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Evaluation of the Summer Transition Grant Program

Report to the 2013 Legislature



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About the Minnesota Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state Office providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The Office also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding up to \$150 million in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The Office oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

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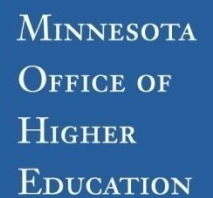
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Introduction

The 2009 Minnesota Legislature created the Summer Transition Grant program to provide financial assistance directly to eligible Minnesota students attending research-based high school-to-college summer developmental transition programs offered by Minnesota colleges in the summer between high school graduation and the freshman year of postsecondary education. The grant program is administered by the Office of Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the “Office”) and was first implemented during the summer of 2010 for students who graduated from high school after December 31, 2009. The annual program appropriation was originally designated as \$4.9 million from the 2010-2011 biennium State Grant appropriation but was subsequently reduced during the 2010 legislative session to \$1.0 million per year.

According to the statute (Appendix A), the purpose of summer transition programs is to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework when the student enrolls in a postsecondary program. Programs must address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by the student, as well as provide support services to participating students.

Legislation included a strong evaluation component to measure the effectiveness of summer transition programs in meeting goals. The program statute requires the Office to convene a data working group comprised of knowledgeable data collection and academic delivery staff from the types of institutions participating in the program. This group assists the Office in developing the methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of programs designed to improve academic performance and postsecondary retention, including the identification of appropriate comparison groups.

This report includes information about Summer Transition Grant recipients enrolled in participating summer bridge programs during the summer of 2012, as well as follow-up college enrollment data on recipients who completed a summer bridge program during the summer of 2010 and 2011.

Summer Transition Grant Program Overview

Application Process

As part of their program proposal, participating campuses were required to have marketing and outreach plans to reach potential students and direct them to the appropriate application materials. In order to apply for a Summer Transition Grant, students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) accessible at: www.fafsa.gov. Students also completed either the paper or on-line Summer Transition Grant application developed by the Office to collect data needed for award calculation and program evaluation (Appendix B). The application also contains a data release section whereby the student permits colleges to release private student data to the Office for program evaluation purposes. As with the Minnesota State Grant program, the Summer Transition Grant application was submitted no later than 30 days after the start of the summer program.

Eligible Students

The program is intended to serve students who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, though the statute does not specifically exclude other types of students from participating. Underrepresented groups in this case include: African-American, American Indian, Latino and Southeast Asian or other historically referenced racial/ethnic minorities; students who are economically disadvantaged and/or first in their families to attend college.

To be eligible for a Summer Transition Grant to attend a summer transition program, a student must:

- Graduate from high school (or earn GED in lieu of high school diploma) the year of the summer transition program
- Plan to enroll in college the fall term following high school graduation
- Demonstrate a need for academic remediation based on the college readiness test administered to the student prior to beginning the summer transition program
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Complete the Summer Transition Grant application no later than 30 days after the start of the summer transition program
- Be enrolled for at least three but no more than 15 credits in an eligible summer transition program at an eligible Minnesota postsecondary institution during the summer following high school graduation or receipt of a GED
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen. An “eligible noncitizen” means a permanent resident of the U.S., a conditional permanent resident of the U.S., or a holder of an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) with one of the following designations: Refugee, Asylum Granted, Parolee, Victim of Human Trafficking, T-Visa holder, or Cuban-Haitian Entrant.
- Be a Minnesota resident as defined in Minnesota Statutes 136A.101
- Demonstrate financial need according to the award calculation formula (typically, students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs in high school will qualify)

Eligible Institutions and Programs

All Minnesota public and private higher education institutions are eligible to participate in the Summer Transition Grant program if they meet the definition of eligible institution used for other state financial aid programs in Minnesota Statutes 136A.101, Subd.4.

Proposed program strategies that will lead to student success may differ based on the interests, needs and resources of the student participants and project site. According to Minnesota statutes, summer high school-to-college transition programs must be research-based, include instruction to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework and address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by the student. Academic coursework may be existing developmental courses offered by the institution or courses designed specifically for the summer transition program. Programs must also provide support services surrounding academic coursework to assist the student in transitioning to the college environment.

In the fall of 2011, the Office sent information about the Summer Transition Grant program to all Minnesota postsecondary institutions and encouraged them to submit program proposals for the summer of 2012 by February 15, 2012. The notice was sent to college presidents as well as academic affairs, student services, diversity/multi-cultural and financial aid offices on each campus. The proposals submitted were reviewed and approved by Office staff. Three campuses offered programs during the summer of 2012: Central Lakes College, Hamline University and St. Olaf College. Campuses that chose not to participate cited the inability of students' grants to cover the cost of offering the program, inadequate staffing, turnover of key personnel on campus and the workload associated with program evaluation and student financial aid as reasons for nonparticipation. Additionally, some of the summer programs did not meet the requirements in statute because they accepted all students regardless of college-readiness level or year of high school graduation or did not offer developmental classes in core subject areas of math, reading and writing.

Program Evaluation

The program statute provides a list of data elements that should be used during the evaluation process (see Appendix C). The statute also requires the Office to form a data working group comprised of campus program administrators and research staff to advise the Office on program evaluation and assist with gathering the necessary data needed for the annual program evaluation report due to the Legislature on March 15. The Office met with program staff in September 2012 to discuss required data elements and selection of comparison group data for the evaluation report.

Description of Participating Programs

During the summer of 2012, a total of 25 students received a Summer Transition Grant for attending summer transition programs offered by the three participating campuses. Additional students participated in the summer transition programs, but did not meet the eligibility requirements for receiving a grant.

Central Lakes College

Central Lakes College's High School-to-College Summer Readiness Program included nine credits of developmental courses, college success courses, workshops and support services over an eight-week period. This is the third year the college offered its summer program. Three students participated in the program and were eligible for a Summer Transition Grant. Based on Accuplacer college readiness test scores, each student was placed in one or more of the appropriate developmental reading or math courses ranging from one to five credits, as well as other courses such as Career Planning and Staying On-Course in College. Workshops offered included Career and Leadership Program Options, Job

Shadowing, Career Planning & Goal Setting and Understanding Student Financial Aid. Students also had the opportunity to plan and participate in student life and civic engagement activities. Strategies used by the campus to ensure program success included scholarships for students who enrolled for fall term and college upperclassmen serving as personal mentors throughout the summer and into fall term. There was also a strong academic advising component to this program, whereby students met with an academic advisor during the program and before fall semester to create and monitor an individualized education plan consisting of course selection, statement of academic goals and professional development goals. Students were also encouraged to meet with an advisor before the start of spring semester.

Hamline University

Hamline University offered a four-week immersive residential summer bridge program, which included an intensive four-credit course focused on quantitative reasoning and critical reading and writing skills. Twelve students participated in the program and were eligible for a Summer Transition Grant. These students also followed up with a two-credit Introduction to Liberal Arts lab during fall term, which developed basic strategies and skills for success in college. The program also integrated workshops and modules from other departments and offices on campus. Faculty, staff and peer-mentors engaged one-on-one with students during the summer and will continue to do so throughout their first year of college. The program also connected students with work-study opportunities so they could have positions in place at the start of fall term. This is the second year the college offered its summer program.

St. Olaf College

St. Olaf College offered a six-week residential program of college preparatory courses, including a Bridge course for recent graduates. Ten students participated in the program and were eligible for a Summer Transition Grant. The Bridge course was taught by a St. Olaf faculty member and was supplemented by additional instruction from two full-time Upward Bound (UB) summer staff. Supplemental Instructions (SI) was offered daily along with office hours and mandatory study halls. To ensure that all students were successful, the Bridge tutors took the course alongside the students and offered recitation daily, allowing students the ability to ask questions immediately following a lecture or concerning the daily reading. The professor offered approximately 36 hours of instruction during the six-week course. Aside from the course itself, UB assigned two full-time staff to assist with the class, SI, recitation, study halls, study skills, writing skills, an internship component and office hours.

Program Operations

The Office developed a user-friendly web-based system for use by students, program and financial aid administrators and Office staff. After entering each student's application data into the system, the campus program administrator enters academic information such as the name of student's high school, high school grade point average, college readiness test scores, summer courses taken and course outcomes. The financial aid director enters the student's Expected Family Contribution, number of credits for which the student is enrolled and whether or not the student is receiving a Federal Pell Grant. The Summer Transition Grant is calculated on-line so the campus can inform the student about the award amount. The Office disburses funds to the campus to cover all the awards entered by the campus. Any refunds from student withdrawals are returned to the Office and recorded on the system. Once fall term is completed, Office staff collected fall term college enrollment data and grade point averages from campus program administrators.

Award Calculation

The Summer Transition Grant award calculation is described in the Minnesota State Grant statute 136A.121, Subd. 9b. For students with an assigned family responsibility greater than zero, the Summer Transition Grant award calculation is identical to the Minnesota State Grant award calculation with one exception: the Federal Pell Grant is not subtracted in the award calculation unless the student is actually awarded a Pell Grant for that term. Students in transition programs offered by two-year public institutions are typically admitted to a college degree or certificate program prior to enrolling in the summer program and therefore have Pell Grants subtracted in the Summer Transition Grant formula.

For students with an assigned family responsibility of zero, the Summer Transition Grant award calculation is less similar to the Minnesota State Grant award calculation. While the award calculation budget is identical, a \$1,200 summer work expectation takes the place of the assigned family responsibility. Further, the Federal Pell Grant is not subtracted, even if the student is awarded a Pell Grant for that term. Thus, the Summer Transition Grant award formula generates a much higher award than the State Grant award formula. Table 1 shows the Summer Transition Grant award calculation for a student with a \$0 assigned family responsibility taking nine credits and receiving a Pell Grant during the summer transition program at Central Lakes College.

Table 1: Summer Transition Grant Calculation

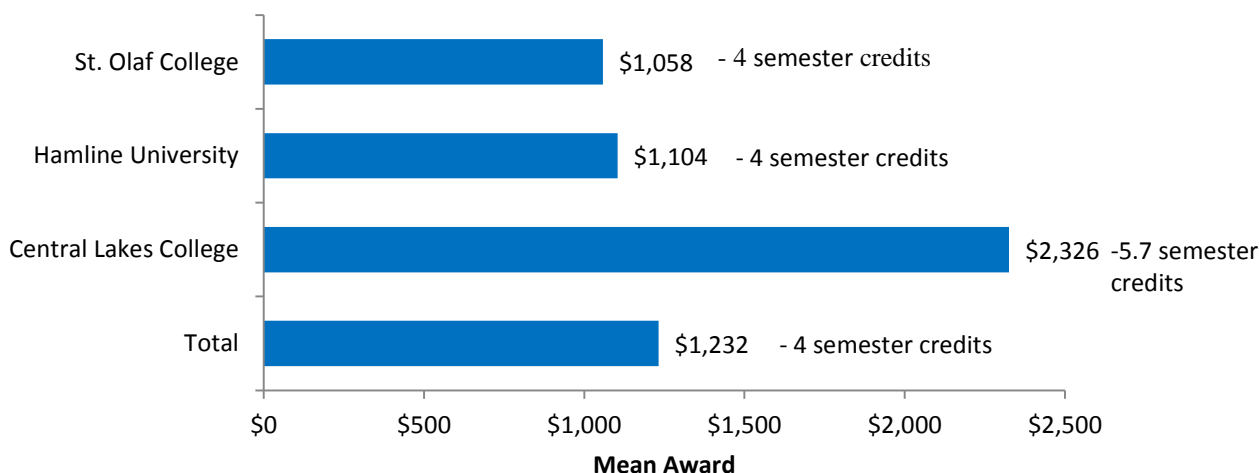
Student with \$0 Assigned Family Responsibility Taking Nine Credits at CLC	
Tuition & Fees	\$1,563
Living & Miscellaneous Expense Allowance	+ \$2,100
Award Calculation Budget	= \$3,663
Summer Work Expectation	- \$1,200
Summer Transition Grant	= \$2,463

Summer Transition Grant Participants 2012

During the summer of 2012, a total of 25 students received Summer Transition Grants totaling \$30,808 for participation in summer transition programs. The three participating summer transition programs served the student populations intended. Participants included a high percent of students of color, low-income students and first-generation college students. Most students were from families with incomes low enough to have a zero assigned family responsibility and thereby qualify for the maximum Summer Transition Grant.

Figure 1 shows the mean Summer Transition Grant amount at each participating campus, ranging from \$1,058 at St. Olaf College to \$2,326 at Central Lakes College, with an overall mean award of \$1,232. Participants who were not awarded either withdrew from the program prior to disbursement of the award, did not meet program eligibility requirements, did not demonstrate financial need for an award or failed to complete required applications and documentation required for the program.

Figure 1
Summer Transition Grant
Mean Awards and Mean Credit Loads
Summer 2012



Student Demographic Information

Of the 25 recipients, three enrolled at Central Lakes College, 12 enrolled at Hamline University and 10 at St. Olaf College. The age of the 25 students participating in programs approved for Summer Transition Grant ranged from 17 to 19 years, with a median age of 18. As shown in Figure 2, 12 program participants were male and 13 were female, as reported on the program application. Out of a total of 25 recipients in all programs, 10 students indicated they were white, six students indicated they were African-American and seven students indicated they were Asian. The remaining two students indicated multi-racial backgrounds (see Figure 3).

Figure 2
Recipients by Gender

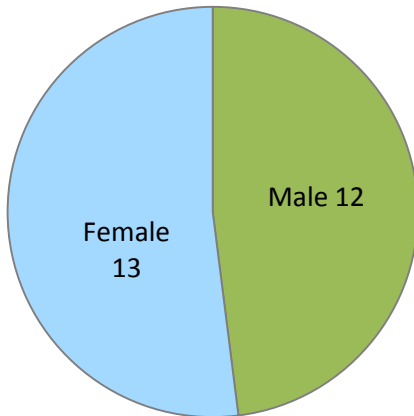
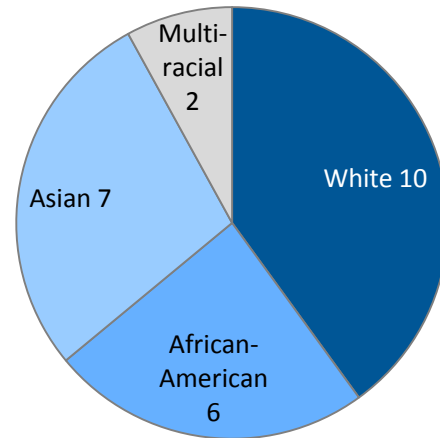


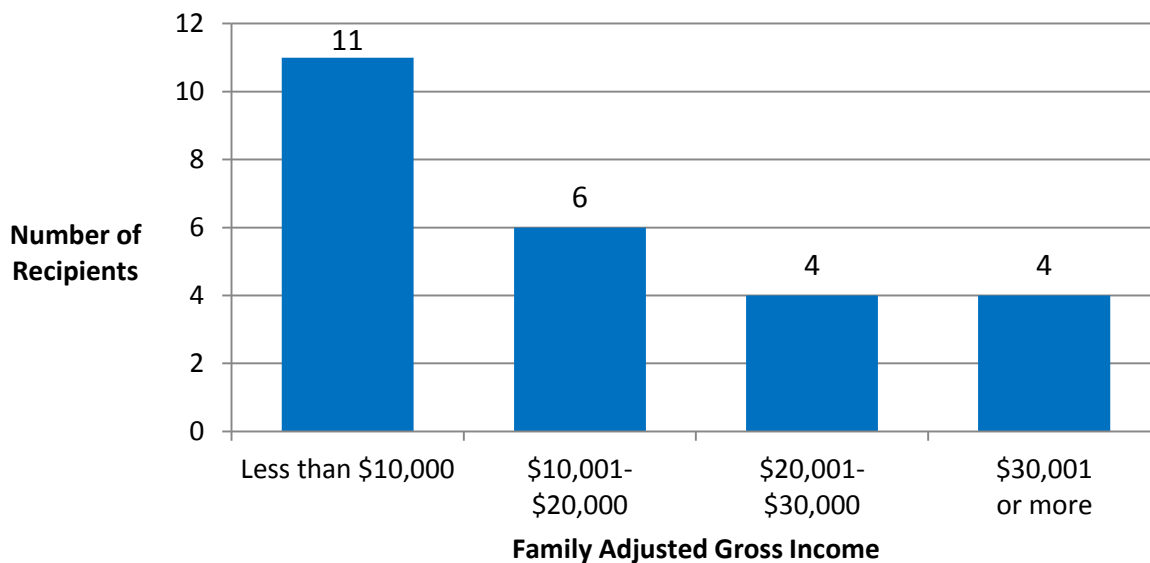
Figure 3
Recipients by Race/Ethnicity



Adjusted Gross Income and Household Size

Adjusted gross incomes for grant recipients, as reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), ranged from \$0 to \$67,000 (family size of eight), with a median adjusted gross income of \$11,494 (Figure 4). Recipient family size, as reported on the FAFSA, ranged from one to 10 family members, with a median household size of three. Though most students were classified as dependent students for financial aid purposes, some were able to apply for financial aid as independent students with a household size of one because they were wards of the court, orphans or had been in foster care at some point after they reached age 13.

Figure 4
Recipients by Family Adjusted Gross Income



High School of Origin

Summer transition programs recruited students from a wide array of regional high schools, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Summer Transition Grant Participant High Schools

Central Lakes College	Hamline University	St. Olaf College
Number of recipients less than 5	Academy of Holy Angels Central High School St. Paul Columbia Heights High School Cristo Rey Jesuit Denfeld High School Harding High School Highland Park Senior High Hopkins High School Northfield High School Roseville High School South High School Minneapolis	Central High School St. Paul Humboldt Senior High School Patrick Henry High School

High School Grade Point Average

The mean high school grade point average for grant recipients was 2.99. Individual high school grade point averages ranged from 1.89 to 4.00.

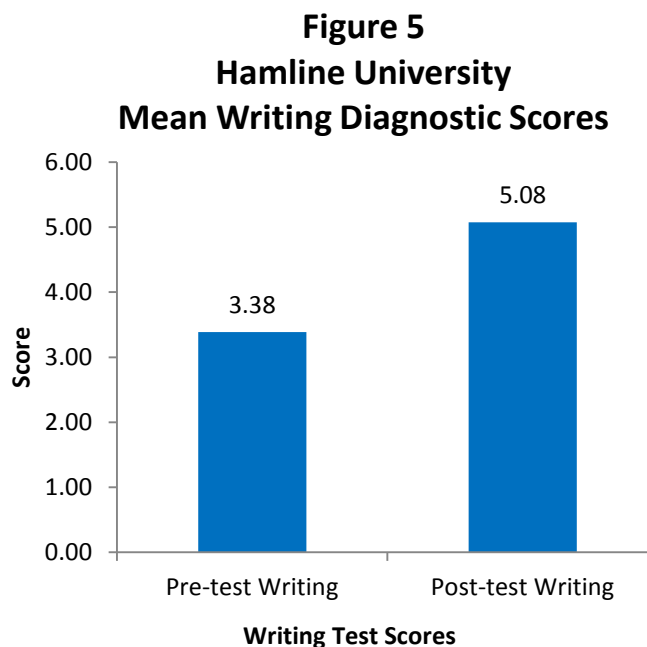
Pre- and Post-Program Metrics

The program statute provides a list of data elements that should be used during the evaluation process. Many of these elements focus on pre- and post-program measures of student performance including college readiness test scores and course grades. These metrics are detailed below.

College Readiness Test Scores

The program statute requires campuses to administer a college-readiness test prior to the start of the summer transition program to identify and address the areas showing a need for remediation. The same test must be administered upon completion of the program to measure program effectiveness. During the summer of 2012, Central Lakes College and St. Olaf College used the Accuplacer test, a product developed by the College Board. Though Central Lakes College and St. Olaf College used the Accuplacer, neither college reported both pre-test and post-test data for grant recipients.

Hamline University developed its own diagnostic instrument for English competency crucial to its undergraduate curriculum. Figure 5 shows the mean writing score increased from 3.38 to 5.08 on a scale of one to six.



Fall Term 2012: Enrollment, Credit Loads and Grade Point Averages

Pursuant to statute, the Office and institutions measured fall term 2012 enrollment, number of credits enrolled and fall term grade point averages in order to evaluate longer-term program outcomes. To evaluate the number of credits enrolled and fall term grade point averages for Summer Transition Grant participants, the Office utilized existing data and requested additional data from colleges and the MnSCU Central Office for comparison group data. As fall term 2012 comparison group data was not available from the MnSCU Central Office, a comparison group of fall term 2011 students was used.

For each of the participating colleges, comparison group students had the following characteristics:

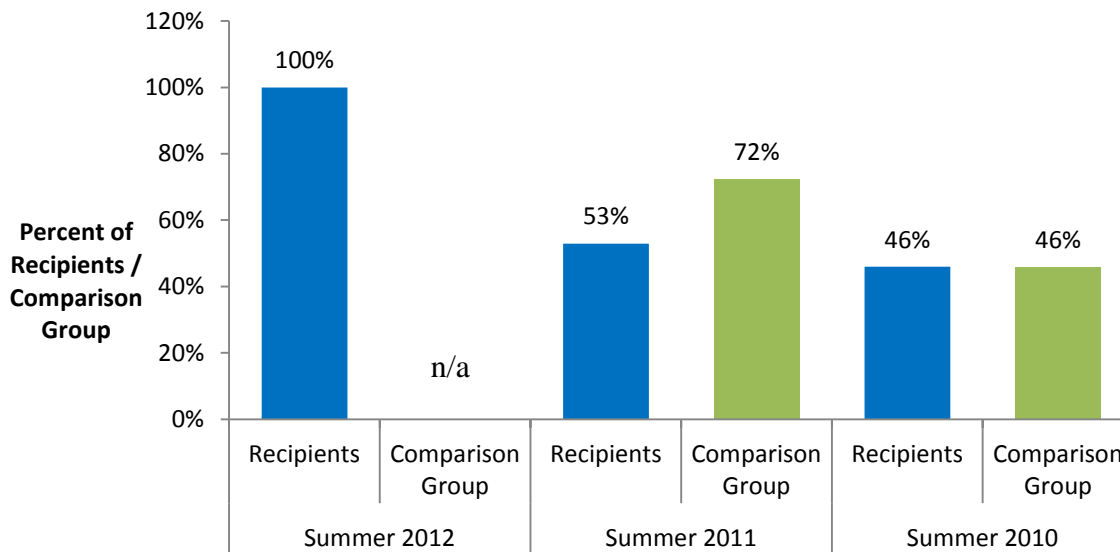
- graduated from high school in:
 - 2012 (2011 for MnSCU) for summer 2012 recipient comparison group
 - 2011 (2010 for MnSCU) for summer 2011 recipient comparison group
 - 2010 (2009 for MnSCU) for summer 2010 recipient comparison group
- enrolled at the participating college during fall term following high school;
- enrolled in one or more developmental credits during the first fall term of enrollment (as a proxy for below college-ready level Accuplacer scores); and
- qualified for a Federal Pell Grant based on the student’s Expected Family Contribution for the first fall term of enrollment

Comparison group data is presented where appropriate in the sections below. Because some of the participating colleges had such a small number of grant recipients and/or could not obtain an adequate number of students for a comparison group, data was consolidated, weighted and reported for all groups as a whole.

Table 4
Recipients and Comparison Group by Campus

Institution	STG Recipients	Comparison Group
SUMMER 2012		
Central Lakes College	3	77
Hamline University	12	12
St. Olaf College	10	10
SUMMER 2011		
The Art Institutes International MN	2	11
Central Lakes College	12	79
Dunwoody College of Technology	6	<10
Hamline University	6	11
North Hennepin Community College	1	248
SUMMER 2010		
Central Lakes College	9	32
Minneapolis Community & Technical College	15	334
North Hennepin Community College	9	214

**Figure 7
Fall Term 2012 Enrollment Rates**



Fall Enrollment in College

All 25 Summer Transition Grant 2012 recipients (100%) enrolled at a Minnesota college during the fall term of the 2012-2013 academic year. As of the end of fall term 2012, only one of 25 recipients (4 percent) who enrolled in college had withdrawn which may be a positive indicator of the program’s effect on retention. First-generation students are 8.5 times more likely to withdraw from college than students with college-educated parents.¹ Participants will continue to be tracked to monitor retention rates.

Of the summer 2011 recipient cohort, 53 percent of recipients enrolled for fall term 2011 were still enrolled in college during fall term 2012, below the comparison group first-to-second year retention rate of 72 percent.

Of the summer 2010 recipient cohort, 46 percent of recipients enrolled for fall term 2010 were still enrolled in college during fall term 2012, the same as the comparison group second-to-third year retention rate of 46. The second-to-third year retention rate does not include students who may have completed their program of study and therefore may underestimate student success.

A comparison of enrollment rates for both summer cohorts is shown in Figure 7.

¹ Ishitani, T. T. (2006). Studying attrition and degree completion behavior among first-generation college students in the United States. *Journal of Higher Education*, 77(5), 861-885.

Fall Term Credit Loads

As shown in Figure 8, summer 2012 recipients had a mean credit load of 14.63 credits, exceeding the comparison group's mean credit load of 13.6 credits. The mean credit load for summer 2011 recipients enrolled in fall term 2012 was 14.33 credits, higher than the comparison group's mean credit load of 11.82 credits. The mean credit load for summer 2010 recipients enrolled in fall term 2012 was 10.18 credits, slightly lower than the comparison group's mean credit load of 10.52 credits.

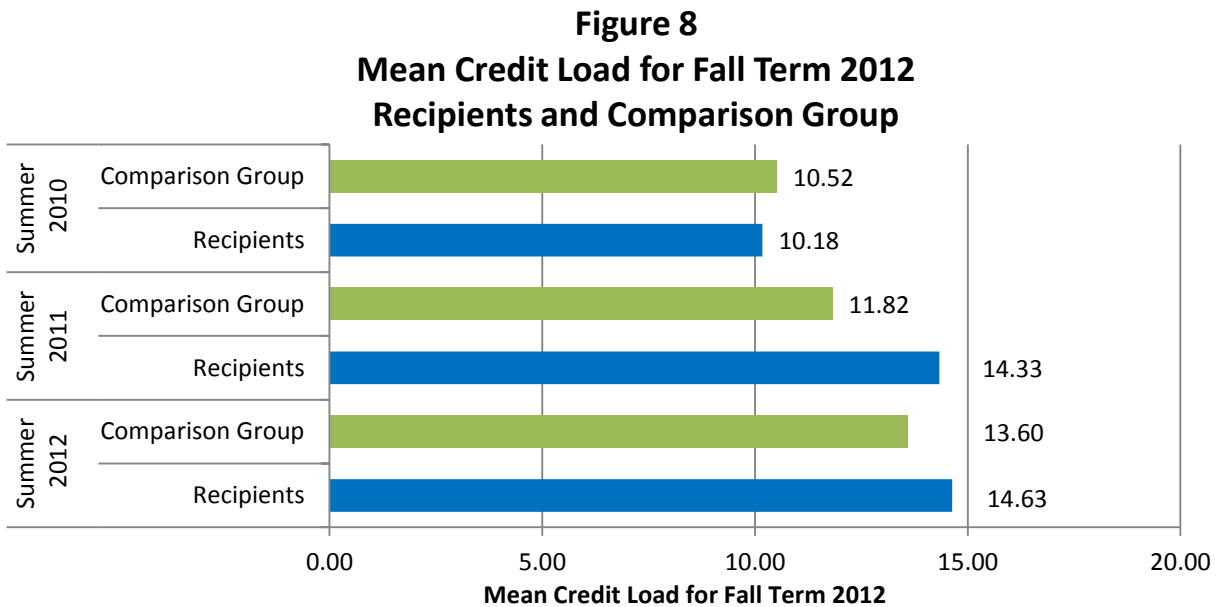
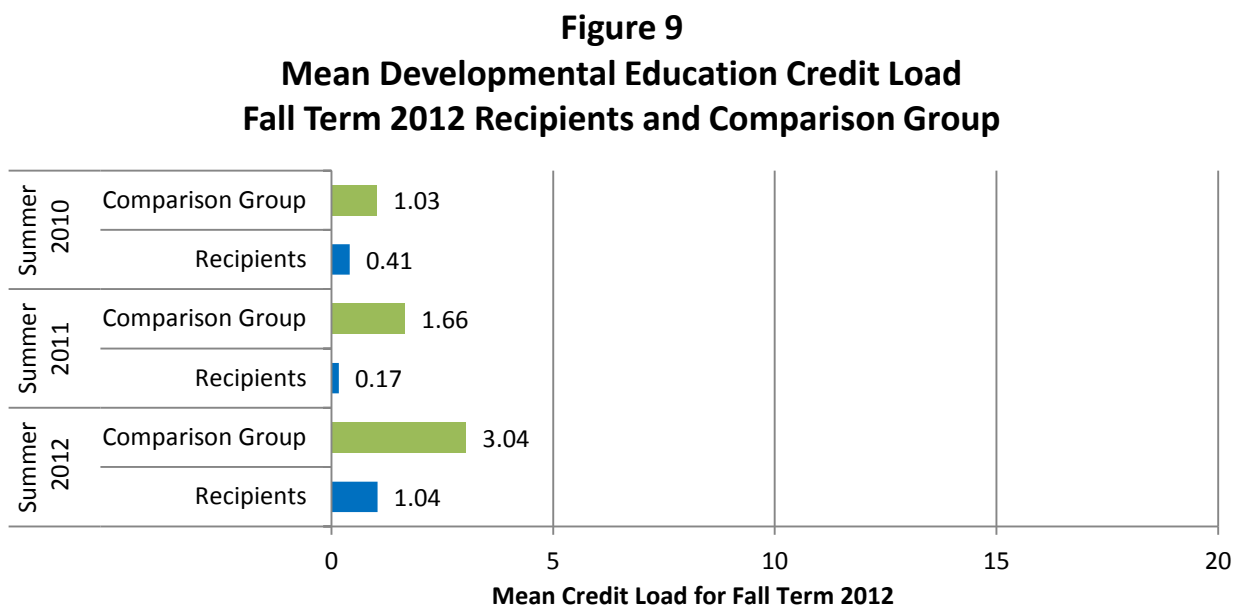


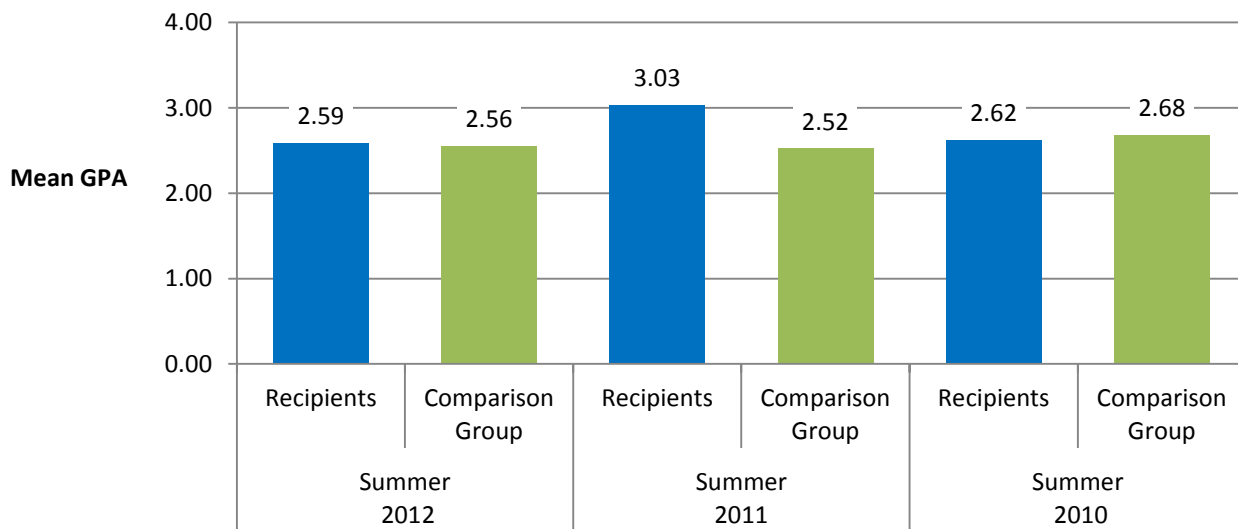
Figure 9 displays the total credits for fall term 2012 that were developmental credits for Summer Transition Grant recipients and students in the comparison groups. Summer 2012 grant recipients enrolled in 1.04 credits of developmental education (7.1 percent of total credit load), significantly below the comparison group (3.04 developmental credits; 22.3 percent of total credit load). One would expect a lower rate for these recipients, since they took developmental coursework during the summer program. Summer 2010 and Summer 2011 recipients also enrolled in fewer developmental course credits than did the comparison group.



Fall Term College Grade Point Averages

Fall term 2012 mean grade point averages for summer program participants are compared to students in the comparison groups in Figure 10. The mean grade point average for summer 2012 recipients (2.59) was similar to the mean GPA for students in the comparison group (2.56). Summer 2011 recipients in their second year of college during fall term 2012 had a mean grade point average of 3.03, higher than the comparison group mean grade point average of 2.52. Summer 2010 recipients in their third year of college during fall term 2012 had a mean grade point average of 2.62, similar to the comparison group mean grade point average of 2.68.

Figure 10
Mean Fall 2012 Term Grade Point Average (GPA)
Recipients and Comparison Group



Institutional Program Goals and Objectives

Central Lakes College

Central Lakes College did not meet its goal of recruiting 30 students, but did have a larger participant group than some of the other campuses. Given the small number of participants, the results should be interpreted with caution. The college did meet its goal of 25 percent of students testing at the college-ready level on the Accuplacer for either math or reading, but 3 of 4 participants did not retest. No participants successfully completed the Reading I course, but two participants completed Reading II. Twenty-five percent of participants successfully completed the first seven modules of Math 0581, with the goal set at 30 percent. All participants enrolled for the fall term exceeding the college's goal of 75 percent and 50 percent of participants were enrolled for Spring 2013, exceeding the college's goal of 30%.

**Table 6
Central Lakes College Summer Transition Program Goals**

Goals	Outcomes
30 participants will be served.	Four students were served, including three Summer Transition Grant recipients.
25% of participants, who were originally recruited upon graduation from high school, will achieve at the college entrance level in either Math or Reading (or both) on the Accuplacer Assessment after completion of the summer program.	25% of participants met this goal. Three of the four participants did not retest.
50% of participants taking a Reading I course will successfully complete the course and move into Reading II.	0% of participants met this requirement, though two participants took Reading II and were eligible to move into Composition I.
30% of participants will successfully complete the first seven modules of Math 0581.	25% of participants (one of four) met this goal.
75% of participants will persist through summer program and to fall term.	100% of participants (four of four) met this goal.
30% of participants who enrolled fall term will persist to their second year of college.	50% of participants (two of four) were enrolled for Spring 2013.

Hamline University

Hamline University selected longer term goals for its summer bridge program, so incremental or final results will not be known until fall term of the 2013-2014 academic year. Though the campus did not identify short term goals, its summer 2012 participants showed improvement on college readiness assessment testing. All 10 participants who were Minnesota residents successfully completed the summer course. These participants subsequently enrolled for fall term 2012 and all but one completed the term and performed at or above the levels of all incoming students in their first-year cohort.

**Table 8
Hamline University Summer Transition Program Goals**

Goals	Outcomes
Persistence: First-to-second year persistence rate has historically been 50% for students in this targeted population. The summer program hopes to increase this rate to 70% for its first cohort and further to 80% by the third year of the program.	Not yet available until fall 2013. All summer 2012 program participants who were MN residents enrolled for fall term. 10 of 12 summer 2012 program participants (tied to MN OHE grant) registered for spring 2013.
Graduation: Over 10 years, move the 6-year graduation rate from 65-69% to 70-75%. The 6-year graduation rate for summer program participants will be on par with the broader population.	Not yet available.
Textual and Quantitative Skills: 100% of summer program participants will pass their first-year writing course without having to retake the course and 80% of those who take a math or science course in their first year will successfully complete that course.	Of those who've taken courses thus far, 1 of 12 participants did not pass first-year writing. All who have taken math or science courses have passed; data for the full year and the whole cohort is not yet complete.

St. Olaf College

St. Olaf College included both short term and long term goals for its summer bridge program. The program exceeded its two short term goals. All participants passed the summer bridge course with a C- or better. All participants enrolled for fall term as well. Outcomes for the program's longer term goal of first-to-second year persistence will not be known until fall term 2013.

**Table 9
St. Olaf College Summer Transition Program Goals**

Goals	Outcomes
90% of students will pass the course with a C- or better.	100% of participants passed the course with a C- or better.
90% of students who participated in the Bridge Component will enroll the fall term immediately following their bridge summer.	100% of participants enrolled for fall term.
75% of those students who participated in the Bridge Component and initially enrolled the following fall term will re-enroll the following fall term for their second year.	To be determined.

Conclusions

Results for the third year of the Summer Transition Grant program are mixed.

Population Served

For the most part, the three participating summer transition programs served the student populations intended. Sixty percent of recipients were students of color. Most recipients had incomes below the guidelines for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch program and tested below college-ready levels on college readiness tests.

Financial Aid Administration

The Office disbursed funds to campuses for recipients in a prompt manner. A web-based system developed by the Office was up and running in early May in time for schools to enter student application data and calculate awards for the summer term. Once student awards were calculated on the system by campus program administrators, funds were disbursed by the Office prior to the anticipated state government shut down to avoid delays for students.

Campus program administrators indicated that it is difficult to predict a student's financial eligibility for the grant prior to admitting students to the program. While a family may qualify for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch program in high school based on the parents' adjusted gross income and family size, there are other factors used in the federal need analysis formula for college financial aid that may result in an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that does not qualify for a significant grant, such as a dependent student's own income and savings or parental untaxed income and assets. The fact that students are enrolled part-time in summer programs further reduces grant eligibility due to the award calculation.

Academic Improvement

There was difficulty in obtaining valid pre-test and post-test scores for participants this year. This usage of the Accuplacer diagnostic test in lieu of the Accuplacer resulted in programs not having valid comparisons. Campus program administrators also continue to caution that students are not enthusiastic about having to retake the college readiness test upon completion of the program and do not give it their best effort.

Summer program or fall term course grades may be a better indicator of academic achievement. Ninety-six percent of summer program courses were successfully completed (grade of C or above), with letter grades of A and B accounting for 52 percent of course grades.

All summer 2012 recipients enrolled in college during fall term 2012. Summer 2011 recipients had a first-to-second year retention rate of 53 percent for fall term 2012 below the 72 percent rate for the comparison group. Summer 2010 recipients had a second-to-third year retention rate of 46 percent for fall term 2012, the same rate as the comparison group.

Summer 2012 recipients had a mean credit load of 14.63 credits, exceeding the comparison group's mean credit load of 13.6 credits. The mean credit load for summer 2011 recipients enrolled in fall term 2012 was 14.33 credits, higher than the comparison group's mean credit load of 11.82 credits. The mean credit load for summer 2010 recipients enrolled in fall term 2012 was 10.18 credits, slightly lower than the comparison group's mean credit load of 10.52 credits.

Summer 2012 grant recipients enrolled in 1.04 credits of developmental education (7.1 percent of total credit load), significantly below the comparison group (3.04 developmental credits; 22.3 percent of total credit load). One would expect a lower rate for these recipients, since they took developmental coursework during the summer program. Summer 2010 and Summer 2011 recipients also enrolled in fewer developmental course credits than did the comparison group.

Fall term 2012 mean grade point averages for summer 2012 recipients (2.59) was similar to the mean GPA for students in the comparison group (2.56). Summer 2011 recipients in their second year of college during fall term 2012 had a mean grade point average of 3.03, higher than the comparison group mean grade point average of 2.52. Summer 2010 recipients in their third year of college during fall term 2012 had a mean grade point average of 2.62, similar to the comparison group mean grade point average of 2.68.

While it is too early to determine the long-term effects of summer transition program participation on academic achievement and persistence, fall term 2012 results for the summer 2011 and summer 2012 cohorts show gains over the comparison group on most indicators, the low first-to-second year retention being the exception. However, given the small size of all cohorts, evaluation results are tenuous. The Office and participating campuses will continue to collect enrollment and grade point average data on program recipients and comparison groups for three academic years following participation.

Program Participation

The number of summer transition grant recipients (25) remains extremely low, which negatively affects the Office's ability to conduct meaningful program evaluations.

One of the main reasons cited by program administrators that inquired about the program but decided not to participate was the lack of personnel and resources to offer a summer bridge program. Participating campuses are unable to recoup their full program costs through individual grants to students. Campuses cannot predict at the time of program planning and hiring how many students will enroll in the summer program and qualify for grants. All of the participating programs consisted of part-time credit loads, making revenues from student grants even less sufficient to fully fund programs. Some summer programs do not offer college credit, which is problematic, since the Summer Transition Grant award calculation formula is based on the number of credits for which the student is enrolled. Thus, the funding structure for the program does not encourage campuses to offer a program unless they can secure additional funding sources.

Related to the program's current funding structure is the additional administrative task associated with ushering students through the financial aid process, screening students for program eligibility requirements, disbursing financial aid and calculating refunds for students who withdraw.

Lastly, some of the summer transition programs currently offered by colleges did not meet the requirements in statute for this program. Summer bridge programs are sometimes designed to socially acclimate first-generation college students to the college environment and do not offer intensive math and English components. Many four-year colleges only admit students who are ready for college-level work and do not offer developmental courses.

Recommendations

1. Restructure program funding to a competitive block grant model

All campus program administrators felt the program would be more successful if it were restructured as a competitive block grant to campuses. There are four primary reasons for restructuring funding in this manner. First, as a competitive block grant, state funding could be used to cover all or a significant portion of summer transition program costs. Second, such a move would also allow campuses to start program planning and recruitment earlier in the year without needing to identify individual students for grants. Third, a competitive block grant may provide a sufficient incentive for other campuses to offer summer transition programs. Finally, a competitive block grant would eliminate the need for students to complete two FAFSAs and reduce the burden on campus financial aid staff to rush the processing of student financial aid applications for summer term awarding.

The 2013 Legislature modified the program to be a competitive block grant to institutions and appropriated \$100,000 in funding for each of the next two fiscal years. The funds are to be used by the Office to award competitive matching grants to Minnesota public and private institutions offering research-based high school-to-college developmental transition programs to prepare students for college-level academic coursework.

Grants must be awarded to programs that provide instruction and services including, but not limited to:

- (1) summer developmental courses in academic areas requiring remediation;
- (2) academic advising, mentoring and tutoring during the summer program and throughout the student's first year of enrollment;
- (3) interaction with student support services, admissions and financial aid offices; and
- (4) orientation to college life, such as study skills or time management.

The programs must serve recent high school graduates planning to enroll in college in the fall who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) are counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I);
- (2) are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Act;
- (3) receive assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Law (Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996); or
- (4) are a member of a group traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Programs are also required to match grant funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis using cash or in-kind contributions. Programs are also subject to current evaluation requirements for the program.

Further information on the new program requirements can be found in Minnesota Session Laws, 2013, Chapter 99 at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?view=session&year=2013&type=0>.

2. Emphasize support of students during the first year of college.

The first year of college marks the period of greatest vulnerability for student attrition. Twenty-eight percent of first-year students in four-year colleges do not return for their sophomore year. Forty-four percent of those enrolled in two-year colleges do not return for their second year.² Research indicates

² ACT National Collegiate Retention and Persistence to Degree Rates. (2012). Retrieved from the web July 17, 2013. http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/retain_2012.pdf

that strategies focused on the first year experience may be effective in increasing student retention rates³. Such strategies can include approaches for improving academic and study skills (e.g. time management, reading a textbook, test-taking strategies, techniques for writing papers) but may also address non-academic areas (e.g. decision-making, relationship and diversity issues, health and stress, and financial literacy skills). Analysis of information about grades, retention and credit loads for the first three years of the program indicates a need for continued programming and support services for grant recipients, and all students, during the first full year of enrollment. One caveat to emphasizing student support services is that students most in need of accessing support services may not have the college know-how to do so⁴. Future summer transition grant program proposals should be reviewed with this recommendation in mind.

3. Reconsider program evaluation mandates.

The number of summer transition grant program participants (25) remains extremely low. In any given year, individual program participant counts ranged from one participant to 15 participants. While the Office and program staff has complied with legislative mandates to provide basic data on participation and outcomes, the data is not of sufficient sample size to form broad-based recommendations or conclusions to inform policy about high school to college bridge programming. Small programs, such as these, are better suited for qualitative evaluation techniques allowing for a deeper understanding of program participants' experiences, motivation, opinions or concerns and can be completed by on-site program staff. The Office would recommend that the evaluation requirements be reconsidered given the small size of participating programs. If the summer transition grant program expands to sufficient size to allow for meaningful program evaluation using quantitative techniques, then such evaluation should be undertaken.

³ Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. University of Chicago Press.

⁴ Karp, M. M., O'Gara, L., & Hughes, K. L. (2008). Do Support Services at Community Colleges Encourage Success or Reproduce Disadvantage? An Exploratory Study of Students in Two Community Colleges. CCRC Working Paper No. 10. *Community College Research Center, Columbia University*.

Appendix A: Minnesota Statutes 2010

M.S. 135A.61 High School-to-College Developmental Transition Programs

Subdivision 1. **High school-to-college developmental transition programs.** All public higher education systems and other higher education institutions in Minnesota are encouraged to offer research-based high school-to-college developmental transition programs to prepare students for college-level academic coursework. A program under this section must, at a minimum, include instruction to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework when the student enrolls in a degree, diploma, or certificate program and must address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by the student. A program offered under this section must not constitute more than the equivalent of one semester of full-time study occurring in the summer following high school graduation. The courses completed in a program under this section must be identified on the student's transcript with a unique identifier to distinguish it from other developmental education courses or programs.

Subd. 2. High school-to-college developmental transition programs evaluation report.

(a) Institutions that offer a high school-to-college developmental transition program and enroll students that receive a grant under section 136A.121, subdivision 9b, must annually submit data and information about the services provided and program outcomes to the director of the Office of Higher Education.

(b) The director must establish and convene a data working group to develop: (1) the data methodology to be used in evaluating the effectiveness of the programs implemented to improve the academic performance of participants, including the identification of appropriate comparison groups; and (2) a timeline for institutions to submit data and information to the director. The data working group must develop procedures that ensure consistency in the data collected by each institution. Data group members must have expertise in data collection processes and the delivery of academic programs to students and represent the types of institutions that offer a program under this section. The data group must assist the director in analyzing and synthesizing institutional data and information to be included in the evaluation report submitted to the legislature under subdivision 3.

(c) Participating institutions must specify both program and student outcome goals and the activities implemented to achieve the goals. The goals must be clearly stated and measurable and data collected must enable the director to verify the program has met the outcome goals established for the program.

(d) The data and information submitted must include, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) demographic information about program participants;
- (2) names of the high schools from which the students graduated;
- (3) the college readiness test used to determine the student was not ready for college-level academic coursework;
- (4) the academic content areas assessed and the scores received by the students on the college readiness test;
- (5) a description of the services, including any supplemental noncredit academic support services, provided to students;
- (6) data on the registration load, courses completed and grades received by students;
- (7) the retention of students from the term they participated in the program to the fall term immediately following graduation from high school;

- (8) information about the student's enrollment in subsequent terms; and
- (9) other information specified by the director or the data group that facilitates the evaluation process.

Subd. 3. **Report to legislature.** By March 15 of each year, beginning in 2011, the director shall submit a report to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy that evaluates the effectiveness of programs in improving the academic performance of students who participated in the transition programs.

M.S. 136A.121 Subd. 9b Onetime grant for high school-to-college developmental transition program

(a) A student who enrolls in a program under section 135A.61 is eligible for a onetime grant to help pay expenses to attend the program. The amount of the grant must be determined according to subdivision 5, except as modified by paragraph (b). The requirement in subdivision 9a that subtracts a federal Pell Grant award for which a student would be eligible, even if the student has exhausted the federal Pell Grant award, does not apply to a student who receives a grant under this subdivision in the award year in which the grant is received. The maximum grant under this subdivision must be reduced by the average amount a student would earn working in an on-campus work-study position for ten hours per week during a summer term. The office must determine an amount for student earnings in a summer term, using available data about earnings, before determining the amount awarded under this subdivision.

(b) For a student with an expected family contribution of zero, the maximum amount of the grant is the cost of attendance under subdivision 6.

(c) A grant under this subdivision counts as one of the nine semesters of eligibility under subdivision 9. A grant under this subdivision must not be awarded for the same term for which another grant is awarded under this section.

EFFECTIVE DATE. M.S. 136A.121 Subd. 9b became effective for students who graduate from high school after December 31, 2009.

Appendix B: Application

SUMMER 2012 APPLICATION FOR SUMMER TRANSITION GRANT PROGRAM

The Summer Transition Grant program provides financial assistance to eligible high school graduates attending summer transition programs offered by Minnesota colleges and universities during the summer between high school graduation and fall term enrollment in college. Students must be U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens, Minnesota residents, 2012 high school graduates and attending an eligible summer transition program offered by one of the colleges shown below. The amount of the Summer Transition Grant will vary based on the income and assets of your family and the cost of the summer transition program you selected. To apply for a Summer Transition Grant you must:

1. Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for both the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years. The results of the 2011-2012 FAFSA will be used to determine eligibility for the Summer Transition Grant program and the 2012-2013 FAFSA will be used to determine eligibility for financial aid for the first year of college. Be sure to respond quickly to any requests from the financial aid office for further information needed to process your FAFSA applications.
2. Complete this application and return it to the Summer Transition Program administrator at the college offering the summer program (contact information provided on the top of this form). The administrator will then notify you about your eligibility for and the amount of your Summer Transition Grant.

Your Full Name:		Date of Birth: / / MM/DD/YYYY	
Social Security Number:		Phone Number: ()	
Permanent Address:			
Email Address:			
Gender: Male <input type="radio"/> Female: <input type="radio"/>		Race/Ethnicity:	
High School Name, City and State		Are you Hispanic or Latino? (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Chicano, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture, regardless of race)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
High School Graduation Date: / / Month/Year		Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Two or More Races <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	
Summer Program you Will Attend: (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Central Lakes College <input type="checkbox"/> Dunwoody College of Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Hamline University <input type="checkbox"/> St. Olaf College		College you Plan to Attend Fall 2012: City/State in Which College Located:	

Student Consent for Access to Educational Records

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Summer Transition Grant program, the Office of Higher Education will need to obtain information from the college offering the summer transition program, as well as the college(s) you attend after completing the program, regarding your high school GPA, college readiness test scores, courses taken, course grades and financial aid received. Because student educational records are considered private data under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the college(s) you attend will need your permission to release this data to the Office of Higher Education. The Office will use this data for the sole purpose of evaluating the Summer Transition Grant program and will not release the information to outside parties. By signing below, you are giving permission to the colleges you attend to provide your data to the Office of Higher Education for the sole purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the Summer Transition Grant Program.

Student's Signature

Date Signed

Appendix C: Evaluation Report Requirements

High School to College Developmental Summer Transition Program Evaluation Report Requirements

DATA MATRIX

Item #	Data element	Description in statute	Level of detail	Data source	Time frame
1	Demographics: <i>Age</i> <i>Income</i> <i>Household size</i>	Demographic information about program participants.	Student	FAFSA	Summer
	<i>Gender</i> <i>Race</i>		Student	Program Application	Summer
2	High School of Graduation & year	Name of the high school from which the student graduated and year graduated.	Student	Program Application	Summer
3	Readiness test name and description	College readiness test used to determine the student was not ready for college-level academic coursework.	Program	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
4	Readiness test content description	The academic content areas assessed in readiness test.	Program	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
5	Readiness test scores	Pre and post-program scores received by students on the college readiness test.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
6	Services provided list; description	A description of the services, including any supplemental noncredit academic support services, provided to students.	Program	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
6	Credits attempted Credits completed	Data on the registration load, courses completed.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
7	Course grades	Course grades received by students.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
8	Institution of Fall Enrollment, current year	The retention of students from the term they participated in the program to the fall term immediately following graduation from high school.	Student	College OHE State Grant database OHE Enrollment database	Fall
8	Institution of Fall Enrollment, future years	Information about the student's enrollment in subsequent terms,	Student	OHE State Grant database OHE Enrollment database	Fall
9	HS GPA	Other information specified by the director or the data working group that facilitates the evaluation process.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer