December 2019

Friends,

When Miguel Centeno and John Webb first imagined PUPP 19 years ago, they knew it would require a robust and enriching summer institute and that developing cultural capital among the students in the program would be essential to achieving their goals. They considered how college admissions guidance might work in partnership with our local schools. They hoped that their efforts would yield not just offers of admission to top colleges, but ultimately, college degrees and successful careers.

I am not sure Miguel and John saw a future where more than two dozen program graduates would go on to attend Princeton as undergraduates or where three PUPP alumni would work for the program full time. In those early years, we were focused on the first few goals – admission to a top college and robust financial aid. Now, we have multiple graduates from many of our nation’s most prestigious universities. We had our first student earn a Ph.D. last year and have four doctoral students in graduate school today. There are PUPP alumni working across a broad range of professions – from law to education, medicine, to business, and beyond. We have a PUPP alumnus serving on Trenton’s City Council and a PUPP alumna serving on Trenton’s School Board.

We serve as a model for communities and colleges that seek to establish similar initiatives. Just this fall, I have had conversations with faculty and community leaders from New Jersey City University, Rhodes College (Memphis), and Carnegie Mellon University about our program and how they can work to establish similar efforts. We have witnessed remarkable growth in the “college access and success” arena. We continue to support our peers locally, through the Trenton College Access Network that we co-chair, and across the country as we work toward broader goals of increasing college opportunity and access for under-represented populations.

With all of this positive advancement and your generous support, we have also worked hard to address the social and emotional development of our scholars – meeting their needs through workshops in mindfulness and yoga and by structuring opportunities for personal development, reflection, and family engagement throughout the PUPP journey.

This year, we even took advantage of advancements in technology (and affordability) and purchased Chromebooks for every PUPP Scholar. We were then able to shift our summer institute classwork to the Google Classroom, mimicking the learning processes that dominate our local schools and undergraduate classrooms and creating an archive of scholar work that can be accessed over the long term. We continue to innovate, responding to local and national trends in high school and college and to the changing needs of our community of scholars.

We also worked through some change of our own this year, including two important staff transitions:

- In August, PUPP Associate Director for College Counseling and Scholar Development, QuinnShauna Felder-Snipes, stepped down from her position after nine extraordinary years of service to the PUPP community. QuinnShauna helped shape our comprehensive college admissions counseling curriculum that begins with our Personal Development course for our rising sophomores and continues throughout the PUPP experience.
- After a nationwide search for a new Associate Director, we were thrilled to bring New Jersey native Dawn M. Wilson to the team. Dawn had most recently served as the Director of College Success at the Cooperman Scholars Program in Newark, NJ. She previously served as an assistant director of admissions at The College of New Jersey and holds a masters in Marriage and Family Counseling.
- This summer, we also said goodbye to Leslie Castrejon (PUPP ’11/Bryn Mawr ’15)
who finished her term as PUPP Alumni Associate. Leslie is now pursuing a Masters in Higher Education at Temple University and working at Villanova University as a retention specialist.

- Aaron N. D’Oleo (PUPP ‘15/Richmond ’19) succeeded Leslie this summer, becoming our fourth PUPP Alumni Associate.

If you have questions or comments about PUPP, or want to learn more about our work, our scholars, or our results, please feel free to reach out to me directly at jklugman@princeton.edu.

And, once again, thank you!

Warm regards and best wishes for 2020!

Jason R. Klugman, Ph.D.
Director