



PRESS RELEASE
ENLACE FLORIDA
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, SOC 107
Tampa, FL 33620

Media Contact: Braulio Colón, Asst. Director (813)974-3897-direct
(813)313-8903-cell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 10, 2008

LOW INCOME STUDENTS OVERCOME BARRIERS ON PATH TO DEGREE

~Report: Academic Aspirations of Many Florida Students caught in an “Achievement Trap”~

Tampa, FL- ENLACE Florida released a special report today describing obstacles many Florida students are having to overcome, both academic and non-academic, as they pursue a college degree. The report, *The Achievement Trap: The Plight of High Achieving Low Income Students*, reveals personal experiences of students currently succeeding in college after overcoming obstacles including dysfunctional families, drug abuse, poverty, and even homelessness. “These students are succeeding despite the many obstacles thrown in their path, showing that hard work and determination can still triumph in the end,” said Dr. Paul Dosal, Executive Director for ENLACE Florida. “They give us hope because they dedicated themselves to their studies and worked hard to support themselves and their families along the way,” said Dosal. However, access to and success in college today is at risk for thousands of high-achieving, limited-income students throughout Florida. Due to deep budget cuts across the State University System and ever-increasing demand, students are discovering, in fact, that a grade point average of 3.5 and an SAT score of 1100 may not get them into the university of their choice. “We’re talking about students who have done all that educators have expected of them and more in high school,” said Braulio Colón, Assistant Director for ENLACE Florida. “Their academic aspirations are being minimized because they are learning that they either can’t afford it, or the university can’t afford them,” said Colón. According to the *College Keys Compact* report recently released by the College Board, “nearly one-half of all college-qualified low- and moderate-income high school graduates do not enroll in a four-year program of college study because of financial barriers.” Despite the barriers, many students in Florida are discovering ways to escape what is known as the “Achievement Trap.” The ENLACE Florida report highlights three student profiles from the fifty-plus essays submitted by college students. ENLACE Florida asked first-generation, limited

income students to submit essays that describe the obstacles and barriers they faced in their effort to get into and succeed in college. “They inspired, enlightened, and alarmed us,” says Dosal. “The essays show that our students are talented and determined dreamers, despite their milieu, who deserve our thanks, admiration, and support,” said Paul Dosal, Ph.D. Next week, (Tuesday, April 15, 2008) hundreds of college students will visit the State Capitol Building in Tallahassee for ENLACE Florida Day. In an effort to promote college readiness, access and success, students will share their experiences with members of the Florida Legislature and state education officials. *The ENLACE Florida Day schedule of events is attached with this release.*

ENLACE FLORIDA is a statewide network funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and managed by NCCEP to promote college readiness, access, and success for Latinos, African-Americans, and other underrepresented students through non-partisan research, communication, advocacy, and support.

###