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On Research and Leadership

Topics Featured in this Issue:

Director's Note

Since the release of the Update on Research and Leadership fall issue, our society has witnessed vast changes following the 2016 presidential election. There are growing concerns and coalition building in response to the current social and geopolitical environment. The upside of the unprecedented times we are witnessing is galvanizing actions from January's Women's March to April's March for Science. American college campuses as microcosms of larger social relations are experiencing more organized protests and increasing activism. Minoritized voices are moving from the margins, calling for inclusion, equity, and mattering on and off campus. Known as "The People's Colleges," the two–year institutions I study and champion for continue to challenge the status quo of college for the elite to extending college to the masses.

At OCCRL, we are steadfast in our commitment to advancing research, programs, policies, and practices that promote successful transitions in and through community colleges to the workplace or further education for diverse youth and adults. This issue of Update reflects our core values to bolster equity for underserved and marginalized students. The first feature, "A Framework to Approach Postsecondary Educational Program Design for College Students with Lived Experience in Foster Care," written by Maddy Day, Linda Schmidt, and Yvonne Unrau at Western Michigan University, shares efforts to increase student success of former foster youth, applying the Seven Life Domains Framework that incorporates wraparound support services that help young adults previously in foster care to navigate college and persist to completion. The respective backgrounds of students are important considerations in providing a multitude of on–ramps to college completion. Apprenticeships are one key avenue for offering alternative routes to earn credentials, earn wages, and increase skill sets. Harper College in Illinois is a leader in registered apprenticeship programming. In "Registered Apprenticeships: Integrated Earn and Learn Pathways at Harper College," Melissa MacGregor and Heather Fox highlight Harper's offerings and discuss how apprentices as well as employers, two–year colleges, and communities benefit from students being able to earn a salary for on–the–job training while also taking academic courses.

While apprenticeships are shown to produce benefits for students, particularly those from underserved populations, another important facet in producing equitable student outcomes and fostering student success comes from student services units. Student affairs professionals are essential co–curricular partners in advancing the academic mission, aiding in retention and matriculation, and getting to graduation. In "Equity and Student Services," Devean Owens, Chauntee Thrill, and Marci Rockey explore student affairs practice in community college contexts and how student support services contribute to the academic and social engagement of students and the organizations that provide enrichment and professional development for student affairs practitioners.

In our attempts to engage scholars and practitioners across multiple platforms and mediums, OCCRL recently launched a new podcast series, Democracy's College, that features conversations on educational equity, justice, and excellence for students in P–20 educational pathways. I had the pleasure of interviewing leading student affairs and higher education scholar Dafina–Lazarus Stewart in "Racial Equity and Justice in Educational Settings." I am sure you will find what is shared in this interview to be enlightening in clarifying, not conflating, what is diversity, inclusion, social justice, and equity. Many messages regarding equity are represented in popular culture through music, television, and film that openly affirm feminism, racial pride, educational attainment, etc. Travis Tyler and Kim Nehls discuss how community colleges emerge in pop culture in "Community College Pop Culture Portrayals." Tyler and Nehls assert that more disciplined inquiry that analyzes past and current trends in popular culture as it pertains to community colleges is needed in showcasing the contributions and criticisms of an invaluable postsecondary sector.

Last but not least, minority–serving community colleges do not readily receive the attention their four–year college counterparts do. Illinois stands out from other states in the Great Lakes Region, in that other midwest states do not have comparable numbers of colleges designated as MSIs. Heather Fox and Chauntee Thrill present rich profiles of these unique institutions in "The Illinois Landscape of Minority–Serving Community Colleges." In sum, it is my hope you find this issue to be a page turner! Stay connected to us via Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Also pass along a copy of this issue and prior issues of OCCRL's Update on Research and Leadership colleagues and friends!

Eboni M. Zamani–Gallaher

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Our mission is to use research and evaluation methods to improve policies, programs, and practices to enhance community college education and transition to college for diverse learners at the state, national, and international levels.

The UPDATE on Research and Leadership is a bi–annual newsletter featuring articles on programs, policies, and research highlighting transitions to, through, and out of postsecondary education. Was this newsletter forwarded to you? Sign up for the OCCRL mailing list to receive news and updates our work.

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A Framework to Approach Postsecondary Educational Program Design for College Students with Lived Experience in Foster Care

by Maddy Day, Center for Fostering Success, Western Michigan University

Linda Schmidt, School of Social Work and Center for Fostering Success, Western Michigan University

Yvonne A. Unrau, School of Social Work and Center for Fostering Success, Western Michigan University

The trajectory for postsecondary education achievement for young adults who experienced foster care placement in childhood is dismal. Compared to their peers, youth in foster care have lower rates of high school graduation (50% vs. 70%), college enrollment (20% vs. 60%), and college graduation (5% vs. 20%) (Wolanin, 2005). However, through evolving governmental policies and supportive campus–based programs, progress is being made toward addressing the achievement gaps impacting this population. This article outlines how key federal and state policies and campus–based support programs employing an integrative framework are contributing to addressing the achievement gaps impacting this population.

Policy

Through various policy initiatives that have evolved over time, the federal government has recognized the need to address college access for youth with experience in foster care. Specifically, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program targets educational attainment for young adults with experience in foster care, effectively giving colleges and universities a policy avenue to create strategies for education and self–sufficiency among their students with experience in foster care. This program offers flexible funding grants to states to support independent living resources for transition–age (i.e. 16 to 23 years old) young adults in foster care. States can apply for education and training vouchers, which can be up to $5,000 per year per student, to support educational goals. These vouchers represent a critical source of support to young people aging out of foster care and pursuing postsecondary education; however, the efficacy of the education and training voucher program, specifically the procedures for young people to access funds in support of their postsecondary goals, remains an unanswered research question.

Within general foster care policies, the Title IV–E section of the Social Security Act ensures categorical eligibility to federal funding to states in the provision of foster care services. This includes support services aiming to improve outcomes in any domain deemed critical to safety, well–being, or permanence. States are reimbursed by the federal government for allowable expenditures without regard to the number of youth in care. In 2008, this categorical eligibility was extended to include youth up to age 21 through the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P. L. 110–351). This updated law expanded categorical payments to include transportation to school and required each case plan to include completion of secondary education and verification of school attendance. Within this framework, state government agencies are encouraged to identify programmatic

supports related to educational attainment through the state planning process. The supports can take the form of education navigators or specialized case managers who focus on increasing educational attainment among foster youth. Thoughtful implementation of education–focused programs can create a pathway for current and former youth with experience in foster care to access college, starting with promoting expectations of attending college as early as elementary school. Colleges and other institutions may work directly with state agencies to include collaborating around these goals as part of that state's Title IV–E plan.

Other opportunities to expand access and successful completion of college for young adults with experience in foster care are embedded in other broad policy areas focused on self–sufficiency. For example, two of the primary policy areas that fit this category are food and cash assistance. First, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can provide food

assistance to students attending college. States may apply for waivers and/or assert categorical eligibility to include more students in their SNAP population. Second, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) can allow students with children to include attendance in college as a component of meeting work requirements to receive this cash assistance. The federal government contracts with the Urban Institute to maintain a database of state plans that identify which states support educational attainment in this manner.

Many of the policies that support postsecondary achievement for students with experience in foster care are jointly executed in partnership between state and federal government agencies. This means that there can be great variety in the options that states choose to take up in their state planning processes. Given this variability, a promising approach for postsecondary institutions interested in enhancing support for this population is to identify which agencies within their state are responsible for the planning process for each of these areas and partner to enhance the state plans by utilizing resources at the postsecondary institution. The development of campus–based support programs, discussed below, highlights the success of leveraging postsecondary resources. When this collaboration is successful it can improve the likelihood for success for not only students with experience in foster care, but also a broad range of students in need of additional support to succeed in higher education.

Campus–Based Programs

Colleges vary in their engagement of policy to ensure that students with experience in foster care have the best possible chance to maintain the necessities of life while trying to achieve academic success. The variation in programming approaches is partially explained by the fact that support services designed for college students who have experienced foster care placement is a relatively new field of practice (Gillum, Lindsay, Murray & Wells, 2016). There is consensus in the research that poor academic preparation, mental health conditions, and lack of financial aid are common barriers for this population, while individual personal strengths and social supports appear to serve as protective factors (Gillum et al., 2016). While these challenges are present for many underrepresented student populations, students with experience in foster care face additional obstacles to thriving and succeeding in postsecondary education that go well beyond academic achievement and college preparation. The adverse and traumatic childhood experiences of many former foster youth are marked by abuse, neglect, family separation, a caseworker–managed childhood, sub–optimal living arrangements, multiple caregivers, and school changes. These are a few conditions that alter how young people from foster care learn to perceive the world and relate to others.

Students with experience in foster care speak to participants at a Fostering Success Michigan Statewide Summit about the need to develop interdependent relationships to support support students in their transition to college.

Establishing a designated program to support students who have experienced foster care is essential to their college success (Cantú, 2014). At the very least, designated staff are needed to help students navigate the maze of policy–prescribed efforts in order to access the benefits available to them and to address the disparities that are part of the foster care experience (Courtney, Terao, & Bost, 2004; Unrau & Grinnell, 2005). The first campus–based program to target support for college students who aged out of foster care began in 1998 at California State University, Fullerton. Since then a range of programs have emerged on college campuses; however, program descriptions and evaluations are scarce (Geiger, Hanrahan, Cheung, & Lietz, 2016). Multiple states, including Arizona, California, Georgia, Michigan, Texas, Virginia, Ohio, and Washington, are leading the way in pioneering this work. While this population of students faces many common foster care–related barriers, the programs range widely in scope, staffing, and services. Strategies to develop campus–based programs targeting students from foster care as a subset of the college population began to be articulated with a case study approach of existing programs (Casey Family Programs, 2010). More recently, an ideal program concept was designed based on available research knowledge (Salazar, Haggerty, & Roe, 2016 ; Salazar, Roe, Ullrich, & Haggerty, 2016). Other approaches to program development have emphasized student voice as part of program development (Unrau, 2011). Evaluations of existing programs are only beginning to emerge in the research literature.

In Michigan, a pioneering effort to increase the college graduation rates among young people aging out of foster care has been underway for nearly a decade. The effort transformed into the Center for Fostering Success, which has three main programs. The first program, established in 2008, is a comprehensive campus–based effort, known as the Seita Scholars Program, and aims to increase graduation rates among students with experience in foster care by addressing their unique needs in the college setting (Unrau, 2011; Unrau, Hamilton, & Putney, 2010). Through financial scholarships, safe housing during semester breaks, and holistic life coaching support by trained "campus coaches," students are supported through college with a view to ensuring that each graduate is also prepared for the transition from college to career given the absence of a reliable family safety net. The second program, established in 2012, is Fostering Success Michigan, a statewide outreach effort utilizing a collective impact framework focused on building networks of organizations and people, bridging the pre–college and college arenas, to support students as they journey through foster care and into, and through, postsecondary education. The third program, established in 2013, is the Fostering Success Coach Training program, which provides a practice framework for professionals who are charged with supporting students from foster care to succeed in college.

Information on foster care state plans and federal guidance related to promoting educational stability and college readiness is available via the Administration for Children and Families website: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/ed–hhs–foster–care–non–regulatory–guidance.

Seven Life Domains Framework

Each of the three Center for Fostering Success programs relies upon a common life domains framework from which to develop services. Specifically, Casey Family Programs (2001) identified seven domains as key for organizing support for young people preparing to make the transition from foster care to adulthood. The Center for Fostering Success adapted the Seven Life Domains framework such that education was made the central focus of program support nested in the other life domains (Figure 1). While education is central in this adaptation of the framework, each life domain integrally ties to the outcome of academic success for students with experience in foster care. In practice, the Seven Life Domains framework offers professionals, supportive adults, and students a concrete way to organize, understand, and develop a response to the complexity of the lives of students with experience in foster care who are transitioning into young adulthood through the college experience. Below is a sample of "street–level" challenges experienced by young people across each of the domains.

Academics and Education. Instead of a family network of support to rely upon, youth transitioning from foster care to college must navigate systems of support, which may include courts, state agencies, Medicaid, and community mental health services. Without consistent supportive adults and caregivers to guide them, youth find it more difficult to prepare for postsecondary education and nurture aspirations for educational achievement. Furthermore, despite recent policy improvements aimed at increasing education stability, placement changes during the foster care experience are often accompanied by changes in schools and result in falling behind in both credits and academic progress (Burley & Halpern, 2001). For those young adults who make their way to a college campus, the challenges to persisting through higher education are those of their peers compounded by the need to navigate two complex networks of support: that of the college campus and the network of resources students bring with them from their foster care experience.

Housing. Young adults with a background in foster care experience higher rates of homelessness (Pecora et al., 2006). When young people in foster care are discharged from foster care by the courts without sufficient supports, which can take place as early as 18 years old, they are at much greater risk. Disrupting care and supportive services at a time when many are completing their senior year of high school can disable their efforts to complete school. When young adults exit foster care, not only are they likely to leave their placement (i.e. foster home, congregate care facility), but other state–funded support services are scaled back or terminated. This transition increases the risk of these young adults experiencing homelessness or "couch surfing." Their instability in placement may derail their progress toward high school graduation, making their plans to attend college even more out of reach. For those students with experience in foster care who matriculate to college, the challenges to secure safe, affordable, and stable housing continue. Students with experience in foster care who are able to live in residence halls can find themselves without a place to stay during the semester breaks when dorms close. For those students attending community colleges, or four–year colleges in urban communities where housing is in high demand, there is the additional challenge of finding an affordable living arrangement in the community that is accessible to school, work, social supports, and other services.

Figure 1. The Seven Life Domains Framework

Finances and Employment. Students who spend at least one day in foster care on or after their 13th birthday are classified as independent according to federal financial aid standards (College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 P.L. 110–84). Although it varies state–by–state, their foster care status qualifies them for federal– and state–funded grants, scholarships, and tuition waivers that reduce the amount of loans needed to pay for a college education. Despite the financial aid available, students with experience in foster care need additional support to be made aware of and fully access these resources (Government Accountability Office, 2016). In addition to the challenges of accesing financial resources, the majority of young adults with experience in foster care are not prepared to manage lump sums paid out by financial aid, nor are they prepared to save funds, financially plan for the future, or complete responsibilities such as filing annual tax returns. Employment struggles are common for young adults from foster care, especially in earning a living wage (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2013). Many young adults lack the skills needed to engage in a workplace effectively, and the high mobility of foster care leads to a lack of social capital, which is becoming increasingly more essential to finding employment.

Physical and Mental Health. Most young people in foster care have grown up experiencing abuse and neglect, as well as conditions of poverty such as poor nutrition and living in unsafe neighborhoods. Post–traumatic stress in response to the conditions leading to entering foster care, and continued experiences while in foster care, is common. In fact, post–traumatic stress disorder is sometimes experienced at higher rates among youth who have been in foster care than among returning war veterans (Courtney et al., 2011). Multiple placement changes can mean new medical providers with a variety of treatment styles; additionally, physical and mental health care is often managed by a caseworker or foster care provider without input from the youth (White, O'Brien, Pecora, & Buher, 2015). While the Affordable Care Act has created provisions for young adults who age out of foster care to maintain their Medicaid status until age 26, when a young person enters college, they may also be navigating the health and mental health care system on their own for the first time.

Social Relationships and Community Connections. The experience of foster care disrupts relationships with the family unit, and since many of the supportive relationships that young people with experience in foster care engage in are with professionals who enter the young person's life on a temporary basis, these youth often become accustomed to transactional relationships with adults (Michigan Department of Human Services, 2011). Necessarily, young adults with experience in foster care have difficulty establishing a supportive and consistent relationship with an adult. Additionally, the high mobility of young people in foster care does not lend itself to developing and maintaining peer connections. The postsecondary setting provides many opportunities for young adults to engage with both peers and professionals in a positive way; however, many lack the skills necessary to navigate these relationships successfully.
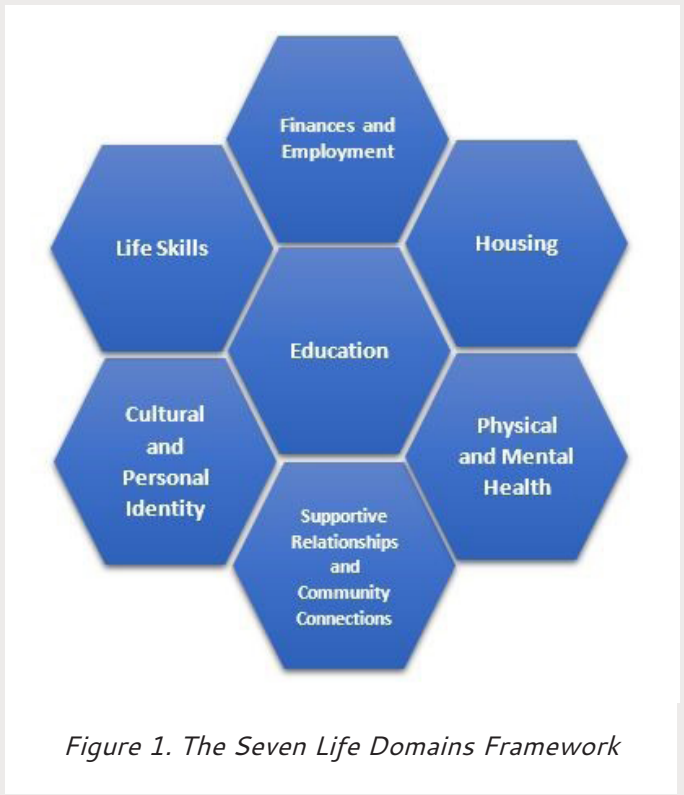
Personal and Cultural Identity. The child welfare and justice systems are fraught with institutionalized racism and prejudice (Miller, Cahn, Anderson-Nathe, Cause, & Bender, 2013); moreover, neither system is equipped to address effectively the nuances and intersectionality of the multiple identities that a young person with experience in foster care holds. While there are often spaces on college campuses to explore and connect with racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and gender identities, students with experience in foster care are rarely able to find each other and do the work of understanding the culture of foster care and how their foster care experiences contribute to their sense of self. Unfortunately, a negative stigma around foster care still exists, and young people growing up in foster care tend to hide the fact of their foster care status for fear of negative stereotyping and being treated differently by others. Withholding one's foster care status not only can prevent the receipt of much needed financial resources, but also keeps students with experience in foster care in a space of otherness, unable to integrate their past experience with their present.

Life Skills. Young people growing up in foster care often have to acquire skills and a mindset beyond their age and in developmental stage. The sentiment that they must grow up faster than their peers is common among transition-age young adults with experience in foster care. This may result in them having acquired some positive independent living skills such as doing laundry, relying upon oneself to problem solve, and packing belongings at an earlier age. However, many youth in foster care learn a sense of "pseudo-independence" as they are abruptly launched into independence upon exiting the dependency inherent in the foster care system (Samuels & Pryce, 2008). For college students with experience in foster care, exposure gaps from a disrupted childhood often challenge the development of adaptive life skills needed to navigate higher education. Furthermore, the belief that one has to be independent to survive may confound their ability to develop the life skills necessary for interdependent success.

Integration of Approach in Programming. The great challenge of campus-based support programs is to design services and support strategies that comprehensively address the complex web of challenges across the Seven Life Domains as outlined above. Despite these dynamic issues, solutions are beginning to emerge at policy and program levels. At the policy level, there is recognition that young people from foster care need supports across multiple life domains. Efforts continue to bring awareness of the need to cross-reference differentiated federal programs to improve coordinated service delivery at the state level to support successful transition from foster care to college. At the program level, it is too early to tell which models of support are most effective in creating college experiences not only to help college students from foster care thrive, but also to fully succeed in achieving a college degree. The Fostering Success Coach model (Unrau & Bennett, 2017) is a unifying practice framework used by professionals who are working in a variety of program settings. It is an approach to student support specific to young adults who have experienced the adversity of foster care. This approach emphasizes relationship skills formed in the coach-student dyad to tackle challenges in college, while also focusing on specific knowledge and skills across the seven domains. The field of campus-based support for students in foster care is ripe for discovery and investigation. Using the seven domains framework, there is ample opportunity for developing differentiated models of support to yield the greatest opportunity for academic and life success for students with experience in foster care.

For individuals seeking more information and resources to aid in increasing postsecondary education access and success, the Fostering Success Michigan Website provides over 500 resources spanning the Seven Life Domains. This website also features the only National Postsecondary Support Map, highlighting tuition waivers, statewide child welfare and higher education coordinating organizations (i.e. Fostering Success Michigan, California College Pathways, etc.), and campus support programs at four-year postsecondary institutions across the country.

Student leaders at the 2016 Michigan Young Leader Advocacy Summit

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Maddy Day may be reached at maddy.day@wmich.edu.
Linda Schmidt may be reached at linda.schmidt@wmich.edu.
Yvonne A. Unrau may be reached at yvonne.unrau@wmich.edu.

Registered Apprenticeships: Integrated Earn and Learn Pathways at Harper College

by Melissa MacGregor, Manager Workforce Grants, William Rainey Harper College
Heather L. Fox, OCCRL Assistant Director of Operations, Communications, and Research

Work–based learning integrates the academic and occupational training that is central to career and technical education and through which students have the ability to gain high–wage, high–skilled occupational experience while pursuing postsecondary credentials (Bragg, Dresser, & Smith, 2012; Holzer & Lerman, 2014; Rayborn, 2015). Work–based learning reinforces the relevancy and authenticity of the learning experiences for students, engaging learners who prefer applied learning environments (Lerman, 2010). Moreover, work–based learning has been found to increase students' persistence, graduation, and employment rates, with notable gains for students from underserved racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Holzer & Lerman, 2014; Kuh, 2008; Lerman, 2010).

Apprenticeships are contractual arrangements between private employers and workers in which students earn a salary during supervised on–the–job training and while engaging in related academic instruction (Holzer & Lerman, 2014; Lerman, 2010). Apprenticeships are the most intensive work–based learning model and are particularly well suited as an entry point for youth and young adults to middle–skill careers (Holzer & Lerman, 2014). While completing on–the–job learning, apprentices are engaged in coursework that includes math as well as verbal and occupation–specific content (Holzer & Lerman, 2014; Lerman, 2010). Students in apprenticeships are employees and are paid for their work (Alfeld, Charner, Johnson, & Watts, 2013; Holzer & Lerman, 2014).

The benefits associated with apprenticeships can be greater for underserved student populations. This is in part because apprentices are paid salaries that include opportunities for wage progression as students gain mastery of new skills and demonstrate their value to the workplace. This allows apprentices to earn a living wage while pursuing an education (Lerman, 2010). Earning a salary while receiving training increases students' confidence (Holzer & Lerman, 2014). It also reinforces for students the relationship between their investment in skill development results and their income potential (Holzer & Lerman, 2014).This is important for underserved students (e.g., students who are low–income, racial/ethnic minorities, or veterans), who are often unable to afford participation in unpaid internships yet are seeking the high–skills training necessary to obtain family–wage employment. Moreover, apprenticeships are particularly beneficial for low–income students and students of color in terms of increased persistence rates and occupational identity (Holzer & Lerman, 2014). However, despite the benefits associated with work–based learning for underserved students, a lower percentage of these students are engaged in work–based learning (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007). This article highlights the growing registered apprenticeship programs at Harper College and introduces the Office of Community College Research and Leadership's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Apprenticeship Project.
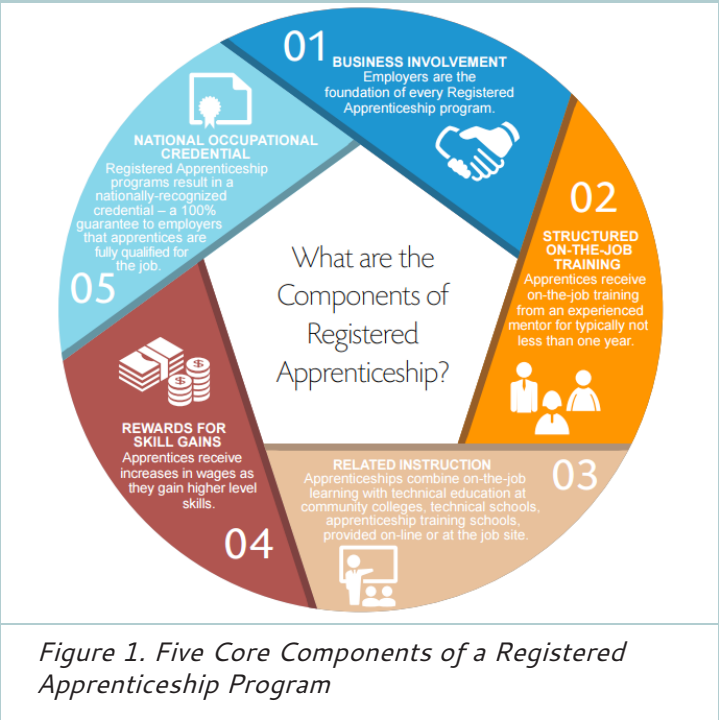
Registered Apprenticeship Programs Are a Win – Win – Win – Win

- **Students** — Receive a free education that coordinates with their work schedules. They have zero debt, skills to apply to their career, credentials in their field, and an AAS degree that transfers to universities.

- **Employers** — Engage in a low–risk talent development strategy that yields high profits in loyalty, reduced turnover, and recruiting costs. Employers help in minimizing the skills gap by helping apprentices gain the skills necessary to do the job. Moreover, this is a perfect opportunity to ensure the knowledge of seasoned experts is passed on before they retire.

- **Community Colleges** — Recognize increases in enrollment, retention, and completion of programs by apprentices. Colleges also strengthen their partnerships with the local business community and are better able to meet the needs of local industries.

- **Communities** — Acknowledge an economic impact of increased jobs and satisfaction in addressing the skills gap. Employed apprentices are able to raise families, purchase goods and services, and buy homes. These employees go on to become tomorrow's business leaders.

Harper College Leads Community Colleges in the Apprenticeship Initiative

Registered apprenticeships were revived via President Obama's American Apprenticeship Initiative to create a talent development strategy in answer to the skills gap. The U.S. Department of Labor (n.d.) has identified five core components of Registered Apprenticeships, illustrated in Figure 1. Apprenticeship is, fortunately, a bipartisan initiative with support from the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, the White House, as well as business and industry. Harper College was awarded a $2.5 million American Apprenticeship Initiative grant in October 2015. Apprenticeship can sound old fashioned, evoking historical references or calling to mind something to do with building trades and unions. However, apprenticeships are a proven earn and learn model that ensures a quality education by combining the on–the–job training provided by a company with related technical instruction to prepare the student apprentice for a high–demand career.

Traditionally, companies interested in sponsoring a Registered Apprenticeship program would approach the Department of Labor in their state for help in identifying an appropriate occupation. Companies would have to write the standards, complete paperwork, obtain a education partner, and then hire, train, and track apprentices. It is generally a lot of work, and only large corporations have the capacity for this model. Harper College has spurred the acceptance and growth of an apprenticeship model in which the community college is the program sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program, removing that burden from the companies. In this way, Harper College, or any community college, can aggregate apprentices from a variety of companies into a cohort to move through a lock–step program together on a fast–paced schedule. This practice develops a cohort learning community whose members can pull from their various experiences on the job to enrich classroom discussions. Early outcomes for apprentices in Harper College's programs are promising, with a retention rate of 84% and a mean grade point average of 3.48 (as of spring 2017).

Figure 1. Five Core Components of a Registered Apprenticeship Program

Harper College has developed four registered apprenticeship programs: Industrial Maintenance Mechanic, CNC Precision Machinist, Logistics / Supply Chain Managment, and General Insurance. Each of these programs has their full curriculum and weekly schedules online on Harper College's apprenticeship website along with all the forms for companies and students. The website has been a key resource for Harper College in attracting both employers and students to the program.

Harper College's Role and Responsibilities

As both the program sponsor for the registered apprenticeship programs and the provider of the related technical instruction, Harper College is responsible for the following activities:

- Conducting site visits at the company to monitor progress and learning.
- Teaching throughout the full accredited applied associate degree program with experienced, qualified faculty.
- Reviewing the curriculum with companies to help in building an on–the–job training program.
- Registering students for all courses and providing them with new schedules each semester.
- Purchasing all books and materials at the beginning of each semester.
- Providing coaching and tutoring services as necessary.
- Keeping companies aware of students' academic progress.
- Documenting third–party credentials earned throughout the program and funding any fees for the first exam.
- Registering apprentices in the U.S. Department of Labor RAPIDS database.
- Training the trainer for all mentors (partner companies can send as many as they like).
- Providing guidance for observing demonstrations of proficiency.

Employers' Roles and Responsibilities

Companies considering apprenticeship as a workforce development strategy submit an employer interest form. Employers who complete this form are contacted by Harper College's Office of Apprenticeship. The best part of hiring an apprentice through Harper College's program is that employers do not need to do any of the legwork involved in registering a program with the U.S. Department of Labor, and the college assists them throughout the full program. Employers are made aware of the following responsibilities:

- Providing their apprentices with experienced mentors who are responsible for the on-the-job training components of the program. Harper College will give them access to easy checklists of competencies they will observe over the life of the program. Harper College also requires all mentors to attend a four-session workshop in the first semester of their apprenticeship involvement, called "Train the Trainer." These classes teach essential mentoring skills, such as setting goals for and providing constructive feedback to their apprentices.
- Allowing apprentices to attend classes on days when classes are scheduled each semester.
- Documenting apprentices' progress using the forms supplied by Harper College.
- Meeting with Harper College staff regularly to share work plans, competency checklists, grades, and academic progress.
- Providing Harper College with the wage schedule the apprentices will receive as they increase in skills and experience.
- Paying the college a flat fee of $15,000 for the full program, billed by semester. For example, a six-semester program is $2,500 per semester for all tuition, fees, books, certifications, and assistance from Harper College.

Companies are also encouraged to work with local high schools to develop an internship program that will allow them to have an "extended interview" with candidates they may later hire as registered apprentices.

New partner employers are often attracted to the program based on their observations of success of the program. For example, a recent cohort of Industrial Maintenance Mechanic apprentices visited a local manufacturing company, which is a routine aspect of the program. The plant manager providing the tour was so impressed with the group of students, the thoughtful questions they asked, and their overall engagement that he wanted to hire an apprentice himself.

Students' Roles and Responsibilities

Potential students who are interested in one of the registered apprenticeship programs available at Harper College initiate the process by completing and submitting an interest form. This starts the admissions process and directs the student to apply to Harper College. As the current Registered Apprenticeship programs are associate degree programs, candidates must be college ready, as determined by Harper College's admissions office based on either recent ACT or SAT scores or scores on a placement exam. A list of prospective students who are college ready is sent to the Harper College's Office of Apprenticeship. These students are then requested to submit a complete application and resume. Harper College's Job Placement Resource Center provides resume assistance and interview tips for these prospective apprentices.

Candidate applications and resumes are sent to employers interested in hiring one apprentice or more. Interviews are organized and conducted by potential employers following their standard hiring practices. When a company hires a candidate for the apprenticeship program, Harper College places the student in the Registered Apprenticeship cohort. Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 to remain in the program. Students are required to sign a contract with their company. This contract states that if the student fail a course or is released from the company they must reimburse the company for any funds invested in their education, and that the student will remain employed by the company for up to two years. Apprentices are batch registered for all courses and attend a customized orientation. Harper College's Office of Apprenticeship keeps the employer informed of the apprentices' academic progress.

Registered Apprentices in CNC Precision Machining and Industrial Maintenance Mechanic programs at Harper College in the manufacturing labs.

OCCRL's CTE Apprenticeships Project

OCCRL has launched a project to study CTE Apprenticeships in the state of Illinois, such as the Registered Apprenticeship programs at Harper College. This baseline study includes an environmental scan that is designed to describe the utilization of CTE apprenticeships in Illinois, the CTE programs these apprenticeships are embedded in, and the student populations engaged in these apprenticeships. OCCRL's CTE Apprenticeships study will answer the following guiding research questions.

1. To what extent are apprenticeships currently embedded in CTE programs in Illinois overall, and in Chicago specifically?
2. What are the characteristics of CTE programs that have apprenticeships embedded in them?
3. How are the apprenticeships within CTE programs structured? What are the requirements for entry into, participation in, and completion of these apprenticeships?
4. What are the demographics of students who are enrolled in CTE programs with apprenticeships embedded in them?
5. What is the relationship between apprenticeship and youth employment, as perceived by faculty of CTE programs with apprenticeships?
6. What factors do faculty identify as being supportive of or creating barriers to the potential to scale apprenticeships in CTE programs?

This study will examine the potential of apprenticeships as a strategy to improve employment prospects for youth and young adults, as well as supports for and barriers to scaling apprenticeships, as perceived by CTE faculty providing academic instruction in apprenticeship programs. Finally, this study will serve as a baseline for future research, by providing a clear picture of existing usage of apprenticeships and illustrating the potential to scale apprenticeships as a strategy to improve youth employment prospects for underserved minority and low-income youth.

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Melissa MacGregor may be reached at mmacgreg@harpercollege.edu.
Heather L. Fox may be reached at hlfox2@illinois.edu.

Equity and Student Services

by Devean R. Owens, OCCRL Research Assistant
Chauntee R. Thrill, OCCRL Research Assistant
Marci Rockey, OCCRL Research Associate

Community college student affairs and services professionals serve a plethora of students with wide-ranging unique needs. Due to their location in the higher education hierarchy there are many inequities these professionals face that are counter to their efforts to holistically and effectively support student success. This article outlines the provision of student support services in the community college context, applying a "traditional" student support framework in the community college context, and the role of professional development for staff members. The conclusion provides next steps for future research as well as ideas to improve the current state of student services in community colleges.

Student Support Services in the Community College Context

Community colleges serve a diverse population of students with various academic and personal needs and stemming from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, goals, and abilities. Community college students represent 45% of all undergraduates, 41% of first-time freshman, and more than half of Native American, Hispanic, and Black students who enroll in postsecondary studies (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). The average age of community college students is 28, with about half of students falling into the 22–39 age range (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Community colleges provide a pathway to postsecondary education for many first-generation and single-parent students, 36% and 17% of community college undergraduates, respectively (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Many community college students enroll in college underprepared, with about 60% of community college students being referred to at least one developmental education course (Bailey, 2009). Community college students can also lack crucial knowledge necessary to navigate college successfully (Schoem & Dunlap, 2011). This unpreparedness can translate into substantial developmental education coursework, increased drop-out rates, and longer time to degree completion (Bailey & Cho, 2010). Finally, nearly two-thirds of community college students enroll part-time, often due to a need to maintain employment throughout their studies (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016).

Community college students' needs are both similar and dissimilar from those students attending four-year institutions. All students require academic, social, and personal support; however, the degree of support needed is often higher among community college students. Community college students commonly balance a complex set of responsibilities. As a result they often need more flexibility in course offerings, student activities, and student support services to be successful. Likewise, student affairs personnel need to provide these students with more personalized academic supports, including tutoring, one-on-one support meetings with faculty and advisors, access to learning centers, and alternative means of learning. Effectively meeting the needs of community college populations often requires personalized non-academic supports such as childcare assistance, access to emergency funds, extensive mental health assistance, and disability support.

Academically and personally, student support services are essential to the success of community college students. Student support services offered by community colleges can fall into one of five categories:

- Academic guidance, including educational assessments, educational planning, and degree requirements;
- Academic supports such as tutoring;
- Personal guidance and counseling, including mental health treatment, crisis management, and mentorship;
- Career counseling and career planning, including resume building and interview skill development; and
- Supplemental services, such as child care assistance, book vouchers, and emergency funds (Purnell & Blank, 2004).

Other examples of supplemental student support services include orientation, first-year student programming, student activities, registration events, student success courses, learning communities, and special population programming (e.g., TRIO).

Student support services, especially in community colleges, are extremely vulnerable to downsizing or elimination due to budget cuts. Often community colleges find themselves understaffed in student support services, relying heavily on other staff to take on extraneous duties or multiple roles within the institution. Inequities exist in the areas of academic advising and personal counseling as community colleges experience high student-to-counselor/advisor ratios and staff members have limited time to dedicate to working with each student individually. Access to support services is a common issue, as most services are provided only during normal business hours, which does not meet the needs of students who take evening or weekend courses or who access their coursework remotely. Supplemental services, when offered, are also at risk when state revenues and funding are decreased, requiring institutions to minimize costs on non-academic expenses.

Applying a "Traditional" Student Support Framework in the Community Colleges Context

Despite community colleges increasingly serving as a gateway educational pathway for contemporary students (Shapiro, Dundar, Wakhungu, Yuan, & Harrell, 2015), much of the literature on student development theory is modeled from and applied within the context of a "traditional" college experience characterized by a student entering a four-year institution directly from high school, living on campus, and attending college full time. However, research on student learning styles within the community college context has been conducted (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010).

Engaging students in campus life and services can be challenging in any institutional context. However, serving a community college population creates nuances in the experiences of student affairs and student support professionals. For campus activities professionals, the only "captured audience" may be found mid-day in a cafeteria setting. A LGBTQA club advisor may need to support and engage the senior adult who has been out publicly for many years and the 19-year old questioning student. Academic advisors may be expected to counsel students at all levels of ability and preparation for any number of trajectories in a myriad of programs, often in a matter of minutes. This includes supporting students who are engaged in adult education, developmental education, lifelong learning, short- and long-term certificate and diplomas program, and/or technical and academic degree programs.

Given the realities of working with community college populations and the limited literature on student development in this context, there are notable opportunities for future research. Developing theoretical frameworks that reflect the community college context is essential for student affairs professionals in engaging, and thus retaining, their students. These frameworks could support the development of assessment efforts that shift institutional mindsets from delivering services to developing students. To advance equity, these frameworks must consider increasingly diverse student populations with complex lives and needs. As a part of this, equity should be at the center of assessment efforts to determine gaps in student involvement or participation in support services.

The Role of Professional Development for Student Services Staff

Student services professionals are often the first point of contact for students. These employees provide support, information, and resources pertinent to student success.

> Because personnel in student affairs are usually the first to interact with students and often reconnect with students several times throughout their careers, it is imperative that these staff members have the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to meet the challenges presented. (Diaz, 2013, p.3)

Systems are constantly evolving to better serve student needs; due to the vast and diverse population of students at community colleges, student affairs professionals need to constantly stay abreast of the changes happening within the field (Person, Ellis, Plum, & Boudreau, 2005). Student services staff work with insufficient time and budgets to meet the needs of students. The scarcity of resources forces student services staff to engage in creative strategies to support various student groups effectively and efficiently. "Over the past several years, public colleges and universities have cut faculty positions, eliminated course offerings, closed campuses, and reduced student services. . ." (Mitchell, Leachman, & Masterson, para. 14, 2016). In order to enhance education, Chickering and Gamson (1991) argue "an organizational culture that values, nourishes, and provides support for efforts to become more effective professionals. . . emphasizes quality performance from administrators, faculty, support staff and students" (p. 57).

Enhancing delivery of services, improving knowledge attainment, and ensuring student success are benefits of professional development for the institution, employee, and students (Diaz, 2013). The complexity of the roles of student services staff members warrants the identification of training and experiences needed to prepare them and sustain their skills adequately. In addition, community college student affairs professionals frequently access professional development via local and state organizations or conferences, as distance, understaffing, and expense often hinder community college personnel from attending larger national conferences or training. Recently, however, national organizations, including the the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the National Council on Student Development (NCSD) have made some strides in improving offerings for community college student affairs professionals whether virtually or in person.

The complexity of the roles of student services staff members warrants the identification of training and experiences needed to prepare them and sustain their skills adequately.

The ACPA Commission for Two-Year Colleges seeks to provide professional development opportunities "through sponsored programs at ACPA's annual convention, commission-sponsored workshops, and co-sponsored programs with other national student development in two-year college focused organizations" (American College Personnel Association, n.d.). This ACPA commission also publishes a newsletter with a wealth of information on current student affairs issues.

NASPA manages a Community College Division that "examines issues relevant to community college institutions and professionals and hosts a variety of professional development opportunities" (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2017). The Community College Division spearheads three different initiatives for student affairs professionals in community colleges:

- NASPA Community Colleges Online Series. This series includes four free online learning opportunities each year. Its goal is to provide relevant professional development for student affairs practitioners. There is also an archive with past session presentations.
- NASPA Community Colleges Symposium Series. This series occurs at various community college campuses across the country. It provides high-quality professional development opportunities for new and mid-level community college student affairs professionals, focusing on the role of the community college in society, student development theory, and adult learning theory.
- NASPA Community Colleges Institute. This institute is a one-and-a-half-day pre-conference workshop facilitating deep discussion regarding a variety of critical issues affecting community colleges.

As an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges, the NCSD "supports the understanding of and respect for all community college students and professionals through advocacy and education" (National Council on Student Development, 2015). The NCSD is the only organization solely dedicated to community college student development professionals. The NCSD hosts the Walter G. Bumphus Leadership Institute, which provides networking opportunities, facilitates discussions on leadership and student development, and develops and refines critical leadership skills. Professionals will also find webinars, training, and a full list of associated organizations on their website.

Conclusion

Community colleges are dealing with numerous variables and challenges whilst trying to ensure the success of their students. Adequate resources, including access to and support for professional development, are needed to improve the quality of services offered by community colleges. Tailored professional development that directly addresses the specific needs and problems facing community colleges is vitally important. Student affairs professionals need frameworks that are based in the community college context. The unique structure and issues community colleges possess create distinct situations that must be addressed delicately and directly. Frameworks with four-year institutions at the center do not fit the community college context (Kelsay & Zamani-Gallaher, 2014).

Employees and institutions benefit from targeted research capturing the complex issues situated in the community college context. Specific research regarding student engagement and the experiences of student affairs professionals in the community college context can provide valuable resources that will support both students and staff members. Potential areas for research and practice could include developing partnerships between faculty and student affairs professionals, engaging students via student employment, studying the experiences of satellite campus staff and students, designing and assessing learning outcomes in student affairs, and assessing the value of student affairs in retention efforts.

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Devean R. Owens may be reached at drowens2@illinois.edu.
Chauntee R. Thrill may be reached at thrill2@illinois.edu.
Marci Rockey may be reached at rockey2@illinois.edu.

Racial Equity and Justice in Educational Settings

by Eboni M. Zamani–Gallaher, OCCRL Director

Colleges and universities nationwide have been in the news as student demands from racially minoritized students, particularly black students and their accomplices, have gone viral via social media. The current generation of black student activists is calling for direct actions, tangible outcomes, and greater institutional accountability for creating and sustaining campus environments that are more diverse and inclusive. Incidents of racial microaggressions against minoritized faculty, staff, and students continue despite pledges to increase the numbers of faculty, staff, and students of color; sizable commitment of dollars; and notable gains in the racial and ethnic diversity of certain parts of campus. Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart, a professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University, is a scholar, educator, and activist focused on empowering and imagining futures that sustain and cultivate learning, growth, and success of marginalized groups in the U.S. higher education institutions. In August, Dr. Stewart will serve as Professor in the School of Education and Co–Director of the Student Affairs in Higher Education Program at Colorado State University. Zir research and activism calls attention to the gap between focusing attention on compositional diversity and actually doing the work necessary to drive institutional transformation toward greater racial justice. Dr. Eboni M. Zamani–Gallaher interviewed Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart, a professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University. The summary below highlights this interview; the full interview is available as the debut episode of the Democracy's College podcast series.

In the face of ongoing aggressions, micro and macro against racialized minorities on university college campuses, what do you find is the role of faculty, staff, and student activists in response to racial inequities?

Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart

Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart: I think they play critical roles in bringing awareness to what the issues are that are of particular concern and that are hindering progress towards greater racial equity and justice in our colleges and universities. I think that is probably the first critical role they play. I think secondly, beyond awareness, they are also contributing to putting the pressure on, provoking attention and actual change to take place. You know, so that it is not just a matter of bringing awareness but continuing to apply pressure. I think the third role that faculty, staff, and student activism can play in response to racial inequities on campus is actually being able to provide a vision of how things could be different. What could that change look like? What must it look like? And to play a role at the table as those decisions are made that will actually lead to greater institutional transformation.

About twice a generation, there are calls that come forward from faculty, staff, and students from racially minoritized groups to make demands at their institutions, over and over again, requests for more faculty and staff of color and students of color. The need for faculty and staff of color to successfully advance through tenure and promotion and to advance into senior–level administrative roles. The need for greater financial resources to support students of color to enroll and to stay at the institution. Training for majority, racially majoritized faculty on how to deal effectively and appropriately with issues of equity and inclusion in the classroom, hostile campus climates, and incidents of micro–aggressions. Campus counseling center staff who are actually competent in addressing racial battle fatigue and racial trauma.

All of these issues, and of course the multiple identities of students of color and dealing with the intersecting oppressions they face on campus in terms of sexuality and gender, social class, and disability as well. In those ways, within the higher education context, those issues can take on particular nuances and concerns because of the very different ways and the wide variety and diversity of ways that students and people become involved in higher education. So different from, let's say, the P–12 sector, our primary and secondary sector, where there is mandatory education where students have to go to school. So in some ways schools have to find ways to deal equitably with students in the classroom, or at least they have to recognize that they are going to have difference and diversity within the classroom. That is not necessarily a presumed situation at all colleges and universities. When we move to the postsecondary level it shifts and institutions have much more. . . we could say autonomy and choice in how they shape their classes, incoming classes. How they shape the faculty and staff that are working with those students. That greater degree of autonomy in postsecondary education I think adds some additional layer of nuance and complexity to how these issues show up and how they are dealt with at that level.

What is the variation or contrast, if you will, between what diversity looks like and what equity is, what social justice is, and what inclusion entails?

Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart: To cover the gap between compositional diversity—who is in the room—and institutional transformation we need to do more than just center on diversity and inclusion. We must really move forward to amplify efforts to promote equity and justice. Diversity and inclusion are not terms that are actually related inherently to equity and justice. One of the issues with it is that we see higher education institutions taking what I call a Kool–Aid approach to addressing the deep systemic and structural issues that have resulted in racial injustice and inequity in our colleges and universities. For too long we've centered on the goal of achieving a critical mass of racially minoritized constituents as the best reflection of campus progress. Where White, cis–gendered, heterosexual, Christian, temporally able–bodied, and middle– and upper–class people are the water and the minoritized people are the cherry Kool–Aid mix, as it were. We merely have poured the contents of this cherry–flavored pouch into the existing water and stirred and hoped it would be enough to produce sustainable change. And that clearly has not been effective and has not been the case. And so I argue that it is time for colleges and universities to stop trying to make Kool–Aid for the picnic already in progress, that we really need to pay attention to how to move beyond merely counting who's in room, to actually examine how our institutional norms, practices, and systems continue to reproduce conditions that frustrate efforts to achieve equity and diversity.

The different ways that these concepts approach the issues is important.

Diversity asks   Who is in the room?
How many more of x group do we have this year than last year?
Is it separatist to provide funding for ethnic student centers?

Inclusion asks   Have everyone's ideas been heard?
Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?
Wouldn't it be great to have a program with a panel that debates Black Lives Matter as a movement?

Equity asks   Who is trying to get into the room but cannot?
Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?
What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as a perpetual majority here?
What are people experiencing on campus that they do not feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?

Justice asks   Whose ideas will not be taken as seriously because they are not in the majority?
Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable in maintaining their dehumanizing views?
Why would we allow the humanity and dignity of a group of people to be the subject of a debate in the first place?

In these ways, diversity celebrates increases in numbers that still reflect minoritized positions and incremental growth, whereas equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems, and increases in support for peoples' lives and life chances as reported by those who have been targeted. Inclusion celebrates awards for initiative and credits itself for having an ethnically diverse candidate pool, but justice celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups in the first place. That too is the difference.

Diversity and inclusion were never meant to produce equity and justice. Those concepts and constructs really represent merely evolutionary changes that do little to actually change the essence of an organization and how it operates, whereas equity and justice represent revolutionary change that is designed to dismantle in order to rebuild. And so, I believe that if our colleges and universities are going to make a difference in issues of equity and justice we need to embrace revolution, not merely evolution.

What tangible corrective actions can leaders take to initiate the work that you discussed in moving beyond just compositional diversity to cultivating learning environments that actively counter the marginalization of racialized minorities and other minoritized groups?

Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart: It is not enough to recruit more racially minoritized faculty. One also needs to be examining reappointment, tenure and promotion systems, and hostile and toxic department cultures that create a revolving door. And in that revolving door, when racialized minoritized faculty are constantly moving in and out every three to four years, it destabilizes community–building efforts and isolates tokenized faculty that manage to make it through. It is not just the recruitment; it is really examining the systems and structures that support retention.

It is not enough to do annual training on using inclusive language in the classroom, for instance, if we never really take to heart efforts to call out and disrupt faculty assumptions of the presumed incompetence of racially minoritized students in their classroom. If the faculty are still assigning readings that reinforce normative assumptions that bolster Whiteness and White supremacy. If the faculty are not taught to recognize and disrupt the creation of study and project groups that often students are allowed to do on their own, but they tend to do so in ways that ostracize marginalized and exclude racially minoritized students. We also have to think about how we can hold faculty accountable as part of the departments' and colleges' advancement systems for how they are actively contributing or failing to contribute to creating just and sustainable classroom environments.

It is moving beyond merely bringing people in the door, and again, what are the things that are underneath that, and really thinking about systemic and structural change. Many changes institutions boast about receiving diversity initiative that celebrates diversity or got students involved in celebrating difference and what that means, but this is often absent of any concrete assessment of the sustained impact of those initiatives. Those things need to be happening. We can't just recruit students if we are not examining and making structural changes to disrupt and revolutionize the classroom climate, the residence hall environments that often are hostile and toxic to minoritized groups. Those are the kind of things that I think are tangible, actionable, corrective actions that leadership can take on campuses.

> It is moving beyond merely bringing people in the door, and again, what are the things that are underneath that, and really thinking about systemic and structural change.

Is there an additional call to action that you would like to issue to those who want to take a more active role in advocating for racial justice?

Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart: I would encourage people to first do the self–work, the interior work, necessary to learn about and unlearn the internalized dominance or internalized oppression that all of us have been socialized into in this country. That kind of self–work is essential to actually being positively effective in impacting change in our campuses. I will also encourage folks to actively seek to build coalitions with others who are also members of minoritized populations on campus. We will gain more by working together than by working separately, recognizing that our futures are really bound up together with each other. We don't need to compete; we can actually work collaboratively in coalitions to achieve gains that will improve the life chances and educational experiences of everybody on campus, not just one group at a time.

Hear more insights from Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart by listening to the full interview. Also, readers are encouraged to watch Minding the Gap: The Distance Between Compositional Diversity and Institutional Transformation, Dr. Dafina–Lazarus Stewart's lecture given at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, as part of the Dean's Diversity Lecture Series sponsored by the College of Education, Office of the Provost, and OCCRL.

Eboni M. Zamani–Gallaher may be reached at ezamanig@illinois.edu.
Dafina–Lazarus Stewart may be reached at dafinas@bgsu.edu.

Community College Pop Culture Portrayals
by Travis J. Tyler, ASHE Intern and alumnus of the UNLV Masters Degree in Higher Education
Kim Nehls, Executive Director of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)

The hallowed halls of higher education are a fertile setting for novels, TV shows, and movies. A vast array of students, faculty, and administrators roam these fictional colleges and universities, creating the plots of many classic academic trials and tribulations. However, many scholars (Hawk & Hill, 2016; Hinton, 1994; LaPaglia, 1994; Reynolds, 2014; Tucciarone, 2007) have called into question the veracity of these portrayals and the potential effects of these fictional accounts of higher education on prospective students. Tucciarone (2007) argued that popular media functions as a source of information for unfamiliar situations and places. Yet the portrayals of institutions of higher education are often myopic in scope and subject matter: dating, athletics, and partying dominate the intercollegiate narratives.

Alternatively, the college landscape is often portrayed through the nostalgia–tinged lenses of elitism with settings resembling Ivy League institutions (Reynolds, 2014). Reynolds (2014) wrote, "The social overshadows the academic, and manifestations of institutional hierarchy viciously (mis)characterize role and purpose for institutions of higher education of differing types in ways that contain privileged messages about who institutions are for" (pp. 21–22). Indeed, the popular media's portrayals of the higher education landscape do not reflect the ever–evolving and expanding student population. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2016), 45% of all undergraduate students in the United States attend community colleges, that serve a diverse student population with a wide range of educational needs, but colleges and universities in popular culture rarely venture outside of the traditional social or sports tropes of teenagers. In fact, Hinton (1994) noted between 1960 and 1990 not a single film was made featuring nontraditional students at a community college. This lack of representation in film is interesting not only considering the number of nontraditional students who attend community colleges, but also due to the number of Hollywood figures who were educated in the community college system: George Lucas began at Modesto Junior College; body builder, actor, and politician Arnold Schwarzenegger started his academic career at Santa Monica College; and Tom Hanks, before transferring to Cal State Sacramento, attended Chabot College (Ross, 2016). However, since 2000, community colleges were introduced to the popular media's limelight—for better or worse. This literature review features popular portrayals of community colleges as the "punchline" for higher education and forming a community. It concludes with future directions for portrayals of community colleges in pop culture.

Popular Portrayals of Community Colleges: Higher Education's Punchline?

Very few studies (Bourke, Major, & Harris, 2009; Hawk & Hill, 2016; LaPaglia, 1994; Tucciarone, 2007) have focused specifically on popular media and community colleges. Indeed, this is reflective of the popular media's lack of focus on community college, but these portrayals do exist. However, it is unfortunate that these portrayals are often on the periphery or are the punchline of mean–spirited comedy calling into question the mental prowess of community college students (LaPaglia, 1994; Tucciarone, 2007). In her study of print, film, and television up to 1992, La Paglia (1994) found that community college students are represented as "mediocre, probably losers, and usually unsympathetic" (p. 6) or function as the center of "mean spirited images. . . [meant to] demean. . . devalue and declass" (p. 151). Although LaPaglia (1994) analyzed fiction up until 1992, her findings remained consistent after that period. For example, while *Good Will Hunting* (Van Sant, Damon, & Affleck, 1997) predominantly takes place at MIT, Sean McGuire, Robin William's character, teaches at Bunker Hill Community College, which Keroes (2004) described as "the sort of institution considered a refuge for underprivileged students, those too poor or academically undernourished to gain admission to a more prestigious institution" (p.42). In one scene, in which a group of community college students listens to Sean McGuire lecturing about psychology, one female student is depicted chewing on her hair, and when a male student is called upon to answer a question about trust, he responds, "Trust is uh, trust is life" (Van Sant et al., 1997). Even for those unfamiliar with the movies, this scene depicts community college students as apathetic, distracted, and lacking knowledge to answer a simple question. Yet, these poor portrayals seem to be universal in popular media even past the turn of the century. The sci–fi comedy *Evolution* (Reitman & Jakoby, 2001) featured community college professors more concerned with research than teaching (Tucciarone, 2007). In Rodney Atkins' (2006) song "These Are My People," he sang, "We got some discount knowledge at the junior college where we majored in beer and girls" (as cited in Hawk & Hill, 2016, p. 31). The lyrics insinuate an inferior source of education and the students' lack of focus toward academics (Hawk & Hill, 2016). In *Tosh.O* (Zabielski, McAdams, & Judge, 2012), host Daniel Tosh comments over internet videos. In one video, a younger community college student collides with an older female student on his skateboard, to which the host comments:

> Just another day at community college where kids who can't get into a state school share a campus with old people who want to learn computers. . . Maybe this would not have happened, if you were not 45 years late to class. (Zabielski et al., 2012 as cited in Hawk & Hill, 2016, p. 31)
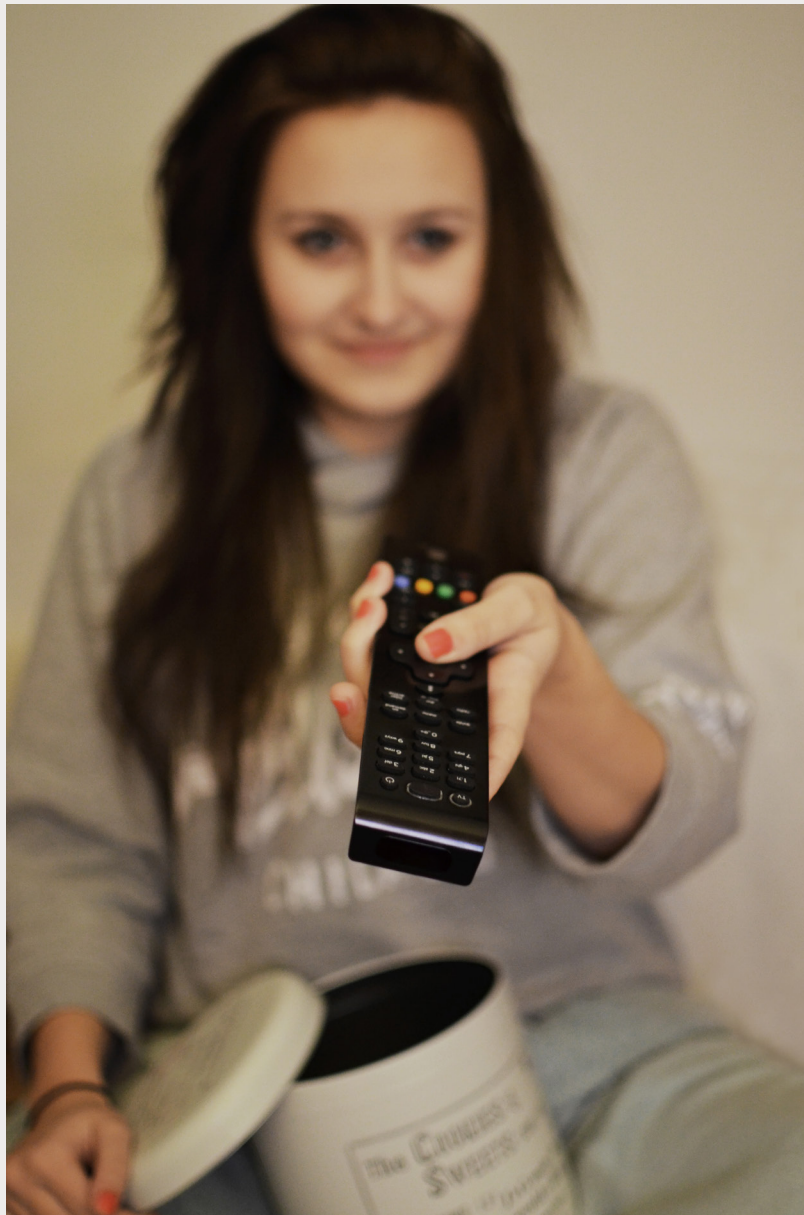
The commentary is mean spirited to all demographics, mocking the intelligence of traditionally aged students at community college, while simultaneously denigrating nontraditional students' sense of belonging at community college (Hawk & Hill, 2016). While Bourke and colleagues (2009) argued popular media's negative portrayals of community colleges were relegated to students' lack of motivation, these recent examples from popular media demonstrate a broader repertoire of ridicule, targeting multiple facets of community college (i.e. the students' intelligence, the professors, and the institutions).

Popular Portrayals of Community Colleges: Forming a Community

Contrary to the previous examples, *Community* (Harmon, Russo, & Russo, 2009) and *Larry Crowne* (Hanks & Vardalos, 2011) represent more positive portrayals of community colleges. These portrayals defy common conventions, taking the community college from the periphery and placing it as the center of the story. *Community*, a long-running sitcom TV-show, walks a fine line between mockery and satire. Fain (2012) argued, "The show. . . poke[s] fun at common conventions at community colleges: turf battles between departments, overly ambitious administrators, underprepared students and relentless budget-cutting." In addition, *Community* features a cast of characters representing a range of ages, races, and educational experiences (Fain, 2012). These characters more accurately reflect the actual student population of community college students, illustrating its growing diversity. Further, the emphasis of the show is on the daily lives of the students as they build relationships within a close-knit study group of traditional and nontraditional students (Hawk & Hill, 2016). While often implementing a farcical spin (e.g., playing paintball to win early class registration), the show features the struggles of community college students to balance academics and life.

In *Larry Crowne*, Tom Hanks plays the titular character, a military veteran who is laid off for not having a degree. He enrolls in community college, where he takes Julia Roberts' speech class and another class in economics. Similar to *Community*, the movie features a wide range of characters from different races and different backgrounds as traditional and nontraditional students build friendships and a community both inside and outside the classroom. In particular, Hanks' character is taken under the social wing of younger and hipper student, Talia. However, the portrayals of the professors are problematic in *Larry Crowne*. While the economics professor, played by George Takei, embodies the stereotypical arrogant and self-absorbed professor (Reynolds, 2014), his character counters the lack of rigor or inferior status of community college academics. Julia Roberts' character begins as an apathetic and possibly alcoholic educator who believes she is too good for community college but evolves into a dedicated professor.

Although a quirky sitcom and rom-com may not seem like viable reflections of the actuality of community college, beyond the comedic and dramatic effects of *Community* and *Larry Crowne* exists a message of personal and academic opportunity to earn a college degree, especially for nontraditional students (Tucciarone, 2007). Furthermore, these two stories feature nontraditional students taking a second chance on achieving success in life, highlighting the positive aspects of community college (Hawk & Hill, 2016). The physical buildings of the institu-

tions in *Community* and *Larry Crowne* also look like community colleges instead of the Ivy League institutions in most feature films. These shows demonstrate a progression of the portrayal of community colleges from ridicule to societal relevance.

Future Directions

As mentioned previously, the amount of research on popular media and community college is limited. In more specific terms, Tucciarone's (2007) and Hawk and Hill's (2016) data were collected from community college students who were familiar with these types of institutions, allowing them to analyze media portrayals more accurate in comparison to the actuality of attending a community college. However, it would be beneficial to expand the current sample to include those who are not familiar with community college, such as prospective college students in high school or first-generation students, as they may be more influenced by popular media's portrayals (Hawk & Hill, 2016). The mission of community colleges is offer open-access and cost-effective way to earn a college education. Therefore, it is important to remain vigilant in studying and analyzing current trends in popular culture in order to counteract the misrepresentation of the mission and benefits of enrolling at a community college.

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Travis J. Tyler may be reached at tylert3@unlv.nevada.edu.
Kim Nehls may be reached at kim.nehls@unlv.edu.

ILLINOIS SPOTLIGHT

The Illinois Landscape of Minority-Serving Community Colleges

by Heather L. Fox, OCCRL Assistant Director of Operations, Communications, and Research
Chauntee R. Thrill, OCCRL Research Assistant

Roughly one–fifth of all undergraduates attend minority–serving institutions (MSIs), including large proportions of underrepresented minoritized students of color who otherwise may not enroll in postsecondary education (Aragon & Zamani, 2002; Gasman & Nguyen, 2014; Núñez, Hurtado, & Galdeano, 2015). Institutions are designated as MSIs based on either their primary mission or origin or the percentage of minoritized undergraduate students of color enrolled at the institution. In total, there are seven categories of MSIs recognized by the U. S. Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Status as Historically Black Colleges and Universities or Tribal Colleges and Universities was granted legislatively as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and Equity in Education Land–Grant Status Act of 1994 to institutions based on the primary mission and origin of these institutions. Status as Historically Black Colleges and Universities was designated by congress to accredited institutions founded prior to 1964 whose primary mission was the education of African Americans. Similarly, Tribal Colleges and Universities are institutions designated by congress that serve predominantly American Indian and Alaska Native students. Outside of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities, the definitions and titling of each designation of MSIs can vary across federal agencies, funding opportunities, and research. The remaining MSIs are designated based on the percentage of minoritized undergraduate students of color served by the institution. Generally, institutions are designated as:

- Predominantly Black institutions if at least 40% of the institution's total enrollment is African American or Black,
- Hispanic–serving institutions if at least 25% of the institution's total enrollment is Hispanic or Latino/a,
- Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander–serving institutions if at least 10% of total enrollment falls in those categories, and
- Alaskan Native and/or Native Hawaiian–serving institutions if at least 20% of the institution's total enrollment falls in those categories (Center for Minority Serving Institutions, n.d.a).

Institutions not otherwise categorized, but whose combined enrollment of minoritized undergraduates exceeds 50%, are sometimes referred to as other minority–serving institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).

Approximately 46% of MSIs are two–year institutions or Minority–Serving Community Colleges (MSCCs) (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). The number of MSCCs is ever evolving as the body of students enrolled at these institutions changes over time. As of 2016, 22% of all two–year intuitions were MSCCs (Center for Minority Serving Institutions, n.d.b). This includes 321 community colleges, 15 private and 306 public, that were federally designated MSIs (Center for Minority Serving Institutions, n.d.b). These institutions overwhelmingly serve as the primary pathway into postsecondary education for historically underrepresented and underserved students, particularly minoritized students of color (Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007).

Illinois MSCCs

Within the Midwest region, the State of Illinois has the largest number of MSCCs. There are 14 MSCCs in Illinois: ten that are Hispanic–serving institutions, five that are predominantly Black institutions, and two that are Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander–serving institutions. Figure 1 provides a map of the MSCCs in Illinois by MSI type. Most of the Illinois MSCCs are located within 30 miles of downtown Chicago, with the exception of College of Lake County, Elgin Community College, and Waubonsee Community College. These three campuses are all about an hour drive from downtown Chicago (43–58 miles).
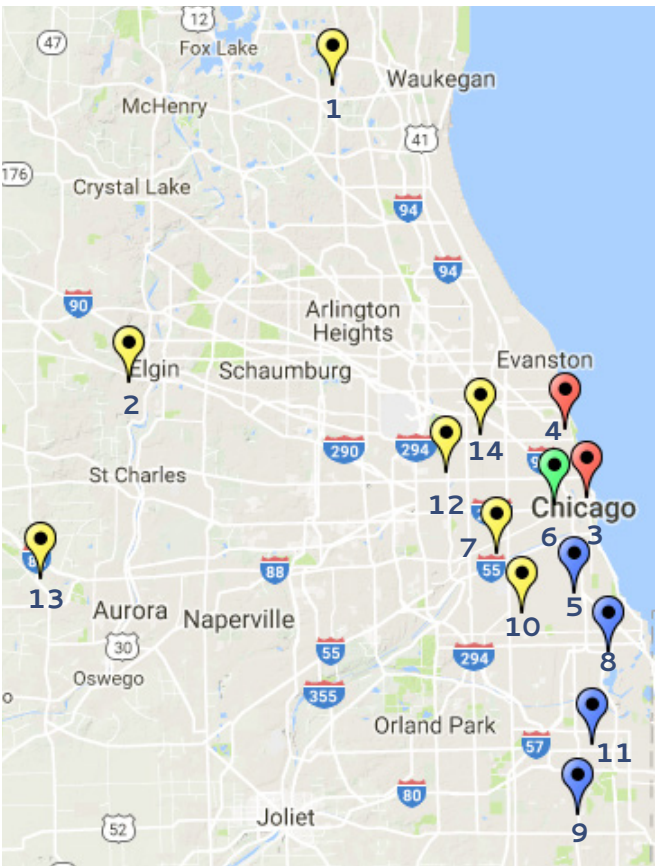
Illinois MSCC Profiles

College of Lake County
Hispanic–Serving Institution

Founded in 1968, College of Lake County (CLC) first opened its doors in 1969 to 2,360 students (College of Lake County, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, CLC enrolled 24,952 students across three campuses. CLC's student body is primarily White (46%) or Latina/o (34%), but CLC does enroll a diverse body of students (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). CLC offers a variety of associate degrees in arts, science, fine arts, and engineering, as well as career education degrees and certificates. In 2016, CLC conferred more than 900 certificates in health professions and related programs and over 400 certificates in mechanic and repair technologies/technicians programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). CLC also awarded over 850 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities, along with multi/interdisciplinary studies and health professions and related programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Elgin Community College
Hispanic–Serving Institution

Founded in 1949, Elgin Community College (ECC) began as a junior college, holding classes out of Elgin High School (Elgin Community College, 2017). ECC services District 509 (one of the 39 community college districts in Illinois), which covers 360 square miles. In the 2015–2016 academic year, ECC enrolled 16,114 students, of whom the majority were White (44%) or Latino/a (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). ECC offers a variety of associate degree programs in the arts, sciences, engineering, fine arts, and liberal studies, along with transfer programs and adult education. During the 2015–2016 academic year, ECC awarded approximately 320 certificates in mechanic and repair technologies programs and over 350 certificates in health professions and related programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). ECC also awarded 545 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities and 256 associate degrees in biological and physical sciences (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Hispanic–serving institution

Hispanic–serving institution and predominantly Black institution

Predominantly Black institution

Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander–serving institution and Hispanic–serving institution

1. College of Lake County
2. Elgin Community College
3. Harold Washington College
4. Harry S Truman College
5. Kennedy–King College
6. Malcolm X College
7. Morton College
8. Olive–Harvey College
9. Prairie State College
10. Richard J Daley College
11. South Suburban College
12. Triton College
13. Waubonsee Community College
14. Wilbur Wright College

Figure 1. Illinois Minority–Serving Community Colleges

MSCC
Minority Serving Community Colleges

The MSI institutional types of MSCCs in Illinois are clustered, with the five predominantly Black institutions being located in central and southern Chicago regions and both Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander–serving institutions located in northeastern Chicago regions. Half of the state's MSCCs are part of the City Colleges of Chicago. Each City Colleges of Chicago college focuses on one or more industry areas:

- Harold Washington College: business, entrepreneurship, and professional services;
- Harry S Truman College: education, human sciences, and natural sciences;
- Kennedy–King College: culinary arts and hospitality;
- Malcolm X College: healthcare;
- Olive–Harvey College: transportation, distribution, and logistics;
- Richard J. Daley College: advanced manufacturing; and
- Wilbur Wright College: technology (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017).

It is also important to note that most of the Illinois MSCCs have one or more satellites or campus locations. This is true of all the MSCCs that are part of City Colleges of Chicago, with the exception of Harold Washington College.

While Illinois MSCCs are clustered in primarily urban regions there is notable variation in the neighborhoods served, students enrolled, and institutional focus. One indicator of the different contexts that Illinois MSCCs operate in is shown by comparing the composition of educational credentials held by the adults in the community. Figure 2 shows the educational composition for 12 of the 14 Illinois MSCCs. Morton College and Elgin Community College were excluded, as comparable data was not available. Among the neighborhoods served by Illinois MSCCs, the percentage of the adult populations that has less than a high school diploma ranges from 5% to 46%. Similarly, the percentage of the neighborhood population that has an associate degree or higher ranges from 22% to 61% (City–Data, 2017). Illinois MSCCs employ 25% of the full–time community college faculty in the state (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Overall Illinois MSCCs rely on a higher percentage of part–time faculty, with 76% of their faculty being part–time, compared to 70% at Illinois non–MSCCs (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). However, the range in the percentage of part–time faculty at Illinois non–MSCCs ranges from 47% to 94%, whereas the range at Illinois MSCCs is much smaller at 62% to 87%. As such the reliance on part–time faculty appears more reflective of the structures of the individual institutions than of the presence or absence of an MSI designation.
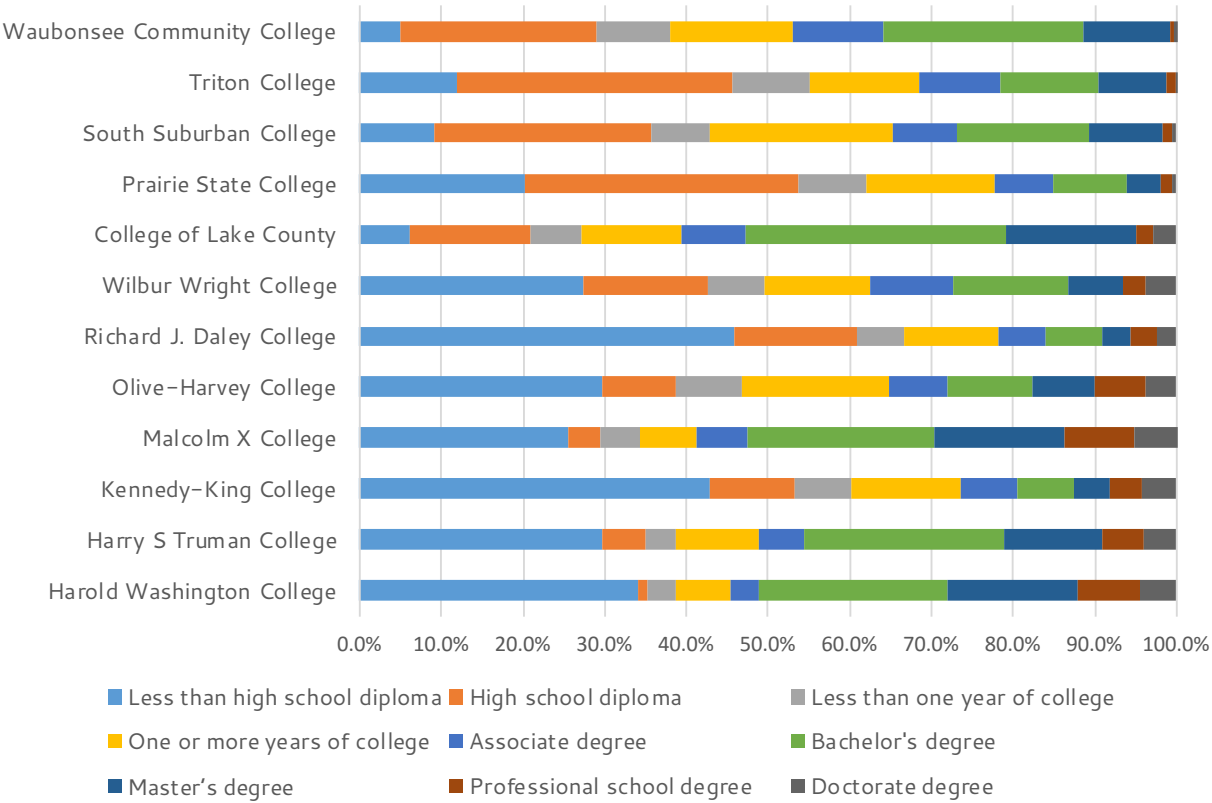

Figure 2. Highest Educational Attainment of Adults in Communities Served by Minority–Serving Community Colleges in Illinois

Illinois MSCC Profiles Continued

Harold Washington College, City Colleges of Chicago
Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander–Serving Institution and Hispanic–Serving Institution

Founded in 1962 as Loop Junior College, Harold Washington College (HWC) is the third–oldest community college in the City Colleges of Chicago system. It was renamed in 1987 after the passing of Chicago's first African–American mayor, Harold Washington (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, HWC enrolled almost 14,000 students, the majority of whom were African American (31%) or Latina/o (39%) (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Located in the Loop area of Chicago, HWC serves as a hub for business education, partnering with businesses such as Deloitte, Accenture, and Randstad (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In 2016, HWC awarded 87 certificates in business, management, marketing, and related support services and almost 870 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). HWC offers college to career pathways in the areas of insurance and banking, accounting, marketing and management, and business and economics. HWC is also the Chicago home for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017).

Harry S Truman College, City Colleges of Chicago
Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander–Serving Institution and Hispanic–Serving Institution

Founded in 1956, Harry S Truman College (HSTC) began as an "evening college," offering classes out of a local high school. Outgrowing its initial location, HSTC, then known as Mayfair College, relocated to its current location. It was renamed in 1976 after the 33rd president of the United States (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, HSTC enrolled approximately 15,850 students, the majority of whom were African American (21%) or Latina/o (42%) (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Located in the Uptown neighborhood, HSTC offers courses in education and human and natural sciences. In 2016, HSTC conferred certificates in the areas of family and consumer sciences/human services and health professions and related programs and awarded associate degrees in health professions and related programs, multi/interdisciplinary studies, liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). HSTC is the home of Truman Middle College, an alternative high school for students who dropped out of high school but wish to obtain a high school diploma.

Kennedy–King College, City Colleges of Chicago
Predominantly Black Institution

Founded in 1935 as Woodrow Wilson Junior College, Kennedy–King College (KKC) is one of seven community colleges that make up the City Colleges of Chicago. Renamed in 1969 in honor of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., KKC is the smallest of the City Colleges of Chicago colleges (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, KKC enrolled approximately 6,900 students, the majority of whom were African American (84%) (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Nestled in the Englewood area, KKC serves as a hub for hospitality and culinary arts education, offering courses at the Washburne Culinary and Hospitality Institute. In 2016, KKC conferred almost 250 certificates in personal and culinary services programs and 263 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). KKC is also home to WXCC PBS Chicago, WKKC 89.3FM Radio, the Center for Distance Learning, and the Child Development Laboratory Center (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017).

Malcolm X College, City Colleges of Chicago
Hispanic–Serving Institution and Predominantly Black Institution

Founded in 1911 as Crane Junior College, Malcolm X College (MXC) is the oldest of the seven City Colleges of Chicago community colleges. Known as Herzl Junior College from 1932 to 1969, the institution served as a U.S. Navy training college in 1944–1945 (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, MXC enrolled approximately 9,500 students, the majority of whom were African American (55%) or Latina/o (31%) (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). MXC serves as a hub for healthcare education, offering the largest selection of health sciences degrees in Cook County. In 2016, MXC conferred over 600 certificates in health professions and related programs and conferred associate degrees primarily in the areas of multi/interdisciplinary studies, liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). MXC recently opened a new School of Health Sciences, which houses a virtual hospital and the City Colleges of Chicago School of Nursing (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017).

While the tuition and fees charged to attend any of the City Colleges of Chicago is consistent, the median incomes served across these and other Illinois MSCCs are not. Table 1 provides a listing of in-district, in-state, and out-of-state tuition and fees for each of the Illinois MSCCs. In the 2015–2016 academic year, the in-district tuition and fees ranged from $2,832 to $4,583 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The mean in-district tuition and fees were $3,529, with each of the City Colleges of Chicago charging $3,505. Figure 3 shows the distribution of annual median household income across the neighborhoods served by Illinois MSCCs, which ranged from $22,633 to $107,200 with a mean of $59,006, (City-Data, 2017). The neighborhood served by Waubonsee Community College has the highest median income, the lowest percentage of adults without a high school diploma, and the lowest tuition and fees among the neighborhoods served by Illinois MSCCs. In contrast, in the neighborhood served by Kennedy-King College, where the median income is 62% of the mean and 43% of adults do not have a high school diploma, the tuition is just $29 below the mean charged by Illinois MSCCs.

Table 1. Tuition and Fees at Minority-Serving Community Colleges in Illinois, 2015–2016 Academic Year

College	In-district tuition and fees	In-state tuition and fees	Out-of-state tuition and fees
College of Lake County	$3,612	$8,358	$11,046
Elgin Community College	$2,868	$10,439	$11,959
Harold Washington College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906
Harry S Truman College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906
Kennedy-King College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906
Malcolm X College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906
Morton College	$3,668	$7,764	$9,812
Olive-Harvey College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906
Prairie State College	$3,432	$7,800	$9,240
Richard J. Daley College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906
South Suburban College	$4,583	$10,786	$12,173
Triton College	$3,870	$9,360	$11,630
Waubonsee Community College	$2,832	$7,002	$7,587
Wilbur Wright College	$3,506	$8,126	$11,906

Data source. National Center for Education Statistics, 2016

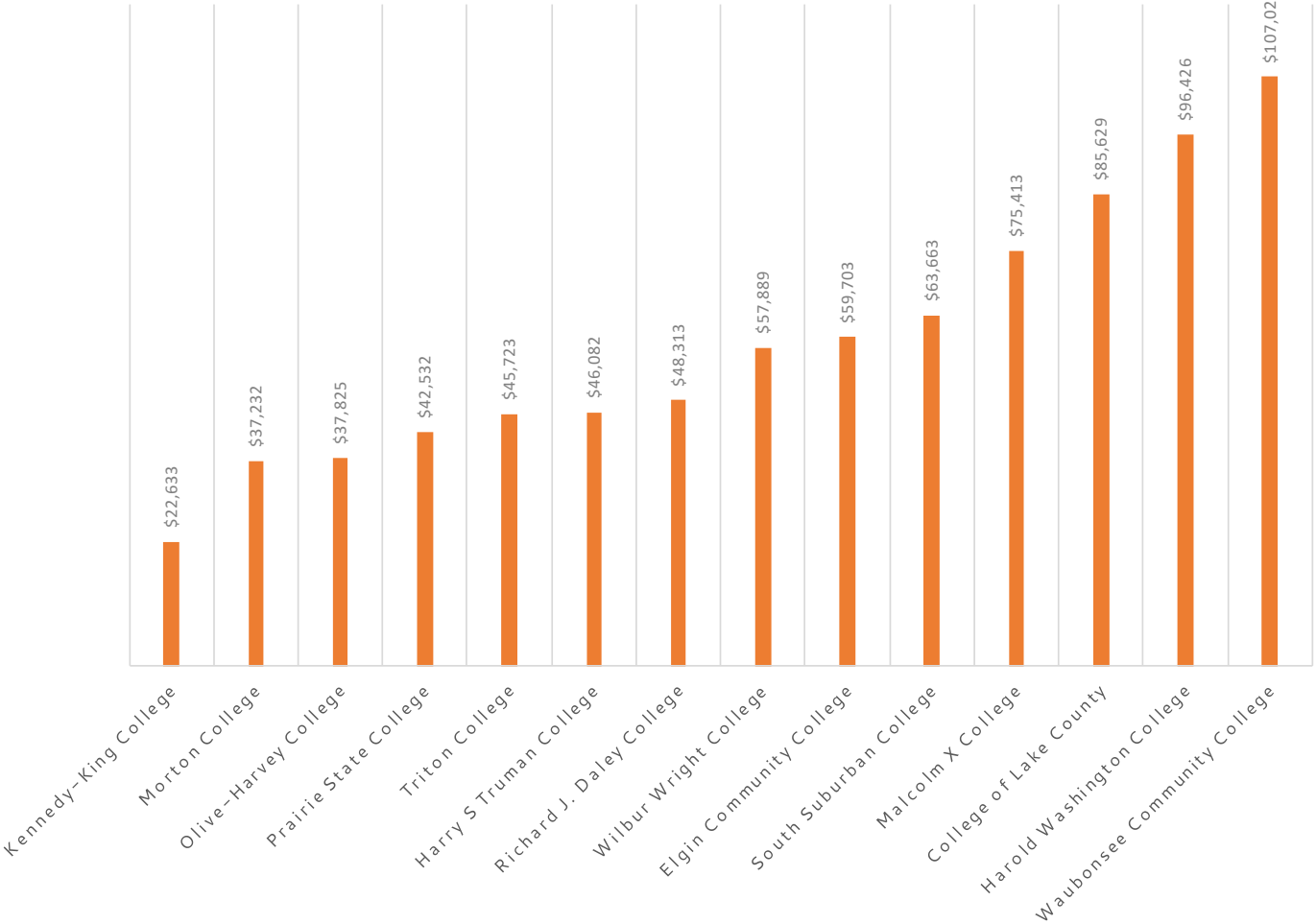Figure 3. Annual Median Household Income in Illinois Communities Served by Minority-Serving Community Colleges

Illinois MSCC Profiles Continued

Morton College
Hispanic-Serving Institution

Founded in 1924, Morton College (MC) is the second-oldest community college in Illinois (Morton College, 2017). Originally located at Morton East High School, Morton College initially had 11 teachers and 76 students (Morton College, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, MC enrolled 6,942 students of whom the majority (84%) were Latina/o (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). MC offers a variety of concentrations in an Associate of Applied Science degree along with a host of certificate programs. During the 2015–2016 academic year, most of the certificates awarded by MC were in the areas of business management, marketing, and related support services programs, and child care provider/assistant programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Additionally, MC conferred 122 associate degrees in the areas of biological and physical sciences and 182 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). In 2007, the Hawthorne Works Museum and Heritage Hall opened, honoring MC's history in the community (Morton College, 2017).

Olive-Harvey College, City Colleges of Chicago
Predominantly Black Institution

Founded in 1950, Olive-Harvey College (OHC) began as two colleges, Fenger and Southeast Junior Colleges. In 1970, the two colleges merged and were renamed Olive-Harvey College (OHC) in honor of PFC Milton Lee Olive III and Carmel Bernon Harvey, Jr., two Chicago men who lost their lives in the Vietnam War (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). Located in the Pullman neighborhood, OHC has the largest campus of the City Colleges of Chicago community colleges. In the 2015–2016 academic year, OHC enrolled 7,479 students, the majority of whom were African American (62%) or Latina/o (22%) (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017; Illinois Community College Board, 2017). During the 2015–2016 year, OHC awarded 1,627 certificates in transportation and materials moving programs and almost 300 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities. OHC serves as a hub for transportation, distribution, and logistics programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Prairie State College
Predominantly Black Institution

Founded in 1957 as Bloom Township Junior College, the college was renamed in the late 1960s as Prairie State College (PSC). The first Illinois community college to guarantee the transferability of their courses to other Illinois institutions, PSC serves the Chicago Heights area (Prairie State College, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, PSC enrolled 9,818 students, 56% of whom were African American (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). PSC offers degrees and certificates in over 100 fields of study, along with continuing education courses (Prairie State College, 2017). In 2016, PSC conferred more than 250 certificates in health professions and related programs and over 190 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Richard J. Daley College, City Colleges of Chicago
Hispanic-Serving Institution

Founded in 1960 as William J. Bogan Junior College, Richard J. Daley College (RJDC) is the third-largest community college in the City Colleges of Chicago. In 1970, the college was renamed to Southwest College, and in 1981 it was renamed again as RJDC to honor the passing of former mayor Richard J. Daley (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). RJDC is a Hispanic-serving institution located in the West Lawn neighborhood of Chicago. In the 2015–2016 academic year, RJDC enrolled 14,263 students (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). RJDC serves as a hub for advanced manufacturing programs. In 2016, RJDC awarded over 500 certificates in construction trades programs and approximately 352 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities. RJDC offers advanced manufacturing certificates and degrees in computerized numerical control machining and factory automation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Enrollment and Completion at Illinois MSCCs

In the 2015–2016 academic year, Illinois MSCCs enrolled 32% of the community college students in the state and a high prercentage of the underserved minoritized students (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Specifically, they enrolled 62% of Latina/o students, 55% of African American students, and 44% of Nonresident Alien students enrolled across the state of Illinois (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Table 2 outlines the demographic composition of Illinois MSCCs and Illinois non–MSCCs in the 2015–2016 academic year. Collectively, there were notably higher percentages of Black and Latina/o students enrolled at Illinois MSCCs. In contrast, while 66% of the students enrolled at Illinois non–MSCCs where White, only 24% of those enrolled at Illinois MSCCs were White (Illinois Community College Board, 2017).

Table 2. Demographics of Students Enrolled at Illinois Minority–Serving Community Colleges (MSCCs) and non–MSCCs, 2015–2016 Academic Year

Race / Ethnicity	Illinois MSCCs	Illinois non–MSCCs
African American / Black	22%	9%
American Indian / Native American	<1%	<1%
Asian American	4%	4%
Hispanic / Latino	37%	11%
Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian	<1%	<1%
Nonresident Alien	1%	<1%
White	24%	66%
Other / Unknown	10%	8%

Data source. Illinois Community College Board, 2017

Half or more of students at four Illinois MSCCs received Pell grants for the 2015–2016 academic year, with a range across Illinois MSCCs from 20% to 59% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Table 3 shows the percentage of students at each Illinois MSCC institution who received grants or scholarships, Pell grants, and federal student loans. The highest percentage of students with Pell grants was 59% at Kennedy–King College. The percentage of students receiving grants or scholarships at each institution is closely reflective of the percentage receiving Pell grants, typically within a 5% difference. The exception here is South Suburban College, where 50% of the students received Pell grants and 59% received grants or scholarships. South Suburban College also reported that none of their students received federal student loans.

Table 3. Percent of Students Receiving Financial Aid at Minority–Serving Community Colleges in Illinois, 2015–2016 Academic Year

College	Grants or scholarships	Pell grants	Federal student loans
College of Lake County	23%	20%	4%
Elgin Community College	31%	26%	8%
Harold Washington College	52%	51%	28%
Harry S Truman College	25%	24%	13%
Kennedy–King College	59%	59%	37%
Malcolm X College	55%	55%	27%
Morton College	40%	39%	3%
Olive–Harvey College	41%	41%	41%
Prairie State College	52%	47%	21%
Richard J. Daley College	28%	28%	12%
South Suburban College	59%	50%	0%
Triton College	33%	28%	5%
Waubonsee Community College	33%	26%	11%
Wilbur Wright College	37%	37%	19%

Data source. National Center for Education Statistics, 2016

Enrollment patterns across program classifications are substantially varied between Illinois MSCCs and Illinois non–MSCCs. Table 4 shows the percentage of students of each classification type served by each institutional type during the 2015–2016 academic year. While Illinois MSCCs enrolled 32% of the community college students in the state, they served 68% of adult basic education students, 63% of English as a second language students, and only 7% of vocational students (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). This showcases how, in Illinois, MSCCs provide a conduit to postsecondary education for substantial groups of underserved students needing educational and language learning supports in preparation for further education or employment.

Table 4. Enrollment by Program Classification in Illinois Minority–Serving Community Colleges (MSCCs) and non–MSCCs, 2015–2016 Academic Year

Program classification	Illinois MSCCs	Illinois non–MSCCs
Transfer	33%	67%
Vocational	7%	93%
Career and technical	23%	77%
Adult basic education	68%	32%
Adult secondary education	38%	62%
English as a second language	63%	37%
General studies	24%	76%
Total	32%	68%

Data source. Illinois Community College Board, 2017

Despite supporting high numbers of students with their secondary completion, language learning, and developmental coursework, Illinois MSCCs' rates of completion reflect the proportion of the student body enrolled at these institutions. Table 5 shows the distribution of awarded associate degrees, long–term certificates, and short–term certificates at Illinois MSCCs and non–MSCCs. In 2015–2016, Illinois community colleges conferred 35,472 associate degrees, 31% of which were awarded by Illinois MSCCs (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). However, while the overall percentage of credentials at each level, including associate degrees, long–term certificates, and short–term certificates, is reflective of the proportion of students enrolled at Illinois MSCCs, there are variations in the types of associate degrees awarded. Illinois MSCCs awarded 37% of the Associate of Arts degrees, 11% of the Associate of Arts degrees in teaching, and none of the 585 Associate of Arts and Sciences degrees awarded in the state (Illinois Community College Board, 2017).

Table 5. Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Illinois Minority–Serving Community Colleges (MSCCs) and non–MSCCs , 2015–2016 Academic Year

Credential	Illinois MSCCs	Illinois non–MSCCs
Associate degrees	31%	69%
Certificate 1+ year	28%	72%
Certificate < 1 year	32%	68%
Total	31%	70%

Data source. Illinois Community College Board, 2017

Conclusion

Illinois MSCCs provide a critical on–ramp to postsecondary education for nearly a third of all community college students in the state. While primarily urban, these institutions operate under differing contexts and resources. These institutions all serve substantial populations of underserved racially minoritized students, while the needs and experiences of these students vary across the landscape of Illinois. Illinois MSCCs serve students with high levels of financial need, English as a second language learners, and students engaged in adult basic education. While institutions across the country struggle to serve these populations, Illinois MSCCs are meeting their needs, as demonstrated by these colleges showing graduation outcomes comparable to those of Illinois non–MSCCs. This supports the idea that it is essential that research is done that draws out what systemically is different in the practices, policies, and cultures in place at MSCCs that supports the success of underserved racial minorities and other underserved student subgroups.

Illinois MSCC Profiles Continued

South Suburban College
Predominantly Black Institution

Founded in 1927 as Thornton Junior College, South Suburban College (SSC) initially began as an extension of Thornton Township High School (South Suburban College, 2017). In 1969, the institution was renamed to Thornton Community College, followed by its current name in 1988, to reflect the geographic location of the college (South Suburban College, 2017). SSC serves the south suburbs of Chicago, also called Chicago Southland. In the 2015–2016 academic year, SSC enrolled 9,770 students, of whom the majority were African American (58%) or Latina/o (18%) (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). SSC offers a variety of degrees and certificates, while providing adult basic education and other community programs. During the 2015–2016 academic year, SSC conferred more than 130 certificates in the areas of business, management, marketing, and related support services programs and health professions and related programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). SSC also awarded more than 200 associate degrees in the areas of multi/interdisciplinary studies, liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Triton College
Hispanic–Serving Institution

Founded in 1964, Triton College (TC) was named after three high school districts: Elmwood Park, Leyden, and Proviso Township. Located in the western suburbs, TC enrolled 17,832 students during the 2015–2016 academic year (Triton College, 2017). TC serves a diverse student body that is 37% Latina/o, 29% White, and 15% African American (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). TC offers certificates and degrees in over 100 areas of study, provides a real estate academy, and provides concealed carry handgun training (Triton College, 2017). During the 2015–2016 academic year, TC awarded more than 200 certificates in the health professions and related programs field, along with over 600 associate degrees in the fields of multi/interdisciplinary studies, health professions and related programs, liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Triton College is home for the Cernan Earth and Space Center Star Store (Triton College, 2017).

Waubonsee Community College
Hispanic–Serving Institution

Founded in 1966, Waubonsee Community College (WCC) was initially named Fox Valley Community College (Waubonsee Community College, 2017). WCC's current name is the result of a district–wide naming contest and comes from the name of a Pottawatomie Native American chief who resided in the area during the 1800s (Waubonsee Community College, 2017). WCC serves the Sugar Grove area and is a founding member of the Illinois Virtual Campus (Waubonsee Community College, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, WCC enrolled 18,931 students, of whom 47% were White and 37% were Latina/o (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). WCC offers a variety of degrees and certificates, along with career programming. During the 2015–2016 academic year, WCC awarded over 300 certificates in health professions and related programs and over 100 certificates in mechanic and repair technologies programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). WCC also awarded over 500 associate degrees in multi/interdisciplinary studies and 278 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Wilbur Wright College, City Colleges of Chicago
Hispanic–Serving Institution

Established in 1934, Wilbur Wright Junior College, now Wilbur Wright College (Wilbur), was named to honor the death of Wilbur Wright (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). Wilbur is the second–oldest community college in the City Colleges of Chicago system (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In the 2015–2016 academic year, Wilbur enrolled approximately 17,300 students, the majority of whom were Latina/o (59%) (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). Serving the Dunning neighborhood of Chicago, Wilbur serves as a hub for information technology programs. WWC offers information technology associate degrees in networking & technology, web development, and computer science. In 2014, WWC reached a milestone by conferring 1,031 associate degrees (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). This marked the first time in Wilbur's history that more than 1,000 of their students earned an associate degree (City Colleges of Chicago, 2017). In 2016, Wilbur conferred almost 170 certificates in health professions and related programs and 705 associate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

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Heather L. Fox may be reached at hlfox2@illinois.edu.
Chauntee R. Thrill may be reached at thrill2@illinois.edu.

Office of Community College Research and Leadership

University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign
Champaign Office: 51 Gerty Drive, Champaign, IL 61820
Chicago Office: 200 South Wacker Drive, 19th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606
Website: http://occrl.illinois.edu
Email: occrl@illinois.edu
Phone: 217–244–9390

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