THE PITTSBURGH PROMISE
MAGAZINE

YOUR POST-SECONDARY SURVIVAL KIT

also in this issue

Naviance

MEET OUR EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS

SPRING 2019
The Pittsburgh Promise is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and is an affiliate of The Pittsburgh Foundation. The Pittsburgh Promise is a partnership between Pittsburgh Public Schools, the City of Pittsburgh, UPMC, and other key funders.
Jhaunea Sherer is a junior at Nazareth Prep in Emsworth. She became connected with A+ Schools through her school’s internship placement last year and has been active in TeenBloc ever since. Her plan after high school is to pursue a teaching career.

Michelle Bethel is a junior at Pittsburgh Allderdice. She became connected with TeenBloc over a year ago, and her memorable comment to her mom after her first TeenBloc meeting was, “Finally! You actually brought me to something good this time.” Michelle plans to pursue a career as a school counselor.

To learn more about TeenBloc and get involved, contact Amie Matson.

412-697-1298 ext. 113
amatson@aplusschools.org
The Pittsburgh Promise is a tremendous program that had a considerable impact on my life.

After graduating from Pittsburgh Allderdice, I earned my bachelor’s degree in Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering from Penn State University. After three college internships, I was hired by Range Resources and worked hard to become a Reservoir Engineer II.

Today, as a Promise alum, I proudly stand by the wonderful staff of The Pittsburgh Promise and hope to see the program live on for generations. I believe in The Pittsburgh Promise. That’s why now I’m a supporter myself. Beyond writing checks, I also attend events and engage other donors in conversations about the impact of the scholarship on the lives of students and alumni like me.

In addition to supporting The Promise, I also coach for a nonprofit youth boxing program. For me, working with young people provides the opportunity to instill the same values of hard work and persistence that I developed growing up in the Lincoln-Lemington neighborhood and helped me to get where I am today.

My parents actively modeled having a giving spirit while I was young. They extended hospitality, respect, and kindness to many vulnerable people who found their way into the family’s life. My parents thought nothing of bridging gaps with a few dollars or a place to stay when someone simply needed a break or a second chance.

I think that the work I’m doing in our community today carries their legacy on and my efforts have been fortified by my new wife’s active participation in philanthropic decisions.

Her willingness to help others is one of the many reasons why I chose to marry her. She is a nurse and always looking for ways to support any and every one.

I give to The Promise because I want the program to continue to provide the opportunity for success to Future Promise Scholars like you.

Keep working hard and dreaming big!

Wade Lipscomb

A Pittsburgh Promise scholarship opened up opportunities for me that I never thought were possible.

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Brett uses Geneva’s Pittsburgh Promise match to double the money she can use for her education. With caring professors and friendly classmates, she gets plenty of support and sees God continue His work in her life.

Brett Searcy - Pittsburgh, PA
Graduate of Barack Obama Academy of International Studies 6-12, Electrical Engineering major at Geneva College, class of 2020; Read more at Geneva.edu/brett

Geneva Room and Board Grant of up to $40,000 over four years!

Geneva.edu/promise

Geneva is a member of the Pittsburgh Promise Preferred College Partners Program.

Geneva.edu/promise

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“Impressive media creates a lot of opportunities for thinking both about how do we create ways to invite people into experiences that are really inaccessible and also how do we invent completely new kinds of experiences.”

— Doug North Cook
Assistant Professor of Immersive Media

To see the whole story, visit youtube.com/chathamu

Geneva.edu/promise

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In 2016, the Association of American Medical Colleges reported that only 41.5% of medical school applicants were admitted to a single program.

Although it’s competitive to be accepted into medical programs, there are things that you can do as early as 6th grade to boost your chance of an eventual medical school acceptance.

**Middle School**
In middle school, a future physician spends their time preparing for the rigors of an advanced high school curriculum. Enroll in the highest level of math. Many successful medical school applicants completed at least one year of Calculus in high school, which means that you should try to complete Algebra I in 8th grade if possible.

Learning how to perform well on standardized tests will also benefit you. If you are underperforming on the PSSA, for instance, it may be because you struggle with test taking. There are free resources that you can use to improve your test taking skills, I particularly like Khan Academy’s tips and tricks (www.khanacademy.org).

**Grades 9 & 10**
Maximize your academic effort and push yourself in challenging classes when you get to high school. If you can get at least a B/84% in an Honors/AP/IB class, it is worth it to stay in that level.

This is a good time to explore if medicine is a good fit for you while also logging community service hours. For example, volunteering with the Special Olympics might expose you to genetic and developmental diseases that you could envision yourself treating or researching. Joining a hospital-based volunteer program will allow you to witness clinical care up close.

**Grade 11**
Continuing your study of a foreign language throughout high school may give you an advantage when you apply to medical school. This is because the number of Americans for whom English is not their primary language is growing, and medical school admissions offices often look to develop a physician population that serves community needs.

Use the summer after 11th grade to grow your exposure to healthcare or the sciences. Some notable free programs include the UPMC Hillman Academy (hillmanacademy.upmc.com), the Governor’s School for the Sciences (sciences.pa-gov-schools.org), and I Look Like a Cardiologist (more details in the sidebar). Be wary of expensive programs, as you can find equally prestigious free and paid opportunities.

**Grade 12**
When researching colleges, email the pre-health advising office. Ask about the volume of medical school applicants and acceptance rates. Also find opportunities to talk to adults about their careers. Ask what they like about their chosen field, what their day looks like, and what training they needed. Although you may be planning a pre-medical track, it’s always possible that a conversation with your dentist could reveal a hidden interest in dentistry.

IF YOU WANT TO BE A DOCTOR, THE JOURNEY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL STARTS NOW.

CAREER SPOTLIGHT
**Physician**

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DO YOU WANT TO BE A DOCTOR?

The first “I Look Like a Cardiologist” conference was held on January 26th for western Pennsylvania girls interested in medicine and cardiology, more specifically. Cardiologists are doctors who specialize in studying or treating heart diseases and heart abnormalities. Professional mentors guided the students through simulations, discussions, and panel sessions. The program will be run again in the summer and this time, all students from backgrounds underrepresented in cardiology, including women, people of color, first-generation college students, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, are encouraged to apply.

To learn more about the program, email Diana Rodgers: diana@fiteducationconsulting.com
A Life-Changing Opportunity
for Qualified Young Men

- Williamson College of the Trades prepares qualified young men to be respected leaders and productive members of society.
- Williamson provides Trade, Leadership, and Character Development education centered on its core values of Faith, Integrity, Diligence, Excellence, and Service, resulting in an Associate in Specialized Technology Degree.
- Williamson relies on its endowment income, government grants, and the generosity of donors to provide each student a 3-year full scholarship covering 100% of the cost of tuition, room, and board.

www.williamson.edu

Craftsmen + Character = CAREERS

I chose to transfer to KU from one of the top private universities in the country and I’m so glad! There are so many ways to get involved on campus, trips to NYC and Philly and opportunities to make a difference. I see plenty of diversity and there are people in every direction willing to help. I’m a city girl and KU is pretty rural, but it definitely feels like home.

– Marshae Batchelor, Social Work/Criminal Justice

I’m a first generation student who really didn’t know what to expect out of college, but KU was so welcoming, it made my transition easy. You definitely get more attention than you would at a large university. Administrators helped me find jobs on campus and made me feel really comfortable. I even got to study abroad in Spain.

– Felix Alberto, Business Management/Communications

www.kutztown.edu
As high school graduation approached at Pittsburgh Allderdice, I felt pressured to consider a four-year institution. I considered going to school for nursing, mainly because it was something that my mom encouraged me to do and she always has my back. But after I spent some time researching careers in nursing, I quickly realized it wasn't for me.

I always loved cars and trucks and I wondered if this passion could turn into a career. I started going to career fairs and I had a close friend who attended Rosedale Technical College, so I reached out to him for input. After I learned about the various career fields at the school, I decided to go take a tour of the campus. It felt like a perfect fit.

After I graduated from high school and enrolled at Rosedale Tech, I dove right into the automotive technology program and it became clear that I made the right decision. I excelled in the coursework and enjoyed learning so much that following completion of the automotive program, I enrolled in the diesel technology program.

After graduating with two associate degrees, I immediately secured a job as a diesel technician at Frank Bryan, part of Bryan Materials Group. They are a family-run business and the laidback atmosphere matches my personality. My team services about 50 vehicles, which include cement trucks, triaxles, and occasionally some company pick-up trucks, so I have the opportunity to do the hands-on technical work that I love.

Thanks to Rosedale Tech and The Promise scholarship, today I’m practicing my skills and earning a living without worrying about repaying loans. I have an amazing job and a truck I love, I just bought a house, and my wife and I are going to have a baby this spring.

Based on my experience, I encourage Pittsburgh students to consider trade schools alongside four-year schools and do what you think is right for you. Trade school was the right choice for me and I think it is a great option for a lot of people that is often overlooked. There are awesome programs out there and a ton of jobs in the trades, so it’s possible to get a decent job right out of school.

Jerome Tria

My mom has always battled health problems, so she’s never been able to work. Receiving a Promise scholarship to attend Rosedale Tech was huge for me. Without it, I probably wouldn’t be where I am today.

Jerome Tria graduated from Pittsburgh Allderdice in 2012. He has two associate degrees from Rosedale Technical College, where he completed both the automotive technology program and the diesel technology program, and he now works as a mechanic at Frank Bryan.

Jerome Tria attended Rosedale Tech and now he’s living the dream.
Finally! You’re getting closer and closer to graduating from high school. And it’s only taken what feels like forever. But soon, you’ll be starting the next chapter of your education. You’ve been waiting so long for this. Working hard for it. Ready to move on and become more independent. Make your own choices and do your own thing.

And then... you get there. Pretty soon, you’re trying to find your way around a strange place or a huge campus filled with one massive, unfamiliar building after another. There’s a ton of work you need to do, this paper to write and that test to take. You look around and everyone seems to know where they’re going, what they’re doing, who to talk to and where they need to go. And suddenly you feel like you have no idea what you’re doing here, where you’re going, and who in the world can you talk to who would even understand what you’re feeling right now, anyway?

The good news is that you don’t have to worry. It’s totally cool. Because yeah, you’ll probably be working harder than you ever have before, but you are not on your own. There are support systems in place at almost every school called Student Services that are free and run by people who care about your well-being, who want to offer you a safe and nonjudgmental space to help you figure out whatever comes your way. Everything from making sure you’re taking the right classes for your major and how to overcome test anxiety, to dealing with homesickness, stepping in to help settle roommate disputes and even inviting you to blow off some steam with other students by attending really fun social events like movie and game nights, segway tours of the city you’re in, and trips to the ballfield.

The point is that if you put in the effort, you’re not going to fail. You’ve got this. Your school wants you to succeed. And they know that the transition out of high school and on to higher education is exciting but can be tough. Really tough. Not everyone immediately adjusts to this next chapter in their life, and they get that. So, to stress out about it is also totally normal.
The way to make it less overwhelming is to take advantage of as many Student Services as you need to. Sign up for that networking movie night with student alumni, find a place that feels safe and comfortable for you and spend time there, and most importantly, talk to people about how you’re feeling. Chances are pretty good that they’re probably feeling the same way you are. Or, have been there, done that, and can offer you some perspective on things.

“There are so many benefits of using a college’s services, like planning out your upcoming semester, networking with faculty and other professionals that have years of experience that can guide you to what you need,” says Promise Executive Scholar, and La Roche College sophomore Rebecca Boles, who’s majoring in biology. “They are not just working to help me, but they work to make all students grow in and out of the college. And when we finally graduate, we know who takes credit in helping us. In the end, you don’t want to waste all those semesters not asking and talking with people to better yourself and your college experience.”

And don’t forget that it’s just as important to take care of yourself as it is to go to class, get your work done, and study. You definitely need to carve out some time to relax and do stuff that you love to do, even if it’s as simple as watching your favorite television show or hanging out with friends; things that always make you feel good.

“My advice to students is to consider what they enjoyed being a part of in high school and testing that out on their college campus,” says Duquesne University’s Director of Freshman Development Adam Wasilko. “For example, many students come to Duquesne having had great experiences on an athletic team and join our intramural leagues or student government if they had a passion for that in high school. You will find like-minded students and form a community of people with the same goals as yourself. That tends to ease the anxiety and homesickness that sometimes happen while being away at college for the first time.”

And sometimes, what can help ease a lot of tension is to take the time, energy, and effort to do things that seem obvious, but can make a world of difference in your overall experience.

“So, no matter where you land after high school, don’t ever feel weird about reaching out and asking for help. Maybe you just need a little boost to get through those math classes. Maybe you need to spend your first year in close contact with guidance counselors. Just don’t freak out. Take it step by step, do what you need to do, and don’t forget that you’re never, ever alone.

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“Go to class every day,” says CCAC sophomore and graphic design major Kenneth Edmonds. “Sit in front of the class. I feel like when you sit in front of the classroom, you’re the first person the teacher looks at. So, when you raise your hand, they see you first. Just experience it.”

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The Preferred College Partners program is intended to strengthen relationships between The Pittsburgh Promise and certain post-secondary institutions that provide additional financial aid and robust support services for Promise Scholars.

Preferred College Partners provide grants for room and board to Promise-eligible students who are accepted to the institution. The schools will also provide targeted transition and academic support services to ensure student retention and success.

First Year Transitions
- Summer orientations
- Summer bridge programs
- Parent/family orientations
- Early intervention programs for struggling students

Academic Support
- Learning centers or labs
- Tutoring
- Faculty mentoring
- Peer mentoring or study groups

Financial Support
- Pre-enrollment financial aid counseling
- Student financial aid counseling
- Workshops in money management
- Short-term loans

Career Planning
- Interest/aptitude/personality assessments
- Career exploration workshops or courses
- Individual career counseling
- On-campus career fairs

Student Engagement
- Promise Scholar student organization
- Service learning opportunities
- Capstone courses or projects
- Learning communities

Personal Support
- Mental health counseling
- On-site health clinics
- Health and wellness courses or programs
- Personal coping skills courses or programs

Heather Hackett is the Communications and Project Manager of The Pittsburgh Promise. She received her bachelor’s degree in Communications and Creative Non-Fiction from the University of Pittsburgh, where she is currently pursuing a Master’s of Public Policy and Management.

Questions? If you have questions about the Preferred College Partners program, email questions@pittsburghpromise.org

These participating Preferred College Partners will extend program benefits to Promise Scholars who enter as freshmen in fall 2019:

ALLEHENY COLLEGE
CARLOW UNIVERSITY
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
CHATHAM UNIVERSITY
CLARION UNIVERSITY
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
EDINBORO UNIVERSITY
GENEVA COLLEGE
GROVE CITY COLLEGE
INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
JUNIATA COLLEGE
KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY
LA ROCHE COLLEGE
PENN STATE—SELECT CAMPUSES
PITTSBURGH TECHNICAL COLLEGE
POINT PARK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY
SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE
SETON HILL UNIVERSITY
SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY
SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY
SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY
THIEL COLLEGE
WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE
WESTMINSTER COLLEGE
WILLIAMSON COLLEGE OF THE TRADES

Our thanks to these Preferred College Partners, who share The Pittsburgh Promise’s commitment to helping make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable.

NEXT STEPS
1. Be certain to consider Preferred College Partners during your post-secondary school search.
2. Visit the schools and ask about financial aid and support services for Promise Scholars.
3. Apply to all schools of your choice.
4. Complete the FAFSA (FAFSA.gov) and PA State Grant Form (Pheaa.org) by May 1st.
5. Once accepted to a Preferred College Partner school, reach out to the school’s financial aid office to learn more about your individual financial aid package. Financial aid packages will vary by school and by student.
When I think of my time at West Point and the Army, I reflect on all the things I’ve accomplished and look ahead to the opportunities that are still to come.

Some of my best memories in life are from the time I’ve spent at military school and in the armed services. While both West Point and the Army are tough, what you get out of each often goes underrated. The people you live with and struggle alongside are from locales all across the country and world and will broaden your perspective. I have met some amazing people and learned from incredible mentors about their life experiences, which are extremely unique to their life in the army and living around the world.

Thanks to West Point and the Army, I have already had many once in a lifetime experiences in a number of far-flung states and countries. From leading a mission with 40 soldiers who were all older than me to having a private tour of the President of Poland’s office by the President himself, the chance to do something exciting and rewarding is there.

For those interested in serving others, the armed services are one of many paths available that can offer you that opportunity. If it is a path you are considering, I recommend playing sports, both to stay in good shape and to learn about teamwork. Make sure you are comfortable working with others in a stressful environment. Growing yourself in these ways will not only help you get into college or the armed forces, but they also help develop excellence.

My military experience is allowing me to build upon the strong foundation provided by my education at Pittsburgh Public Schools. While it can be difficult to manage so many things at once in the armed services, I developed the ability to find the balance I needed to be a leader and perform well. Regardless of your interests, both organizations will push you to be a better you.

MILITARY SCHOOLS AND THE ARMED SERVICES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET NEW PEOPLE, TRY NEW THINGS, AND GO TO NEW PLACES AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.

MY EXPERIENCES WITH WEST POINT AND THE ARMY HAVE SOLIDIFIED MY FAITH IN THIS NATION AND MY DEDICATION IN MAKING SURE IT IS THE BEST IT CAN BE.

Joel Macklin is from Stanton Heights. He graduated in 2015 from Pittsburgh Obama.

The Pittsburgh Promise allows students who enter the military after high school to defer their scholarship until after they are discharged. Students should contact The Promise office once they are discharged to pursue their scholarships funds.

questions@pittsburghpromise.org
Naviance

Helps Students Track Post-Secondary Success

Through Naviance, students in grades 6-12 can take advantage of four key benefits:

**Creation of a Personalized Plan:** Every student is unique, and every student has different options for college and career. Naviance helps students devise a plan that suits their individual needs.

**Career Exploration:** When students start exploring career possibilities early, they become more interested in succeeding in school. They also become more aware of a world of job opportunities waiting for them.

**Academic Planning:** Through Naviance, students, families, and counselors can work together to choose appropriate academic coursework that aligns with career goals.

**Self-Discovery:** Students become more confident in their abilities as they recognize their strengths and match their interests with potential careers. If their interests change, Naviance is there to redirect their efforts and help them find a new path to success.

**Pittsburgh Public Schools envisions that all students will graduate high school college-, career- and life-ready, prepared to complete a two- or four-year college degree or workforce certification.** With the official adoption of Naviance in 2017, the District is moving in the right direction to support that vision.

Naviance is comprehensive college and career readiness tool that helps schools align student strengths and interests to post-secondary goals, improving student outcomes and connecting learning to life.

This easy-to-use tool helps students track important information, including their potential eligibility for The Pittsburgh Promise. 

"We want to introduce these options at an early age. Pittsburgh Public Schools is ahead of the game by introducing it this early," said Monika Pugh, Director of Student Support Services (Guidance).

Managed by counselors and social workers, Naviance looks different at every school. Some schools are rolling out the program in Social Studies, English or Intervention classes. Overall, every student in grades 6-12 uses Naviance to prepare for life after high school.

Domenique Ross is a senior at Pittsburgh CAPA studying dance, and she has many colleges and universities to choose from upon graduation, including Howard University, University of the Arts, Hampton University, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

She says Naviance made the application and decision process easier.

"Instead of sending my transcripts through the mail, my guidance counselor just did it through Naviance. Colleges were able to receive my information faster," said Ross.

Students can access Naviance Student through a mobile app that is available on their smart phones or tablets, allowing students to take Naviance with them no matter where they are.

At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, parents will have access to each student’s profile. This access will help parents weigh in and/or guide their student regarding post-secondary education. In Spring 2019, Naviance will expand to students in grades 3-5.

**Monika Pugh**
Director of Student Support Services (Guidance)

**For more information about Naviance:**
- visit the District website: www.pghschools.org/naviance
- email: Monika.Pugh@pghschools.org

**Since 2003, Mercedes J. Williams has worked in many different capacities at over 20 Pittsburgh Public Schools. Currently, she works for the District’s Office of Public Information as Project Assistant where she covers social media, event planning, news stories, and serves as a liaison between the media and school district. Mercedes is a proud Pittsburgh Public Schools alumna, employee, and parent.**

**Monika Pugh**
Director of Student Support Services (Guidance)
EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS.

The Executive Scholars Program builds a pipeline between high-performing students and our major corporate donors.

The program provides students with the chance to connect with the prestigious company with which they are matched and pursue professional development opportunities and relationships during their college years. High school seniors with a strong academic performance, a commitment to community service, and leadership skills are encouraged to apply. The Executive Scholars Program is one of the ways that The Promise can help students transition not only from high school to college, but also from college to a career. We are very proud of our 2018 Executive Scholar Class. Congratulations!
American Eagle Outfitters Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Noor El-Dinabbé: A Pittsburgh CAPA graduate, Noor is now a pre-veterinary student at the University of Pittsburgh. She won several writing awards during high school and works for the school newspaper. Noor is passionate about creative writing and community-based art, so she was especially proud of her work as part of the Mattress Factory Art Cooperative’s outreach programs.

Samikchya Rai: Samikchya graduated from Pittsburgh Blackshear, where she achieved High Honor Roll all four years. Samikchya has not yet declared a major at the University of Pittsburgh, but she is passionate about biology and the environment. Samikchya was in the National Honor Society, volunteered at West Penn Hospital, and held an internship at Penn Presbyterian.

Teddy Cation: Majoring in fine arts, Teddy is attending the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. This Pittsburgh Allderdice graduate participated in the Student Conservation Association, National Honor Society, Spanish Club, and was on the crew team during high school. Teddy volunteers with S-Serve and Sojourner House.

Sarah Jackson: Sarah was a Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador at Pittsburgh Allderdice, where she participated in the Black Student Union and National Honor Society. In addition to her Promise award, she received the President’s Award, and a Leadership Award. Sarah is studying marketing at Robert Morris University with hopes of becoming a real-estate agent.

Miranda McCollum: Miranda received a Tuition Scholarship to study at Point Park University. She is majoring in advertising and hopes to start her career quickly after graduating college. She attended Pittsburgh Carrick. As Vice-President of the Senior Class Committee, she was proud to fundraise and organize a memorable prom for her classmates.

Thermo Fisher Scientific Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Haley Cook: Haley wants to become a physician to improve the quality of life no matter where they live in the world. She is studying bioinformatics at University of Pittsburgh. Haley graduated from Pittsburgh Allderdice. She completed a business internship with the Squire 1916 Urban Coalition and received the 2018 Pittsburgh Penguins Scholarship.

Amalia Lewis: Amalia has a passion for helping and caring for animals. She is currently enrolled in the pre-veterinary program at Clarion University and hopes to one day own her own clinic. At Pittsburgh Scholts she was captain of the soccer team and a member of the Black Student Union. She also volunteered with Interact Club.

Sarah Jackson: Sarah was a Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador at Pittsburgh Allderdice, where she participated in the Black Student Union and National Honor Society. In addition to her Promise award, she received the President’s Award, and a Leadership Award. Sarah is studying marketing at Robert Morris University with hopes of becoming a real-estate agent.

Beatrice Miles: During her time at Pittsburgh Allderdice, Beatrice received many awards for scientific research. She is now studying microbiology at the University of Pittsburgh with plans to go on to pursue a Ph.D. Psychology. During high school, Beatrice was on the soccer team and a member of the STEM/Minor Club and Mock Trial Team.

Kayla Ackerman: Kayla is majoring in nursing at Carlow University. She graduated with High Honors from Pittsburgh Carrick and was in Student Council and the Senior Class Committee. Kayla is passionate about ice hockey and was proud to become assistant captain of the two teams that she played with during high school.

W heel th Un te s: Uthe m is studying bioengineering at the University of Pittsburgh on a Stamps Scholarship. With passion for laboratory research and helping others, he aspires to become a heart surgeon. Utheem is most proud of his success at science competitions such as PRSEF and FAS. He is a Pittsburgh Allderdice graduate.

Joshua Zito: Joshua is studying mechanical engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. He enjoys making gadgets and engineering make projects and won several engineering awards while attending Pittsburgh SciTech. He is an intern and teaching assistant with Gene Team and a SciTech Student Ambassador. He also played soccer.

Giant Eagle Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Jeffrey Martin: Having received The Swanson School of Engineering Excellence Award, Jeff is attending the University of Pittsburgh where his focus is mechanical engineering. He hopes to extend his passion for go-karts into a career in automotive engineering. Jeff was involved in numerous activities and clubs and served as Class President at Pittsburgh Allderdice.

McKensie Williams: McKensie was salutatorian of her class at Pittsburgh Carrick. She is now in the pre-pharmacy program at the University of Pittsburgh. McKensie was president of the student leadership group The Future is Mine, secretary of both the National Honor Society and Student Council, and participated in the Homecoming committee, International Club, and Engineering Club.

Markayla Killin-Bronson: Being accepted at her dream school, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, made Markayla proud of her efforts to maintain good grades during high school. She played on the basketball team while attending Pittsburgh Allderdice. In addition to volunteer work, she also held retail jobs and worked summers at the Ammon Recreational Center.

Samantha Devlin: Samantha is a member of the Black Student Union. She also participates in the Student Conservation Association, National Honor Society, Spanish Club, and was on the crew team during high school. Tedd volunteers with S-Serve and Sojourner House.

Blaze Pelles: At Pittsburgh Carrick, Blaze was a member and a member of the cross country and track & field teams. He now attends the University of Pittsburgh where he is studying statistics, economics, and mathematics. Proud of his martial arts experience and accomplishments, Ignacio works as an Assistant Black Belt Instructor.

Ignacio Cuevas Manu: A Pittsburgh Allderdice graduate, Ignacio was a National Honor Society member and a member of the cross country and track & field teams. He now attends the University of Pittsburgh where he is studying statistics, economics, and mathematics. Proud of his martial arts experience and accomplishments, Ignacio works as an Assistant Black Belt Instructor.

Anya’s Zones: A Pittsburgh Urban Pathways graduate, Anya earned the Top Student Award, the President’s Award, and a Leadership Award. She is now studying criminal justice at California University of Pennsylvania, where she received the Board of Governor’s Scholarship. She strives to be a peacemaker who can find justice in unjust situations and hopes to someday work for a major law firm.

KeyBank Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Jeremy Benedetto: In addition to being salutatorian of his class at Pittsburgh Carrick, Jeremy was also president of National Honor Society. He was recognized by the American Legion for both his academic performance and his community service work. Now a student at the University of Pittsburgh, he aspires to become a doctor after finishing college.

Rauli Johnson: Rauli received an academic scholarship from Duquesne University, where she is majoring in accounting. Rauli is interested in auditing or forensic accounting after college, and eventually wants to work independently. This Pittsburgh Carrick graduate values community service and hopes to make a difference in people’s lives.

Ivagar Cesar Nino: A Pittsburgh Allderdice graduate, Ignacio was a National Honor Society member and a member of the cross country and track & field teams. He now attends the University of Pittsburgh where he is studying statistics, economics, and mathematics. Proud of his martial arts experience and accomplishments, Ignacio works as an Assistant Black Belt Instructor.

Sarah Jackson: Sarah was a Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador at Pittsburgh Allderdice, where she participated in the Black Student Union and National Honor Society. In addition to her Promise award, she received the President’s Award, and a Leadership Award. Sarah is studying marketing at Robert Morris University with hopes of becoming a real-estate agent.

Miranda McCollum: Miranda received a Tuition Scholarship to study at Point Park University. She is majoring in advertising and hopes to start her career quickly after graduating college. She attended Pittsburgh Carrick. As Vice-President of the Senior Class Committee, she was proud to fundraise and organize a memorable prom for her classmates.
McGuinn Family Foundation Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Keiyoa Holtzclaw is studying early childhood education at Carlow University. She was proud to stay on the High Honor Roll throughout high school at Pittsburgh Allderdice. She is a sports enthusiast who enjoys playing softball and basketball. Keiyoa wants to become a teacher after college and help children succeed in school and life.

Kortnei Almon is a Pittsburgh Carrick graduate. Kortnei was a member of National Honor Society and president of the Senior Class Committee. She is now majoring in general studies at CCAC. After completing her studies, she hopes to become an architect or civil engineer. She also wants to give back to her community and help others.

Andrew Knight is an additional several academic awards. Andrew was Senior Class President and valedictorian of Pittsburgh Perry. He played basketball and tennis and volunteered his time at the Jefferson Recreation Center. He is now studying English Literature at the University of Pittsburgh, with plans to become an English teacher.

Maria Pilar Lopezino is the recipient of Pittsburgh Online Academy’s Superintendent Achievement Award. She is majoring in early childhood education at La Roche College and wants to make the world a better place for kids. In addition to caregiving for her cousin who has spina bifida, she volunteers at Free Arts Wishes and the Squirrel Hill Community Food Pantry.

Anya Epstein is passionate about music and art. Anya is studying theatre and dance at Millikin University. She was prognosis earn scholarships to help pay for school, including the Constance T. Rockwell Scholarship from the Pittsburgh CLO Guild. While at Pittsburgh CCAP, she performed volunteer work on behalf of Squirrel Hill Food Pantry, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, and Temple Sinai.

Mia Kramkova is studying psychology and biology sciences at Carnegie Mellon University because she wants to become a doctor or physician assistant. With supplemented High Honor Roll all four years at Pittsburgh Allderdice, where she played volleyball and participated in Student Council. She also volunteered at Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh and Framed Circle.

Mylan Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Grace Wolof is a graduate of Pittsburgh Allderdice. She is now majoring in pre-medicine at Edinboro University, where she received an Honors Program Award. In the future, she plans to specialize in women’s health because it is her hope to positively impact the lives of women all over the United States.

Charysma Adams is studying civil engineering at Drexel University. She is now a mentor at Panhandle Road, where she played the volleyball and softball teams at Pittsburgh Allderdice and now in National Honor Society. She was proud to receive awards from the Society of Women Engineers twice during high school.

Bree McCullough is studying physics at Bucknell University, where she received a Presidential Fellowship. She hopes to use her degree to help wildlife and improve the world. She was a member of the fencing team, active in the music program, and President of the Jewelry Club at Pittsburgh Allderdice. An entrepreneur, she operates her own face-painting business.

Austin Burnett is enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh. Austin is studying physics and astronomy. A Pittsburgh Obama graduate, Austin was proud to earn an A+ Diploma. While in high school, he participated in the We Promise program and the Black Student Union. He also volunteered with K2BOOM!

Want to learn more about the Executives Scholars Program? Email: executescholars@pittsburghpromise.org.
When I was an undergraduate, learning support was available only for students who were struggling academically. Today, California University and many other schools take a proactive approach to academic success, offering skills development and tutoring programs to students at all academic levels. We recognize that even highly competent students sometimes encounter difficulties in a particular course or discover that high school study skills do not always meet the challenges of college-level learning.

Today at Cal U, the Office of Academic Success coordinates a first-year seminar course that helps every new student master essential skills, learn about university resources and transition smoothly to the college environment. Online tools allow all students to check their progress toward graduation or “raise their hand” to request assistance with scheduling or coursework. A welcoming, one-stop location for academic support in writing, reading, STEM subjects and study skills makes it easy for students to get help before they fall behind.

As a first-generation college student, I would have appreciated a comprehensive student success office where all students were welcomed and supported. Knowing that help would be available should I need it would have given me greater confidence as I embarked on my college career.

What support services do you see post-secondary schools offering today that you wish had been available when you were in college?

Dr. Kenneth S. Hawkinson  
Kutztown University

I was happy with the support services I received while in college but had little awareness of the help available before arriving to campus. I was a first-generation student, attended a community college, and worked at a factory to pay tuition, rent, and food. After earning my associate degree, I continued on to a bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degree with the help of the military and a stipend for having served as a Peace Corps Volunteer. On my return, I became a professor, rising through the ranks to my current role as president of Kutztown University. I am grateful for the support I received once in college—academic advising to help me choose the right classes, financial aid to receive grants and short-term loans, residential life which gave me a job, student activities that provided me with opportunities to develop leadership skills, and so many other areas. A college education made all the difference in my life—it awakened me, made me curious, helped build my character, and each day I am humbled to be in this role as president of a university and grateful for all the opportunities attending college provided me. Today, institutions begin assisting students with options to help them succeed in college while they are still in high school, and their journey is easier as a result.

Ms. Geraldine M. Jones  
California University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson  
Clarion University

Take advantage of everything you can! This is not only a time to learn in the classroom, but also to grow and develop into the person you want to become. You will meet people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds and from all over the world. Embrace these opportunities; join clubs and organizations that interest you and participate in community service projects. Know that you are not alone, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. At Clarion, our Student Success Center houses Tutoring/Learning Skills, the Writing Center, Disability Support Services, and Minority Student Services. We cultivate your potential and give you one-on-one assistance from professionals who’ll help you set academic goals for success. Take care of your body and mind. Be active in ways that work for you and your situation. Our Center for Wellness focuses on helping you achieve positive mental and physical health—both of which are passions of mine. Don’t wait until you’re ready to graduate to start thinking about career preparation. Our CU Mentor program matches participating students with mentors in their chosen field, so you can learn practical knowledge to ensure a good start when you graduate.
What support services do you see post-secondary schools offering today that you wish had been available when you were in college?

Dr. Kathy Richardson  Westminster College

While a college student, I had access to excellent classroom teaching and faculty advisors who cared about my intellectual development. What my peers and I didn’t have, though, was a professional career center that helped us as first- and second-year students to more clearly match our strengths and skills to appropriate academic disciplines. Opportunities to develop job-search strategies and to practice interviewing would have reduced some of the stress and uncertainty associated with finding internships and jobs during our junior and senior years. Liberal arts colleges engender the “hard skills” of our academic disciplines and the “soft skills” of communicating to and collaborating with others, and it would have been helpful to know how to reflect those skills in our resumes, portfolios and interviews. Stronger connections with potential employers and alumni networks would have made it easier for us to find mentors and to establish our own professional networks.

Such a center, like Westminster’s Professional Development Center, would have allowed alumni to identify strong candidates from their alma mater and the rewarding opportunity to give back by helping students develop their skills. The enhanced career services found today on most college campuses provide students with opportunities to refine the professional competencies that lead to success in their first careers.

Dr. Calin L. Troup  Geneva College

At the entry point, the quality of direction for major selection and vocational direction is stronger today. Colleges and universities equip students with aptitude and interest analyses that suggest majors to complement their passions and capabilities. We also do a better job with students as they engage college work and provide tools for classroom success. Smaller schools like Geneva combine high expectations with strong support from professors and staff to invite students into the demands of a college education.

As students complete their degrees, colleges now have more effective support services for job and graduate school placement. Higher education has reinvented itself in preparing students to search for good jobs. A generation ago, we might receive personal advice on resumes, job interviews, business etiquette, etc., from a good professor. We had job fairs and visits from companies looking for entry-level positions and from graduate program recruiters. But today schools offer students programs that provide hands-on training for the job search process. Students still need to engage these services and take initiative—an essential part of student success and good placement at completion of the college journey.
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Attention Seniors:
The deadline to file the FAFSA and PHEAA for the 2019-20 school year is **May 1st**!

Both the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the PA State Grant Form (PHEAA) are required every year before Pittsburgh Promise funds can be paid. The PHEAA only needs to be completed once unless you transfer schools.

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Questions? Email: [questions@pittsburghpromise.org](mailto:questions@pittsburghpromise.org)