Project Description

As an open access institution, Palm Beach State College (PBSC) is seventh largest of the 28 colleges comprising the Florida College System. The College serves more than 48,000 students, in the 2016 Fall semester, 7,780 students were enrolled in full time in credit courses and 58.9% are full time students who receive financial aid assistance in the form of Pell Grants, scholarships and loans. The College does not have adequate support systems for students who experience economic insecurities or homelessness. The College currently offers many student support services programs that target first generation, low-income students such as Pathways to Success, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Center, First Year Experience, MEN – Motivated, Empowered and Noble, Veterans Center, Counseling and an array student activity clubs designed to engage and retain students. The average age of a PBSC student is 26 and the majority of the full time students work to support their families. PBSC recognizes the academic, social and financial barriers these adult students face to support their families. They often do not persist to the next semester or gain credit hours causing them to stop out for a semester to support their families or worse, drop out. To persist and graduate, it is important to maintain full time academic status, stay on track to graduation and gain a high wage full time employment to sustain their families. The need to expand student support services to address economic insecurities was identified by PBSC's academic advisors, counselors, librarians and the faculty. Every year the college community selects a book to be read for the Common Reader Program. The book is given to freshman students in the first year experience program to read over the summer and students and faculty participate in discussion groups and other activities during the fall and spring semesters. For the 2015-2016 Academic Year, the book by Liz Murray, Breaking Night about a homeless college student was selected and the College libraries, First Year Experience and the PTL sponsored campus wide events and panel discussions about the book. These events underscored the need for additional student services to address economic insecurities. The College community immediately took action by forming the Housing Insecurity Ad Hoc Committee in 2016. In January 2017, the committee surveyed the student who participant in the Common Reader Program. Of the 118 responses received, 60% of students experience homelessness or housing insecurities and 18% receive services from a community agency. As a result of the survey, the College opened Panthers Pantry, a food pantry and Panthers Closet, a thrift shop at the Lake Worth campus to serve the students and families. In 2016, the food pantry’s opening year served over 60 students more than 176 times and Panthers Closet recently opened August 8, 2017 to prepare students and their families with clothing for the new school year. In the Spring 2017, the Counseling Center provided 613 counseling sessions and more than 20% of the students requested financial support for housing and food. The College analyzes the outcomes of all student services and academic programs for continuous improvement and effectiveness. The Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment evaluates the outcomes of the student support programs and, the Vice President of Academic Affairs in conjunction with the Institutional Research and Effectiveness department who collects, analyzes
and reports student’s academic data, persistence, graduation and academic program performance.

The College has long withstanding partnerships and is actively involved in projects with Achieve Palm Beach, The School District of Palm Beach County, Career Source, Children’s Service Council, Prime Time, Take Stock in Children, United Way and other social service agencies to strategically serve the families of Palm Beach County. The College is active in nationally recognized organizations that support first generation, low income students and has researched community colleges with similar student populations for best practices. PERC is modeled after the successful Single Stop U.S.A.’s Community College Initiative (Single Stop), a one-stop source for students and immediate family members to gain access to public benefits and local resources in a coordinated approach. The outcomes for the Single Stop are to accomplish higher education to graduation and achieve financial self-sufficiency for low-income students. PBSC will be the second higher education institution in Florida to provide a resource center with access to free benefits screening, financial coaching, legal supports and public benefits. The target population for the PERC is first generation, low income students at the Lake Worth and Belle Glade campuses and McKinney-Vento and foster care students who matriculate from the School District of Palm Beach County to PBSC. The project will serve a total of 2,000 students for the two year project at the Lake Worth and Belle Glade campuses. The School District of Palm Beach County reports on average 95% of the student body from the Title 1 high schools at Pahokee, Glades, John I. Leonard and Lake Worth High receive free and reduced lunch. In 2016, 50% of the graduating class from these high schools matriculated into PBSC (813 students). Lake Worth and Belle Glade campuses have the highest percentage of students on financial aid. For Fall 2016, Lake Worth served 4,426 full-time credit students, 61% receive financial aid and Belle Glade served 544 full-time students, 76.4% receive financial aid. Most notably, the Homeless Ad Hoc Committee has partnered with the District to serve the McKinney-Vento students by offering intensive support services to ensure a seamless transfer into PBSC.

PBSC believes the PERC is one of the best approaches to address the economic insecurities and homelessness of low income students. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development identified Single Stop as a model that could be replicated to address benefit-access issues for students. The PERC replicates Single Stop best practices to provide students’ access to a range of free services including screenings and applications for public benefit programs, tax services, financial counseling, legal services and case management with referrals to community resources. According to the report conducted by the RAND Corporation, *Connecting College Students to Alternative Sources of Support*, by Lindsay Daugherty, William R. Johnson, Tiffany Tsai, programs that provide wrap around services to college students have the potential to improve postsecondary outcomes by helping students address non-academic barriers to success and facilitating access to alternative sources of financial support. Research shows financial support programs play an important role in student success and programs like Singe Stop that help college students’ access external resources and complete important administrative requirements have been shown to positively affect student outcomes. A survey of ten community colleges found
that only one in five students with low levels of food security received food stamps and only one in five students with low levels of housing security received public housing support. Students have many stigmas associated with utilizing public benefits, but when they are informed about public benefit their experience of the process to register for benefits is cumbersome, challenging and resource intensive. Low-income students who have academic, work and family responsibilities do not necessarily have the time or resources to complete the cumbersome applications and navigate the complex process to apply for public benefits. By offering students a support center with a dedicated financial aid advisor and One Source Coordinator to offer them a web based public benefit portal, the One-e-App is the solution. The concept of Single Stop was originally introduced to the College by Dr. Peter Barbatis, Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management who witnessed the success of Single Stop at the City University of New York (CUNY). During that time, Miami Dade College (MDC) also became one of the original Single Stop sites. The Single Stops at these institutions were evaluated by RAND report. The institutions indicated an increase in college persistence of at least 3 percentage points and adult students (age 25 and older), independent students and nonwhite students had a positive experience. MDC Single Stop participants were substantially less likely to be part-time students and somewhat more likely to be black. The participants at CUNY were more likely to be black females, age 25 or older and less likely to be part-time students. The Single Stop at CUNY and MDC are housed at the Student Services and Enrollment Management divisions with a staff to student ratio of one to 2,328 at CUNY and one to 11,107 at MDC. In the design of the PERC, PBSC considered of the operational details of MDC and CUNY of hiring a full-time PERC Coordinator (Coordinator) and a part-time Financial Aid Advisor to implement the services at two campuses, Lake Worth and Belle Glade to serve a total of 2,000 full-time students in the two year project. The Financial Aid Advisor and Coordinator will report to the Financial Aid Director, Mr. Eddie Viera. He reports to the Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management, Dr. Peter Barbatis. The Coordinator will lead the PERC Advisory Council comprised of the College’s Student Support Services programs, Counseling, Financial Aid, the Lake Worth and Belle Glade Student Services Deans, Veteran Services and external community partners. The Council will meet biannually to share information on community resources, best practices, sponsor workshops and provide feedback of the program outcomes for continuous improvement. College Relations and Marketing will develop and design marketing materials and will arrange public relations outreach through college-related print and electronic publications as well as develop a PERC website.

PBSC will contract with Social Interest Solutions to connect students with their One-e-App web based tool at the PERC. Social Interest Solution is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to leveraging technology innovation to improve customers’ access to public and private health and social services. Developed in 2003, the One-E-App is a comprehensive multi-application process that streamlines the eligibility and enrollment by capturing client data through a single streamlined user interface, conducts preliminary determination across a range of federal, state and local health and social service programs, and submits completed applications to the appropriate systems of record for final determination and enrollment. The Coordinator and Financial Aid Advisor will assist the student to screen for federal and state programs and local and charity resources. One-e-App also provides the Coordinator with a case management tools
for efficient tracking of applications and provides retention tools to help students maintain coverage. Broward and Palm Beach Counties have utilized the One-e-App to facilitate eligibility and applications submission for programs including Medicaid, Florida KidCare, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, TANIF, WIC, EITC, Child Tax Credit, LIHEAP and others. Social Interest Solution will customize the One-e-App tool to serve the specific needs of PBSC’s student population. The PERC will be available to students year round. At the start of each semester, the Coordinator will distribute information about the Center to and recruit students from the student services and academic programs. Students will be referred from the following campus wide programs: Pathways to Success, First Year Experience, Student Support Services, Student Learning Centers, student clubs and at the student activities events. Additionally, the Coordinator will present at campuses student and faculty convocation, College is Possible and Financial Aid Awareness events and FAFSA Workshops. The Coordinator will also provide students with information about the Center at the mandatory Introduction to College Experience 3 credit course for all new incoming students. The Coordinator or Financial Aid Advisor will help the student complete an application and create a Pathway to Prosperity Roadmap to identify financial challenges, set goals and make a financial plan. Next, the student will complete the One-e-App and receive referrals based upon the needs identified in the roadmap such as tax preparation services, financial literacy, health insurance assistance and legal aid. The Coordinator will also host workshops with community partners about financial literacy, credit repair, legal counseling and tax preparation. PBSC does not anticipate any challenges with the implementation of the project. The College administration supports the PERC and commits to leveraging existing partnerships within the community. For more than 20 years the College has strong partnerships and experience with managing student support projects that leverage community resources which include the Department of Education’s TRIO programs, Title V and Pell Grant that serves low-income, first generation students. PBSC is a founding and active member of Achieve Palm Beach, a community approach to ensure an integrated and effective system of supports from middle school through post-secondary that empowers students for career success. PBSC’s Counseling Center has partnerships with mental health counselors and other agencies throughout Palm Beach County to offer workshops and referrals of our students. The Homelessness Ad Hoc Committee convenes with Palm Beach County leaders throughout the year to address economic insecurities and homelessness to support students. Faculty members and students have participated in service learning projects to support the food pantry and thrift shop with the help of community partners. These partnerships will enable the Coordinator to work internally and externally to create a robust Advisory Council. PBSC’s budget request includes a full-time Coordinator position salary and benefits, a part-time Financial Aid Advisor, the One-e-App service, mileage costs to travel to and from the Lake Worth to Belle Glade campus and to meet with community partners, outreach materials, supplies and other costs for targeted approach to reach and engage students. The College commits to seeking private foundation and community wide support to sustain the PERC and expand to the College’s Loxahatchee Groves, Boca Raton and Palm Beach Gardens campuses.
to invite partners and solicit letters of commitment to the PERC Advisory Council. The Financial Aid Director and Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment will convene the initial PERC Advisory Council and the Financial Aid Director will serve as interim Chair. Once the Coordinator is hired, he/she will be appointed the Chair of the Council. The Council will be comprised of government and community representatives of Palm Beach County, the School District, Career Source, and the college community. The Council members will be required to provide a letter of commitment with details of the activities and responsibilities for the Center. The Council members will receive outreach materials to distribute to their contacts, community organizations, student services programs, student clubs, and campus wide events. At the Council meetings, project details will be shared and the roles of the members will be clarified through the development of an action plan. As partners commit to support for the PERC, the College Relations and Marketing will create a press release of the partnership for distribution to media outlets and post on the PBSC website and social media accounts. The partner will be added to PBSC’s PERC webpage, Facebook and Twitter accounts to announce the partnership.

The PERC aligns with the mission of the College to provide an accessible, affordable and high quality education. The Center offers students’ access to the One-e-App and Financial Aid Advisor to help make post-secondary education affordable. The President has instructed the administrators of the Lake Worth and Belle Glade campuses to support and aid the Center. The Vice President of Enrollment and Student Support Services has the expertise to lead a project and serve the project’s target population. He currently has oversight for the student support services programs such as the Department of Education’s, Pell Grants, Title V, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Educational Opportunity Center and Student Support Services. The Program Directors of these projects commit to collaborate and share their best practices of serving low-income, first generation students with the Center and leverage their community partners with the PERC. PBSC’s Office of Administration and Finance department manages an annual budget of $126.7 million and follows the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). They will provide overall fiscal oversight for the project and will provide accurate accounting for project funds. The College maintains written policies and procedures that describe cost transfers/expenditure reclassifications, expenditure approval, and the competitive bidding process. The Center will be assigned a dedicated Grant Accountant who will produce timely reports on all fund expenditures and balances. PBSC’s ERP database, Panthernet will permit purchase orders to be processed. The Human Resources and Payroll departments will process all payroll and benefits and manage the recruiting and hiring process with a focus on identifying candidates with background that mirror the target population and experience as a participant or employee.
All Key Staff have demonstrated commitment to and sensitivity for addressing the needs of economically and educationally disadvantaged students. The Key Staff who will be instrumental in the development and implementation of the Center include the following:

Dr. Peter Barbatis, Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management. As the champion of this project and as a member of the President’s Cabinet, Dr. Barbatis has a broad perspective of the institution and the importance of serving low-income, underrepresented students in support of PBSC’s mission. Dr. Barbatis reports directly to the President, Ava L. Parker, J.D. Dr. Barbatis provides the institutional leadership; sets the program priorities in keeping with the College’s mission; approves expenditures for program activities; ensures institutional systems for effective, efficient and compliant administration of the project. Serves on the PERC Advisory Council. Dr. Barbatis has Ed.D., Florida International University.

Mr. Eddie Viera, College Financial Aid Director
Mr. Viera has served as the Financial Aid Director at four Colleges. He was the Assistant Director of Student Services at Monroe Community College and managed the One Stop Financial Services Office, Admissions, Registration, Bursars, Financial Aid, Testing and Placement, Transfer and Placement, Academic Advisement and the Educational Opportunity Program. He was a Senior Consultant for a Financial Aid Consultant Firm and as a Marketing Manager for a financial institution federal student loans program. Mr. Viera reports directly to Dr. Barbatis and has direct access to him and will have full authority and autonomy to administer the project. They meet regularly for scheduled status meetings and at a moment’s notice if issues arise related to project implementation. Serves on the PERC Advisory Council. The PERC Coordinator will report directly to the Financial Aid Director. Mr. Viera has earned a M.S. Education, State University of New York

PERC Coordinator
This position was recently hired. Required qualifications include a Master’s degree in Education, Counseling or Psychology is preferred with three years of work experience as an advisor, counselor or financial aid advisor. This position must be knowledgeable about the academic, economic, social and cultural needs of disadvantaged students and programmatic methods proven effective in overcoming barriers to success. The qualified candidate will have documented experience affirming his/her capacity to exercise administrative responsibility and decision-making authority to: Procure appropriate resources within the approved budget limits; Allocate and manage resources; Develop, review, and revise policies and procedures; Provide oversight of the day-to-day implementation undertakings; Establish an effective organizational structure to recruitment and intake procedures; Implement a systematic plan for data collection; Facilitate the Social Interest Solutions One-e-App contract and provide support to students with completion application; Develop and implement a communications plan; Chair the PERC Advisory Council; Coordinate with internal departments supporting project efforts including other student support services programs, and advisors; Coordinate with external partners supporting grant efforts, including the School District, Career Source, community organizations, and workshop providers; Conduct weekly staff meetings, Advisory Council meetings; Oversee
website and social media communications; Ensure that stakeholders remain current on regulations, policies, and best practices related to implementation of the grant; Provide for assessment of the impact of the grant: Monitor progress of all grant funded activities; Coordinate data collection and prepare required reports for Key Partner’s evaluation and; Ensure use of evaluation findings to improve outcomes.

Jeannie Hoban, Director of the Student Counseling Center/Professor II

Jeannie Hoban is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and currently serves as the Director of the Student Counseling Center at Palm Beach State College. She is an Adjunct Professor in the Human Services Program. Ms. Hoban trains faculty and staff on dealing with distressed and disturbing students. She is a certified trainer for Mental Health First Aid and provides that training for staff, students and the community. In addition to other committee work, Ms. Hoban chairs the college’s Ad Hoc Housing Insecurity Committee. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Palm Beach County Homeless and Housing Alliance and a member of the Unmet Needs subcommittee. Ms. Hoban has served on the Students of Concern Team (Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment) at Palm Beach State since she began in 2009. She holds a Master of Social Work degree from Florida International University and a Master of Education degree from Florida Atlantic University where she is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in Higher Educational Leadership. Her dissertation topic involves faculty’s appraisal of disruptive students. She will serve on the PERC Advisory Council and provide student referrals, workshops and resource to the One Source Coordinator. Ms. Hoban reports to Mr. David Asencio, Dean, Student Development.

Mr. Van P. Williams, Dean, Student Services

Mr. Williams is the Dean of Student Services and former Director of the Federal TRIO Programs and Outreach at Palm Beach State College. Mr. Williams is committed to providing students with quality services to support their enrollment and success at Palm Beach State and to advocate for the needs of students, collectively and individually. As the district representative for outreach to the community, he is responsible for engaging and educating various constituent groups about the educational programs and services available at the College. As the TRIO Director, he was responsible for providing realistic college-going experiences for 2,430 precollege and college students annually from low-income and first-generation college backgrounds. Mr. Williams is also an adjunct faculty member and teaches at least one section of Introduction to The College Experience each semester. He will serve on the PERC Advisory Council and provide student referrals to the Coordinator.

The PBSC Foundation has a long history of securing funds for the College programs and scholarships. The Foundation and the Resource and Grant Department pledges to continue its commitment to raise funds for student services projects that prove to be successful by increasing persistence and graduation rates. If the evaluation plan shows the pilot project is proven effective and increases the persistent and graduation rate of students, the College intends to expand the Center to all campuses. Therefore, the PBSC Foundation and Resource and Grant
Development departments commit to make a coordinated effort to explore various funding sources to sustain and expand the Center. PBSC Foundation pledges to add the PERC to its list of funding priorities; and, through its continual exploration of resources, fully vet all related and appropriate opportunities.