

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME LAB FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES
and
[INSERT NAME OF SERVICE PROVIDER]
and
[INSERT NAME OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE]
and
CATHOLIC CHARITIES FORT WORTH
for the
Stay the Course™ Project

This Memorandum of Understanding (the “MOU”) is entered into between the University of Notre Dame’s Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (“LEO”), [Insert Name of Service Provider], [Insert Name of Community College], and Catholic Charities Fort Worth (“CCFW”) for the purpose of outlining the collaboration between the organizations as they work together to implement *Stay the Course™*. This project is a randomized control trial intervention with the goal of helping low-income individuals stay in school in order to obtain the skills necessary to increase earnings and maintain stable employment.

This document will reference specifically stated data sharing procedures outlined in the “Data Sharing Agreement between LEO and [Insert Name of Community College].” The Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) acts as the master document. This document exists to clarify general areas of cooperation.

I. Purpose

Low-educated adults in the U.S. are at a tremendous economic disadvantage in large part because those without more than a high-school education are unqualified for the jobs offered in today’s economy. The gap between the skills employers demand and those would-be-employees have to offer is often called the skills gap. In recent years, policy makers have touted community colleges as a way to close the skills gap and reduce poverty. Post-secondary degrees drive income growth by providing access to mid-skill, high-wage jobs in industries that often struggle to find qualified workers. Estimates suggest that completing an Associate’s Degree at a community college increases earnings by 38 percent on average.

More than 3 million young adults attend community college each year, but the overwhelming majority never complete a degree. The purpose of *Stay the Course™* is to test and study the impact of financial assistance and individual case management services on the degree completion rate of low-income community college students. The program under investigation—*Stay the Course™*—was developed by CCFW. In Winter 2018, CCFW released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find a social service agency to replicate *Stay the Course™* in partnership with a local community college. [Insert Name of Service Provider] was chosen as the replicating agency through the RFP and agreed to implement *Stay the Course™* in partnership with [Insert Name of Community College]. This MOU covers the implementation of the replication of *Stay the Course™* by [Insert Name of Service Provider], in partnership with [Insert Name of Community College]. CCFW is included in this MOU because they will continue to play a role in the replication of *Stay the Course™*. LEO is included in this

MOU because they will continue to play a role in evaluating the impact of the *Stay the Course™* program.

II. Goals

The goal of this project is to implement the *Stay the Course™* program with fidelity to the model and evaluate the impact of the replication of an intervention that aims to increase educational attainment among low-income community college students and increase their likelihood of obtaining a degree, consequently reducing poverty in the community. A secondary goal is to identify the value of replication of the evidence-backed program, *Stay the Course™*, in a new context. Initial targets include:

- Recruit eligible students to participate in *Stay the Course™*
- Provide access to case management and limited financial assistance to students selected at random from eligible students
- Track outcomes for all participants over the course of the study
- Determine if there are statistically significant differences in outcomes like grades, number of credits earned, degree completion, time to earn a degree, and transfer to four-year colleges for treatment and control groups
- Produce a research report and academic article detailing findings based on data collected during the project
- Determine the impact of expanding the program to a new community college

III. LEO Responsibilities

LEO, in support of the collaboration outlined in this MOU, agrees to:

- Prepare and present the design for the implementation of the intervention and its subsequent evaluation including:
 - Identify eligibility requirements for student participation in the project (these requirements are specifically outlined in the DSA)
 - Coordinate with [Insert Name of Community College] to identify eligible students
 - Track outcomes for study participants through six semesters post enrollment
 - Complete any Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications to ensure compliance with IRB, legal, and ethical requirements
- Assist in recruiting students including:
 - Provide staff time and effort to coordinate and implement recruitment strategy with the assistance of [Insert Name of Service Provider] staff
 - Help [Insert Name of Service Provider] coordinate the registration of students interested in participating in the project and the random assignment of students into treatment groups
- Implement research design including:
 - Oversee the assignment of students into treatment and control groups
 - Set up infrastructure to track key outcomes over time
 - Provide a timeline to [Insert Name of Community College] and [Insert Name of Service Provider] outlining when requests for participant data will be made (this timeline is explicitly laid out in the DSA)
- Review and analyze study results including:

- Prepare summary of analysis for semester results on relevant outcomes, persistence, credit completion and accrual, degree completion and transfer.
- Provide annual summary report to [Insert Name of Service Provider], CCFW, and [Insert Name of Community College] by February 1 of each year
- Provide draft of the final paper to [Insert Name of Service Provider], CCFW, and [Insert Name of Community College] before journal submission
- Disseminate key findings:
 - Disseminate the study's results to the research and policy communities through presentations at conferences, publications, and other activities

IV. [Insert Name of Service Provider] Responsibilities

[Insert Name of Service Provider], in support of the collaboration outlined in this MOU, agrees to:

- Implement the *Stay the Course*TM program with fidelity to the model, as prescribed by CCFW
- Manage the recruitment of participants including:
 - Work with LEO to implement a recruitment strategy that describes the program and enrollment processes
 - Create and generate marketing materials for student recruitment
 - Provide staff time and efforts to coordinate and implement recruitment strategy
 - Work with LEO to identify key recruitment times and maintain a regular presence on the [Insert Name of Community College] campus during those times
 - Have staff available to give presentations, attend informational meetings, and speak with potential participants during recruitment phase
- Provide case management services to eligible participants including:
 - Maintain appropriate staffing levels to effectively provide case management services to participants, including on-site services at the [Insert Name of Community College] campus
 - Enroll a minimum of 120 students from [Insert Name of Community College] into the treatment group of the *Stay the Course*TM program by the end of the Spring 2020 semester.
 - Back-fill Navigator caseloads through the Fall 2020 semester to maintain caseloads between 35-40 students
 - Offer individual case management services for a total of at least three years from each participant's intake date as defined in the research design
 - Work with assigned participants to identify and overcome barriers to degree completion
 - Maintain contact with assigned participants on a regular basis as identified in the program design
 - Maintain detailed records of all interactions with assigned participants
- Manage and distribute financial assistance to eligible participants including:
 - Maintain appropriate staffing levels to adequately distribute funds
 - Offer financial assistance to enrolled and eligible participants based on program guidelines, for up to three years
 - Process financial assistance requests in a timely fashion
 - Apply fund distribution requirements in a consistent manner to all fund applications
 - Document all fund distributions and financial assistance applications
- Provide ongoing data for participating clients who have signed the appropriate release of information by mutually agreed upon dates throughout the project including:

- Customize data collection systems within the [Insert Name of Service Provider] client database to meet the requirements as outlined in the [Insert Name of Service Provider] and CCFW contract, to streamline the reporting of specific data elements to LEO
- Cooperate with LEO in providing information gathered from case records.

The responsibilities outlined above for [Insert Name of Service Provider] do not negate or supersede the existing contract between [Insert Name of Service Provider] and CCFW.

V. [Insert Name of Community College] Responsibilities

[Insert Name of Community College], in support of the collaboration outlined in this MOU, agrees to:

- Assist in the recruitment of students for *Stay the Course™* including:
 - Distribute project information and marketing flyers to students through [Insert Name of Community College] email system based on identified eligibility requirements
 - Allow the display of approved marketing materials at key locations on campus and on [Insert Name of Community College] websites and social media sites
 - Provide access to the [Insert Name of Community College] campus for marketing efforts by [Insert Name of Service Provider] and/or LEO
 - Promote the project to faculty and encourage them to support it
- Provide logistical support for project including:
 - Provide meeting space for recruitment and informational sessions
 - Provide work space on campus for [Insert Name of Service Provider] employees who are providing services to students
 - Provide secure file cabinets for case files and other confidential information, as needed
 - Provide private meeting space for individual client meetings
 - Provide campus liaison to facilitate the use of campus resources as needed, including but not limited to internet access, printers, access badges, etc.
- Provide ongoing data for participating students who have signed the appropriate release of information as defined in the data sharing agreement as well as access to and support from the Office of Institutional Intelligence & Research (or other relevant institution at [Insert Name of Community College])
 - Provide administrative data, academic records and contact information for eligible students at the beginning of the each semester (Specific variables detailed in the DSA)
 - Provide up to date contact information for enrolled students periodically (up to twice per year) to facilitate communication between program staff and program participants
 - Provide data on student outcomes within one month of the census date for each semester of the study (Variables and data sharing dates outlined in the DSA)

VI. CCFW Responsibilities

CCFW, in support of the collaboration outlined in this MOU, agrees to:

- Provide operational leadership to [Insert Name of Service Provider] through training and technical assistance, to ensure the site has the tools needed to implement the *Stay the Course™* program and provide services with excellence
 - Provide *Stay the Course™* replication materials to [Insert Name of Service Provider] staff

- Communicate the replication plan to [Insert Name of Service Provider] and assist in implementation
- Allocate staff time, support, and resources to guide [Insert Name of Service Provider] in the implementation of *Stay the Course™*
- Act as a liaison between [Insert Name of Service Provider] and LEO and cultivate productive partnerships
 - Facilitate introductions between [Insert Name of Service Provider] and LEO
 - Assist in communication between [Insert Name of Service Provider], LEO, and [Insert Name of Community College]
- Monitor replication site activities to evaluate adherence to the *Stay the Course™* program model and contract requirements
 - Oversee [Insert Name of Service Provider]’s implementation of *Stay the Course™* through monitoring visits, replication calls, and review of program reports and data files to identify issues, recommendations, and best practices observed
 - Provide financial support as outlined in the contract between [Insert Name of Service Provider] and CCFW and keep informed on program funds and expenses
- Collaborate with LEO to provide information regarding implementation trends, identified through data collected from Monthly and Semester Progress Reports compiled by [Insert Name of Service Provider]

VII. Funding of Project

LEO, CCFW, and [Insert Name of Community College] are responsible for raising the funds necessary to support their respective responsibilities listed above. [Insert Name of Service Provider] is responsible for raising a portion of the funds, outlined in the contract between [Insert Name of Service Provider] and CCFW, to support their respective responsibilities listed above. When appropriate LEO, CCFW, and [Insert Name of Service Provider] will work together to raise the funds to cover the costs of the intervention and the evaluation from foundations, government agencies, and private donors.

VIII. Use of/Dissemination of Data

Usage of the data collected from this project will be in accordance with the project’s goals and will adhere to all requirements of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Notre. Data will be used for:

- The advancement of knowledge;
- The identification of future research questions;
- Making recommendations to policy and social service audiences

Data will not be used for purposes unrelated to the goals of the research. Dissemination of the analysis of this data will be conducted by LEO. Upon completion of the project, LEO will provide [Insert Name of Service Provider], [Insert Name of Community College], CCFW, and CCUSA with a copy of its results. All participating organizations will be identified and credited in the dissemination of the research unless the party specifically requests to remain unnamed. Except in the recruitment and promotion of activities contained in this MOU, no party may use the name of another party in any form of advertising or publicity without express written permission.

IX. Term of Project

Work related to *Stay the Course™* will begin at the [Insert Name of Community College] campus in the fall of 2019. The final round of recruitment is set for the Spring of 2020 (Navigators may back-fill caseloads during the Fall 2020 semester). Participants will be followed for at least three years. To track outcomes through six semesters, LEO will need outcome data (including both [Insert Name of Community College] outcomes and National Student Clearing House outcomes as outlined in the DSA) through the fall semester of 2023 in order to observe the enrollment status of students at the end of this study period. The terms outlined in this MOU will begin on or about June 1, 2018 and are expected to continue for the duration of the project projected to end in 2023. Upon mutual agreement between LEO, [Insert Name of Community College] and CCFW, LEO may continue to track outcomes of study participants beyond the initial study period.

*For University of Notre Dame Wilson Sheehan Lab for
Economic Opportunities*

For [Insert Name of Service Provider]

Dr. James Sullivan, Co-Founder

[Insert Name of CEO], CEO

Signed on:

Signed on:

For [Insert Name of Community College]

For Catholic Charities Fort Worth

Insert Name of Chancellor, Chancellor for [Insert
Name of Community College]

Heather Reynolds, President/CEO

Signed on:

Signed on:
