

## CPI at Indiana University

**W**ith a statewide focus to enhance the pre-college preparation of young Hoosiers, Indiana University was asked by the Lilly Endowment, in the spring of 1998, to submit a 3-year proposal for the Indiana College Preparatory Program. In December of 1998, the Lilly Endowment awarded a \$3,000,000 grant to Indiana University to fund College Preparatory Initiatives (CPI). The original three-year grant period was given a no cost one-year extension approved by the Lilly Endowment in 2002.

The overall CPI proposal included initiatives from the following Indiana University campuses: IU Bloomington, IUPUI, IUPU Columbus, IU East, IU Kokomo, IU Northwest, IU South Bend, and IU Southeast. Through these efforts, CPI has served over 1,300 students in its four years. In addition, there has been a considerable focus on evaluation. Throughout the grant cycle, the program has produced documentation for successful program implementation.

### **CPI at Indiana University has had three primary objectives:**

- Activities should raise students' postsecondary aspirations and enhance their preparation and readiness for high school and the Core 40 courses that prepare them for academic success in college;
- Increase the capacity of parents, peer groups, community agencies, and students themselves to support and promote college preparatory activities;
- Share with other agencies and institutions in Indiana the strategies and practices that are effective for preparing middle grade students for postsecondary education.

CPI programs have utilized the resources and opportunities of our large university system and its campuses to reach middle grade students and their families to encourage and prepare them for postsecondary education.

What have we learned?

### **After four years of operations, the important lessons of CPI are these:**

**1. Parent programs are a vital component and should be offered in tandem with student programs throughout the year.** Though sometimes separate in focus or activity, student and parent programs ultimately work together to the entire family's benefit in the pursuit of postsecondary education. Joint programs offering simultaneous opportunities for students and parents were most successful.

- 2. Welcome the entire grade cohort into the program.** A voluntary, all encompassing approach resulted in the highest level of student diversity in CPI programs. Utilize after school enrichment programs that differ from a routine school day to introduce students to college, and the work that will be needed to succeed.
- 3. College students are the most important asset and a key component for pre-college encouragement.** They are good mentors and role models with a fresh perspective, and most decidedly they possess a middle school student “awe” factor. In addition, important service learning hours are acquired.
- 4. CPI builds positive connections between the community, middle/elementary schools and Indiana University.** These connections and partnerships are vital to the success of Indiana University’s P-16 initiatives. The longevity of the program (four years) built the identity of CPI and confidence in the work accomplished. Younger siblings attended the same program, and great connections continued to be made.
- 5. Short but powerful programs such as family campus visits and summer camp are popular and effective encouragement tools.** Families had the opportunity to travel to a variety of college and university campuses, and these tours became important family events, well attended and highly rated.

### **What are the next steps?**

Indiana University has a strategic role to play in the preparation of students to pursue and succeed in college. More than 75% of the state’s P-12 students live in areas designated as a service region of one of IU’s campuses. Based on what we have learned, the next steps then would be:

- First we recognize the importance of early college connections to students in the middle grades and work to bring all campuses on board in this recognition. Students in this age group across the state of Indiana are making decisions about Core 40 and academic preparation that will impact their academic achievement and success in high school and college beyond. In addition, Indiana University and its students also benefit and grow in many important ways.
- Next we share what has been learned thus far. The University must bring together partners and stakeholders who will provide ongoing resources, commitment and dedication to middle school students and opportunities for their success.
- Ultimately, we find ways to continue the middle school encouragement programs that are having an impact. In this way, we build upon the foundations laid and expand Indiana University’s outreach to middle school students and their families throughout the state of Indiana.