



**College Advising Corps**  
**Interim Report (October 1, 2023)**

**UNC Award # 2000052688**

## Overview

College Advising Corps (CAC) is pleased to submit this update on our accomplishments during the grant period (October 1, 2022 – October 1, 2023), CAC made significant progress towards our goals to strengthen, sustain, and grow advising service across all 100 North Carolina counties. This report highlights our 2022-23 school year impacts and provides an update on the current 2023-24 school year.

## Program Updates

### 2022-23 School Year

#### Adviser Placement

During the 2022-23 school year, CAC partnered with five university partners to place approximately 120 advisers in 75 counties. Together, these advisers served over 140 high schools, provided direct service to over 20,000 senior students, and established a college-going culture for nearly an additional 100,000 younger students. Roughly 67% of the students served by CAC advisers in North Carolina are eligible for the National School Lunch Program (free- or reduced-priced lunches), and 65% of students identify as people of color. Below is a breakdown of the number of advisers, high schools, and counties served by each university partner.

University Partner	# Advisers	# High Schools	# Counties	Tiers Represented
UNC Wilmington	5	5	4	Tier 1 & Tier 2
UNC Chapel Hill	62	79	32	Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3
NC State University	20	21	11	Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3
Appalachian State University	20	22	20	Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3
Duke University	16	16	8	Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3

#### Innovation

Advisers and students alike have continued to utilize CAC's AI-powered chatbot platforms, which provide 24/7, bilingual, accessible support for students and families. CAC's chatbot, Oli, communicated actively with students nationwide in the 2022-23 academic year, sending general weekly reminders about application deadlines, financial aid opportunities, and FAFSA requirements. Oli elevates more complex questions to an adviser when necessary.

CAC's strategic investment in AI-powered chatbot platforms increased adviser capacity and expanded the impact of CAC's Family Academy program. Family Academy aims to increase family engagement in the college application process. Implementing AI-powered chatbots allowed CAC advisers to serve nearly 10,000 student guardians, offering resources in both English and Spanish.

#### Impacts & Outcomes

CAC continues to track "Key Performance Indicators" (KPIs) to assess adviser impact across our programs. Our chosen KPIs have been shown to predict college enrollment. Thus far in the 2022-23 academic year, CAC advisers are on track to meet our annual program KPI benchmarks. National KPIs include the following:

- Percentage of seniors who submitted 1+ college application
- Percentage of seniors who have met with an adviser at least once

- Percentage of seniors who submitted 3+ college application
- Percentage of seniors who completed the FAFSA
- Percentage of families who met with an adviser at least once
- Percentage of seniors who were assisted with financial aid

North Carolina program-specific KPI outcomes are available in Appendix A.

In addition to CAC's progress towards our KPI benchmarks, we are pleased to report the following impact across our network nationally. Among the students served by a CAC adviser:

- 56% of students completed the FAFSA by June 1. This is 4 percentage points higher than the overall US completion rate.
- Submitted a total of 450,000 college applications, and 77% of students reported having one or more confirmed college acceptances.
- Secured over \$1 billion in combined scholarship and institutional aid.

**Research Findings & Highlights.** Research evaluations by CAC's Impact and Evaluation team and outside organizations have found that students who engage with chatbot messages aligned with in-school adviser support hold more meetings with their adviser and are more likely to submit their FAFSA. According to a 2022 CAC study, students in North Carolina and Georgia who interacted with CAC's chatbot were 9.8% more likely to meet 1:1 with an adviser and 19.8% more likely to submit a FAFSA. Subsequent impact analysis on CAC's North Carolina programs has found that the FAFSA application was completed at a higher rate and submitted earlier than at other comparable schools not served by a CAC adviser. CAC's research also indicates that advisers are influential in student decision-making. Advisers' influence on students' college decisions increases with the number of one-on-one meetings; by the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, advisers surpass the influence of families.

## 2023-24 School Year

### Adviser Placement

All five CAC university partners in North Carolina expanded to new counties at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. As of September 25, 2023, CAC placed 132 advisers in 151 underserved high schools across 79 counties. Collectively, CAC's North Carolina advisers are directly serving over 28,000 senior students and establishing a college-going culture for an additional 100,000 younger freshman, sophomore, and junior students. A detailed overview of CAC's expansion for the 2023-24 school year.

University Partner	2022-23 School Year # of Counties	2023-24 School Year # of Counties
UNC Wilmington	4	5
UNC Chapel Hill	32	34*
NC State	11	14*
App State	20	24
Duke	8	9*
NC Hybrid Advising	Planned program launch for 2023-24 school year.	17

\* CAC intends to serve all 100 counties. Durham County is served by both UNC Chapel Hill and Duke. Pitt County and Granville County are served by both UNC Chapel Hill and NC State.

CAC has seen significant improvement in our recruitment efforts compared to this time last year, with three of our five university partners being fully staffed. Program staff increased recruitment strategies this year to help solidify candidates. These strategies included advertising key benefits advisers can

pursue to through their service with CAC. For example, many programs highlighted the AmeriCorps education award, CAC's Life After the Corps professional development pathway, and the UNC System Equity Fellows Program.

### **Hybrid Advising**

CAC is on track to serve all 100 counties in North Carolina by the end of the 2023-24 school year. For the current school year, CAC implemented a tiered hybrid expansion to reach 17 of the state's most rural counties. Of the 17 counties intended for hybrid advising, 13 counties have fully or partially executed contacts, and the final four are working with district leadership to determine which high school will be best served by a CAC advisers. Below is a timeline of our hybrid program launch and adviser placement:

County	County Tier	Placement Timeline
Gaston County	Tier 2	September 2023
Lincoln County	Tier 3	October 2023
Iredell County	Tier 3	October 2023
Yadkin County	Tier 2	October 2023
Anson County	Tier 1	January 2024
Brunswick County	Tier 3	January 2024
Camden County	Tier 3	January 2024
Carteret County	Tier 3	January 2024
Hyde County	Tier 1	January 2024
Onslow County	Tier 2	January 2024
Stanly County	Tier 2	January 2024
Tyrell County	Tier 1	January 2024
Union County	Tier 3	January 2024

Hybrid programs follow CAC's standard near-peer design, but their impact is scaled to reach more students by balancing virtual advising with in-school advising and leveraging artificial intelligence. Hybrid advising is more accessible for students and their families, providing additional services to students outside of school hours, and by providing 24/7 bilingual services that meet a diversity of needs, such as supporting students with learning differences.

Advisers supported by this model will be based out of the CAC national office and directly supervised by a program manager. Each adviser will be serving one high school. Advisers will be placed at a high school depending on where the adviser lives and how far they are able to commute on a regular basis. The preferred approach is to have advisers physically present in their school two or three times a week. However, in instances where an adviser does not live close enough to any high school for this to occur, an adviser will visit their campus for a minimum of 3-4 days each month and serve their students remotely the remaining time. CAC's hybrid programs demonstrate the benefits of CAC's culture of innovation—including making adviser recruitment easier and more successful. Recruiting and staffing are particularly difficult in today's workforce, especially in rural areas. Providing our partners with the flexibility of hybrid-advising options helps them meet the needs of their communities with greater success. Additionally, CAC has encouraged advisers in their second year of service to continue their work for an additional year, if they wish, to ensure that there are sufficient personnel.

### **Staff Updates**

**Chief Program Officer.** CAC welcomed Cary Claiborne as the Chief Program Officer in April 2023. Mr. Claiborne is responsible for overseeing the portfolio of partnerships and collaborations with our university and funding partners, including those related to traditional in-school advising, hybrid and virtual advising, and advising conducted using artificial intelligence. He raises CAC's profile through external communications and by providing mentoring, guidance, supervision, and professional development to program staff. Mr. Claiborne enhances the structure of the organization by staying abreast of developments in postsecondary education and college access policies. He has led strategic student success initiatives for over a decade and brings experience developing, implementing, and scaling student success programs at the two- and four-year levels. Most recently, he served as Director of Diagnostic and Implementation Services at the National Institute for Student Success, where he partnered with institutions nationwide to improve student success outcomes. Mr. Claiborne is pursuing his Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies from Georgia State University, where he earned an M.B.A. in Business Analysis and a B.S. in Economics.

**North Carolina, Hybrid Program Manager.** We are pleased to report the creation of a new position to assist the expansion efforts, the North Carolina Hybrid Program Manager. We are delighted that the position has been recently filled by Madisson Smith, who has extensive experience in higher education and with CAC. In her role as North Carolina Hybrid Program Manager, Madisson Smith's team of hybrid advisers will serve the remaining unserved counties in western and eastern North Carolina. She will report to Sarah Simmons, Partnership Director, Hybrid Programs. Before joining College Advising Corps, Madisson worked in the K-12, higher education, and non-profit spaces for 8 years. Madisson served as a college adviser for three years with the Davidson College Advising Corps program and then became the program coordinator for the Davidson CAC program, serving as a coach and mentor for advisers. Madisson also worked as a Career Counselor at UNC Charlotte, supporting students in the exploratory major. Most recently, Madisson served as the Lead School and College Counselor at Langtree Charter Academy in Mooresville, NC. Madisson is dedicated to student access, support, and success.

## Appendix A

### KPI RESULTS

The below tables reflect academic year results for 2022-23 CAC's North Carolina university partners. CAC evaluates KPI data for schools where our advisers served for 40% or more of the academic year.

KPI	App State Results	Duke Results	NC State Results	UNC Chapel Hill Results	UNC Wilmington Results
Percentage of seniors who submitted 1+ college application	65%	62%	62%	61%	69%
Percentage of seniors who have met with an adviser at least once	92%	78%	97%	87%	92%
Percentage of seniors who submitted 3+ college application	28%	27%	28%	31%	33%
Percentage of seniors who completed the FAFSA	54%	54%	55%	54%	50%
Percentage of families who met with an adviser at least once	50%	31%	47%	34%	52%
Percentage of seniors who were assisted with financial aid	59%	38%	40%	49%	58%