

**COLLEGE ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY  
PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM**

**PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition Brief  
2008-2009**



***The more you know, the less you'll owe!***  
**[www.CollegeBoundAid.com](http://www.CollegeBoundAid.com)**

**BACKGROUND:**

**Dr. Watson Scott Swail**, the President of The Educational Policy Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to policy-based research on educational opportunity for all students, says that his research targeting middle school youth has identified four barriers to attending college:

- College Knowledge
- Academic Preparation
- College Costs
- Career Counseling

The CBA *College Bound Aid* public awareness program, ***Hit the Books Running...the more you know, the less you'll owe***, addresses all these barriers by its focus on:

- Raising awareness of the importance of a college degree today
- Getting good grades now can pay off later in college accessibility
- Financial literacy needs to begin early and at home
- Raising awareness of resources to guide academic choices and, through the Bateman Competition, providing positive role models and messages by PRSSA students.

Of special note, *Hit the Books Running* (hereafter known as **HTBR**) focuses on a younger audience than most programs which target later high school years. Early learning initiatives that begin in middle school are much needed if we are to overcome the barriers to higher education.

### **Who are the priority publics?**

Who needs to know or understand; who needs to be involved; whose support do you need; who will be affected?

- Middle school to early high school students
- Parents of school age children
- The media (as an audience, a research resource, a strategy and/or a communication tactic)

### **KEY MESSAGES:**

#### **It's time to think about college.**

In today's society of escalating tuition costs and commensurate graduate debt levels, CBA's *HTBR* program seeks to raise awareness through grass roots initiatives that it is increasingly important to save, plan ahead and consider initiatives that can reduce loan dependency.

#### **College can be the difference between having a career and just getting a job.**

An important *HTBR* objective is to introduce or reinforce the imperative that a college degree has become the new high school diploma. It is the baseline credential needed to realize the dream America's youth envision for their future.

#### **It's never too soon to get smarter.**

While challenged by the broad range of interests, emotions, aspirations and even distractions of 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students as well as their busy parents, *HTBR* seeks to raise awareness of the reality that, while the prospect of college might seem a long way off, kids and parents need to start thinking about college years before it's time to actually apply.

#### **Good grades now can pay you back later.**

*HTBR* stresses initiatives that can begin early and at home — stay in school, study smart, keep grades up in order to qualify for scholarships, grants and more. These measures have significant life-lesson value in planning for and reducing the cost of higher education. The program seeks to help keep the cost of higher education within the borrower's means to manage it.

#### **First, use your head.**

*HTBR* focuses on students at an earlier age than the majority of college awareness programs currently in place. *HTBR* asks students and parents to begin exploring college costs, to plan ahead and to become aware of the many ways they can be covered or lessened.

#### **Ready, set, school.**

*HTBR* seeks to establish awareness that a college degree is the difference between realizing dreams or just earning a paycheck. By reinforcing the message that college years can be fun as well as an opportunity to grow and learn, *HTBR* seeks to create the positive anticipation of being a part of a new and exciting community. The *HTBR* core message is, "You can get there and graduate in fine financial shape by getting smarter right now. Visit [www.CollegeBoundAid.com](http://www.CollegeBoundAid.com) for more information on preparing for college."

## **The Opportunity:**

CBA's *HTBR* program offers career-focused benefits to PRSSA Bateman participants. These opportunities include:

- To communicate and address a national issue through meaningful local messages
- To overcome unique community issues or perceptions that challenge earlier adoption of planning for higher education according to the communication theory of Diffusion
- To identify and set attainable, measurable objectives for a targeted audience
- To identify and support your choice of communication channels for specific demographics and geographics including new technology
- To research and respond to diversity in community values, language and culture in the development, delivery and evaluation of an effective public information program.
- To take a social issue through all stages of research, planning, implementation and evaluation, for the mutual benefit of the PRSSA participant's career and the community for which it was prepared.
- To create effective messaging, informational materials and public venues to achieve program results measurable against your research findings.
- To develop an identity (put a face) on an issue-related program geared to a generation influenced by images
- To partner with local businesses, groups and organizations in non-monetary in-kind support of a community-based program.

## **RESOURCES:\***

- [www.CollegeBoundAid.com](http://www.CollegeBoundAid.com)- a dedicated Web site created by CBA to provide a user-friendly, entry level online resource for students and parents. Bateman teams are encouraged to include reference to this excellent *HTBR* information source as a tactic in effective communication to targeted audiences.
- Career counselors and financial aid administrators at local colleges
- Career counselors at local high schools
- Council for Opportunity and Education, Washington, DC: *Upward Bound Program*
- Dr. Watson Scott Swail, Understanding College Pricing and Affordability, Richmond, VA, January 22, 2008. [www.educationpolicy.com](http://www.educationpolicy.com)
- [www.CollegeBoard.com](http://www.CollegeBoard.com)
- [www.CollegeSavings.org](http://www.CollegeSavings.org)
- [www.HomeworkSpot.com](http://www.HomeworkSpot.com)
- [www.MappingYourFuture.org](http://www.MappingYourFuture.org)
- *HTBR* collateral materials to be provided electronically for team reproduction.
  1. Poster
  2. Banner
  3. Brochure
  4. Logo
  5. Slogan

\* With the exception of [www.CollegeBoundAid.com](http://www.CollegeBoundAid.com), referencing the above resource links is optional and not intended to be an endorsement by either CBA or PRSSA.

## Who is “the client”?



The Consumer Bankers Association (CBA) is the recognized voice on retail banking issues in the nation’s capital. Headquartered in Arlington, VA, CBA member institutions are the leaders in consumer financial services, including auto finance, home equity lending, card products, education loans, small business services, community development, investments, deposits and delivery. CBA was founded in 1919 and provides leadership, education, research and federal representation on retail banking issues such as privacy, fair lending, and consumer protection legislation and regulation.

### CBA Objectives

Through outreach by CBA member lenders in their communities, and by sponsoring the 2008-09 Bateman Case Competition, CBA seeks to educate and engage a younger demographic of students and their parents in order to:

- Pave the way for the likelihood that students will aspire to and access higher learning institutions following their postsecondary education, and as such...
- Contribute to the quality of life and economic standards proven to result in communities which enjoy a more educated citizenry.
- Contribute to lifestyle and career opportunities for young adults enabled by a college degree.
- Work to keep our country competitive in the global marketplace through the education of America’s most precious resource—its youth.
- CBA’s objectives for support of the Bateman Case Study Competition are to
  - Support a quality grass roots public education initiative (researched, planned implemented and evaluated) by PRSSA chapters
  - Encourage creativity, innovative technology and effective communications in a public awareness program.
  - Provide knowledge and resources to Bateman teams as needed to support their required issue-related research for program planning and evaluation.

