Journal of College Access

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About the Journal

The *Journal of College Access* (JCA) focuses on the current trends, research, practices, and development of all types of programs, policies, and activities related to the access of and success in postsecondary education. Issues of college aspiration, qualification, application, enrollment, and persistence are the primary emphases.

The Journal was co-founded by Dr. Patrick O’Connor and Dr. Christopher Tremblay. O’Connor is Associate Dean for College Counseling at Kingswood Cranbrook School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and is a board member for the Michigan College Access Network (MCAN). Tremblay is a Research and Marketing Consultant in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) at Michigan State University.

JCA is affiliated with the Michigan College Access Network, a statewide non-profit organization with a mission to increase college readiness, participation, and completion in Michigan, particularly among low-income students, first-generation college going students, and students of color.

Launched in March 2014, JCA is a part of Western Michigan University’s ScholarWorks, a digital showcase of research, scholarly and creative output.

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Welcome to our fourth issue and our fourth year!

Since launching, our articles have been downloaded nearly 8,000 times!

This edition of the *Journal* begins by taking readers through the college access needs and challenges of several special populations. Stacey Havlik et al. identify the considerations counselors should keep in mind when working with homeless populations, while Victor Saenz and his co-authors provide an analysis of the kinds of high school preparations Latina/o students take to make the most out of the college experience.

Summer melt has become an area of great interest to counselors and researchers alike, and the offering by Wendy Tackett et al. guides us through the lessons learned by one summer intervention process. Bradley Custer rounds out the special populations section with insights on the effects college policies have on justice-involved students.

The *Journal* then shifts to address issues of interest to all college-bound students, starting with a look at a report on Dual Enrollment management by Nicole Martinez. Mary Cantor and her collaborators then summarize the results of a 2016 report on the trends in higher education, while Lizbeth Pineda leads a team that reviews a study on access and mobility in higher education. This edition of the *Journal* closes with information on a newer directory for college access and success programs, and a review by Mark Addison of a book that looks at the legal side of college access.

We hope you enjoy the wide array of articles in this edition.
Preparation Students Experiencing Homelessness for College: Considerations for Counselors and Other Supportive Personnel

ABSTRACT

This article describes the unique college and career preparation challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness (SEH), framed using a Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) lens. The experience of homelessness presents barriers for secondary students, which can impact their college self-efficacy, outcome expectations of attending and succeeding in college, and goal setting towards college. In this conceptual paper, background on homelessness and research related to the college planning process of SEH is provided, as well as implications for school and career counselors, as well as other educators.

Across the United States, during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, 34 states saw increased numbers of students experiencing homelessness (SEH) (National Center for Homeless Education [NCHE], 2016). Moreover, during the 2014-2015 school year, over 1.2 million students who were identified as homeless were enrolled in schools (NCHE, 2016). These numbers included over 300,000 ninth through twelfth grade students experiencing homelessness (NCHE, 2016). The federal definition of “homeless children and youths,” as defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act includes children and youths experiencing homelessness who share housing with others due to a loss of housing, those living in hotels, motels, or trailer parks (due to a lack of other accommodations), and those individuals living in transitional or emergency shelters or places that are not meant to accommodate human beings (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The vast majority of SEH are reportedly either living in shelters (14%) or doubled-up with other families (76%) (NCHE, 2016).

SEH can face challenges that include malnutrition, insufficient health care, social isolation, and an absence of parental support (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Youths experiencing homelessness may also exhibit increased levels of depression and anxiety (Aviles & Helfrich, 2004; Baggerly & Borkowski, 2004). Further, they move frequently and lack records necessary to enroll in school, such as birth certificates, immunization records, or proof of residency (Dukes, Lee, & Bowman, 2013; United States Department of Education, 2016). Moreover, SEH may not have reliable transportation, which can force them to drop out of school if they are unable to attend required programming, such as night school to make-up for missing class time (Ausikaitis et al., 2015). Ultimately, the challenges related to homelessness can impact students’ academic achievement, as evidenced by only 24.7% of SEH receiving proficient scores in
math and 30% in reading during the 2014-2015 school year (NCHE, 2016).

This, in turn, may lead SEH to face considerable challenges in preparing for and applying to college. Because many SEH are often low-income first-generation college students, applying to college can be a complicated experience (Dukes et al. 2013). Homelessness and related factors may hinder students’ understanding of the college planning and admissions process and general college experience, as well as their knowledge of financial aid and support systems (Dukes et al., 2013; United States Department of Education, 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to describe the college and career planning issues related to secondary SEH, framed using a Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) lens, in order to provide timely discourse for counselors and other professionals who work to improve college access for underserved populations like SEH.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
Understanding homelessness and education requires foundational knowledge of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY). EHCY falls under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) and addresses the issues that pre-K through high school SEH face in “enrolling, attending, and succeeding” in school. According to the McKinney-Vento Act, states are required to have an office that coordinates homeless education, which includes a state coordinator and local liaison who collect data on SEH and ensure EHCY is being properly implemented. Under McKinney-Vento, there is also grant funding available for programs that support SEH and states are required to have a plan to address the barriers faced by SEH in their education. When the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized in 2015, under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), it included the role of educational agencies in ensuring that SEH are college and career ready (United States Department of Education, 2016). Local liaisons are responsible for verifying the students who identify as homeless and unaccompanied to determine if they qualify for independent student status under the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Moreover, section 722(g)(1)(K) of McKinney-Vento specifically calls upon liaisons, counselors, and school staff to “ensure that all homeless high school students receive information and individualized counseling regarding college readiness, college selection, the application process, financial aid, and the availability of on-campus supports” (United States Department of Education, 2016, p. 50).

College and Career Planning for SEH
The experience of homelessness may impact students’ college access and enrollment, as well as their ability to successfully complete school (Emerson, Duffield, Salazar, & Unrau, 2012). Due to the nature of homelessness, students may lack a role model or mentor in their family or peer group who has been
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successful in college who can guide them through the process (Dukes et al., 2013). Without such support, they may find it challenging to determine a major, or navigate their college and career decision-making. Further, SEH who want to go to college face (a) a lack of information tailored to their needs; (b) challenges completing the FAFSA forms; (c) limited funding for application fees, tuition, and housing deposits, and; (d) college support staff who lack knowledge on homelessness (Emerson et al., 2012). When SEH enter college, they may also struggle to maintain responsibilities because they have to work and/or may lack necessary support systems to attend to their unique needs (National Center for Homeless Education, 2012).

Social Cognitive Career Theory

SCCT offers a framework for understanding the interaction between individuals and the environment and its influence on an individual’s career development (Lent & Brown, 2006; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). The four constructs of SCCT include: (a) self-efficacy, (b) outcome expectations, (c) goal setting, and (d) contextual supports and barriers (Lent et al., 1994; Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent & Brown, 2006). Self-efficacy is described as the degree to which an individual expects to be successful at performing a task (e.g. Can I be successful in college?) (Bandura, 1986; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Lent et al., 1994). The third construct, personal goals and goal setting, refers to plans to accomplish certain tasks within a given amount of time (e.g. college and career goals and choices) (Lent et al., 1994). Finally, contextual supports and barriers includes the environment where an individual resides and its influence on them (e.g. educational factors or family influence) (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

The central constructs of SCCT offer a framework and provide context to illuminate the purpose of the theory and the direction of this article. The interaction among people, their behavior, and their environment provides a highly dynamic relationship. Performance in educational activities is the result of ability, self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and established goals.

Social Cognitive Career Theory and SEH

Secondary students experiencing homelessness face challenges across each of the four SCCT constructs in their college and career development. Each element is deconstructed below, with a description of how it might be impacted by the experience of homelessness for secondary students. Beginning with their self-efficacy, the challenges that students experiencing homelessness face may hinder their their career and post-secondary preparation and planning.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to perform a task in a certain situation (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Self-efficacy is the first of the four constructs
that was conceptualized by Bandura (1986, 1997). The ongoing interaction among a person, the individual’s behavior, and the environment indicates that self-efficacy impacts the other constructs of SCCT. Self-efficacy can be related to college and career planning and outcomes. For instance, Wright, Jenkins-Guarnieri, and Murdock (2012) found that in a sample of 401 undergraduate students, those with higher levels of college self-efficacy were more likely to persist. Moreover, self-efficacy has been found to have a positive relationship with academic expectations and performance for first year college students (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001). Further, Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli (2001) found that socioeconomic status (SES) is linked to self-efficacy, with parents from higher SES backgrounds tending to have higher aspirations for their children, which in turn, indirectly influences the type of careers in which children express interest.

Although the research on self-efficacy and SEH is sparse (Maccio & Schuler, 2012), and virtually non-existent related to college development, there is indication that higher levels of self-efficacy may positively impact SEH. For instance, Bender, Ferguson, Thompson, and Komlo (2010), found a relationship between SEH with higher levels of self-efficacy and lower instances of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In adults experiencing homelessness, higher levels of self-efficacy were related to shortened stays in the shelter and increased searching for new housing (Epel, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 1999).

Moreover, in another study investigating young women experiencing homelessness, those with higher levels of self-efficacy perceived themselves as more successful in comparison to those with lower levels (Christian & Clapham, 2010). Additionally, higher levels of self-esteem, a factor that correlates with self-efficacy (Maccio & Schuler, 2012), may offset the sense of loneliness experienced by SEH (Kidd & Shahar, 2008).

Thus, self-efficacy may be an important factor that could influence the post-secondary trajectory of SEH. Because of the barriers faced by SEH, it may be more challenging to view themselves as capable of success. Perhaps, SEH who are able to visualize themselves overcoming their barriers and succeeding in school may be more apt to do so.

Outcome expectations. The second construct, outcome expectations, is described as the way individuals believe or expect a certain circumstance will turn out for them (Lent et al., 2000). These individual expectations may have a direct effect on the way individuals perceive their personal goals. Thus, those who feel that they can make contributions to bring about desired change and see a stronger connection between their actions and future consequences show stronger commitments to the pursuit of their desired futures (Bandura, 1997; Epel et al., 1999). For students planning for college, if they can envision the outcome that they will be successful, then perhaps,
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they will be more committed to attending and succeeding in college.

SEH may have lower outcome expectations than their peers with consistent housing because of the barriers they face in achieving post-secondary success. For example, since many SEH are first-generation college goers and, therefore, may not be exposed to others who have graduated from college, it may be difficult for them to picture their own outcomes of attending or succeeding at a university (Dukes et al., 2013). First-generation students may have faulty expectations for their career and college outcomes and have trouble envisioning what their future experiences may look like without having seen or heard from others about the experience (Olsen, 2014). For some first-generation students from lower income backgrounds, their socioeconomic status may be seen as potentially leading them to negative outcomes (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004).

In this regard, educational and occupational aspirations may be lower for SEH, as indicated by Rafferty, Shinn, and Weitzman (2004) who found that 85% adolescents who were formerly homeless compared to 96% of students who never experienced homelessness planned to pursue educational training beyond high school. Moreover, outcome expectations may be greatly affected by a time perspective, which is the individual’s construction of personal experiences into a past, present, or future orientation (Epel et al., 1999). Having a future orientation, where one is looking ahead to future outcomes, is related to high academic achievement, career decision-making, and higher socioeconomic status (Epel et al., 1999). Conversely, having a present orientation, which is necessary in acute crisis, to focus on meeting basic needs, is related to juvenile delinquency and lower SES (Epel et al., 1999). For SEH, they may be focused primarily on the present and meeting their basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, and less inclined to envision their future career outcomes.

SEH may, therefore, have trouble seeing themselves as capable of attending and completing college. Early on in their academic career, they may not see college as an end outcome because it is difficult for them to picture and understand what that might look like. They may also be too focused on getting their basic needs met in the present to plan for college in their future.

Goal-setting. Goal setting is establishing a desired outcome within the context of time. Individuals aim to complete various identified goals within an hour, day, week, month, etc. Social Cognitive Theory suggests that goals, with conditional requirements, enhance motivation (Bandura, 1986). When individuals participate in and are informed of their progress toward a goal, they experience momentum and some will be motivated to develop personal goals spontaneously (Bandura, 1986). When an individual identifies a personal, social, academic, or career goal, they may consider both short term and longer term goals. Research
indicates that setting social and academic achievement goals positively impacts student outcomes in secondary settings (Liem, 2016). Setting goals during college has been shown to enhance academic performance for undergraduate students (Morisano et al., 2010). Developing clear goals enhances enthusiasm toward achievement, persistence in the direction of the goal, and performance on tasks related to the goal (Morisano, Hirsh, Peterson, Pihl, & Shore, 2010). Further, having increased self-efficacy enhances individuals’ commitment to their goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). For those individuals experiencing homelessness, their self-efficacy may be hindered by their housing status (Christian & Clapham, 2010) and therefore, their commitment to their goals could be limited.

Oliveira and Burke (2009) found that homeless youths set unrealistic goals for their career plans that are more aligned with their peers with consistent housing, who may not face similar barriers. SEH may face barriers in setting meaningful goals related to their college and career planning because they are forced to focus on meeting their basic needs first (Havlik et al., 2014). Therefore, they may spend limited time considering their higher-level educational goals, as this is not a priority. Setting goals during college has been shown to enhance academic performance for undergraduate students (Morisano et al., 2010), but when goals are too broad or general, students may find it more difficult to focus on achieving them (Mott, 2015).

Perhaps, if students express the desire to escape a homeless situation, or want to go to college and have a successful career, but have little or no additional support or specific direction to get there, it may be more difficult to reach their goals. Further, since goal setting may impact development, learning to set goals at the secondary level may be particularly important. Teaching SEH to set realistic and timely goals may set them up for increased success.

**Contextual supports and barriers.** The final construct, *contextual supports and barriers*, impacts an individual’s self-efficacy and enhances or restrains personal agency. Contextual supports and barriers can be objective or perceived in relation to making and implementing career choices. Lent, Brown, & Hackett (2000) suggest that while using a SCCT lens, it is advantageous to differentiate between the contextual and the intrapersonal factors that impact self-efficacy. Specifically, according to SCCT, the environment where an individual resides influences their career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). Thus, individuals can face contextual barriers that are environmental (e.g. housing loss) or intrapersonal (e.g. self-concept), which have the potential to positively or negatively impact a student’s trajectory and ultimate outcomes (Lent et al., 2000).

The clearest environmental barrier faced by SEH is their loss of housing. Because SEH are often transitioning between various places of residence (Hicks-Coolick, Burnside-Eaton, &
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Peters, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2004), they are more likely to miss school than students from low-income families (Rafferty et al., 2004). This lack of stability impedes SEH from developing supportive relationships with their peers and adults (Baggerly & Borkowski, 2004), a protective factor that promotes academic resilience (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009). Further, SEH, particularly those who are unaccompanied, may have to take on jobs to support themselves and struggle with balancing their work, while trying to meet their own basic needs without parental or adult guidance supporting them (Ausikaitis et al., 2015; NCHE, 2012). All of these challenges may lead SEH to struggle in the educational environment.

There is also evidence that higher levels of social capital (i.e. increased family resources, higher levels of college attainment, parents with higher expectations of their children attending college, etc.) is positively related to four year college attendance for high school students (Sandefur, Meier, & Campbell, 2006). For SEH whose family systems often lack this support, they may be disadvantaged compared to their peers when it comes to college planning. SEH often lack adults who can model how to attend and succeed in college and careers, making the experience foreign and intimidating to them (NCHE, 2015). Applying for college can present a barrier in itself. SEH may have difficulty understanding and completing financial aid forms, face barriers accessing programs that enhance college admission, and have trouble locating full-time housing on campus over breaks (Duffield, Heybach, & Julianelle, 2009; NCHE, 2012).

With all of the above environmental barriers, SEH may internally feel they are not ready to go to college and may not see themselves as successful. If SEH have increased support within their home and school environments, they may feel more inclined to apply for and enter college. However, those who are faced with additional challenges that make it difficult for them to be successful in high school, may not be as inclined to consider college as an option.

Discussion
SEH are impacted in their college and career planning across all four constructs of SCCT: (a) self-efficacy, (b) outcome expectations, (c) goal setting, and (d) contextual supports and barriers (Lent et. al, 1994; Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent & Brown, 2006). In their self-efficacy, or their expectations of how well they will perform on a task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), SEH may not see college as attainable if school has not been a priority, they have had limited exposure to college, or they have previously struggled academically. In terms of their outcomes expectations, or the predicted results of an event (Lent et al., 1994), SEH may not picture themselves graduating from high school or college because of tangible barriers such as financial aid or lack of mentors. Personal goals and goal setting, or plans to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1986) may also be hindered by the experience of homelessness. It may be
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difficult for SEH to set future-focused personal goals, when basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter often take precedence. Lastly, SEH, face clear contextual barriers, such as a lack of housing, absence of role models who have attended college, and limited exposure to college. All of these factors can contribute to the postsecondary planning of SEH.

Educators and school counselors can nurture self-efficacy and outcomes expectations for SEH, as well as promote efforts to remove the barriers students face to set goals and ensure they are prepared for success after high school. In terms of self-efficacy, high school counselors can send the message to all students, but particularly those experiencing homelessness, that they are capable of going to college. By exposing students to college, through bringing them on college visits, requiring them to visit with college representatives at the school, and providing college information at shelters or community organizations where families who are homeless reside, this can help students and parents view college as an option (Dukes et al., 2013). Since research has indicated that parental beliefs about their child’s efficacy can influence children’s achievement and ultimately their career plans (Bandura et al., 2001), it is critical that when preparing SEH to go to college, that counselors and other educators work directly with parents to help them understand college planning and attendance (Bryan, Griffin, & Henry, 2013).

To further enhance outcomes expectations, it is critical that SEH are exposed to a “college-going culture” which includes providing consistent messages encouraging college-going, having the expectation that all students at the school will attend college and can be successful there, and providing resources (e.g. scholarship information, information about fee waivers, study preparation materials, etc.) to all students that focus on college and career readiness (Jones, Bensimon, McNair, & Dowd, 2011; Hatch, 2013). A college-going culture will influence the self-efficacy and outcome expectations for SEH because they will see college as accessible and a realistic option. This culture can be cultivated by forming university and school partnerships where students learn more about a local university and can interact with undergraduate or graduate students in a variety of forms (Popp, 2000). When appropriate, schools can also expose SEH to post-secondary options beyond four-year institutions, including community colleges, military options, or professional training programs.

In order to ensure that SEH graduate high school with realistic options where they can be successful and overcome their current circumstances, students’ perceived and objective contextual barriers must be addressed. For SEH who are first-generation, they face additional challenges related to the SCCT constructs. First-generation students may have no one else in their family to support them in seeing college as a viable option (Olsen, 2014). They may also not understand financial aid processes and therefore dismiss college as accessible to them.
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(Dukes et al., 2013). One way to provide this information is to have material specific to SEH on school websites. Unfortunately, research indicates that many school counseling websites, which are often key places for parents and students to access information about college are lacking information specific to students who are homeless, such as fee waivers for college applications or for ACT or SAT tests, with very few having information posted about accessing food or clothing (Kennedy & Baker, 2015). By including this type of information, families and students can discreetly gain knowledge on how to overcome some of the contextual barriers they face and gain increased self-efficacy through a deeper understanding of what is available to them. Beyond the websites, counselors should educate parents and students experiencing homelessness on the availability of fee waivers and encourage students to apply (Dukes et al., 2013).

School and career counselors must also help SEH to set goals, select challenging courses, develop four-year academic plans that integrate college planning, and engage with other support systems, such as community-based organizations (Brown, 2013). Additionally, because tutoring programs have been shown to be effective with SEH (Grothaus, Lorelle, Anderson, & Knight, 2011), schools should encourage students to participate in them in effort to address any gaps in achievement they may face. They can also engage students in activities that can positively impact their outcomes expectations, such as summer enrichment programs (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004). Increasing self-efficacy of individuals experiencing homelessness while teaching cognitive skills related to a future orientation, including flexible short-term goal setting, may promote a more future oriented outlook (Epel et al., 1999). Further, SEH can be connected to federally funded TRiO programs to support the transition for middle and high school students to college (Duffield et al., 2009).

To ensure that SEH get the supportive services they need to enhance their college outcomes and guarantee that they have the supports necessary under McKinney-Vento (e.g. transportation), it is critical that they are identified early (Havlik, 2017). This begins by educating all staff members in a school on the various definitions of homelessness by hanging up flyers, sending out email to staff and teachers, and providing trainings (NCHE, 2012). Students who are identified as homeless and unaccompanied may qualify for independent student status on the FAFSA form. This means that they may have access to better financial aid packages, which could include grants or low interest loans (Duffield et al., 2009; NCHE, 2012). School counselors should also regularly review the McKinney-Vento guidelines by following updates through the National Center for Homeless Education (https://nche.ed.gov/) so that they keep abreast on policies related to homelessness and education.
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Although this article focuses on the college and career preparation for SEH, school counselors and other support personnel tend to focus more on supporting the basic needs for SEH because they often to take precedence over other needs (Havlik, Neason, Puckett, Rowley, & Wilson, 2017). To address this concern, it is important for schools to define the roles of school personnel who support SEH. For instance, school social workers and homeless liaisons may be the most adept to support the basic needs of SEH, leaving school and career counselors more time to support other needs such as emotional/social or college and career development.

Colleges also have a major role in ensuring that students experiencing homelessness transition smoothly to college and are retained through graduation. Goldrick-Rab, Richardson, and Hernandez (2017) recommend that colleges prepare for students who may continue to face homelessness or hunger when they arrive at the university. They suggest that universities identify a community leader who can assess how to address students’ basic needs in the area and that they provide a point of contact at the university for students who are housing or food insecure who they can turn to for support. Additionally, Goldrick-Rab et al. (2017) recommends that universities have accessible housing for students in low or moderate-income brackets and have programs available such as on-campus food pantries.

Ensuring that SEH are supported in their college and career planning, development, and transition is an important role of educational professionals serving this vulnerable population. With targeted support and being attuned to SEH’s needs, they can increase their self-efficacy and realize positive post-secondary outcomes. School and college counselors, as well as teachers and administrators play critical roles in providing supportive services, and forming partnerships to help remove the contextual barriers SEH face. Table 1 (see page 16) provides an overview of suggested actions for school personnel supporting the college preparation for students experiencing homelessness.

Conclusion and Future Research

Students experiencing homelessness face challenges in their college and career preparation and development. These challenges impede students from having equitable access to the same college and career information and resources as their peers. Based on the constructs of Social Cognitive Career Theory, homelessness and the contextual barriers students face, impact their self-efficacy beliefs, which, in turn, influences their outcome expectations and personal goal setting. School personnel can support the unique college and career preparation needs of SEH by engaging them in college and career counseling, helping them to set and assess personal college and career planning goals, providing information for students and their families, and developing a college-going culture in the school. This all begins by building
relationships with students. By developing meaningful relationships and helping students to identify and utilize their personal strengths, school personnel can offer support and encouragement to students. There may be challenges for school personnel to ensure that SEH are equipped with the information and resources they and their families need. However, through having awareness of the needs of SEH and by offering on-going assistance and support, school personnel have the potential to discuss feasible post-secondary options with SEH. Once equipped with information, students have the potential to utilize their knowledge and supportive mentors to positively impact their college and career trajectory. Although basic needs often tend to be pressing, it is critical that school personnel take a future orientation when working with SEH and engage in interventions that will support their success after they graduate.

Since this is a topic that has been relatively unexplored, there are a plethora of directions for future research. First, research could focus on how school counselors are meeting the new McKinney-Vento requirements related to college and career planning for SEH. Studies are also needed that explore the experiences of the students themselves and their college preparation and transition. Lastly, studies on the impact of college readiness programs on SEH are necessary to determine their effectiveness.

References


### Table 1
**College Preparation for Students Experiencing Homelessness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of Suggested Actions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Approaches</strong></td>
<td>Provide a system of support. School psychologists, social workers, counselors, teachers, etc. can all have a role in providing college preparation support for students experiencing homelessness. Clearly define each role at the onset of every school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Information</strong></td>
<td>Provide college information in accessible locations for all parents. For examples, go to shelters to provide college workshops or provide college information nights in community centers that are accessible to families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College-Going Culture</strong></td>
<td>Expose students to college. Bring in representatives from a wide range of universities. Provide students with questions to ask the representatives. Have students visit university settings and speak to current students. Assume all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status are capable of going to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Aid Advisement</strong></td>
<td>Provide information on financial aid for low-income and students experiencing homelessness on the school website (e.g. fee waivers, FAFSA, etc.). Identify students who are homeless and unaccompanied so they can qualify for independent student status on the FAFSA. Educate students about the options of fee waivers. Form relationships with admissions representatives to request fee waivers when needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal-Setting</strong></td>
<td>Teach students how to set realistic goals related to college. Review and update these goals regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentorship</strong></td>
<td>Coordinate college mentorship programs for students, particularly for first-generation students who have not been widely exposed to other college goers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tailored Career and College Counseling</strong></td>
<td>When advising students, identify universities with break housing and accessible food. Discuss the college transition process and what to expect. Provide tailored post-secondary advisement that includes community college, military options, and professional training programs when it fits students’ interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students Experiencing Homelessness


Students Experiencing Homelessness


Students Experiencing Homelessness


ABSTRACT
This study examined the influence of participation in school and extracurricular activities on Latino males’ intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree in relation to their Latina peers. Using nationally representative High School Longitudinal Study data from 2012, researchers developed two factors and three dichotomous variables focused on academic, non-academic, or pre-college activities and ran multivariate regression models to determine the effect on intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree. After accounting for background characteristics, being female retained a strong positive effect on intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree. Two factors were positively associated with Latino males’ bachelor’s degree intention: Hours on School Work and College Planning and Preparation. Two dichotomous variables, Math Activities and Science Activities were positively associated; however, the other dichotomous variable, Non-academic Activities, was negatively associated. Most significantly, this study found that effects of high school activities and preparation for college are not constant across gender.

Extensive research has established disparate educational attainment between Latino/as and White students and between Latinos and Latinas (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Aud, et al., 2012; Nuñez & Kim, 2012; Strayhorn, 2014). However, researchers too often apply a cultural deficit perspective that neglects systemic and structural factors and over-emphasizes students’ background characteristics (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Harper, 2012; Solorzano, 1992). Consequently, students of color are often perceived as deficient or incapable of academic excellence. This study addressed two pressing scholarly and practical problems: the dearth of literature bringing an asset-based perspective to the study of students of color outcomes, and the need to improve educational pathways for their success.

Studies indicate the achievement gap between Latino/a and White students is largely due to low SES, not lack of student ability or desire to succeed (Gándara, 2010; KewalRamani et al., 2010; Solorzano, 1992). Latina/os largely attend high-poverty urban schools, qualify for free and reduced lunch, and receive limited academic support, factors that place serious challenges to their academic preparation and success (Gandara, 2010; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Despite these barriers, Latina/o students actively establish ambitious educational goals and career plans (Solorzano, 1992; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). However, Latinas tend to outperform their male counterparts: Latinas are 3.3 times more likely to enroll in a four-year college (Nuñez & Kim, 2012) and more likely to take higher levels of twelfth grade math – a key predictor of college readiness (Strayhorn, 2014). Research must examine intra-group dynamics in order to identify ways to help Latino males achieve academic success.
Using High School Longitudinal Study (HSLS:2012) data, this study examined the factors influencing Latino students’ opportunities and intentions to pursue a bachelor’s degree, and compared the influence of these factors on postsecondary intention between Latino males and their female counterparts. The purpose of the study was to better understand how Latino males’ high school activities inform their future college-going behavior. The two guiding research questions were:

What patterns of college-going behavior do Latino male students exhibit in high school? How do these patterns of behavior affect expressed intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree by gender?

Literature Review
Latina/os face an arduous journey from high school to college (MacDonald, Botti, & Hoffman Clark, 2005). High schools are often unable or unwilling to meet their academic needs, placing them at an unfair academic disadvantage early on (Irizarry, 2012). For Latina/os who enroll in college, many perceive a negative climate for diversity and often report a lower sense of belonging (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Nuñez, 2009), making them more likely to withdraw (Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007). Despite these challenges, scholars (i.e. Yosso, 2005) have identified nontraditional forms of “cultural capital” that help students of color persist.

Demographic and Contextual Factors
Demographic and contextual factors affect students’ educational opportunities, and research indicates this is undoubtedly the case for Latino students. Perna and Thomas (2008) identified four contexts affecting college enrollment: student, family, school, and broader social, political, and economic conditions. At the student and family level, Nuñez and Kim (2012) found that Latino students from families earning $25,000 to $75,000 per year were less likely to enroll in a four-year institution than their more affluent counterparts. Studies by Hagedorn and Perrakis (2008) and Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) have identified gender as a factor influencing college attendance, finding Latinas more likely to enroll in a four-year institution than their Latino peers. Parental education level also affects postsecondary intentions by contributing to students’ information and awareness about college (Perna, 2000).

At the school level, Nuñez and Kim (2012) and Engberg and Wolniak (2010) found that higher levels of free and reduced lunch participation were negatively associated with four-year college enrollment. Gandara and Contreras (2009) demonstrated that Latino students were often classified into lower academic tracks that limited their academic pathways, and that schools with higher Latino enrollment tended to provide fewer college planning resources compared to schools with larger proportions of White students. Research also indicates that students attending private high schools are more likely to enroll in a four-year postsecondary
institution (Falsey and Haynes, 1984), and students from rural high schools are less likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than peers from urban or suburban schools (Byun, Meece, & Irvin, 2012).

**Educational Aspirations & Expectations**
Positive relationships play an important role in minority students’ postsecondary aspirations (Diemer, Wang, & Smith, 2010). Studies have found that peer relationships (Cohen, 1983; Hallinan & Williams, 1990), school counselors (Fallon, 1997; McDonough, 2005), and family member and parental support (Ceja, 2006) can increase high school students’ educational goals. However, Latino males have limited access to resources and mentors, placing them at greater disadvantage than their peers (Lasley Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Family SES is highly correlated with parents’ education, income, and employment (Harding, Morris, & Hughes, 2015), and low parental education compounds challenges to children’s educational achievement (Reardon, 2011). Olivos (2006) argued the school system has systematically isolated bilingual parents from engaging in the schooling of their children. Administrators and educators may view bilingual parents as uninvolved and incompetent, resulting in lower support for students’ academic success.

Research also demonstrates that high school preparation and high school behaviors influence students’ predisposition toward college and persistence in higher education (Adelman, 1999; Warburton, Bugarin, & Núñez, 2001). Arbona and Nora (2007) found Latina/o high school graduates’ likelihood of attending a four-year institution following graduation was influenced by their expectation of attaining a bachelor’s degree, plans to attend college immediately, completion of a rigorous curriculum in high school, and the presence of a majority of peers with similar four-year college plans. High school students with strong college ambitions by sophomore year were found to be more likely to enroll in a four-year institution than their peers without clear college plans.

Strayhorn (2014) found that time spent studying predicted college readiness among historically underrepresented students; the only predictor more significant was SES. Participating in precollege preparation programs also predicted Latina/o students’ college readiness more significantly than other racial/ethnic minority groups. Gonzalez (2011) identified taking the highest available level of high school math, planning to take or taking the SAT/ACT, students’ expectations for high educational attainment, and frequency of discussing college with parents correlated with Latino/a aspirations to enroll in a 4-year college. Gibbons and Borders (2010) developed the College-Going Self-Efficacy Scale (CGSES) based on middle school students’ attitudes toward attendance and persistence, and found lower college-going self-efficacy beliefs among those whose parents had not attended college (Gibbons & Borders, 2010).
College Planning and Preparation

Literature on college planning and preparation emphasizes the experience of affluent, White students and largely neglects the experiences of students of color. While White, native-born children with college-educated parents are more likely to form a “college-going habitus” – a largely unconscious set of preferences, behaviors, and styles closely related to social origin (Grodsky & Riegle-Crumb, 2010) – students of color rely more heavily on school networks, teachers, and counselors to navigate college decisions (Farmer-Hinton, 2008). However, Latino/a students often encounter inadequate access to sufficient resources and mentors at school, and the constraints of school counselors who serve large student populations place Latina/o students in a “double bind” with limited support (Irizarry, 2012; Cabrera, Lopez, and Saenz, 2012).

Despite institutions’ limited capacity to appropriately serve all students, research indicates that contact with school counselors can predict college application rates among high school low-income and students of color. Bryan et al. (2011) found students with counselor contact during or prior to tenth grade were twice as likely to apply to one school and 3.5 times more likely to apply to multiple schools. Similarly, Engberg and Gilbert (2014) argued that counseling norms and access to counseling resources increase likelihood of applying to college. Extracurricular engagement can also affect college-going: Martinez (2010) showed students were able to navigate the college choice process through their social identities as athletes, band students, and/or club members because these activities exposed them to college knowledge and provided access to school personnel.

In sum, the majority of existing literature portrays Latina/o students as deficient and displaces much of the school and systemic responsibility onto the students rather than identifying institutional responsibility. However, an increasing amount of research demonstrates how Latina/os actively resist these constraints and pursue quality education despite their circumstances (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Cabrera, Lopez, & Saenz, 2012). Consequently, this study sought to maintain an asset-based perspective that values and empowers Latina/o students while attempting to identify replicable solutions for success.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilized Azjen’s (1985; 1991) theory of planned behavior, a social psychology theoretical lens. Ajzen (2005) suggested that previous behavior is a precursor to an individual’s intention of future behavior. The theory argues that behavioral beliefs about potential consequences produce a certain attitude toward the behavior; normative beliefs about other people’s expectations produce norms and social pressure; and control beliefs shape an individual’s perceived ability to perform a certain behavior. The theory emphasizes the role of consciousness and intentional action in
guiding behavior: as Azjen (2011) stated, “its concern is primarily with behaviors that are goal-directed and steered by conscious self-regulatory processes” (p. 1116). According to this theory, performance of a behavior should be predictable based on the individual’s intentions and their perceived behavioral control (Azjen, 2011).

Azjen (2002) has noted that self-efficacy and an individual’s perception of control may reflect both internal and external influences. Relatedly, studies (see Adelman, 1999; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nuñez, 2001) have demonstrated that multiple complex factors shape Latino male college-going activities and decisions. Azjen (2011) acknowledged that background factors such as age, education, gender, and income contribute to people’s beliefs about their own behaviors, other people’s expectations, and their own self-efficacy. While recognizing and controlling for the influence of these environmental variables, the intent of this study was to identify intentional precollege behaviors that are most likely to predict pursuit of a bachelor’s degree among Latino male high school students. We posited that Latino males’ high school behaviors may predict their four-year degree intentions.

It is important to note, however, that this and many other behavioral theories normalize the experiences of White individuals with high agency and resources. In applying Azjen’s (1985; 1991) theory of planned behavior, this study looked to challenge and begin to expand the ways in which this and other theories are used to explain the experiences of non-White individuals. By understanding the precollege behaviors of Latino male students, we sought to create a broader view of Azjen’s (1985) theory that could more closely reflect the balance of normative, behavioral, and control beliefs among young Latinos.

Methods

Data and Sample
The High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) includes a nationally representative sample of public and private high school students and is intended to examine students’ trajectories from the beginning of high school into postsecondary education and the workforce. Base year data was collected in 2009 and included over 24,000 ninth grade students from 944 schools. A first follow-up of the HSLS cohort occurred in spring 2012, when most study participants were completing 11th grade. The survey investigated secondary to postsecondary transition, the evolution of postsecondary plans, and the educational and social experiences that affect these shifts (NCES, 2015). In order to assess college-going behavior during several years of high school, this project utilized the follow-up data with 11th grade students.

The national dataset included 23,503 students overall and 3,862 Latina/o students. This study relied on the subsample of 3,862 respondents who identified as Latina/o students. However, only respondents with
valid answers on all variables were determined to be eligible for the analytic sample. Researchers ran chi-square tests to compare all Latina/o students with the selected sample of 2,050. Chi-square results suggested that the differences between all Latina/o students and the selected sample by gender (chi-square=.631, df= 1, p>.05), family income (chi-square=3.044, df= 1, p>.05), and parental education level (chi-square=8.396, df= 4, p>.05) were not statistically significant. The sample of 2,050 Latina/o students was included in the present study. Researchers weighted the final sample of 2,050 using the first follow-up student analytic weight (W2STUDENT) before conducting all analyses.

**Measures and Analyses**

As the purpose of this study was to identify key college-going behaviors of Latino male high school students relative to their peers, researchers reviewed the HSLS survey instrument and identified items addressing a student’s participation in activities pertaining to high school or college. Researchers examined the following outcome variable related to college-going behaviors of Latino students: Intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree (0 = No, Yes = 1). The identification of predictor variables was informed by the preceding literature review of past studies examining high school students’ college-going behavior (see for example Arbona & Nora, 2007; Engberg & Gilbert, 2014; Gonzalez, 2011; Martinez, 2011; Strayhorn, 2014). In addition, five predictors associated with demographics (i.e., gender, family income, and parental education level) and school characteristics (i.e., school type and school locale) were included as important input variables. The selection of these variables was again driven by literature review of key contextual factors shaping college-going (see for example Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Hagedorn & Perrakis, 2008; Nuñez and Kim, 2012; Perna, 2000; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Researchers ran principal components analysis and measured reliability using Cronbach’s alpha, producing two unique factors used to provide a parsimonious but comprehensive description of school activities for college readiness. Based on these results, two variables – “Hours on school work,” with very good internal consistency of .891, and “College planning and preparation,” with an acceptable internal consistency of .538 – were added to the dataset. These factors were informed by the literature review framing this study; for example, Strayhorn (2014) found time spent studying was a significant predictor of college readiness, and Bryan et al. (2011) found high school counselor contact by sophomore year increased likelihood of applying to college. In addition to two factors, three predictors of out-of-school activities were used to disentangle the separate influences of extracurricular activities on college-going behavior: math activities, science activities, and non-academic activities. Gonzalez (2011) found taking the highest-level math was a predictor of college-
going, and Martinez (2010) showed that extracurricular activities helped students navigate the college choice process. Each variable was dichotomized into those who participated in at least one of four or five activities outside of school (1) and those who participated in none of activities outside of school (0).

Each variable is described in more detail in Table 1 (page 27), and the weighted descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2 (page 28). Factor loadings and the degree of reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of two factors, “Hours on school work” and “College planning and preparation,” are presented in Table 3 (page 28).

Researchers ran independent sample t-tests for two factors (i.e., Hours on school work, College planning and preparation) and chi-square tests for three dichotomous variables (i.e., Math activities, Science activities, Non-academic activities) against gender variable to identify significant difference between Latino males and their female peers. In addition, researchers utilized logistic regression to predict the likelihood of a student’s intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree. Logistic regression is appropriate to “predict a discrete outcome such as a group membership from a set of variables that may be continuous, discrete, dichotomous, or a mix” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 437). Two multiple logistic regression models using independent variables guided by the previous research were suggested for data analysis. The first model examined factors and dichotomous variables related to college preparation, as well as key background characteristics and school characteristics except interaction terms. The researchers added five interaction terms to the second model to investigate how the effects of high school activities and preparation for college on postsecondary differ by gender. The logistic regression model with interaction terms can be expressed with the following equation:

\[
\text{logit}(\pi) = \ln[\pi/(1-\pi)] = \text{Intercept} + \sum \beta_{1-6} (\text{Demographic characteristics}) + \sum \beta_{7-10} (\text{School characteristics}) + \sum \beta_{11-15} (\text{High school activities and preparation for college}) + \sum \beta_{16-20} (\text{Interaction terms}).
\]

\(\pi\) is the estimated probability of postsecondary intention and varies from 0 to 1 on S-shaped curve. \(\beta\)s are the slope coefficients of the independent variables and interaction terms in the logistic regression model. Researchers reported the following parameters in interpreting the logistic regression results: p-value, unstandardized regression coefficient, standard error, and odds ratios. P-value and odds ratios were utilized to express statistical significance and change in the odds of outcome as the function of a predictor variable, controlling for all other variables.

**Limitations**

Factoring of variables was conducted and informed through literature. However, it is important to note that this process simplifies the complex realities of Latino male educational experiences. Additional variables not represented in the HSLS survey likely inform students’ educational pathways, and
Table 1
Definitions and coding of main variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description and Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>1 = Yes, 0 = No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Demographic Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1 = Male, 0 = Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>1 = $35,000 or less, 0 = Greater than $35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental education level</td>
<td>5 = Ph.D./M.D/Law/other high level professional degree, 4 = Master’s degree, 3 = Bachelor’s degree, 2 = Some college, 1 = High school or Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) School Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School type</td>
<td>1 = Private, 0 = Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School locale</td>
<td>Four dichotomous variables indicate school locale: (1) Rural, (2) Town, (3) Suburb, and (4) City. The reference group is (1) Rural and the other three dummy variables were included in the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) High School Activities and Preparation for College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours on school work</td>
<td>A factor score of the following three items: student were asked how many hours do you spend (1) working on math homework and studying for math class during a typical week, (2) working on science homework and studying for science class during a typical week, and (3) working on other homework and studying for other class during a typical week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math activities</td>
<td>A dichotomous variable indicates whether or not a student participated in at least one of the following four math activities since 2009: (1) math club, (2) math competition, (3) math camp, and (4) math group study. This item was coded as 0 for those who participated in none of activities and 1 for one or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science activities</td>
<td>A dichotomous variable indicates whether or not a student participated in at least one of the following four science activities since 2009: (1) science club, (2) science competition, (3) science camp, and (4) science group study. This item was coded as 0 for those who participated in none of activities and 1 for one or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic activities</td>
<td>A dichotomous variable indicates whether or not a student participated in at least one of the following five activities outside of school since 2009: (1) Art, (2) Music or dance, (3) Theater or drama, (4) Organized sports, and (5) Scouting or club activity. This item was coded as 0 for those who participated in none of activities and 1 for one or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College planning and preparation</td>
<td>A factor score of the following five items: (1) sat in on or taken a college class, (2) took a course to prepare for a college admission exam, (3) attended a program or a tour of a college campus, (4) searched internet or read college guides for college options, and (5) talked with HS counselor about options for after HS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 2
### Descriptive statistics of the variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV: Intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree</strong></td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IVs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental education level</td>
<td>1.731</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School type</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School locale (ref. Rural): Town</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School locale (ref. Rural): Suburb</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School locale (ref. Rural): City</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours on school work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1.683</td>
<td>3.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math activities</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science activities</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic activities</td>
<td>.698</td>
<td>.459</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College planning and preparation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1.772</td>
<td>1.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male*Hours on school work</td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>-1.683</td>
<td>3.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male*Math activities</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male*Science activities</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male*Non-academic activities</td>
<td>.367</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male*College planning and preparation</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>-1.772</td>
<td>1.859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 3
### Factor loadings and Cronbach’s alpha for high school activity factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1: Hours on school work</th>
<th>Factor loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many hours 11th grader spend working on math homework and studying for math class during a typical week?</td>
<td>0.911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many hours 11th grader spend working on science homework and studying for science class during a typical week?</td>
<td>0.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many hours 11th grader spend working on other homework and studying for other class during a typical week?</td>
<td>0.921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cronbach's alpha coefficient | 0.889 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 2: College planning and preparation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11th grader sat in on or taken a college class.</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grader took a course to prepare for a college admission exam.</td>
<td>0.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grader attended a program or a tour of a college campus.</td>
<td>0.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grader searched internet or read college guides for college options.</td>
<td>0.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grader talked with HS counselor about options for after HS.</td>
<td>0.548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cronbach's alpha coefficient | 0.538 |
HSLS variables not included in this analysis may play a role as well. In addition, factors included in the dataset are limited in what they capture, and while factor analysis helps quantify the phenomenon of Latino male pre-college behaviors, it does not provide explanation or background for these students’ experiences and choices. As such, this study offers an important foundation for further examination; additional supplemental research, particularly through qualitative approaches, can provide rich contextual analyses of students’ experiences and processes.

Results
As indicated in Table 4 (page 30), independent t-tests suggested significant gender differences between Latina/o students’ reported effort on school work and participation in activities relevant to preparation for college. Latino males indicated significantly less involvement in academic curricular activities during high school (Hours on school work: t=67.599, p<.001) than their female counterparts; in addition, Latino males reported fewer college preparatory activities (College planning and preparation: t=78.263, p<.001) than their peers.

However, these differences varied by subject. While there was no significant difference between males and females in science activities (chi-square=.639, df=1, p>.05), 55.3 percent of Latino females participated in math activities, compared with 44.7 percent of Latino males. At the same time, Latino males indicated they were more likely to participate in science activities than their female counterparts (52.6 percent, 47.4 percent). Latino males showed slightly higher participation in science activities than Latina peers (51 percent, 49 percent).

Two distinct models of multiple logistic regression analysis were utilized in order to predict the likelihood of intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree as reported by Latino males. Table 6 contains the findings. The effect size for Model 1 was Nagelkerke R2, .240; 24% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. As indicated by the odds ratio, most high school activities that prepare students for college (i.e., Hours on school work, Math activities, Science activities, and College planning and preparation) were a positive predictor of high school students’ intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree. In contrast, the out-of-school variable, Non-academic activities, was negatively associated with intention to pursue a college degree for Latino males. In addition, parents’ education level was positively associated with intention to pursue a degree. However, the model predicted that a Latino student has lower odds of intending to pursue a bachelor’s degree if the student is male or
Table 4
Gender difference in Latino/a’s school work and preparation for college
\(p<.001, p<.01, p<.05\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours on school work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>67.599***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.087</td>
<td>1.025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College planning and preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>78.263***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>1.012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 5
Gender difference in Latino/as’ high school activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender (%)</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>55.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages were calculated using weighted sample.
\(p<.001, p<.01, p<.05\)
has a family income equal to or less than $35,000 per year. Findings suggested lower-income Latino males were less likely to plan on enrolling in postsecondary education than their more affluent peers.

The odds ratios of school factors entered into Model 1 indicated that there are significant differences between students’ intentions to pursue a bachelor’s degree. Students who attended private schools reported higher intentions of enrolling in postsecondary education than those who attended public schools. In other words, high school students are more likely to plan to pursue a bachelor’s degree when they are attending private schools than public schools – regardless of locale. This finding was congruent with intra-group findings listed above, where low-SES Latino males were found to be less likely to plan to attend college than higher income Latino males. School type was also found to be important: results revealed that students attending schools in the suburbs or cities were more likely to report an intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree than those attending schools in rural areas. Students attending schools in suburbs reported the highest intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree compared to students in other locales.

The results of Model 2, presented in Table 6 (page 33), suggested there were statistically significant interaction effects between gender and high school activities and preparation for college. This indicated the association between activities in and out of school relevant to preparation for college and intention to pursue a bachelor’s degree was moderated by gender, even after controlling for gender, high school activities in preparation for college, and interaction terms. Interaction effects revealed the odds ratios for the association between “hours on school work” and “intention” and the association between “college planning and preparation” and “intention” were significantly lower for Latino males compared to their female counterparts. In contrast, the odds ratios for the association between “math activities” and “intention,” for the association between “science activities” and “intention,” and for the association between “non-academic activities” and “intention” were significantly larger for Latino males compared to Latinas.

Discussion
The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of high school activities on college-going behavior for Latino males. Most significantly, this analysis found that effects of high school activities and preparation for college are not constant across gender. The results of interactions between gender and extracurricular activities indicate that Latino males who participate in math activities, science activities, or non-academic activities outside school are still less likely to pursue a bachelor’s degree than their female counterparts. The effects of academic engagement in school work and college preparation are also smaller for Latino males. In other words, Latino males are less likely to pursue a bachelor’s degree compared to their
Latina/o Students’ College-going Behavior in High School

female counterparts, even when Latino males indicate the same academic effort toward school work and experience in college preparatory programs. These findings suggest that academic activities in high school and college preparatory programs may be less effective in motivating college behavior for Latino male students in relation to their Latina peers.

Findings supported the application of Azjen’s (1985; 1991) theory of planned behavior to the bachelor’s degree intentions of Latina/o students in high school. Data showed some college-related behaviors in high school do predict Latina/os’ plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree. The significance of two behavioral factor revealed that behaviors related to precollege activities and academic engagement in school carry predictive weight. As Azjen’s theory would suggest, participation in college preparatory activities – such as pre-college classes or programs, college fairs, or counseling – does predict an intention to pursue a bachelor’s for Latina/o students. However, the theory’s ability to predict bachelor’s degree intention is stronger for Latinas than Latinos. As noted, Azjen’s (1985; 1991) theory and many other behavioral models primarily capture White norms to the exclusion of minority perceptions, identities, and experiences. These findings reinforce Azjen’s theory, but warrant further research on the high school behaviors that do and do not predict college plans among Latina/os, as well as further analysis – perhaps through qualitative methods – of how these choices and activities influence college intentions.

Demographic and contextual findings from this analysis suggest the persistence of systemic challenges facing P-20 educational attainment, particularly related to gender and family income. The significance of gender throughout the model – namely the increased likelihood that girls compared to boys will plan to pursue a bachelor’s degree – speaks to the importance of continuing national efforts on behalf of supporting boys throughout the educational pipeline. The strong influence of socioeconomic background and family education reinforces existing literature on the challenges low-income and first-generation students face in considering college (Harding, Morris, & Hughes, 2015; Reardon, 2011).

The benefits of private and suburban institutions in particular underscore the importance of ensuring resources and opportunities are available to all high school students, regardless of their school context. It is ever more critical to double efforts on behalf of underrepresented and low-income students, as even those exhibiting college preparatory behaviors remain disadvantaged by their environments. This study’s model predicts that meeting with high school counselors and participating in college fairs increases the likelihood of planning to pursue a bachelor’s degree, but these resources too must be available in order to be utilized. Given Latina/o students’ concentration in low-income schools, it is important to
### Table 6

Logistic regression results predicting postsecondary intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=2,050</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.701***</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>5.481</td>
<td>1.914***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender (ref. Female)</td>
<td>-.296***</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>-.763***</td>
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<td>Family income (ref. Greater than $35,000)</td>
<td>-.660***</td>
<td>.007</td>
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<td>-.664***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental education level (ref. HS or less)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>.136***</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>1.145</td>
<td>.158***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>.372***</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>1.450</td>
<td>.373***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>.716***</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>2.046</td>
<td>.701***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D./Professional degree</td>
<td>1.660***</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>5.262</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School type (ref. Public)</td>
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<td>.023</td>
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<td>School locale (ref. Rural): Town</td>
<td>-.095**</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>-.121***</td>
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<td>School locale (ref. Rural): Suburb</td>
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<td>.011</td>
<td>1.860</td>
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<td>.010</td>
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<td>.089***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours on school work</td>
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<td>.005</td>
<td>1.989</td>
<td>.878***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math activities</td>
<td>.772***</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>2.165</td>
<td>.791***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science activities</td>
<td>.686***</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>1.986</td>
<td>-.170***</td>
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<td>Non-academic activities</td>
<td>-.060***</td>
<td>.008</td>
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<td>-.185***</td>
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<tr>
<td>College planning and preparation</td>
<td>.405***</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>.476***</td>
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<td>Male*Hours on school work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-.346***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male*Math activities</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.139***</td>
</tr>
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<td>Male*Science activities</td>
<td>1.695***</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>5.446</td>
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<td>.310***</td>
<td>.016</td>
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<td></td>
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Nagelkerke R-Square

<p>| | |</p>
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<td>.240***</td>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>.251***</td>
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</table>

*b = unstandardized regression coefficient; OR = odds ratio

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05
Latina/o Students’ College-going Behavior in High School

acknowledge that these students often lack access to the guidance, activities, and resources our model indicates can support bachelor’s degree intentions. Community-based programs and organizations that provide college counseling services in partnership with local schools can play a critical role in countering inequitable distribution of school resources by locale and type.

Previous studies have shown a positive effect on college readiness of time spent studying (Strayhorn, 2014) and math or science activities available (Gonzalez, 2011). This study showed that academic effort on school work predicts bachelor’s intentions among Latino high school students. The model also indicated that participation in academic extracurricular activities may encourage college-going among underrepresented students, particularly towards four-year institutions. These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting academic engagement is positively related to college-going behavior.

Unexpectedly, the models showed that participation in non-academic extracurricular activities such as art, athletics, and clubs was negatively related to bachelor’s intentions. In contrast with other scholars (see Cohen, 1983; Halliman & Williams, 1990; Martinez, 2010) who have argued that these extracurricular activities can be particularly beneficial for students of color by providing a positive environment, encouraging role models, and nurturing students’ individual strengths and talents, this study’s results suggested potential negative effects of these activities on Latino males’ postsecondary trajectories. However, research on the effects of extracurricular activities on academic outcomes for Latino males is limited and inconsistent (Peguero, 2010): studies have found extracurricular activity associated with decreased dropout and stronger school attachment among Latinos (Davolos et al., 1990; Diaz, 2005), while others have shown extracurriculars, particularly athletics, correlated with lower academic performance (Prelow & Loukas, 2003). This model’s indication of a negative effect underscores the need to delve deeper into the nuance and variation of extracurricular engagement and outcomes for Latino males in high school (Peguero, 2010).

Implications & Conclusion

This model’s initial results provide an important baseline from which to build a more robust multivariate model that begins to answer why these trends may exist among Latino male students and their peers. The multivariate regression model included student input characteristics, environmental variables related to their high school campuses, and key factor measures related to college-going behaviors. After accounting for student- and school-level effects, findings revealed Latino males still lag behind their female peers in their volume of college-going activities. The imperatives outlined by President Obama’s “My Brother’s Keeper”
initiative supporting the academic success of young men of color (The White House, 2016) must remain a priority. However, variables that account for these inter-gender differences were not identified by this study. Further studies could focus on understanding where these differences exist and how to adequately support Latino males’ bachelor’s degree intentions.

This study’s findings on the positive effects of college planning and academic preparation activities are particularly valuable for high school counselors and organizations looking to strengthen academic engagement and aspirations among underrepresented students. As Latino students disproportionately attend lower-resourced schools, college outreach efforts and the work of nonprofit partner organizations are essential to promoting access and opportunity for students in low-income and/or remote areas. This study also reveals an opportunity for subsequent research on the effects of participation in college pathway programs, such as GEAR Up and TRIO, on Latino males’ bachelor degree plans. Examination of these programs should dissect the program types, components, and level of student involvement that may influence their ability to support bachelor’s degree intentions.

Further, all researchers should adopt a culturally appropriate perspective when assessing the educational experiences of non-White students. An appropriate cultural lens allows for the identification of unique intra-group nuances not acknowledged or valued by generalistic models.

As anticipated, this study also points to the need for additional consideration of how Azjen’s (1985; 1991) theory of planned behavior does and does not explain bachelor’s degree intentions of Latino males in high school. While findings showed key behaviors—namely, academic college preparatory activities—predict college intentions, behaviors related to extracurricular activities such as music, dance, theater, and sports do not. Yet, each of these activities represents a talent students might pursue in college, and scholars have found that participation in these activities can improve likelihood of attending college (see Cohen, 1983; Halliman & Williams, 1990; Martinez, 2010). Further research should examine the relationship between these activities and college plans. In addition, Latina/o students may engage in activities not identified by the survey that are influential in predicting intentions to pursue a college degree. By Azjen’s (2011) own admonition, the theory of planned behavior has been criticized for taking too rationalist an approach and diminishing the emotional, subjective processes shaping human behavior. The theory may not fully account for the social and cultural experiences or responses of Latino males in a society built around White norms. Azjen (1985; 1991) placed these affective and emotive elements in the background of his theory; however, it may be necessary to foreground these factors and consider greater social-cultural complexity in order to explain the extracurricular factors.
predicting Latino male bachelor’s degree intention.

Building upon the foundation established by the models presented in this study, this research aims to continue exploring these and other factors that may influence Latino male students’ pre-college behaviors, and consequently their intentions to pursue a four-year degree. This important work will help scholars and practitioners better understand how Latino males’ high school activities may shape their future college decision-making, in turn yielding insights that can inform and improve asset-based approaches to Latino male student success.

References


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Latina/o Students’ College-going Behavior in High School


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Best Practice: Lessons Learned from a Summer Melt Prevention Program

The Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University explained, “Across the country, 10–40% of seemingly college-intending students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, fail to enroll in college the fall after graduation. This phenomenon is known as summer melt” (Castleman, Page, and Snowdon, 2013). In order to minimize the number of students that enroll in college their senior year but do not matriculate in the fall, the College and Career Action Network, with the support of The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo and in partnership with nine school districts throughout Kalamazoo County, piloted a summer melt program experience in summer 2016. The authors seek to explain how to design a summer melt prevention program, how to set up an evaluation plan related to the program, the key findings from the summer 2016 pilot in Kalamazoo County, and lessons learned for those wanting to replicate the program.

Background
Over the years, various programs have been implemented to help students in high school with college applications, financial aid forms, etc., but students still typically had tasks to complete over the summer (e.g., placement tests, housing forms) with no support. Those summer tasks have been shown to be especially difficult for first-generation and low-income college-bound students who do not have family members versed in the college application process (Castleman, Page, & Schooley, 2014). Racial and ethnic minority students also experience more challenges in the summer before college (Rall, 2016).

“Summer melt” is defined as the experience where students who planned to attend college were unable to navigate the additional summer obstacles thereby not actually attend their intended college the fall after high school graduation. Data from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002, mined and analyzed from the perspective of summer melt, determined that approximately 10% of students who intend to go to college the fall immediately after high school fail to do so, with students living in high poverty not transitioning 15% of the time. While higher education offered some bridge programs beginning in the early 1990s for students entering college, it really was not until 2008-2009 that researchers, policymakers, and secondary educators began to seriously consider the summer before college as something that affects college success.
Summer Melt Prevention

(Castleman & Page, 2013). The most well-studied summer melt program was piloted in Providence, RI and was replicated in 2011 in Boston, MA and Fulton County, GA, using two specific interventions: automated text messages and trained financial advisors. The automated text messages sent to students and parents cost approximately $7 per student, reminded them of important tasks to be completed, and increased college enrollment up to 7.1% in schools where little to no other support was provided (Castleman & Page, 2014). The trained financial advisors who met with students for 2-3 hours of support during the summer cost between $100-200 per student and resulted in an increase of on-time enrollment by 5%. The inclusion of a $25 gift card incentive for students who were willing to meet with the financial advisor in some schools participating in the program may have had an additional positive impact. This same study also found that not only did the summer advising program have a statistically significant impact on college enrollment, it also increased persistence rates between the freshman and sophomore years of college (Castleman et al, 2014). Supplemental qualitative studies on the same cohort of students have begun to examine how things happening in the students’ lives, the affordability of college, and student feelings about the summer interventions with advisors impacts students’ feelings about enrolling in college (Arnold, Chewning, Castleman, & Page, 2015).

Program Design
Building on the work previously done with success using financial aid advisors, a partnership in Kalamazoo County, MI decided to involve high school counselors in the summer melt prevention. A strategic plan guided the pilot program and was developed by members of the College and Career Action Network (CACAN), including partners from Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), Western Michigan University (WMU), iEval, the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA), the Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo (LNGK), and a number of high school counselors from districts within KRESA. The overarching goal of CACAN is to increase college enrollment, with an emphasis on closing the existing gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. The summer melt prevention program was designed to help accomplish that, on a small scale during the pilot year of the program in 2016. The planning team took into consideration the research around summer melt, including the potential value of advisors and texting students over the summer, but also wanted to allow for local personalization of services to students. The local counselors were seen as experts in how to best interact
with their students over the summer. Because of the variations in implementing the summer melt program, the CACAN partnership sought to explore the following questions:

1. Does a summer melt prevention program help encourage students to go to college?
2. Do students who participate in summer melt prevention attend college the fall following their high school graduation at a higher rate than a matched comparison group of college intending students?
3. What specific communication type or dosage level of communication from the counselors (e.g., text messages, face-to-face meetings, college visit) helps contribute more to the participants going to college?

The pool of mentors was comprised of nine high school counselors, two of whom worked alongside a college adviser. Participation as a mentor was voluntary. High school counselors at the local districts identified the students for participation in the program. The targeted population included economically disadvantaged students and potential first-generation college students, but those categories were not used to exclude others from participation. It was required that program participants be selected prior to high school graduation, and interventions were scheduled to begin after the end of the school year. The process for selecting and informing students included:

- Counselors established an internal list of potential participants based on the following criteria: applied and accepted to either Kalamazoo Community College or Western Michigan University in fall 2016, completed the FAFSA and/or applied for scholarships, and had indicated their intention on their school’s senior exit survey to attend KVCC or WMU.
- Counselors held group or individual face-to-face meetings where they outlined the details of the program with the students where an important step was also ensuring students under the age of 18 were given parental consent to participate in the program.
- Students received an informational letter that required a student or parent signature in order to confirm their participation in the program. Counselors felt strongly that requiring the return of this form would increase buy-in from potential participants.

To control counselor to student ratios, there was a cap of no more than ten student participants per high school. Recommended communication included at least two face-to-face meetings, one of which had to occur on the campus of KVCC or WMU, and subsequent electronic communications as needed. It was encouraged that counselors utilize a variety of communication methods throughout the duration of the program. Additionally, counselors were expected to extend communication throughout the entire summer, tailoring the amount to each student.
Beyond this, counselors were not limited to the dosage or type of communication. Because high schools were limited to no more than ten participants, a comparison group of students with similar demographics was identified across the county from students who would also have qualified but did not participate. Students in the comparison group were graduates from the high schools participating in the pilot program. Counselors used student exit survey results to determine the students that met the selection criteria but would not be receiving the interventions.

- Recommended program participation on the part of the school counselors involved:
- Participating in training in March 2016 that covered program goals and requirements;
- Identifying low-income students for participation in the pilot program, as well as students to serve in a comparison group to determine potential program impact;
- Posting at least one response to prompts on an online discussion board;
- Mentoring of students, including college access, success strategies, and on-campus activities;
- Tracking student intervention data during the summer melt program (dosage and type); and
- Assisting with student matriculation.

Counselors received a stipend for their participation, which was based on the number of hours they spent communicating with and providing support to their students.

**Evaluation Methodology**

Because of the variation in implementation of the summer melt interventions across the nine participating schools, it was important to design an evaluation that would be flexible enough to take into consideration the changing local needs and rigorous enough to analyze differences in processes and outcomes. The development and implementation of the evaluation followed these basic steps:

1. Develop the evaluation questions
2. Clarify the data needed to answer those questions
3. Create data sharing agreements between necessary partners to access data
4. Identify students – participants and comparison group members
5. Ensure valid and reliable data collection
6. Analyze data and create a report on the impact of the program including recommendations for the future.

**STEP 1.**

The evaluation team developed a set of questions, based on national research and local context, and then reviewed the questions with the CACAN team. The evaluation was then designed around answering the following questions:

A. To what extent does summer communication with a high school counselor impact fall 2016 college attendance for Kalamazoo County students planning to attend KVCC or WMU?
Summer Melt Prevention

B. What communication interventions (e.g., text, email, face-to-face) result in the biggest impact on preventing summer melt?

C. What topics covered during the summer communications (e.g., financial aid, housing, registering for classes) result in the biggest impact on preventing summer melt?

STEP 2.
Discussions between the CACAN team and the evaluation team helped identify what data would be available to access to help answer the evaluation questions. The brainstormed list of data came from sources such as the summer mentors (i.e., counselors), students, National Student Clearinghouse, local school districts, and partnering institutions of higher education. The activities/data points used in the evaluation of the pilot program included:

- High school student exit surveys indicating their post-secondary plan after high school graduation
- High school demographic data including gender, ethnicity, special education status, and high school grade point average
- Counselors tracking number of connections with students and topics discussed with students selected for the summer melt interventions
- A survey in fall 2016 with students and counselors about their experience with the program
- College enrollment and attendance prior to the fall 2016 drop dates at KVCC or WMU
- College enrollment based on National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data to indicate if any students who “melted” from KVCC or WMU actually enrolled and attended post-secondary education elsewhere

STEP 3.
Memoranda of understanding (or data sharing agreements) were developed between CACAN, iEval (the external evaluation team), and each participating school district to share student data necessary for this evaluation. Data sharing agreements were also developed between iEval and each of the participating institutions of higher education.

STEP 4.
In order to more accurately determine if the summer interventions were related to student enrollment/attendance at college in the fall, a comparison group was necessary. From the pool of seniors that met the criteria for participation in the program (see Program Design section), the counselor selected up to ten students to invite as summer melt prevention participants. The rest of the students in that pool were considered part of the comparison group since they were matched based on qualifying criteria. The participant group started at 66 students but ended at 50 students (16 students became disengaged due to no return communication or moving and were not considered program participants). The comparison group had 73 students.
Summer Melt Prevention

STEP 5.
A data tracking spreadsheet was developed in partnership between CACAN and iEval. The spreadsheet was used to track both hours spent on the project (for payment of time for the counselors) and communication dosage and type between counselors and students. The spreadsheet was reviewed at a countywide school counselor meeting prior to the beginning of the program.

STEP 6.
The data analyses conducted by the external evaluation team included qualitative and quantitative measures, with findings triangulated from the data including student demographics, student high school exit surveys, summer melt program type and dosage, counselor surveys, and student surveys. Key findings are reported in the next section.

Key Findings
The summer melt prevention program had 66 student participants, ranging from 3-10 students at each of the nine participating high schools. Sixteen (24%) of the participating students disengaged from the summer melt prevention program with reasons such as moving out of state, death in the family, and lack of response to counselor communications. When examining the overall impact that participating in the program has on student enrollment in college in fall 2016, the students were disaggregated into three groups: students who fully participated in the summer melt prevention program (n=50), students who disengaged from the summer melt prevention program (n=13), and students who were in the comparison group (n=73). Students who were full participants in the summer melt prevention program attended KVCC or WMU at a higher rate than students in the comparison group (65% and 46%, respectively).

Graph 1.
Fall 2016 Enrollment

![Graph showing fall 2016 enrollment for KVCC and WMU with 65% full participants, 19% disengaged participants, and 46% comparison group.]

While there was not enough power in the analyses because of the number of participants (50 full participants, compared to the 100 originally planned) to determine if the timeframe for, type of, or topics of each mentoring session had any different levels of impact on summer melt, some findings related to the sessions are as follows:

- The average number of mentoring sessions (e.g., text, phone call, in-person meeting, college visit) per student was 4, with 219 mentoring sessions overall ranging in time from 1-180 minutes. The majority of the
mentoring sessions took place in June (34%) and July (34%).

- The type of mentoring sessions varied greatly by counselor, with some counselors employing a variety of communication strategies and others using only one or two. The type of mentoring sessions recorded included Facebook Messenger, individual text messages, group text messages, emails, phone calls, and group and individual face-to-face meetings.

- The majority of face-to-face communications took place at either the high school or KVCC.

- There were several examples of creative face-to-face meeting locations such as counselors driving participants to the bank to figure out financial aid deposits, riding bus routes with participants to ensure they could get to school, and meeting at student/counselors’ homes.

- The most commonly covered topics at mentoring sessions were financial aid and attending college orientation. The least often covered topics were career planning, tuition bills, residence life, employment, and scholarships.

While the low number of full participants did not allow for generalizable findings, the preliminary analyses did support the research. Students were very interested in talking with their mentors about financial aid issues, which aligns with the need for financial advisors to work with incoming freshmen. Individual text messages, group text messages, and FaceBook Messenger discussions were the most popular ways the mentors and students maintained communication over the summer. Automated text messages were not used, as suggested in the research, as the local counselors felt the personal touch of individualized communication was important.

Data accessible in April 2017 through the National Student Clearinghouse allowed for a deeper dive into understanding college enrollment, completion, and persistence of the full participants and comparison group of students. Several of the following updated findings reinforced initial data that pointed to participation in the summer melt prevention program contributing to higher college-going rates:

- Students participating in the summer melt prevention program were 1.25 times more likely to complete at least one semester of classes at KVCC or WMU the year after their high school graduation than students in the comparison group.

- 96% of the full participants who attended college completed their first semester immediately following their high school graduation, compared to 80% of the comparison group.

- 66% of the full participants who attended college persisted to completing their second semester in college during their freshman year, compared to 58% of the comparison group.

- A higher percentage of students completed first semester with full-time
status in the participant group compared to the comparison group (50% and 45%, respectively), while more comparison group students completed second semester with full-time status than the participant group (48 and 36%, respectively).

- The rate of withdrawal from enrollment in any one semester was the same for both the participant and treatment groups (10%).

Based on the preliminary findings from the pilot year of implementation of the summer melt program, CACAN is implementing a full second year of programming in 2017, incorporating many of the recommended changes that came out of the evaluation process, many of which are shared in the next section.

**Recommendations for Replication**

Based on the pilot year of summer melt implementation, the CACAN and iEval teams would like to share the following recommendations to consider when trying to replicate the summer melt prevention program:

- Provide clearer guidance and/or training with counselors on how to track the communication and interaction with the students (e.g., ensuring Facebook chats aren’t counted for 45 minutes or texts for 30 minutes). Counselors reported having difficulty tracking the amount of time spent communicating via text message and Facebook Messenger. The recommendation for the future is to track the number of messages exchanged as opposed to time spent exchanging messages.

- In the pilot program, counselors were paid per contact hour with students. This payment structure proved not to be beneficial for those counselors who were more efficient with their time yet potentially just as effective as counselors who spent more time. The recommendation for programs that follow this year’s pilot is to pay a stipend per student served, regardless of the hours.

- The total cost of the pilot program was $7,772. Costs included counselor stipends, supplies for meetings (e.g. printing, food), and mileage reimbursement. The recommendation for program replication is to budget $125 per student participant for counselor stipends and an additional $500-1,000 for additional resources.

- Counselors need to identify multiple ways to communicate with students prior to them graduating from high school, as well as rank the best ways for communication. This may help increase student engagement in the summer melt prevention program. The pilot data showed that students who fulfilled the summer program’s requirements were almost 3½ times more likely to continue with college enrollment in the fall than those students who became disengaged. The recommendation for moving ahead with the summer program is to identify multiple strategies for communication,
Summer Melt Prevention

specifically determining how students prefer to be contacted.

- Counselors were responsible for identifying students for the pilot program’s comparison group. As noted, the students identified for the comparison group fit the criteria for the summer melt program but did not receive interventions throughout the summer. The recommendation is for the program coordinator to utilize available senior exit survey data and data regarding economic status to identify students for the comparison group. This would ensure that the comparison group is an accurate and exhaustive list.

- Due to the constraints of the pilot program, there was some confusion as to whether or not interventions should continue with students that self-reported plans to not attend a college/university or reported plans to attend an institution other than KVCC or WMU. The recommendation for the future is to have counselors continue working with these students to ensure matriculation to any college if they are still college-bound or to assist students in finding resources for viable work experience, apprenticeship/internship experiences, and career exploration if their intent to attend a college/university has shifted.

- One of the counselors’ responsibilities in the pilot program was to hand off each student to an advisor at the college level so the student would have someone to continue working with if they needed support. This expectation was not reinforced, so it did not happen consistently across the county. Making that personal connection with students to someone at the college may not be as important for summer melt, but it could be critical for retention between freshman and sophomore years of college. The recommendation for future programs is to make that connection with an advisor at the college level a mandatory part of the program, prior to paying the counselor stipend.

- The two surveys, the student survey and the counselor survey, are critical for understanding the impact of the summer melt program within the students’ lives, particularly for determining the most meaningful ways to improve the program for the future. The recommendation is to brainstorm, at the beginning of the program and with student input, ways of distributing the survey (e.g., text, online, final personal meeting) and encouraging survey completion (e.g., incentives) with

"Students who participated in the program were 1.4 times more likely to go to college the fall after high school graduation when compared to the matched comparison group and 3.4 times more likely to go when compared to students who disengaged from the program."

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both students and counselors.

- In the pilot program, communication from the program coordinator occurred inconsistently to counselors and almost entirely via email. The recommendation moving forward is for the coordinator to vary the communication methods (e.g., phone, text) and schedule outreach appointments, which will help clarify data reporting expectations and potentially improve program satisfaction on both the part of the counselors and students.

- Some counselors reported that the student information letter to be signed and returned by participants was off-putting to some potential summer melt students. The recommendation for those considering programs is to exclude details that are unnecessary for participants to ensure clarity about the purpose of the program and avoid verbiage that marginalizes those identified for the program.

Conclusions
The overarching goal of CACAN is to increase college enrollment, with an emphasis on closing the existing gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. The pilot of the summer melt prevention program accomplished that. Students who participated in the program were 1.4 times more likely to go to college the fall after high school graduation when compared to the matched comparison group and 3.4 times more likely to go when compared to students who disengaged from the program. Because of the vast variations in types of communication, dosage of interventions, and student participation, as well as the low number of participating students, no conclusions could be made about what specific types of communication or interventions had the most impact on the college going rate. The preliminary findings from the summer melt prevention pilot were positive enough to encourage the planning team to implement the program again, with modifications, in summer 2017. The CACAN partnership plans to implement the program, incorporating the recommendations previously mentioned, and expanding it to students intending to attend any postsecondary educational institution.
References


Perspective:
Reconsidering Policy Barriers for Justice-Involved College Students

Each year in the United States, more than 700,000 people are released from prisons and jails (Davis et al., 2013). Many of them may decide to attend college, but they are likely to face unique challenges. A wide range of laws and institutional policies target college students who have previous involvement in the criminal justice system (called “justice-involved students”). In this piece, the major policy barriers faced by justice-involved students are identified and argued that such policies are harmful to students and incompatible with higher education’s goals for improving access and completion. By helping students to overcome barriers and by encouraging policy changes, school counselors, admissions officers, academic advisors, and student affairs professionals can play an important role in helping justice-involved students to be successful in college.

Driven by private foundations, state policymakers, community college leaders, and the Obama Administration, colleges across the country have embraced a completion agenda, particularly for underrepresented students (Kelly & Schneider, 2012). The goals of this agenda are to increase the number of graduates, to close educational attainment gaps between certain groups, and to maintain a trained workforce that can compete in the global marketplace (Hauptman, 2012). Much effort has gone into fostering student retention through federal and state policies, such as financial aid, remedial education, transfer and credit portability, outcomes-based funding, grant-funded programs, and accountability systems (Kelly & Schneider, 2012), but justice-involved college students are not recognized in these efforts. Quite the opposite, my review of policies finds that higher education policymakers at the federal, state, and institutional levels appear intentional in building barriers that hinder justice-involved students’ abilities to complete college. By unveiling these sometimes hidden or ignored barriers, the goal is to bring awareness to the multi-faceted challenges faced by a potentially growing population of college students.

The term “justice-involved student” comes from the U.S. Department of Education’s (2016a) Beyond the Box report. “Justice-involved”—meaning involved in the criminal justice system—specifically avoids the stigmatizing labels commonly applied to this population and is necessarily broad to encompass a range of experiences. People with a history of arrests, juvenile crimes,
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misdemeanors, or felony convictions can be called justice-involved, as well as people who are currently or formerly incarcerated. “Justice-involved” is used mainly to refer to a person with prior felony convictions. Since not everyone convicted of a felony has been incarcerated, the term “justice-involved” should not be conflated with “formerly incarcerated.”

Policy Barriers in Higher Education
It is estimated that 25% of Americans have some type of criminal record, and especially for the estimated 20 million Americans with felony convictions, criminal records last for life (Jacobs, 2015). The criminal record attaches to a person permanently, and it is the instrument that allows for countless forms of legalized discrimination, called collateral consequences, to persist long after a person is released from the criminal justice system, including the loss of employment, occupational licensure, housing, welfare benefits, voting rights, parental rights, privacy, or the ability to serve in the military, participate on juries, or hold public office, to name a few (Jacobs, 2015; Love, Roberts, & Klingele, 2013).

People with criminal records who become college students also face a range of collateral consequences that are specific to higher education, called barriers here, that have been previously undocumented or understudied. In this piece, an inventory of the major barriers faced by justice-involved students in U.S. higher education was conducted, which is significant in that there has been no previous attempt to synthesize the vast assortment of higher education policies targeted at people with criminal histories. It is relevant now because it draws attention to a population of students that are not represented within the college completion agenda, at a time when the stories and experiences of justice-involved students increasingly appear in the media and in qualitative research (see Ayers, 2017; Custer, 2013a; Hager, 2017; Halkovic & Greene, 2015).

For education professionals who rarely interact with justice-involved college students, this policy review may be surprising and hopefully initiates new discussions.

This review of policies relied on a broad range of sources. First, a search was conducted for research literature from the fields of higher education, criminal justice, legal studies, sociology, public policy, and more. Finding few studies on the topic, this search also considered non-scholarly sources, including laws, institutional policies, court cases, governmental reports, non-governmental organization reports, and news sources. Table 1 displays six categories of policies with corresponding policy examples, for which a hyperlink is provided. These examples are not meant to be representative of all policies within the category; instead, they offer readers the option to explore a sample of policies in more depth.

Admissions
In the past 15 years, colleges have increasingly added questions about criminal history on admissions applications such that
most colleges now consider criminal history information in general admission decisions (Custer, 2016; Weissman et al., 2010). Questions typically focus on felony convictions, but some institutions cast a wide net, requiring the disclosure of misdemeanors, juvenile crimes, arrests, and pending cases (U.S. Department of Education, 2016a). Researchers have found no evidence to show these admissions policies improve campus safety, as intended (see Custer, 2016), and several studies have found that justice-involved applicants are deterred from completing applications due to the stigma of disclosing their criminal history, leading to high levels of application attrition (Custer, 2013a; Rosenthal et al., 2015).

Most institutions rely on applicants to disclose prior misconduct by answering questions on admission applications, but some institutions go further by conducting criminal background checks. For example, Columbus State Community College requires students to order and pay for their own background checks (see Table 1 on page 54). Since 2007, the University of North Carolina system, which includes 17 public universities, has conducted criminal background checks on all applicants whose applications contain "triggers" or "red flags," such as not answering certain questions, inconsistent answers, unexplained time periods since graduation, or affirmative responses to the criminal history questions (see Table 1). As shown below, criminal background checks are increasingly used in higher education, from admissions to student employment to campus housing, without evidence of cost effectiveness or impact on campus safety.

The admission of registered sex offenders is scrutinized heavily by institutions and state governments. Some institutions automatically deny admission to some or all categories of sex offenders (see Houston Community College and University of Florida in Table 1). According to one court case in Michigan, policies that deny admission to broad categories of offenders may violate the due process rights of students (Kowarski, 2010; "Lake Michigan College," 2011). Because of the lawsuit, Lake Michigan College changed its blanket admission ban on all sex offenders and agreed to conduct individual reviews of applicants. Some state laws also add requirements to the admission and registration process of registered sex offenders. In seven states, students who are registered sex offenders must register directly with campus police departments, which is more than what federal law requires, and in New Mexico, those students must also notify the college registrar of their sex offender status (Custer, 2017).

Advocacy organizations and the Obama Administration’s Department of Education have suggested that colleges consider discontinuing the collection of criminal history information in the college admission process; the chief concern is the potential racial discrimination that could occur from the disproportionate number of marginalized people in the criminal justice system (Rosenthal et al., 2015; U.S. Department of
# Justice-Involved College Students

Table 1
Policy Barriers for Justice-Involved Students in Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Policy Examples (with Hyperlinks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Columbus State Community College, Students with History of Felony Conviction(s) <a href="#">Website</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of North Carolina, Regulations on Student Applicant Background Checks <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State University of New York, Admission of Persons with Prior Felony Convictions <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Houston Community College, Convicted Sex Offender <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Florida, Admission Reviews <a href="#">Website</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>Florida Bright Futures Scholarship <a href="#">Handbook</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Georgia HOPE Scholarship <a href="#">Website</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Housing</td>
<td>Blinn College, Criminal History Record Check Requirement <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weatherford College, Background Check Requirements <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wichita State University, Housing <a href="#">Contract</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Employment</td>
<td>University of Delaware, Human Resources Criminal Background Checks <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Idaho State Board of Education, Student Athletes <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California State University-Fresno, Athletics Recruitment <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Barriers</td>
<td>Eastern Kentucky University, Registered Sex Offender <a href="#">Listing</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seattle Central College, Registered Sex Offender <a href="#">Listing</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moraine Valley Community College, Sex Offender <a href="#">Policy</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Education, 2016a; Weissman et al., 2010). As a result, a few higher education institutions have recently restricted the use of criminal history in admissions, including the State University of New York system (Rosenberg, 2016) and the University of Minnesota (Clarey, 2016), and in 2017, Louisiana became the first state to partially ban the practice at its public institutions (Roll, 2017). The Trump Administration has not, as of early 2018, issued any statements on this policy topic.

Financial Aid

With mixed results, financial aid has overall been shown to have positive effects on enrollment, retention, and completion (Bettinger, 2012). For justice-involved students, affording college without financial aid may be an insurmountable barrier to attending college, and students convicted of drug offenses, especially, face significant barriers in getting financial aid.

First, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act’s (1988) Denial of Federal Benefits Program allows federal and state judges to deny all types of federal aid to people convicted of drug trafficking or possession charges (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.), which is documented in an internal federal file against which all financial aid applicants are checked (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). No research has documented how many people have been denied federal financial aid under this law.

Then in 1998, Congress passed the Drug-Free Student Loan Provision to amend the Higher Education Act (1965), which rendered all people convicted of certain drug crimes ineligible for federal student financial aid starting in 2001 (Crawford, 2005). A person convicted of a drug crime involving possession was ineligible for one year for the first offense, two years for the second offense, and indefinitely for the third. A drug sales conviction rendered a person ineligible for two years for the first offense and indefinitely for the second. After the one- or two-year suspension, individuals could resume eligibility by completing a drug rehabilitation program (Higher Education Act, 1965).

Between 2001 and 2004, it was estimated that between 17,000 and 41,000 students lost eligibility for financial aid due to a drug conviction (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005). As a result, one study found youth with drug offenses delayed attending college for about two years after high school, yet the policy did not deter youth from committing drug crimes, as intended (Lovenheim & Owens, 2014).

In 2005, Congress amended the eligibility rule by rendering only students convicted of certain drug crimes while receiving federal financial aid to be ineligible for aid, following the same schedule of penalties outlined above (Deficit Reduction Act, 2005). Currently, therefore, individuals with drug convictions prior to receiving federal aid are not affected, but students who are on federal financial aid at the time they are convicted of drug crimes cannot receive additional aid until regaining eligibility (Higher Education Act, 1965).
Finally, state financial aid policies also contain eligibility barriers. Merit-based state financial aid is often unavailable to justice-involved students. For example, students with any felony conviction are ineligible for Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship, and students with a drug felony conviction are ineligible for Georgia’s HOPE awards for one term following the conviction (see Table 1). Additional research is needed to quantify exactly how many states deny financial aid to justice-involved students.

Campus Housing
The scarcity of housing is one of the many crises facing people released from prison. People with criminal histories, especially drug and sex offenders, are routinely denied access to public and private housing (Love, Roberts, & Klingele, 2013), and many are forced to live with family, friends, or become homeless (Petersilia, 2005; Roman & Travis, 2004). Despite evidence suggesting living on-campus improves student retention (Schudde, 2011), justice-involved students commonly face discrimination in on-campus housing. Some state statutes and state system policies prohibit certain people from living in campus housing, including sex offenders in Texas, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee, as well as drug offenders in South Dakota. After Texas passed a law in 2013 allowing colleges to access state criminal records databases for checking housing applicants, most Texas institutions implemented criminal background check policies and denied housing to most students with convictions (see Blinn and Weatherford Colleges in Table 1; Downing, 2013). But then, Texas went a step further in 2017 to ban most sex offenders from campus housing at public and private institutions (Raney, 2017). Even in states without such laws, many institutions conduct background checks on housing applicants and prohibit those with criminal histories from living in residence halls (see Wichita State University in Table 1).

Balancing the legitimate safety and security needs of residence halls with the housing needs of justice-involved students is a complex policy problem for higher education administrators. More research is needed to document trends in housing background check policies and to develop evidence-based criteria for determining who should and should not be permitted to live in residence halls.

Student Employment
Despite employment being one of the most critical factors for successful reentry, thousands of U.S. laws bar people with criminal histories from working in certain public and private sectors (Harris & Keller, 2005; Jacobs, 2015). Employers may also choose not to hire people with criminal convictions, which is a legally permissible practice known as discretionary employment discrimination (Jacobs, 2015). As the availability of public electronic criminal records has increased, more employers are using criminal background checking to bar justice-involved people from jobs (Jacobs, 2015; Love, Roberts, & Klingele, 2013). Higher education institutions are also increasingly
requiring employees to undergo criminal background checks, including student employees (Owen, 2014). A survey of 132 institutions found 26% required criminal background checks for student employees, 87% for staff, and 40% for faculty (Hughes, Hertz, & White, 2013). For example, the University of Delaware conducts criminal background checks on all new employees, including undergraduate and graduate student workers (see Table 1). However, in a study of crime data from four states, there were no significant differences in campus crime rates before and after mandatory background checks were implemented for newly hired employees, regardless of the robustness of the background checking policies (Hughes, Elliot, & Myers, 2014). It is estimated that 80% of all undergraduate students hold a job while attending college (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins, 2006), and for justice-involved students who need work, student employment may be the only viable option. If there is doubt in the effectiveness of student employee background checks, eliminating background checks could provide important employment opportunities for these students.

Student Athletes
Student athletes face a unique class of rules related to criminal history. For example, the state of Idaho requires all public institutions to collect and maintain criminal history information on student athletes and prohibits them from recruiting athletes with felony convictions (see Table 1). Institutions in other states maintain similar recruiting and eligibility policies (see California State University-Fresno in Table 1; Hughes et al., 2015; Potrafke, 2006). In a recent survey of 567 athletics directors, few reported conducting criminal background checks on student athletes: 12 (2.09%) conducted checks on all athletes, 7 (1.22%) conducted checks on transfers only, 46 (8.01%) did not conduct checks but plan to start, while the remaining 506 (88.68%) did not conduct checks and had no plans to start (Hughes et al., 2015). While the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has no eligibility requirements related to the prior criminal history of athletes, commentators have called on the NCAA to implement background checking policies, especially following stories of athletes with known criminal histories transferring to play at other institutions (New, 2014; Potrafke, 2006).

Additional Barriers
While the five categories of policies described above may constitute the most significant barriers in higher education, there are certainly others that require more investigation. For example, students have commented on not being able to participate in student organizations or activities due to stigmatization from their criminal histories (Tewksbury, 2013), but some institutions may restrict justice-involved students from participating in certain student activities. Justice-involved students are also likely to face difficulty studying abroad, participating in service-learning projects, and other activities that involve community engagement, work with children, traveling, or
visiting places like schools, hospitals, or prisons. In addition, there is no available information on how international students with criminal convictions from their home countries fare in gaining legal status to study in the US, getting through the admissions process, or overcoming the other barriers described above. Additional research is needed to explore policies affecting justice-involved students in these areas of college student life.

Students previously convicted of sex offenses are vulnerable targets for special policies. In addition to the barriers to admission and registration mentioned above, hundreds of institutions maintain their own sex offender registry websites where the names, and sometimes photographs, of sex offender students are posted for campus community members to see (see Eastern Kentucky University and Seattle Central College in Table 1; Tewksbury, 2013; Tewksbury & Lees, 2006). Institutions have also created policies whereby sex offender students are subjected to regular surveillance by campus administrators (see Moraine Valley Community College in Table 1). Furthermore, at the state level, 31 states post where a registered sex offender is enrolled on sex offender registry websites, and nine states allow users to filter results by school name or address to view all registrants enrolled at an institution (Custer, 2017). These policies drastically increase the public exposure of these college students.

How to Support Justice-Involved Students
Taken together, the policies described above present a formidable challenge for justice-involved college students. At each stage of their college journey, these students face systematic barriers from gaining admission, to qualifying for financial aid, finding a room on campus, getting a job, playing sports, and beyond. Though policymakers and campus administrators argue these policies are necessary for campus safety reasons, the limited available policy research does not support such claims (Custer, 2016; Hughes, Elliot, & Myers, 2014). Therefore, education professionals should be critical of these policies’ unintended negative consequences on student success. Next, an explanation of how the policies are harmful to students, and then recommendations are offered to education professionals on supporting justice-involved students.

Finding Alternatives
Many of the policies described above are insurmountable by design, like total bans on sex offenders in campus housing or ineligibility for financial aid. To state the obvious, these policies are quite literally barriers to student success because justice-involved students are prohibited from benefiting from campus programs and services that are designed to support students. It should be no surprise, for example, that a student who is ineligible for state financial aid, who is not permitted to live in campus housing, and who cannot get hired as a student employee has the deck stacked against him. Research is not needed
Justice-Involved College Students

to conclude that many students are denied support because of these policies, but future research is needed to estimate how many students are affected by these policies and the extent to which justice-involved students can be successful without the programs they are denied.

The task for education professionals, then, is to help students find alternatives to the services and programs that they are denied. When prospective students seek admission, school counselors and admissions officers should be aware of which institutions in their community or state require the disclosure of criminal history; then, they should be prepared to explain the often-unpublished criminal history review process, including advice on how to succeed in gaining admission (see Custer, 2016). When students cannot get hired on campus, career services professionals should be knowledgeable about employers in the community who hire people with criminal history (e.g., employers who take advantage of tax credits or federal bonding for hiring people with criminal history; see Rakis, 2005). When students are blocked from living on campus, housing professionals should be aware of the background checking practices of local housing communities and should refer students to properties that are open to people with criminal histories. When students are denied financial aid, financial aid officers should be able to recommend alternate scholarship programs and funding sources. If knowledgeable about the policies and their alternatives, education professionals can be well-positioned to help students overcome the barriers.

Preventing Stigma

For students who are not entirely blocked by policies, the literature offers another explanation of how these policies can be harmful. Research suggests that stigma is a tangible consequence for some justice-involved students dealing with these policies. Stigma is often described as a characteristic, mark, or label that designates a person as “flawed, compromised, and somehow less than fully human” (Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000, p. 3), and in this case, the criminal record is the stigmatizing characteristic. In a study of college applicants in the State University of New York system, it was estimated that two out of every three applicants with prior felony convictions who started an admission application did not complete it, potentially to avoid the stigmatizing admission process that ensued (Rosenthal et al., 2015). In a case study of one university applicant who withdrew her admission application, it was clear that stigma played a role in her decision to drop out (Custer, 2013a). In a qualitative study of admissions essays required of applicants with criminal history, applicants reported feeling judged, fear of losing education opportunities, anger about having to relive and describe past crimes, embarrassment, and lowered self-esteem because of the application process (Custer, 2013b). From these cases, it appears that the admission process is a powerful source of stigma that deters prospective college students.
Many justice-involved students make it through the admission process or attend colleges that do not inquire about criminal history. Once enrolled, they face stigmatization from peers, faculty, and administrators each time they are identified as having a criminal record, like when applying for campus jobs or financial aid. In perhaps the first study of justice-involved college students, Copenhaver, Edwards-Willey, and Byers (2007) explicitly studied how four students experienced and coped with stigma. The participants reported fear of being identified and described the difficulty of concealing their prison tattoos and deciding when and when not to disclose their history for fear of judgment (Copenhaver, Edwards-Willey, & Byers 2007). Similar experiences have been reported in subsequent studies (Halkovic & Greene, 2015). Two formerly-incarcerated, African-American male students reported being stigmatized by pejorative labels, including ex-offender, convict, and criminal, “which negatively affected some peer interactions, limited options for campus involvement, and all-too-often shaped faculty members’ perceptions of the students (Strayhorn, Johnson, & Barrett, 2013, p. 84). The students were victims of stereotyping, racial micro-aggressions, and lowered expectations from faculty, staff, and peers (Strayhorn, Johnson, & Barrett, 2013). In addition, at institutions that maintain campus-based sex offender registries, students who are registered sex offenders have reported intense social isolation and vulnerability, particularly related to the fear of being identified by others (Tewksbury, 2013).

There has been such little research on the experiences of justice-involved college students that these accounts stand out as troublesome. Stigma appears to be a common experience, and the policies identified above—especially admissions—are regularly cited by students as sources of stigma. It is the continual unveiling of a student’s criminal history at different points in the college journey that harms these students, making them feel exposed and vulnerable. For campus administrators, conducting an inventory of all the points at which a student must disclose criminal history would be informative. From there, reducing the number of disclosure points could go a long way in supporting justice-involved students by protecting their privacy, dignity, and basic right to learn in a judgement-free environment.

To protect justice-involved students from stigmatization, policy changes are necessary. Admissions officers should consider delaying or eliminating the collection of criminal history information, as some institutions have recently done (Clarey, 2016; Rosenberg, 2016). Campus police departments should remove campus-based sex offender listings from their websites, leaving only the links to state sex offender registries, as required by federal law (U.S. Department of Education, 2016b). Campus housing professionals should stop conducting criminal background checks on all students, except when required by state law. Similarly, human resources departments should stop conducting background checks on all student employees, except for those...
who apply to sensitive positions. In most of these cases, campus administrators established the policy barriers for justice-involved students, which means they are equally empowered to change or eliminate them. Making these policy changes would constitute significant advances in the support of justice-involved students.

Conclusion
The purpose of this essay was to raise awareness of the policy barriers faced by justice-involved college students, to critique them, and to offer education professionals advice on how to support students. When considering the over 20 unique policies identified above, it should be clearer now how challenging it could be for some students to gain admission, secure financial aid, get a campus job, live on campus, and participate in athletics at higher education institutions across the U.S. Reducing such challenges should be a goal for all institutions seeking to improve college access and completion. Eliminating or changing the policies would be the most direct method for breaking down barriers. When the average practitioner is not empowered to change institutional policies, they can still support justice-involved students by learning about their campus policies, advocating for students in a judgement-free manner, helping them find alternative solutions when barriers are insurmountable, and bringing this discussion to their campuses and professional organizations.

References


Justice-Involved College Students


Justice-Involved College Students


During the 2010-2011 academic year, more than 1.4 million students participated in dual enrollment programming, which allows high school students to participate in college-level courses (Marken, Gray & Lewis, L, 2013). The federal government has identified dual enrollment as a strategy to promote student access to college (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), however the implications of dual enrollment for institutional strategic enrollment management have not been thoroughly explored. A recent collaboration between the professional organization of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), with support from research partner Hobsons, resulted in a November 2016 report which seeks to examine college perceptions of dual enrollment as an enrollment management initiative. According to AACRAO, this work advances the organization’s desire to promote college access and affordability (AACRAO, 2016). The report examines enrollment management and its utilization of dual enrollment using both quantitative and qualitative measures. A survey, which sought to assess dual enrollment programming in the 2015-2016 academic year, was sent to AACRAO members and garnered close to 400 responses. Participants were asked to indicate whether they would be willing to take part in further interviews, which resulted in ten institutional case studies included in the report. These stories, presented alongside the survey findings, provide a more in-depth view of how dual enrollment might be used to meet college enrollment goals and increasing state mandates to improve college access and affordability. Overall respondents indicated dual enrollment is generally viewed as a viable enrollment management tool, particularly as a means to support student recruitment.

Previous research indicates that students who participate in dual enrollment stand to benefit in multiple ways. Students who complete college level courses in high school are thought to be better academically prepared for college as determined by performance on state standardized tests (Cassidy, Keating &
Utility of Dual Enrollment

Viki, 2010), have increased rates of college attendance, attain higher GPAs, and graduate at greater rates than those who do not participate in such courses (Kilgore & Taylor, 2016). AACRAO’s survey found that a majority of respondents felt dual enrollment supports college access by preparing students for the rigors of college and providing proof that a student is college ready, but the data provided reflects only enrollment management perceptions of dual enrollment students, not documented student outcomes observed by the institution.

It seems unclear what enrollment management results can be expected from dual enrollment and whether possible outcomes would clearly benefit the host-college or university. For example, the credits students can earn while dual enrolled may be offered at a reduced tuition rate and allow students to gain both high school and college credit upon successful completion. Earning lower-cost, transferable credits reduces the expense of a credential or degree and positively impacts college affordability, which is a broad college access and enrollment management goal. However, while students may financially benefit from these courses, it is not known how or if colleges benefit in ways that offset the expenses incurred and make the program a sound enrollment management endeavor. AACRAO’s survey also suggests that dual enrollment collaboration can help to build a college-going culture and increase college awareness in high schools. In return, institutions may benefit by building a student recruitment pipeline, another enrollment management goal. However, the degree to which institutions are then able to boost enrollment as a result of these partnerships was not fully explored in the present report.

It is important to note that over 20% of survey respondents did not actually offer dual enrollment programs, suggesting such programming is not a universally accepted enrollment management practice. Most institutions that did not offer dual enrollment cited the culture of their institution as the most significant barrier in providing such courses. Four-year colleges generally valued dual enrollment as an enrollment management tool less than two-year/community colleges and institutions granting both bachelor and graduate degrees, implying that institutional values and goals may also play a part in facilitating the utility of dual enrollment. Approximately one-fifth of institutions without dual enrollment offerings reported that the cost of the program was prohibitive and/or the time required to forge a working relationship with high schools was problematic.

The AACRAO report found that other barriers exist which limit the availability of dual enrollment. Institutions discussed financial challenges on the part of the student and the colleges posed by dual enrollment and perceived difficulties with the transfer of earned credits. A large majority of institutions accept dual enrollment credits in transfer, yet there seems to be lingering concerns, on the part of institutions, about the quality of
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course instruction and the resultant rigor of dual enrollment courses. Of the schools who did not offer dual enrollment, 18% had in the past, but ended their programming due to lack of interest on the part of partner high schools. Over one-fifth of institutions who did not offer current programs did express an interest in offering dual enrollment in the next year, but the likelihood of program implementation was not explored.

AACRAO’s work serves to further the conversation on the merits of dual enrollment as an enrollment management strategy, but it does not offer an evidence-based argument that dual enrollment supports broad enrollment management goals. While the work endorses the use of dual enrollment as an enrollment management tool, it most saliently argues that student recruitment can benefit from such programs. Enrollment management is also concerned with student success after enrollment, as measured by student retention, graduation rates (Wilkinson, Taylor, Peterson & Machado-Taylor, 2007) and, increasingly, student loan indebtedness and loan repayment default rates, topics which are not thoroughly addressed by the data gathered in the survey. In an environment where colleges are increasingly held accountable for student success, it is not clear that the benefits of dual enrollment are worth the financial and administrative costs on the part of the institution.

Though nine out of ten respondents viewed dual enrollment as a way to improve college access, a majority of institutions reported that their dual enrollment programs served under 500 students total. There seems to be a hesitancy, even on the part of AACRAO member institutions (who, by virtue of their participation in the professional organization, may be more receptive to new and innovative enrollment management initiatives) to make dual enrollment a widespread program without evidence that supports investment in these initiatives. Therefore, dual enrollment is likely an important tool to support both college access and enrollment management goals, but colleges and universities may not be inclined to implement these programs, as the institutional benefits have not been clearly researched and defined.

The work of AACRAO and Hobsons should serve as a foundation for further research to explore enrollment management outcomes beyond recruitment, such as degree completion time, graduation rates and the education loan debt of former dual enrollment student as compared to non-dual enrolled students, to inform a more compelling argument for colleges and universities to begin and/or increase their commitment to such offerings. As the benefits of dual enrollment for students are well documented, college access professionals must push for such research to promote program expansion and ensure that students can more easily take advantage of dual enrollment opportunities. College access professionals, whose work is often most concentrated on preparing high school students for college admissions, must broaden
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their focus to ensure that students not only make their way to college, but also successfully through college as well. The present work of AACRAO does support the use of dual enrollment programming as an impactful enrollment management tool but it does not provide an evidence-based rationale as to how institutions might benefit from these programs. The greater development of dual enrollment opportunities has important implications for under-resourced populations who stand to benefit from the positive outcomes associated with dual enrollment participation. Significant barriers, such as institutional concerns regarding cost and the academic rigor of dual enrollment, exist and these issues must be empirically addressed to encourage expansion and steadfast support of dual enrollment programming. It is only through effective high school and post-secondary collaboration that seeks to benefit both students and institutions, that dual enrollment can be utilized to increase both college access and success.

References


A Primer on the College Student Journey, published by the American Academy of Arts & Science in 2016, reports the “major trends in undergraduate education” that were identified by tracking the experiences of the students in the study (p. v). The tone of the primer is academic, yet accessible, with statistically-driven evidence and visual representations of the data. The introduction breathes life into the document, moving beyond analysis to communicate the nuanced stories behind the data. Readers are implored to understand that “getting a college degree really represents the outcome of a process or, perhaps better, of a journey” (p. 2). Statistical evidence is the driving force of the document, but consideration is consistently given to the students’ stories behind the data.

The introduction provides a brief overview of the historical context in which these students were pursuing higher education, including the effects the “economic distress” of the Great Recession had on their college and job attainment experiences (p. 3). Financial and economic implications of higher education are prominent features in discussions of the cost and value of higher education, thus, graduation rates, employment rates, and post-college earnings are central foci and assumed measures of success.

This primer presents “the most up-to-date evidence on the current state of affairs in higher education” (p. 2). Although a number of studies are cited throughout the rest of the publication, the introduction focuses on a longitudinal study conducted by The National Center for Education Statistics. The study began in 2002, when the students were high school sophomores, and continued until 2012, when they had emerged into the workforce, and it provides a compelling and convincing of argument for the value of higher education to the life of the student and the success of society.

Section 1
Through careful analysis of the processes regarding higher education, issues surrounding accessibility have been brought to the forefront as what to consider when it
Primer on the College Student Journey

comes to students enrolling in colleges and universities. In section one of A Primer on the College Student Journey, the focus is on “Getting Ready for College,” which includes issues of accessibility and how those issues affect various groups who are seeking higher education.

The article established the one unifying admission criteria across the spectrum of higher education: either a high school diploma or educational equivalent. Though the numbers of those who graduate high school have increased, we still find disparities among race, ability, and socioeconomic class (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2016). Ultimately, because this is the first step in the application processes and accessibility of higher education, high school graduation rates are integral, this report argues, to understanding how students are preparing for college.

Correlational indicators of higher education enrollment include maintaining a GPA minimum, doing well academically in terms of state-sanctioned exams, as well as other opportunities in which students have a chance to academically outperform their peers. In contrast, the barriers indicated are “academic struggles, financial hurdles, low college awareness and/or aspirations, and an inability to complete instrumental requirements such as applying for financial aid” (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2016). The barriers are brought on by a “lack of sufficient support” as a result of students’ status in relation to higher education.

A few interesting points to take away from this article is the inclusion of non-traditional learners, as well as what the conditions are for students who do cross that barrier and make it to a higher education institution. Including non-traditional students in this population of preparing for college is a necessary one, though the section that addresses this population in the article is minute and does not necessarily categorize issues facing this population. The research on traditional students, however, indicates that though students are able to be admitted into a university, their continued success often rests on catching up academically through remedial courses and the like. What does this say about the state of entering higher education? The authors do not make it clear, but perhaps give the audience something to think about in terms of higher education admittance being more of a hoop-jumping procedure only open to privileged classes—that merit alone is not quite enough.

In sum, though this section points out a variety of concerns within the realm of accessibility, the research is foundational in nature. This section provides a very basic understanding of the issues facing accessibility in college as an issue of support throughout high school. Various populations and the disparities were considered, however,
the detail of what creates those disparities and perhaps a section on future considerations in order to better this issue is missing from the article. This is a great start in terms of identifying some of the barriers and successes we see from students who are pre-college; we would just like to see it be taken further or that future considerations be acknowledged in laying out problems.

Section 2
Section 2 was developed to highlight a diverse depiction of the student journey getting into college. This section does so by exploring “student enrollment trends and the institutions [in which] students attend” (p. 12). Material presented in this section does take into perspective the realities of present day America, in terms of economic and social issues students face when pursuing post-secondary education.

Section 2 highlights various issues that current students face while attempting to get into college, issues such as the gap in college access. While minorities are enrolling in college more rapidly than ever before, causing a narrowing of the access gap, there still are disparities within access to higher education based on income (American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2016). Low-income students have significantly lower rates of college enrollment than their affluent peers (American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2016). Also highlighted in Section 2 are the evolving characteristics of students in higher education, such as the influx of international students seen recently. University of Michigan researchers concluded that a 10% decrease in state appropriations for education was correlated with a 12% increase in international student enrollment at public universities, something that must be addressed (American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2016).

Although contributors to Section 2 focus primarily on low-income students and students of color, the information is presented objectively and provides facts supporting the main arguments proposed throughout the section. Section 2 sets out to highlight current trends in student enrollment in higher education and the types of higher education institutions students are choosing to attend. The contributors accomplished this goal by presenting current statistical information supporting those trends. For example, the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (2016) states that “by 2014, 81% of high-income high school graduates immediately enrolled in college, compared with 52% of low-income students” (p. 14). This highlights that gaps in college enrollment for low-income students and high-income students continues to be a challenge for researchers in higher education.

Section 2 of A Primer on the College Student Journey, provided a good sample of the literature surrounding low-income students, but contributors could have gone into more
detail in regard to the significance of their findings. For example, it was recognized that Black and Hispanic students are enrolling in two-year colleges at higher rates than their Asian and White peers. To give readers a better context of the circumstances surrounding those students, contributors could have presented more analytical information on why.

Overall, Section 2 was strong in its ability to objectively shed light on current trends in post-secondary enrollment. However, it could have gone deeper into the significance of the facts presented. The Journal of College Access' overall mission focuses on current trends in enrollment. Section 2 provides a significant amount of data on a good number of issues that different students are currently facing when considering college.

Section 3
Section 3 was intended to explore the cost of college. For many students and families, the cost of attendance to a college or university is the main determinant when deciding where to enroll in higher education. More specifically, students and families base their decisions on the cost of attendance published on the college websites. These “Sticker Prices” (p.26) reflect the costs of attendance and are made to be attractive to prospective students. If the sticker price appears to be too high, students and families rule out colleges because they are disconnected from higher educational resources. Families face difficulties when trying to attain information about scholarships and grants opportunities available to students.

According to the research presented in Section 3, students and families unfortunately rule out many colleges they can afford. Section 3 presents data and other analytical information as a way to examine sticker prices, net prices and total net prices (tuition, fees and room and board) for public 2-year, public 4-year, private 4-year and for profit colleges. About 66% of all students do not pay sticker prices, in fact, “the majority receive grants and scholarships that reduce their required prices below the sticker price and, as a result, published prices do not capture the true cost of attendance for most students and their families” (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2016, p. 26). The graphs further reinforce that students and families are able to afford colleges by highlighting that the net prices are lower than the advertised sticker prices.

Aside from scholarships and grants, students and families rely on some form of financial aid to pay for college. The American Academy of Arts & Sciences (2016) found that 66% of all students receive some sort of financial assistance and current trends have shown that increases in the cost of attending college has contributed to the increase of “students relying on student loans to pay for college” (p. 41). Colleges that
produce research and advanced degrees are funded at much higher rates than community colleges and colleges awarding master’s degrees. Essentially, funding for higher education should emphasize student needs, particularly low income populations, rather than producing research that is being produced not positively connected to student success of this population.

While Section 3 argues that most families need not to focus on the sticker price but rather on the net prices, it fails to provide further implications for how families, students and colleges can acquire such information prior to ruling out a college. Another limitation in this section is that it does not include the cost of textbooks, access codes, utilities, supplies that students and families incur per semester. Overall, Section 3 was successful in highlighting the cost of college, types of funding, adjustments to funding and current trends.

Section 4
Section Four, or “Getting Through and Getting Out,” discusses seven areas of the college process. Those areas are 1) developmental and remedial classes, 2) transfers, 3) under matching of student to institution, 4) extended time to degree, 5) graduation rates, 6) attainment rates, and 7) credentials conferred. All of these sections discuss how each of the seven topics affects the undergraduate student during their undergraduate experience and progress toward graduation.

In this section, developmental courses or remedial education are presented as a factor that negatively influences students’ progress towards graduation. Although most institutions of higher education offer these courses to help students reach a college academic level, many students do not complete remedial courses and move on toward degree-related coursework. Additionally, at least one remedial course is taken in higher education with 68% at community colleges and 40% at four-year institutions. The poor progression through these courses adds additional time to degree completion.

Another influencing factors for undergraduate degree completion include transferring, under matching, and extended time to degree. Transferring from one institution to another is defined and obstacles of the process were discussed. This section reviews the transfer process as a negative occurrence for undergraduate students because it adds to the delay in obtaining a degree. Additionally, it is reported that low-income or traditionally marginalized students who under-match, or attend colleges and universities less competitive than those they could have attended based on their academic record, may lead to a delay in graduation. Finally, a true descriptor of the length of time to obtain a
bachelor’s degree is presented as that of almost six years and approximately four years for an associate’s degree. The actual time to degree can be extended for students who struggle financially.

The last three topics discuss actual graduation and degree attainment rates as well as credentials. For bachelor’s degrees, the data unfortunately indicates less than 50% graduation rates within four years. Although the percentage increases to 59% in six years, these rates vary depending on other factors such as gender, race or ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, among others. Further, the organizational authors acknowledge institutions are aware of the dismal graduation rates but few, if any, changes are occurring due to the challenge of this task. Similar factors influence overall attainment rates. The author discusses that women, white and Asian students, and students in high-income families have attained more degrees, collectively, as compared to people of color and low-income students. The credentials section finally discusses the low levels of associate and bachelor degrees awarded.

In conclusion, section four has a comprehensive discussion of seven major issues that affect undergraduate students’ progression through college. Those seven items were objectively presented with additional influencing factors.

**Conclusion**

Following the four main sections of the primer is a conclusion that discusses some of the effects that college has on students after they graduate. Examples of positive, non monetary outcomes of higher education include higher voting and volunteer participation rates as well as improved personal and family well-being (p. 46). The reader is reminded that “the people who attend and especially those who complete college were significantly different in many ways before they enrolled” (p. 46). The “issues of causation” noted early in the document are addressed in the conclusion, as the author cites studies that identify causal relationships between higher education and positive outcomes (p. 5 & pp. 46-48).

One noteworthy statistic is the earnings gap between those who have attained a college degree and those who have not. In 2011, the average earnings of individuals with a bachelor’s degree were $21,000 higher than those with only a high school diploma (p. 48). However, the reader is cautioned about giving “outsized attention” to the monetary aspects of higher education without recognition of other benefits of education (p. 46). The organizational authors also caution the reader in interpreting averages, which do not display the full range of variation within a set of data. The journey of a student whose data represents the lowest figure in a single average is likely quite different from the
journey of a student who represents the top edge of an average.

A Primer on the College Student Journey is a useful resource for leaders within higher education, as well as for students and their families or any other stakeholders that interact with higher education. One limitation, however, is that for all of the data presented, there was a lack of deeper analysis of the findings and their implications. The author addresses this by stating that future publications will address many of the questions that were left unanswered in the primer.

References

Research Report Critique: Moving on Up? What Groundbreaking Study Tells Us About Access, Success, and Mobility in Higher Ed

The Moving on Up? What Groundbreaking Study Tells Us About Access, Success, and Mobility in Higher Ed report by Stephen Burd seeks to raise awareness of the data published in a paper, “Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility.” This paper was released at the same time that Donald Trump began his presidency, therefore, it may not have received as much attention as it could have, considering the findings. New America published a blog series highlighting the information from the Mobility Report Cards paper and versions of those posts have been reprinted in this report. The paper and this report gathered data from de-identified tax records from students, who attended college between the years 1999 and 2013, as well as from their parents. They also used the College Scorecard provided by the U.S. Department of Education, which supplied the information about the early adulthood earnings of the more than 30 million Americans for which data was gathered.

The report begins by highlighting that the Mobility Report Card data demonstrates that college access is still a problem despite increases in the number of students receiving financial aid and the increasing number of low-income students pursuing degrees after high school. The report concludes that "access rates for low-income students have an inverse relationship with selectivity and prestige" (p. 9). This is applicable in both public and private institutions. Many low-income students are attending community colleges and for-profit institutions, which do not have as high mobility rates as the more selective and prestigious public and private institutions nor do they have the necessary resources to assist these students. Furthermore, a significant discovery that arose from this data is that low-income students are nearly as successful as their wealthier counterparts that graduate from the same institution. Therefore, this finding contradicts the popular assumption that low-income students should settle for colleges that are less selective and that they should be going to the best college they can. This is not to say that open enrollment colleges deserve less support from policymakers because they...
still have mobility rates that are on par with regional public universities. However, policymakers need to find ways to push the prestigious public and private institutions to enroll higher numbers of low-income students who deserve it while also supporting open enrollment admissions institutions.

In addition to analyzing the results of the Mobility Report Card data studies, the Moving on Up? What a Groundbreaking Study Tells Us About Access, Success, and Mobility in Higher Ed report goes on to explain some of the many reasons behind the relative lack of lower-income students at more prestigious universities. It is a fact that the most selective institutions "take the students with the strongest academic backgrounds" (p. 19). While low-income students are just as likely to succeed once enrolled at a prestigious and selective college or university, difficulty being accepted into one due to a lack of preparatory resources is a barrier many low-income students face. While more well-off students often have access to advanced college-prep resources during high school, such as advanced courses, ACT/SAT prep courses, opportunities for extracurricular involvement, and college application coaches, the report explains that many low-income students do not have these advantages. In response to this inequality of resources, some selective institutions are moving toward ways to overcome these issues, through practices such as making applications test-score optional, as well as replacing some student loans with grant aid (p. 24). However, while the paper speaks to this issue, this is just one small piece of the puzzle of missing resources that acts to keep low-income students from being accepted into more selective institutions.

Proximity to home is another important factor that influences college choices for low-income students. A further analysis and explanation of the ways in which institutions can work to overcome these issues would be very beneficial to students from less affluent backgrounds as well as ways to help students think about their options even if they are farther away.

A discouraging finding from the Mobility Report Card study was that many public institutions are enrolling fewer low-income students than they used to in the late 1990s. Not only are they enrolling fewer low-income students, but these institutions are enrolling more high-income students. Not all selective...
public institutions are following this trend (i.e. Georgia State University) but the majority of them are becoming less accessible. This trend is also affecting the institutions that are not as selective and prestigious, which have a history of being more accessible to low-income students. This data is alarming because it means that the pathways that existed before and were possibly responsible for that increase in college access, in terms of a higher number of low-income students pursuing degrees after high school, may be going away. The report insists that policymakers must examine "the cult of enrollment management," which is pushing institutions to target wealthier students who can pay more out of pocket and limiting access to higher education.

The Mobility Report Card data gives researchers more to work with because it provides a more complete picture of college attendance and how that is influenced by students' family income. For example, in previous investigations of the impact of economic background on college attendance, researchers used the number of students who received the Pell Grant as a rough equivalent of low-income status. However, eligibility for the Pell Grant is dependent on more than family income which means that not all Pell Grant recipients come from the lowest-income families. The Mobility Report Card data eliminates this problem by examining the tax records and yielding data that is more accurate. Additionally, it is important to note that many students who may be just out of range of Pell Grant eligibility may not actually have the financial support that their family's tax and income information suggests. Many students who are ineligible to receive the Pell Grant do not receive financial support from their families, thus by denying them federal financial aid, these students may not have the ability to afford higher education, much less higher education at a selective and prestigious institution. Due to this issue, it can be very hard to get an accurate account of exactly what constitutes a "low-income" student.

Data in the report also provides a look into the other side of the spectrum, the students who come from families at the top of the income scale. This is data that was not formerly available since colleges only have to report the family income data of students receiving financial aid. This type of data is useful because it can be very revealing. For example, the report examines the College of William & Mary, which is a top public research university. However, after reviewing the incomes of the students that attend, it is shown that an overwhelming number of students come from families in the top ten percent of the income scale. Therefore, the report urges that policymakers must increase the transparency in higher education data so students, researchers, and policymakers can have more accurate data when making decisions.
Research Report Critique: Moving on Up?

It is important to mention that the *Moving on Up? What a Groundbreaking Study Tells Us About Access, Success, and Mobility in Higher Ed* report also acknowledges the limitations of the Mobility Report Card data throughout the different sections. Due to the nature of the way the data was collected, researchers limited the data to traditional college students who attended college between the years 1999 and 2013. Yet there is a growing number of nontraditional college students so this data does not offer much insight into the mobility rates of this population. The data also does not include the program of study, which could be a factor that has influence on some of the findings because there is a variety or a lack of variety of programs depending on the type of institution sometimes. Without some context, the Mobility Report Card data seems to show for-profit colleges as a viable path that may even be better than the average public community college. However, a majority of the students at those types of institutions are nontraditional college students and for-profit colleges tend to charge more and have more students with large amounts of student debt when compared to traditional and community colleges. In fact, when the researchers ranked institutions based on the net price, student loan repayment rates, and mobility indicators, the bottom fifteen schools were all for-profit colleges and vocational schools.

Overall, the *Moving on Up? What a Groundbreaking Study Tells Us About Access, Success, and Mobility in Higher Ed* report provides a thorough explanation and interpretation of the important and relevant data found in the Mobility Report Card paper. In the future, additional reports could build off of this information by seeking to more thoroughly analyze the ways in which highly selective institutions could work to level the playing field on which students from all backgrounds can access success. Additionally, future reports could look more closely at ways in which less selective institutions can adopt practices that work to increase their mobility rates. Furthermore, while there is an increase in the accuracy of the data provided by the Mobility Report Cards, the data focuses heavily on traditional college students. Researchers must also examine the access, success, and mobility rates of nontraditional students, as this is a growing population attending colleges. Overall, this report highlights the significant issue that, though talent may be equally distributed between students of all socio-economic backgrounds, opportunity and resources are not. The *Moving on Up? What a Groundbreaking Study Tells Us About Access, Success, and Mobility in Higher Ed* report is an important first step in bringing to light the important issue of disparity of access between high and low-income students in the world of higher education today in the United States.
Research Report Critique: *Moving on Up?*

References
The National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) is a professional organization of more than 15,000 members who serve students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. Since 2013, NACAC has overseen a Directory of College Access & Success Programs. The national database was created to help NACAC members connect with access organizations and learn more about the important role community-based organizations and other groups play in preparing underserved students for college.

As U.S. colleges and universities are continually exploring new and more effective ways to improve diversity in their student populations, the directory may offer some assistance. It was developed primarily to serve college admission officers looking for ways to reach a diverse pool of well-prepared, college-ready students and prospective applicants. The design of the directory, especially in its mobile application, allows counselors to target specific geographic areas. For instance, an admission rep visiting a particular city might consult the directory and make plans to visit one or more of the listed organizations in addition to the secondary schools already on his or her list. We believe that connecting postsecondary institutions with access and success programs helps all concerned by introducing students to colleges and helping colleges identify students who are prepared to succeed.

NACAC also hopes that the directory can be a resource for parents and families looking for local programs that might offer students some additional academic help and advising in preparation for the transition to college. The programs listed in the directory are all non-profit, are free of charge to students, and offer ongoing programming to students from diverse backgrounds. Some work primarily with first-generation students and refugees, others with students in foster care, while still others serve students on a first come, first served basis. The programs within the directory aim to prepare students not just to get into college, but to succeed at college. Test prep and financial aid literacy, as well as study skills classes, extracurricular programming, and supplementary academic programming are just some of the offerings of the many programs in the directory. Many
Resource Highlight:
Directory of College Access & Success Programs

provide support that continues through college graduation. At present, the directory isn’t heavily marketed to students, but as the directory grows, student use may as well.

NACAC highlights the directory through a regular feature in *The Journal of College Admission*, with an article spotlighting the work of one community-based organization (CBO) per issue. The association also continues to promote the database to our members through ads and on the NACAC webpage. The directory now contains roughly 525 entries, which is only a fraction of the total number of college access and success organizations in the U.S. We hope to grow that number through promotional efforts and by word of mouth. Each time new programs are added to the directory, the resource becomes more valuable to NACAC members and to students seeking assistance in their transition to college.
Book Review: 
Courtrooms and Classrooms: 
A Legal History of College Access, 1860-1960

Reviewed by 
Mark Addison (Brown University)

Issues of college access are increasingly met with resolutions within social and economic contexts. Models such as cost of production output, and race and socioeconomic-conscious strategies form the basis of such analyses (Jenkins & Rodriguez, 2013; Henriksen, 1995; Treager Huber, 2010; Schmidt, 2012). We can expect retooling and reinventing of such models with increasing college costs and changes in student demographics. One such model was the Personal Achievement Index (PAI) which was adopted by the University of Texas (UT) in response to the U.S. Court of Appeals’ decision in Hopwood v. Texas (1996). The decision held that race-conscious admissions processes were unconstitutional (Heriot, 2012-2013). The PAI score considered a student’s “socioeconomic background, single-parent/guardian status, and languages spoken at home other than English” (Heriot, 2012-2013, p. 79). Hopwood was repealed in 2003 by the Supreme Court during Grutter v. Bollinger and led UT, Austin to announce that it would resume direct consideration of race in admissions. So why would the U.S. Supreme Court annul Hopwood? What implications do judicial rulings have on college access? A historical analysis of Supreme Court rulings of college access cases provides some understanding. Scott Gelber’s (2016) Courtrooms and Classrooms, impressively provided a historical analysis of college access through an indispensable legal lens. Gelber’s work was important because its publication came on the heels of the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the Fifth Circuit’s ruling in favor of UT in Fischer v. University of Texas (2016).

As an admissions case, the Court decided that universities may consider race, among other factors, in efforts to diversify student population. Courtrooms traced judicial deference to higher education institutions in college access cases over a span of 100 years. Throughout the century, judicial deference to colleges at the discretion of the Supreme Court took a wild path based on the contexts of American politics, historical events, and social change (Klarman, 2007). Creatively, Gelber reviewed the history of that deference within topics of admissions, desegregation, expulsion, tuition, and child support. Gelber (2016) presented the nature of college admissions processes, during a fifty-year period (1860-1910), to have lacked
Courtrooms and Classrooms

“substantial admission requirements” due to a scarcity of well-prepared students in the common schools (p. 39). Requirements for admission became moderately standardized post-Civil War in basic subjects such as English grammar and composition, history, science, and math; yet, institutions struggled to uphold these moderate standards because of “conditional” enrollment of unqualified applicants (p. 39). Gelber recounted that even prominent institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia accepted students conditionally until the turn of the new century. Most “conditional” applicants were whites who were non-degree seeking, part-time, and unqualified applicants invited to remediate certain courses. As a result, institutions were more likely to be under political or judicial scrutiny, as well as faced the challenge of maintaining sustainable student enrollment. It is critical to learn about this legal perspective of higher education which challenges the student affairs notion that students – often white males – who attended prestigious institutions, were presumably qualified.

Gelber’s (2016) research revealed that admissions in some state schools operated within statutes that restricted universities from accepting students from other regions. State statutes such as The Morrill Act (1862) did not guarantee women’s rights to attend land grant schools, and led to exclusion from extracurricular activities and science courses when those women gained initial access. The post-Civil War political era also brought about renewed political forces to change education in general. For example, judicial oversight over college access in higher education increased after the war, as a result of statutes that pushed for desegregation in education.

The strength in Gelber’s (2016) analysis was his ability to weave the topics of the chapters to tell a story of educational jurisprudence, which in turn revealed an era of national political ‘tug of war’. He especially connected the chapters on admissions and desegregation impressively well. Gelber explained that these state mandates of college access that guided admissions were challenged by desegregation suits following Reconstruction Era. Tensions grew even more with the new vision that higher education was a privilege and not a right, which led to increased deference toward university administration’s access policies. This prompted challenges, on the other hand, from rejected whites who believed that “virtually all white applicants were entitled” to admission (p. 61). Gelber mentioned shared the caveat of this particular analysis to be that deference was given to colleges when it came to admissions; however, twentieth century courts referred to former rulings and federal laws which limited colleges when adjudicating desegregation suits.

College access is also linked to success and degree attainment. Gelber (2016) explored this
link within the historical context of success as a byproduct of abiding by university policies. Colleges and universities historically reserved the right to determine the parameters of campus life during the period between the 1900s and early 1960s. University officials acted in loco parentis and expelled students who did not conform to university expectations and requirements (such as complete military science courses on the basis of religion). Some southern institutions prohibited students and administrators from participating in Civil Rights demonstrations and initiatives. This common university statute formed the basis for the landmark case of Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education (1961). The case involved St. John Dixon (named appellant) and five other black students from Alabama State College who were expelled by the university without notification and a hearing. St. John Dixon, recounted his experience saying, “we found out about the expulsion in the newspaper” at the 2016 Gehring Academy in Berkeley, at which I was in attendance. The supreme court overturned the lower court’s decision to uphold the expulsions for violating then Alabama law of requesting service at a white-only restaurant. Gelber noted that Dixon became the beginning of due process (students’ rights) in universities.

A continuous revision of Gelber’s (2016) analysis of the chapters on tuition and child support cases revealed a weakness in his work, although admittedly, cannot be solely attributed to the author’s lacking. The two chapters lacked some depth mainly due to the fact that the roles of institutions and the courts have mostly remained consistent regardless political forces. Gelber, in his conclusion, attributed the lack of depth to the fact that “tuition cases occupy a less prominent” place when it comes to judicial deference. The two chapters share a similar concept within college access with regard to higher education affordability. Gelber could have combined the two chapters and examined their relationship for a robust historical analysis throughout the book. Courts continue to defer to universities in tuition cases as long as they do not interfere with state laws. Remarkably, courts have required “increased responsibility for tuition within the private realm” by consistently ordering parents (especially divorced parents) to serve that economic role (p. 162). The recent political season saw the issue of rising college tuition cost as a topic at the forefront for Democratic candidates, Senator Bernie Sanders and Secretary Hillary Clinton. The candidates each referred to proposals that would render two-year community colleges and four-year public universities tuition-free. The topic of free tuition shall soon lose its vague notion of being apolitical, and potentially one that comes with great contention.

To conclude, Gelber’s (2016) work served as a document that has foreshadowed the future of college access and should prompt action especially in areas of admissions and tuition.
His work provided admonition for college admissions officials to retool their approaches for recruiting and enrolling a diverse student body. It is important for a college to articulate the importance of a diverse student body in its academic exercise in order to avoid scrutiny of its policies in a judicial review. Judicial deference affects university goals and tactics to recruit, enroll, and provide access for all students. Hence, college officials must begin planning ways to continue providing quality access for students, in anticipation of how the issue of rising tuition may be resolved in the future.

References


