

# DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

## WHO WE ARE

The Division of Student Affairs strives to **create a statewide culture that promotes educational opportunities for all citizens**, regardless of age or income. The Division coordinates several college access and completion programs, including the federally funded West Virginia GEAR UP initiative, a program that works to increase college-going rates among students in 10 West Virginia counties.

The Division also houses the state's Office of Veterans Education and Training, which is the state approval agency for VA benefits and seeks to guide veterans, eligible persons, National Guard members, and reservists in West Virginia throughout the college-going process.

Additionally, the Division of Student Affairs supports the work of student affairs offices on the campuses of West Virginia's public two- and four-year colleges and universities.

## VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Office of Veterans Education and Training (OVET) provided approval and compliance oversight activities to more than 120 facilities throughout West Virginia during federal fiscal year 2017. These activities included **approving more than 1,100 programs of education, training, or licensing and certification** for students or trainees using VA education benefits, such as the GI Bill.

OVET conducted 16 audits of facilities approved for VA education and training benefits, which led to the reporting of nearly \$25,000 in payment-related errors. OVET provided more than 115 instances of technical assistance to public and private universities, colleges, apprenticeship sites, on-the-job training sites, and West Virginia veterans and family members. OVET provided policy guidance to implement new federal legislation that assured all West Virginia public institutions of higher learning remained eligible to participate in the GI Bill.

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual West Virginia Student Leadership Conference took place in May 2017. Sponsored by Higher Education Resource Assessment and coordinated by staff from the Division of Student Affairs, the conference serves as an opportunity for **student representatives from all public higher education institutions in the state to hone their leadership skills**. Each public two- and four-year college and university could send up to five student leaders to attend the conference to exchange ideas and network with other student leaders across the state.



## FAFSA COMPLETION CHALLENGE

In 2016, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) secured a \$55,000 grant from the National College Access Network (NCAN). With the grant, the Division of Student Affairs coordinated a project in partnership with Kanawha County Schools (KCS) to increase the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as part of NCAN's FAFSA Completion Challenge.

Out of the 22 cities nationwide that competed in the challenge, **KCS achieved the second highest FAFSA completion rate**. More than 62 percent of Kanawha County's class of 2017 filed a FAFSA for the 2017-18 academic year. As a result, NCAN awarded HEPC and KCS with \$50,000 to continue their efforts.



College and community partners in the FAFSA Completion Challenge include the Office of the Governor; the West Virginia Community and Technical College System; BridgeValley Community and Technical College; West Virginia State University; the University of Charleston; the Education Alliance; the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation; the Bob Burdette Center; the Human Resources Development Foundation; Daymark, Inc.; the Charleston Area Alliance; and Generation Charleston.

## 15 TO FINISH

Through its outreach initiatives, **the Division of Student Affairs supports HEPC's goal to have more students take at least 15 credit hours per semester**. Taking at least 15 credit hours ensures students stay on-track to graduation. Further, studies show that students who take at least 15 credit hours have better grades and save more money on tuition than their counterparts who do not take 15 credit hours each semester.

To support HEPC's efforts, the Division of Student Affairs coordinates initiatives housed on CFWW.com, such as college- and career-planning tools, as well as a comprehensive College 101 guide that can help students navigate their degree paths. Staff also coordinate CFWW's Txt 4 Success initiative, which sends out text reminders to students who opt-in to the service just before registration begins to remind them to speak with their advisor about taking at least 15 credit hours.

## STUDENT SUCCESS SUMMIT

Staff members from the Division of Student Affairs coordinated the seventh annual Student Success Summit in July.

The two-day event, which took place at the Waterfront Hotel and Conference Center in Morgantown, WV, was an **opportunity for educators across the full length of the education pipeline to collaborate**. Representatives ranging from pre-school teachers to college presidents to student leaders attended the conference.

Nearly 500 educators attended the conference, and the Summit housed more than 60 sessions for professional development and collaboration. The event was coordinated in partnership with staff from the West Virginia Department of Education.



# COLLEGE FOUNDATION OF WEST VIRGINIA

## WHO WE ARE

The College Foundation of West Virginia (CFWV) provides free resources to help students and families **plan, apply, and pay for education and training beyond high school.**

CFWV.com is a free website that features career and college exploration tools, information about all federal and state level financial aid programs (including the PROMISE Scholarship and Higher Education Grant Program), and details about the state's colleges and universities.

## WHO WE SERVE

- Students can explore careers, practice for tests, and plan for high school, college, and beyond.
- Parents can learn how to help their children plan for education and careers.
- Adult learners can find out how to return to school and balance their school lives and personal/work lives.
- Educators can track their students' progress and help students explore their options for high school and beyond.

## TXT 4 SUCCESS

In 2014, CFWV began a pilot project to provide students with college-counseling via text message. Now, college-bound students from all over the state can sign up to receive text messages. The text messages sent to students provide general college reminders and advice, such as key deadlines and regular check-ins to make sure students are transitioning well into college life. Students attending one of our partner institutions will receive additional messages specific to their college. Additionally, students who opt-in to the service can text at any time to have any of their college questions answered by a college professional. In 2017, more than 22,000 students received texts.

A recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Virginia found that students who opt-in to the service are **6 percentage points more likely to persist** through their first year of college. Rural students are **7.6 percentage points more likely to persist** through their first year of college.

Bluefield State College, Concord University, Fairmont State University, Marshall University, Potomac State College, Shepherd University, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, West Virginia Northern Community College, and West Virginia State University are partners in the project.

I'm really worried I won't be able to pay for college.

Student

Have you filed the FAFSA? That's your first step in getting free money to pay for college. Also check out CFWV.com for scholarship opportunities. Your college may have scholarships too!

Counselor

Sweet! Thank you!

Student

## COLLEGE APPLICATION & EXPLORATION WEEK

College Application and Exploration Week is one of CFWV's three annual college-planning milestone events, alongside statewide FAFSA completion events and the College Decision Day campaign. For seniors and adults who participate, the week serves as an opportunity to receive one-on-one assistance to complete college applications and to prepare for postsecondary education. For all students, **the week serves as an exploration opportunity for students to learn about and plan for postsecondary education.** In 2017, nearly 370 schools registered to participate. This week is part of a national movement coordinated by the American College Application Campaign.

102,000+ STUDENTS PARTICIPATED\*

131  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

110  
MIDDLE SCHOOLS

122  
HIGH SCHOOLS

5  
ABE CENTERS

\*according to post-event survey data

## FAFSA COMPLETION

Each year, CFWV sets a statewide FAFSA completion goal for West Virginia high school seniors. The goal's purpose is to encourage students to file the FAFSA by April 15 to meet state financial aid deadlines.

To assist schools with meeting the goal, financial aid staff members have traveled to schools across the state to assist with FAFSA completion efforts. **In 2017, more than 200 financial aid events were scheduled** with financial aid staff members to help families complete the application.

