

# SECTION 21H & 21I

## H. PERSISTING IN COLLEGE

The Coach plays a critical role in helping young people persist in college, from enrollment through graduation. See [Appendix G16 College Persistence Checklist](#).

### PREPARING FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER

Once a student is enrolled in college and applied to all forms of funding, the Goal becomes: "[Prepare for and Complete College Semester with 2.0+.](#)"

To complete this goal, the Coach should follow the **Required Steps** to ensure that the student:

- ☐ Ensure that the student has applied to College Choice and submitted all necessary documentation.
- ☐ Ensure student has food, transportation, and basic minimum living expenses before stipends/financial aid comes in
- ☐ Check in with young person before AND after first day of the semester to debrief on experience
- ☐ Ensure student has a plan to purchase books
- ☐ Check student's financial aid balance after the first week of school to ensure there is nothing owed and no holds; *follow up with Bursar/Financial Aid office if needed*
- ☐ Ensure student understands how to use college systems (e.g., Blackboard, CUNYFirst, etc.)
- ☐ Ensure student's address is correct in the college system
- ☐ Ensure student understands consequences of class attendance policies, which can be found in the syllabus
- ☐ Walk through all syllabi with student and put assignment due dates in calendar (*time management is a critical skill for success*)
- ☐ Check in with young person before "withdrawal" period is over
  - ☐ If they need to withdraw from any classes, see Advisor.  
If failing a class is inevitable, it is usually better to receive a "W" than to get a failing grade, which can more significantly affect financial aid, scholarships, etc. **Whenever possible, students should wait until after 60% of the semester has passed before withdrawing in order to avoid having to return Pell Grants.**  
See [Appendix G17 How to Properly Withdraw from College Classes](#)
- ☐ Check in with young person during mid-terms (*a highly stressful time*)
- ☐ Provide emotional support to student; check-in on them weekly
- ☐ Check in with young person during finals (*another stressful juncture*)

*\*All of these Required Steps are based on best practices and align with critical junctures where young people tend to become discouraged/overwhelmed and drop-out.*

**Potential Steps** to help students persist and/or improve their GPA include:

- ☐ Attend any orientation
- ☐ If student is enrolled in an Opportunity Program, ensure student attends any mandatory summer programs
- ☐ Assist student with accessing mental health supports and/or peer group supports to emotionally prepare for college
- ☐ Visit college to get familiar with campus
- ☐ Apply to ASAP program if in CUNY (and if not already enrolled in Opportunity Program)
- ☐ Create study plan
- ☐ Connect young person to tutoring (most colleges have a tutoring center and some agencies have college tutors)
- ☐ If a student wants to withdraw from classes or drop out completely: discuss pros/cons, financial implications, and meet with an advisor. See [Appendix G17 How to Properly Withdraw from College Classes](#)
- ☐ Check in with college counselor (or ACS Coach/Tutor) as needed
- ☐ Connect youth with campus Disability Services office
- ☐ Enroll in work-study
- ☐ Celebrate finishing with 2.0 or higher GPA

**Any student who had an IEP or 504 Plan in high school should be referred to the campus Disability Office.**

Students can receive additional time to take tests or other needed supports, which can make a big difference in academic performance. As students can feel self-conscious entering the office and discussing their disabilities, the Coach or College Specialist should offer to accompany the student.

At CUNY, in partnership with ACCES-VR, there is a program called **CUNY LEADS Plus** designed to serve students who need extra support, including with paid internships. LEADS Plus is located on five campuses: Bronx Community College, College of Staten Island, Guttman Community College, Kingsborough Community College, and Queensborough Community College. See [Appendix G9 CUNY Support and Opportunity Programs](#) for more information.

## **AFTER EACH SEMESTER**

if the student wants to continue in college the Goal becomes "[Re-enroll in another semester of college](#)".

**Required Steps** include:

- ☐ Ensure that the student re-applies for College Choice funding and submits all required documentation.
- ☐ Ensure student's grades are submitted to all scholarship providers and/or ETV upon completion of last semester (so that they continue to receive funding)
- ☐ Check student account to ensure there is no outstanding balance and no holds on the student account
- ☐ Apply to classes
- ☐ Submit class schedule to scholarship provider and/or ETV

## **ONCE RE-ENROLLED**

The academic goal becomes: "[Prepare for and Complete College Semester with 2.0+](#)" until the student graduates.

See all associated steps in [Appendix E Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#)

## **EACH SEMESTER**

Coaches should select the Goal "[Reapply to all sources of financial aid](#)" and check with the College Specialist to ensure that all financial aid (FAFSA & NYS TAP), ETV, and scholarships are reapplied to.

See [Appendix G16 College Persistence Checklist](#)

## **I. RECAP: ROLE OF THE COLLEGE SPECIALIST VS. COACH**

To summarize, the Coach and College Specialist both play an important role in helping young people plan/prepare for, apply/pay for, and persist in college.





### **THE ROLE OF THE COACH IS TO:**

- ☐ Provide exposure to college and post-secondary pathways, starting in 9th grade, and throughout high school;
- ☐ Meet with the student's guidance counselor to discuss post-secondary pathways, and ensure that students are enrolled in the correct coursework to graduate high school on time;
- ☐ Refer young people to the College Specialist in the 9th grade (if the student is engaged in school); for young people who come into foster care when they are older, they should be referred to the Specialist if the Coach thinks that college could be a potential pathway and/or once they express an interest in college;
- ☐ Refer all young people who are not on a college-bound track to the Career Development Specialist to explore vocational and other post-secondary pathways/ programs and develop a career plan;
- ☐ Communicate with the student's parent(s) about their post-secondary plans;
- ☐ Visit potential colleges with the young person, and/or sign them up for college tours;
- ☐ Ensure the student takes the PSAT and SAT, if they are interested in applying to a 4-year college, and receives tutoring
- ☐ Ensure that the student work with the College Specialist to apply to colleges and all forms of financial aid, opportunity programs, and scholarships that are available;
- ☐ Assist with the college selection process, if needed;
- ☐ Ensure students are prepared for the first semester, including
  - ☐ Support the student and College Specialist with submitting documents for College Choice
  - ☐ Having all books and supplies (including a laptop through New Yorkers for Children's Back to School Package program and, if dorming, dorm supplies);
  - ☐ Developing a plan and structure for organizing their documents and college coursework;
  - ☐ Checking their email regularly for information from the school;
  - ☐ Registering for classes;
  - ☐ Attending orientation or any mandated summer programming
- ☐ Provide persistence coaching to help ensure students remain enrolled in good standing, are connected to the supports they need, and reapply to college and financial aid/funding each year. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21H](#).
- ☐ Help dorming-away students waive their campus health insurance by transitioning their Medicaid to a provider recognized by the campus.



### **THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGE SPECIALIST IS TO:**

- ☐ Meet with young people interested in college to have an exploratory and informational session, after they are referred by their Coach, and discuss what that roadmap/timeline would look like for them at their particular high school;
- ☐ Monitor PSAT/SAT scores of those students who do take them, and meet with them to discuss/refine college options;
- ☐ Organize college tours;
- ☐ Help young people apply to colleges in line with their goals, and assist with essays/personal statements, where needed;
- ☐ Ensure that each student applies to any Opportunity Programs available to them;
- ☐ Review any college applications or financial aid forms filled out by the student's school/guidance counselor
- ☐ Sit down with students and help them apply to FAFSA, TAP, ETV, and all applicable scholarships. Review scholarship essays and help with obtaining letters of reference as needed;
- ☐ Ensure students are signed up for any entrance interviews/exams;
- ☐ Work with students to apply to and submit the paperwork needed for College Choice;
- ☐ Reach out to students each semester to ensure they have a course schedule that will move them toward on-time graduation and assist with enrollment, if needed;
- ☐ Help young people re-apply to all forms of financial aid and scholarships each year;
- ☐ Assist students with transferring colleges, if needed. See [Appendix G18. Transferring Colleges Guide](#).

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