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Final Summary of the Summer Transition Grant Program



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About the Minnesota Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding over \$170 million in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs and initiatives for youth.

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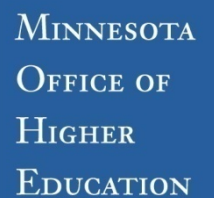
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Introduction

The 2009 Minnesota Legislature created the Summer Transition Grant program to provide financial assistance to eligible Minnesota students attending research-based high school-to-college summer developmental transition programs. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (the Office) was the program administrator.

The program was originally allocated \$4.9 million from the 2010-11 Minnesota State Grant program appropriation. Funding was subsequently reduced during the 2010 legislative session to \$1 million per year. The program was first implemented during the summer of 2010 for students who graduated from high school after December 31, 2009. Eligible students were required to attend programs offered by Minnesota colleges in the summer between high school graduation and the freshman year of postsecondary education.

According to *Minnesota Statutes* [136A.862](#), the purpose of summer transition programs was to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to begin college-level coursework when the student enrolls in a postsecondary program. Programs must provide developmental coursework aimed at improving key academic skills. The student completed a college readiness assessment at the beginning and end of the program to measure gains in these skills. Programs also provided support services to participating students, such as academic advising, mentoring, and tutoring during the summer program and throughout the student's first year of enrollment. Many programs also introduced students to student affairs, counseling, admissions and financial aid offices.

The 2013 legislature, as recommended by the Office, restructured the program to award competitive block grants to qualifying Minnesota postsecondary institutions offering developmental summer transition programs beginning in 2014. The annual program appropriation was reduced to \$100,000 for each year of the biennium. This report includes information about 2014 summer transition grant recipients and the legislature's discontinuation of the program in 2015.

Summer Transition Grant Program Overview

Eligible Institutions and Programs

All Minnesota public and private higher education institutions were eligible to participate in the Summer Transition Grant program if they met the definition of eligible institution used for other state financial aid programs in *Minnesota Statutes* 136A.101, Subd. 4. Proposed program strategies leading to student success may differ based on the interests, needs and resources of the student participants and project site. According to *Minnesota Statutes* 136A.862, Subd. 1, summer high school-to-college transition programs were required to be research-based, include instruction to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework and address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by students. Academic coursework may have been existing developmental courses offered by the institution or courses designed specifically for the summer transition program. Programs were also required to provide support services surrounding academic coursework to help students transition to the college environment.

In fall of 2013, the Office sent information about the Summer Transition Grant program to all Minnesota postsecondary institutions and encouraged them to submit program proposals for the summer of 2014 by March 15, 2014. The proposals submitted were reviewed and approved by Office staff. All proposals were funded for the summer of 2014 and were renewed for the summer of 2015 contingent upon meeting program goals for the summer of 2014.

Four campuses applied for the funds and offered programs during the summers of 2014 and 2015: Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Saint Paul College, and the University of Minnesota, Duluth. The proposals submitted were reviewed and approved by Office staff.

Eligible Students

The program was intended to serve students who were members of groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, though the statute did not specifically exclude other types of students from participating. Underrepresented groups in this case included Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Asian and students of two or more races/ethnicities who were economically disadvantaged, or the first in their families to attend college.

To be eligible to participate in a summer transition program funded by this program a student must have:

- Graduated from high school (or earn GED in lieu of high school diploma) the year of the summer transition program
- Planned to enroll in college the fall term following high school graduation
- Demonstrated financial need by meeting one or more of the following criteria:
 - Counted under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
 - Were eligible for free or reduced price lunch
 - Received assistance from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Application Process

As part of their program proposal, participating campuses were required to establish outreach plans to reach potential students and direct them to the appropriate application materials. Students permitted colleges to release private student data to the Office for program evaluation purposes by completing the data release section of the application.

Grant Awarding

Four campuses were each granted \$25,000 for fiscal year 2014. Each campus provided its own matching funds on at least a one-to-one basis. A total of \$88,561 in program funds were expended for fiscal year 2014, with excess funds carried over to fiscal year 2015. Once fall term was completed, Office staff collected fall term college enrollment data and grade point averages from campus program administrators.

2014 Summer Transition Grant Participants

During the summer of 2014, 87 students received services covered by Summer Transition Grants totaling \$88,261.35 for attending a summer transition program offered by one of the four participating campuses:

- Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- St. Paul College
- University of Minnesota, Duluth

The four participating summer transition programs served the intended student population including a high percent of students of color, low-income students and first-generation college students. Additional students participated in these summer transition programs, but did not meet the eligibility requirements for attending under grant provisions. The following section details each program's operations, students served, and use of grant funds.

Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) offered the nine-week Jump Start to Careers program. Fifteen students participated in the program, and 10 of these students completed and passed their courses. The program included an intensive introductory Algebra course, and students also concurrently participated in a First Year Transitions class to prepare for success in postsecondary. Student participants received one hour per day of Academic Support time to work closely with tutors to ensure adequate progress in their classes. Mid-semester, students in the program participated in all day career exploration activities in either Health Careers or Manufacturing/Construction Careers. In addition, students received one-on-one and group advising from the Jump Start to College/Career Coordinator, information and assistance in financial literacy, applying for financial aid, and referrals to college student support programs. MCTC has offered its Jump Start to Careers summer program for two years. MCTC received \$22,429.09 in Summer Transition Grant Program funding from the Office for program costs. MCTC provided \$28,609.04 in matching funds.

Student Participation

Of the fifteen students enrolled in the Jump Start to Careers program at MCTC, 10 completed the program. Nine were female and one was male. Seventy-two percent were students of color. The median age of students was 19. Sixty-three percent were first-generation college students and sixty-three percent were Pell grant eligible.

Outcomes

- 10 students completed Math 0070
- 14 students registered for the First Year Student Transition class and 10 completed
- 9 students participated in the Health Careers Camp
- 2 students participated in the Manufacturing/Construction Careers Camp
- 9 participants registered for full time classes for the 2014 fall semester with an average credit load of 13 credit hours

- Participants completed an average of 12 credit hours during the 2014 fall semester
- Average GPA for fall semester was 2.0

Minnesota State University-Mankato

Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) offered the College Access Program (CAP), a five-week intensive residential summer bridge program who did not meet regular MSU admission requirements but showed promise of success. Full admission to MSU is based on successful completion of CAP. The objective of CAP is to provide student participants the opportunity to acclimate to the university while earning nine university credits, including college-level courses in composition and math. Twenty-eight students participated in this program. Twenty-seven of 28 students completed and passed their courses and registered for classes for fall semester at MSU. These students will continue to receive support from CAP through their first two years of college. This is the eighth year MSU offered the CAP program. MSU received \$25,680.43 in Summer Transition Grant Program funding for OHE for program costs. MSU provided \$29,835.62 in matching funds.

Student Participation

Of the twenty-eight students enrolled in CAP, 14 were female and 14 were male. Eighty-nine percent were students of color. The median age of students was 18. The average high school grade point average of participants was 2.44 and average ACT score was 17. One-hundred percent of participants were Pell grant eligible.

Outcomes

- All 28 students who enrolled completed the summer CAP completed the program
- 27 of the 28 participants registered full-time for classes during fall semester at MSU with an average credit load of 15 credit hours
- Participants completed an average of 12 credit hours during the 2014 fall semester
- 25 were retained and enrolled full-time for the spring 2015 semester
- 67 percent of participants scored higher on the Pre Elementary Algebra section of the Accuplacer test after completing CAP
- 78 percent of participants scored higher on the College Math portion of the Accuplacer test after completing CAP
- 74 percent of participants scored higher on the Reading portion of the Accuplacer test after completing CAP
- 11 students tested into English 101 after completing CAP
- Average GPA for fall semester was 2.9

Saint Paul College

In the spring of 2014, Saint Paul College launched the eight-week Math Transitions Program. The summer component of Math Transitions consisted of free summer math courses, one for students placing into Introductory Algebra and another for students placing into Intermediate Algebra. The program enrolled 18 grant participant students with all 18 completing the program. The summer math courses were made available to additional students of the Power of YOU program who were entering their second and third years at Saint Paul College with 37 student participating in the two math

courses. Support activities were offered including a series of six STEM educational workshops, a math tutor, and a bus pass to increase attendance. The program goal was to support students' placement into a higher level of math by the end of the program. Saint Paul College received \$24,812.00 in Summer Transition Grant Program funding from OHE for program costs. Saint Paul College provided \$48,424.35 in matching funds.

Student Participation

Of the total participants in the summer math program, ninety-five percent of participants were students of color. Fifty-seven percent of participants were female and forty-three percent were male. The median age of students was 19.

Outcomes

- 100 percent of participants completed the Math Transitions Project
- 17 participants placed into a higher level math course after completing the Math Transitions Program
- 88 percent of Math students enrolled registered for full time classes at St. Paul College with an average credit load of 14 credit hours
- Participants completed an average of 11 credits during fall semester
- 75 percent of participants enrolled in developmental education classes for fall semester
- Average attempted developmental education credit load for fall semester was 7 credit hours
- Median developmental education credit load was 3 credit hours
- Participants enrolled in developmental education courses for fall semester completed an average of 6 developmental education credits hours
- Average GPA for fall semester was 2.54

University of Minnesota – Duluth

The University of Minnesota, Duluth (UMD) offered a Math Prep for STEM Careers Program. Twenty-six students participated in three online math courses with all 26 completing and passing the courses. The program began with a five-day UMD campus visit consisting of introductory labs in microbiology, biology, chemistry, and engineering. The campus visit also included college preparation classes and a financial literacy lecture. Fourteen students attended the campus visit. Over the summer, students received online reports regarding their course progress every two weeks. The program administrator and student mentors ran five study sessions over the summer in order to prepare students for testing into a higher level math course in the fall. The goals of the program were to increase student preparedness for college level mathematics and science, and in particular, increase student interest to pursue a STEM undergraduate degree at UMD. UMD received \$15,339.83 in Summer Transition Grant Program funding from OHE for program costs. UMD provided \$16,330.06 in matching funds.

Student Participation

Of the twenty-six participants enrolled in the summer Math Prep for STEM Careers program at the UMD, 17 were female and nine were male. Sixty-five percent were students of color. The median age of participants was 18. Forty-six percent of participants were Pell grant eligible. The average ACT score among participants was 23.

Outcomes

- All 26 participants completed the Math Prep for STEM Careers program
- 24 of the 26 participants registered full-time for fall semester with an average credit load of 15 credit hours
- Participants completed an average of 14 credits during fall semester
- Average GPA for fall semester was 2.64

Summer Transition Grant Program Repeal

In an attempt to more effectively provide services to the student population targeted by the Summer Transition Grant (STG) program, the Office proposed moving STG funds into the Intervention for College Attendance Program (ICAP). ICAP provides competitive grants to postsecondary institutions in a manner that strengthens student preparation and aptitude for postsecondary success through academic enrichment activities, tutoring, academic counseling, mentoring, career awareness and exploration, orientation to college life, assistance with high school course selection, and financial aid counseling.

Reasons for Recommendation

Reasons for Repeal of the Summer Transition Grant Program include:

- The Office could only provide grant funds to four higher education institutions in the summer of 2014 as the majority of college transition programs did not meet program requirements
- Participation numbers were too low and could range from one to 87 participants in a given year as recruitment of targeted populations was significantly less than projected recruitment goals
- The data was not of a sufficient sample size to form broad-based recommendations or conclusions to inform policy about high school to college bridge programming
- The majority of summer bridge programs offered by higher education institutions are not designed to meet the requirements for the Summer Transition Grant including allowing students of all ages and offering softer curriculum (study skills and college orientation) as opposed to strong emphasis on developmental education in English and Mathematics
- College administrators opposed the requirement to conduct student assessment tests prior to program start and upon program completion as it is believed the number of tests negatively impacted students motivation to achieve high test scores

Though the Office's recommendation to move the funds to ICAP was not adopted, the Summer Transition Grant Program was repealed in [2015 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 69, Article 2, Section 47](#). The program's funding was reallocated to the Summer Academic Enrichment Program (SAEP) due to its comparatively broad scope while keeping with the same goal of assisting first-generation college students to access and succeed in college. SAEP received \$200,000 over the biennium to provide up to a \$1,000 stipend per student to cover all or a portion of the direct cost for students to attend summer academic camps. SAEP consistently encourages low-income students toward success in postsecondary education throughout primary and secondary schooling. In June and July of 2015, eligible students participated in various summer camps for Mathematics, Science, Performing and Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Communications, and World Languages and Cultures through the SAEP.