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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Human Development and Social Policy, June, 2010 (expected)

School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University

Dissertation: Gaps in the College Enrollment Process: Can High School Programs Reduce Them?

Dissertation committee: Drs. James E. Rosenbaum (chair), David N. Figlio, and James P. Spillane

M.A. in Human Development and Social Policy, 2006

School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University

Thesis: Does College Type Matter for Degree Completion?

M.A. in Economics, Princeton University, 1998

B.A. in Economics and German Literature, Vassar College, 1995

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Nearly all high school seniors plan college, but low-income students enroll at lower rates and in colleges with worse completion rates. While research typically focuses on cost and academic achievement, other barriers are often overlooked, and some may be more easily reduced. Using survey, transcript, and enrollment data from all graduating seniors in Chicago Public Schools and interviews with students and counselors, this dissertation seeks to understand the enrollment process for low-income students and how high schools may promote dependable college pathways. The first study compares college enrollment for students in four programs. While some reforms focus on improving general college plans, this study finds several gaps in the enrollment process and that college actions and specific plans are crucial mediators of successful enrollment. Although three programs are selective, a nonselective program has comparable outcomes. The second study focuses on the nonselective program using a difference-in-differences approach and controls for prior enrollment trends. Besides providing stronger causal inference, this analysis indicates that underprivileged students gain relatively more. Interviews suggest innovative techniques from youth organizations that the program uses to increase students' social capital and address complex information needs. The third study investigates additional dimensions of students' plans that may undermine college success. With national policy deeply committed to improving college outcomes, I hope to contribute to an understanding of various policy approaches, their mediating processes and outcomes.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2009 – 2010 Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
 University Scholar, Northwestern University
 AERA Dissertation Grant (declined)
 AIR Dissertation Grant (declined)
- 2005 – 2010 Institute for Policy Research Graduate Assistant
- 2005 – 2009 Multidisciplinary Program in Education Sciences, Institute for
 Education Sciences Fellowship
- 1995 Phi Beta Kappa Prize at Vassar to the member of the graduating
 class with the highest academic record (valedictorian)
 Agnes Reynolds Jackson Prize at Vassar for excellence in written
 work in economics

PUBLICATIONS

- Stephan, Jennifer L.**, James E. Rosenbaum, and Ann E. Person. 2009. "Stratification in College Entry and Completion." *Social Science Research* 38(3):572-593.
- Stephan, Jennifer L.** and James E. Rosenbaum. 2009. "Permeability and Transparency in the High School-College Transition." In *AERA Handbook on Education Policy Research*, edited by D. Plank, G. Sykes, and B. Schneider. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Spillane, James P., Kathryn Weitz White, and **Jennifer L. Stephan**. 2009. "School Principal Expertise: Putting Expert-Aspiring Principal Differences in Problem Solving Processes to the Test." *Leadership and Policy in Schools* 8:128-151.
- Goble, Lisbeth J., James E. Rosenbaum, and **Jennifer L. Stephan**. 2008. "Do Institutional Attributes Predict Individuals' Degree Success at Two-Year Colleges?" *New Directions in Community College Research* 144:63-72.
- Rosenbaum, James E., Julie Redline, and **Jennifer L. Stephan**. 2007. "Community College: The Unfinished Revolution." *Issues in Science and Technology* 23:49-56.
 (One of four papers selected as a planning document and circulated for the Planning Meeting for Design of Community College Research Area, Gates Foundation, May, 2008)

SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

Stephan, Jennifer L. and James E. Rosenbaum. 2010. "Enabling College for All: From General Dreams to Actual Enrollment." Accepted for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, Denver, CO.

Stephan, Jennifer L. and James E. Rosenbaum. 2009. "Beyond Blaming Students: How School Programs May Reduce Gaps in the College Enrollment Process." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August, San Francisco, CA.

Rosenbaum, James E., Kelly Hallberg, **Jennifer L. Stephan**, Lisbeth J. Goble, and Michelle Naffziger. 2009. "Institutional Assumptions in the College Application Process in High- and Low-SES High Schools." Presented at the Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting, August, San Francisco, CA.

Rosenbaum, James E., Michelle Naffziger, and **Jennifer L. Stephan**. 2009. "Making Plans: Improving College Access from Urban High Schools." Presented at the Institute for Policy Research, May, Evanston, IL.

Stephan, Jennifer L., Lisbeth J. Goble, and James E. Rosenbaum. 2008. "Barriers to College for Low-SES Students." Presented at the Institute of Education Sciences Research Conference, June, Washington, DC.

Stephan, Jennifer L. and James E. Rosenbaum. 2007. "College Type Effects on Degree Completion: A Propensity Score Analysis." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, Chicago, IL.

Person, Ann E., **Jennifer L. Stephan**, and James E. Rosenbaum. 2006. "Testing a 'Commuter' Model of Persistence among Two-year College Students." Presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, November, Anaheim, CA.

Stephan, Jennifer L. and James E. Rosenbaum. 2006. "Do Some Colleges Improve Students' Chances of Completing Degrees? How Propensity Scores Change the Question." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August, Montreal, Canada.

Stephan, Jennifer L. and James E. Rosenbaum. 2006. "Do Community Colleges Hurt Students' Chances of Completing Degrees?" Presented at the Institute for Education Sciences Research Conference, June, Washington, D.C.

Rosenbaum, James E., **Jennifer L. Stephan**, and Ann E. Person. 2006. "Do Some Colleges Improve Students' Chances of Completing Degrees?" Presented at the Institute for Policy Research, February, Evanston, IL.

Rosenbaum, James E. and **Jennifer L. Stephan**. 2005. "College Degree Completion: Institutional Effects and Student Propensity." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August, Philadelphia, PA.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant (Advisor: Dr. James E. Rosenbaum), 2006 - present
High School Transitions Study, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

- Assisted in developing and writing major grant proposals and managing grant activities
- Collaborated in the development of interview protocols
- Conducted interviews with high school students and staff
- Analyzed interviews focusing on issues of college plans, the enrollment process, and counseling
- Analyzed large datasets with student and school records focusing on issues related to counseling and the enrollment process

Graduate Research Assistant (Advisor: Dr. James E. Rosenbaum), 2004 - 2006
College to Careers, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

- Interviewed community college faculty
- Conducted quantitative analysis related to community colleges and degree completion

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Supervisor for Undergraduate Theses and Independent Studies, Northwestern University, 2006 – present

- Taught undergraduate students to clean survey data and conduct statistical analyses
- Supervised undergraduate students in coding of interview data

Teaching Assistant, Regression Analysis of Human Development Research (graduate level class)

School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University, Spring 2006

- Developed instructional material for and taught weekly laboratory section
- Graded weekly student homework
- Advised students in the design and implementation of statistical analyses for final papers

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Analyst, CFI Group, Ann Arbor, MI. 2001 – 2003

- Managed the design, implementation, evaluation, and interpretation of all statistical procedures relating to the measurement of customer and employee satisfaction and the identification of its key drivers
- Applied econometric and psychometric techniques including linear, non-linear, and latent-class regression; factor and cluster analysis; forecasting; and, structural equation modeling (PLS and LISREL)
- Consulted on the development of survey design and instruments

Analyst, R.L. Polk, Southfield, MI. 1998 – 2001

- Designed, executed, and presented research based on a variety of statistical methods including multiple and logistic regression, time series analysis, and survival analysis to identify customer segments and predict purchasing behavior

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Educational Research Association, 2005 - present
American Sociological Association, 2005 - present
Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2006 - present
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, 2006 - present

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Knowledge of Stata, SAS, SPSS, HLM, Amos, Latent GOLD, EViews, Microsoft Office