

GRANTMAKERS FOR EDUCATION
POSTSECONDARY ACCESS & ATTAINMENT
IMPACT GROUP (PSA2)

Postsecondary Spotlight on Peer-to-Peer Advising

April 16, 2024



AGENDA

- Introductions
- Overview of Issue and Approach
- Case Study of the Work in Action: A Moderated Discussion with CARA + Queens College (CUNY)
- The Role of the Funding Community



INTRODUCTIONS



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ECMC

Foundation

ECMC Foundation is a national, private foundation whose North Star goal is to eliminate equity gaps in postsecondary completion by 2040.

The Foundation uses a spectrum of funding structures, including strategic grantmaking and program-related investments through Education Innovation Ventures, to invest in both nonprofit and for-profit ventures. In pursuit of system change, the Foundation's grantmaking and investing are concentrated on the three following strategic priorities:

- removing barriers to postsecondary completion;
- building the capacity of organizations, institutions and systems;
- transforming the postsecondary ecosystem.



CARA's mission is to ensure that first-generation college students, low-income students, and students of color have the knowledge and support necessary to enroll in and persist through post-secondary education.

Public school students need opportunities to learn about college and career pathways, but most public high schools and institutions of higher education are not structured to provide this assistance. CARA's programs, research, and policy work address these inequities. We work with high schools, community-based organizations, and higher education institutions to move access and success guidance from an 'enrichment for some' to an '**entitlement for all**' model.

We do this through two primary focus areas:



INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

We conduct original research on post-secondary access & success, with a focus on policies for institutional change and peer-to-peer advising.



ORIGINAL RESEARCH & POLICY

We build the capacity of high schools, colleges, school districts, and nonprofit partners through both our whole school and peer-to-peer models.





CUNY is an urban public college system founded to serve all students living across NYC's five boroughs. Made up of 25 colleges (community, 4-year, and graduate institutions, CUNY's student population serves a representative population of NYC):

- 80% of first-year students are NYC public high school graduates;
- 75% of students are students of color
- 50% of students come from families earning less than \$30,000/year
- 80% of students graduate with no loan debt



Queens College is a four-year institution with both undergraduate and Masters programs. Student population:

- 13,500 undergraduate students
- 77% full time
- 81% under 25
- 73% students of color
- 49% Pell grant recipients
- 33+% born outside of US

Sources: Roland & Herman, 2020; Elsen-Rooney & Zimmerman, 2023; [CUNY](#), Office of Institutional Research; [CUNY](#), Student Databook; Queens College, [QC at a Glance](#).



Why We Are Here: Addressing Inequities in Student Support

SELECTIVE PRIVATE COLLEGE
\$52,700/STUDENT

*** 1:100**

Advisor :
Student Ratio

*** 1:10**

Faculty :
Student Ratio

BROAD ACCESS PUBLIC COLLEGE
\$15,129/STUDENT

*** 1:260**

Advisor : Student Ratio (4-year)

*** 1:441**

Advisor : Student Ratio (2-year)

*** 1:1,000**

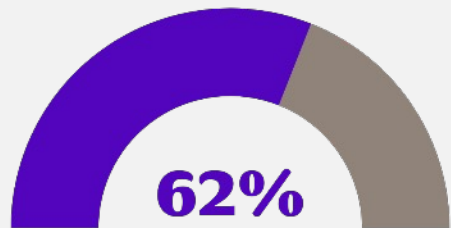
CUNY Advisor : Student Ratio

*** 1:29**

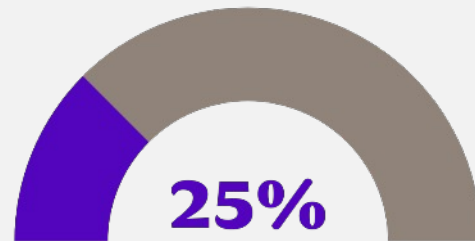
CUNY Faculty : Student Ratio

*** 1:5,000+**

CUNY Career Advisor : Student



students who enter CUNY 4-year colleges graduate in 6 years



students who enter CUNY 2-year colleges graduate in 3 years

Sources: [Cahalan et al., 2022](#); [Fryar, 2015](#); Amandalore, S. & Dvorkin, E. (2022); CUNY Office of Research, Evaluation, and Data Analytics, 2022; [Carlstrom & Miller, 2013](#); Hilliard, 2017; CUNY, 2022; Freedland Fisher, 2023.



Overview: Institution-Based Attempts to Address the Problem

**Intensive support for select students:
High impact, high cost, not scaled**

Example: CUNY ASAP/ACE

- Impact = Doubles community college graduation rate
- Cost = \$16,000/student
- Reach = 27% of all CUNY students

**Low touch support for all students:
Low impact, low cost, scaled**

Example: TEXT NUDGES

- Impact = Null
- Cost = \$5 - \$100
- Reach = Hundreds to Thousands

Sources: [Cahalan et al., 2022](#); [Fryar, 2015](#); [Amandaloro, S. & Dvorkin, E. \(2022\)](#); CUNY Office of Research, Evaluation, and Data Analytics, 2022; [Carlstrom & Miller, 2013](#); [Hilliard, 2017](#); CUNY, 2022.



Adding a Layer of Relational Support: Scaled Peer-to-Peer Advising

CARA, CUNY and Foundation for Tacoma Students, is working to implement a best practice peer-to-peer advising model at the campus level, with three explicit goals:

1. Using peer-to-peer support to **narrow the guidance gap**, augmenting existing advising resources with trained peer advisors to support students not in special programs to enroll and persist.
2. Providing **meaningful career development** to college students as paid peer advisors.
3. Establishing a **framework for institutionalization** and scalability.



Scaling at CUNY + Queens College: First-Year Student Support

CUNY

2021-2024



Campuses: Increased from 2 to 4

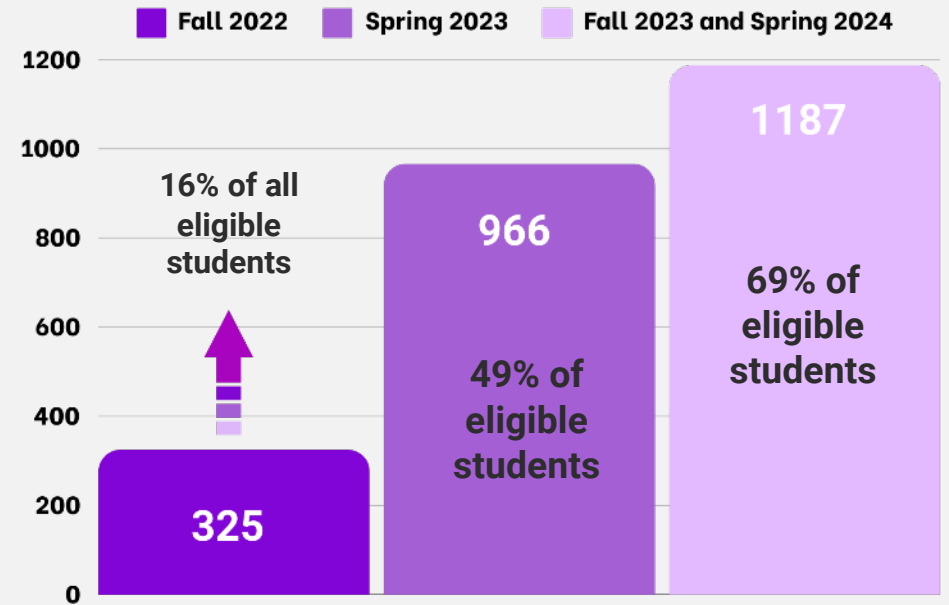
Students Served: Increased from 1,838 to 4,599

Peer Advisors: Increased from 23 to 37

4.4 percentage points higher fall-to-fall persistence for the Fall 2022 cohort, compared to a propensity score matched comparison group.



QUEENS COLLEGE



Source: CARA with support from CUNY's Office of Applied Research, Evaluation and Data Analytics

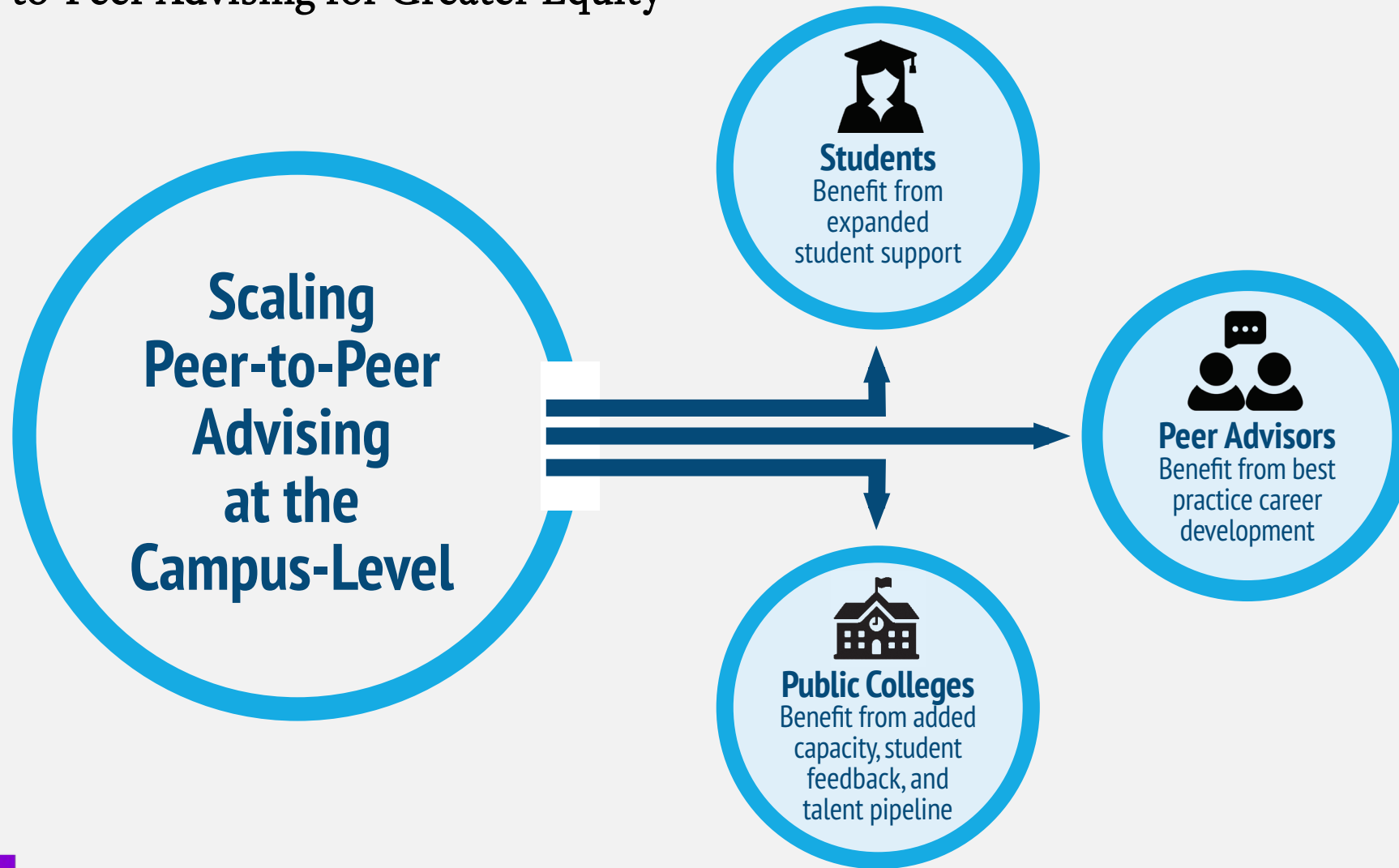


Achieving Program Fidelity: Best Practice for Peer-to-Peer Advising

- **Comprehensive and continuous training** for peer advisors delivered by experts.
- **Competitive pay and stable employment** for peer advisors, with rates above state minimum wage and opportunity for yearlong employment.
- **Strong site-based supervision** and evaluation from an expert in the field.
- **Structures that ensure peer advising** is proactive, relational, and ongoing.
- **Work placements in students' own communities**, e.g. colleges they attend or have attended, in order to act as role models and provide culturally-relevant advising.



Scaling Peer-to-Peer Advising for Greater Equity



Source: CARA



Case Study of the Work in Action: A Moderated Discussion with Queens College + College Access Research & Action (CARA)

QUEENS COLLEGE (CUNY)



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Director
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Considerations for the Funding Community: Scaling Peer-to-Peer Postsecondary Advising Programs

Organizations often grapple with how to close the gap between their Direct Impact model and ultimate vision:

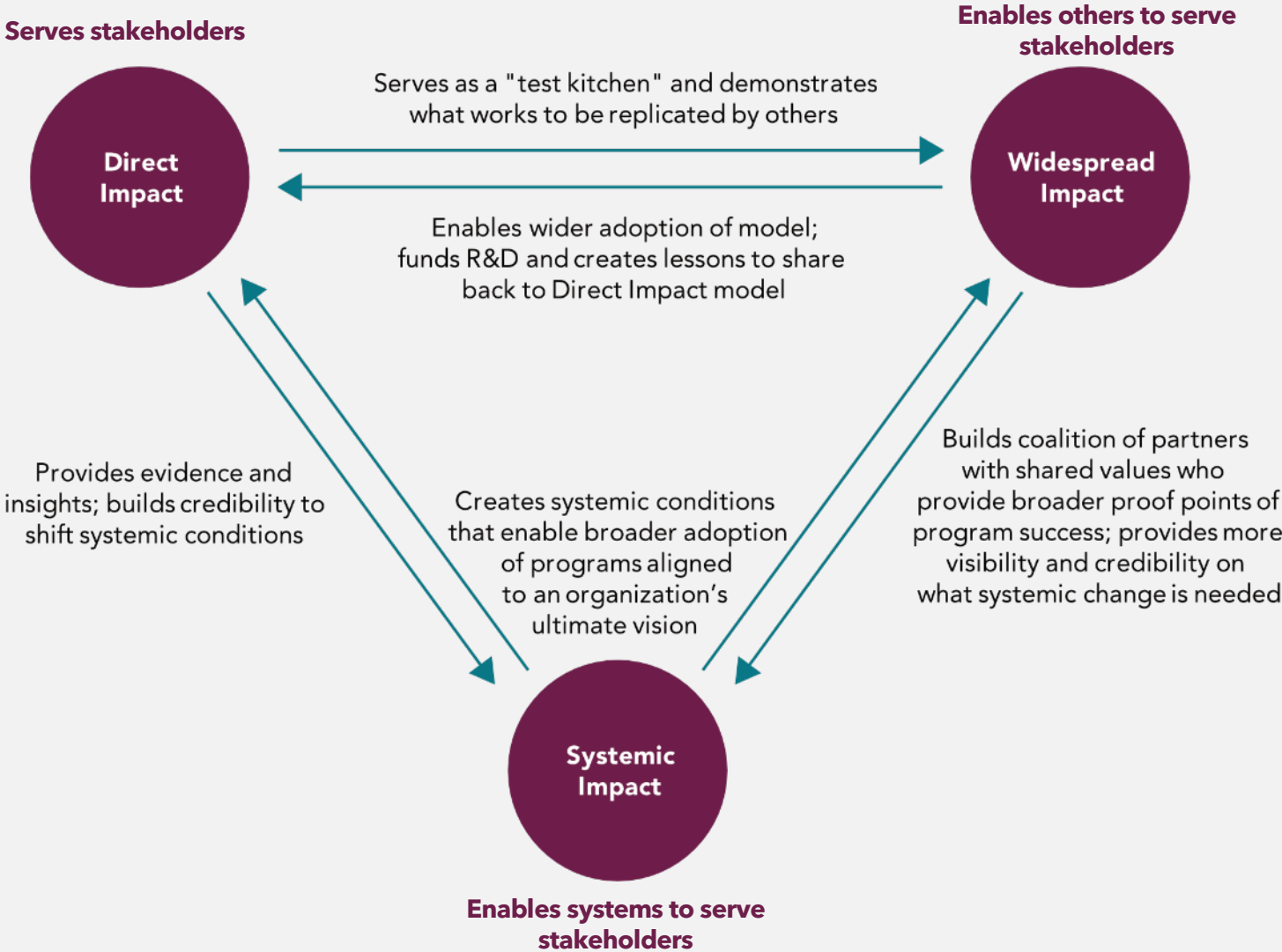


Organizations employ a range of impact strategies to help them achieve their ultimate vision.

Source: Bellwether.org



Considerations for the Funding Community



Source: Bellwether.org



Considerations for the Funding Community

DIRECT IMPACT	How an organization provides programming directly to its target beneficiaries.
WIDESPREAD IMPACT	How an organization builds the capacity of partners to implement elements of its program model.
SYSTEMIC IMPACT	How an organization shifts mindsets, relationships, and power to in turn shift policies, practices, and resource flows* to create stronger conditions for adoption of an organization's program model and/or its ultimate vision for change.

Source: Kania, Kramer, and Senge, "Water of Systems Change," https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/.



Considerations for the Funding Community

- **Understand the true resource constraints** – money, talent, time, space, systems, and partnerships
- **Track the actual execution against program design** – what is and what is not working
- **Invest in research and evaluation** - assess the impact of peer advising programs
- **Support enhancements in data and technology infrastructure** – to increase access, extend program reach, and efficiency
- **There is no right answer** – but be clear with your answer and flexible with measures

Source: Bellwether.org



THANK YOU!

- Contact Panelists
- Read CARA's Impact Report: The Triple Impact of Peer-to-Peer Postsecondary Advising Programs
- Learn more about the Academic Advising Center at Queens College
- Download Bellwether's full essay, PowerPoint introduction, and case studies

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LINKS

