

Making the Dream a Reality-
Investigating College Access for Minority/Low-Income CPS students
SESP 298
Class Hours: Monday 6-9
Class Location:

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Availability:

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The Issue

Why do historically underrepresented and low income students, specifically those in the Chicago Public School system, have such low college enrollment and graduation rates?

The percentage of tenth-graders in Chicago who hope to obtain a college degree is nearly 80 percent. Yet only 17 percent of students in 2004 actually received one. In addition, 15 percent of students who graduated in 2002 or 2003 will obtain a college degree in six years or less. According to the 2008 National Report Card on Higher Education, 91 percent of high school students from families in the highest income group enroll in college as compared to 52 percent of high school students from families in the lowest income group.

Course Description

This seminar is designed to investigate the disparities of college access particularly for minority and low-income students in the city of Chicago. Seminar participants will research and read contemporary literature that has shaped dialogue concerning this issue over recent years. Students will engage in meaningful discussion with colleagues as well as special guests who are also invested in the issue and finding solutions. Specifically, the seminar will take a deeper look into the college application process in hopes of producing and proposing a project model Northwestern can use to create a partnership with CPS.

Course Prerequisites

There are no specific prerequisites for this course. However, students with an invested interest in the issue will be encouraged to enroll in the seminar.

Proposed Course Readings

College Access: Opportunity or Privilege? Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro
(NY: The College Board, 2006).

Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities. William G.

Bowen, Matthew M. Chingos, and Michael S. McPherson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

From High School to the Future: Making Hard Work Pay Off. Melissa Roderick, Jenny Nagaoka, Vanessa Coca, and Eliza Moeller (Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, April 2009).

A History of American Higher Education. John R. Thelin (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

"A Stronger Nation through Higher Education: How and Why Americans Must Meet a Big Goal for College Attainment." Special Report. (Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation, 2009).

The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society. Sandy Baum and Jennifer Ma. (NY: College Board, 2007).

Course Assignments

- 2 pg. Weekly Reflection on Readings
- 5 pg. Policy Brief
 - Reviewing a current model used to confronting the issue of college access
 - Offering policy recommendations on how to improve the model
- Capstone Group Project: Proposal for NU Model

Course Examinations

- Interview / Shadow Report
 - Students will be required to conduct an interview or shadow a individual who is invested in the issue some way (i.e. an urban college counselor or school leader, a UC Consortium member, etc.). Reports generated from this assignment will serve as the course midterm.
- Capstone Project Final
- Presentation to Center for Student of Involvement

Possible Guest Speakers

Tim King - *CEO, Urban Prep Charter Academies*

Morton Schapiro – *Northwestern University President*

Melissa Roderick - *University of Chicago and the Consortium on Chicago School Research*

Lindsay Peters – *Coordinator, National College Advising Corps; University of Illinois Chapter*

James Rosenbaum - *SESP Professor in Human Development and Social Policy*

Weekly Topics / Readings

Week 1: *Introduction to the Problem*

- Intro to course and problem; description of efforts at NU and models we know about (National College Advising Corps, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Posse, etc)

Week 2: *The Problem at a National Level*

- The National perspective on issue
- Read about NCAC online; chat via phone with NCAC staff

Reading: -The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

-*Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society.* Sandy Baum and Jennifer Ma. (NY: College Board, 2007).

Week 3: The Problem at the State Level

- Gain state perspective of issue
- Read about ISAC online;
- Speak with ISAC staff on phone or have speaker come to class

Reading: "*A Stronger Nation through Higher Education: How and Why Americans Must Meet a Big Goal for College Attainment.*" Special Report. (Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation, 2009).

Week 4: *The Issue in Chicago*

- Gain Chicago perspective of problem;
- Speaker: Melissa Roderick (or fellow author)

Reading: *From High School to the Future: Making Hard Work Pay Off.* Melissa Roderick, Jenny Nagaoka, Vanessa Coca, and Eliza Moeller (Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, April 2009).

Week 5: *The University's Standpoint*

- Investigate higher ed perspective
- Speaker: Tamara Stewart / Laura Robinson – NU Admission Staff
- Discussion on issues about recruiting and college retention of this cohort

Reading: *College Access: Opportunity or Privilege?* Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro (NY: The College Board, 2006).

A History of American Higher Education. John R. Thelin (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Week 6: *Implementing a Model*

- Implementation issues in CPS
- Speaker: Michelle Naffziger

Reading: *Chicago School Policy: Regulating Black and Latino Youth in the global city.* Pauline Lipman, DePaul University, Chicago. 2003.

Week 7: *Finding a Model For NU*

-Students to form work groups to work on proposing a specific model for NU; divide by interest

-Paper outlining focus of group due

-Spend class time working with groups; organizing plan for field research, presentation, and final paper

-Speaker: Stephanie Arias or Rosy Martinez to report on task force

Reading: Compilation NU Daily articles on minority student enrollment, related issues that could effect model

Week 8 and 9: *Research and Preparation*

-Conduct research and visit sites

-Conduct interviews / complete shadows

-Students responsible for generating individual reports on visits and interviews

-Group report and presentation also to be completed

-Create a written record of interviews (transcribe) for support proposals

Week 10: *Presentation Week*

-Present final reports to Center for Student Engagement and other patrons