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**CITY COLLEGES' STAR SCHOLARS THRIVE IN SECOND YEAR WITH A 20 PERCENT INCREASE
IN ENROLLMENT, AND OVERALL HIGHER RETENTION RATES AND GPA THAN THEIR PEERS**

*Nearly 2,000 CPS graduates attend college tuition-free this fall with
eligibility for transfer scholarships to 15 four-year colleges and universities*

Now in its second year, the Chicago Star Scholarship program at City Colleges of Chicago is helping nearly 2,000 Chicago Public School (CPS) graduates attend college tuition-free this fall, a 20 percent increase in new scholars this year over last year. In the fall 2016 semester, City Colleges welcomed 1,017 Star Scholars – up 20 percent from fall 2015, with more qualified students expected to enroll throughout the academic year. As participation in the program increases, Star Scholars have proven to exceed GPA and retention rates set forth at two-year colleges, suggesting that Star students are more likely to persist in their coursework toward a degree than their peers.

To ensure more students can access a viable pathway to college regardless of financial means, Mayor Rahm Emanuel created the Star Scholarship in 2014 to reward hard-working CPS students with an opportunity to pursue a degree or certificate at City Colleges at no cost. Since that time, the program has grown to include a partnership between 15 Chicagoland colleges and universities to provide transfer scholarships for eligible Star students to continue progress toward college and career goals under the Chicago Star Partnership.

“We created the Star Scholarship because a family’s financial ability should not determine a child’s ability to one day go to college, and today this program is paying off with 2,000 students working to earn the college education they deserve,” said Mayor Emanuel. “While we are proud of this progress, we are committed to growing this program until we can ensure that every CPS high school graduate who wants to go to college can attend as long as they are willing to put in the work on their studies– no matter their financial means.”

In addition to increasing enrollment, the Chicago Star Scholarship program has successfully retained students with 86 percent of Star Scholars enrolled last fall returning to City Colleges for the fall 2016 term, suggesting that students enrolled in this program are highly likely to persist in their coursework toward a degree. That rate is nearly double the national fall-to-fall retention rate

for two-year public college students, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's most recent report which found that just 48.5 percent of students return to the same institution within the same fall-to-fall semester time period.

Star Scholars who returned to City Colleges are also succeeding in the classroom, with an average 2.83 institutional GPA, the equivalent of a "B/B-" grade on average, as tracked for fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters, compared to a 2.74 GPA for non-Star, non-remedial City Colleges credit students.

"We are pleased that an increasing number of CPS graduates are taking advantage of the Star Scholarship, and even more importantly, that we are helping these students successfully persist in their academic pursuits, complete their degree programs, and progress onto further college or career," said City Colleges of Chicago Chancellor Cheryl Hyman.

Mayor Emanuel met with several Chicago Star Scholars at the CCC Transfer Scholars On-Site Admissions Day, where students interviewed with – and, in many cases, received admissions offers from – more than 25 local, regional and national four-year colleges and universities, including the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Fisk University. Twelve of the participating colleges and universities – including UIC and IIT – are also partners in the Star Scholarship program. By the end of the fair, at least 100 students are expected to have received offers in hand from four-year institutions to continue building on the academic progress they began at one of the seven City Colleges.

To support students' continued academic success after completion at CCC, the Chicago Star Scholarship program features partnerships with 15 four-year colleges and universities. Each of these partners have committed to creating an opportunity that will allow Star Scholars to continue their college education following a successful completion at CCC, with wraparound supports to ensure a successful transfer. These packages range in monetary value between \$2,500 and nearly \$50,000 each year, and include some of the top colleges state- and nationwide.

The Star Partners are: Columbia College, DePaul University, Dominican University, Governors State University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Loyola University, National Louis University, North Park University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northwestern University, Robert Morris University, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Roosevelt University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

To become a Star Scholar, CPS students must meet specific criteria to be selected for the Star Scholarship at City Colleges of Chicago. These students must graduate with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, they must demonstrate "completion ready" ability with an ACT math and English score of 17, and they must enroll in one of CCC's structured, relevant pathways. Students meeting these criteria will be offered waivers for all tuition and books for up to three years at City Colleges of Chicago.

A diverse population of graduates from over 100 CPS high schools has enrolled in the Star Scholarship over the past two years. One of the top Star sending schools is Benito Juarez Community Academy High School in the Pilsen community, with 74 students currently enrolled as Star Scholars.

“The Star Scholarship affords talented students with limited financial means an opportunity to attend and succeed in college,” said Juan Carlos Ocon, principal of Benito Juarez High School. “This program has eliminated one of the most significant barriers our students faced in earning a college degree, and has shown our staff and our students alike that there is no limit to reaching their educational goals.”

It is estimated that students who complete the first two years at one of the seven City Colleges and then transfer to a four-year institution can save up to \$40,000 on the cost of a bachelor’s degree.

“Attending City Colleges of Chicago as a Star Scholar has helped me become a more competitive and confident student,” said Jose Hernandez, who studies Mathematics at Daley College and is a student with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. “The scholarship has improved my chances of one day earning a bachelor’s degree because of the partnerships the City Colleges Star Scholars program has with four-year colleges.” Jose added that receiving the Star Scholarship gave him a sense of hope for a successful future.

The Star program is one of many transformation efforts of City Colleges of Chicago’s Reinvention, which has directed significant investments in all seven colleges to ensure that all degrees and certificates are made relevant to the demands of the workplace and four-year institutions. Furthermore, since its launch in 2010, Reinvention has equipped all of the City Colleges to deliver enhanced academic supports for students to ensure that they have the tools and support they need to be successful in their pathway of choice. As a result, CCC realized its highest graduation rate on record—17 percent—more than double the graduation rate since the launch of the Reinvention effort.

For more information about the Chicago Star Scholarship at City Colleges of Chicago, visit: www.ccc.edu/starscholarship.

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