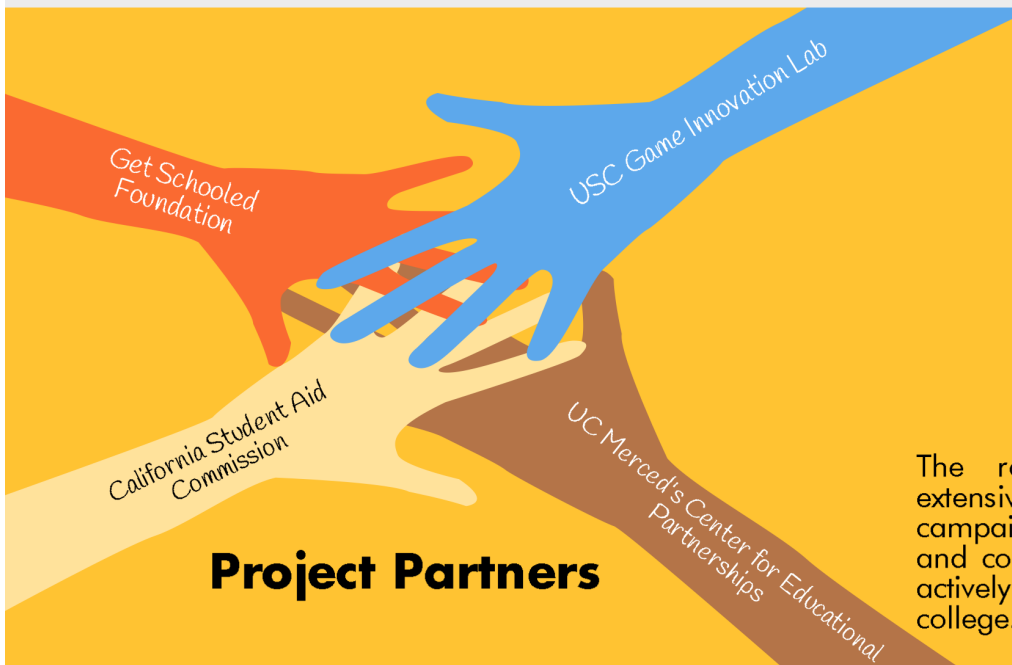



Improving Access to College through Games, Technology, and Social Media: The Case of California

In the fall of 2014, The U.S. Department of Education's Fund for Innovation in Postsecondary Education's (FIPSE) First in the World program awarded University of Southern California's Pullias Center for Higher Education a \$3.2 million grant to study the effects of a game-based college access intervention in high schools across California. First in the World grants are intended to spur the development of innovations in postsecondary outcomes, college affordability and evidence-based practices to ensure that the United States is 'first in the world' with regard to college attendance and graduation. The goal of USC's project is to meet students where they are (in digital and game spaces) and engage them in learning about college.



Project Partners

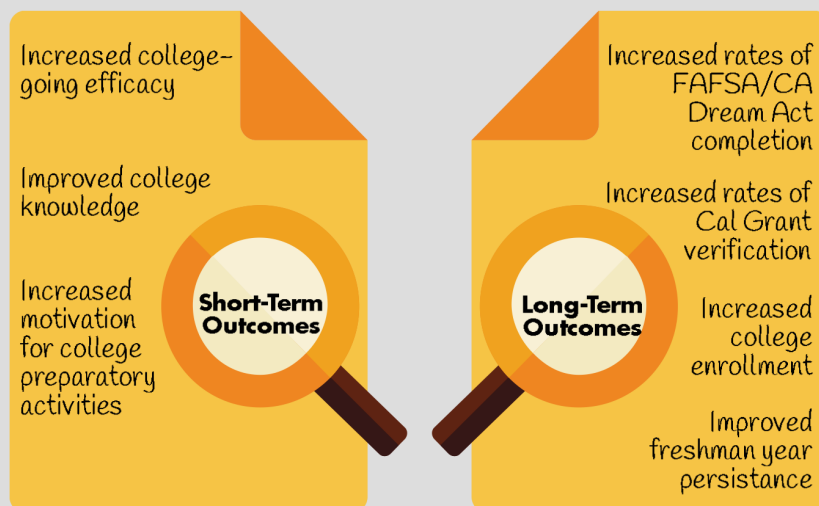
- Get Schooled Foundation
- USC Game Innovation Lab
- California Student Aid Commission
- UC Merced's Center for Educational Partnerships



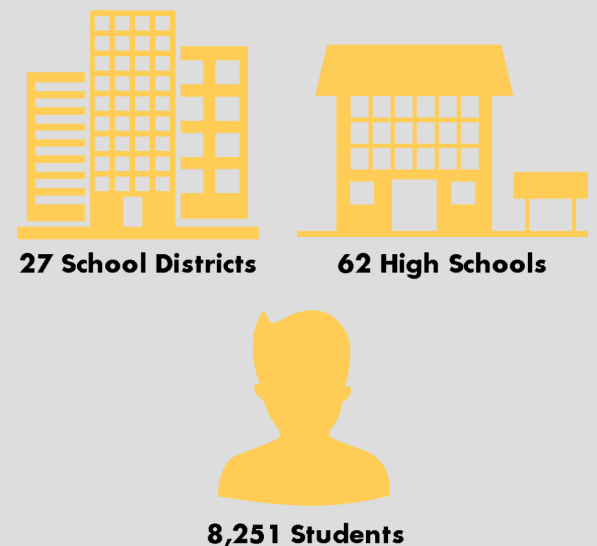
The role-playing game, along with an extensive student-centered social media campaign and support materials for teachers and counselors, offers schools online tools to actively engage students in preparing for college.

The research team is at the halfway point of a large-scale random control trial study designed to study the effects of the game intervention on actual college outcomes in schools across California.

Thus far, the project has involved:



Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Increased college-going efficacy	Increased rates of FAFSA/CA Dream Act completion
Improved college knowledge	Increased rates of Cal Grant verification
Increased motivation for college preparatory activities	Increased college enrollment
	Improved freshman year persistence



27 School Districts

62 High Schools

8,251 Students

Emerging findings highlight:

- ➔ Persistence of first level digital divide issues in schools and home communities.
- ➔ Lack of systemic measures of college readiness across schools and districts.
- ➔ Significance of teachers and counselors who play key roles as gatekeepers or facilitators of resources.
- ➔ Benefits of game-based learning on students' college-going efficacy, college interests, and college knowledge.
- ➔ Challenges to implementing game-based and online interventions.

**Ongoing
research
will
continue to
explore:**

Best practices regarding
implementation of digital tools

College-going culture in a digital era

The effects of a school's digital
infrastructure on low-income students
— and related district policies

Please contact Dr. Zoë Corwin for more information via zcorwin@usc.edu.