

Impact of college advising on non-academic outcomes in young adults: Follow-up to the 2014-2015 Bottom Line RCT

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Current college enrollment and graduation rates for first-generation and low-income college students significantly lag behind their peers,⁷ and the evidence regarding economic and employment gains as a result of college enrollment and graduation are well-documented.⁸ Improving college access and completion for low-income and first-generation college students is, therefore, a critical challenge facing our nation. Bottom Line has sought to address this issue through a two-part system of intensive college advising to students during high school and into college, combined with explicit guidance to students about applying to and attending institutions where they are likely to be successful without incurring substantial costs. The first part is the Bottom Line College Access program. With this, Bottom Line begins by working with students in their junior year of high school, focusing on college preparation, application, and affordability. The second part, the Bottom Line College Success Program, provides students who attend a participating college or university access to personalized, campus-based support throughout their college career - up to six years of support. The College Success Program advises students in four areas, known as DEAL: Degree, Employability, Aid (financial), and Life.

A past, recent, multi-cohort randomized control trial (RCT), conducted by researchers Ben Castleman and Andrew Barr, studied the effectiveness of Bottom Line on its entering 2014 and 2015 participants in Boston, New York City, and Worcester. Initial findings from this RCT provide evidence that the Bottom Line model leads to large effects on college enrollment and four-year college enrollment. In contrast to most interventions, these effects grow over time as program participants are substantially more likely to persist in college than control students who did not receive Bottom Line advising. Program effects are remarkably consistent across space, time, counselors, and student characteristics.⁹

This study, sponsored by Carnegie Corporation, examines the longer term outcomes on Bottom Line students. Using the existing RCT sample (N=1,428; 433 control and 995 treatment), participants were classified into two groups at baseline: high and low probability of enrolling in a four-year college or university. Using these probability groupings, we create four mutually

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⁷ <http://pnpi.org/first-generation-students/>

<http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/R1708-retention-firstgen-2018-04.pdf>

⁸ Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2007

⁹ http://people.tamu.edu/~abarr/BL_shell_10_17_2017.pdf

exclusive cohorts – low-probability students who did/did not enroll in a four-year institution and high-probability students who did/did not enroll in a four-year institution. We explore the differences between these four groups in broad outcome areas, including physical health, psychosocial well-being, career preparation, financial literacy/money management, educational experiences, and perceptions of those educational experiences. Each domain is measured through multiple indicators. Within the broad substantive area of physical health, for example, the survey will cover the following topics: public health assistance, substance use, medical care and diagnoses, and exercise.

Data collection was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in collaboration with Castleman and Barr from April to July 2019. The study presented will consist of results from the analyses. It is hypothesized that low-probability students who enrolled in college will have similarly positive outcomes in the areas studied when compared with high-probability students who enrolled in college.