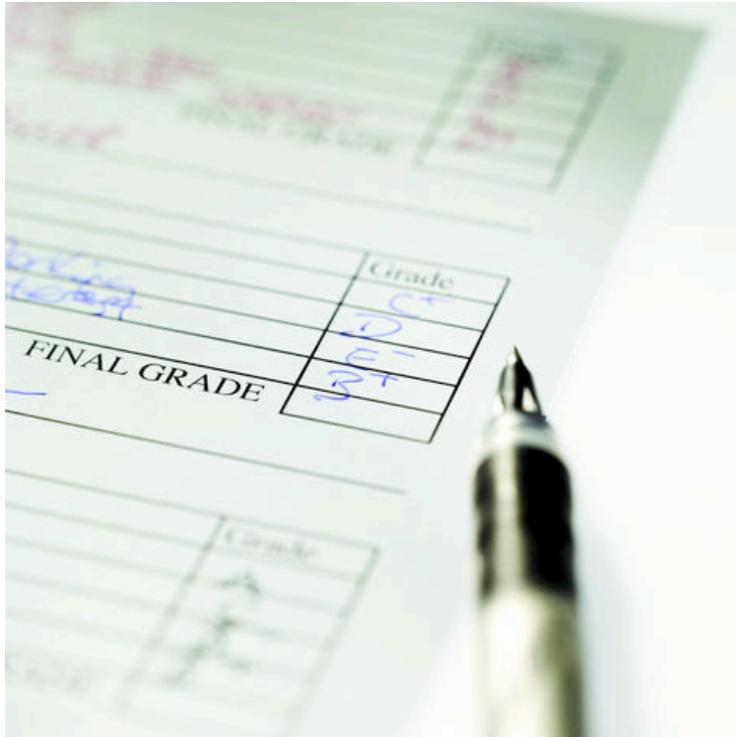


# Counseling helps steer low-income students toward higher education

By Julia West

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<http://www.metro.us/newyork/lifestyle/education/2013/11/14/college-counseling-creates-opportunities-for-low-income-students-study-shows/>



A study by the National Bureau of Economic Research earlier this year found that low-income students who were high academic achievers were not applying to competitive four-year colleges. The study also revealed — perhaps unsurprisingly — that with the help of intensive counseling, students may be more likely to apply to selective colleges.

Though the study highlighted this problem, we found that many professionals were already aware of the benefits of hands-on intervention in the education paths of disadvantaged youth.

“There has been a great deal of research done over the years that shows that one of the main reasons low income students tend to attend less selective colleges than they are suited to stems from a lack of information,” explains Thyra Briggs, vice president of admission and financial aid at Harvey Mudd College. Essentially, students are unaware of the support, both financial and otherwise, available to them. “College counseling can help students understand that colleges with a high price tag often have greater resources for aid,” says Briggs, adding that “in this process, access to information is everything.”

Specialized schools, like the Texas-based Foundation for the Education of Young Women, help make such information accessible. Ann Marano is the director of the College Bound Initiative there, and knows the value of empowering potential students with greater knowledge about the application process. “Students may not understand the ‘language’ of it all – how to start a college search, the college application process and that financial assistance is available,” Marano says.

That goes for parents, too. “Parent education is key, so we also focus on empowering parents with information and connecting them to alumni parents who have successfully navigated the process,” she says.

Dr. Ann P. Garber, independent counselor and president of Garber Academics, brings up a similar point. “For several reasons, including immigration trends, there is an unprecedented number of first-generation applicants, students whose parents did not attend college. They grow up without hearing about their parents’ college experiences,” says Garber. Without that knowledge to back them, and without proper assistance, it’s no wonder some very capable students struggle with the application process. But with the amount of resources that are now available, this trend can be reversed.