

The Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)

The Facts:

What is HEOP? The Higher Education Opportunity Program is a **partnership** between the **State of New York** and its **independent colleges** and **universities** that provide economically and educationally disadvantaged residents the possibility of a college education. What makes HEOP unique is that it serves students who would not normally meet the criteria for admission to the colleges they attend. The success these students have depends on the academic and supportive services that HEOP programs provide and the financial aid assistance that makes attending college a reality.

56 HEOP Programs at 52 Independent Colleges and Universities Making a Difference for New York State: The independent colleges and universities of New York have created “opportunity programs” that succeed better than any similar programs nationwide. Their commitment to serving the needs of our State’s disadvantaged youth has been one of the best buys for taxpayers of New York.

4,600+ HEOP Students with More Waiting to Be Served: There are not enough spaces in our opportunity programs to meet the demands of our disadvantaged population. Studies continually document that higher education is the way out of poverty. Continued State support is needed to meet the needs of New York State citizens whose lives can be changed because of HEOP. In return, HEOP graduates help change New York!

HEOP Has Been a Program for All New Yorkers: Serving the urban, suburban and rural disadvantaged population, HEOP students come from every county in the state. HEOP students come from those populations traditionally underrepresented in higher education. 32% of the HEOP student population is Black, 35% Hispanic, 10% Caucasian, 13% Asian, and less than 1% Native American. Of the 1,192 entering freshmen, ~33% had high school averages below 80, 69% scored 500 or lower on the SAT verbal and 64% scored 500 or lower on the SAT math. 89% of new freshman are from households with incomes below \$31,830. HEOP students bring a diversity of cultures, life experiences and challenging academic needs to our campuses, which enrich the educational possibilities for all students.

Over 36,000 Graduates: Higher Education Opportunity Programs work! HEOP has a success rate unparalleled in higher education nationwide. The most recent student cohort analysis indicates that **59%** of HEOP entering freshmen graduate, exceeding the national graduation rate of **52.5%** for four-year institutions (ACT, 2008). This is a remarkable achievement considering that all HEOP students were educationally disadvantaged and would not have been admitted as students to the college or university from which they graduated if it were not for HEOP! About 75% of these graduates go on to graduate, professional education or are employed upon graduation. HEOP graduates include doctors, accountants, engineers, corporate executives, lawyers, and educators.

The success of HEOP students demonstrates the investment value of State funding. The independent colleges and universities have also demonstrated their support of HEOP. When the HEOP partnership was created in 1969 the legislation mandated a 15% contribution from each host HEOP institution for every state dollar approved. Now over 43 years later participating colleges and universities are contributing almost \$5.00 for every state dollar received to assist HEOP students. The 2012-13 State budget included \$20.783 million for the HEOP statewide appropriation. This level of funding represents a challenge to the resources that campuses need to provide program support services and financial assistance to current and future HEOP students. As education related costs increase and economic conditions decline, HEOP students will be challenged to take out maximum loans, to do more work-study or to drop out of higher education entirely. The success of the Higher Education Opportunity Programs is in the lives of the students who are now empowered to make choices about their lives that would have been impossible without this unique partnership between the State of New York and its independent colleges and universities.

**HEOP WORKS!
KEEP IT WORKING!**