

Kaplan Educational Foundation helps community college students beat the odds

Thanks to comprehensive tutoring, test prep, financial assistance, Kaplan Scholars are now attending selective four-year schools

New York, October 9, 2007 – According to the U.S. Department of Education, only one in four community college students manages to graduate.* But four promising New York community college students from low-income backgrounds have not only graduated, but are now attending selective four-year institutions, thanks to a far-reaching program of academic, financial and personal support from the Kaplan Educational Foundation.

The four are: Hamissou Samari, who arrived in the U.S. from Togo only four years ago and is now enrolled in the Honors Program at American University in Washington, D.C.; Keisha Carrington, an aspiring pediatrician from Queens now at Goucher College in Baltimore; Bolaji James, a Nigerian immigrant and budding entrepreneur who has started at Morehouse College in Atlanta; and Martha Santos, a single mother who wants to eventually start her own school and who is attending New York University.

"There are numerous programs designed to help needy students in elementary and high school, but students in urban community colleges are often overlooked," said Melissa Mack, Chairman of the Board of the Kaplan Educational Foundation and Senior Vice President of Kaplan, Inc. "This program is designed to provide intensive support to high achieving community college students who want to attend four-year schools."

The Foundation is already working with a second cohort of five Scholars, who will be applying for admission to four-year schools for the fall of 2008; recruiting is underway for a third cohort.

In order to help students selected as Kaplan Scholars, the Foundation provides: scholarships to help pay tuition and other educational expenses; tutoring; SAT preparation; academic counseling; stipends to help cover living costs; and placement in part-time jobs. Students typically receive tens of thousands each year in scholarships, living stipends and services.

Kaplan Scholars also get special assistance with transfer and admissions into four-year programs.

"The admission process for selective four-year schools can be difficult for families with parents who are college graduates. For many community college students, often the first person in their families to go beyond high school, it can be even more daunting," said Jennifer Benn, Director of the Kaplan Educational Foundation. "We help our students navigate the often complicated application process for these competitive programs, including arranging and taking the students on college tours and preparing them for admissions interviews."

Once students are accepted, the Foundation will assist the scholars for the duration of their bachelor's degree programs, working with them and their campus academic counselors to reach their academic and career goals.

Hamissou Samari, a graduate of the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), now plans to pursue a career in international law. Keisha Carrington, a native of Barbados, is a Science graduate of BMCC. Bolaji James holds an associate's degree from the New York City College of Technology. Martha Santos is an Early Childhood Education graduate of BMCC and a native of Ecuador.

This year the Program welcomed a second cohort:

Guyana native Kwesi Blackman, a U.S. Army veteran of Iraq and a biology major at Kingsborough Community College, who hopes to become a surgeon.

Queensborough Community College student Veronica Nunez, who moved to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic two years ago. Her ambition is to become a child psychologist.

Sharrise Simmons, a student at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, who hopes to do research on cures for sickle cell anemia and public health issues affecting underserved communities.

Brooklyn native Levald Thomas serves as vice chair of the executive board of the student senate at Kingsborough Community College and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

Former U.S. Marine Aaron Hudson, a network systems administration major at LaGuardia Community College, who would like to start his own computer consulting firm.

For more information about the Kaplan Educational Foundation and to download an application, please visit www.KaplanEdFoundation.org.

Editor's note:

***National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2004, Table 5, page 11, Graduation rates at Title IV institutions, by race/ethnicity, level and control of institution, and gender, United States, cohort years 1998 and 2001.**

About Kaplan, Inc.

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