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\$10M Gift Highlights College Advising Corps 2014-2015 Expansion

Driven by Belk Endowment's first major grant, Chapel Hill based non-profit to grow by 34% to over 500 advisers in America's underserved high schools

Chapel Hill, N.C – The White House today announced that the John M. Belk (JMB) Endowment will provide \$10 million to the College Advising Corps to increase access to higher education for low-income students in rural North Carolina high schools. The three-year initiative supports Michelle Obama's second-term focus and the President's efforts to boost the nation's college graduation rates.

The College Advising Corps, in collaboration with its university partners, places recent college graduates in underserved high schools to increase the number of low-income, first generation, and underrepresented students entering and completing college.

"The John M. Belk Endowment grant will improve students' futures and strengthen the workforce in the communities we serve," said Nicole Hurd, Founder and CEO of the College Advising Corps. "Increased student access to four-year colleges, community colleges and other credentialing programs will lead to lifelong, family sustaining jobs aligned with workforce needs."

The gift reflects the JMB Endowment's newly defined mission to empower the 21st century workforce by creating pathways to prosperity for low-income and other underrepresented students by increasing their access to postsecondary opportunities.

The JMB funding allows the College Advising Corps to partner with Davidson College, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to place recent college graduates as advisers in 60 rural high schools. These efforts are part of the College Advising Corps' national expansion.

In the 2014-2015 school year, the College Advising Corps will grow by 34%, adding 129 advisers and serving 38,700 additional students. Commitments from previously announced funders and universities bring the total number of students served to 82,200 over a three-year period.

“The advisers are a diverse and effective group of public servants: 69% are from underrepresented populations, 63% were Pell eligible when they were students, and 54% were first in their families to go to college,” explained Hurd.

New university partners for the College Advising Corps include Davidson, NC State, and Washington University in St. Louis. University partners that are expanding the number of advisers they will support include Brown, University of California-Berkeley, University of Illinois, University of Michigan, University of Missouri, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Southern California, and University of Virginia.

With this White House Summit announcement, 504 advisers will be placed in 552 high schools and will serve 165,000 students in the 2014-2015 school year. Beyond the 2014-15 expansion, the Corps commits to continue to scale over the next five years with a growth target of 1,000 high school placements and 300,000 students served per year.

High schools with Corps advisers see up to an eight to 10 percent increase in college-going rates compared to schools without advisers, according to a study by Stanford University. The advisers work in conjunction with high school guidance counselors, and are expertly trained to navigate financial aid, application and education options – and to guide students toward higher education and credentialing opportunities that best fit their skills and interests. Advisers also work closely with colleges and other credentialing programs that are aligned with workforce needs and have demonstrated commitment to helping students complete their programs.

“A successful future for low-income students is often made possible with a college degree and a successful America is made possible by a dynamic, educated population,” said Hurd. “It is an honor to serve our nation’s students with our partner universities as we work to strengthen North Carolina’s and America’s human capital, economic capacity and rural communities.”