tutoring and opportunities to attend cultural events. To see if your school has a TRiO grant program, [search the Department of Education’s list of 2013 grantees](#). TRiO programs, if offered, are typically part of a school’s academic support department.
- **Need-blind admissions:** If a college or university is need-blind, its admissions office does not consider financial need when determining which applicants to admit. Being need-aware, on the other hand, means that students with greater financial need may be negatively impacted in the admissions process. [Check to see if your school is listed here as a need-blind institution](#). However, need-blind status *does not* mean that a school is necessarily more socioeconomically diverse, or that the school takes disadvantages based on socioeconomic background into account for admissions. Especially for the most selective colleges and universities, need-blind admissions promotes socioeconomic diversity but does not guarantee it. You should check if your school offers need-blind admission to all applicants or only U.S. Citizens. Also, remember to review the percentage of need-met

statistic available through CollegeInsight.

- **Partnership with the Posse Foundation or QuestBridge:** The Posse Foundation and QuestBridge are non-profits that connect highly talented lower-income students with partnering colleges and universities. Schools generally only partner with one or the other. As with need-blind admissions, partnership with the Posse Foundation or QuestBridge does not guarantee a school will be more socioeconomically diverse as compared to peer institution, but it can be an important factor. Check out the listings of [Posse partners](#) and [QuestBridge partners](#).

We've listed additional key policies & programs in our Improving Campus Policy & Programs section. These are also listed on the Campus Socioeconomic Diversity Tracker.

Additionally, take time to **discuss your campus with other members of your organization**. How do students in your group perceive administrative efforts to promote socioeconomic diversity? How accessible are campus resources? How do they perceive the campus dialogue (if there is one!) on issues of social class and socioeconomic diversity?

STEP 3: Meet with Campus Administrators

To fully understand what's happening on your campus and ultimately effect policy change, you need to **develop relationships** with administrators. **Administrators are often on your side and eager to work with you on these issues.** (It's also important to know what you're talking about first—which is why Steps 1 & 2 are critical, too.) Send a professional email asking for an initial meeting. For example:

“Dear Dean X,

My name is [Your Name] and I'm a leader of X/FUSED, an organization that promotes socioeconomic diversity and awareness on the X University campus. I would like to meet with you and any other admissions administrators to learn more about existing efforts to promote socioeconomic diversity, access and success within the X University student body. Are you available to meet with us at any of the following times over the next two weeks?

Monday: 10AM – 2PM

[etc.]

Thank you,
[Your Name]”

A basic list of administrators to contact should include:

- **Admissions staff:** If possible, meet with your school's Director or Dean of Admissions, or any admissions officers that focus on recruitment of socioeconomically diverse prospective students. Important questions to ask include:
 - What is the current socioeconomic diversity within the school's student body? How is this socioeconomic diversity measured?
 - How does socioeconomic diversity impact the department's admissions decisions? For instance, does the department value jobs worked to help support a prospective student's family? Does a student's financial need ever negatively impact their chance of admission?
 - How does the Admissions staff encourage talented low-income and first-generation prospective students to apply? What programs do they have in place to reach these students?
- **Student Financial Services staff:** It may be valuable to meet with Admissions staff at the same time as Financial Services staff members. At some schools, Admissions and Financial Services are combined in one department. Questions to ask include:
 - What expenses are included when Financial Services evaluates a student's need? Are costs such as transportation to and from school included?
 - What outreach does Financial Services provide to help lower-income prospective students know that they will likely not pay sticker costs at your school?
 - How does Financial Services help current students understand their loans? How can students make Financial Services aware of changes in their financial situation?
- **Academic Support staff:** These departments often include staff responsible for your school's TRiO program, a federally funded program that supports lower-income and first-generation college students, if your school has a TRiO program. Questions to ask include:
 - How do you help students from lower-performing high schools acclimate to a university environment?
 - What programs do you offer during orientation or pre-orientation to help students hit the ground running in class?
 - Do you offer mentoring or one-on-one services for lower-income and/or first-generation college students?
- **Other departments:** Once you have contacted the above departments, you may also want to contact your university's **Residential Life** or **Student Activities** departments to learn how they support lower-income students. For example, how does Student Activities ensure lower-income students can participate in student activities when they require fees, transportation or equipment?

Additionally, it is helpful to contact faculty in your school's **Political Science, Education, Sociology, or Economics departments**. They can help you learn about current issues surrounding socioeconomic diversity, provide support from a faculty perspective, and connect

you with other interested faculty. Ask any faculty your organization's members might know who are interested in related issues, review online faculty listings, and/or contact staff members in these departments to find interested faculty.

Be sure to **send a thank you** after you meet with them, too!

STEP 4: Assess Your Campus with a Survey

Surveys have provided significant insights into socioeconomic diversity of U/FUSED affiliates schools' student bodies at colleges like Washington University in St. Louis and St. Louis University. The surveys also helped assess the campus climate related to issues of social class, and publicized the issue of socioeconomic diversity in general. **Performing a survey is an incredible way to direct your group's work and foster awareness, and one of our top recommendations for our affiliates.**

Check out our [model survey, linked here](#). Also, some tips as you put together and disseminate the survey:

- **Find a survey service on campus if available, and if not use an outside site.** If possible, use a university-purchased survey service (e.g., Student Voice). If not, you can use an online service like SurveyMonkey.
- **Keep it short.** Students don't answer long surveys. Keep it under 15 questions max.
- **Add a random drawing.** Spending \$15 on an Amazon gift card, for instance, for a random drawing prize drastically increase response rates. (Be sure to ask for students' emails for the drawing in a separate question disconnected from the main survey.)
- **Get approval (if necessary) and let the administration know.** Some schools require groups to obtain permission before sending out a survey—you should check with your Student Life or Activities office. You should also give a heads up to your school's Student Financial Services or Admissions offices as a courtesy.
- **Work with student government.** If your organization is not part of student government, working with them can ensure that emails with links to your survey can be sent to the student body. In addition, many undergraduate student governments conduct their own surveys. If possible, consider asking your student government to conduct the survey.
- **Approach diversity-oriented student groups to contact their memberships.** It is critical that students take the survey to produce useful data; also, simply having students take the survey leads them to consider the issue of socioeconomic diversity.

You should also plan ahead to publicize your results before you even start the survey.

- **Pursue a partnership with your local newspaper.** Socioeconomic diversity is a hot topic, and is particularly appealing to student and college town newspapers. Contact the news

editors of your local papers as you begin developing the survey and contact them with the results.

- **Write a report.** [Check out the excellent recap WU/FUSED wrote regarding their 2013 survey](#). Also, [check out the \(very lengthy\) report students at Yale Law School prepared based on their survey in fall 2012](#). You should write a brief report summarizing the key points of the survey, including:
 - 1) Findings re: the student body population itself and its attitudes
 - 2) Identify problems the campus should address
 - 3) Provide suggested solutions for those problems.
- **Take care to interpret results.** For instance, both the WU/FUSED and SLU/FUSED surveys used income ranges, as students cannot be expected to know their household's exact annual income. As a result, only median ranges, and not averages, can be measured. (Note: the Washington University newspaper article incorrectly cites the median as the average).

III. Foster Awareness

There are many reasons to foster awareness and productive dialogue about socioeconomic class and equity on your campus! A more cognizant student body better supports and empowers students of *all* socioeconomic backgrounds. Greater recognition of issues of class and equity can help spur students to get involved in social justice work in campus and afterward. College is a critical place to empower students to challenge their own explicit and implicit biases about class, as well as other issues like race, gender and sexual orientation.

A Note on Inclusion

Socioeconomic status is a very sensitive subject for most people. We don't often talk about class in American society. To raise awareness effectively of the issues that arise from of socioeconomic status, we must be willing to break down the barriers people have against talking about class.

At the same time, it's critical to frame the issue with an inclusive approach. Just like religion and politics, social class is a tricky topic in modern America. Many people try to ignore its existence or reject its impact on their life experiences. However, if we want most effectively to foster awareness and serious reflection about class on college campuses, we should be careful not to swing too far the other way. We shouldn't attack students based on their upbringing. We should reach out to students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Some tips for fostering inclusive, productive dialogue:

- **Recognize that class identities do not define people.** Class is a part of all of our identities, but just like any other characteristic—such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference—it doesn't define us. The most effective criticism against diversity initiatives is that they solidify artificial categorization. Issues of class are real and significant, and they affect our perspectives, identities and opportunities. Yet, it's much more effective, and realistic, to consider class as a critical concern, not a defining one.
- **Invite people from all backgrounds to share their experiences.** It's most pressing that students understand the challenges lower-income and first-generation students face on campus, given the institutional and implicit biases they often encounter. However, asking all students to share their perspectives can provide for a more inclusive conversation, and help students to consider their own identities and views.
- **Identify the issue of unconscious or implicit bias.** While overt racism, classism and other forms of prejudice still exist in America, unconscious or implicit bias plays a significant and often unrecognized role—particularly on college campuses. Challenge people to consider these unconscious biases they have. It's particularly effective to recognize your own implicit biases as a way to start—and [this video from Avenue Q is a funny way to start the conversation.](#)

Ways to Think About Class on Campus

If you're reading this Guidebook, you've probably thought about class on campus in a critical way already. Exploring your experiences and those of your fellow students is essential to effective conversations about class on campus. Here are a few more things to consider.

- **Messaging and framing matters.** For example, [recent research at Northwestern University](#) suggests that first-generation students often face a “cultural mismatch” when they attend college. The research found that when universities framed the college experience as one focused on “independence,” first-generation students performed worse than middle-class students. However, when the university frame the experience as one focused on “interdependent” norms, the social class achievement gap was eliminated.
- **Students from different class backgrounds have very different interactions with institutions and administrations.** A fantastic [recent New York Times article](#) followed three lower-income students through their college experiences. One of the article's key points is that, as Prof. Annette Laureau from UPenn recounted, students from affluent backgrounds have more experience and confidence advocating to administrators. Parents that are more affluent intervene quicker when their kids need help, and as Prof. Laureau said, “Middle-class students get the sense the institution will respond to them. Working-class and poor students don't experience that. It makes them more vulnerable.”
- **Negative stereotypes affect students from diverse class backgrounds.** Prof. Elizabeth Aries' excellent book [Race and Class Matters at an Elite College](#) reviews how both

lower-income and wealthy students can face prejudice on college campuses based on stereotyping (as noted above). Students and alumni often assume that lower-income or first-generation students are less capable, cultured or qualified, while students often assume that more affluent students are arrogant or have a sense of entitlement. As Aries also reviews, these stereotypes can break down as students get to know people from other backgrounds as individuals and not members of categories based on class.

- **Class often goes unseen.** As Aries also points out, students she studied commonly formed “uniformly affluent groups of friends and demonstrated little awareness that all students did not share their privilege.” As a result, students often forget or are not aware that students from other class backgrounds are part of the campus community.
- **Check out students' stories from around the country.** Many first generation students have shared their stories at [I'm First](#), an initiative of the Center for Student Opportunity (a U/FUSED partner organization!).

Pass a Student Government Resolution

A student government resolution that affirms a commitment to socioeconomic diversity and dialogue can make a powerful statement. Passing a resolution can spread awareness; provide justification for funding (for workshops, speakers, etc.); empower your group to partner with the university administration on policy change; and building connections with student government members. If your U/FUSED affiliate organization isn't part of your school's student government, a resolution represents “official” support for your work. If it is part of your student government, a resolution officially recognizes your activities and can provide formal guidance for further work.

[Check out a sample resolution here, passed by Tufts University's student government.](#)

You should consider including these elements in your resolution:

- Recognition of **the need to address socioeconomic diversity at your institution** in terms of access for prospective students, support systems for current students, and awareness of socioeconomic diversity on your campus;
- Recognition of **the relationship between socioeconomic diversity and other types of diversity**;
- **The benefits of socioeconomic diversity and awareness of class issues**, for both your institution and society in general;
- The **creation of a U/FUSED affiliate organization** and its basic structure;
- Formally **joining U/FUSED and resolving to partner with students** at other colleges and universities;
- **Specific policies or programs** that your student government resolves to implement or advocate for your institution's administration to adopt.

While each school's legislative process might be a bit different, there are a few steps to consider.

1) **Decide the outcomes you're looking to achieve.**

2) **Identify a sponsor.** If a member of your organization is part of student government, they could sponsor the resolution. If not, ask around to see if anyone knows a student government member passionate about diversity and class issues. You can also attend a student government meeting to connect with student government members about the idea.

3) **Write a working draft for the resolution.** Meet with the potential sponsor of your bill and write a working draft, drawing from your initial outline. Use specific language if possible. For instance, write that you want to increase your school's percentage of Pell Grant recipients by 5% in the next 5 years, not only that your school should increase its socioeconomic diversity. While this language may change by the bill's final passage, this provides a starting point.

4) **Meet with student government members.** The earlier you meet with stakeholders in your student government to educate them about the issue of socioeconomic diversity and to solicit their input, the better. Be sure to ask them for their insights and be prepared to respond. This is the most important step you can take in to ensure the resolution passes.

5) **Begin the process to submit the resolution for consideration.** Some student governments require a committee to pass a resolution before it will see the floor for consideration. Once you have a working draft, have your sponsor submit it to the appropriate body.

6) **Prepare for a presentation or to answer questions.** Your student government might ask you to give a presentation; if so, make it short and refrain from creating a long PowerPoint. The best persuasive presentations come from what you know well. Speak to your experience with the issue, the larger context for the issue of socioeconomic diversity, and what benefits this resolution will have for students on your campus.

7) **Attend the meeting and encourage partner organizations to attend.** Make sure your membership shows up for the student government meeting. It's also a good idea to encourage other organizations interested in diversity and class issues to show up to support the resolution. When the resolution is presented, keep your cool and don't get frustrated or flustered if student government members push back against the bill. Stick to your talking points while emphasizing the issue's urgency: increasing socioeconomic diversity at your school benefits both society as a whole as well as your campus, as students interact with people different from themselves and learn about the broader issue of class in society.

8) **Follow up with PR efforts.** Make sure to contact your student newspaper and let them know about the resolution's passage. Post updates on social media, including U/FUSED's national blog.

Build and Use a Mailing List

Your group should build two types of mailing lists:

- 1) **Membership list** - Students who are active in your group (i.e., have shown up to at least a meeting).
- 2) **Supporters list** - Students, faculty and staff who support your group's work, but not actively involved.

Services like [MailChimp](#) are particularly helpful; your school may also have a listserv service for email mailing lists. You should be careful to use a list service from which people can unsubscribe if they want.

You should add emails to your supporters list, for instance, from:

- Meetings with administrators or faculty
- Sign-in lists at events or programs your group puts on
- Students who speak with your group members and express interest

Sending regular emails to your supporters' list can help you:

- Inform them about upcoming events
- Keep supporters updated on your group's progress
- Share campus updates or facts (e.g., "Did you know...")
- Share national policy updates (U/FUSED will regularly send these to you!)

You should be careful not to send too many emails to your supporters' list—once every two weeks is probably the absolute maximum.

Forums & Speakers

Large-scale events bring in people from around the campus and community alike to offer different perspectives on the issue of socioeconomic diversity. In the past, we have found that the best-attended events connect to events currently in the news, either nationally or on your campus. Additionally, it's particularly effective to consider socioeconomic diversity in the context of intersections with other topics like race. For example, a couple potential events include:

- **A forum on the state of diversity on your campus:** You can focus purely on socioeconomic diversity or diversity in general. Consider inviting a faculty member, a dean or other member of the campus administration, and student leaders to speak about diversity issues on your campus. Consider co-planning the event with your student government and student newspaper.

- **A speaker on inequality and education:** Inviting a big-name speaker on education and inequality can kick start the conversation at your school. You should consider reaching out to your school's education and sociology departments to partner with them. Ask your members for some speakers they're interested in—whether it's a national name like Paul Krugman or someone from your local community.

Dialogues, Workshops & Conversations

Smaller-scale dialogues and conversations can help you significantly impact a group of students. These conversations are often particularly effective when co-programmed with another diversity group or campus center (such as a Social Justice Center). Also, consider partnering with groups you might not initially consider, such as Greek life, to host conversations on these topics. Here are several potential topics for these conversations.

- **Your campus assessment and survey:** This is a perfect place to start: identify campus issues and how students feel about them. What challenges do students encounter? How do they identify on your campus? What kind of changes does your school need and how can you get there?
- **Economic inequality, social mobility and attitudes:** Economic inequality is on the rise and social mobility has slipped in America. Here are a few articles for starting points.
 - *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2012 series: [“Has Higher Education Become an Engine of Inequality?”](#) Two members of the U/FUSED Board of Advisors, [Richard Kahlenberg](#) and [Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab](#), wrote articles for the series.
 - **Economic inequality in America:** [this is a very readable 2012 op-ed](#) from Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz
 - **American attitudes on economic inequality** compared with international sentiment, [one from The Economist](#) and [another with a useful graph and stats](#)
- **Step into social class.** Try [these neat exercises](#), which help students understand the range of social class experienced by themselves and others.
- **Examine how class works and what it means.** Many students are unaware of what class means and their own place. Here are a few places to start:
 - **Definitions of social class and the four types of capital.** One way to consider socioeconomic differences is four types of capital: economic, cultural, social, and academic capital. It's much more than just monetary divides. [This piece by Professor Will Barratt](#) is a great starting point, and also explores the different ways to define class with some striking statistics.
 - [A New York Times interactive infographic](#) that helps students identify their potential socioeconomic place in society, as determined by polling data on class issues.

- [An NPR infographic](#) on how Americans across the income distribution spend their money.
- **Explore intersections: race and class.** Ask students how these complex topics intersect. Consider how other types of diversity, such as gender identity and sexual orientation (and many more) intersect with class.
- **Consider privilege and what it means.** Many students are unfamiliar with the concept of privilege and how it influences their self-identity and interactions with others. Check out [this exercise](#) that challenges students to explore their own privilege.

School-Wide Surveys

Check out our guidance above on performing a survey. The survey and subsequent publicity can play an incredible role in facilitating awareness of the socioeconomic diversity on your campus.

Other Ideas

Some other ideas to try out:

- **Tabling:** Reserve space in a highly populated area of campus and set out a table with members of your organization.
- **Art displays:** Find out if there is a space on your campus that allows art displays, particularly if it receives a lot of student traffic. SLU/FUSED had a great display that showed photos of different students and shared their stories, revealing how those students often have had very different socioeconomic experiences than we would expect.
- **Make flyers:** Catchy posters are another method for fostering awareness. Use quotes, statistics, images, etc. that make a very clear point quickly.
- **Take advantage of social media.** Create a Facebook page for your group and post relevant articles and facts. Be sure to ask questions of your audience, too, and think of creative ways to get the conversation going—like maybe an “Overheard at _____ College/University” page that focuses on classist or class-insensitive issues.
- **Create a Video:** Consider using YouTube or similar video sharing websites to create an entertaining video to gain more members and spread your message. [Check out SLU/FUSED’s video here.](#)

IV. Improve Campus Policy & Programs

How to Engage in Policy & Programs

At U/FUSED, we firmly believe current students have a key role to play as universities work to promote socioeconomic diversity among their student bodies. Once you've [assessed your university's current socioeconomic diversity programs](#), you're ready to foster positive policy change at your school. We're also here to help you do that, whether that means choosing policy & program proposals that make sense for your group and campus or helping you make your ideas reality.

Many non-students (administrators, faculty, financial aid directors) at universities realize that there exists a serious lack of socioeconomic diversity in high education. Remember your group does not have to lobby for better policies and programs alone. It helps to know what leading programs non-students have implemented. Work together to figure out how you can each use your roles to help promote economic diversity, such as helping to develop ambitious fundraising campaigns or lobby government officials to fund better support programs.

For example, the [Carolina Covenant](#) at the University of North Carolina allows admitted low-income students to enroll without worrying about how they will pay for it. If these students work 10-12 hours per week in a Federal Work-Study job, they can graduate debt-free. The Carolina Covenant also includes academic and personal support services to help Covenant Scholars make the most of their college experience and succeed in completing their undergraduate degree program. While private schools have made similar commitments, this was the first at a major public university. For some other great examples of university programs and related research that supports them, please check out [Rewarding Strivers](#), edited by [Richard Kahlenberg](#), U/FUSED Board of Advisors member.

In the sections below, we've listed proposals that are supported by on-the-ground success as well as evidence-based research. Some of these proposals require more from you and your school than others. Whatever you decide to prioritize, we'll help you accomplish it.

Also, consider these keys for success in the campus policy & programs arena:

- **Build relationships with administrators.** Relationships are the key to successful advocacy. Make sure you've met with administrators in critical university departments, like Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Loan Office or Career Services Center ([see above for more on that](#)). Even if administrators are leery to implement your proposals and you're frustrated, remain cordial.

- **Engage student government.** Student government can be tricky to work with (we've been there from the inside and outside—we know!). Even if your group isn't a part of student government, though, you want them to be on the same page as you. They might have good relationships with the administrators to whom you're advocating, or they might pass a resolution in support of your proposal.
- **Engage key campus life groups.** Besides student government, other key campus groups play important roles in helping set campus policy, working with administrators and ensuring students feel comfortable on campus regardless of socioeconomic background. Example groups include 1) major living and social groups, such as eating clubs, sororities and fraternities; 2) your student union in charge of major campus-wide social programming; and 3) non-scholarship athletic associations, especially those that travel frequently to train, compete or just have fun. Many of these groups' activities have associated cost barriers that prevent full socioeconomic access. While at some schools, these costs may be heavily subsidized, the costs may be significant at other campuses. Not all of the costs may be obvious to administrators or even to these organizations because students from lower-income backgrounds may be avoiding some activities altogether.
- **Explain how your proposal will help students.** Make your case to the administrator through both research and insights about students' needs at your school. For each proposal below, we've explained the issue and included evidence that the proposal works, based on academic research and on-the-ground results.
- **Put on pressure when needed.** Sometimes things happen when you ask. Other times, they don't. Use leverage. Propose a student government resolution, write an op-ed in the student newspaper, start social media campaigns, or enlist your fellow students to email the administrator in question. Depending on the topic, you might need to get more drastic—and this is where town hall meetings or protests come in. (Note that a majority of those proposals we've included won't require this kind of campaign.)

Promote Access

Significant evidence shows selective colleges are not reaching nearly as many academically qualified lower-income students as they could (*The Chronicle of Higher Education* has published [a helpful article on the topic](#).) For example, Harvard's Financial Aid Initiative (FAI) specifically recruited and included financial aid to students from lower-income backgrounds. Avery et al showed in [a 2006 academic paper](#), "Cost Should Be No Barrier," that FAI had a significant effect almost entirely because the program attracted a pool of applicants that was larger and slightly poorer.

Overall, highly selective institutions could enroll up to 30-50% more lower-income students and maintain their current selectivity, [as Winston and Hill detailed in their 2005 academic paper](#). Winston and Hill set forth a new commitment for selective colleges: that enrollment of lower-income students should proportionately match the fraction of qualified lower-income students.

High achieving, low-income students apply to college very differently than their higher-income peers, as [Hoxby & Avery showed in 2013](#). These students, in general, **are less likely than their high-income peers to apply to schools that would be their "safety" or "fit" schools academically**. Specifically, low-income, high-achieving students:

- Strongly favor **non-selective colleges**, and don't disfavor schools with median test scores that are lower than theirs.
- Disfavor schools with higher **sticker prices**
- Favor **in-state schools** more than high-income students, though they do not prefer their in-state flagship school
- Value **nearby schools**, especially schools that allow them to live at home (fewer than 10 miles away) and those near home (fewer than 120 miles away)

Fight Sticker Shock: Include financial aid info in admissions tours, brochures and mailings, and improve financial aid calculator

The Issue: Many talented, lower-income prospective students believe they could not afford to attend a top school. However, many schools provide substantial need-based aid that makes such schools more affordable for these students after taking financial aid into consideration.

Whom to Work With: Financial Aid & Admissions departments

The Solution:

- **Better publicize the availability of financial aid** in admissions materials for prospective students. Note that **costs of attendance vary** depending on students' financial need. [The Institute for College Access & Success \(TICAS\) provides a comprehensive review](#) of the factors that affect students' and parents' awareness of financial aid, and ways to educate them. **Just providing information alone is not often enough: colleges need to engage directly with prospective students and their families.**
- If your school is need-blind or commits to meet 100% of students' demonstrated need, they should **mention that in their materials!** They should also distinguish if these policies apply to U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents or everyone.
- Schools are now required to provide **financial aid calculators** to enable prospective students to determine a rough, likely net cost of attendance. E.g., [see Yale's financial aid calculator](#). However, the quality of these calculators and their visibility varies between colleges. TICAS has reviewed calculators [in this report](#). Some of the TICAS recommendations for calculators include: make calculators easy to find on university websites; create calculators that allow prospective students to easily get and view results;

and make the results easy to understand. (See the report for full recommendations.) **Take a look at your school's calculator and see how it could be improved.**

Proof This Works: [Daniel de Vise, *Washington Post*, "As College Costs Rise, Sticker Shock Eased by Financial Aid," Feb. 10, 2010](#); [Sandy Baum, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Hysteria Over High Tuition Distracts from Real Solutions for Students," Sept. 7, 2009](#).

Expand Student Ambassador Program

The Issue: Student ambassador programs, through which current students recruit at their former high schools or nearby schools, are a key part of schools' admissions programs. However, these programs can hinder efforts to increase socioeconomic diversity at a school. Student ambassadors often don't go to schools in lower-income areas and the cycle continues.

Whom to Work With: Admissions department

The Solution: Expand these programs so current students speak at a more diverse range of high schools when they go home. Your Admissions office can help students set up these appointments and determine which schools to visit. Also, ask your fellow students if your university visited their high school to evaluate the impact of ambassador programs at your college.

Proof This Works: When Yale expanded its ambassador program to focus on students at lower-income high schools, applications from those schools increased 10%. See [Caitlin Roman, *Yale Daily News*, "Ambassador Visits Yield Rise in Applications," Nov. 6, 2007](#).

Search and Recruit at More Geographically Diverse High Schools

The Issue: Colleges could significantly improve their student bodies' socioeconomic diversity by expanding their geographic patterns for search and recruitment of prospective students. (Search means how schools find students. Recruitment means how colleges strive to connect with students.)

Selective colleges have too often:

- 1) Recruited low-income students from a small number of "tapped out" areas, and **neglected "untapped" regions** with high numbers of high-ability low-income students. Schools often only look in their relative backyards, not where many talented low-income students live.
- 2) Searched based on **SAT and not ACT test scores**. High-ability low-income students in untapped regions often only take the ACT.

Many high-achieving low-income students in "untapped" areas are not geographically concentrated, however—for example, only a handful may attend any given high school. Accordingly, colleges might find it difficult to reach them cost-effectively by usual methods, such as visits by admissions staff. However, Hoxby & Turner have demonstrated that targeted mailings and admissions waivers can lead these students to apply to more selective colleges at a low cost.

Sources: [Catharine B. Hill & Gordon C. Winston, "Low-Income Students and Highly Selective Private Colleges: Searching and Recruiting" \(2008\)](#); [Caroline M. Hoxby & Christopher](#)

[Avery, "The Missing 'One-Offs': The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low Income Students" \(2013\); Caroline M. Hoxby & Sarah Turner, "Expanding College Opportunities for High-Achieving, Low Income Students" \(2013\).](#)

Whom to Work With: Admissions Department

The Solution & Proof This Works:

- **Focus admissions efforts on regions with higher proportions of highly talented low-income students.** [According to the research, these areas include:](#) Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio; Pennsylvania, upstate New York, and New Jersey; and Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota. For comparison: the East North Central (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio) accounts for 22.7% of the nation's high-ability low-income students. New England, where highly selective colleges traditionally focus recruitment, accounts for only 3.5%.
- **Search by both ACT and SAT test results.** If a college uses an SAT-only search policy, it can miss an enormous proportion of a state's high-ability, low-income students: [59% in Michigan and 58% in Alabama, for example.](#)
- **Use targeted mailing programs and offer fee waivers, prospectively in collaboration with other selective institutions.** The [Expanding College Opportunities project](#), which operates on behalf of a group of schools, has demonstrated that this strategy can significantly affect application and enrollment decisions of talented low-income students.

Yale University has already taken an important and low-cost step to apply this knowledge with a [targeted mailing program to high-achieving rising high school seniors from low-income families.](#)

Partner with QuestBridge or the Posse Foundation

The Issue: Schools have limited admissions budgets and often more trouble reaching qualified lower-income students. It's often easier for schools to recruit at the same high schools that send more students to highly selective colleges. There are, however, programs that directly connect colleges with these talented lower-income students.

Whom to Work With: Admissions department

The Solution: [Questbridge](#) and the [Posse Foundation](#) are excellent organizations that help connect exceptionally talented, lower-income high schools students with participating colleges and universities. In turn, these schools agree to support fully these students' financial needs. QuestBridge and Posse are primarily differentiated by geography: Posse focuses on connecting students from a smaller number of specific regions, while QuestBridge has a wider, national scope. If your institution is not a member of either organization, advocate for your Admissions department to join.

Proof This Works: QuestBridge has connected over 6,000 low-income students to highly selective colleges and universities. [Check out some of their success stories.](#) [The Posse Foundation has connected 4,223 students to highly selective schools; 90% of Posse students graduate.](#)

Promote Pipeline Programs with Community Colleges

The Issue: [the Pell Institute reports that](#) while over 60% of low-income, first-generation students attending public two-year institutions hope to earn a B.A., only 5% of them ultimately do. U/FUSED Board of Advisors member [Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab points to research](#) that shows lower-income students are much less likely to transfer from two-year schools to four-year colleges. Four-year and two-year institutions can facilitate success for these students by developing programs that connect with each other.

Whom to Work With: Admissions, Financial Aid departments

The Solution: Advocate for your school to develop partnerships for transfers with local community colleges, focusing on lower-income students. [See this report for an outline of successful community college transfer initiatives.](#) This benefits your school by helping it recruit students that have already succeeded in a college environment. Your school should develop a full plan for the partnership, including:

- Point people in each relevant university department;
- Partnerships with campus leaders with community college connections;
- Early identification and recruitment of prospective transfer students, including; personalized attention from trusted adults and peers – consider a full-time transfer liaison
- Workshops and info sessions at partner community colleges;
- Pre-enrollment readiness programs, including information on financial aid and demystification of the admissions process; special orientation programs; meetings with current students at your school; summer residential programs; and taking courses taught by faculty at your school;
- An approach for transferring credits;
- Academic integration programs, particularly advising; and
- Social integration programs, including a cohort model and personal, peer support.

Proof This Works: The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation’s Community College Transfer Initiative supported eight selective colleges and universities from 2006-2010. The Initiative helped these schools increase their enrollment of talented, low- to moderate-income transfer students from community colleges. [According to a review of the Initiative from Brandeis University](#), the Initiative helped these schools improve diversity and benefited students, “at times truly transformed their lives.”

Increase Financial Aid: Implement Full-Need Funding Financial Aid Programs, If Possible

The Issue: Once lower-income students are admitted to your school, it is critical that your institution meet their full financial need. [Schools with full-need financial aid programs](#) guarantee that they will meet the need of all students whom their admissions offices admit (note that if a school meets full need, it is not necessary need-blind). Also, note that institutions can take widely differing views on what students’ need actually is. This can be especially important when

considering travel costs to school from across the country, ability to attend without a car, costs of summer storage, summer internships, study abroad, extracurricular activities, differing lab and textbook costs between majors and housing costs for students not in dorms. Additionally, even if your school does not have the resources to meet students full need, increasing aid beyond its current level can be critically valuable.

Whom to Work With: Financial Aid & Admissions departments, potentially Alumni & Development

The Solution: Your institution can increase its financial aid resources in three primary ways: by increasing the size of the pot through direct fundraising, shifting resources from elsewhere and better controlling costs¹. Offer to partner with your school's Alumni & Development department on an existing or new campaign to raise additional resources. The students whom you work with will likely be some of the best advocates for increased need-based financial aid.

Convincing your school to shift resources from elsewhere requires a different kind of advocacy. At some schools, merit scholarships have absorbed substantial funding or have endowment surpluses that could be combined to form new scholarships or used directly to improve need-based aid. You should meet first with your school's Financial Aid department and then consider approaching your school's Chancellor or President. Depending on their response, you might need to implement a larger campaign calling for your school to commit financially to socioeconomic diversity. (Your U/FUSED liaison can help you plan this.)

Proof This Works: [There is a significant research base](#) to support the common-sense notion that increased financial aid improves college access and success for lower-income students. Grants are much more beneficial than loans, unsurprisingly. At the same time, the research shows that colleges must supplement increased aid with increased outreach to lower-income students about that aid. (See above at [“Fight Sticker Shock”](#) for more info.)

Socioeconomic Affirmative Action

The Issue: If a school implements race-based affirmative action, it values racial diversity during its admissions process. Race-based affirmative action programs have played a key role in diversifying college campuses, as the Supreme Court affirmed in the 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* decision. As highly selective colleges struggle to achieve socioeconomic diversity among their student bodies as well, socioeconomic-based affirmative action provides a potential solution.

Whom to Work With: Admissions Departments

The Solution: Schools can use several different methods to implement socioeconomic affirmative action, [as Matthew N. Gaertner has compiled](#), including a points-based system or an

¹ Easy cost controls include providing more comprehensive public transportation, helping students find summer funding, creating carpool incentive programs, making a campus bike friendly, increasing use of digital classroom resources instead of textbooks, increased library textbook reserve programs, better used book buying or lending options, regular transportation to lower-cost grocery stores, increasing transparency for discretionary school spending and helping students find affordable housing.

index. Your school's admissions department would tailor the policy's implementation to fit its existing admissions procedures.

Note that while socioeconomic affirmative action also boosts racial diversity, it does not provide the same benefit to racial diversity as race-based affirmative action. We recommend that institutions implement both methods of affirmative action.

Proof This Works: Socioeconomic affirmative action enables schools directly to seek increased class diversity without relying on proxy identifiers. [As Richard Kahlenberg, a member of the U/FUSED Board of Advisors and Senior Fellow at the Century Foundation, has argued,](#) socioeconomic affirmative action empowers schools significantly to increase the proportion of lower-income students in their student bodies.

Advocate Against Legacy Admissions Programs

The Issue: Legacy admissions provide children of a school's alumni with an advantage in admissions. As [Richard Kahlenberg, Senior Fellow at the Century Foundation and member of the U/FUSED Board of Advisors, writes,](#) nearly ¾ of research universities and almost all liberal arts colleges, employ legacy preferences. These legacy preferences have a significant impact: [statistical research estimates](#) that at highly selective colleges, legacy status is worth 160 additional SAT points.

Whom to Work With: Admissions, Financial Aid department

The Solution: Have an initial conversation with your school's admissions office and financial aid officers presenting the research and evidence included here against legacy admissions. If that does not work, build a campaign at your school (we can help with that!).

Proof This Works: [as Kahlenberg points out,](#) at least 16 top schools have eliminated legacy preferences over the past 10 years. While college administrators have justified legacy preferences on the ground that they help schools attract alumni donations, there is [substantial evidence that there is actually no causal link](#) between legacy admissions and alumni donations. Ending legacy admissions means eliminating policies that are unfair and contrary to diversity: [they significantly disadvantage prospective students of color and from lower-income families.](#)

Need-Blind Admissions

The Issue: Need-blind admissions policies ensure that no student is denied entry to your school because of their financial need. If your school is not need-blind, a student's financial need may count against them during their admissions cycle. Becoming need-blind represents a major step to improving socioeconomic diversity for many schools. Additionally, need-blind admissions can be especially critical for international students. Many universities that have a need-blind admissions policy only use that policy for American students. [This is a list of schools that are need-blind with respect to American students;](#) and [this site lists schools that are need blind for all prospective students.](#)

Whom to Work with: Admissions & Financial Aid departments

The Solution: If your school is not currently need-blind, ensuring they become so will likely require a major advocacy effort on your group's part. It will likely require elements such as op-eds, student government resolutions, and grassroots organizing. Your U/FUSED liaison can provide you with individualized recommendations if you decide to pursue this incredibly meaningful policy change. If your school cannot afford to implement need-blind admissions, help to ensure the school pledges itself to becoming need-blind in the future and establish a financial aid initiative specifically aimed at making the university need blind.

Proof This Works: Need-blind admissions can provide benefits for schools by ensuring all qualified students can attend regardless of financial need. It also can serve as an important recruitment tool for lower-income students, [as has been true for Vassar College](#).

Also note, though, that need-blind policies can be costly for schools, and particularly those with less robust endowments. Additionally, while need-blind policies are important, they are not a magic bullet, [as one study from 2002 showed](#). If a school attracts a comparatively low number of lower-income prospective students to apply in the first place, need-blind policies are not significantly effective.

Support for Students: Academic Programs

Implement First Year Programming for Lower-Income Students, Including Orientation Programs

The Issue: [The Pell Institute's research](#) shows that 60% of low-income first-generation students who leave college without graduating leave after the first year. The Institute also cites research showing that first-generation students tend to delay getting involved on campus while they initially transition to college. Additionally, [considerable research](#) shows that lower-income and minority students drop out of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) coursework at a higher rate, such as pre-medical programs. (They also drop out of the STEM pipeline at every other stage in their educational process.)

Who to Work With: Student Support or Academic Advising Department (if your school has a TRiO Student Support Services program, it likely already has a program like this!)

The Solution: Strategies include:

- **A pre-orientation or orientation program** that helps students acclimate to college. Programs focused on STEM coursework are particularly essential! Programs over the summer before student's first year also are helpful.
- **Student advising, counseling and tutoring:** these can be especially important for majors that require heavy STEM coursework. Students who attended schools with poor quality STEM courses or schools that did not offer advanced, honors, AP or IB courses will often find themselves behind on the first day of college. Many majors heavy in STEM coursework will not be accessible to these students unless tutoring opportunities and introductory classes are widely available. Additionally, due to

heavy major requirements, colleges and universities should ensure lower-income students have sufficient course schedule time to finish the prerequisite and background courses they did not take and still finish their intended major.

- Study skills courses & test-taking clinics
- Learning communities and faculty involvement
- Career advising

Proof This Works: [As the Pell Institute writes](#), a wide array of research shows that these programs help students acclimate to college and foster their academic and social success on campus. [Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab et al's literature review](#) accords with the Pell Institute's finding, though she also notes that research on specific impacts of programs remains to be done.

Work with your University's TRiO Program

Issue: The TRiO program was created as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. TRiO programs are federally funded by competitive grants, and exist to serve lower-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities. TRiO programs can provide many services, ranging from academic tutoring to financial guidance. Working with your TRiO program can help increase awareness of both its existence and socioeconomic diversity in general on your campus. In addition, it provides students with the resources they may need.

Whom to Work With: the department of your school that hosts TRiO, if your school has a program. Contact your school's financial aid or academic services office.

The Solution: At some schools, students don't take full advantage of the programs TRiO offers. For example, at Saint Louis University (SLU) we found that students who were a part of the TRiO program were not fully participating because they felt there was a stigma attached to participating in the program. SLU/FUSED worked with the SLU TRiO committee heads to raise awareness of the existing socio-economic diversity so all students could feel more comfortable. This in turn provided students more access to what TRiO had to offer without them feeling uncomfortable. Your school's financial aid or academic services department are typically the most closely linked with TRiO. They will likely be able to provide you with more information on its operations at your school, should your school have a program.

Proof This Works: TRiO programs have been found significantly to improve educational outcomes for lower-income, first-generation students and student with disabilities, as [this Pell Institute report details](#).

Support for Students: Financial & Holistic Programs

Investigate the full impact socioeconomic diversity has on your institution

The Issue: While your group's assessment of your campus is very useful, a full investigation by your institution's administration can help your school improve awareness of campus issues and

find solutions. It also creates buy-in from your school's administration to address these issues. Additionally, be sure to include international students in your school's assessment. Many schools are need-blind for only American students and not international students.

Whom to Work With: The Provost, Dean or Chancellor of your school

The Solution: Duke's Office of Undergraduate Education began the Duke Socioeconomic Diversity Initiative in 2009 in order to investigate the social and cultural barriers low-income students face at Duke University. University researchers work with administrators and students to conduct thorough research on the topic. Lobby for a similar initiative at your school. With this improved understanding of student culture, your university can develop the best policies to integrate and attract students from all backgrounds. [Please see this article on the initiative from the Duke Chronicle.](#)

Regarding international students, Duke's International Association in conjunction with Duke Student Government has sought to increase financial aid for international students with hopes of one day making Duke a need-blind admissions institution for international applicants. For domestic students, Duke University is a need-blind admission institution that promises to meet the full financial need for all admitted domestic students. The same does not hold for international students. [Please see this relevant memo.](#)

Proof This Works: Duke University conducted a similar research-based initiative on the pressures campus women face, known as the Women's Initiative. This research results led to several innovative campus policy changes and the introduction of several new campus programs. Dr. Donna Lisker, a member of U/FUSED's Board of Advisors, was heavily involved in both initiatives.

Financial Aid Transparency: Hold workshops for current students and provide additional information

The Issue: Many students (and parents) have trouble understanding their current loans and financial aid, as well as keeping track of forms. They also can use help with personal budgeting and issues with credit and credit cards: [research shows college students' financial literacy remains dismal, on average.](#) Schools often help students find local banks to open accounts and get a credit card, but do not help students fully understand their new benefits, risks and responsibilities. Additionally, many students have concerns with financing for graduate and professional school. Medical school, for instance, requires students to travel for interviews, often at last-second airfare prices.

Whom to Work With: Financial Aid department

The Solution: Partner with your school's financial aid department. Your school should also consider including information on these issues in mandatory programming for first-year students. A few options include:

- A **financial literacy seminar**, including one at the start of school with online reference information for students and parent

- A **workshop on financial aid with guest speakers**, both for current financial aid and future graduate/professional programs
- Events and dissemination of **pamphlets and informational brochures** through student life and residential life departments

Proof This Works: These efforts have already significantly assisted students on campuses where U/FUSED affiliates work. UIC/FUSED at the University of Illinois at Chicago, in particular, has implemented fantastic programs to assist current students with financial issues. [They've also documented their successes here.](#)

Expand financial aid program to cover *all* student expenses, including extracurriculars

The Issue:

Students often find that financial aid fails to cover their full expenses. For example, art students may not receive sufficient aid to cover the costs of their materials. Other students may need more funding for travel to interviews.

Extracurricular activities are a key component of the college experience for many students. Unfortunately, at many schools, some extracurriculars cost additional money that lower-income students are not able to afford. Additionally, lower-income students often have to sacrifice summer internships and study-abroad experiences, as well as other learning opportunities.

Dues for Greek life often pose particular challenges for lower-income students. At Duke University, for example, the student government found that members of Greek organizations come from wealthier backgrounds partially because lower-income students could not afford the dues.

Who to Work With: student government, financial aid office, student activities & leadership office.

The Solution:

At Yale Law School, students worked with administrators to make sure financial aid would cover their costs for travel for interviews. You should work with your financial aid office to ensure that financial aid is available for additional expenses. Your campus survey is a particularly helpful way to identify gaps in current financial aid.

In order to make access to Greek groups available to all, Duke has taken the first steps to establish a Greek financial aid program, primarily financed by Greek alumni. [See this article in the Duke Chronicle.](#) Eventually, Duke hopes to extend this aid to other organizations and activities. By using the fundraising power of Greek groups, Duke Student Government hopes to grow eventually an extracurricular activity endowment large enough to subsidize all activities with cost barriers that segregate students.

There are many other important mechanisms to allow students to engage in extracurricular programs and social activities. For example:

- **A long-term plan developed by students and the university to fund activities**, such as slowly establishing an endowment or allocating money from the student activity fee.
- Social groups, such as sororities or dance groups, can operate **clothing exchanges** so students can trade in clothing items they only used on a few occasions for nice and suitable clothing new to them.
- Major and minor associations, political groups, debate teams and student governments should have **money set aside for conference and travel funds**.
- Non-varsity athletic groups, such as intermural sports teams, also should work to **establish funds for equipment, training and travel**.
- **Collective fundraising** from multiple groups. Examples include running a student business, like a campus coffee shop or student laundry service; a major fundraiser, such as a silent auction where campus community members donate services (e.g., cooking lessons, baked goods, handmade clothing, donated gift certificates, dinner at a professor's house, last semester's study flashcards, used books, airport rides etcetera); soliciting for sponsorships from the community or alumni; or a continuous fundraiser, like selling student-designed shirts, jackets and sweatpants.

Proof This Works: [As Professor Will Barratt has explored](#), social class often plays a powerful yet unrecognized role in student participation in extracurricular activities. Developing these activities while being conscious of students' different economic backgrounds can ensure students from all backgrounds feel included and can fully participate.