Apply!
Why Host a College Application Event?

ACT Summit, Stillwater, OK
March 1, 2022

ACAC
American College Application Campaign
ACT Center for Equity in Learning

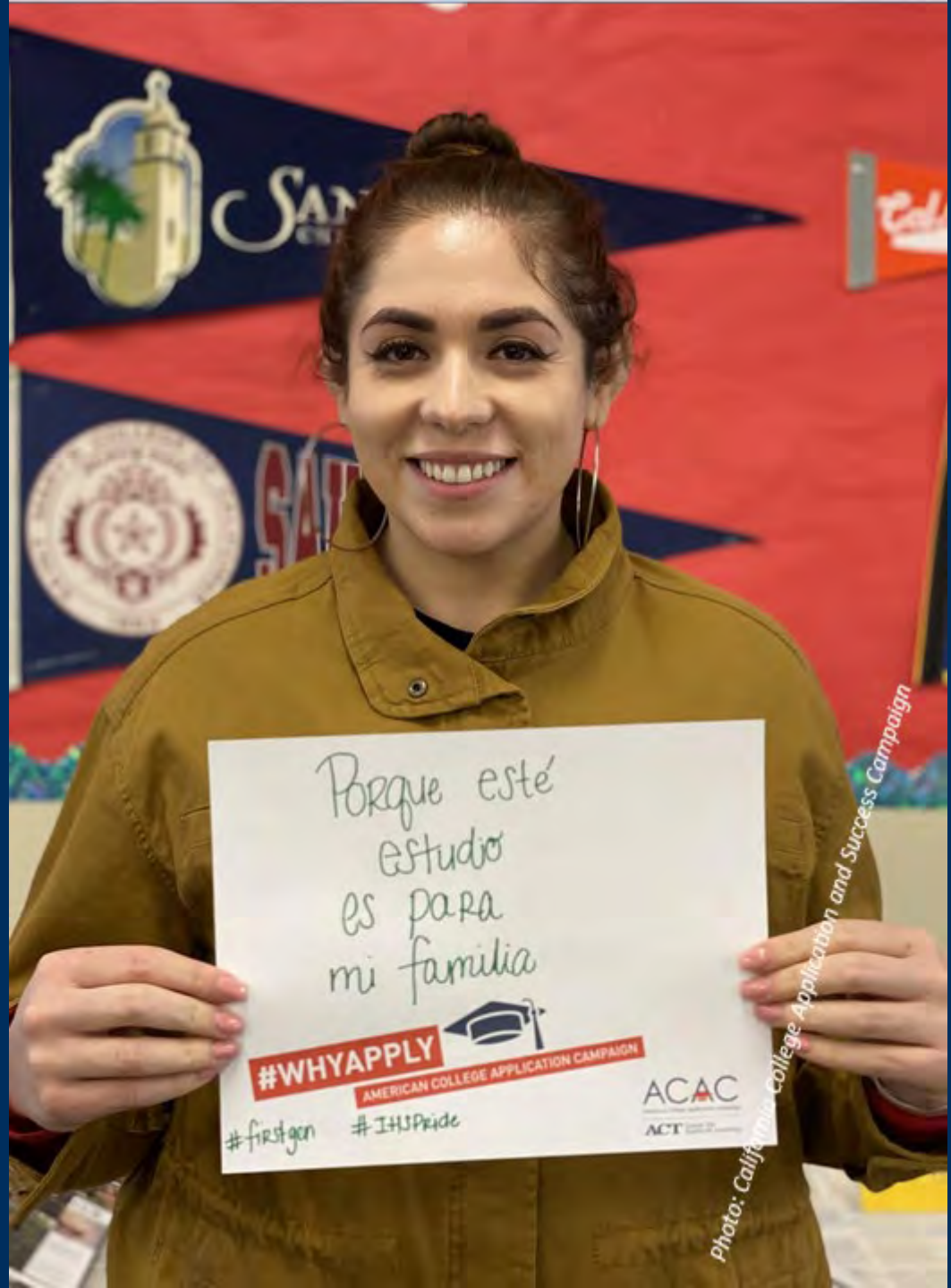

Photo: California College Application and Success Campaign

Speakers

Kelli Kelnar
Assistant Director for Outreach Services
Oklahoma College Assistance Program

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Oklahoma College Assistance Program

What we'll cover today

1. What is the challenge?
2. Our solution
3. History of ACAC
4. How you can help
5. Q&A
6. College App Week in Oklahoma

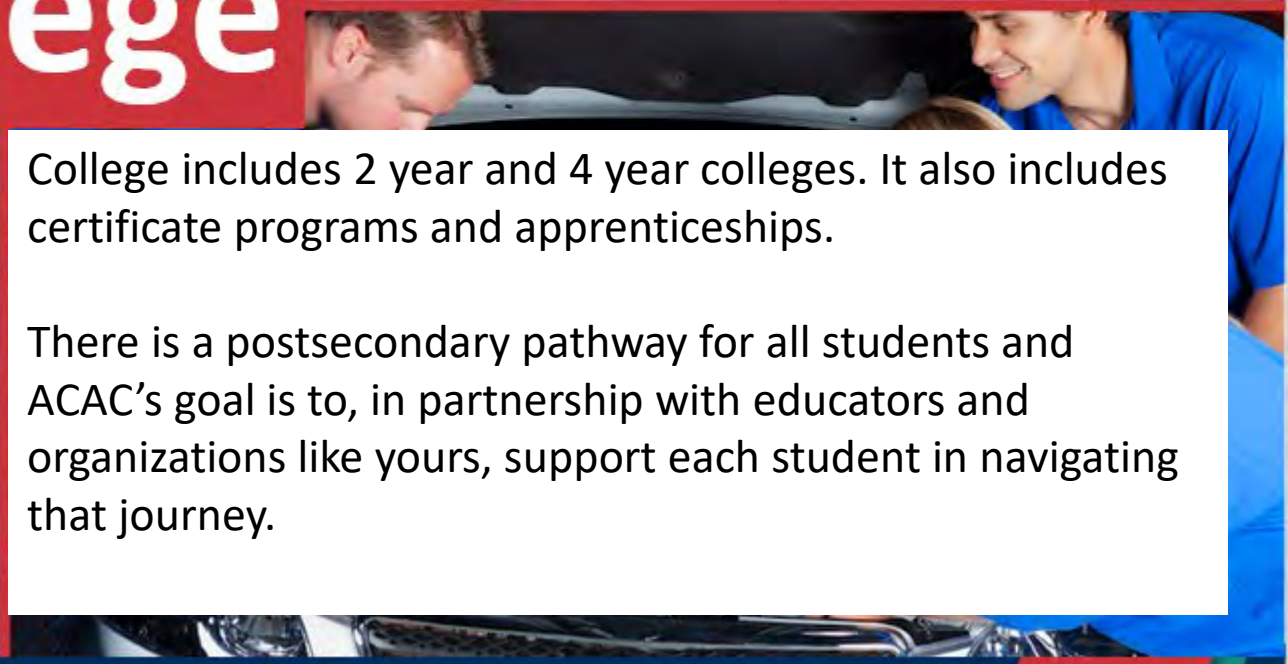
Today I'd like to share with you the challenge we're all trying to address and one of the solutions we're promoting and hope you'll join us.

I'll also share a little history of ACAC and the national efforts they are using to help us reach a solution.

Participating in a College Application Week event is something you can do to help increase the number of students from low-income families or first generation students who apply and attend college.

Letha Huddleston is the Queen of CAW in Oklahoma and she'll share the numbers from our state and ways for you to get involved in a few.

college



College includes 2 year and 4 year colleges. It also includes certificate programs and apprenticeships.

There is a postsecondary pathway for all students and ACAC's goal is to, in partnership with educators and organizations like yours, support each student in navigating that journey.

1

What

Access to college is not equitable for all students

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What is the challenge?

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer students from low-income families entered college – just 41% compared to 90% of their higher income students. As they moved toward graduation, only 10% of those from the bottom income quartile complete a bachelor's degree by age 24, compared to 82% of those in the top quartile.

It's too early to know the full impact of the pandemic on students' access to higher education, but the information ACAC has suggests it has disproportionately impacted lower-income students.

For the class of 2020, fewer enrolled in college, and less members of the class of 2021 applied. Similar trends occurred among students of color, those who will be the first in their family to attend college, and those from rural communities.

There are many reasons that students don’t attend college after high school.

One of the most simple is that they don’t apply. And often they don’t apply because the process can be confusing.

Now think about the students you work with. Do you know what type of assistance they’ll need? Or how they can get that help?

Another reason students may not apply is because they don’t feel like they can afford to attend college. WE offer training on financial aid, scholarships and how to complete a FAFSA. We’re happy to come to you and offer our assistance.

What is one thing students find challenging about applying to college?

For some students, those very things – not knowing what documents they need, not having the time, finding the process confusing – can be the roadblock that prevents them from submitting a college application. And if they don't apply, they can't go.

2

We have a solution

College application completion events can help

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ACAC…

- Is for all students
- Focuses on reaching students who have been underserved
- Helps students make plan for education beyond high school

As part of the college application campaign, schools and community based organizations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia host school-day events in which all 12th graders have an opportunity to receive the help they need.

The overall focus of this campaign is to support students who are systemically underserved – those who are from low-income families, those who will be the first in their families to attend college, and those who may need an added layer of support to begin and complete the college application process.

By making these events grade-wide, host sites actively increase the number of students who are making a plan for continuing their education after high school.

Many host sites include younger students by adding activities that help them learn about college opportunities and celebrating their older peers as they complete their applications.

For most schools and organizations, participating in a CAW event is low or no-cost. You can invite recruiters to volunteer their services and be on-site to help students with their applications and ***some request donations from local businesses***. Very few spend money to host their programs.

In our state, you may know our campaign as Oklahoma College App Week. As a partner of ACAC, we have the same goals. Letha will speak to you more about the specifics of CAW coming up in a minute.

Photo: Mississippi College Countdown

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More about ACAC

Where we've been and where we're headed

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Knowing the history and context of programs can be a helpful way to understand the importance of it. I'm going to share a little bit about how the American College Application Campaign came to be, what's happened in that time and our plans for the future.

Pop Quiz!

I know that for some of you, application completion events are an annual tradition while others of you may be hearing about them for the first time today. That's okay!

What does ACAC stand for?

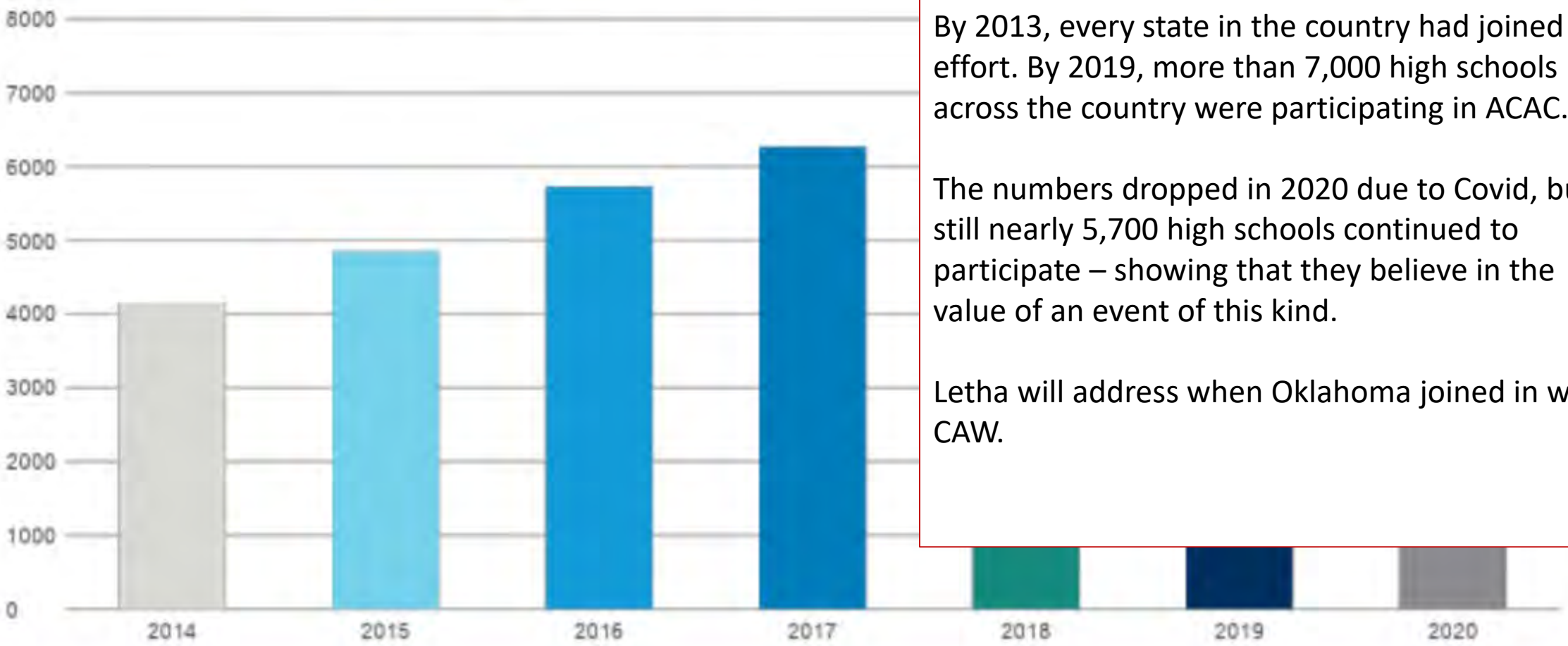
1. Association of College Application Campaigns
2. American College Application Campaign
3. Association of College Application Completers
4. American Campaign for College Applications

As a reminder, the CAW effort is a national one.

Schools and organizations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia have hosted college application completion events. In fact, there is a network of state coordinators who meet regularly to share ideas and discuss best practices to take back to their states.

The national effort has been housed at the ACT Center for Equity in Learning since 2019. State initiatives may be housed in a government agency, through college access programs like GEAR UP, at a university, or in the case of one state – at a bank! Some states have connected their application completion events to other efforts that help students learn about, enroll in, and succeed in college. In these state, the program might be called something else, but they're all connected to ACAC. And that means that every host site and every student participating in one of these events is part of something much bigger.

Participating High Schools



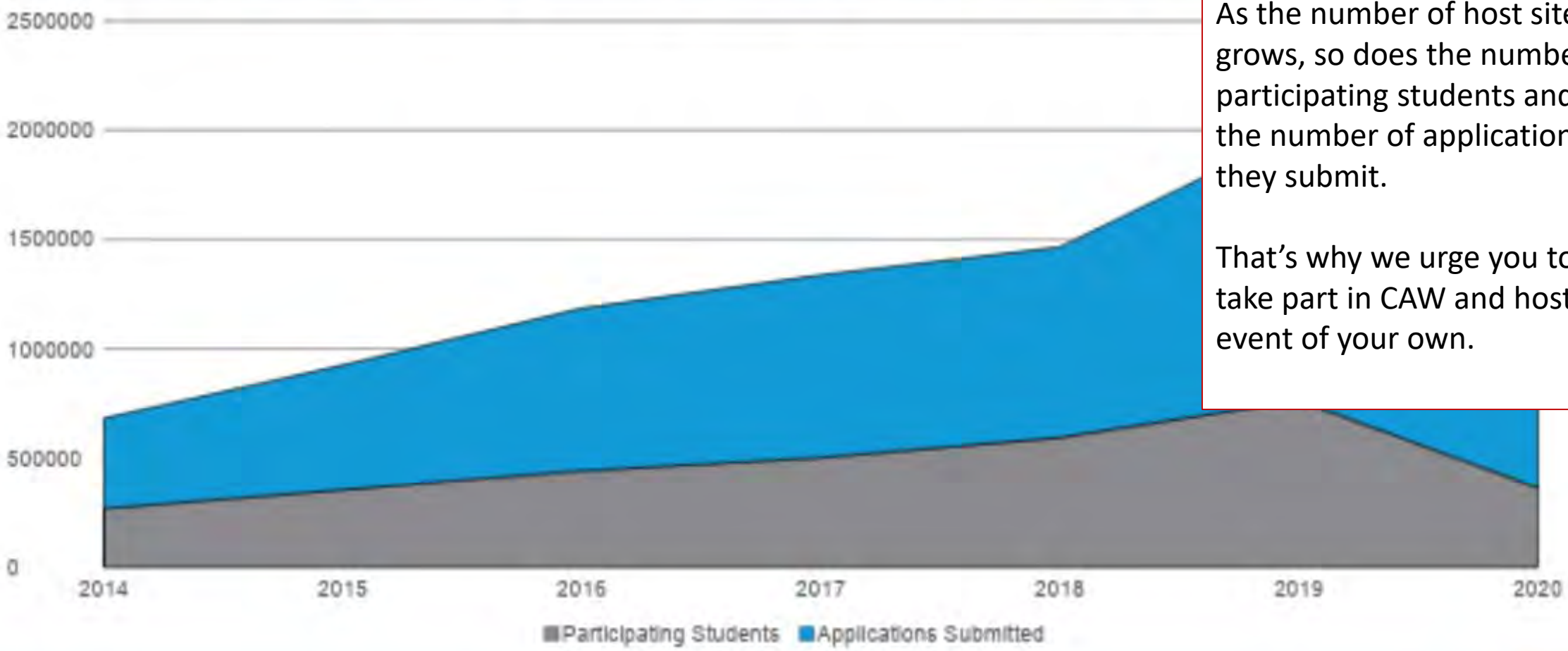
The first CAW was in 2005 in North Carolina. That week was so successful that the idea caught on, first within the state, and then throughout the southeastern US.

By 2013, every state in the country had joined the effort. By 2019, more than 7,000 high schools across the country were participating in ACAC.

The numbers dropped in 2020 due to Covid, but still nearly 5,700 high schools continued to participate – showing that they believe in the value of an event of this kind.

Letha will address when Oklahoma joined in with CAW.

Participating Student & Applications Submitted



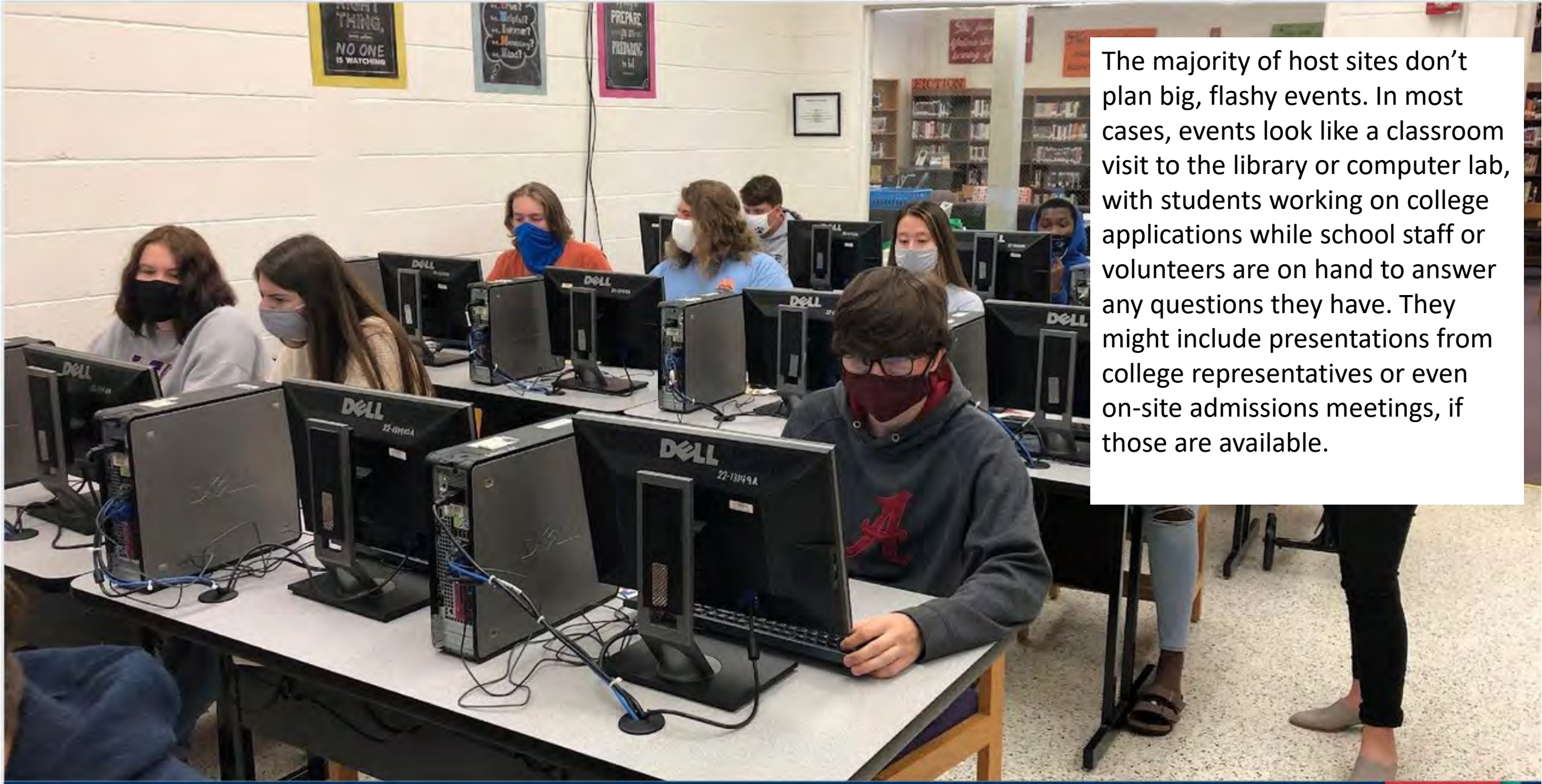
As the number of host sites grows, so does the number of participating students and the number of applications they submit.

That's why we urge you to take part in CAW and host an event of your own.

And since that first event in 2005, more than 3.5 million students have submitted nearly 6 million applications.

5.99 million

applications submitted since 2005



The majority of host sites don't plan big, flashy events. In most cases, events look like a classroom visit to the library or computer lab, with students working on college applications while school staff or volunteers are on hand to answer any questions they have. They might include presentations from college representatives or even on-site admissions meetings, if those are available.

Photo: Alabama College Application Week

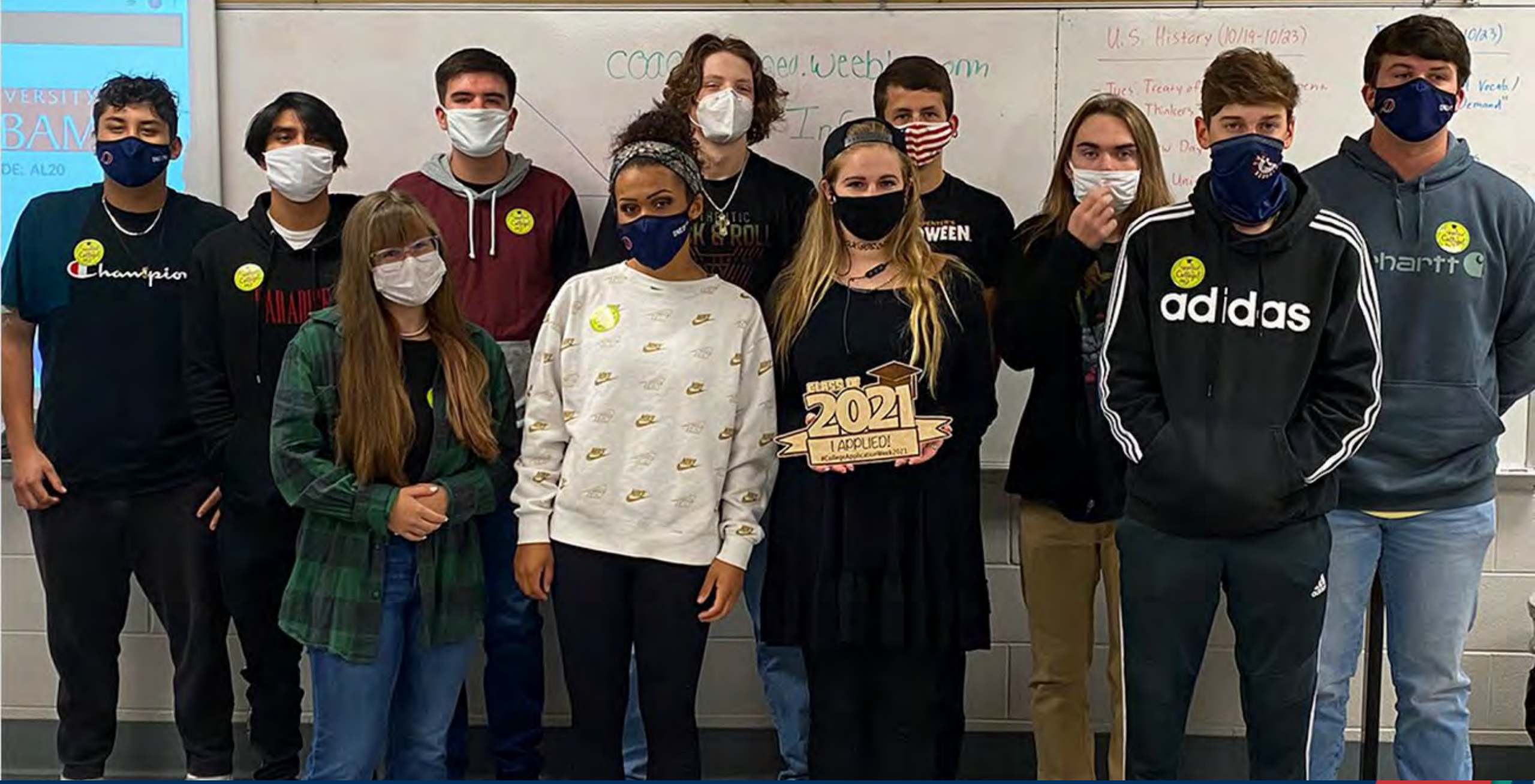


Photo: Alabama College Application Week

“I wouldn't have applied without College Application Week. I couldn't have even done this at home!”

Senior, Taft 7-12 School, Lincoln City, Oregon

Students are celebrated for their efforts. You can make signs for your students. We share filters for students to use saying ‘I Applied’ and we’ll provide stickers for each of your seniors to received once their applications are complete. Posters will also be sent to you after you’ve registered your school for an event.

Photo: Oregon College Application Week

If you believe, like we do, that every student should have a path for life after high school, we invite you to join ACAC's efforts in hosting a college application event.

No matter who you are or what you do, there's a place for you in our campaign.

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You can join us

Really! Everyone can support ACAC efforts in their state

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To enroll your high school, library, community center or higher ed campus, visit **OKCollegeAppWeek.org** and choose Register Now

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College App Week in Oklahoma

- 2012 - Oklahoma GEAR UP piloted College App Week (CAW) in our state. Only designated GEAR UP districts participated at that time.

- 2014 – Oklahoma College Assistance Program was invited to introduce CAW to non-GEAR UP schools statewide

2014	65 high schools
2019	140 high schools, libraries, higher ed campuses
2021	117 high schools, libraries, higher ed campuses

Since 2012

307 schools & organizations have registered

More than 24,000 seniors have participated

More than 29,000 college applications have been submitted

OKCollegeAppWeek.org

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAW2022