

## **January/February 2008 Educational Equity Brief**

### **1. Senate Looking into College Tuition Practices**

The US Senate has requested information on endowments, tuition price setting and financial aid from the 136 wealthiest colleges. It seems that congress is looking into education reform via regulating the amount of tuition that colleges charge and how much of their endowments they are required to spend. Colleges spend on average 4.6% of their endowment annually.

“Senators Scrutinize Well-Endowed Colleges.” By Doug Lederman, Inside Higher Ed, 1/25/08.

### **2. Shifting Focus Away From Access to Persistence**

Clifford Adelman argues that we don't really have a college access problem in the United States anymore but we do have a persistence problem. Sixty-six percent of on-time high school graduates entered postsecondary education directly from high school and another 13% entered by their mid-twenties. Therefore, combined we get a total college access rate of 79%. If we disaggregate the data, we see differences in access by race and socio-economic status. Eighty-one percent of white students enter college versus 73% of African-American and 75% of Latinos. Ninety-one percent of students from higher-income families enter college versus 69% of students from lower-income families. What happens to these students once they enter college is important. Ninety percent of first year students enroll for their second year, but one third of those students had fewer than 20 credits and/or poor academic records. Of this group, 73% did not earn any credential by age 27. On average, these students only accumulated 14 credits and had a GPA of 1.79. Adelman argues that what we need to work on is meaningful participation in college – succeeding in their classes and persisting through graduation.

“Do we really have a college access problem?” By Cliff Adelman, Grantmakers for Education Newsletter, Fall 2007.

### **3. Access and Completion at California Community Colleges**

California “college access” policies are not translating to degree completion. Only about 25% of community college students achieve their goal of transferring to a four-year university and/or earning an Associate's degree within six years. The community colleges are integral to helping students achieve their educational goals because of the sheer number of students they serve. Of the students enrolled in public universities in the state, 73% are at the community colleges.

Degree completion is associated with race, age and enrollment patterns:

Completion by Race:

33% Asian

27% White

Completion by Age:

27% of students ages 17 to 19

21% of students in their 20s

18% Latino  
15% Black

18% of students in their 30s  
16% of students age 40 or older

Completion is also positively correlated with:

- Full-time attendance the majority of terms
- Enrolled continuously without taking time off
- Completed an orientation course
- Dropped few of their courses
- Registered on time for most of their classes.

“Rules of the Game: How state policy creates barriers to degree completion and impedes student success in the California community colleges.” By Nancy Shulock and Colleen Moore, February 2007.

#### **4. The Importance of Academic Success for Low-Income Students**

A research study on persistence found that academic success has a greater influence on persistence for low-income students than the availability of financial aid. For every one-letter grade increase, students were 15% more likely to stay in college. However, when financial aid increased, their likeliness of persistence did not change.

“Keeping Needy Students in College Hinges More on Academic Success Than Financial Aid, Study Finds.” By Elizabeth Farrell, The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1/21/08.

#### **5. Six-year College Graduation Rates by Various Characteristics**

Six-year graduation rates for students by parental income for 1994 freshmen:

\$0 to \$24,999	48.5%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	56.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	59.6%
\$75,000 and over	67.2%

Six-year graduation rate for students by SAT score for 1994 freshmen:

1000 or less	48.1%
1001 to 1099	62.9%
1100 or more	71.8%

Six-year graduation rates for students by institutional selectivity for 1994 freshmen:

Low	48.6%
Medium	57.9%
High	75.7%

“Institutional Graduation Rates by Family Income, Student SAI Scores and Institutional Selectivity 1994 Freshman Cohort.” Postsecondary Education Opportunity, June 2007.

## **6. College Entrance Rates According to Parental Income**

According to the National Population Survey in 2005, the college participation rate was 61% for dependent 18 to 24 year olds. The disaggregated data is as follows:

Lowest income quartile:	40.2%
Second income quartile:	59.3%
Third income quartile:	71.1%
Top income quartile:	80.5%

The proportion of Pell Grant recipients at four-year schools has declined from 62.4% in 1974 to 45.1% in 2006. They are increasingly attending the two-year colleges rather than the four-year schools.

“Higher Education for Students from Low Income Families.” Postsecondary Education Opportunity, September 2007.

## **7. National K-12 Funding Gaps Updated**

The Education Trust recently released a report about national funding gaps in public K-12 education. They found that the national funding gap between school districts serving the highest concentration of low-income students received on average \$938 less per student than districts serving more affluent students. Furthermore, districts serving high concentrations of minority students received on average \$877 less per pupil than low-minority districts. The Education Trust argues that these numbers are an understatement of the real gaps in equity because high-poverty and high-minority districts often need more resources than other districts because they have less ability to fall back on other community and family resources. When they add in the real costs needed to bring students in high-poverty and high-minority districts up to standard, they claim that the poverty gap is \$1532 per student and the minority gap is \$1275 per student. The funding inequities undermine districts’ ability to meet standards and accountability measures.

“The Funding Gap.” By Carmen Arroyo, The Education Trust, January 2008.

## **8. Sallie Mae Pulls Back on Loans**

Sallie Mae announces that it will no longer be issuing private student loans to students with below prime credit scores. Additionally, they will not issue loans to students at schools with low

graduation rates. The decision is in response to the downturns in the student loan industry as well as the mortgage crisis.

“Sallie Mae Tying Loans to Students’ Credit cores and Colleges’ Graduation Rates.” By Paul Baken and Kelly Field, The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 1, 2008.

## **9. Minority Students Ask for More Parental Involvement**

A recent study shows that minority student parents are less involved in their student’s college life and decisions than white parents. Minority students were much more likely to report that their parents are involved “too little” in their college life. In particular, Hispanic students reported the most desire for more parental help in dealing with college officials, choosing college courses and choosing college activities.

“Surveys of Students Challenge ‘Helicopter Parent’ Stereotype.” By Eric Hoover, The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 1, 2008.