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# 2021 IMPACT REPORT

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The USC College Advising Corps program is a powerful demonstration of how a research center like CERPP can translate research into policy and practice for our larger community. California students lack adequate access to college guidance, and this is especially detrimental for students who are less likely than their more affluent peers to have friends or family members who have navigated the college process.

Our USC CAC program responds to this critical need for guidance by placing passionate, high-quality college advisers in our most underserved high schools.

Jerry Lucido, PhD  
Professor of Research and Executive Director  
Center for Enrollment Research, Policy and Practice

### MISSION

To improve college outcomes for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students.

### GOAL

To raise the number of students who attend and complete college by encouraging and assisting high school students with their college searches, applications, financial aid, and making the transition to postsecondary education.

### HISTORY

In the fall of 2013, the USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy and Practice partnered with the College Advising Corps to launch the USC College Advising Corps. The launch was made possible by a seed grant from the College Advising Corps.

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# VISION 2026

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# 100,000

**Our vision is to assist 100,000  
students to enroll in college by 2026**

## 55K

**Thus far we've  
assisted 55,511  
students  
to enroll in college**

**+9%**

Greater college  
going rate

Difference in college  
enrollment rate at USC CAC  
served schools vs. other  
Title 1 schools in LA County  
(65% vs. 56%)

**74%**

Low income  
students

74% of students we  
serve are  
low income

**89%**

Underrepresented  
students

89% of students we  
serve come from  
communities  
underrepresented in  
higher education

## **WHERE WE WORK**

School District Partners - 2021

Alhambra Unified  
Compton Unified  
Duarte Unified  
El Monte Union  
Glendale Unified

Long Beach Unified  
Los Angeles Unified  
Lynwood Unified  
Paramount Unified  
West Covina Unified

# CUMULATIVE IMPACT

**224,503**

One-on-one advising meetings

**207,917**

Group advising meetings

**58,037**

Students submitted college applications

**\$86,885,895**

Financial aid received

**55,511**

Students enrolled in college



### OUR ADVISERS

The secret behind USC CAC's impact at scale is the impact at the individual level. Behind each number represented in this report is an individual student connecting with their college adviser having meaningful conversations about the future. Each relationship results in significant change for students, families, schools and communities. We place exceptional recent college graduates on high school campuses to lead low-income and first-generation students to college. College advisers work full-time alongside school staff to mentor, encourage, and assist students one-on-one as they search for colleges, complete admissions and financial aid applications, and transition from high school to higher education.

**Full Time.** Advisers work full-time at one high school exclusively. Students are always able to access advisers, and advisers carry out consistent outreach to students.

**Staff Excellence.** A very selective hiring process results in highly motivated, skilled, near-peer college advisers.

### Extensive Training.

Advisers train for 160 hours prior to school placement. They complete nearly 400 hours of training over their 2-year term.

**Access for All.** Advisers have no cohort or caseload. They are there for **all** students.

**Data Informed.** We track and analyze data to inform and improve service.

### Capacity Building.

Advisers increase capacity of other student support staff by taking on a large portion of college access activities.

**Building College-Going Culture.** Advisers play a major role in the district's comprehensive efforts to build a college-going culture for all students.



Adriana Reyes, M.Ed. • 1st

Transfer Admissions Counselor at University of California, Riverside

2w • 🌐

Bittersweet moment: On my lunch today, I met up with one of my former high school students who I had the honor of meeting while serving as a College Adviser w/ [USC College Advising Corps](#). She is now a senior and on her last year at UCR! Such an exciting yet nostalgic moment getting life updates from her. I went from assisting her with college apps (2017) to today assisting her with graduate school apps (2021)! 🥳 She is applying to be a school counselor! 🙌

Wow have the years flown by!? I am so proud to see all my former HS students pushing themselves and working hard to obtain their goals. 🥳 Proud Higher Ed Counselor here! [#students](#) [#highered](#) [#school](#) [#collegeapps](#) [#gradschoolapps](#) [#counselor](#) [#collegeadvising](#) [#usc](#) [#cac](#) [#ggusd](#)



### MODEL & PARTNERSHIP

USC CAC is a partnership between the USC CERPP and the national nonprofit organization, College Advising Corps, headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC. We place well-trained, recent college graduates as full-time college advisers in high schools across Los Angeles County.

Advisers work to foster a college-going culture by collaborating with teachers and administrators to tie college-going into the life of a school, devising creative approaches to reach and connect with students, and most importantly, opening the eyes of students and their families to the possibility of college. Equally important, advisers supplement, not replace, existing high school counseling staff, thereby reaching more students.



Our national partner, College Advising Corps, serves students across the nation through similar partnerships with various universities.

College Advising Corps traces its roots to 2005 at the University of Virginia. With the help of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, Dr. Nicole Hurd, then serving as Dean and Director of the Center for Undergraduate Excellence at the University of Virginia, launched the “College Guide” program by placing 14 recent UVA graduates in rural communities where college-going rates were below the state average. In March 2007, the program was renamed the National College Advising Corps, added 10 new higher education partners and moved its headquarters to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with the steadfast commitment of UNC’s senior leadership. In 2013, College Advising Corps became an independent, nonprofit organization. Today, after more than a decade of growth and impact, 829 near-peer advisers serve more than 240,000 students in 782 high schools across America.

## *USC Class of 2025*

**Sebastian S.  
Hoover High School  
Glendale Unified**

### **USC Class of 2025**



Sebastian was one of the first students that Talia Guiragossian, Hoover High School's first college adviser, met. Sebastian is a first-generation student--the eldest of four. They got to know each other and discussed postsecondary options. They talked about multiple colleges, majors, and application timelines. Sebastian's dream was to pursue screenwriting at USC. Ms. T encouraged and helped him with his application and writing supplements. After submitting, Sebastian decided against applying to any other school. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of his hero and fellow Hoover alum, producer and screenwriter, Sev Ohanian.

In Sebastian's mind it was SC or bust. Though Ms. T wanted nothing more than for Sebastian to attend his dream school, she knew he needed fall back options. Upon her urging, he also applied to Glendale Community College on a transfer path.

By mid-March, Sebastian had received news of his USC acceptance to the screenwriting program. Sebastian was thrilled! And while Ms. T. was thrilled for him, she knew that his persistence to graduation depended on the type of financial aid he received. It was her duty to carefully review his financial aid package before he committed. She needed to make certain that the financial aid was renewable--a nuance most first generation, low-income students are unfamiliar with. They called the financial aid office together and were relieved to learn that his aid was indeed eligible to renew on an annual basis. Sebastian was grateful that his college adviser helped guide, support and look out for him through the complex and ambiguous college access process.

Flash forward to Sebastian's freshman year at USC and he has nothing but great things to say about it. He loves his screenwriting program. He finds his classes demanding but manageable, as well as therapeutic, creative, supportive and calming. Sebastian has been maximizing his time at USC. He now has a network of friends within his screenwriting program and is collaborating with many of these friends. He directed a music video that will be released soon! Sebastian has no doubt that the creativity that USC sparks in him will continue and will lead to great projects. He plans to explore advertisement classes at Annenberg to expand his educational dreams. Through the support of his college adviser, Sebastian has been able to live out his dream and Fight On!



## PROFILES IN PROMISE

### *UC Berkeley of 2025*

**Joel H.**  
**Jordan High School**  
**Long Beach Unified**

#### **UC Berkeley Class of 2025**

Jordan International Baccalaureate student Joel worked hard but was sometimes unsure of himself. He maintained good grades but struggled in some classes. As a first-generation student, Joel knew he wanted to go to college, but the application process was a rocky road.



He had dreams of attending a UC as an engineering major, but struggled significantly with the Personal Insight Questions (PIQ or short essay questions). One morning in the college center, USC CAC advisers Gerrel Sayles and Stacy Anguiano noticed that his demeanor had changed and asked what was the matter. After several drafts and iterations of his PIQs, he had had enough. “I’m just not going to apply to the UC system,” Joel said. Thankfully, Mr. Sayles and Ms. Anguiano were there to ensure that he did not give up.

“You miss every shot you don’t take.”

“Don’t reject yourself. Put in the application--if it doesn’t come out how you want it, it’s not a rejection. It’s a redirection pointing you to a school that might be a better fit for you.”

The encouragement worked. Joel got back to work on his PIQ’s with Mr. Sayles and Ms. Anguiano’s support. Where others had told him to start over, they decided the best strategy would be to help him build on what he already had. By the end of the day all three felt more confident about his essays. They were proud to see him click submit.

In March, acceptance letters began to roll in. Joel was not admitted to UCLA. Next UC San Diego sent a redirection as well. Seemingly, his fears about his essays had been confirmed. But then, he received an admission as an engineering student at UC Berkeley! Through his perseverance and the support of his college advisers, Joel went from taking himself out of the running to attending one of the top universities in the world.

## PROGRAM BUDGET

We pride ourselves on running our USC CAC program as efficiently as possible.

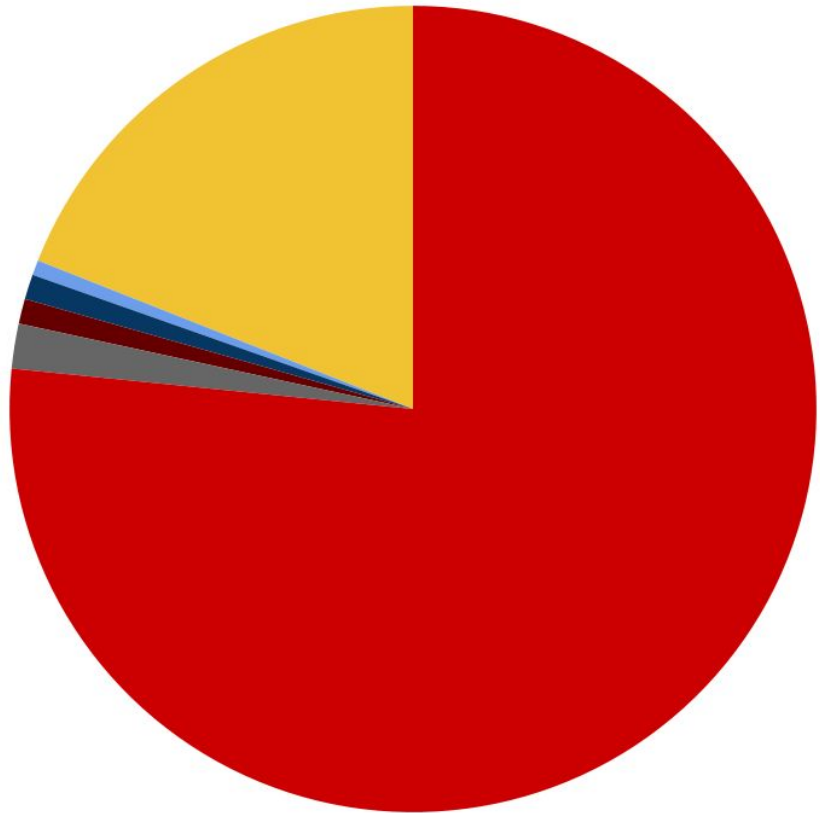
- 81 cents from each dollar goes directly into schools.
- The bulk of expenses are for adviser wages and fringe benefits as USC employees.
- Fringe benefits include health care, vision, and dental plans and retirement matching funds.

Remaining expenses include:

- Materials, supplies and costs related to adviser professional development .
- Each adviser also has an \$800 budget to spend on Decision Day and other college access events.

Finally, administrative wages and fringe are an essential part of the budget. The administrative team:

- Oversees advisers who work primarily off-site.
- Recruits, hires, trains, and places advisers.
- Ensures advisers receive support they need to do their job effectively.

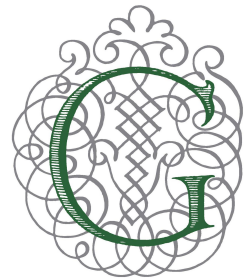


USC CAC Budget		
Adviser Wages & Fringe	76.6%	
Decision Day Budgets	1.8%	
Materials & Supplies	1.0%	
Professional Development	1.0%	
Adviser Recruitment & Screening	0.6%	
Administrative Costs	19.0%	

### SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMMING

The USC College Advising Corps has a sustainable funding model shared among its key stakeholders. School district partners generally contribute 60% of the cost of placing each adviser serving their district. The USC College Advising Corps also raises funds from local foundations and corporations. Our national partner, College Advising Corps, raises the remaining cost.

#### Our Investors:



THE ROSALINDE AND ARTHUR GILBERT FOUNDATION





### GROWTH THROUGH INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE

An important factor for USC CAC to continue its trajectory of programmatic growth and impact is adviser wages. In order to recruit and retain the quality of advisers, and sustain our high-level of impact, USC CAC is committed to increasing adviser pay to a living wage.

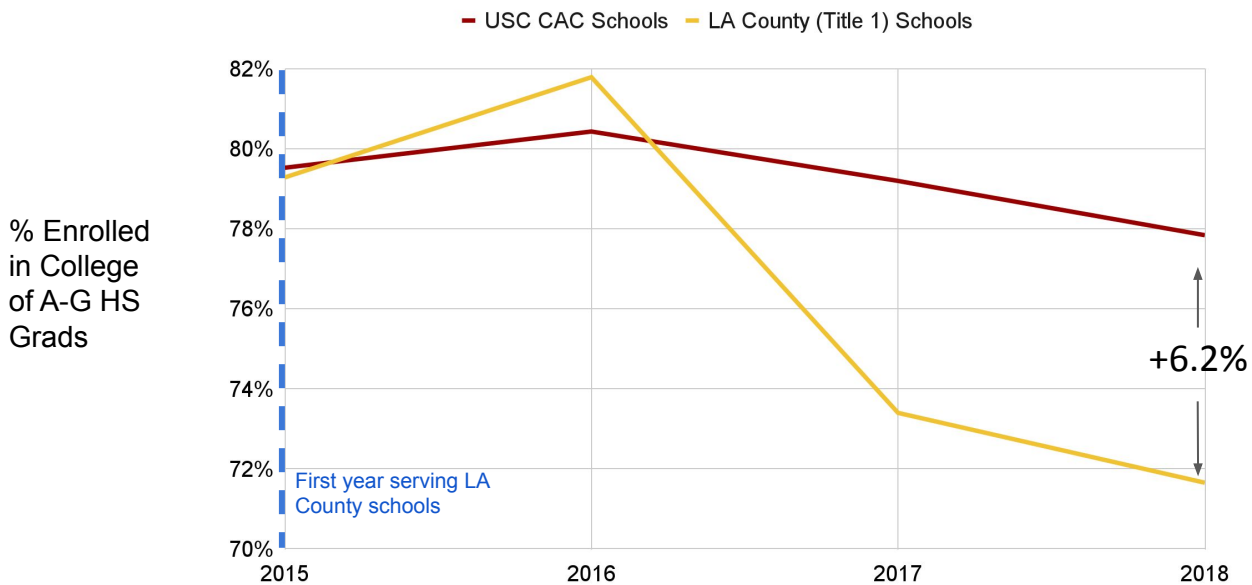
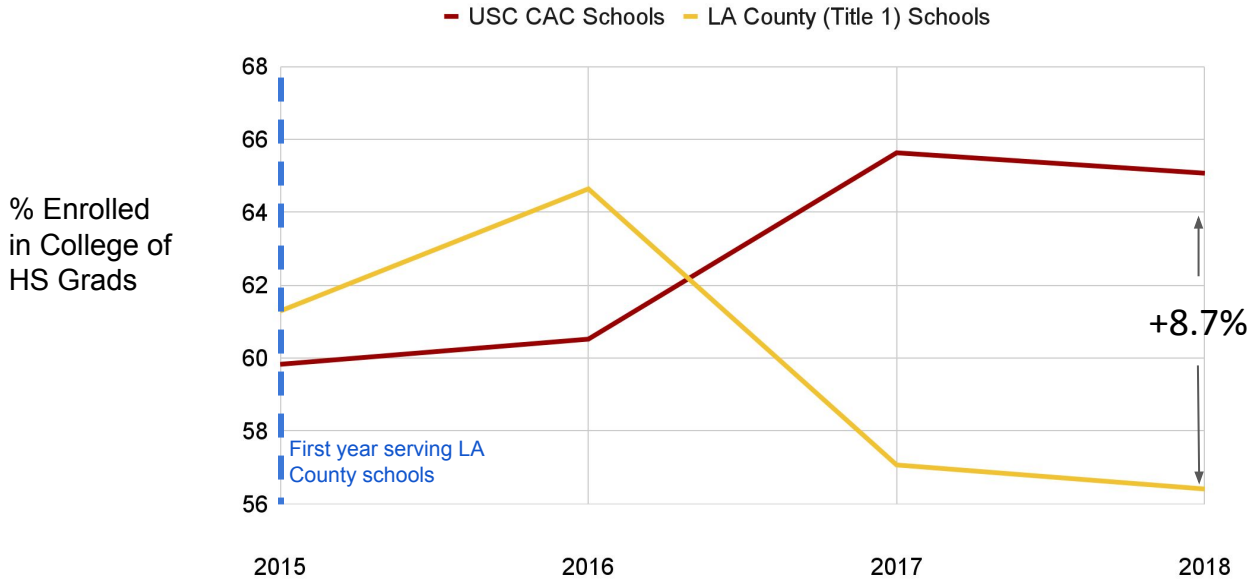
As we work toward achieving **VISION 2026**, enrolling 100,000 students in college, raising adviser wages to \$20 per hour will be key.





## USC CAC vs. Equivalent LA County Schools

College going rate for All USC CAC partner schools compared to other Title I schools across Los Angeles County (12 months after high school completion)



### Independent Expert Analysis

According to an independent evaluation of our work by Stanford University, seniors who meet with a USC adviser are:

**+6%**

6% More likely to  
have at least one  
college acceptance

**+8%**

8% More  
likely to take  
the SAT

**+18%**

18% More likely  
to apply to  
college

**+19%**

19% More likely  
to apply for  
financial aid

**+20%**

20% More likely to  
apply for  
scholarships

## CUMULATIVE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

School Years 2013-2014 through 2020-2021*	Total
<b>Students</b>	
Total Students in Senior Class	95,151
<b>Adviser to Student or Family Interactions</b>	
Students Met in 1:1 setting at least once	53,402
Total 1:1 Meetings	224,503
Students Met in either Group or 1:1 setting at least once	74,808
Total Group Meetings	207,917
Families/parents Met in Group or 1:1 setting at least once	7,155
<b>College Exposure</b>	
Students visiting a college campus at least once	2,168
Students attending college rep visits at least once	12,479
<b>College Entrance Exams</b>	
Students assisted to Register for SAT or ACT	16,335
Students assisted to receive SAT or ACT Fee Waiver	11,726
<b>College Applications and Acceptances</b>	
Students with 1+ College Apps Submitted	58,037
Students with 3+ College Apps Submitted	28,304
Total College Apps Submitted	176,629
Students with 1+ College Apps Accepted	45,413
Total College Apps Accepted	88,601
<b>Financial Aid</b>	
Students received 1+ College App Waiver	16,901
Total # College App Waivers	76,036
Total Waiver \$ Value	\$4,516,524**
Total Institutional Aid \$ received by Students	\$35,228,841**
Students Submitted FAFSA	56,519
Total Students Assisted with Financial Aid (FAFSA + CA Dream Act)	49,123
Total \$ Scholarship + Instit. Aid + Waivers + Test Waivers	\$86,885,895**

\*Data Source: USC CAC student database. Interactions and activity recorded by college advisers with backup materials.

\*\*This information is difficult to collect. This total is vastly underreported; the actual amount is significantly higher.



**USC** Rossier  
School of Education

**Center for Enrollment Research,  
Policy and Practice**