

SUMMER KUHN, Health Sciences and Technology Academy, West Virginia University, Shady Spring, WV, 25918, KAS KASTEN, Health Sciences and Technology Academy, Morgantown, WV 26506, SEAN FREELAND, Health Sciences and Technology Academy, Morgantown, WV 26506, MERGE MCMILLION, Health Sciences and Technology Academy, Exchange, WV 26619, CATHY MORTON, Health Sciences and Technology Academy, Webster Springs, WV 26288, and ANN CHESTER, Health Sciences and Technology Academy, Morgantown, WV 26506. A look into HSTA student success initiatives directed at increasing college persistence and success among at-risk students.

Health Sciences and Technology Academy (HSTA) is a network of after-school STEM clubs for 9th-12th graders in West Virginia (WV). This program encourages underrepresented students to pursue undergraduate and graduate college degrees, thus increasing the number of health practitioners and advocates in the underserved communities of rural WV. HSTA is a four-year college pipeline program for high school students who are selected to participate based on program criteria. Many HSTA students experience at-risk factors that impact college persistence and success, such as minority background, financially disadvantaged family, and/or first-generation college student. HSTA's curriculum consists of seven core elements: reward, recreation, relationships, research, relevance, rigor, and repetition that are delivered in an after-school club environment, through community-based research studies, and during summer camp immersion experiences. Data will show this influences student success at the high school and college level. For example, the HSTA curriculum plays a key role in retaining HSTA students. Another program initiative is the in-state college waiver awarded to students who complete the program. Initiatives continue through college, such as campus-based alumni associations with focuses on high school mentoring and providing peer to peer mentoring for each other. In addition, our sister program Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) provides an incoming college freshmen experience as well as a graduate school preparation program. Results and discussion can provide ideas and resources to other pipeline and collegiate programs seeking to increase college persistence and success among at-risk students.