

Spring 2020 Rhode Island Promise Report to the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Community College of Rhode Island – May 13, 2020

Submitted by Sara Enright, Vice President of Student Affairs & Chief Outcomes Officer

Executive Summary: The following report is provided in accordance with RIGL 16-107-7a.

This report comes at a time of significant milestones for the Rhode Island Promise program and unprecedented changes at the Community College of Rhode Island as the college responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the fall of 2019, CCRI welcomed its third and largest cohort of first-time, full-time straight from high school Rhode Islanders as part of the Rhode Island Promise program. The 2,599 students in the third Rhode Island Promise cohort represent 11% growth over last year's cohort and a 136% increase over pre-Rhode Island Promise enrollment of these students. The Rhode Island Promise program continues to improve access to higher education for historically underrepresented students, with 171% growth in Pell grant recipients and 185% growth in students of color over pre-RI Promise levels. This enrollment growth has helped to raise the statewide college-going rate for Rhode Island high school graduates by 9 percentage points, from 59% in 2016 to 68% in 2019.

This report provides a detailed summary of the enrollment figures and budget estimates for the Rhode Island Promise program. While this report is not one that is focused on outcomes, it is worth noting that the Rhode Island Promise program continues to drive the best outcomes that CCRI has experienced in more than 20 years. The first Rhode Island Promise class had a 19% two-year graduation rate, which far outpaces the college's recent historical graduation rates in the single digits. And this academic year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and a transition to a fully online environment this semester, CCRI expects to achieve its highest three-year graduation rate in more than twenty years.

Despite the significant upheaval that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to our college and CCRI's traditional operations, we have seen our staff, faculty, and students rise to creatively address the challenges presented by the moment. We know that now more than ever, CCRI will have a critical role to play in educating the workers needed to rebuild the Rhode Island economy. We remain confident that the College will emerge on the other side of the pandemic with stronger, more flexible, and more effective systems to help all Rhode Islanders, including Rhode Island Promise students, to earn postsecondary degrees. We are grateful to the State for its continued support of the Rhode Island Promise and look forward to working in partnership through this program.

Demographics: The Rhode Island Promise continues to attract a diverse group of students from across the state. Students who seek a high-value, low-cost college degree are choosing to attend CCRI through this program.

Table 1: Final RI Promise Cohort Demographics (2019-20 academic year)				
New Fall 2019 cohort = 2,599 students (11% growth vs. last year's cohort)				
Returning Fall 2018 cohort = 1,409 students (60% retention of last year's cohort)*				
*Note: Return group consists of 1,398 returning 2019-20 students + 11 one-year graduates				
High School vs. GED				
	New Cohort		Returning Cohort	
GED	34	1%	10	1%
HS Grad	2564	99%	1394	99%
Unknown	<10	<1%	<10	<1%
Gender				
	New Cohort		Returning Cohort	
Female	1231	47%	696	49%
Male	1313	51%	678	48%
N	55	2%	35	2%
Race/Ethnicity				
	New Cohort		Returning Cohort	
American Indian or Alaska Native	<10	<1%	<10	<1%
Asian	60	2%	37	3%
Black or African American	183	7%	80	6%
Hispanic, of any race	572	22%	308	22%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<10	<1%	<10	<1%
Two or more races	198	8%	103	7%
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	159	6%	51	3%
White	1423	55%	825	59%

Current Semester Tuition and Fee Funding Sources: The financial aid awards and/or payment mechanisms for the two current Rhode Island Promise cohorts are outlined in Tables 2A and 2B below. Table 2A summarizes financial aid and payment for the 2,599 students in the cohort that began in the Fall 2019 and Table 2B summarizes that information for the 1,420 students in the first cohort who graduated in their first year or returned for their second year.

In the new Rhode Island Promise cohort, 56% of students received federal Pell grant funding. In the returning cohort, 50% of returning students received federal Pell grants. In both cohorts, support from federal funding exceeds support from state funding. This continues to demonstrate that part of the power of the Promise program is that it leverages significant federal funding to educate Rhode Islanders.

With just over a month remaining in the fiscal year, we have 19 students across the two cohorts remaining as “unresolved” cases, largely due to challenges with FAFSA verification. We will continue to work to resolve as many of those as possible before the end of the year.

Table 2A: Final RI Promise Financial Aid Awards - New Cohort (2019-20 academic year)					
Award category		Average Award	Total Amount	Number of Students	Percentage of cohort
Rhode Island Promise (state funding)		\$4,289	\$4,696,123	1095	42%
Full Pell grants + SEOG (federal funding)		\$5,471	\$5,225,123	955	37%
Partial Pell	Pell portion (federal funding)	\$2,578	\$1,268,402	492	19%
	State grant portion (former RIHEAA funds)	\$1,861	\$915,708		
	Combined award	\$4,439	\$2,184,110		
Other (other scholarship, waiver, etc)		\$2,425	\$19,400	10	<1%
Self-pay		N/A	N/A	36	1%
Unresolved: FAFSA, Federal Verification, etc.		TBD	TBD	11	<1%
Balance of tuition and fee revenue vs. refunds to students for Pell recipients					
Full Pell	Avg. Tuition & Fees	\$4,285			
	Avg. Award	\$5,471			
	Refund for books and other expenses	\$1,186			
Partial Pell	Avg. Tuition & Fees	\$4,018			
	Avg. Award	\$4,439			
	Refund for books and other expenses	\$421			

Table 2B: Final RI Promise Financial Aid Awards - Returning Cohort (2019-20 academic year)

Table 2B: Final RI Promise Financial Aid Awards - Returning Cohort (2019-20 academic year)					
Award category		Average Award	Total Amount	Number of Students	Percentage of returners
Rhode Island Promise (state funding)		\$4,488	\$2,118,390	472	34%
Full Pell grants +SEOG (federal funding)		\$5,474	\$2,036,424	372	27%
Partial Pell	Pell portion (federal funding)	\$2,560	\$880,804	344	25%
	State grant portion (former RIHEAA funds)	\$1,529	\$527,846		
	Combined award	\$4,089	\$1,408,650		
Other scholarship award or waiver			\$94,573	46	3%
Self-pay/loans		N/A	N/A	167	12%
Unresolved: FAFSA, Federal Verification, etc.		TBD	TBD	8	1%
Graduated before Fall 2019 semester		N/A	N/A	11	N/A
Balance of tuition and fee revenue vs. refunds to students for Pell grant recipients					
Full Pell	Avg. Tuition & Fees	\$4,338			
	Avg. Award	\$5,474			
	Avg. Refund for books and other expenses	\$1,136			
Partial Pell	Avg. Tuition & Fees	\$3,656			
	Avg. Award	\$4,089			
	Avg. Refund for books and other expenses	\$433			

Budget Estimates for FY 2020 and FY2021: CCRI’s RI Promise budget estimates are below in Table 3. The figures for FY20 are near final figures. The end of year total expenditure could change slightly, but is not expected to change by more than \$10,000. For FY2021, CCRI is not expecting program growth. After 40%+ growth in each of its first two years, Rhode Island Promise growth slowed substantially this year and the entering cohort was only 11% larger than the Fall 2018 entering cohort. At this point, the college is planning for future entering cohorts to be no larger than the Fall 2019 cohort.

Table 3: CCRI FY 2020 and FY 2021 Estimates for RI Promise Budget					
FY 2020	Fall 2019		Spring 2020		FY 2020
	New Cohort	Returning Cohort	New Cohort	Returning Cohort	
Student Count	1,095	472	979	418	1,567
Required funding	\$ 2,533,830	\$ 1,092,208	\$ 2,265,406	\$ 967,252	\$ 6,858,696
Budgeted Dollars					\$ 6,976,425
Variance to Budget					\$ (117,729)
FY 2021	Fall 2020		Spring 2021		FY 2021
	New Cohort	Returning Cohort	New Cohort	Returning Cohort	
Student Count	1,095	524	979	464	1,590
Required funding	\$ 2,609,385	\$ 1,248,692	\$ 2,332,957	\$ 1,105,712	\$ 7,296,746
Budgeted Dollars					TBD
Variance to Budget					TBD
<p>Note, the above budget assumes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pell students not included here, as this projects state funds for the RI Promise scholarship The full cohort sizes are more than double the student counts above with Pell students included An average award per semester of \$2,314 in FY20 and \$2,383 in FY21 A fall-to-spring retention rate of 89% for all cohorts A 48% rate of students earning the second-year RI Promise scholarship in FY 21 					

Institutional impacts of this program: The Rhode Island Promise program continues to deliver on its dual legislative mandates to 1) increase the number of students enrolling at CCRI and 2) increase the number of students completing degrees on time at CCRI. As we conclude the third year of Rhode Island Promise, the results of this program in increasing college access, equity, and completion remain clear. For the past three years, CCRI has implemented new systems that ensure we can meet course demand, schedule classes at the time students need them, and provide targeted outreach for thousands of additional Rhode Island Promise students. These same systems provided critical capacity that allowed all CCRI students, faculty, and staff to more effectively transition to a fully online teaching environment in the Spring 2020 semester in response to COVID-19. We remain confident that, with the State’s continued support, CCRI and Rhode Island Promise will continue to equip Rhode Islanders with the skills they need to contribute to the Rhode Island economy.