IHE 2016 REPORT
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION • UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Success Starts Here
IHE shapes those who inspire, discover and lead.
From “College?” to “College!”

The Georgia College Advising Corps helps high school students further their education.

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As each adviser delivers a PowerPoint presentation they have put together, complete with photos of the students they have worked with throughout the past year, there is an occasional catch in the throat, even a few happy tears.

Some success stories are about persuading those who don’t see themselves as college material to take the SAT or ACT—with surprising results. Others are about assisting with financial aid forms and applications that led to scholarships to finance the college dream.

But all are tales of the positive outcomes that can occur when high school students get a boost of moral and practical support that they might otherwise be missing.

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**Adviser Victor Onukwuli, a UGA grad, describes why he is involved with GCAC.**
Advisers are recruited to serve for two years and they go through an intensive training program before being assigned to their schools. “We are very fortunate to have GCAC based in IHE,” says Peeples, who became involved with the program during her graduate studies at the institute. “We are able to attract recent college graduates who are dedicated and passionate and then give them an opportunity to hone their skills as they figure out their future graduate school or career plans. The end results are impressive. According to an evaluation led by a Stanford University researcher, high schools that partner with the College Advising Corps see a significant increase in college-going rates versus control schools in similar areas. Advising corps schools also see an average increase of $1 million in scholarship support for their college-going students.

Such results are celebrated at “Decision Day” ceremonies, where high school seniors proclaim their college choices with posters or t-shirts and other paraphernalia. Clarke Central High School in Athens began Decision Day a few years ago as part of the school’s effort to get more students into college. GCAC adviser Darnell Shelton served as the master of ceremonies at this year’s event and obligingly took selfies with the students who came by to thank him afterwards. And then there is the pay-it-forward success story of Jessica Taylor. As a student at Thomson High School, she was assisted by Ashley Holmes from GCAC’s first corps of advisers (2009-11). She went on to graduate from Alabama A&M University and now is a GCAC adviser herself.

YARBRAH PEEPELS: ENABLING SUCCESS

YARBRAH PEEPELS (Ph.D. 2012) began working with the Georgia College Advising Corps while still a graduate student at IHE and became director of the program after earning her doctoral degree. Her interest in higher education access and success issues related to first generation, low-income and minority students dovetail well with her GCAC responsibilities. “We are fortunate to have Yarbrah Peeples lead the GCAC program,” says IHE Director Libby Morris, who worked to establish GCAC as an outreach program of IHE in 2008. “As director, Dr. Peeples is in charge of the staffing and network overall, including relating to the high school principals and counselors. The position requires an incredible array of skills —from understanding the research and literature on college going, to measuring outcomes, to hiring and staffing, to making the dollars and cents work.”

Last year, Peeples applied to participate in the Education Policy Fellowship Program and was selected as a member of the class of 2015-16. The 10-month professional development program is sponsored by the Institute for Educational Leadership, a national organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps emerging leaders in education and related fields acquire new perspectives and skills through site visits. “I learned a great deal through the EDPF,” says Peeples. “The readings and meetings and guest speakers helped me understand what our GCAC advisers are dealing with in schools.” As a doctoral student at IHE, Peeples was the recipient of the Zell and Shirley Miller Graduate Fellowship for the 2010-2011 academic year. She holds an M.S. in higher education from Florida State University and earned a B.S. in business management, along with an MBA, from Florida A&M University. Prior to starting her doctoral studies, Peeples was an academic program specialist with the TRIO Student Support Services Program at Florida State.

AROUND IHE

IHE Welcomes New Postdoctoral Fellow Ashley Clayton

ASHLEY CLAYTON joined the Institute of Higher Education in August after earning her Ph.D. in educational research and policy analysis at North Carolina State University, where she gained research and teaching experience, in addition to rigorous methodological training.

She was the recipient of an Association for Institutional Research dissertation grant for her dissertation “Assisting Students in the College Choice Process: Three Essays on the Role and Effectiveness of College Advising Professionals in Public High Schools.” Additionally, she served as the editorial assistant for the Journal of Higher Education for the past two years. Her research agenda broadly focuses on postsecondary outcomes for underrepresented student populations, with an emphasis on college access and success. Specifically, her research is focused on examining postsecondary policies and systems that aid or inhibit the educational transitions of marginalized populations. Several of her publications examine college access interventions, pre-college advising, community college pathways, remedial education, and the postsecondary experiences of underrepresented minority populations.

Clayton earned her M.S. in higher education administration from Florida International University and her B.S. in interior design from Virginia Tech. She has worked professionally in undergraduate admissions and TRIO Upward Bound programs.

“I am honored and excited to be joining the Institute of Higher Education,” says Clayton. “I am looking forward to collaborating with faculty on research projects, teaching in the quantitative methods sequence, and serving as a resource for students.”

Meet the New Ph.D. Students

INCOMING PH.D. STUDENTS (left to right) Holly Hawk, Jennifer May, Charles Sanchez, Lindsey Hammond, Justin Jeffrey, Danielle Kerr, Ngoc Okaho and Hee Jung Gong come to IHE from other universities and positions in higher education administration in the U.S. and abroad.

Elisabeth Hughes Retires

ELISABETH HUGHES retired last December after serving for six years as the associate director of IHE’s Executive Ed.D. program. She worked with the first three cohorts after the program was launched in January 2010. At her retirement reception, Executive Ed.D. Director Charles Knapp read a proclamation thanking Hughes for her service as the administrative liaison between the Ed.D. students and IHE faculty and for handling the logistics of delivering the program in Atlanta.

Susan Sheffield Retires … But Not Quite

SUSAN SHEFFIELD, who has worked at the Institute of Higher Education since 1992, retired from her full-time position as IHE’s administrative manager in March of this year, but returned in May and continues to work on a part-time basis.

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