HELPING MORE STUDENTS BECOME OUR STUDENTS
ASAP COLLEGE EXPLORATION ACTIVITY
INTRODUCTION: Applying to college can be an overwhelming experience. Students receive messages from families, peers and counselors about applying to schools, filling out forms, paying fees and receiving acceptances. Most students are anxious about what it means to go to college, where they are applying to college, and how they will be supported when they get to college.

This exploration activity is designed to help talk to students about the transition from high school or HSE programs to college. By connecting the common anxieties of many college-bound students to the benefits and supports that Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) has to offer, students can begin exploring the possibility of going to college, no matter the obstacles!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

What is ASAP? ASAP assists students in earning associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, tuition waivers, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks.

ASAP also offers special class scheduling options to ensure that ASAP students get the classes they need, are in classes with other ASAP students, and attend classes in convenient blocks of time to accommodate their work schedules. As students approach graduation, they receive special supports to help them transfer to 4-year colleges or transition into the workforce, depending on their goals.

Where is ASAP offered? ASAP is available at six community colleges (Bronx C.C., Borough of Manhattan C.C., Hostos C.C., Kingsborough C.C., LaGuardia C.C., and Queensborough C.C.) and College of Staten Island, Medgar Evers College, and New York City College of Technology.

How long is this activity and how should it be used? This 45 minute activity may be used in group settings to engage students in dialogue about their feelings related to the transition to college. Counselors often discuss opportunity and college success programs with students after they receive acceptances. However, consider introducing this activity before students apply to college. Early exploration helps students to may make better decisions about when they apply and commit to college, and apply to success programs such as ASAP.

What materials are needed for this activity? For this activity, you will need board/chart paper, chalk/markers, index cards, the ASAP brochure and Timeline resource, and a computer/tablet with internet access.
REVIEW/WARM UP/INTRODUCTION OF ASAP: (1 minute)
Welcome participants and explain the goal of this workshop is to introduce them to the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at CUNY, and provide them with the opportunity to:
- Discuss their feelings about the transition to college
- Learn the steps to completing CUNY enrollment
- Learn how the components/benefits of ASAP can support them in earning a degree at a CUNY college.

GROUP ACTIVITY: (5 minutes)
- Open the session with a conversation about college and some of their thoughts about college
- Write on the board/chart paper the word COLLEGE and draw a circle around it
- Ask for 6-7 volunteers (or call on students) to come up and write a word they associate with COLLEGE
  - Provide examples to get the ball rolling:
    - LOANS  BOOKS
    - NO SUPPORT  MAJORS
    - TOO MUCH WORK  IS COLLEGE FOR ME?

Once a student writes a word, have them pass the chalk/marker to another student until a few students have had a chance. Review the responses and ask all participants to raise their hands if they identify with the feelings/thoughts/questions shared by their peers.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: (10 minutes)
- Around the activity space, place chart paper with the following headings:
  - I DO NOT KNOW HOW I WILL PAY FOR COLLEGE
  - I AM NOT THE PERFECT STUDENT
  - I WILL NOT KNOW ANYONE
  - I WILL BE THE FIRST PERSON IN MY FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE
  - I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I WANT TO STUDY

- Ask students to look around the room at the different labels and write a word/question/thought they have connected to the labeled chart paper.
- Read the labeled chart paper statements out loud - Generating thoughtful responses on each sheet is enhanced when the activity facilitator adds an example of what someone might add - Examples:
- I DO NOT KNOW HOW I WILL PAY FOR COLLEGE - (College is expensive and I’m scared of taking out loans and being in debt forever!)
- I AM NOT THE PERFECT STUDENT - (I want to go to college, but I truly hate math! What if I’m not ready?)
- I WILL NOT KNOW ANYONE - (I’m kind of glad to start new but it’s also kind of freaking me out!)
- I WILL BE THE FIRST PERSON IN MY FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE - (My mother has no idea what a FAFSA is.)
- I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO STUDY - (I want to go to college but I have no idea what I want to study. Will I just be wasting my time?)

After students have had a moment to look around the room, ask them to stand and move to the chart paper statement they most relate to

Have students write a word, phrase or question on that chart paper

After giving students some time to add their own idea/question, encourage students to rotate around the room to write on EACH chart paper

QUICK ACTIVITY PROCESSING QUESTIONS:
- What are some common themes written on the wall?
- Do you relate to something another student has written?

THE ASAP CONNECTION: (15 minutes)
- Facilitator should move to each chart paper, present the ways ASAP addresses the most common obstacles to college completion
  - ASAP is a comprehensive support program dedicated to helping students earn their associate degree in 3 years or less! ASAP provides the following supports to help you to focus on your goal of earning your degree, transferring to a baccalaureate degree program, OR entering the workforce.

- I DO NOT KNOW HOW I WILL PAY FOR COLLEGE: **TUITION GAP WAIVER**
  - If you are in receipt of financial aid, ASAP will pay any gap in your tuition if financial aid does not cover the full amount
  - It is important to apply for financial aid and complete FAFSA and TAP application as soon as possible

- I’M NOT THE PERFECT STUDENT: **ACCESS TO ASAP TUTORS**
  - ASAP provides tutoring and other academic support to help you succeed in your classes
  - Review sessions are provided to prep for mid-terms and finals
  - ASAP staff works closely with faculty to make sure you do your best

- I WILL NOT KNOW ANYONE: **CONNECTED COMMUNITY**
  - ASAP is a cohort program, which means in your first year, you will take some of your classes with fellow ASAP students. This will help you get to know other like-minded students and to begin building your network and possibly make life-long friends
● I AM THE 1ST PERSON IN MY FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE: **COMPREHENSIVE ADVISEMENT**
  ○ Every student is assigned to their own personal advisor who will be there to guide you along the way, answer your questions, and help you reach your goal of graduating!

● I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I WANT TO STUDY: **ACCESS TO A CAREER EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST**
  ○ Not only do you have your own advisor, ASAP also has in-house career employment specialists
  ○ By meeting with your ASAP advisor and the career employment specialist regularly, you will receive information and support in picking a major that matches your interests and long-term career goals

● WHAT IF I CANNOT AFFORD TO GET TO SCHOOL: **FREE MONTHLY METROCARD**
  ○ ASAP provides their students with a free unlimited monthly MetroCard to travel to and from school

**WHAT’S THE CATCH:** In order to qualify for this opportunity, you must:

- Be a New York City resident and or eligible for in-state tuition
- Attend college full time (minimum 12 credits each semester)
- Complete any developmental course needs within the first year
- Meet regularly with your ASAP advisor and attend any required ASAP activities
- Re-apply for financial aid each year

**HOW TO APPLY: (10 minutes)**
ASAP is a post admission consideration. Students apply to ASAP after being accepted to a CUNY campus offering ASAP. The first step to applying is determining eligibility. Review the [ASAP Eligibility Checklist video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ) with students so they are aware of and understand all the items needed to determine ASAP eligibility.
NEXT STEPS AND INFO FOR STUDENTS: (5 MINUTES)

**ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO:**
- Visit the ASAP website at [www.cuny.edu/asap](http://www.cuny.edu/asap) to explore resources and program offerings
- Review the ASAP Eligibility Checklist with friends and family
- Follow ASAP on facebook at [facebook.com/cunyasap](https://facebook.com/cunyasap) to interact with current ASAP students and alumni
- Text ASAP to 258-27 for free once monthly enrollment tips

**FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH!**
- [Complete the CUNY application by February 1](#)
- Complete the [FAFSA](#) and [TAP](#) application after January 1
  - To be eligible for ASAP, students **NEED to apply** for financial aid (*PELL and TAP*) at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)
  - The sooner you apply, the better your chances of getting a good financial aid package!
- Check your email regularly and inform your counselor of the CUNY college(s) you have been accepted to

**TAKE THE CUNY ASSESSMENT TESTS (CAT)**
- If necessary, take the [CUNY Assessment Tests (CAT)](#) as soon as you are invited to do so. The CAT determines your readiness for college-level math, reading, and writing
- An invitation to take the CAT will be part of your admissions materials. Go to the college cited in your admissions documents on the date listed to take the CAT. If you can’t make it, inform your counselor and call to reschedule **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**
- Even if you don’t pass one of your assessment tests, it is better to know as soon as possible so that you can **MAKE SUMMER COUNT!** CUNY offers **FREE** developmental classes over the summer through the University Skills Immersion Program that will help you get ready for your college-level classes!

**APPLY TO ASAP** - ASAP is a post admission consideration. Students apply to ASAP after being accepted and committing to a CUNY campus offering ASAP. Complete the ASAP Eligibility Checklist at [www.cuny.edu/asap/checklist](http://www.cuny.edu/asap/checklist) as soon as you are accepted and commit to a college that offers ASAP.

**EXIT TICKET: Burning Questions (1 minute)**
On index cards, ask students to write down any last burning questions they might have that were not answered. These questions should be collected and used in follow-up meetings with their college counselor or advisor.
GET ORGANIZED AND EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

- Get familiar with the CUNY application, now available online
- Like us and join the ASAP mailing list on Facebook
- Connect with ASAP – check out our student success stories on Facebook and find out how you can do it too
- Make an appointment with your counselor to talk about college options
- Create an electronic or paper folder to keep track of your college information
- Set up an email account for your college communications and plan to check it often
- Explore CUNY colleges and possible majors at www.cuny.edu
- Research ASAP at www.cuny.edu/ASAP
- Turn your skills into a bright future! Take a career inventory online
- Search resources for getting into and staying in college at www.cnycollegeline.org
- It’s CUNY month! Attend an open house at a CUNY college
- Attend a free admissions application workshop at the CUNY Welcome Center
- Familiarize yourself with the financial aid process

MAKE IT HAPPEN APPLY TODAY!

- If ready, submit your CUNY application (February 1st deadline)
- Apply for your FAFSA PIN number and put in your college folder at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Research and apply for scholarships
- Submit your CUNY application by February 1st
- Learn financial aid tips from a CUNY expert, google CUNY Alice Murphy
- Begin your FAFSA application and apply for TAP at www.nyscny.gov

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

- Check CUNY application status
- Check mail and email for college acceptance and CUNY Assessment Test (CAT) information
- Prepare for the CAT using CUNY online practice tests
- Complete your FAFSA with updated tax information and apply for TAP
- Continue to check mail and email for college acceptance and CAT information
- Submit your CUNY application by February 1st
- Check your CUNY college events page for information about free financial aid workshops
- Confirm deadlines for scholarships and organize applications, recommendation letters, and essays

MAKE SUMMER COUNT

- Based on your CAT score, register for and take any required developmental math and English classes (they are free over summer!)
- Follow up with your CUNY college financial aid office to confirm your financial aid award
- Attend an ASAP information session at your CUNY college or call an ASAP campus office
- Meet with your assigned ASAP advisor to plan your fall schedule
- Find out about on-campus services that you can access during summer
- Check out and apply for an on-campus job if needed
- Participate in new student orientations at your CUNY college
- Pick up your textbooks and get ready to start the fall semester with a bang at your CUNY college
- Find out what the ASAP experience is all about! Attend your ASAP Summer Institute
- Participate in new student orientations at your CUNY college

www.cuny.edu/asap
HOW CAN ASAP BENEFIT ME?

BUILD YOUR NETWORK
Successful people often have large networks that provide support and connections to jobs and resources. ASAP fosters relationships to other CUNY students, faculty, and staff to help you begin building these important connections now.

SAVE MONEY
ASAP reduces the cost of college to almost zero for most students by covering any financial aid gap (for those in receipt of aid), books, and transportation.

BECOME A BETTER YOU
ASAP helps you develop the skills and attitudes that lead to success not only in college, but life. Focus, Determination, Confidence, Resiliency. Just a few of the traits students have developed in ASAP.

GO FARTHER FASTER
ASAP students graduate and transfer to baccalaureate degree programs or enter the workforce at twice the rate of similar students. The faster you earn your degree, the sooner you can start your career and watch your earnings rise.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ASAP?

You may be eligible for ASAP if you answer YES to all of the following questions:

- Are you a New York City resident and/or eligible for in-state tuition?
- Do you agree to enter into a full-time associate degree program (minimum of 12 credits per semester) in an ASAP-approved major? Most majors quality!
- Are you fully skills proficient or have no more than two outstanding developmental course needs in reading, writing, and math based on CUNY Assessment Test scores?*
- If you are a continuing or transfer student, do you have 15 college credits or fewer and a minimum 2.0 GPA?

*Students with two developmental course needs at time of application must enroll in at least one of their required courses in the summer or winter before program entry. Visit your college’s ASAP website to learn about any college-specific requirements.

HOW DO I APPLY TO ASAP?

If you think you meet ASAP eligibility requirements, follow these six easy steps to get started:

1. Apply to a CUNY college that has ASAP at www.cuny.edu/admissions.
3. Accept your offer of admission.
4. Complete all admissions requirements, including the CUNY Assessment Tests, if necessary. For more information on testing visit: www.cuny.edu/academics/testing.
5. Check your college’s ASAP website for up-to-date information about any college-specific requirements.