



Hosted by  
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# CHAS

CONSORTIUM ON HIGH  
ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

Resources, Grants,

and Conferences

for CHAS Faculty



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## *Member Institutions*

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Barnard College  
Bates College  
Bowdoin College  
Bryn Mawr College  
Bucknell University  
Carleton College  
Clark University  
Colby College  
Colgate University  
College of the Holy Cross  
College of Wooster  
Connecticut College  
Dartmouth College  
Franklin & Marshall College  
Hamilton College  
Hampshire College  
Haverford College  
Lafayette College  
Mt. Holyoke College  
Oberlin College  
Pomona College  
Reed College  
Sarah Lawrence College  
Skidmore College  
Smith College  
St. Lawrence University  
Swarthmore College  
Trinity College  
Union College  
University of the South  
Vassar College  
Washington and Lee University  
Wheaton College  
Wellesley College  
Williams College



Founded in 2000, The Consortium on High Achievement and Success (CHAS) is composed of 35 private, select liberal arts colleges and small universities dedicated to promoting high achievement, leadership, and personal satisfaction of students on member campuses, with a focus on promoting success among students of color. CHAS develops programs to support the whole student academically, socially and culturally. CHAS is supported by its members and is hosted by Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

## CHAS STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Students who matriculate at CHAS institutions are among the brightest and best prepared in the nation and, when they enter college, they are hopeful and often optimistic that they will succeed. Yet too many of them fail to achieve their highest potential, and disproportionate numbers of those are students of color. Because of the similarities among our student populations and our common mission as private liberal arts colleges and small universities, we believe in collective study of our challenges and development of solutions.

*WORKING TOGETHER, WE WILL EFFICIENTLY AND  
PRODUCTIVELY TRANSFORM OUR CAMPUSES INTO OPTIMAL  
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL STUDENTS.*

We share a common approach to this project and base our work on common assumptions:

- We believe that all students who matriculate on our campuses are capable of succeeding. Because of our belief in the capabilities of our students, we will devote Consortial efforts to promoting high educational achievement, not remediation.
- Our most important mission is to transform institutional barriers into gateways to high achievement. Any student can experience difficulties; it is the role of the faculty and college or university administration to anticipate difficulties and provide appropriate preventive measures and interventions to help students over the hurdles that they encounter. Accordingly, the institutional environment and support systems available should be the focus of attention, not individual students.
- We also believe that attention must be directed to the “whole student.” Thus, we will continue to address the academic, social-cultural, and financial support systems needed to promote high achievement, leadership, and high levels of student satisfaction with our institutions.
- Correspondingly, the success of our efforts depends upon attention to the “whole college/university.” Each person on a campus can and does make a difference in the lives of students and their feelings of belonging and their motivation to succeed. Thus, we must involve people from all over the campus and help them recognize the role that they play in this important enterprise.
- Our explicit purpose is to promote improved outcomes for students of color at CHAS institutions. However, we firmly believe that our actions will benefit all students, whether directly through participation in the same programs or indirectly through the enhanced, healthier educational environment that ensues when all students receive the resources to thrive academically and personally.

## CHAS FACULTY

### *Working with CHAS Faculty*

Since the founding of CHAS, a major goal of the Consortium has been to engage our faculty in its work. The presidents and chief academic officers of CHAS expressed their clear support for this objective at the 2003 Presidents Forum. They agreed that campus climate affects both classroom and co-curricular learning, and that faculty play a key role in creating an inclusive learning environment. Since 2005 the chief academic officers have actively participated in recruiting faculty to participate in CHAS conferences, serving on the jury for faculty grants, and supporting their faculty members' applications for CHAS grants.

### *Faculty Conferences*

CHAS has organized three conferences for its faculty. The first was hosted by Mt. Holyoke College on May 25, 2005 and was attended by 70 faculty in the math and science disciplines from 17 member institutions. The second conference targeting faculty in these disciplines was held at Haverford College on November 4, 2005. Faculty in the arts and humanities attended the third faculty conference at Mt. Holyoke College on May 28, 2008.

These conferences highlight the work of fellow CHAS faculty members. The focus has been on pedagogies that engage all students in the learning process, effective mentoring and counteracting stereotype threat, and the potential of peer-led learning. Faculty have shared best practices and innovative approaches, and continue to share information across institutions following the conferences.

CHAS faculty will be invited to the fourth conference to be hosted by Union College in June, 2009. Please visit the CHAS website for updates.

*DIRECTLY ENGAGING WITH STUDENT*

*LEADERS WHO ATTEND THESE CONFERENCES*

*HAS ALLOWED SOME TO APPRECIATE*

*THE CHALLENGES OUTSIDE OF THE*

*CLASSROOM WHICH AFFECT THE LEARNING*

*ENVIRONMENT.*

### *Funds Awarded*

CHAS has provided approximately \$86,000 in grants to 14 teams of faculty from 11 member institutions. Applicants were required to demonstrate how their research would be relevant to many CHAS campuses, not just their own faculty, and agreed to present the outcomes of their research at a CHAS-organized event. The 2005 grant recipients gathered at Wesleyan University on November 17, 2006 to share their work, and their reports were compiled for distribution throughout CHAS. 2007 grant recipients will report on their research in June 2009 at Union College.

Future proposals for research on promoting high academic achievement among historically underrepresented students may involve pedagogical improvements to courses, creating workshops for faculty on mentoring, or a variety of other approaches to enhance the faculty's role in promoting student success.

### *Faculty Participation Across CHAS*

Faculty have played a role in every CHAS working group as we seek to impact the whole institution. They have participated in Supplemental Instruction supervisor trainings to support students who lead learning sessions for their peers. They have participated in campus-wide assessment projects such as the Equity Scorecard project to identify areas in which the institution can better promote student success. And they have attended annual student conferences, including the Black and Latino Males Conference, and the Promoting a Diverse Social and Cultural Life Conference.

## CHAS FACULTY GRANTS

Most recently in 2008, faculty were invited to compete for a maximum award of \$6,500 that will allow them to undertake a project to promote high academic achievement among all students, with a focus on students of color. The CHAS faculty grant competition encourages faculty members teaching in all disciplines to submit proposals that focus on pedagogy and enhancing the faculty's role in promoting students success. Both individuals and groups may submit. Projects should be directed at how we teach, or how teach, rather than what we teach. For future grant competition announcements, please check the CHAS Web site: <http://org.trincoll.edu/chas>.

## A list of previous grant recipients follows.

### 2005 Grant Recipients

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**Dr. Stephanie Pfirman**, Professor & Chair, Environmental Science  
**Dr. Kristen Shepard**, Assistant Professor of Biological Science  
BARNARD COLLEGE

*Fostering Achievement: Best Practices for Advancing Diverse Students and Faculty*

- Seminar series to focus on teaching, advising, and mentoring in the sciences.

**Dr. Steven Stroessner**, Associate Professor & Chair, Psychology

**Dr. Catherine Good**, Term Assistant Professor  
BARNARD COLLEGE

*Eliminating Stereotype Threat through Best Practices*

- To create a resource of research-based strategies for reducing stereotype threat and to boost student achievement.

**Dr. William Church**, Associate Professor, Chemistry  
TRINITY COLLEGE

*Scientists of Color: Exposure in the Classroom*

- Allowing students of color exposure to role models in the field of science.

**Dr. James Donady**, Professor, Biology/Director HPPI

**Renee Johnson-Thornton**, Associate Coordinator, Mellon  
Mays Undergraduate Fellowship

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

*Virtual Interactive Pre-College Program (V.I.P.)*

- To stimulate and adapt the Health Professions Partnership Initiative's (HPPI) Pre-college Experience Program into an Internet format.

**Dr. Thomas Luxon**, Cheheyl Professor & Director for Advancement  
of Learning

**Dr. Giavanna Munafo**, Associate Director, Institutional Diversity  
& Equity

**Dr. Colleen Larimore**, Assistant Dean of First-Year Students  
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

*Critical Moments for Undergraduates in Pre-medical Courses: 35 Cases*

- Research into why students abandon pre-med preparation and what works for them when they succeed.

**Dr. Kirk Pillow**, Associate Dean of the Faculty

**Dr. David G. Bailey**, Associate Professor of Geosciences

**Dr. Karen Brewer**, Associate Professor of Chemistry

**Dr. Alistair E.R. Campbell**, Associate Professor of Computer Science

**Dr. Jinnie M. Garrett**, Professor of Biology

**Dr. Larry Knop**, Professor of Mathematics

**Dr. Herman K. Lehman**, Associate Professor of Biology

**Dr. Tara McKee**, Assistant Professor of Psychology

HAMILTON COLLEGE

*Improvement of the Math/Science Climate for Students of Color at Hamilton College*

- A reaction to the CHAS student narratives, this project seeks to address the issue of diversity in the sciences through a self-study survey on classroom climate.

### 2007 Grant Recipients

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**Dr. Jeffrey Reno**, Assistant Professor, Political Science

**Dr. Daniel Klinghard**, Assistant Professor, Political Science  
COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS

*A Program for Student Research on Race, Ethnicity, and Urban Affairs*

- Promoting high academic achievement in research projects among students of color, increasing the number of students engaged in researching the fields of race, ethnicity, and urban affairs.

**Dr. Stephen Schmidt**, Associate Professor, Economics  
UNION COLLEGE

*Access to the Economic Major for Women and Students of Color*

- Identify factors which will enable changes to make the major more accessible to underrepresented students. Surveys of students at different class levels and those not taking economics courses will identify obstacles.

**Dr. E'mett McCaskill**, Associate Professor, Psychology  
BARNARD COLLEGE

*The Personal Narratives of Minority Women in Higher Education*

- A study of the dynamic between student and professor, including documentation of minority experiences in the form of qualitative assessment.

**Dr. Theodore Fernald**, Associate Professor and Chair, Linguistics

**Dr. Donna Jo Napoli**, Professor, Linguistics

**Dr. David Harrison**, Associate Professor, Linguistics  
SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

*Linguistic Underpinnings of Racism and Bigotry*

- Scientific approach to identify the origins of stereotypes that lead to racial, ethnic, and other types of bias based on bigotry. Exploration of the symbolic and covert meanings and assumptions embedded in our everyday speech and writing.

### 2008 Grant Recipients

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**Dr. Steven Yao**, Assistant Dean for Diversity Initiatives

**Dr. Shelley Haley**, Professor of Classics & Africana Studies and  
Director, Africana Studies Program

**Dr. Nancy Rabinowitz**, Margaret Bundy Scott Professor of  
Comparative Literature

**Dr. Stephen Orvis**, Professor of Government

HAMILTON COLLEGE

*Pedagogical Practicum for Fostering Dialogue in the Diverse College*

- Facilitating the opportunity for faculty members to hone their pedagogical skills while promoting campus-wide conversation about teaching and multiculturalism.

**Dr. Benjamin Lotto**, Professor of Mathematics

**Dr. Natalie Friedman**, Associate Director of the Learning and  
Teaching Center

VASSAR COLLEGE

*Crossing the Divide: Race & Pedagogy in STEM Fields*

- Development of a conference designed to promote communication between scientists/mathematicians and humanists, and discuss mentoring of students of color in STEM disciplines.

**Dr. Lucas Wilson**, Associate Professor of Economics and American  
Studies and Director of Academic Development

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

*Collaborative Learning: Taking Students through the Different Stages of Scholarly Research Process*

- Redesign a current senior economics seminar using the collaborative research project approach developed by John Wertheimer, (History, Davidson College). Students will learn the form and content of scholarly writing in political economy while using techniques and activities expressly designed to take advantage of social aspects of learning and understanding.

**Dr. Light Carruyo**, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin  
American and Latino/a Studies

**Dr. Eve Dunbar**, Assistant Professor English and Africana Studies  
VASSAR COLLEGE

*Emerging Pedagogical Practices and High Achievement in the Multicultural Classroom and Beyond*

- Development of a two-day retreat that explores questions of pedagogy, high achievement, and faculty-student relationships that arise when multiculturalism and difference are central to the classroom curriculum.

## STEREOTYPE THREAT

Claude Steele, Lucy Stern Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, shared his research on stereotype threat with CHAS presidents and chief academic officers at the first Presidents Forum on November of 2003 and has spoken at several CHAS campuses.

*STEREOTYPE THREAT REFERS TO BEING*

*AT RISK OF CONFIRMING, AS SELF-*

*CHARACTERISTIC, A NEGATIVE STEREOTYPE*

*ABOUT ONE'S GROUP.*

This term was first used by Steele and Joshua Aronson in 1995, who showed in several experiments that Black college freshmen and sophomores performed more poorly on standardized tests than White students when their race was emphasized. When race was not emphasized, however, Black students performed better and equivalently with White students. The results showed that performance in academic contexts can be harmed by the awareness that one's behavior might be viewed through the lens of racial stereotypes.

Geoffrey Cohen, Associate Professor of Psychology at Yale University, Joshua Aronson, Associate Professor of Psychology at New York University, and Valerie Purdie-Vaughns, Associate Professor of Psychology at Yale University, have given talks to faculty on their respective research on stereotype threat at more than 15 CHAS campuses. Practical applications of their research to pedagogy and mentoring have been gathered to create a list of strategies used to avoid or counteract stereotype threat. Strategies for “wise mentoring” include:

- Faculty and administrators must watch for the signs of stereotype threat. Stereotype threat may occur to students of any group which may be subject to negative group stereotypes. Students especially identified with the group and students who care a great deal about doing well in college are most likely to suffer. The consequences are not only poorer performance, but switching majors to remove oneself from difficult situations and spending more time in nonacademic pursuits that are less likely to challenge identity.
- Stereotype threat is situational and avoidable. Watch for situations that cue people to their identity; in such situations those so identified will wonder whether the reaction of others stems from prejudice.

- Some students disengage with the course due to perceived threat. Check early and often on who is doing homework, missing class, participating in class discussions, and asking questions. Look for parity across racial, ethnic, gender, and other groupings, or examine features of the classroom environment or style that may be allowing distrust and perceived threat to impede good teaching.
- Treating all students alike or thinking that all students will see the classroom environment or feedback in the same way will not lead to equitable outcomes. The classroom is not color- or gender-neutral from some students' perspective.
- During orientation, early meetings with advisers, and in other settings, faculty and administrators must convey two messages.
  - All students admitted to the college have what it takes to succeed; no one was admitted undeservingly.
  - It is normal during the transition to college for all students to wonder if they belong in college and to doubt their capability relative to others. Doubts tend to disappear by sophomore year, but for some they linger. When we acknowledge doubt as a general reaction among students, students from under-represented groups, athletes, legacies, and women in science and math are not as likely to worry. Research shows that they will approach work with more enthusiasm (e.g., studying longer hours, communicating more with faculty, earning higher GPAs).
- Because some students may worry that faculty “buy into” stereotypes about their group, it is important to build trust and to take steps to increase the likelihood that feedback from faculty will be constructively received rather than dismissed.

Successful faculty mentors do not shy from criticizing student's work, but they:

- invoke high standards and demand a lot from all students and communicate about high standards from the outset of the course;
- communicate to students that they are capable of achieving high standards, assuring students of their ability to meet the standards;
- emphasize the importance of effort, practice, persistence, and the development of skills; and
- provide authentic feedback to students, communicating what they need to do to perform better.

- Professors should stress skill development, rather than ability or performance, as a key to success and stress learning rather than performance. Cooperative learning exercises *applied in a sound manner* (e.g., Jigsaw classroom) increase student learning and feelings of effectiveness and reduce social isolation and prejudice. Minimizing competition (e.g., eliminating grading on a curve) and encouraging group study help as well.
- Faculty can teach students that “intelligence is malleable,” not fixed, and that the “mind is a muscle.”
- Students who are taught about stereotype threat learn more and perform better than students unaware of the phenomenon. One reason may be that students generally overestimate the number of people who believe negative stereotypes. Another reason may be that some students fear that the stereotype is accurate; they need to be reassured that it is not.
- Develop stories, create a video, or otherwise expose first year-students to upperclass students who experienced challenges and eventually found success through perseverance and through helpful resources.
- Faculty and administrators need to be careful about messages about diversity. Students don’t believe messages about “color-blindness.” They do appreciate communications about valuing diversity and recognizing that people are different from one another. Students of color who have white friends in high school achieve more highly in college. Integration matters.
- To promote integration among students in college right from the beginning, encourage late-night discussions in residence halls on issues pertinent to the transition to college. Through these discussions, students recognize commonalities of concerns among first-year students. Issues pertinent to racial or ethnic identity should not be the initial focus of discussions, but at a later time encourage students to read something and discuss the topic among themselves.
- Critical mass matters: the more students find people like themselves, the more comfortable they will feel. When asked to identify her happiest day on the Supreme Court, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor reported that it was the day that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg joined her.

## RESOURCES

1. Dr. Steven Stroessner, Professor of Psychology at Barnard College, utilized a CHAS faculty grant to develop a Web site called *Reducing Stereotype Threat*. Please visit this resource at: <http://reducingstereotypethreat.org>.
2. *Student Voices* are two documents produced by CHAS and formatted by Hamilton College. They contain excerpts from 29 of 50 interviews recently conducted with under-represented students about their *classroom and campus experiences* at eight CHAS institutions in four Northeastern states. They have been utilized for planning among faculty on many CHAS campuses and are available through your institutional representatives.
3. A summary of the 2005 reports from CHAS faculty grantees on their funded research is available upon request from the CHAS administrative office.
4. Dr. Gavin W. Henning, Director, Student Affairs Planning, Evaluation, and Research at Dartmouth College, is developing an instrument for use by faculty in building assessment into their CHAS related and other research projects. Please contact CHAS for details.
5. The Teagle Foundation, in its 2006 working group white paper “Eliminating Racial Disparities in College Completion and Achievement: Current Ideas, New Ideas and Assessment”, offers a list of best practices. The document is available at: [http://www.teaglefoundation.org/learning/pdf/2006\\_cornell\\_whitepaper.pdf](http://www.teaglefoundation.org/learning/pdf/2006_cornell_whitepaper.pdf).
6. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute offers online resources for educators in the sciences at: <http://www.hhmi.org/resources/educators/>.

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