

EASE

HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Encouraging Additional
Summer Enrollment

cabs  center for applied behavioral science at mdrc

Ascendium[®]
Elevating opportunity

EASE HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Encouraging Additional
Summer Enrollment

CAMIELLE HEADLAM, BENJAMIN COHEN,
KAYLA REIMAN with DAN HANDY

APRIL 2020

Supporters

The Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment (EASE) project is funded by Ascendium Education Group.

Dissemination of MDRC publications is supported by the following organizations and individuals that help finance MDRC's public policy outreach and expanding efforts to communicate the results and implications of our work to policymakers, practitioners, and others: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Arnold Ventures, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, Daniel and Corinne Goldman, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., The JPB Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and Sandler Foundation.

In addition, earnings from the MDRC Endowment help sustain our dissemination efforts. Contributors to the MDRC Endowment include Alcoa Foundation, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, The Grable Foundation, The Elizabeth and Frank Newman Charitable Foundation, The New York Times Company Foundation, Jan Nicholson, Paul H. O'Neill Charitable Foundation, John S. Reed, Sandler Foundation, and The Stupski Family Fund, as well as other individual contributors.

The findings and conclusions in this report do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the funders.

For information about MDRC and copies of our publications, see our website: www.mdrc.org.

Copyright © 2020 by MDRC®. All rights reserved.

Overview

Students who take summer courses attempt and earn more credits per year — potentially speeding up the time it takes them to graduate. This boost may be particularly beneficial for community college students, many of whom are enrolled part time. Many community college students also receive financial aid that can be applied to the cost of summer courses. Encouraging them to sign up is a low-cost way for schools to increase enrollment and improve student outcomes.

This guide, the **EASE Handbook for Community Colleges**, is for college administrators and staff members — to help you implement two interventions designed to increase summer enrollment rates at your school. They were developed and evaluated by MDRC in partnership with the Ohio Association of Community Colleges and 10 Ohio community colleges, as part of the Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment (EASE) project.

- Strategy 1: An **informational campaign** of personalized student communications using email and mail and informed by behavioral science. The campaign simplifies academic, financial aid, and procedural information related to summer enrollment, reminds students about that information, and motivates them to follow through and register for courses.
- Strategy 2: A similar **informational campaign paired with a “last-dollar” tuition-assistance grant** that covers the difference between each student’s summer tuition and fees and any grant financial aid (such as Pell Grant funding) they have available for summer courses.

These interventions proved effective in MDRC’s 2017/2018 randomized controlled trials — the most rigorous form of evaluation — increasing both enrollment in summer courses and credit attainment. Although they did not increase enrollment in the subsequent fall semester, the additional credits earned during the summer helped students make progress toward earning a degree.

By increasing summer enrollment, the EASE interventions also increased tuition revenue for colleges, much of which came from an increase in Pell Grant funding. A simplified return-on-investment calculation suggests that Strategy 2 generated more revenue than the program cost of the tuition-assistance grant. Given these positive findings, MDRC has created the **EASE Handbook for Community Colleges** to help practitioners like you adopt the two strategies tested in the study.

This is not meant to be a “one size fits all” approach. Strategy 1, for example, has a lower upfront cost, does not require tuition-assistance disbursement, and has a positive return on investment. Strategy 2 has a higher upfront cost and requires tuition-assistance disbursement, but it also has simpler messaging techniques and a similar return on investment. This guide will help you determine the best fit for your school and your students.

Also included, a resource toolkit (www.mdrc.org/resources/ease-summer-school-toolkit):

- Message templates for each strategy, annotated with instructions and tips. Plus an editable version that you can download, copy, and customize.
- A summer Pell Grant calculator to estimate students’ Pell Grant awards and create personalized messages to tell them how much funding they may have available.

Let’s get started!

Contents

Overview	iii
List of Exhibits	v
Acknowledgments	vi
PART I – Getting the Most Out of Summer	
1 Why Encourage Summer Enrollment?	3
Two Proven Strategies with a Positive Return on Investment	4
About This Guide and Its Accompanying Resources	4
2 A Closer Look at the Two EASE Strategies	7
Key Features of the Informational Campaign	7
Adding the Tuition-Assistance Grant	10
3 What’s Best for Your School?	13
Recommendations Based on the Research	13
Financial and Implementation Considerations	14
4 How to Implement the Strategies	19
A Checklist for Both Campaigns	20
Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment, Step-by-Step	21
5 Steps Toward Success	27
PART II – Design Your Own Campaign	
6 A Summer School Toolkit	31
General Instructions and Tips	31
Putting Behavioral Science to Work	32
7 Strategy One: Message Templates for Informational Campaigns	35
8 Strategy Two: Message Templates for Informational Campaigns Plus Tuition Assistance	51
References	67

Exhibits

Table

1	Comparing the Two Strategies	14
2	Calculating Net Revenue per Student	17
3	The Roles of Different Departments in Implementing Each Strategy	22

Figure

1	Sample Financial Aid Message, Informational Campaign Only (Strategy 1)	9
2	Sample Financial Aid Message, Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance (Strategy 2)	11
3	EASE Phase I Message Timeline	25

Box

1	Summer Messaging and Tuition Assistance Boost Academic Progress	5
2	Calculating Increases in Net Tuition Revenue	16

Acknowledgments

MDRC would like to acknowledge and thank Ascendium for supporting the Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment project through funding for the tuition-assistance grants and the intervention design, implementation, and research efforts. We thank Sue Cui and Amy Kerwin for their continued encouragement and guidance.

We would also like to express appreciation and admiration for our college partners who participated in Phase I and II of the project and were essential to its launch and implementation. The project could not have been achieved without the dedication and many contributions of their staff members. Special thanks to Robert Haas from Marion Technical College for reviewing the guide.

MDRC would like to thank our partners at the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, including Laura Rittner and Anne Foster, who have coordinated project efforts and provided strategic guidance. We would also like to recognize Brett Visger from the Ohio Department of Higher Education, who provided early assistance with reconnaissance efforts, and Dilip Soman and Benjamin Castleman, who advised on the intervention design.

Finally, we would like to thank our MDRC colleagues who worked tirelessly on many aspects of this project, including Caitlin Anzelone, who led the design of the strategies, in addition to Xavier Alemany, Melissa Boynton, Michael Weiss, Justine Yu, and many others. We would like to give special recognition to Bria Spencer for diligently coordinating and fact-checking this guide, and to Leigh Parise, Emily Marano, Caitlin Anzelone, Mike Weiss, and Alice Tufel for their review. Jill Kirschenbaum edited the guide and Carolyn Thomas prepared it for publication.

The Authors

PART I

Getting the Most
Out of Summer

1

Why Encourage Summer Enrollment?

Community college three-year graduation rates are low, especially among low-income students.¹ However, research has shown that students who enroll in summer classes, in addition to classes during the fall and spring semesters, experience improved academic outcomes.²

They attempt and earn more credits per year, potentially speeding up the time it takes them to complete their studies. This boost may be particularly beneficial for community college students, many of whom enroll part time or are required to complete developmental education courses before taking college-level classes. Many community college students also have financial aid that can be applied to summer courses. In 2017, the federal government reinstated year-round Pell Grants, which provide funding that eligible low-income students can use to take summer courses. Encouraging them to do so is a low-cost way to improve student outcomes.

This guide is intended for community college administrators and staff members, to help you implement two proven strategies designed to increase summer enrollment rates.

¹ McFarland et al. (2018); Ma and Baum (2016).

² Adelman (2006); Attewell, Heil, and Reisel (2012); Attewell and Jang (2013).

TWO PROVEN STRATEGIES WITH A POSITIVE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

As part of the Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment (EASE) project (described in Box 1), MDRC collaborated with 10 community colleges in Ohio to develop two interventions to encourage summer enrollment among students who are eligible for Pell Grants.

- Strategy 1: An **informational campaign** of personalized student communications using email and regular mail. The communications simplify academic, financial aid, and procedural information related to summer enrollment, remind students about that information, and motivate them to register for courses. The campaign design was informed by research in behavioral science, an interdisciplinary field that incorporates psychology, economics, marketing, and other social sciences, to shed light on how and why people make certain choices.
- Strategy 2: A similar **informational campaign paired with a “last dollar” tuition-assistance grant**, labeled the “Summer Scholar Grant.”³ Last-dollar assistance covers the difference between each student’s summer tuition and fees and Pell Grant or state grant aid.

MDRC worked with the colleges to test the interventions, with positive results.

- **The strategies increase enrollment and help students progress toward a degree.** Through a randomized controlled trial — the most rigorous form of evaluation — the strategies proved effective, increasing enrollment in summer courses and credit attainment. Although the interventions did not increase enrollment in the subsequent fall semester, the additional credits earned during the summer helped students make meaningful progress toward earning a degree.
- **The strategies increase tuition revenue and Pell Grant receipt, and probably generate more revenue for colleges than costs.** By increasing enrollment rates, the strategies increased tuition revenue for colleges, much of which came from Pell Grant funding. A simplified return-on-investment calculation suggests that the informational campaign plus tuition assistance strategy generates more tuition revenue than the cost of the tuition-assistance grant.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE AND ITS ACCOMPANYING RESOURCES

Given the project’s positive findings, MDRC has created the **EASE Handbook for Community Colleges** to help colleges adopt and implement the communication and financial aid strategies used in the EASE study. The sections that follow provide guidance and tips for adopting the informational campaign with and without tuition assistance. It is organized as follows:

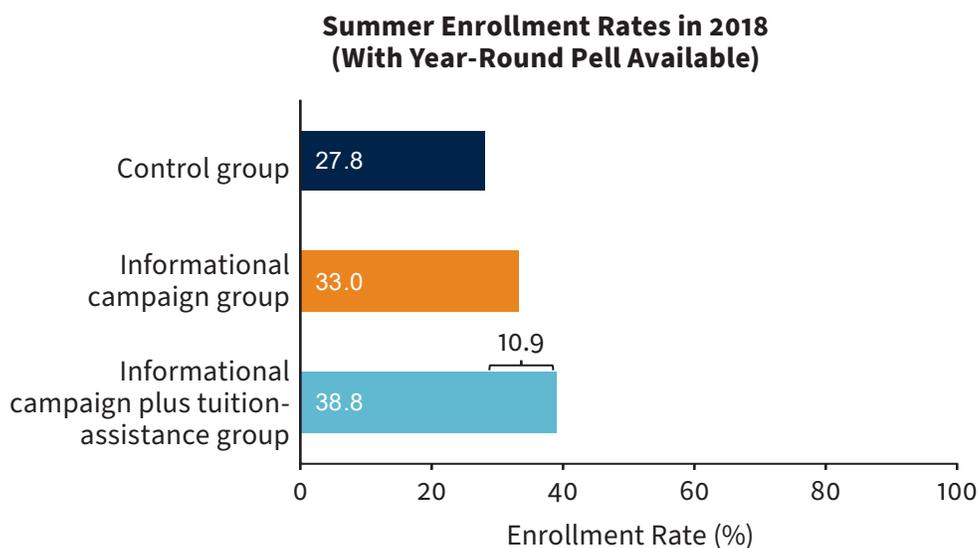
- A Closer Look at the Two EASE Strategies
- What’s Best for Your College?
- How to Implement the Strategies
- Steps Toward Success

3 Headlam, Anzelone, and Weiss (2018).

Box 1. Summer Messaging and Tuition Assistance Boost Academic Progress

As part of the Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment (EASE) project, MDRC tested the two summer enrollment strategies at 10 Ohio community colleges using a randomized controlled trial. All first-year students who enrolled in the spring semester and received a Pell Grant were randomly assigned to the informational campaign group (Strategy 1), the informational campaign plus tuition-assistance group (Strategy 2), or to a control group that received their respective colleges' standard communications and financial support. Across two cohorts of students — one enrolled in spring 2017 and one enrolled in spring 2018 — a total of 10,668 students were randomly assigned to the three groups in equal proportions. Both strategies had a positive, statistically significant effect (that is, the results were probably caused by something other than chance) on summer enrollment in the absence of year-round Pell Grants (2017 cohort) and after their reinstatement (2018 cohort); in fact, the effects were similar in both contexts. The findings below summarize outcomes for students with access to year-round Pell (the 2018 cohort) because that is the current policy landscape. For a detailed account of findings for both cohorts, see MDRC's 2019 brief titled *How Can Community Colleges Increase Student Use of Year-Round Pell Grants?**

Summer enrollment: The informational campaign increased end-of-first-year summer enrollment by 5.2 percentage points, which resulted in an average of 0.24 more credits earned per student — an 18 percent increase. The informational campaign plus tuition assistance increased summer enrollment by 10.9 percentage points, which translates into an average of 0.48 more credits earned — a 35 percent increase. All estimated effects are statistically significant.



Note: *Weiss (2019).

This guide also includes a toolkit of resources (www.mdrc.org/resources/ease-summer-school-toolkit) to aid implementation, including:

- Message templates for each strategy, annotated with instructions and tips. Plus an editable version that you can download, copy, and customize.
- A summer Pell Grant calculator that can be used to estimate students' summer Pell Grant funds and create personalized messages to tell students how much funding they may have available.

The simplest and most effective way to encourage summer enrollment using these strategies is to implement them as closely as possible to the way they are described, customizing only as needed to reflect your college's local context. You may also use the message templates and tips as samples to build your own campaign. This guide points out the features that MDRC recommends keeping to maintain effectiveness, and which ones may be modified to accommodate different institutional resources and contexts.

2

A Closer Look at the Two EASE Strategies

The first subsection below describes features of the informational campaign that are central to *both* Strategies 1 and 2. The second subsection discusses the addition of the last-dollar tuition-assistance grant. Section 3 provides information on how to pick the best strategy for your college.

KEY FEATURES OF THE INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN

The core of both strategies is an informational campaign of personalized student messages using email and mail. You may tailor your approach to meet your school's particular needs. Even so, the features described below — determined by research conducted prior to designing the EASE campaigns — are probably important to retain:¹

- **Incorporate behavioral science principles:** The informational campaign incorporates principles from behavioral science that have proved to increase engagement. Research has shown

¹ The research included qualitative data, such as student focus groups and administrator and staff member interviews, and quantitative analyses of summer registration trends and financial aid use. For more on this process, see Headlam, Anzelone, and Weiss (2018).

that even small changes in the environment or in the way information is presented can make it easier for people to act or make decisions. The EASE informational campaign incorporates various behavioral principles, such as **PERSONALIZATION**, **SOCIAL INFLUENCE**, and **IMPLEMENTATION PROMPTS**. For example, each message is personalized with the student's name. Some contain individualized information, such as the student's Pell Grant award estimate for the summer term, or courses that student could take in the summer. These **PERSONALIZED** elements make it easier for students to access important information and enroll. The campaign also highlights how other students benefited from summer courses — a behavioral concept known as **SOCIAL INFLUENCE**, which suggests that information about how others behave can influence one's actions. To reduce the hassles associated with registration, messages also include **IMPLEMENTATION PROMPTS** — a list of steps to help students select and register for courses — and essential information such as deadlines and direct hyperlinks to registration web pages. To learn more about the behavioral principles incorporated in the informational campaign, see Part II.

- **Use several modes of communication:** The messages are delivered in a variety of ways — primarily via email and mail. While most colleges mainly use email nowadays, students in the EASE study reported preferences for various modes of communication and mentioned that they paid particular attention to mail in envelopes that they received from their college — especially the financial aid office. Sending messages in several forms makes it more likely that students with different communication preferences will read them. Colleges may also add other forms of communication, such as text messages.
- **Send multiple messages:** The campaign includes multiple messages, and a message is sent to students roughly every other week. (In the study, students were sent a total of eight to ten messages, depending on the year and the college). This design is intentional; the research team found that students register throughout the open-registration period, suggesting that continual messaging may be the most effective way to reach them and encourage enrollment. **REMINDERS** are a powerful behavioral science tool for motivating action.
- **Mention financial aid:** Students and staff reported that the cost of college is a major barrier to summer enrollment. Financial aid rules are complex, and many students do not fully understand how much Pell Grant and other aid they may have for the summer term. To address that, most of the messages in the campaign mention financial aid, to remind students that it is available.

When the informational campaign is implemented by itself (Strategy 1), the messages remind students that Pell Grant funding can be used to pay for summer courses, and two key messages provide personalized Pell award estimates. Figure 1 shows one of these personalized messages. It simplifies financial aid by providing students with a custom estimate of how much Pell Grant funding they may receive for each enrollment level during the summer. You can use the Pell calculator that accompanies this guide to create and personalize this message for Pell-eligible students at your college.

These Pell estimates, which are sent by email and by letter from the financial aid department, are important messages in the informational campaign; calculating these personalized estimates,

Figure 1. Sample Financial Aid Message, Informational Campaign Only (Strategy 1)

Hi Taylor,

I am pleased to let **you know that you have up to \$2,960 from the Pell Grant to use for summer courses.**

I strongly recommend you take at least one summer class, because this is financial aid **you do not have to pay back.** Don't miss out on the opportunity to take advantage of your funding and get ahead in your education.

Your grant award will depend on how many summer courses you take. Use this chart* to determine how many courses you should plan to take this summer:

If you take:	You will receive:
1 to 5 credits	\$740
6 to 8 credits	\$1,480
9 to 11 credits	\$2,220
12 or more credits	\$2,960

If you have questions about your financial aid, email me, call 555-555-0100, or visit the Financial Aid office, located in the Student Services building M101.

Best,
Bill Louis
Financial Aid

*Important notes:
Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2018.
Values in the chart are estimates based on your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and enrollment history.

however, requires additional staff time. When the informational campaign is accompanied by the last-dollar tuition-assistance grant (Strategy 2), there is no need to create these personalized Pell estimates; instead, you are simply letting students know that their summer tuition is free or fully covered. The next section describes key features of the tuition-assistance grant, followed by an example of a message from the informational campaign that accompanies the grant (Figure 1).

ADDING THE TUITION-ASSISTANCE GRANT

Like the informational campaign, the campaign plus the tuition-assistance grant contains important features:

- **Last Dollar:** The last-dollar assistance grant covers the difference between students' summer tuition and fees and any grant financial aid (such as Pell Grant funding) they may have available for summer courses. However, many community college students already have enough Pell Grant funding to cover their tuition and do not need the supplemental grant. The tuition-assistance grant in Strategy 2 probably reassures those students that they will be able to afford summer courses.
- **Low Cost:** Since the grant is last-dollar and Pell-eligible students have funding for summer courses, the tuition-assistance grant is low cost to the college. In 2018, colleges in the EASE project spent an average of \$44 per student on the tuition-assistance grant. (Spending on the grant varied by college, ranging from \$3 to \$74 per student.)² On average, this cost was offset by additional tuition revenue generated by increased summer enrollment.
- **Available to full-time students who take fewer than six credits in the summer:** Another benefit of the tuition-assistance grant is that it covers students who enroll full time for two semesters in the academic year but only take one course in the summer (the third term). These students are not currently eligible to receive Pell Grants; year-round Pell funding does not cover them because students are required to attempt six credits to receive a third semester of Pell Grant funding.
- **Marketed through an informational campaign:** It is important to tell students about the tuition-assistance opportunity through the informational campaign. The reason for this pairing is to inform and consistently remind eligible students about the new funding opportunity.
- **Simplified messaging about summer funding:** When the informational campaign is implemented with the last-dollar tuition-assistance grant, the messages include information about the grant and highlight the fact that summer courses are tuition-free. Although students will also receive federal Pell Grants, the funding message is simplified by telling students they are fully covered and summer courses are tuition-free. (See Figure 2 for an example.)

² Cost estimates are for the 2018 cohort, which occurred after year-round Pell was reinstated.

Figure 2. Sample Financial Aid Message, Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance (Strategy 2)

Dear Pauline:

Congratulations! This is official notice that you are one of a small number of students selected to receive the new **Summer Scholar Grant*** at ABC State College. All you have to do to take advantage of this opportunity is to enroll in summer courses—**there is no application required**. If you enroll in one or more summer courses, this grant will fully cover the cost of your tuition and fees for the Summer 2018 semester. Once you register, the grant will be automatically applied to your summer bill.

You do not have to pay back this grant, and you can use it for as many courses as you would like to take this summer. If you do not use this grant for classes this summer, you will lose it next academic year.

Grant Name	Grant Amount
Summer Scholar Grant	Free tuition and fees for summer classes

If you have questions about this award or your financial aid package, call me at 555-555-0100, or visit the Financial Aid office, located in the Student Services building M101.

Sincerely,
Bill Louis
Financial Aid

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be applied to the cost of summer tuition and fees after funds from any federal and state grants. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in the summer 2018 semester.

3

What's Best for Your School?

Now that you have a little background on the two EASE strategies, you and your team can decide whether to implement **Strategy 1, the informational campaign**, or **Strategy 2, the informational campaign plus “last dollar” tuition assistance**. This section focuses on that decision. It begins with a recommendation from MDRC based on the research evidence, followed by financial considerations that you can consider to make an informed choice based on your college’s needs and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE RESEARCH

Both strategies have a positive impact on student enrollment and credit attainment and probably generate a positive return on investment (Table 1). Strategy 2, the informational campaign paired with the last-dollar tuition-assistance grant, is recommended because it has a significantly larger impact on student academic progress, and the additional revenue generated from increased enrollment will probably offset the additional cost of the tuition assistance. However, not all institutions may be able to secure the upfront resources needed to implement the tuition-assistance grant. In that case, consider the informational campaign alone.

Table 1. Comparing the Two Strategies

STRATEGY 1: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN	<u>ISSUE</u>	STRATEGY 2: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN PLUS TUITION ASSISTANCE
Lower upfront cost (staff time only)	COST	Higher upfront cost (staff time and tuition assistance)
Positive (smaller)	REVENUE GENERATED	Positive (larger)
Positive impact on student academic progress (smaller)	EFFECTIVENESS	Positive impact on student academic progress (larger)
Personalized Pell estimate message harder to implement Not accompanied by tuition- assistance grant	EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION	Simple messages, very easy to implement Requires financial aid to disburse tuition-assistance grants

To help with this assessment, the next section summarizes the financial and implementation considerations of each strategy. These considerations are also summarized in Table 1 and the balance of this section provides additional details.

FINANCIAL AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

As you decide which strategy to execute, consider the following:

- Cost:** Both strategies require funds to cover the staff time needed to coordinate and send the messages and postage for mailing two letters per student. The informational campaign plus tuition assistance has an additional cost to cover the grant. In 2018, colleges in the EASE project spent an average of \$44 per student on the tuition-assistance grant when year-round Pell funding was available. (Spending on the grant varied by college, ranging from \$3 to \$74 per student.) These estimates can be used to figure total costs at your college for your first year of implementation. After the first year, you may decide to reestimate the grant’s cost based on your own experience.

- **Revenue generated:** Since both strategies in the study increased summer enrollment rates, they also increased tuition revenue at the colleges. Most of this revenue came from Pell Grant aid, since students' awards covered most of their tuition costs. The information campaign increased tuition revenue by around \$50 per student. The information campaign plus tuition assistance increased tuition revenue by around \$90 per student. Since the average tuition grant cost just over \$40 per student, both strategies increased tuition revenue by approximately \$50 per student (see Box 2). The increased revenue was largely covered by Pell Grant funding. To estimate potential net increases in tuition revenue for your college, fill in the template cells highlighted in yellow in Table 2.
- **Effectiveness:** While both strategies generate similar revenue, the informational campaign plus tuition assistance intervention has larger impacts on students' academic outcomes. The informational campaign alone increased first-year summer enrollment by 5.2 percentage points, while the informational campaign plus tuition assistance increased summer enrollment by 10.9 percentage points.
- **Ease of implementation:** The informational campaign in Strategy 1 is more complex than the campaign in Strategy 2 because it requires staff members to estimate Pell Grant awards and send personalized messages to each eligible student. The Pell calculator in this guide can help with that process, but additional staff time is still required. Since Strategy 2 includes the tuition-assistance grant, the corresponding messages inform students that their summer courses will be tuition-free, simplifying message implementation. But, as noted earlier, Strategy 2 requires financial aid staff to *disburse* the last-dollar tuition-assistance grant. (Note: Implementation of the two strategies is described in detail in Section 4 of this guide.)

Now that you have had some time to consider the implications of implementing each of these strategies, you may have some questions. Below are two questions that often come up:

How Can My College Cover the Cost of the Grant?

Here are two ways that your college might fund the tuition-assistance grant:

- Repurpose funding from a few of your college's current institutional grants or scholarships for summer or other semesters.
- Apply for funding from your college's foundation or other foundations.



TIP: Colleges facing financial constraints may also mitigate costs by only offering the tuition assistance to students with an expected family contribution of 0.¹ In the EASE project, the summer 2018 impacts on enrollment were marginally lower for this group (9.1 percentage points, compared with 10.9 percentage points for the full cohort), but their average grant cost was substantially lower, at only \$16 per student. Notably, the impact on enrollment for students with an EFC of 0 who received

(continued)

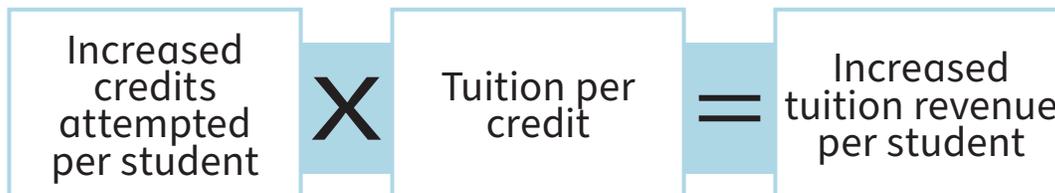
¹ Expected Family contribution (EFC) is calculated from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that is used to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid and the amount of their award.

Box 2. Calculating Increases in Net Tuition Revenue

MDRC worked with colleges to calculate net tuition revenue. These calculations incorporated the cost of the tuition-assistance grant (\$44 per student). They also incorporated the additional revenue generated from tuition resulting from students taking more credits because of the summer enrollment strategies. These calculations excluded costs such as staff time, postage, and the opening of additional course sections due to increased enrollment. They also excluded revenue sources, such as out-of-county tuition, semesterly fees, and course-based fees such as labs or online courses.

During the summer of 2018, students who were offered the informational campaign paired with the “last dollar” tuition-assistance grant (Strategy 2) enrolled in 0.67 more credits, on average, than the control group students. At participating colleges, tuition/fees ranged from \$99 to \$182 per credit hour, with a weighted average of \$137. Therefore, the informational campaign paired with the tuition-assistance grant generated an average increase of \$92 ($0.67 \times \137) in tuition revenue per student offered this intervention. Increases in tuition revenue more than offset the direct cost of the grant, resulting in increased revenue of \$48 ($\$92 - \44) per student. For a college with 500 eligible students, for example, this means a net increased tuition revenue of around \$25,000.

The informational campaign alone (Strategy 1) also increased tuition revenue. Students who were offered this intervention enrolled in an average of 0.38 more credits than control group students, for increased revenue of \$52 per student. There were no scholarship costs for this group.



The EASE strategies may also help colleges increase revenue from other sources, such as county or state performance-based funding. Both interventions caused students to earn more credits, and the State of Ohio offers colleges up to approximately \$100 per additional credit earned. However, colleges must compete with one another for a share of the fixed sum of performance-based funding. Therefore, state funds should be interpreted as at the “upper bounds” of potential return on investment, given that receiving the full amount is contingent on being the only college to increase credit attainment.

Table 2. Calculating Net Revenue per Student

	Example College		Your College	
	Info only	Info + Tuition	Info only	Info + Tuition
INCREASED REVENUE PER STUDENT				
Tuition/fees per credit				
Increase in credits attempted	0.38	0.67	0.38	0.67
x Tuition/fees per credit (\$)	x \$137	x \$137	x \$ _____	x \$ _____
Increase in per-credit revenue per student (\$)	= \$52	= \$92	= \$ _____	= \$ _____
State				
Increase in credits earned	0.24	0.48	0.24	0.48
x Potential state subsidy per credit (\$)	x \$100	x \$100	x \$ _____	x \$ _____
Increase in state revenue per student (\$)	= \$24	= \$48	= \$ _____	= \$ _____
INCREASED COST PER STUDENT				
Summer Scholar Grant (\$)	\$0	\$44	\$0	\$44
REVENUE MINUS COST PER STUDENT (\$)				
Lower bound (excluding state)	\$52 = \$52	\$92 - \$44 = \$48	= \$ _____	= \$ _____
Higher bound (including state)	\$52 + \$24 = \$76	\$92 + \$48 - \$44 = \$96	= \$ _____	= \$ _____

Notes: The numbers for the "Example College" above approximate the 2018 EASE calculations, but numbers do not match exactly due to rounding. The average community college tuition nationwide is approximately \$143 per credit.

TIP (continued)

the informational campaign plus tuition assistance was still higher than the impact on students who received the informational campaign alone. (The impact for these students was 5 percentage points.) This suggests that **the promise of free tuition can encourage college students — even those whose grant aid will likely cover their tuition costs — to enroll in courses.**

Do These Strategies Work for “Header” Colleges?

If you work at a “header” institution that starts its financial aid year in the summer, you may wonder how well either EASE strategy will work for your school. Since 3 of the 10 colleges in the EASE project were headers, this allowed the research team to compare outcomes with those at the trailer colleges, which started their financial aid year in the fall. The impact estimates and revenue estimates were lower for header schools, but these differences were not statistically significant. Header schools still exhibited positive intervention impacts and net revenue estimates. Additional details will be published in a final report on findings from the EASE study.

4

How to Implement the Strategies

Have you decided which strategy to adopt? Now you're ready to start carrying it out. This section discusses each step of that process. While the steps are laid out in a particular order, there is a lot of flexibility and you can complete later steps before earlier ones if that works better for you. Use the order presented here as a general guide and the checklist to track your progress. Each step is then explained in greater detail, with additional tips based on insights from the EASE study researchers. Message templates are provided in Part II. An editable version that you can download, copy, and customize is also available on the [MDRC website](#).

A Checklist for Both Campaigns

Fall Semester To-Do List

- Choose which strategy to adopt.**
- Identify an office and staff member to lead or coordinate the summer enrollment campaign strategy.
- Identify which departments should be involved and begin discussions with them.
- Determine your target population — the students who will be sent the campaign.
- Determine how you will send personalized email messages.
- Understand the process for mailing personalized letters on your campus.
- Customize the messaging templates to suit your school's needs.
- Create a timeline including the dates when each message will be sent out and identify a sender for each message (if necessary).

Spring Semester To-Do List

- Identify Pell recipients who meet your selected eligibility criteria.
- Launch the campaign — send each message to students according to your timeline.
- Estimate each student's Pell Grant funding for summer courses and send personalized messages (Strategy 1: Informational Campaign).
- Create and send students personalized course recommendations for their summer programs.
- Award the tuition-assistance grants (Strategy 2: Informational Campaign Plus "Last Dollar" Tuition-Assistance Grant).
- Send out remaining messages and complete the campaign.

Summer Term

- Review the campaign and consider how to modify and continue the strategy next year.

ENCOURAGING ADDITIONAL SUMMER ENROLLMENT, STEP-BY-STEP

1 Identify an office and staff member to lead your summer enrollment campaign.

Since both strategies require input from several departments at your school, it is recommended that one staff member or office coordinate the initiative. The lead coordinator should be able to connect easily with different divisions on campus. Responsibilities of the lead coordinator may include:

- Developing an implementation timeline
- Liaising with staff members from different departments
- Ensuring that the messages are sent to students on schedule

2 Identify which departments should be involved and begin discussions.

The campaign incorporates information that may ordinarily come from several different departments. For example, registration deadlines may be sent out by the registrar, while Pell Grant and scholarship information may come from the financial aid department. In contrast, the EASE summer enrollment campaign messages combine registration *and* financial aid information, so students can consider all factors when determining whether or not to enroll. That's why it may be helpful to involve various departments in the initiative early on, or at least inform them of the effort to encourage summer enrollment. At a minimum, the implementation team should consist of a lead coordinator, a representative from financial aid, and a staff member who can pull lists of students by attributes such as Pell eligibility and enrollment status. Table 3 shows the roles that various departments may play in implementing each strategy.



TIP: Implementation teams can vary in size. In Ohio, some college implementation teams were large, with staff members from several departments including student success, financial aid, advising, marketing, and institutional research. In other schools, the core teams consisted of just one or two people — typically the lead coordinator and a representative from financial aid or institutional research.

Four colleges in the EASE study implemented the campaign twice — once in spring 2017 and once in spring 2018. At most of these colleges, cross-departmental meetings were held the first year to customize the campaign language. That level of effort decreased significantly the following year because the team did not need to customize the campaign again. The lead coordinator simply updated the messages and confirmed with various departments as needed (Table 3).

Table 3. The Roles of Different Departments in Implementing Each Strategy

STRATEGY 1: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	STRATEGY 2: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN PLUS TUITION ASSISTANCE
N/A	◀ COLLEGE FOUNDATION OR DEVELOPMENT ▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding for tuition-assistance grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review campaign language related to financial aid • Calculate personalized Pell estimates • Sign and/or send personalized Pell messages • Answer questions related to financial aid 	◀ FINANCIAL AID ▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding for tuition-assistance grants • Award and disburse grants • Answer questions related to the grants • Sign and/or send certain messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with summer course recommendations message • Sign or send certain messages 	◀ ADVISING ▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with summer course recommendations message • Sign or send certain messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with summer course recommendations message 	◀ ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS ▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with summer course recommendations message
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm registration information • Sign or send certain messages 	◀ ENROLLMENT/REGISTRAR/ STUDENT SUCCESS ▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm registration information • Sign or send certain messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull student lists for messaging based on eligibility criteria 	◀ INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull student lists for messaging based on eligibility criteria

3 Determine your target population — the students who will be sent the campaign messages.

The informational campaign is designed for Pell Grant-eligible students, as most of the messages reference Pell Grant funding. You should target your campaign to Pell-eligible students but feel free to add other eligibility criteria if you wish.

 **TIP:** While many colleges reduce course offerings in the summer, they often offer developmental as well as general education courses. Since many community college students enroll part time, first-year students typically have outstanding general education requirements that could be completed the summer after matriculation. The EASE project largely targeted students who were in their first year, received a Pell Grant, were degree-seeking, and enrolled in the spring semester. Students in all majors were included.

4 Determine how you will send personalized email messages.

As discussed, the emails of the campaign are personalized with student names. This can be done using mail merge in Microsoft Office, or you may be able to use one of your college's information systems. Importantly, two email messages in the informational campaign contain additional personalized content. One contains personalized Pell Grant award estimates for summer (Strategy 1 only) and the other contains personalized summer course recommendations (Strategies 1 and 2). The project coordinator should determine which department will send out each message in the campaign. These messages can also be generated with mail merge.

 **TIP:** The colleges in the study used various methods to send personalized emails. Examples include mail merge using Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, and Excel), Constant Contact, and Starfish Early Alert.

5 Understand the process for mailing personalized letters on your campus.

As described earlier, some messages are sent via regular mail and you may need information about how to send personalized letters to students on your campus. Some mail departments may conduct the mail merge necessary to personalize letters, while others may require the sender to do so. It is also important to know how far in advance the mail department requires materials, so you can plan accordingly.

6 **Customize your messaging templates.**

This guide provides message templates that were used in the EASE project (See Part II, Strategy 1 and 2). Certain aspects of each template need to be filled in with specific information, such as your college's name and registration deadlines.

While you may decide to make minor edits to the messages in your campaign, it is important to retain the essential behavioral principles and to send as many messages as possible. The behavioral principles and messaging frequency probably contributed to the success of the interventions in the study.

7 **Create a timeline including the dates when each message will be sent and identify a sender and signer (if necessary) for each message.**

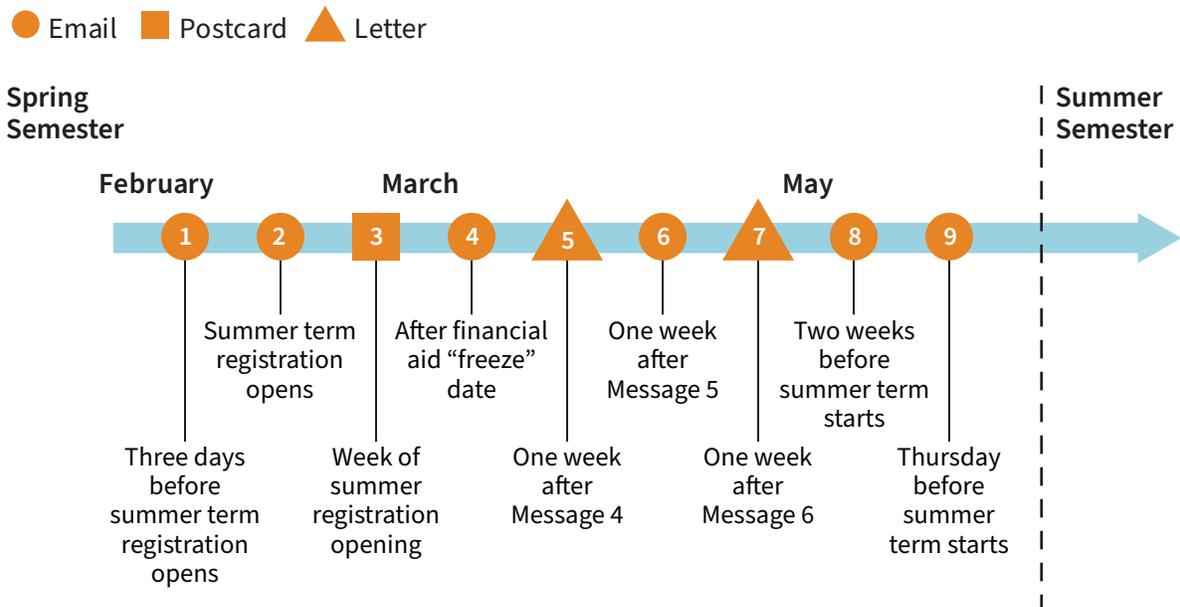
The message template suggests when to send out each message. For example, it is recommended that the first one be sent out a few days before summer registration opens. Use the sample timelines to create a messaging schedule for your college. Remember, it is important to send as many messages as possible; the frequency of the communications probably contributed to the increase in summer enrollment in the study. The message template also suggests a department that should "sign" the message. This signer may be the same as or different from the person who actually sends the message. Some messaging systems allow one user to send messages from different accounts. It is best that the name in the "from" line of an email matches the "signer" of the message. Figure 3 shows an approximate timeline for all of the messages in a campaign.

8 **Identify Pell recipients who meet your selected eligibility criteria.**

A week or so before you are ready to launch your campaign, obtain a list of Pell recipients who meet any other eligibility criteria you have set. This will be your messaging list. It is important to obtain this list in the spring and to include students who received a Pell Grant in the spring (not just those who are eligible), as some students may have lost their eligibility after the fall semester because they did not meet satisfactory academic progress guidelines or had other issues.

9 **Launch the campaign: Send out each message to students according to your timeline.**

A few days before the opening of summer term registration, launch your campaign by sending out the first personalized emails to students. Continue to send the messages according to your timeline.

Figure 3. EASE Phase I Message Timeline

Note: Message timelines at each college vary slightly and are summarized in this representation.

10 Estimate each student's Pell Grant funding for summer and send personalized messages (Strategy 1: Informational Campaign Only).

When implementing the informational campaign only, two messages — one email and one letter — include personalized summer Pell Grant estimates for each student. It is recommended that a member of the financial aid team calculates these estimates after spring financial aid has been disbursed. The Pell calculator included in this guide can be used to create the estimates. The spreadsheet can then be used for an email and mail merge. While this message requires some additional effort on the part of financial aid staff, it can simplify the financial aid process for students and is probably a critical message.



TIP: This message is sent via email *and* regular mail. Many students in the study recalled receiving the mailed letter from financial aid. This suggests it is worthwhile to send both versions of this message.

11 Create and send personalized course recommendations for summer.

One message contains custom course recommendations for students. After the open registration period for spring courses is over, work with the advising department or the registrar to send each student a list of one to three courses they could take during the summer.



TIP: Smaller colleges in the EASE study typically created this message by running degree audits of each student. (Remember, the campaign is being targeted to first-year, Pell-eligible students.) Larger colleges found it more difficult to run degree audits for each student; one school's solution was to group students by their program of study and to suggest general or required courses that students in that major often take during the summer.

12 Award the tuition-assistance grants (Strategy 2: Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance).

If you are implementing Strategy 2, make sure to determine the appropriate time to award and disburse the last-dollar tuition grants to students who have enrolled, preventing the arrival of any unexpected tuition bills for the summer semester.

13 Complete the campaign and determine how to continue the strategy each year.

All the messages in the campaign should be sent by the end of summer registration. The recommended timeline for the last message is a few days before the start of the first summer session. After implementing your selected strategy, take some time to debrief with your team and think about how to refine implementation for the following year.

5 Steps Toward Success

Several studies, including the EASE project, have demonstrated that explicitly encouraging community college students to enroll in summer courses and providing them with tuition assistance can boost enrollment and degree progress.¹

This guide presents two low-cost, research-based strategies to encourage summer enrollment among low-income community college students that have demonstrated a positive return on investment: an informational campaign and an informational campaign plus tuition assistance.

Students face many barriers to summer enrollment, such as the need to care for children or work additional hours during the summer.² The two strategies described in this guide do not and are not intended to address all such barriers. The behavioral science-informed messaging and financial aid strategies help students — especially those who may not have considered summer enrollment — by providing simplified information to consider and resources to help them sign up. The strategies also encourage students to take advantage of available resources for summer enrollment.

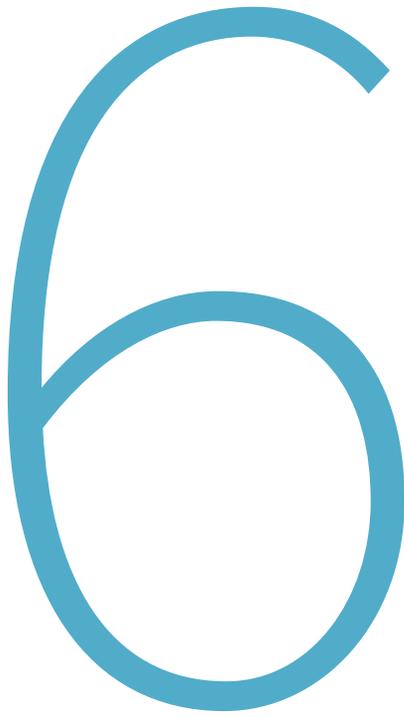
¹ Scrivener et al. (2015); Mayer, Patel, Rudd, and Ratledge (2015); Weiss (2019).

² Headlam, Anzelone, and Weiss (2018).

These strategies are particularly timely, as many low-income students have Pell Grant funding that can be used to take summer courses. You can use this guide to help your students make use of their Pell Grants to earn credits, complete requirements, and make progress toward earning a degree.

PART II

Design Your
Own Campaign



A Summer School Toolkit

This section provides the complete series of messages in the two informational campaigns, Strategy 1 and Strategy 2. It is annotated with tips and information about the behavioral science elements used in each campaign.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS

- The college department or division that signs each message varies. Each message in the campaign includes a suggested department as a guide, but colleges can have a staff member from the department that feels most appropriate sign the message. It may be helpful to include a specific staff member's name and title (such as Taylor Smith, Director of Student Services) rather than the department name only.
- **Yellow highlighted fields** are student-specific personalized fields. **Gray highlighted fields** are those specific to the college.
- Try to maintain the behavioral science elements outlined here in the messages. These elements are described in this section as well as in the text of the messages in each strategy. An editable version that does not include the annotations is also provided, so you can download, copy, and customize.

PUTTING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TO WORK

Both informational campaigns incorporate the following behavioral science principles, listed in order of importance.

<p>PERSONALIZATION</p> <p>Efforts to personalize information or provide personal assistance can improve outcomes.¹ Personalizing letters with students' names can increase engagement, and providing individualized information such as Pell Grant award estimates and course recommendations can reduce hassles for students and encourage enrollment.</p>	<p>Appears in all messages except 3</p>
<p>REMINDERS</p> <p>Consistent prompts help people remember deadlines and other important information.² Providing students with multiple messages that reiterate important information, such as deadlines and the availability of financial aid, throughout the entire open registration period can encourage more students to enroll.</p>	<p>Appears in all messages except 1, 3, and 4 (in Strategy 1)</p>
<p>SOCIAL INFLUENCE</p> <p>Persuasion by society, peers, or a person of influence can affect people's decisions and actions. People often use the behavior of others to guide their own actions.³ Informing students through student testimonials of the potential benefits of enrollment and the many successful peers who have taken summer courses might encourage action.</p>	<p>Messages 2, 7 and 9</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION PROMPTS</p> <p>Encouraging people to plan the steps they will take to complete a task can move them from intention to action. Guiding students with steps on how to select and register for summer courses might help those who intend to sign up to do so.</p>	<p>Messages 2, and 4 (in Strategy 2)</p>
<p>LOSS AVERSION</p> <p>People tend to prefer avoiding losses rather than achieving an equally sized gain.⁴ Framing something as a loss rather than a gain can drive behavior.</p>	<p>Messages 4 and 5</p>
<p>EASE</p> <p>Making processes automatic — including defaults, simplifying, color coding, adding hyperlinks, and removing hassles — increases the likelihood that people will act.⁵</p>	<p>Appears in all messages except 3, 5, 8b and 9b</p>

¹ Castleman and Page (2015, 2016).

² Farrell, Anzelone, Cullinan, and Wille (2014); Dechausay, Anzelone, and Reardon (2015); Baird, Cullinan, Landers, and Reardon (2016).

³ Allcott (2011).

⁴ Tversky and Kahneman (1991).

⁵ Bettinger, Long, Oreopoulos, and Sanbonmatsu (2012).

RECIPROCITY

People tend to respond to a positive action with another positive action.⁶ Informing students that the sender did something for them may lead to greater engagement.

**Messages
6 and 8b**

MAKE DEADLINES

Setting a time or date by which something should be completed can induce urgency and clarity. This discourages the tendency to prioritize today's needs over tomorrow's needs.⁷ Clearly stating enrollment deadlines or suggesting that students enroll by an earlier date could encourage timely enrollment.

**Messages
7, 8a, 9a**

6 Behavioural Insights Team (2015).
7 Ariely and Wertenbroch (2002).

7

Strategy One

Message Templates
for Informational
Campaigns

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 1

MESSAGE TIMING: Three days before summer registration opens

MODE: Email

RECOMMENDED SENDER: Registrar, Enrollment, or Student Success

Subject: You have funding for summer courses! Sign up on March 6, 2020.

Hi Janae,

← PERSONALIZATION

I have good news! I took some time to review your records and identified you as a student who will benefit from the year-round Pell Grant. **This means you have additional Pell funding* for Summer 2020 courses that you do not need to pay back!**

← RECIPROCITY

Whether your goal after getting a degree from City College is to get a great job, support your family, transfer, or learn new skills, **summer courses will help you get there faster.** Research shows that students who take summer classes have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate. Take advantage of your Pell funding by enrolling in a course you didn't have a chance to take in the spring, or getting a head start on fall courses.

City College offers a variety of summer course options, including online and evening classes, to fit your schedule. Take 10 minutes today to think about what courses you could take. Click <https://www.collegesite.edu/su2020catalog> to view the summer course schedule.

← EASE

Registration opens on March 6, 2020. See you this summer!

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Registrar

P.S. Would you like your advisor to recommend summer courses that will help you complete your degree? Contact your advisor, Betty Ramos, at bramos@collegesite.edu or (500) 555-0100. I'm confident we can find a summer schedule that works for you!

← PERSONALIZATION

*Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.



ADDITIONAL TIP

→ Use the most direct link possible to your college's summer course schedule.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 2

- MESSAGE TIMING:** The day summer registration opens — after online registration has officially opened
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Advising

Subject: Summer registration is open. How many courses will you take?

Hi Janae,

PERSONALIZATION

Summer registration is now open!

Taking summer classes is the best way to stay on track toward getting your degree. In fact, many of your classmates at City College attend summer classes to graduate faster. I want to make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Secure your spot in the classes you need by taking a few minutes to register for summer courses right now. Follow these simple steps to enroll:

IMPLEMENTATION PROMPT

1. Look at the summer course schedule [here] and write down three courses that you need for your degree program that you haven't taken yet.
2. Choose courses that work with your summer schedule
3. Register for your summer courses at www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration [customized]

EASE

Keep in mind that you are eligible for the year-round Pell Grant.* This means you have funding available for summer courses!

REMINDERS

If you need advice, take 15 minutes this week while on campus to check in with me. You can contact me at kucas@collegesite.edu or (500) 555-0100 to schedule a quick advising session.

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advisor

*Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.



ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ Customize “simple steps to enroll” by laying out how students can select and register for summer courses.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 3

MESSAGE TIMING: Mail the week of summer registration opening

MODE: Mailed postcard

Front of postcard



Back of postcard

<p>COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</p> <p>4 REASONS TO TAKE SUMMER COURSES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Most students have money remaining from their Pell award for summer classes. 2 Summer courses can fit into your schedule with online and evening options. 3 We offer a wide variety of courses and locations, making summer a good time to complete classes that you need. 4 Research shows that students who take summer classes have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate. <p>Take time this week to log onto CougarWeb and register for classes. If you need help or to find your advisor, contact Student Central on the Columbus Campus at 614-287-5353 or Student Services on the Delaware Campus at 740-203-8345.</p>	<p>Columbus State Community College 550 East Spring Street PO Box 1609 Columbus, OH 43216</p>	<p>First-Class Mail U.S. Postage PAID Columbus, OH Permit #540</p>
--	---	---

**ADDITIONAL TIP**

➔ This postcard is just an example. You may use similar language and images to design your own and customize to your needs. Be sure to maintain use of the behavioral principles.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 4

MESSAGE TIMING: Message 4 should be sent after financial aid “freeze” date

MODE: Email

RECOMMENDED SENDER: Financial Aid

Subject: You have funding for summer courses!

Hi Janae,

PERSONALIZATION

I am pleased to let you know that **you have up to \$3,097.50* from the year-round Pell Grant to use for summer courses.**

I strongly recommend you take at least one summer class, because this is financial aid **you do not have to pay back.** Don't miss out on the opportunity to take advantage of your funding and get ahead in your education.

LOSS AVERSION

Your grant award will depend on how many summer courses you take. Use this chart** to determine how many courses you should plan to take this summer:

If you take:	You will receive:
1 to 5 credits	\$774
6 to 8 credits	\$1,548.75
9 to 11 credits	\$2,323.13
12 or more credits	\$3,097.50

EASE

PERSONALIZATION

If you have questions about your financial aid, email me, call (500) 555-0100, or visit the Financial Aid office, located at 80 Rosemary Dr, Marion, OH 20000.

Best,
Sharon Klein
Financial Aid

*Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.

**Values in the chart are estimates based on your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and enrollment history.



ADDITIONAL TIPS

- ➔ The [MDRC Pell Grant Spreadsheet](#) can help you create the estimates for the chart.
- ➔ Qualitative research suggested that students may be more likely to open communications from Financial Aid.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 5

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 5 should be sent one week after Message 4
- MODE:** Mailed letter
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Financial Aid

[Place on College's Letterhead]

March 2, 2020

Dear **Janae Williams,**



PERSONALIZATION

The City College Financial Aid Office has reviewed your records, and I am pleased to let you know that, because of the new year-round Pell Grant policy, **you have Pell funding* available to use for summer courses.** I strongly recommend you take at least one summer class, because this is financial aid **you do not have to pay back.**

REMINDERS

Your grant award will depend on how many summer courses you take. Use this chart** to determine how many classes you should plan to take this summer:

IMPLEMENTATION PROMPT

If you take:	You will receive:
1 to 5 credits	[\$550]
6 to 8 credits	[\$1,100]
9 to 11 credits	[\$1,650]
12 or more credits	[\$2,200]

EASE

PERSONALIZATION

Your Pell Grant is valuable. Use it to take a step closer to graduation.

If you have questions about this award or your financial aid package, contact the Financial Aid Office at (500) 555-0100, financialaid@collegesite.edu, or come visit us at 80 Rosemary Dr, Marion, OH 20000.

Sincerely,
Sharon Klein
Financial Aid Office
City College

*Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.

**Values in the chart are estimates based on your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and enrollment history.



ADDITIONAL TIP

➔ While many colleges no longer send postal mail to students, qualitative research from the EASE project suggests that students are more likely to recall the mailed letter. To engage as many students as possible, send both Message 4 and Message 5.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Messages 6a and 6b

MESSAGE TIMING: Message 6a or 6b should be sent about one week after Message 5

MODE: Email

RECOMMENDED SENDER: Advising

Message 6a — for students who have NOT registered for summer courses

Subject: Your summer course recommendations

Hi **Janae**, ← **PERSONALIZATION**

I took some time to run a degree audit for you. According to **City College's** system, you are an **Advertising** major. As of **March 9, 2020**, I see that you are not registered for summer courses. Here are a few courses you need for your degree that are offered during the summer: ← **RECIPROCITY**

- **ADV 150: Introduction to Advertising**
 - **ECON 102: Microeconomic Principles**
 - **SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology**
- ← **PERSONALIZATION**

Register on www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration so you don't lose your spot! ← **EASE**

If you have questions or need help registering, contact **Advising** at advising@collegesite.edu or **(500) 555-0100**.

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advisor

P.S. The new year-round Pell Grant means you have funding for summer courses **as long as** you remain a Pell recipient in summer **2020** — don't miss out! ← **REMINDERS**

(continued)

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Messages 6a and 6b (continued)

Message 6b — for students who have registered

Subject: Your summer course recommendations

Hi Janae,

PERSONALIZATION

I took some time to run a degree audit for you. According to City College's system, you are an Advertising major. As of March 9, 2020, I see that you are registered for the following summer course: ADV 150. This is great news!

RECIPROCITY

If you would like to take another course, here are additional courses for your degree that are offered this summer:

- **ECON 102: Microeconomic Principles**
- **SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology**

PERSONALIZATION

Register on www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration now, so you don't lose your spot!

EASE

If you have questions or need help registering, contact Advising at advising@collegesite.edu or (500) 555-0100.

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advisor

P.S. The new year-round Pell Grant means you have funding for summer courses as long as you remain a Pell recipient in summer 2020 — don't miss out!

REMINDERS



ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ Some colleges in the EASE project ran degree audits to create personalized course recommendations for students. Other colleges found this too difficult and provided alternatives. For example, one college informed students of common courses or requirements that others in the student's major usually take during the summer.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 7

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 7 should be sent about one week after Message 6
- MODE:** Mailed letter
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Student Success

[College letterhead]

March 16, 2020

Dear **Janae Williams,**

PERSONALIZATION

As you may have heard around campus, many of your classmates are signing up for summer courses to get the most out of their time at **City College**. The exciting new year-round Pell Grant* means **you have funds for summer that you do not have to pay back.**

REMINDERS

I wanted to share a couple of stories from students like you who got the most out of their summer by taking classes:

I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."
 —Heather I., Nursing student

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

"I think of it as a win-win situation. I was able to finish my modern language requirement as a result of taking a summer course. I had a couple friends in the class, and we would typically study after classes together...it was a good experience overall."
 —Jacob B., Associate of Arts

Make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity! If you haven't already done so, log in to www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration to register for summer courses by **May 1, 2020.**

MAKE DEADLINES

Sincerely,
 James Cho
 Student Success
 City College

EASE

*Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer **2020.**



(continued)

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Message 7 (continued)

✂

Your goals could be closer than you think! Register for summer now to make it happen.

Think about how summer can help you:

I want to graduate faster	yes	no
I would like to earn more credits this year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I still have pre-requisites to take for my major	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you checked yes to any of these, summer courses are right for you!

I will commit to taking summer courses so I can achieve my goals faster.

Check off a day next week when you will register for classes

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Tip
Set a reminder on your phone for the day you choose!


ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ The testimonials presented here were gathered from students at community colleges in Ohio during the EASE project. You can use these or collect your own testimonials.

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Messages 8a and 8b

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 8a or 8b should be sent two weeks before summer registration closes.
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Registrar

Message 8a — for students who have NOT registered for summer courses

Subject: There's still time to register for summer courses! ← REMINDERS

Hi Janae, ← PERSONALIZATION

Summer registration closes on May 1st — register today! ← MAKE DEADLINES

Keep in mind a few reasons you should take summer courses:

1. Pell Grant recipients have money remaining from their award that they do not have to pay back.
2. City College offers a variety of courses, so you can take the classes that you need to graduate on time.
3. With online and evening options, summer courses can fit into your schedule.
4. Research shows that students who take summer courses have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate.

Click www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration and log in to City College's registration portal to register now so you can reserve a spot in the courses you need. ← EASE

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.

(continued)

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Messages 8a and 8b (continued)

Message 8b — for students who have registered

Subject: Four reasons summer courses are a good idea

Hi **Janae**, ← PERSONALIZATION

I reviewed your registration status, and I am excited to see that you have signed up for summer courses! ← RECIPROCITY

Keep in mind a few reasons why it's a good idea to take courses in summer:

1. Pell Grant recipients have money remaining from their award that they do not have to pay back.
2. **[College Name]** offers a variety of courses, so you can take the classes that you need to graduate on time.
3. With online and evening options, summer courses can fit into your schedule.
4. Research shows that students who take summer courses have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020. ← REMINDERS

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Messages 9a and 9b

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 9a or 9b should be sent the Thursday before summer classes begin.
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Registrar

Message 9a — for students who have NOT registered for summer courses

Subject: Summer courses start on May 11th — last chance to register! ← **REMINDERS**

Hi Janae, ← **PERSONALIZATION**

Summer courses start on Monday, and there are still a few spots left. Don't miss out on this opportunity! Click www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration to log in to City College's portal. Register by May 1, 2020 to reserve a spot in the courses you need for your degree. ← **LOSS AVERSION**

↑ **MAKE DEADLINES**

Check out Heather's story of getting the most out of her summer:

"I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track.... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."

—Heather I., Nursing student

← **SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

(continued)

STRATEGY ONE: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Messages 9a and 9b (continued)

Message 9b — for students who have registered

Subject: Summer courses start on May 11th — what are your goals? ←

REMINDERS

Hi Janae, ←

PERSONALIZATION

Summer courses begin on Monday!

Take a second to remember why you signed up for your summer course. Write down 3 goals you are hoping to achieve by taking a summer course and put these goals in a visible place. This will help you stay motivated throughout the summer.

Check out Heather's story of getting the most out of her summer:

"I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track.... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."
—Heather I., Nursing student

← SOCIAL INFLUENCE

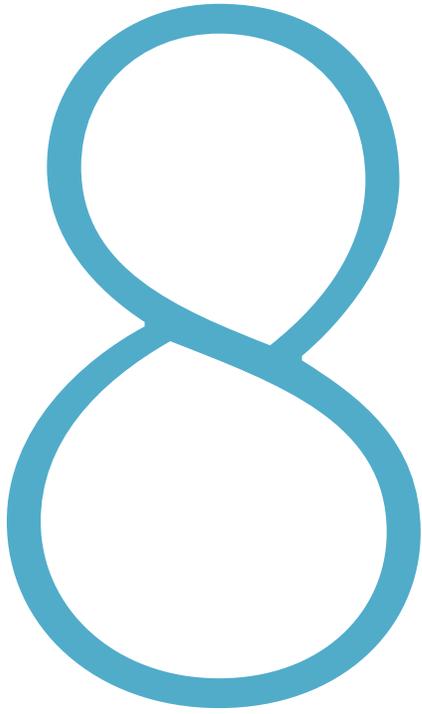
Stay focused and have a great summer!

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advising



ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ The testimonials presented in 9a and 9b were gathered from a student at a community college in Ohio during the EASE project. You can use this or collect your own testimonial.



Strategy Two

Message Templates
for Informational
Campaigns Plus
Tuition Assistance

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 1

MESSAGE TIMING: Three days before summer registration opens

MODE: Email

RECOMMENDED SENDER: Registrar, Enrollment, or Student Success

Subject: You received a grant for summer courses!

Hi **Janae**,

← PERSONALIZATION

I have good news! You have been awarded the new **Summer Scholar Grant!*** This means that if you take Summer **2020** courses, **City College** will automatically use the grant to cover your tuition and fees, making your summer courses completely **FREE**. **No application is necessary to receive the grant.**

Whether your goal after graduation is to get a great job, support your family, transfer, or learn new skills, **summer courses will help you reach this goal faster.** Research shows that students who take summer classes have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate. Take advantage of your Summer Scholar Grant by enrolling in a course you didn't have a chance to take in the spring, or getting a head start on fall courses.

City College offers a variety of summer course options, including online and evening classes, to fit your schedule. Take 10 minutes today to think about what courses you could take. Click <https://www.collegesite.edu/su2020catalog> to view the summer course schedule.

← EASE

Registration opens on March 6, 2020. See you this summer!

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

P.S. Would you like your advisor to recommend summer courses that will help you complete your degree? Contact your advisor, **Betty Ramos**, at bramos@collegesite.edu or **(500) 555-0100**. I'm confident we can find a summer schedule that works for you!

← PERSONALIZATION

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer **2020**.



ADDITIONAL TIP

➔ Use the most direct link possible to your college's summer course schedule.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 2

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 2 should be sent the day summer registration opens, after online registration has officially opened.
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Advising

Subject: Your summer tuition is covered — register for courses now!

Hi Janae,

PERSONALIZATION

Summer registration is now open!

Take advantage of your new **Summer Scholar Grant**, which allows you to take Summer 2018 courses for **FREE!** Taking summer courses is the best way to stay on track toward getting your degree. In fact, many of your classmates at City College attend summer classes to graduate faster.

SOCIAL
INFLUENCE

Secure your spot in the classes you need by taking time to register for summer courses now. Follow these simple steps to enroll:

IMPLEMENTATION
PROMPT

1. Look at the summer course schedule [here] and write down courses that you need for your degree program that you haven't taken yet.
2. Choose courses that work with your summer schedule.
3. Register for your summer courses in www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration.

EASE

Pay for your summer courses with your Summer Scholar Grant.

If you need advice, take 15 minutes this week while on campus to check in with me. Contact me at kucas@collegesite.edu or (500) 555-0100 to schedule a quick advising session.

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advisor

P.S. All you need to do to receive the Summer Scholar Grant is enroll in summer courses. You do NOT need to apply for the grant separately. The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.

REMINDERS

ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ Customize “simple steps to enroll” by laying out how students can select and register for summer courses.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 3

MESSAGE TIMING: Mail the week of summer registration opening

MODE: Mailed postcard

Front of postcard



Back of postcard

<p>COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</p> <p>4 REASONS TO TAKE SUMMER COURSES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Most students have money remaining from their Pell award for summer classes. 2 Summer courses can fit into your schedule with online and evening options. 3 We offer a wide variety of courses and locations, making summer a good time to complete classes that you need. 4 Research shows that students who take summer classes have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate. <p>Take time this week to log onto CougarWeb and register for classes. If you need help or to find your advisor, contact Student Central on the Columbus Campus at 614-287-5353 or Student Services on the Delaware Campus at 740-203-8345.</p>	<p>Columbus State Community College 550 East Spring Street PO Box 1609 Columbus, OH 43216</p>	<p>First-Class Mail U.S. Postage PAID Columbus, OH Permit #540</p>
--	---	---

**ADDITIONAL TIP**

➔ This postcard is just an example. You may use similar language and images to design your own and customize to your needs. Be sure to maintain use of the behavioral principles.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 4

MESSAGE TIMING: Message 4 should be sent after financial aid “freeze” date
MODE: Email
RECOMMENDED SENDER: Financial Aid

Subject: Do you know about your new Summer Scholar Grant?

Hi Janae,

PERSONALIZATION

I took some time to review your summer financial aid package, and I am excited to inform you that **you have been selected to receive a Summer Scholar Grant***. The funding is only available for summer 2020, so take advantage of these funds by enrolling in a summer course today. All you need to do to receive the grant is enroll in summer courses. You do not need to apply for it separately.

LOSS
AVERSION

To enroll in summer courses:

IMPLEMENTATION
PROMPT

1. Look at the summer course schedule [here] and write down courses that you need for your degree program that you haven't taken yet.
2. Choose courses that work with your summer schedule
3. Register for your summer courses at www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration

EASE

Pay for your summer courses with your Summer Scholar Grant.

REMINDERS

Save your spot in your summer courses by registering now! If you need advice, feel free to email me at sklein@collegesite.edu, call (500) 555-0100, or visit the Financial Aid office, located at 80 Rosemary Dr, Marion, OH 20000, to schedule a 15-minute advising session.

Best,
 Sharon Klein
 Financial Aid

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.



ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ Qualitative research suggests that students may be more likely to open communications from Financial Aid.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 5

MESSAGE TIMING: Message 5 should be sent one week after Message 4

MODE: Mailed letter

RECOMMENDED SENDER: Financial Aid



[Place on College's Letterhead]

March 2, 2020

Dear **Janae Williams,**

← PERSONALIZATION

Congratulations! This is official notice that you are one of a small number of students selected to receive the new **Summer Scholar Grant*** at City College. All you have to do to take advantage of this opportunity is enroll in summer courses — **there is no application required.** If you enroll in one or more summer courses, this grant will fully cover the cost of your tuition and fees for the Summer 2020 semester. Once you register, the grant will be **automatically applied** to your summer bill.

You do not have to pay back this grant, and you can use it for as many courses as you would like to take this summer. If you do not use your grant for classes this summer, you will lose it next academic year.

← LOSS AVERSION

Grant Name	Grant Amount
Summer Scholar Grant	Free tuition and fees for summer classes

← REMINDERS

If you have questions about this award or your financial aid package, contact the Financial Aid Office at (500) 555-0100, financialaid@collegesite.edu, or come visit us at 80 Rosemary Dr, Marion, OH 20000.

Sincerely,
Sharon Klein
Financial Aid Office
City College

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be applied to the cost of summer tuition and fees after funds from any other federal and state grants.



ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ While many colleges no longer send postal mail to students, qualitative research from the EASE project suggests that students are more likely to recall the mailed letter. To engage as many students as possible, send both Message 4 and Message 5.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Messages 6a and 6b

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 6a or 6b should be sent about one week after Message 5
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Advising

Message 6a — for students who have NOT registered for summer courses

Subject: Your summer course recommendations

Hi Janae,

PERSONALIZATION

I took some time to run a degree audit for you. According to City College's system, you are an Advertising major. As of March 9, 2020, I see that you are not registered for summer courses. Here are a few courses you need for your degree that are offered during the summer:

RECIPROCITY

- **ADV 150: Introduction to Advertising**
- **ECON 102: Microeconomic Principles**
- **SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology**

PERSONALIZATION

Don't forget, you can use your new **Summer Scholar Grant*** to take summer courses for FREE. All you need to do to receive the grant is enroll in courses — you do not need to apply.

Register on www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration so you don't lose your spot!

REMINDERS

If you have questions or need help registering, contact Advising at advising@collegesite.edu or (500) 555-0100.

EASE

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advisor

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020.

(continued)

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Messages 6a and 6b (continued)

Message 6b — for students who have registered

Subject: Your summer course recommendations

Hi **Janae**, ← PERSONALIZATION

I took some time to run a degree audit for you. According to **City College's** system, you are an **Advertising** major. As of **March 9, 2020**, I see that you are registered for the following summer course: **ADV 150**. This is great news! ← RECIPROCITY

If you would like to take another course, here are additional courses you need for your degree that are offered this summer:

- **ECON 102: Microeconomic Principles**
 - **SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology**
- ← PERSONALIZATION

Don't forget, you can use your new **Summer Scholar Grant*** to take summer courses for **FREE**. All you need to do to receive the grant is enroll in courses — you do not need to apply.

Register on www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration so you don't lose your spot! ← REMINDERS

If you have questions or need help registering, contact **Advising** at advising@collegesite.edu or **(500) 555-0100**. ← EASE

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
 Academic Advisor

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer **2020**.



ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ Some colleges in the EASE project ran degree audits to create personalized course recommendations for students. Other colleges found this too difficult and provided alternatives. For example, one college informed students of common courses or requirements that others in the student's major usually take during the summer.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 7

MESSAGE TIMING: Message 7 should be sent about one week after Message 6

MODE: Mailed letter

RECOMMENDED SENDER: Student Success

[College letterhead]

March 16, 2020

Dear **Janae Williams,**

PERSONALIZATION

As you may have heard around campus, many of your classmates are signing up for summer courses to get the most out of their time at **City College**. You are one of a small number of students selected to receive the new **Summer Scholar Grant,*** which means you can take summer courses for **free**.

REMINDERS

I wanted to share a couple of stories from students like you who got the most out of their summer by taking classes:

"I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."
—Heather I., Nursing student

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

"I think of it as a win-win situation. I was able to finish my modern language requirement as a result of taking a summer course. I had a couple friends in the class, and we would typically study after classes together...it was a good experience overall."
—Jacob B., Associate of Arts

Make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity! If you haven't already done so, log in to **www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration** to register for summer courses by **May 1, 2020**.

MAKE DEADLINES
EASE

Sincerely,
James Cho
Student Academic Success

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied.



(continued)

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Message 7 (continued)

✂

Your goals could be closer than you think! Register for summer now to make it happen.

Think about how summer can help you:

I want to graduate faster yes no

I would like to earn more credits this year

I still have pre-requisites to take for my major

If you checked yes to any of these, summer courses are right for you!

I will commit to taking summer courses so I can achieve my goals faster.



Check off a day next week when you will register for classes

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Tip
Set a reminder on your phone for the day you choose!



ADDITIONAL TIP

➔ The testimonials presented here were gathered from students at community colleges in Ohio during the EASE project. You can use these or collect your own testimonials.

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Messages 8a and 8b

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 8a or 8b should be sent two weeks before summer registration closes
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Registrar

Message 8a — for students who have NOT registered for summer courses

Subject: There's still time to register for summer courses!

Hi **Janae**, ← PERSONALIZATION

Summer registration closes on May 1st — register today! ← MAKE DEADLINES

Keep in mind a few reasons you should take summer courses:

1. Pell Grant recipients have money remaining from their award that they do not have to pay back.
2. **City College** offers a variety of courses, so you can take the classes that you need to graduate on time.
3. With online and evening options, summer courses can fit into your schedule.
4. Research shows that students who take summer courses have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate.

Registration closes on **May 1st**. Click www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration and log in to **City College's registration portal** to register now so you can reserve a spot in the courses you need. ← EASE

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer **2020**. ← REMINDERS

(continued)

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Messages 8a and 8b (continued)

Message 8b — for students who have registered

Subject: Four reasons summer courses are a good idea

Hi **Janae**, ← PERSONALIZATION

I reviewed your registration status, and I am excited to see that you have signed up for summer courses! ← RECIPROCITY

Keep in mind a few reasons why it's a good idea to take courses in the summer:

1. Pell Grant recipients have money remaining from their award that they do not have to pay back.
2. **City College** offers a variety of courses, so you can take the classes that you need to graduate on time.
3. With online and evening options, summer courses can fit into your schedule.
4. Research shows that students who take summer courses have higher GPAs and are more likely to graduate.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer **2020**. ← REMINDERS

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Messages 9a and 9b

- MESSAGE TIMING:** Message 9a or 9b should be sent the Thursday before summer classes begin.
- MODE:** Email
- RECOMMENDED SENDER:** Registrar

Message 9a — for students who have NOT registered for summer courses

Subject: Summer courses start on May 11th — last chance to register! ← **MAKE DEADLINES**

Hi Janae, ← **PERSONALIZATION**

Summer courses start on Monday, and there are still a few spots left. Don't miss out on this opportunity! Click www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration to log in to City College's portal. Register by May 1, 2020 to reserve a spot in the courses you need for your degree. ← **LOSS AVERSION**
← **MAKE DEADLINES**

Check out Heather's story of getting the most out of her summer:

"I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track.... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."
—Heather I., Nursing student ← **SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

Don't miss out on the opportunity to use your **Summer Scholar Grant*** to pay for your summer tuition and fees. Click www.stuinfo.collegesite.edu/registration to log in to City College's portal to register now so you can reserve a spot in the courses you need by May 1, 2020. ← **EASE**

Sincerely,
Jane Doe
Registrar

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer 2020. ← **REMINDERS**

(continued)

STRATEGY TWO: INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN + TUITION ASSISTANCE MESSAGES

Messages 9a and 9b (continued)

Message 9b — for students who have registered

Subject: Summer courses start on **May 11th** — what are your goals?

Hi **Janae**,

← PERSONALIZATION

Summer courses begin on Monday!

Take a second to remember why you signed up for your summer course. Write down 3 goals you are hoping to achieve by taking a summer course and put these goals in a visible place. This will help you stay motivated throughout the summer.

Check out Heather's story of getting the most out of her summer:

"I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track.... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."
—Heather I., Nursing student

← SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Remember, your **Summer Scholar Grant*** is covering all your tuition and fees. Good luck and have a great summer!

Sincerely,
Karen Lucas
Academic Advising

*The Summer Scholar Grant will be used to pay the cost of summer tuition and fees after other federal and state grants are applied. Funding is contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in summer **2020**.

← REMINDERS


ADDITIONAL TIP

- ➔ The testimonials presented in 9a and 9b were gathered from a student at a community college in Ohio during the EASE project. You can use this or collect your own testimonial.

References

- Adelman, Clifford. 2006. *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Allcott, Hunt. 2011. "Social Norms and Energy Conservation." *Journal of Public Economics* 95, 9-10: 1,082-1,095.
- Ariely, Daniel, and Klaus Wertenbroch. 2002. "Procrastination, Deadlines, and Performance: Self-Control by Precommitment." *Psychological Science* 13, 219-224.
- Attewell, Paul, Scott Heil, and Liza Reisel. 2012. "What Is Academic Momentum? And Does It Matter?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 34, 1: 27-44.
- Attewell, Paul, and Sou Hyun Jang. 2013. "Summer Coursework and Completing College." *Research in Higher Education* 20: 117-141.
- Baird, Peter, Dan Cullinan, Patrick Landers, and Leigh Reardon. 2016. *Nudges for Child Support: Applying Behavioral Insights to Increase Collections*. OPRE Report 2016-01. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Behavioural Insights Team. 2015. "The Behavioural Insights Team Update Report 2013-2015." Website: <https://www.bi.team/publications/the-behavioural-insights-team-update-report-2013-2015/>.
- Bettinger, Eric, Bridget Terry Long, Philip Oreopoulos, and Lisa Sanbonmatsu. 2012. "The Role of Application Assistance and Information in College Decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127, 3: 1,205-1,242.
- Castleman, Benjamin L., and Lindsay C. Page. 2015. "Summer Nudging: Can Personalized Text Messages and Peer Mentor Outreach Increase College Going Among Low-Income High School Graduates?" *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 115: 144-160.
- Castleman, Benjamin L., and Lindsay C. Page. 2016. "Freshman Year Financial Aid Nudges: An Experiment to Increase FAFSA Renewal and College Persistence." *Journal of Human Resources* 51: 389-415.
- Dechausay, Nadine, Caitlin Anzelone, and Leigh Reardon. 2015. *The Power of Prompts: Using Behavioral Insights to Encourage People to Participate*. OPRE Report 2015-75. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- Farrell, Mary, Caitlin Anzelone, Dan Cullinan, and Jessica Wille. 2014. *Taking the First Step: Using Behavioral Economics to Help Incarcerated Parents Apply for Child Support Modifications*. OPRE Report 2014-37. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Headlam, Camielle, Caitlin Anzelone, and Michael J. Weiss. 2018. *Making Summer Pay Off: Using Behavioral Science to Encourage Postsecondary Summer Enrollment*. New York: MDRC.
- Ma, Jennifer, and Sandy Baum. 2016. *Trends in Community Colleges: Enrollment, Prices, Student Debt, and Completion*. New York: College Board.
- Mayer, Alexander K., Reshma Patel, Timothy Rudd, and Alyssa Ratledge. 2015. *Designing Scholarships to Improve College Success*. New York: MDRC.
- McFarland, Joel, Bill Hussar, Xiaolei Wang, Jijun Zhang, Ke Wang, Amy Rathbun, Amy Barmer, Emily Forrest Cataldi, and Farrah Bullock Mann. 2018. *The Condition of Education 2018*. NCES 2018-144. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Richburg-Hayes, Lashawn, Caitlin Anzelone, and Nadine Dechausay with Patrick Landers. 2017. *Nudging Change in Human Services: Final Report of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) Project*. OPRE Report 2017-23. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Scrivener, Susan, Michael J. Weiss, Alyssa Ratledge, Timothy Rudd, Colleen Sommo, and Hannah Fresques. 2015. *Doubling Graduation Rates: Three-Year Effects of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for Developmental Education Students*. New York: MDRC.
- Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. 1991. "Loss Aversion in Riskless Choice: A Reference-Dependent Model." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 106, 4: 1,039-1,062.
- Weiss, Michael J. 2019. *How Can Community Colleges Increase Student Use of Year-Round Pell Grants? Two Proven Strategies to Boost Summer Enrollment*. New York: MDRC.

About MDRC

MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and education policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of its findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of social and education policies and programs.

Founded in 1974 and located in New York; Oakland, California; Washington, DC; and Los Angeles, MDRC is best known for mounting rigorous, large-scale, real-world tests of new and existing policies and programs. Its projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives. MDRC's staff members bring an unusual combination of research and organizational experience to their work, providing expertise on the latest in qualitative and quantitative methods and on program design, development, implementation, and management. MDRC seeks to learn not just whether a program is effective but also how and why the program's effects occur. In addition, it tries to place each project's findings in the broader context of related research — in order to build knowledge about what works across the social and education policy fields. MDRC's findings, lessons, and best practices are shared with a broad audience in the policy and practitioner community as well as with the general public and the media.

Over the years, MDRC has brought its unique approach to an ever-growing range of policy areas and target populations. Once known primarily for evaluations of state welfare-to-work programs, today MDRC is also studying public school reforms, employment programs for ex-prisoners, and programs to help low-income students succeed in college. MDRC's projects are organized into five areas:

- Promoting Family Well-Being and Children's Development
- Improving Public Education
- Raising Academic Achievement and Persistence in College
- Supporting Low-Wage Workers and Communities
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Working in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada and the United Kingdom, MDRC conducts its projects in partnership with national, state, and local governments, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.

New York 200 Vesey Street, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10281, Tel: 212 532 3200 **Oakland** 475 14th Street, Suite 750, Oakland, CA 94612, Tel: 510 663 6372 **Washington, DC** 1990 M Street, NW, Suite 340, Washington, DC 20036 **Los Angeles** 11965 Venice Boulevard, Suite 402, Los Angeles, CA 90066 www.mdrc.org

