



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DC COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM EXPANDS TO CHARTER SCHOOLS**

### *Grant From The Sallie Mae Fund Launches Pilot Program*

**WASHINGTON DC**, October 3, 2007 – The DC College Access Program (DC-CAP), an organization dedicated to encouraging and enabling D.C. public high school students to enroll in and graduate from college, today announced the launch of its pilot expansion program to four DC Charter High Schools in the 2007-2008 school year. DC-CAP will bring its full complement of services to students at Thurgood Marshall Academy, Friendship Collegiate Academy, Maya Angelou Public Charter School and Cesar Chavez Public Charter School with support from The Sallie Mae Fund.

“It is welcome news that four DC charter schools will be sending more kids to college because of this pilot program,” said U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, (D-La). “DC-CAP combined with the DC Tuition Assistance Grant program, which I have consistently supported, gives students access to the services and resources they need to make college a reality.”

“The Sallie Mae Fund has supported the DC College Access Program as it has become a model for the country in forging a public-private partnership that enables more students to pursue higher education,” said Kathleen deLaski, president of The Sallie Mae Fund. “We’ve also been a sponsor of the growing charter school movement in Washington, and are pleased to enable DC-CAP’s proven program to reach more students and make a lifetime difference for more of D.C.’s families.”

“This grant enables us to now serve even more DC public high school students who need assistance in getting to and graduating from college,” said Argelia Rodriguez, president and CEO, DC-CAP. “With more than a quarter of DC’s school age children now attending charter schools, the expansion is critical. Our goal is to extend our program into the entire DC Charter school system in the 2008-2009 academic school year. This pilot program lays the groundwork for doing that.”

Since the program’s inception in 1999, DC-CAP’s research suggests that today nearly twice as many DC public high school students go to college and nearly three times as many graduate from college within five years. This expansion into the charter school systems will mean that each of the four schools in the pilot program will have access to all DC-CAP services such as high school college counseling, college retention services and Last Dollar Award Scholarships. In addition, each school will host a College Information Resource Center with a dedicated DC-CAP advisor who will hold office hours each school day.

In 1999, Congress and President Bill Clinton signed into law the District of Columbia College Access Act, allowing high school graduates who are DC residents to attend public colleges and universities nationwide at in-state rates to which they gain admission. Each student can receive up to \$10,000 per year, with a maximum of \$50,000 in federal tuition assistance. The legislation, of which DC-CAP played a significant role in getting passed, also provides up to \$2,500 per year, with a maximum of \$12,500 for students to attend private colleges and universities in the DC area. And, since 2002, all students attending historically Black Colleges and Universities were deemed eligible to receive up to \$2,500 per year with a maximum of \$12,500.

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**About The Sallie Mae Fund**

The Sallie Mae Fund is a charitable organization sponsored by Sallie Mae. The Fund achieves its mission-to increase access to a post-secondary education for America's students-by supporting programs and initiatives that help open doors to higher education, prepare families for their investment, and bridge the gap when no one else can. For more information, visit [www.salliemaefund.org](http://www.salliemaefund.org).

**About the D.C. College Access Program**

D.C. College Access Program (DC-CAP) is a privately funded, not-for-profit organization dedicated to encouraging and enabling D.C. public high school students to enroll in and graduate from college. In partnership with the D.C. Public High and Charter School System, DC-CAP provides direct counseling and financial assistance to more than 12,000 high school students. Since its founding in 1999, DC-CAP observes that today, the rate of college enrollment of DC high school students has nearly doubled. The overwhelming majority of students served by DC-CAP in its 20 College Information Resource Centers (CIRCs) are from low-income, minority, single-parent households and many are the first in their families to attend college. DC-CAP has awarded approximately \$12,500,000 in Last Dollar Award scholarships since its inception, and in fall of 2007, will be tracking and counseling nearly 5,300 college students.

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