

## Orientation, Transition, and Retention Annotated Bibliography

By: Adrienne Harmer, [Maggie Murphy](#), Kathryn Wilhite, Stephanie M. Foote

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### **Abstract:**

An annotated bibliography on the current professional literature related to student orientation, transition, and retention in higher education.

**Keywords:** Higher education | Student retention | College transition | College orientation | bibliography

**\*\*\*Note: Full text of article below**

# Orientation, Transition, and Retention Annotated Bibliography

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Transition, and Retention in Higher Education

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Adult Learners	2
Commuter Students	6
Students with Disabilities	8
Distance Students	11
Dual-Enrollment Students	12
English Language Learners	14
First-Generation Students	16
First-Year Seminar & Experience	26
First-Year Students	28
Foster Care Youth	33
Graduate Students	35
Greek Life	40
Honors Students	40
Immigrant/Undocumented Students	42
Learning Communities	41
LGBTQ + Students	45
Low-Income Students	52
Orientation (General)	55
Parent & Family	56
Retention (General)	59
Spirituality and/or Religious Affiliation	64
Spring Admits	65
Student Athletes	66
Students of Color	68
Transfer Students	78
Transition (General)	87
Two-Year College Students	87

## **Adult Learners**

**Cox, E. M., & Ebbers, L. H. (2010). Exploring the persistence of adult women at a Midwest community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34(4), 337-359.**

This study examined factors that influence persistence of adult female community college students. The authors used a phenomenological research method, focusing on how individuals develop meaning through social interaction, to investigate the educational experiences of adult female students at an urban community college in the Midwest. Five participants, all of whom were women 25 years of age or older and enrolled part-time, participated in a series of three semi-structured interviews with the researchers. The authors found several themes in their analysis of factors impacting the participants' decisions to persist, including the influence of friends and family, challenges with balancing obligations, and positive and negative aspects of their learning environments. Additionally, the authors consider the concept of "aspirational capital," derived from Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural capital, as it relates to the women's determination to persist in their studies. Throughout the discussion, the authors include many relevant excerpts from their interviews, which practitioners and researchers interested in adult learners at community colleges will find valuable. The authors found that positive support systems and campus experiences, as well as the participants' inner drives and motivations, greatly influence their decisions to persist. They conclude with a recommendation that community colleges evaluate their services, programming, and resources for adult female students and include students as stakeholders in the decision-making processes about the development of targeted interventions for adult learners.

**Key words:** *Adult learners, college adjustment, friendships, parents and family, two-year institutions*

**Deschacht, N., & Goeman, K. (2015). The effect of blended learning on course persistence and performance of adult learners: A difference-in-differences analysis. *Computers & Education*, 87(2015), 83-89.**

This study assessed the impact of blended learning on the persistence and success of adult learners in an undergraduate business program at a large Belgian university. Because the program introduced a blended or hybrid learning option for adult learners when they previously had only been able to take a traditional on-campus program, the authors were able to compare the exam results of adult learners before and after the introduction of blended learning and use a difference-in-differences research design to estimate the effect blended learning has on adult learners in the program with regard to dropout rates, exam scores, and credit attainment. The results of the study indicate that blended learning has a negative effect on course retention as evidenced by increased dropout rates and a positive effect on student performance as evidenced by higher exam scores and slightly

higher pass rates. However, they caution that the higher exam scores likely are impacted by selectivity effects, as students who persist to take exams may have characteristics that positively correlate with performance. The authors plan to engage in qualitative research among adult learners in the program, such as conducting exit interviews with students who elect to drop out, and evaluate interventions that are assumed to support student learning in blended environments. As blended or hybrid learning course and program offerings may increase to meet the needs of non-traditional students, practitioners and researchers are likely to be interested in the implications of this study and the future research directions it suggests.

**Key words:** *Adult learners, online and blended learning, persistence, retention*

**Gast, A. (2013). Current trends in adult degree programs: How public universities respond to the needs of adult learners. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 140, 17-25.**

This article examines current trends and best practices in degree programs and services for adult learners, with a focus on public universities. The authors argue the needs of adult learners at public institutions are not given the same emphasis as they are at community colleges and for-profit institutions. The authors contextualize these trends within a discussion of factors impacting the growing enrollment of adult students at colleges and universities and the perceived barriers they face in both accessing higher education and completing degree programs. The authors also highlight how policies concerning transfer credit acceptance and prior learning assessments impact adult learners at public universities and make a case for specialized services in support of adult learners in those settings. The conclusion of the article emphasizes the need to track adult student retention and degree completion data, as the authors argue that 77% of institutions were not tracking those data for their adult student populations as of publication. Practitioners at public four-year institutions may be especially interested in this article's focus.

**Key words:** *Adult learners, transfer credit, retention*

**Kim, K. A., Sax, L. J., Lee, J. J., & Hagedorn, L. S. (2010). Redefining nontraditional students: Exploring the self-perceptions of community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34(5), 402-422.**

Using role theory as a conceptual framework, this study is focused on determining which role most non-traditional students most closely identify with: student, employee, or family member. Learning which role is the primary identity for non-traditional students can serve as a launching point for a wider discussion of the limitations of the traditional definition of non-traditional students based on age and as a way to begin redefining our conception of what it means to be non-traditional. The study analyzed data available from the Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students database and conducted the analysis using two

different sets of variables. The most important finding was that using student self-perceptions of primary roles yields a more authentic way to identify non-traditional students. Using these self-perceptions also gives a fuller, more comprehensive, and holistic picture of the ways in which students see themselves as non-traditional. This study gives practitioners a new lens through which to view non-traditional students and a new working definition of what makes a student non-traditional. This enlarged definition can help educators plan services and programming that will reach this wider non-traditional audience, rather than continuing to focus only on the traditional non-traditional age distinctions.

**Key words:** *Adult learners, self-image/concept, two-year institutions*

**Markle, G. (2015). Factors influencing persistence among nontraditional university students. *Adult Education Quarterly*. Advance online publication.**

Citing nontraditional student enrollment and persistence statistics, the author signals the need for further investigation into the causes of poor persistence rates. Drawing on research and theoretical frameworks that examine the roles of students who have work and family responsibilities, the author presents the ideal of the academically committed student versus the reality of a student who is juggling many commitments. The author also reviews the demographic, academic, and situational factors that have been previously explored noting that demographics appear not to play a significant role in persistence for nontraditional students, while academic success and factors like full-time or part-time attendance, employment, and family roles, as well as confidence, have varying impact according to the number of studies conducted previously on the population. An embedded, mixed-method qualitative and quantitative study surveyed 494 nontraditional students at a large public institution in the southeast. The results are analyzed to assess differences between men and women; findings indicated that there was no significant difference in persistence between men and women; however, persistence barriers do differ by gender. Women cited inter-role conflict, the struggle balancing school alongside familial or work responsibilities, as their barrier to persistence while men cited the risk of taking time away from furthering their career as their barrier to persistence. Among men and women, the barrier of being different and feeling as if they do not belong was also cited as a barrier to persistence. Women also shared a lack of understanding from instructors about their family roles and both men and women express that the institution's bureaucracy and culture were not accommodating. Motivation emerges as the best strategy to overcoming barriers; men cite their career goals and women cite their determination to attain a degree for personal reasons. Nontraditional students in this study recommend institutions support this population better by creating more services, more opportunities, and more connections that accommodate their needs, lifestyle, and include them into the culture. It is recommended that practitioners and institutions recognize that female nontraditional students need to be recognized by their traditionally aged student colleagues as a part of the culture

while they want to be acknowledged by instructors as having multiple competing priorities; male nontraditional students need to have their time respected and to feel their investment is leading toward end-goals.

*Key words: Adult learners, self-image/concept, sense of belonging*

**Rollins, L. L. (2014). Futuring for optimum outcomes in higher education: Addressing the needs of today's adult learners. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 367-330.**

Noting technology's increasing influence in higher education, coupled with trends that include the reduction of remedial course requirements and hours required to earn a degree, and citing the rising number of nontraditional and adult learners attending college, the author presents the case for designing classrooms to meet the specific and unique needs of these students. Focusing on the need to make coursework relevant to the lives of students who are nontraditional or adult learners and respecting the life experiences of these students in the development of assignments, the author suggests institutions develop surveys to identify adult learners, understand the unique needs of these students, and to find ways consider how the landscape of higher education can be designed to better serve the population. The author identifies strategies including scenario presentation and the "futuring" tree to prepare for the adult learner population specifically as related to the advising process.

*Key words: Adult learners, advising, assessment, environment, technology*

**Wainwright, E. & Marandet, E. (2010). Parents in higher education: Impacts of university learning on the self and the family. *Educational Review*, 62(4), 449-465.**

The researchers aim to understand how university students who have dependent children can achieve academic success in college. Recognizing that this population is often under-studied and underserved, the researchers' primary aim was to uncover needs and experiences of students who are also parents and with specific interest to differences between males and females. The researchers first identify that a significant motivation for learning is the perceived social mobility earning a degree affords and the desire to either provide that social mobility for one's family or to serve as a positive model of achievement for one's family. In terms of transition, the researchers identify emotionally charged responses regarding significant struggle for students who are also parents in relationship to time management. Students signal challenges in adjusting to their academic life and balancing their work or domestic responsibilities. Alongside barriers, students identify positive achievements in reflection and growth in their own identity; they also highlight their familial support as critical to their success even through the challenges to balance their time. The researchers call for further research to measure both

quantatively and qualitatively how successful students are in the college environment. Further the researchers advocate that barriers to success be examined and removed for these students to have a smoother transition and adjustment period because statistical data for the institution demonstrates that students from this population are not being retained.

**Key words:** *Adult learners, college adjustment, parents and family, self-concept/image*

## **Commuter Students**

**Biddix, J. P. (Ed.). (2015). Understanding and addressing commuter student needs *New Directions for Student Services, 2015(150), 1-107.***

This special issue of *New Directions for Student Services* is an essential read for practitioners who work with commuter student populations in both student and academic affairs. The authors take many different approaches to discussing commuter students in higher education that will help practitioners develop, improve, and assess commuter student programs and services. This includes examinations of theoretical perspectives and frameworks for understanding commuter student needs and experiences, examples for applying theory and research to practice with regard to commuter student engagement and well-being, and recommendations for supporting specific commuter sub-populations, such as students of color and students with disabilities. Additional chapters provide practical suggestions for addressing the unique needs of commuter students, such as developing robust online student services for students who spend limited time on campus and creating an academic advising model that encourages commuters to persist and make progress towards transfer and/or degree completion. Biddix concludes the issue with a chapter on strategies for designing effective assessment projects that focus on commuter students, which practitioners should find especially helpful in the present culture of assessment and evidence-based practice. Taken all together, this special issue provides readers with a holistic view of how institutions can positively impact commuter student success and offers both quick ideas and long-term strategies for supporting with this student population.

**Key words:** *Commuter students, assessment, academic success*

**Brown, J. L. (2015). What can alumni tell us about persistence at commuter institutions? *College Student Journal, 49(3), 405-414.***

The object of Brown's study was to develop specific strategies for increasing persistence rates of undergraduate students within a specific college at a commuter institution. Brown used McTighe's Backwards Design Model (2004), which

involved first setting long-range goals, then creating objectives, and last planning activities to achieve the desired results, in order to determine predictors of success for student persistence at the institution. Informed by Tinto's Interactionist Theory (1975, 1993, 1997), Brown deployed a Freshman Orientation Survey to assess pre-college characteristics of both incoming freshman who declared a major within the college and successful alumni of the college. The survey was divided into ten scales of pre-college characteristics, including Individual Aptitude, College Decision Basis, Family Attributes, and Academic Intentions. Using the pre-college characteristics of the alumni as a baseline, Brown analyzed the data to determine the differences between incoming students and alumni for each scale. Through this comparison he identified potentially positive and negative factors impacting the persistence of incoming students, allowing the college to develop interventions for students predicted to be unsuccessful based on the alumni baseline. One limitation of this study is that it relies on the ability of alumni to accurately report on their own pre-college characteristics after several years have passed.

**Key words:** *Commuter students, assessment, persistence*

**Gianoutsos, D. & Rosser, V. (2014). Is there still a considerable difference? Comparing residential and commuter student profile characteristics at a public, research, commuter university. *College Student Journal*, 48(4), 613-626.**

This article makes the case that to date studies about commuter students have been conducted largely at majority-residential institutions and seeks to address that gap by examining the differences between commute and residential students at one institution of higher education. Following a review of the relevant literature, the authors discussed how they are framing their study through the lens of status attainment theory. The study itself was conducted by collecting data from several institutional databases and was analyzed using descriptive statistics and discriminant function analysis. Results showed statistical significance in three major areas: demographic characteristics, prematriculation characteristics, and the factors that contribute to academic achievement and student success once students are enrolled in college. Findings indicated that aside from select demographic characteristics (primarily ethnicity/race) and amount of financial aid awarded there were few differences that separated residential and commuter students at this particular institution.

**Key words:** *Commuter students, academic success*

## **Disabilities, Students with**



**Asselin, S. B. (2014). Learning and assistive technologies for college transition. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 40*(3), 223-230.**

This article examined the role of learning and assistive technologies for students with disabilities in the transition to college. The authors posited that while transition assessment and planning for students with disabilities often focuses on academic preparation, teaching students about emerging and assistive technologies during that process can help students better understand how their disability may impact them in college and advocate more effectively for accommodations. The authors highlighted many assistive technologies and aspects of accessible information technology that provide students with access to instruction and college services as well as support the cognitive and functional skills necessary for college success. In particular, the authors argued that innovations in accessible technology, such as built-in accessibility features in operating systems, portable software, universally-designed instructional materials, and organizational tools such as calendars and contact lists, have greatly reduced the need for assistive technology accommodations. In turn, this created a more inclusive and accessible experience for many students with disabilities.

**Key words:** *Students with disabilities, environment, accessibility*

**Connor, D. J. (2012). Actively navigating the transition into college: Narratives of students with learning disabilities. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 25*(8), 1005-1036.**

This study focused on how students with learning disabilities navigate the academic, social, and personal/emotional aspects of their college transition. Specifically, the authors were interested in identifying student actions that contributed to their academic success, investigating student thinking about their identities as students with learning disabilities, and examining the ways in which students with learning disabilities respond to the social demands of college. Using narrative inquiry and disability study as mutually-supportive theoretical frameworks, the authors conducted qualitative interviews with three self-identified students with learning disabilities at a large urban university in the northeastern United States to determine the students' experiences with their first year of college. Each student was interviewed three times over the course of three months. Data from the interviews are analyzed in a "student narrative" section of the paper, in which each participant's narrative is presented separately. The authors made several recommendations for how practitioners and student and academic affairs can help students with learning disabilities navigate their first year of college, including developing peer mentorship programs, self-advocacy groups, and forums, panels, and lectures featuring students and/or guest speakers with learning disabilities.

**Key words:** *Students with disabilities, college adjustment: relationships, academic success*

**Gelbar, N. W., Smith, I., & Reichow, B. (2014). Systematic review of articles describing experience and supports of individuals with autism enrolled in college and university programs. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(10), 2593-2601.**

This article aimed to provide readers with a comprehensive review of the literature on college students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) published since 1999. The authors found just 20 peer-reviewed articles on this topic, consisting of two experimental studies and 18 case studies. They argued this indicates a scarcity of research that limits researchers' and practitioners' understanding of how to create effective programmatic interventions for college students with ASD. The authors concluded that the case studies in particular indicate the presence of anxiety, loneliness, and depression among students with ASD and a need for more effective academic and non-academic supports. The article includes a table diagramming each article's contents, which can help researchers and practitioners review the articles in this body of literature that specifically interest them. As the authors stated, an increasing prevalence in the diagnosis rates for higher-functioning individuals with ASD, colleges and universities are likely to see increased enrollments by students in this sub-population. Without more research, practitioners may not have enough information to develop effective programs and support services for these students.

**Key words:** *Students with disabilities, academic support*

**Oertle, K. M., & Bragg, D. D. (2014). Transitioning students with disabilities: Community college policies and practices. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 25(1), 59-67.**

This paper presents a literature review of scholarship relating to community college transition policy for students with disabilities. The authors' goal for the literature review was to provide a basis for an expanded conceptual model that also builds on the previous work of Garrison-Wade and Lehmann (2007, 2009). The conceptual model, Transition to Community College (TtCC), can be used by practitioners to guide development and assessment of disability policies, practices, and programs that support the transition to college for students with disabilities. Features of the model include coordination among P-16 educational settings to prepare students for transition to community college, collaboration between disability support personnel and classroom faculty, and the establishment of peer-support networks for students with disabilities. The authors made recommendations for both secondary education settings and postsecondary education settings, with a specific focus on community colleges, where students

with disabilities are enrolling at increasing rates as compared to four-year institutions. These recommendations include using a person-centered access and accommodation process and implementing universally designed instruction.

**Key words:** *Students with disabilities, college adjustment, community college*

**Trevisan, D., & Birmingham, E. (2015). Examining the relationship between autistic traits and college adjustment. *Autism*. Advance online publication.**

This study examined characteristics associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as they relate to certain aspects of college adjustment in a sample of neurotypical college students. The authors analyzed data collected from a sample of 134 undergraduates at Simon Fraser University, none of whom self-identified as having ASD or an immediate family member with ASD, who took both the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) and the Broad Autism Phenotype Questionnaire (BAPQ; Hurley et al., 2007). The characteristics associated with the Broad Autism Phenotype (BAP) included in the study are pragmatic language difficulties, aloof personality, and rigid personality. 18 students in the sample met the criteria for possessing the BAP by meeting cut-off scores in two of the three characteristics, with the remaining 116 making up the non-BAP comparison group. Students with the BAP scored significantly lower on academic and social adjustment to college and marginally lower on personal-emotional adjustment to college as indicated by their responses to the SACQ. The authors made suggestions for how each BAP characteristic relates to college adjustment, such as pragmatic language difficulties impeding social and academic adjustment because of the way the associated communication difficulties might impact formation and maintenance of relationships with peers inside and outside of the classroom.

**Key words:** *Students with disabilities, college adjustment*

**Walpole, M., & Chaskes, J. (2011). Advising new students with disabilities: Challenges and opportunities. *The Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 11(1), 37-48.**

The authors began this article with articulation of the additional challenges new students with a disability (SWD) encounter during their transition as well as general exploration of the concept of disability. In reviewing general topics of transition, the authors explored the transition to self-advocacy and the evaluation of the need for advocacy, all alongside traditional college transition. Longitudinal quantitative data were analyzed over a period of six years; qualitative interviews were conducted with 18 students. The quantitative analysis examined the frequency in which SWD report meeting interacting with advisors and faculty and found that there were no significant differences between this population and their non-SWD peers. The data from the quantitative analysis indicated that SWD reported significantly less attainment of a degree or retention toward degree attainment than their non-SWD peers. The researchers found that self-advocacy

was closely related to how much and to whom SWD choose to disclose their disability and the nuance behind that choice. Additionally, in their interviews the authors found a theme of transitioning to advocacy for oneself from the advocacy a parent may have played in the past and the relationship to self-confidence in that transition. The other emergent themes were related to faculty response to self-advocacy, which was positive overall, and navigating the bureaucracy of college and the unexpected challenges that bureaucracy can present. Ultimately the authors advocated that institutions work to normalize disabilities as a component of diverse campuses and that these conversations occur early during orientation or other on-boarding experiences. Additional recommendations included orientation sessions designed for SWD or other services to help prepare students for self-advocacy and college bureaucracy.

*Key words: Students with disabilities, college adjustment*

## **Distance Learners**

**Chen, P.S. D., Lambert, A. D. & Guidry, K. R. (2010). Engaging online learners: The impact of Web based learning technology on college student engagement. *Computers & Education, 54*(4), 1222–1232.**

The researchers investigated the impact of online learning on student engagement and educational achievement. Of particular interest is their research into whether the relative amount of technology used in an online course has a significant relationship to self-reported levels of learning and engagement. The study was conducted using aggregate data from the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The data were examined using multiple regression analysis of four of the five NSSE benchmarks (excluding “enriching educational experiences”) as dependent variables. Findings indicated that the use of learning technologies within online courses has a positive and strong relationship to deep learning and educational gains and that course-related technology is important to student engagement. This study is of somewhat limited value in that the findings are dated and the study does not explicate which specific technologies increase student engagement or impact student learning.

*Key words: Online and blended learning, engagement*

**Dumais, S. A., Rizzuto, T. E., Cleary, J., & Dowden, L. (2013). Stressors and supports for adult online learners: Comparing first- and continuing-generation college students. *American Journal of Distance Education, 27*(2), 100-110.**

This article is an examination of the different experiences of first-generation and continuing-generation adult online learners. The authors began with a review of the literature on first- and continuing-generation students in general, online

education in general, and availability of support services for online learners. They then described the purpose of their study, which was to explore differing motivations of first- and continuing-generation adult online learners, their approaches to using institutional support systems, and similarities and differences between these two groups in terms of barriers to student success. The authors used data from the Center for Adult Learning in Louisiana to identify study participants. The study itself used a mixed-method approach, employing both web-based surveys and follow-up telephone interviews with select participants. Results of the study indicated that there are distinct differences between first- and continuing-generation adult online learners, for example first-generation students are more likely to say their primary motivation for attending school is for personal fulfillment, as opposed to the continuing-generation students who reported that employment and financial considerations were their primary motivations. The study also found that first-generation students were more likely to avail themselves of institutional support services and particularly to valuing the relationships with their advisors. Both groups of students reported that the biggest barrier to success was the need to balance work and school responsibilities.

*Key words: First generation students, relationships, adult learners, online and blended learning*

**Shea, P., & Bidjerano, T. (2014). Does online learning impede degree completion? A national study of community college students. *Computers & Education, 75*(2014), 103-111.**

Using the work of Tinto (1975, 1998), Bean & Metzner (1985), and particularly Falcone (2011), the authors sought to discover whether community college students who participate in online classes are retained at higher rates than those who do not. The study was conducted using data from Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. In contrast to earlier studies and to the authors' own expectations, analysis of the data set revealed that students who participated in online courses obtained associates degrees at higher rates than students who did not participate in any online courses. These findings indicated that community college educators should re-dedicate their efforts and energies into developing high quality online classes as the evidence shows that online learning has a significant impact on degree completion.

*Key words: Retention, technology, community college*

## **Dual Enrollment Students**

**Bragg, D. D., & Taylor, J. L. (2014). Toward college and career readiness: How different models produce similar short-term outcomes. *American Behavioral Scientist, 58*(8), 994-1017.**

This study analyzed positive short-term student outcomes in math and English associated with two community college sites, Prairie College and River College, participating in Illinois' College and Career Readiness (CCR) pilot initiative. This goal of this initiative was for high school and community college partners to develop programmatic academic interventions for high school students to be able to transition to college-level math and English without remediation. The authors used backwards mapping to evaluate the sites' respective programmatic models, taking a mixed-methods approach combining analysis of quantitative data captured from a student information system with semi-structured interviews with administrators, faculty, and support personnel, focus groups with students, and classroom observations. Conley's (2010) four dimensions of college and career readiness guide the authors' analysis of differences in the sites' CCR programs, including their approaches to academic interventions, curriculum alignment, giving students the "college feel," and addressing holistic readiness beyond cognitive development and student supports. The authors concluded that while their results do not explain program impact, they highlight program elements that may benefit students and impact their college-transition readiness and raise questions for future empirical research.

**Key words:** *Assessment, academic, community college*

**Kim, J. (2014). Relationship of tech prep and dual credit to college readiness and retention. *College Student Journal*, 48(3), 337-447.**

The author of the article argued that by analyzing the empirical data on tech prep and dual enrollment programs one can better understand the effect of high school college preparation education programs on the transition of students into community colleges. Astin's Input-Environment-Output model served as a conceptual framework, and the study was conducted using data from the Community College & Beyond dataset, in particular student record data on previous participation in either dual enrollment or tech prep and placement in developmental courses upon enrollment in college. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine whether participation in a secondary education program predicted the likelihood of enrollment in a developmental course. Data analysis revealed that students who participated in dual enrollment were less likely than their tech prep counterparts to need developmental courses in college and were particularly less likely to need development math. These findings indicated that high school educators might wish to include more dual enrollment courses into their tech prep programs.

**Key words:** *Academic preparation, community college*

**Taylor, J. L. (2015). Accelerating pathways to college the (in)equitable effects of community college dual credit. *Community College Review, 43(4)*, 355-379.**

Citing an increase in institutions and students engaging in the dual enrollment model, the author examined the effect of dual credit in community colleges on college completion as well as the differential effects for students identified as low socioeconomic status and for students of color. The author identified historical inequities and previous research for dually enrolled students and presents Perna and Thomas' Conceptual Model of Student Success and Rawl's Theory of Justice as conceptual frameworks for viewing the research. Distinguishing, through policy, students who are dually enrolled versus participating at their high school in dual credit programs, the researcher demonstrates 26 individual variables that will assign the propensity score. Using enrollment data to examine the effect of the treatment of dual credit the researcher determined that those who participated in dual credit programming academically outperformed their peers who did not participate in dual credit programming. This finding holds true for students in the populations identified in the research question: students of color and students from low socioeconomic status, however, the effect is smaller than the average effect size. Additionally, the author highlighted that correlation in this study does not necessarily mean causation. As a result of the findings and comparisons to similar research projects, the author suggested that state policies don't equally affect students and from the standpoint of Rawls' Theory of Justice, dual credit/enrollment programs should be evaluated and designed to offer significant impact on those who are most marginalized in society. The author encouraged growth in programs that could better support underserved students to dismantle educational inequity.

*Key words: Students of color, community college*

## **English Language Learners**

**Janis, T. (2013). The community college: Bridge or roadblock to higher education for US adult immigrant English-language learners? *Research in Comparative and International Education, 8(2)*, 149-165.**

The author highlighted the increasing reliance from a number of populations on community college as an avenue to begin or complete their higher education and notes that for older, adult immigrant ESL students, community college is an often chosen path. The research sought to understand how this population was served by the environment citing discouraging retention, progression, and graduation and GPA data as cause for concern along with a lack of research on the population. The author attempted to learn more about the population and the identities within it as well as in what ways community college supports or inhibits these students' success. Turning to Becker's cultural capital as related to student identity and

Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the author asserted the important role the community college environment plays on the student identity of adult immigrant students. In reviewing the literature, social belonging was found to be critical to whether students persist in their coursework and those students who are able to identify connections between their lived experiences and the concepts in their courses will be more likely to persist. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted among six students and three faculty. Themes among the students are similar to other studies of older students reflecting struggles with age, balancing familial priorities, and difficulty finding social connectedness with other students in addition to a lack of college knowledge. Themes from the faculty included the recognition that each student has specific needs and that learning in English is a driving factor of enrollment for these students. The author asserted suggestions including the need for community colleges to play a more intentional role as guide within the environment and attempts to increase sense of belonging and understanding within the environment.

*Key words:* Sense of belonging, international students, community college

**Kanno, Y., & Cromley, J. G. (2013). English language learners' access to and attainment in postsecondary education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(1), 89-121.**

Citing the growing number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the education system and the lack of research about successful degree attainment at the post-secondary level, the researchers explored the factors, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, for ELLs access to post-secondary education and completion of a degree. A review of trends and research presented justification for the research questions which explored patterns of access and attainment as they differ from monolingual English speaker and the impact of linguistic background as a predictor as compared to other documented factors including socioeconomic status, high school preparation, and race or ethnicity. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction was offered as a theoretical foundation for the 12-year longitudinal study. The analytical sample consisted of 10,300 students from 1,052 schools who participated in five waves of interviews between 1988 and 2000. The students are divided into three linguistic categories: English-monolingual students (EMs), English-proficient linguistic-minority students (EPs), and English language learners (ELLs). Variables included access to and attainment in post-secondary education which include a bachelor's institution/degree or higher, a vocational program/certificate, a community college/associate's degree, and high school completion. Results indicated that the patterns for access and attainment for EMs at bachelor's institutions is significantly higher, for EPs at vocational and community colleges is significantly higher, and for ELLs to neither attend nor complete was significantly higher. When compared against the other potential factors, ELL status was less of a predictor than demographics and family dynamics indicating that the largest barriers to access and attainment were not language but rather conditions for those



who are from families that have transitioned or are transitioning to the United States.

**Key words:** *Access to higher education*

## **First-Generation Students**

**Aspelmeier, J. E., Love, M. M., McGill, L. A., Elliott, A. N., & Pierce, T. W. (2012). Self-esteem, locus of control, college adjustment, and GPA among first- and continuing-generation students: A moderator model of generational status. *Research in Higher Education, 53*(7), 755-781.**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between college students' generational statuses, self-esteem, locus of control, college adjustment, and GPA. In order to investigate this relationship, a sample of 322 undergraduate students were surveyed using a combination of online instruments, including a demographic questionnaire, the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, the Lefcourt et al. (1979) Multi-dimensional-Multi-attributational Causality Scale, and the Baker and Siryck (1984) Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. The results suggested that generational status significantly moderates the relationship between psychological factors and academic outcomes. Furthermore, first-generation status may act as a sensitizing factor that amplifies both the positive and negative effects of locus of control. However, first-generation status was found to be a risk factor with regard to self-esteem, only exacerbating its negative effects. The authors positioned their findings as reflecting motivational differences between first-generation students and continuing-generation students. Additionally, the authors argued that practitioners should consider creating interventions for first-generation students that focus on personal and psychological factors, such as self-esteem, attributional style, and academic-self efficacy, in addition to informational support and academic remediation.

**Key words:** *First generation students, college adjustment, self-image*

**Atherton, M. C. (2014). Academic preparedness of first-generation college students: Different perspectives. *Journal of College Student Development, 55*(8), 824-829.**

This research study investigated whether first-generation status influences both objective measures and self-assessments of academic preparedness. The data were collected over a ten-year period from students at a public, 4-year university in Southern California who participated in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program survey. Logistical regression analyses were conducted on the relationship between generational status and both objective and subjective measures of

academic preparedness. The analyses found that continuing-generation students were significantly more likely to have higher levels of objective academic preparedness, yet there was no difference found between first-generation status and self-reported ratings of academic ability. The author cited Vargas (2004) in arguing that first-generation students have difficulty in making a connection between academic preparation in high school and academic success outcomes in college, which can lead to feelings of frustration and negative retention. The article concluded with recommendations for ways practitioners can address the disparity, including pre-collegiate and summer bridge programs that feature faculty- and peer-mentoring and first-year programs that provide academic support resources and address first-generation student transition.

**Key words:** *First generation students, academic preparation*

**Davis, J. (2010). *The first-generation student experience: Implications for campus practice, and strategies for improving persistence and success.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.**

This monograph serves as a primer on the first-generation student experience for practitioners in academic affairs, student affairs, and administration. Davis argued that while the success of first-generation students is a stated priority for many colleges and universities, these institutions have no agreed-upon definition for what constitutes a first-generation student. These lead to difficulties in both counting first-year students and developing targeted interventions to support them. While Davis's discussion of the unique behaviors and internal psychology of first-generation students will help practitioners understand why first-generation students need to be treated as a unique sub-population, the highlight of this work is a collection of first-person narratives from first-generation students, followed by narrative analyses that examines the major themes and issues raised by the narratives.

**Key words:** *First generation students, persistence, academic performance*

**Ecklund, K. (2013). *First-generation social and ethnic minority students in Christian universities: Student recommendations for successful support of diverse students.* *Christian Higher Education*, 12(3), 159-180.**

The goal of this study was to provide recommendations for practitioners at Christian colleges and universities with regard to supporting first-generation students. Ecklund argued that Christian universities are in the position to create better experiences and interventions for first-generation students than they currently offer. Following a review of the literature on first-generation students, most of which focused on students at secular institutions, the author shared her findings from observing structured dialogues between first-generation students at a Christian University. These dialogues took the form of both a semester-long

discussion group of 7 students and a two-hour long forum with 56 participants. Practitioners may benefit from considering Ecklund's recommendations, based on these student narratives, for issues such as parent involvement, self-efficacy, stress management, curriculum issues, and mentoring/advising.

**Key words:** *First generation students, students of color, mentoring, self-image, parental involvement*

**Everett, J. B. (2015). Public community colleges: Creating access and opportunities for first-generation college students. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 81(3).**

This short article discussed problems of access first-generation college students face in obtaining college degrees while also positioning public community colleges as the institutions that provide first-generation students with the best opportunities for access and success. Everett structured this discussion with Heller's (2001) five categories of access (financial accessibility; geographic accessibility; programmatic accessibility; academic accessibility; and cultural/social/physical accessibility) as they relate to first-generation students. While Everett touched on challenges that community colleges face with low retention, transfer, and graduation rates and the impact this has on first-generation students, these issues are not discussed in depth.

**Key words:** *First generation students, access to higher education, community college*

**Garcia, V. (2010). First-generation college students: How co-curricular involvement can assist with success. *The Vermont Connection*, 31(2010), 46-52.**

In this short article, Garcia introduced some of the characteristics and challenges that first-generation students experience and uses Astin's (1984) student involvement theory and Huang and Chang's (2004) research on co-curricular student involvement and academic success to discuss positive correlations between involvement, academic attainment, and persistence for first-generation students. In particular, Garcia highlighted studies by Pascarella et.al (2004), and Inkelas (2006) focusing on first-generation students and co-curricular involvement, including the impact involvement may have on critical thinking, sense of control, and self-confidence. The article concluded with a call for more research on how involvement affects first-generation students attending different type of institutions, such as four-year vs. two-year institutions.

**Key words:** *First generation students, co-curricular involvement, academic success*

**Gibbons, M. M., & Woodside, M. (2014). Addressing the needs of first-generation college students: Lessons learned from adults from low-education families. *Journal of College Counseling, 17*(1), 21-36.**

This qualitative study adds to the literature about first-generation college students by examining the work and career experiences of first-generation college students after college completion. The authors' goal was to investigate the influence of the participants' parents and families on their career development. Using data collected from previous phenomenological studies they had conducted on the experiences of men and women whose parents lack post-secondary education, the authors identified three common themes from their interviews with participants about their experiences. These themes were the significant role of the participants' fathers in their educational experiences and career choices, their expectations about attending and completing college as a means to a good job, and their expectations for their careers as a source of enjoyment and fulfillment. The authors discussed their findings in the context of their implications for college career counselors and advisors and conclude that the study offers important insights into the career directions of first generation students, such as that students who are in conflict with their fathers may have difficulty making career decisions. In turn, they suggested the new information could be used by college counselors to develop talking points for professional practice involving first-generation students.

**Key words:** *First generation students*

**Grayson, J. P. (2011). Cultural capital and academic achievement of first-generation domestic and international students in Canadian universities. *British Educational Research Journal, 37*(2011), 605–630.**

This paper examined the experiences and outcomes of first-generation students in Canada, a population the author argues has been relatively overlooked by scholars in that country. Using data from a longitudinal survey study of entering domestic and international students at four Canadian universities beginning in 2003 and ending in 2006, the author investigated whether first-generation students have less positive experiences than other students, and if so, whether those experiences have a negative impact on their academic achievement. The research objective was informed by aspects of both the college impact model and cultural reproduction theory. The author analyzed the data for differences in demographic data and student experiences between attendees of the different universities, differences between domestic and international students, differences in academic achievement between first-generation students and other students, and consider the campus experiences of participants over time, with a goal of identifying how campus involvement impacted academic achievement for both first- and continuing-generation students. While the impact of campus involvement on international students was less clear, the author concluded that first-generation domestic college students in Canada are less involved than their peers in campus activities and have relatively low levels of academic achievement, which puts them at a disadvantage as

compared to their peers. While this research is specific to the experiences of students at Canadian universities, it may be of interest to those investigating links between co-curricular involvement and educational outcomes or differences between domestic and international students, as well as those concerned about the experiences of first-generation students more broadly.

**Key words:** *First generation students, international students, academic performance*

**Hawthorne, M. & Young, A. (2010). First-generation transfer students' perceptions: Implications for retention and success. *The Journal of College Orientation and Retention*, 17(2), 29-39.**

In this study, the authors examined the perceptions of first-generation community college students who transferred to a four-year institution. Hawthorne and Young cite Tinto's (1975) student integration model as the basis of their hypothesis that low degree attainment rates for community college transfer students may be impacted by the high percentage of community college students who are first-generation students, as first-generation students tend to be less comfortable in the college environment, less involved on campus, and less satisfied by their college experiences than their peers. A total of 178 undergraduate students from Texas A&M University-Commerce took part in this study, answering a satisfaction survey and demographic questionnaire. The authors found that first-generation students, transfer students, and African-American and Hispanic students all experienced lower levels of satisfaction than second-generation students, non-transfer students, and European-American students, respectively. However, as both first- and second-generation transfer students had low levels of satisfaction with the overall four-year university experience, they concluded that first-generation status is not the only important factor in community college transfer student attrition from four-year institutions. The authors found that first-generation minority transfer students had lower levels of satisfaction than second-generation minority transfer students, which suggested that first-generation status may negatively impact students and minority community college transfer students in particular.

**Key words:** *First generation students, transfer students, students of color, community college*

**Inkelas, K. K., Daver, Z. E., Vogt, K. E., & Leonard, J. B. (2007). Living-learning communities and first-generation college students' academic and social transition to college. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(4), 404-434.**

This paper is a seminal work about the impact of living-learning (L/L) communities on the transition to college. Living-learning communities are defined as residential communities with shared academic focus or other theme. In this study, the authors specifically focused on the role of living/learning communities in the perceived

academic and social transitions of first-generation college students. After analyzing responses from 1,335 first-generation students from 33 four-year institutions who participated in the 2004 National Study of Living-Learning Programs, the authors concluded there is evidence that living-learning communities support positive academic and social transitions for first-generation college students. However, they found that co-curricular involvement and informal peer interactions (as elements of L/Ls) are not as impactful on first-generation students as they have been found to be on other groups in previous studies of L/Ls, which may interest researchers. The authors' recommendations for academic and student affairs practitioners included targeting first-generation students for recruitment to living-learning communities and making accommodations for commuter student participation in L/Ls as many first-generation students live at home. The authors also suggested that future research on the topic should incorporate a longitudinal design.

**Key words:** *First generation students, college adjustment, transition*

**Irlbeck, E., Adams, S., Akers, C., Burris, S., & Jones, S. (2014). First generation college students: Motivations and support systems. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 55(2), 154-166.**

The authors conducted a case study of first-generation college students within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Texas Tech University. They began with a literature review on the challenges unique to first-generation students. The authors used Astin's (1993) I-E-O model to frame their case study, which was conducted using semi-structured interviews in which the authors asked questions designed to elicit information on how participants selected the institution, the extent of participation in co-curricular organizations and activities, the support groups and specific support systems the participants avail themselves of, and the participants reported levels of satisfaction with the institution and the academic program. Findings indicated that students valued parental and high-school agriculture teacher support systems and availed themselves of those supports much more often than they used on on-campus resources. On the other hand, students often reported that their parents' lack of "college knowledge" adversely affected the students' transition into college. The authors suggested that college personnel strengthen their relationships with local high school counterparts in order to provide potential students with more assistance in making a successful transition into college.

**Key words:** *First generation students, relationships, parental involvement*

**Jehangir, R. (2010b). Stories as Knowledge: Bringing the lived experience of first-generation college students into the academy. *Urban Education*, 45, 533-553.**

This article is a philosophical meditation on how the stories we tell about ourselves reflect our constructed realities and lived experiences. The author drew on data collected as part of a larger eight-year longitudinal study of first-generation, low-income students who have participate in a specific Multicultural Voices Learning Community (MVLC) to examine the ways in which first-generation students from low-income families both experience and overcome feelings of isolation and marginalization during the first year of college. The author began by discussing the challenges faced by first-generation low-income students and by providing an overview of the MVLC, a part of the institution's TRIO student support services program. Next, the author described how critical pedagogy and theories of multicultural education serve as the frames through which she analyzes her data sets. These data sets consisted of weekly reflective writings and a final reflective paper collected as part of the first-year seminar attached to the MLVC and a series of semi-structured interviews conducted both at the end of the seminar and three-four years later. The author coded this reflective writing and the interview transcripts for themes related to self-authorship and how these experiences created narratives of isolation and inclusion that persisted throughout the collegiate experience.

**Key words:** *First generation students, relationships*

**Jenkins, S. R., Belanger, A., Connally, M. L., Boals, A., & Durón, K. M. (2013). First-generation undergraduate students' social support, depression, and life satisfaction. *Journal of College Counseling, 16(2), 129-142.***

The researchers were interested in how to improve college wellness and counseling services for first-generation students and in how tailoring these services to the stressors that are unique to this population might increase retention and improve academic performance for these students. This study was designed to compare traumatic stress reactions, use and availability of social support, depressive symptoms, and general life satisfaction of first- and non-first generation students. The researchers hypothesized that first-generation students would report less social support, more symptoms of PTSD and depression, and less general life satisfaction than their peers. Participants in the study were culled from the researchers introductory psychology courses and were asked to complete four online psychometric inventories (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, PTSD Checklist–Specific, Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptoms–Self Report, & Quality of Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction Questionnaire). Responses were analyzed using statistical analysis software. Of the four hypotheses of the researchers, three were supported. First-generation students reported less social support, higher levels of PTSD, and less life satisfaction than non-first generation students. The results also indicated that this was particularly true for first-generation women, who fared worse on every psychometric measure. One of the major recommendations of the researchers was that college counselors begin regularly testing for PTSD, which this study indicates is widely prevalent and the literature

suggests is underreported. A second suggestion was to focus efforts on ameliorating the acculturative stress particularly for first-generation women.

**Key words:** *First generation students, relationships, self-image*

**Marsden, L. M. (2014). The transition to college of first generation freshmen. *InSight: Rivier Academic Journal*, 10(2), 1-7.**

This article presents the results of a literature review designed to explore the research on the transition experience and orientation programming available to first-generation students. The literature review was conducted by searching through several academic databases for relevant original research. Articles were selected for inclusion if they focused on the transition and orientation experience of first-time, first-year, first-generation students. General findings of the review of the literature confirm much of the previous and subsequent research in this field. The literature reviewed indicated that first-year, first-generation students experience at least four forms of transitional stress: social, emotional, academic, and feelings of incongruence (which led to feeling isolated and disconnected from the institution). The author discussed some of these findings in more depth and concludes by calling for more research on these topics and particularly on the orientation programming available for this sub-population.

**Key words:** *First generation students, transition*

**Melendez, M. C., & Melendez, N. B. (2010). The influence of parental attachment on the college adjustment of White, Black, and Latina/Hispanic women: A cross-cultural investigation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51(4), 419-435.**

This study sought to discover how parental/familial attachment affects the adjustment to college of white, black, and Latina women in their first year of study. The article began with a review of the literature on student transition and adjustment and the relationship of these factors to retention. There is a particular focus on previous studies that highlight the combined impact of gender, race/ethnicity, and culture. This was followed by an introduction to the psychological theories of attachment and adolescent development. Finally, the authors looked at the literature examining the impact of adjustment on retention as experienced by different student sub-populations. Based on the literature review, the authors hypothesized that race and gender played a significant role on levels of parental attachment and that considering factors of race and level of parental attachment in conjunction with one another would be the strongest predictor of college adjustment. Surveys were administered women (under the age of 24) in the first year of college and included demographic questions and both the Parental Attachment Questionnaire and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. The survey results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and stepwise multiple regression analysis. Findings indicated that familial attachment could play an even



more pivotal role in adjustment and retention that previously realized, particularly for women of color. Furthermore, the familial situation may (depending on that situation) have strongly positive or negative effects on college adjustment.

**Key words:** *First-generation students, students of color, African-American students, Latino and Latina students*

**Nguyen, A., Hays, B., & Wetstein, M. (2010). Showing incoming students the campus ropes: Predicting student persistence using a logistic regression model. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College, 18(1), 16.***

This study investigated whether participating in an eight-week orientation course increases retention and persistence to the second year for incoming freshmen. The data for the study was obtained from the institutional student enrollment records and analyzed using logistic regression analysis. The analysis revealed that enrollment in the orientation course significantly improved fall-to-fall retention rates for participants by a rate of almost 18% with all other things being equal. The effect was still significant, although less so, for retention and persistence to the third year. Based on these findings, the authors recommended that the orientation course be made mandatory on their campus.

**Key words:** *Persistence*

**Padgett, R. D., Johnson, M. P., & Pascarella, E. T. (2012). First-generation undergraduate students and the impacts of the first year of college: Additional evidence. *Journal of College Student Development, 53(2), 243-266.***

This study was designed to examine the intellectual and personal development of first-generation students and to provide empirical evidence on the predictive nature of parental education across six different measures of cognitive and psychosocial development. The authors began with an examination of the research on the effects of generational status and parental education on student success and achievement. Next the authors discussed several of the theoretical models that support the importance of parental educational attainment on the social and cultural capital that students bring with them to college. This was followed by an extremely detailed examination of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNSLAE) dataset, the inventories and scales, and the data analysis methods that the authors used to conduct their study. Results indicated that first-generation students, particularly those exposed to best practices in student success programming, were not disadvantaged in comparison to their non-first-generation peers in three of the cognitive outcomes (need for cognition, critical thinking, and moral/ethical development). However, first-generation students were significantly disadvantaged

when it comes to the fourth cognitive outcome (positive attitude towards literacy) and both of the psychosocial outcomes (psychological wellbeing and appreciation for diversity). These findings suggested that student success programming may be needed in order to offer additional support for the psychosocial development of first-year, first-generation students.

**Key words:** *First generation students, college adjustment*

**Soria, K. M., Stebleton, M.J. (2012). First-generation students' academic engagement and retention. *Teaching in Higher Education, 17(6), 673-685.***

Assuming that first-generation college students have less social capital than their non-first-generation peers, the study attempted to determine how lower social capital affects student success in terms of persistence to second year and differences in academic engagement. Citing existing research on first-generation students the authors explored the factors that create barriers in transitioning to the college environment. The authors also examined existing research findings indicating poorer academic performance from first-generation college students and the attributions in this research to Bourdieu's social capital framework ultimately surmising that first-generation college students don't inherit this social capital from their parents. The lack of social capital was identified by the authors as debilitating in the academic setting because it made students less likely to ask for help or interact with faculty. A survey administered to 28,237 undergraduate students examined themes including academic engagement, community and civic engagement, global knowledge and skills, and student life and development. Academic engagement was weighed through questions about frequency of in class and out of class interactions and involvement. Logistic regression predicting retention analysis for students persisting to their second year uncovered a significant decrease in the likelihood of returning for a second year among first-generation college students. Further, first-generation students were found to be less academically engaged than their non-first-generation student peers. The authors cited sense of belonging as an important consideration when viewing the data through the social capital lens and recommend that institutions establish "communities of belonging" for first-generation college students. Additionally, the authors suggested that high-impact practices could be of unique and significant benefit to this population. Finally, collaboration across divisions and outreach directly to first-generation students from faculty was encouraged by the authors. Future research was suggested to expand the study beyond the single institution and to explore more about pre-college preparation's role in academic engagement.

**Key words:** *First generation students, engagement, academic performance, retention*

**Stoll, E.B. (2013). First-generation college students: Navigating the worlds of school and home. *The Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 20(2), 5-15.**

In this article, the author reviewed existing research and literature on first-generation students and highlights that success in these studies is defined in relationship to retention, focusing on impediments of student success. The author recognized the attention first-generation students have received in literature and research since the 1980's and acknowledges that many institutions have utilized research to develop programs for first-generation students, focused on campus engagement. The review demonstrated that little existing research, literature or programming examines the home environment and family relationship first-generation students experience, which the author argued are important considering it is an aspect of their family's education that determines their status as a first-generation student. The article advocated for a holistic view of the first-generation student experience that includes their family context due to the nature of the differences in negotiating new relationships with parents as part of the transition to college. One theme that was explored is the feeling of "homelessness" as first-generation students navigate their new roles both at campus and with their family. The author reviewed seminal theories related to student engagement and determines that these theories have contributed to a notion that parent and family relationships have a negative impact on the student transition to college. Internal Resources and Validation Theory were presented as important in considering how to best help first-generation students navigate their transition to college and the author asserts that institutions and practitioners must be willing to learn from first-generation students, listening to their voices when determining their need. The author cited research that points to the need to foster understanding and participation between first-generation students and their families. Further, the author advocated that families be included in the ways achievement is recognized and celebrated. Further research on the delicate balance of home and school life for first-generation students is advocated with specific attention to the ways policies and programs support or detract from first-generation students' needs.

***Key words:*** *First generation students, relationships, parents and family*

## **First-Year Seminars & Experiences**

**Bers, T., Chun, M., Daly, W. T., Harrington, C., Tobolowsky, B. F., & Associates (2015). *Foundations for critical thinking*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.**

Building on the seminal 1995 work by William T. Daly, published by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, Beyond

Critical Thinking: Teaching the Thinking Skills necessary for Academic and Professional Success, the editor presents the continued need for an examination of the teaching of critical thinking skills to students in college coursework. The text is divided into two sections, the first beginning with a modified version of Daly's work and laying the foundations for examining critical thinking in the college setting. Theoretical, developmental elements, pedagogy, and independent thought are explored within the first section. Section two presents eight case studies from public, private, two-year and four-year institutions, examining assessment tools, professional development, seminars and programs designed to infuse critical thinking into the framework, undergraduate research, and graduate internships. The text offers a comprehensive and diverse snapshot of the landscape of critical thinking within courses in higher education and provides demonstrated applications for committing to the outcome of critical thinking performance among college students.

**Key words:** *first-year students, community college, program evaluation*

**Young, D. G., & Hopp, J. M. (2014). 2012-2013 National survey of first-year seminars: Exploring high-impact practices in the first college year (Research Report No. 4). Columbia: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.**

This monograph reported on the triennial National Survey of First-Year Seminars (NSFYS). The survey findings offered insight into the state of first-year seminars nationally including the typology, the strategies, the pedagogies, and the trends. Specific foci of the 2012 version included the role of peer leaders, integration of other high impact practices (HIPs) into the first-year seminar, and explanation from institutions that had no seminar at the time of the survey. The sample was representative of responses from 896 institutions, 804 of which offered a first-year seminar at the time of the survey which is the highest response rate offering at least one seminar in the survey's history. The 896 institutions were disproportionately large, public institutions. One finding is that the majority of first-year seminars were extended orientation followed by academic seminars, then hybrid seminars, with pre-professional and study skills seminars offered least. Some institutions reported that seminars were mandatory while others did not but that majority of institutions report that 90% or more of their first-year students enrolled in a first-year seminar. Reportedly, seminars have increased academic rigor, increased peer leader participation, serve as an anchor for HIPs, and are taught by faculty, part-time instructors, and staff from areas on campus other than academic affairs. It is concluded that the ongoing value of the NSFYS is evident in the landscape of trends and characteristics of seminars nationally that are exposed via the survey.

**Key words:** *first-year, academic performance, peer support*

## **First-Year Students**

**Dalton, J. C., & Crosby, P. C. (2014). The power of personal coaching: Helping first-year students to connect and commit in college. *Journal of College and Character, 15*(2), 59-66.**

This article discusses personal coaching as a relatively new student support service aimed at helping first-year students succeed and persist in college. The authors begin by contextualizing personal coaching within the broader contexts of student engagement and retention initiatives, first-year experience and transition programs, and the evolution of the life coaching movement for business and professional leadership. The authors highlight features of existing college student coaching programs and argue that the proactive role of personal coaches differentiates this service from the other passive supports colleges and universities already provide. The authors also highlight the appeal of personal coaching to students who have limited contact with an institution's physical campus, such as commuters, part-time students, and online-only students, as well as returning veterans and adult learners who may need extra guidance and extra motivation. While the authors argue that personal coaching has the potential to positively impact student success and institutional effectiveness, they also provide a list of critical issues that should be addressed before this support service is widely adopted, such as a small body of evidence-based research and lack of convincing theoretical framework associated with personal coaching. This article provides many points of consideration for practitioners debating whether a personal coaching program will be right for their students and institutions.

**Key words:** *First-year students, academic coaching, engagement, retention, and success*

**Goenner, C. F., Harris, M., & Pauls, K. (2013). Survival of the fittest: What do early behaviors tell us about student outcomes? *Journal of College Student Development, 54*(1), 43-61.**

This study investigates how some behaviors observed during the recruitment process may relate to student success and retention by comparing stop-out behavior of first-year students at a large public university to their pre-enrollment participation in college fairs, campus visits, and welcome weekend activities. In order to do this, the authors followed the enrollment history of first-time, first-year students over three consecutive fall semesters and attempted to control for several factors that might impact their results, such as previous academic ability, socioeconomic background, and state residency status (as it relates to the cost of tuition). The results of the study indicate that students who participated in the pre-enrollment events were less likely to stop out. The authors argue that participation in these events may reveal students' underlying motivation, preparation, and commitment to the institution, which positively correlate with persistence and

success, and that institutions can use student data to improve their understanding of how their early interactions with students may impact outcomes. Additionally, institutions may be able to identify at-risk students and develop targeted interventions by analyzing participation data. While the participants of this study were limited to a single institution, its implications will be of interest to any practitioner or researcher working in the area of student success.

**Key words:** *First-year students, orientation and transition programs*

**Jenkins, G., Lyons, K., Bridgstock, R., & Carr, L. (2012). Like our page: Using Facebook to support first year students in their transition to higher education. A Practice Report. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 3(2), 65-72.**

In this article, the authors discuss the implementation of a Facebook page as a communication channel between program staff, teaching faculty, and cohort of first-year students within the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology. The article is structured with a series of questions and answers that address issues readers might raise about the decision to create a program Facebook page, such as posting content and frequency, risk management concerns, staff workload implications, and student participation activity and impact. Throughout the article, the authors give many specific examples of how the cohort Facebook page is used in their department for administrative communications, academic and social engagement with and between students, and assessment of student learning and satisfaction. The authors also highlight the importance of having the framework of a social media policy to guide and govern interactions with students on a platform such as Facebook. While the popularity of specific social media platforms with college students is always changing, this article introduces key issues for those considering whether an official social media presence may be useful for an institutional or departmental first-year experience program and may also be of interest to those researching social media, online teaching, innovative content delivery methods, and student behavior online.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, first-year students, social media*

**Lane, F. C., Martin, G. L., & Henson, R. K. (2015). A multidimensional comparison of traditional, transfer, and online students' university attachment. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(7), 746-751.**

This study was designed to test the validity of the University Attachment Scale (UAS) to see if the UAS is an appropriate scale to measure engagement and institutional belonging at a four-year public institution with a large transfer population to delineate the differences measured by the UAS between traditional and transfer students in terms of connection to campus. Previously the UAS had only been administered on residential campuses with traditional students so the authors

were interested in how the UAS worked as a measure of attachment on a larger and less traditional student body. The researchers collected UAS surveys from 983 students, a little more of half of which were transfer students (evenly split among first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students). Based on the analysis of the survey data, the authors concluded that the UAS is a valid instrument that can be used to measure the institutional belonging of transfer students, which expands the UAS scope of use. Practitioners interested in measuring the attachment and engagement of their students may find this study of use in determining an appropriate scale or measurement to use on their campuses.

**Key words:** *Transfer students, engagement, sense of belonging*

**Mattanah, J. F., Ayers, J. F., Brand, B. L., Brooks, L. J., Quimby, J. L., & McNary, S. W. (2010). A social support intervention to ease the college transition: Exploring main effects and moderators. *Journal of College Student Development, 51(1), 93-108.***

The researchers hypothesized that a peer-led social support intervention would increase levels of perceived social support and interaction, reduce loneliness, and improve process of college adjustment. The study described in this article was conducted over a two-year period at a large, four-year commuter institution and participants were all first-time, first-year students. Participants were engaged in a 9-week intervention during which groups of students met weekly with peer-facilitators to discuss issues related to social adjustment to college. The article includes a detailed report of the demographic characteristics of the participants and of the instruments, procedures, and methods of analysis used by the researchers. The researchers found that their hypothesis was born out, particularly in the reduction of loneliness. Practitioners will find this study useful if they are interested in or working to add peer-support programming to existing first-year initiatives.

**Key words:** *First-year students, peer support, sense of belonging*

**Stephens, C. M., & Beatty, C. C. (2015). Leading and Thriving: How Leadership Education Can Improve First-Year Student Success. *Journal of Leadership Education, 14(3), 119.***

This article is an examination of two theoretical models (Schreiner's Thriving Model and Social Change Model) in order to see where these two models intersect, specifically delving into whether using Social Change theory to improve student self-advocacy and the development of leadership skills has a positive impact on student thriving. The authors break down each theory into its component parts and carefully lay out the areas where they see the theories intersecting. Furthermore, the authors include a lengthy section describing what these intersections look like in terms of student learning and provide many examples of how these connections can be intentionally strengthened and implemented in leadership development

courses. A robust section detailing the implications of this research for practitioners, including a series of recommendations for best practices, and the authors conclude by suggesting that future empirical research can and should be conducted to test the validity of this theoretical model.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, first-year students, development theory, thriving*

**Stephenson-Abetz, J., & Holman, A. (2012). Home is where the heart is: Facebook and the negotiation of “old” and “new” during the transition to college. *Western Journal of Communication*, 76(2), 175-193.**

Acknowledging the usage patterns of college students in “emerging adulthood” (ages 18-25), the authors consider identity and Relational Dialectics theory to account for meaning-making, negotiation of old and new identities and relationships, and to allow for the nuances that emerge during the transition to college. Using an interpretive research method of open-ended interviews 30 students meeting requirements of age, enrollment, and Facebook account ownership are interviewed. Results indicated tension for students as they experienced new identity development and new relationships during their transition and balancing those introductions to self and friendships with their old identities and their old relationships proved to require maintenance. The researchers identify that a need to connect with old and new friends creates a process of “Preservation and (Re)invention”. Participants described how Facebook's social media platform provided a platform for personal preservation; participants also identified Facebook as a tool to reinvent themselves and demonstrate their new self to new friends. Additionally, participants express that social media is a place to perform their identity in a unique way. The most tension participants disclosed was in the consideration of which information should be revealed and which information should be concealed on Facebook and that this tension was grounded in the conflict between old and new. The researchers found that Facebook provides value for the student in transition as it helps them to maintain connections and form new connections even through the contradictory struggles that the processes of meaning-making and identity development.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, first-year students, identity development, relationships, social media*

**Turner, P. (2016). Supporting freshman males during their first-year of college. *College Student Journal*, 50(1), 86-94.**

This study acknowledges that the identity issues facing men in college may directly impact the high rate of dropouts, and therefore, the researcher sought to examine the first-year of college to understand strategies for supporting college men. Relying on Tinto's Integration model as a framework the qualitative study asked participants to reflect on engagement and support during their first year. Sixteen



semi-structured interviews are conducted with students who attended a large Southern institution. Participants included students who persisted to their second year, as well as several students who dropped out at the end of their first year. Themes that emerged in the study included: social connections, study skills, and the interactions between faculty and students. In the study, social relationships and study skills were factors that led to the choice to persist or not; while not as heavily weighted, interactions with instructors is noted by a majority of the participants as a positive influence toward persistence. The authors recognize that the study is limited because the pool of participants is limited to a specific institution with its own culture but assert that implications are valuable from the study recommending that institutions work to engage first-year male students with their peers and for instructors to form relationships with first-year male students, specifically aiding in the adjustment to college academic rigor. Further implications are connected specifically to supporting males in their academic transition providing study support but also support in the form of advising and early interventions.

**Key words:** *College transition, first-year students, peer support, student-faculty/staff interaction, study skills*

**Vaccaro, A., Adams, S. K., Kisler, T. S., and Newman, B. M. (2015). The use of social media for navigating the transitions into and through the first year of college. *Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*, 27(2), 29-48.**

The authors share their findings from two constructionist qualitative studies that explored how students use social media to build connections to campus and to ease their transition into college. The authors include a review of the literature on both the impact(s) of social media and on how first-year students experience the transition to higher education. The authors describe the methodology and data analysis of both studies. Study A was predicated on grounded theory research and involved coding semi-structured interviews. Study B was an exploratory qualitative study in which data was collected from student focus groups. Findings indicate that students do in fact use social media as tools of transition before they arrive on campus and as a way to establish connections to campus and classmates during the first semester of college. Of particular interest is the finding that while students appreciate being kept aware of college events and resources via social media, they vastly prefer not to engage with student and academic affairs professionals as social contacts. Practitioners can use this research to inform their decisions as to the appropriate frequency, volume, and content of material they choose to post to institutional or departmental social media accounts.

**Key words:** *First-year students, college adjustment, social media*

**Wojcieszek, J., Theaker, L., Ratcliff, M., MacPherson, L., & Boyd, J. (2014). Enhancing the first year student experience through academic and professional staff collegiality. A practice report. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 5(1), 143-151.**

This study examined the development and effectiveness of a university-wide First-Year Advisor Network (FYAN). The FYAN bridges advisors embedded in schools across the university, and the new FYAN acknowledged that first-year advisors play both an academic and an extra-curricular role in supporting first-year students. Using surveys the researchers review staff perspectives on the success of the network as it relates to supporting first-year transition. The first round of surveys indicates that increased communication and enhanced involvement in institutional culture are positive outcomes. The second round of surveys indicates a small increase in the FYAN's ability to increase awareness of first-year student needs but subsequent surveys demonstrate continued awareness university-wide for best practices to support first-year students. Significantly, staff and faculty point to first-year advisors as an emergent resource to refer first-year student to or for themselves as staff and faculty.

**Key words:** *Advising, campus culture, collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs, first-year students*

## **Foster Care Youth**

**Day, A., Dworsky, A., Fogarty, K. & Damashek, A. (2011). An examination of post-secondary retention and graduation among foster care youth enrolled in a four-year university. *Children & Youth Services review*, 33(11), 2335-2342.**

The study examined whether students who have formerly been in foster care are more likely to drop out of college than low income, first-generation students who had not been in foster care. The authors' aim was to compare outcomes of former foster-care college students to students from a similar socioeconomic background rather than to the general student population, which they argue is a new contribution to the literature. The study used administrative data from the Michigan State University student information systems database to compare outcomes between 444 undergraduates who self-identified as former "wards of the Court" and 378 low-income, first-generation students who had not been in foster care. Findings suggested that former foster care students are significantly more likely to drop out of college than non-foster care students, both by the end of the first year and before degree completion. The authors discussed several implications of the study for policy and practice relating to former foster care youth in post-secondary education, recommending that federal and state governments fund campus support initiatives

for former foster-care students and priority status for federal work study placements be given to this student population.

**Key words:** *first-generation, policy, foster-care*

**Salazar, A.M. (2012). Supporting college success in foster care alumni: Salient factors related to postsecondary retention. *Child Welfare, 91(5), 139-167.***

This study investigated the factors that differentiate foster care alumni who drop out of college from those who complete college. The author examined the experiences of both groups through a survey of 329 participants who had received college scholarships aimed at youths in foster care between 2001 and 2009. Salazar highlighted findings from the study that suggest that having sufficient support in some facets of independent living, such as support for housing and transportation needs, was an indicator of increased college retention, while indicating that help with finding stable housing was not needed was actually associated with college attrition. The goal of this research was to help social workers and policy makers identify individuals in foster care or foster care alumni who will most benefit from independent living programs, college-based support programs, and other sources of support for postsecondary education, as well as help ILP providers and colleges with limited funding make informed decisions about programming.

**Key words:** *retention, policy, programming, foster-care*

**Unrau, Y.A. (2011). From foster care to college: The Seita scholars program at western Michigan university. *Reclaiming Children & Youth, 20(2), 17-20.***

This article described the Seita Scholars Program at Western Michigan University as an example of a campus support program for former foster-care youth. The program offers a tuition scholarship that minimizes the need for student loans when combined with other available state funding for foster care alumni. Unrau describes Seita Scholars Program as intentionally student-centered, inviting students to participate in programming and planning decisions. The guiding principle of the program is to provide participants with strategies for transitioning into adulthood and college. A notable feature of the program is its use of a coaching model that matches each participant with both a Campus Coach (a master's level professional who helps students navigate their new environment) and a Department of Human Service Coach who advises students about public support services. Practitioners in student affairs who want to develop a campus support program for former foster-care youth may benefit from this program description.

**Key words:** *programming, transition, foster-care*

**Unrau, Y. A., Font, S. A., & Rawls, G. (2012). Readiness for college engagement among students who have aged out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34(1), 3476-83.***

This study examined differences in self-reported college readiness between first-year students who have been in foster care and the national first-year student population. The facets of college readiness for college engagement that the authors aimed to investigate include academic motivation, social motivation, receptivity to student services, and general coping. The authors used a one-group cross sectional survey that compared 81 former foster-care youth at Western Michigan University to the national population mean of freshman college students who had taken the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI), Form A, during fall 2009 and 2010. They also compared institutional academic performance data between a sample of 79 former-foster youth and 6517 non-foster youth to determine differences in course withdrawals, credit hours attempted, credit hours passed, and GPA. The authors found that significant differences in readiness to engage in college exist between both groups. Former foster care youth reported higher levels of academic and social motivation and are more receptive to academic student support services, personal counseling, and social enrichment, but are less receptive to career counseling and report lower levels of family support. The study's findings also indicated that former foster youth were more academically underprepared for college than their peer and that this gap persists across the first semester of college. The authors argued that the combination of high motivation with low family support and academic preparedness may indicate a tendency towards optimism that can easily turn to frustration that puts former foster care students at particular risk of attrition.

*Key words: first-year, foster-care, engagement*

## **Graduate Students**

**Bourner, T., & Heath, L. (2014). The pedagogic potential of the pub quiz. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 51(1), 105-114.***

This paper presents a case study of a two-day student program orientation for a small professional graduate program in Great Britain that used a “pub quiz” as a way to efficiently present new students with a host of important program information while also facilitating new student peer interactions. The pub quiz activity was developed as a solution to the need to assess new graduate student familiarity with the contents of the student handbook. The 35-minute quiz was structured as a competition between two teams and was scheduled as the last event on the second day of the orientation. The authors evaluated the successfulness of this program in achieving its aims and reflect on both positive elements and drawbacks to the pub quiz model, as well as discuss the limitations of the model for larger programs, other disciplines, or cultural contexts outside the United Kingdom. The article closed with

a discussion of the pedagogical values and beliefs that support the idea of a pub quiz as a valid pedagogical device to support student learning in many educational contexts.

**Key words:** *orientation programs*

**Crede, E., & Borrego, M. (2014). Understanding retention in US graduate programs by student nationality. *Studies in Higher Education, 39(9)*, 1599-1616.**

This study contributes to the literature on graduate student retention by investigating differences student characteristics and experiences related to retention and degree completion between students of different nationalities in U.S. engineering programs. International students comprise a majority of the graduates from U.S. engineering programs, which the authors argued makes this discipline uniquely suited for studying cultural differences as a facet of graduate student retention. The authors developed surveys to administer at four U.S. research universities in fall 2010, which resulted in responses from 685 graduate students from six international regions (including the United States). The survey explored several constructs related to doctoral student retention the authors identified from earlier studies by others and their own ethnographic observations of graduate engineering research groups. These constructs were expectations, individual preferences, project ownership, perception of value, organization, and climate. The authors analyzed differences in the construct mean for each nationality group and discussed the implications of their findings for research advisors and faculty members who work with culturally diverse research groups in doctoral engineering programs.

**Key words:** *retention, international students*

**Curtin, N., Stewart, A. J., & Ostrove, J. M. (2013). Fostering academic self-concept advisor support and sense of belonging among international and domestic graduate students. *American Educational Research Journal, 50(1)*, 108-137.**

This study examined differences in beliefs about the importance of certain graduate school experiences between international and domestic doctoral students at a Midwestern U.S. research university. The goal of study was to investigate any relationship between retention outcomes and differences in beliefs about advisor support, sense of belonging, and academic self-concept, as international students complete graduate degrees at higher rates, in less time, than domestic graduate students despite facing challenges related to acculturation to the U.S. higher education system. The authors analyzed data from 841 students who responded to a Graduate Student Climate Survey and began their doctoral studies between 1998 and 2003. International students represented 22% of the sample. Among their findings, the authors discussed the high value placed on research and other

academic activities and strong sense of belonging experienced by international students as compared to their domestic peers. Another significant difference between the groups is that domestic students appear to associate sense of belonging with academic self-concept, while international students do not. However, advisor support was associated with a stronger sense of belonging and academic self-concept for both groups. The authors discussed possible explanations and implications for their findings for policy and student support interventions. This included graduate programs placing a focus on facilitating positive student-advisor relationships, perhaps above other student-experience concerns.

**Key words:** *retention, college adjustment, policy*

**Di Pierro, M. (2012). Strategies for doctoral student retention: Taking the roads less traveled. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 35(3), 29-32.**

This paper presents a short overview of a few initiatives and approaches that may support increased student retention in doctoral education. The author advocated for universities developing holistic initiatives for graduate student retention that incorporate enhanced advising and mentorship, technical support, and just-in-time training within the framework of an ongoing doctoral experience. The author argued that universities and individual departments need to assess and analyze the true causes of doctoral student attrition and focus on fixing flawed processes, not blaming unprepared students who cannot meet the academic challenge of graduate education. The author contextualized the critique within a discussion of the implication of continued heightened attrition of doctoral students for programs and universities with regard to funding, Carnegie classification, and the global standing of the United States in scientific and technological research and discovery.

**Key words:** *retention, advising, mentoring, assessment*

**Gardner, S. K., & Gopaul, B. (2012). The part-time doctoral student experience. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 7, 63-78.**

This study was designed to identify the unique needs and challenges of part-time doctoral students. The authors began with a review of the existing literature, which indicates that the experience of the part-time doctoral student is in many ways dissimilar to the experience of the traditional full-time student. In particular, the research showed that part-time doctoral students are less satisfied with and less committed to their institutions and their specific doctoral programs. Part-time students are also less engaged as scholars and have less opportunity to act as researchers. The authors designed an exploratory case study to determine what particular challenges their part-time doctoral students face and to discover how these students can be better supported at their institution. The authors conducted in-depth interviews with ten part-time doctoral students and analyzed the transcripts using the constant comparative method. The themes that emerged were

issues part-time students face in terms of balance, support, and “fitting the mold”. The authors’ recommendations included creating cohorts and peer groups of part-time doctoral students, providing online and point-of-need support services for these cohorts, and keeping the challenges of balance in mind when developing and scheduling classes and program events.

**Key words:** *engagement, environment*

**Jairam, D., & Kahl Jr, D. H. (2012). Navigating the doctoral experience: The role of social support in successful degree completion. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 7, 311-329.**

This study explored the social support networks that can help mitigate the high attrition rate of doctoral students, particularly students in the first year of their programs. The authors began with an overview of some of the most common stressors for new doctoral students, including relative poverty, anxiety, sleeplessness, academic demands, fear of failure, examinations, time constraints, and social isolation. The authors then described the parameters of their research study. They administered an online open-ended qualitative survey to peers and colleagues who had successfully finished their doctoral programs in order to determine which social support networks doctoral student relied on and which behaviors of those support networks were most beneficial and most detrimental. The authors used the grounded theory method to analyze the survey data. Results indicated that there are three main types of social support networks: academic friends, family/friends, and professors (particularly doctoral advisors). The most positive behaviors from these groups included emotional, practical, and professional support. The most negative behaviors included competition between academic friends, lack of understanding from family, and lack of professional activity from faculty. Recommendations for doctoral students included forming and maintaining academic friendships (including the formation of study groups and/or research/writing groups), seeking specific assistance from family and alerting family members when they are being unsupportive, and reaching out early and often to their advisors. Recommendations for doctoral faculty included providing compassion and understanding, sharing practical advice and expert guidance, and involving/inviting students into research and professional networks.

**Key words:** *college adjustment, support*

**Kozar, O., & Lum, J. (2013). Factors likely to impact the effectiveness of research writing groups for off-campus doctoral students. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 7(2), A132-A149.**

This article provides a comprehensive literature review that explored using Research Writing Groups (RWG) and how these groups can be best designed to mediate feelings of isolation and self-doubt frequently experienced by off-campus doctoral students. The authors were specifically interested in investigating how

computer mediated communication (CMC) can facilitate RWG for off-campus students. The review began by looking at the research on how RWG combat isolation and increase feelings of belonging and participation in academic communities of practice. Next the authors reviewed the literature on common challenges experienced by doctoral students and the role RWG can play in mitigating these challenges. Following this, the authors examined the relevant research on the role of CMC relative to cognitive and interpersonal development. The authors then moved on to examining the best practices in developing and implementing CMC RWG. These considerations include pedagogy, logistics, sustainability, administration, mode of delivery, and facilitation. The authors focused the rest of the review on examining best practices related to mode of delivery and facilitation. The literature suggested that a combination of asynchronous and synchronous tools is most effective for online RWG. In terms of facilitation, the existing research suggests that RWG can be effective whether they have professorial or student-led facilitation. Best practices for CMC RWG included voluntary participation, small group size, joint development of procedures and practices, distributing writing pieces in advance, and providing guiding questions for reviewers. Lastly, in order to be successful CMC RWG need to increase interpersonal relationships, cognitive skills and development, and need to work logistically for the group members. If these conditions are met, CMC RWG can be very effective and beneficial for off-campus doctoral students.

**Key words:** *college adjustment*

**Litalien, D., & Guay, F. (2015). Dropout intentions in PhD studies: A comprehensive model based on interpersonal relationships and motivational resources. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 41*, 218-231.**

This study aimed to develop and test a new model of what leads doctoral students to persist in their studies and, conversely, to examine what might be contributing to the high attrition rate of doctoral programs. The authors used the model of self-determination theory (SDT), which explores the motivational and support systems needed by doctoral students to succeed in their studies, to inform the development of their own model. The authors began by outlining the research on SDT and then review the literature on doctoral student motivation, retention, and persistence. This was followed by a discussion of the model the authors propose as a lens through which to study these phenomenon. Finally, the authors discussed the two studies they have conducted so far as a means of testing their model. Both studies involved surveying doctoral students and showed similar results. The first study focused on surveying both completers and non-completers and the second study surveyed current doctoral students as to their perceived likelihood of completion. Overall, findings supported the authors' model and indicate that self-determination and motivation are strongly increased when doctoral advisors take an active and interested role.



*Key words: engagement, thriving*

## **Greek Life Students**

**Moreno, D., & Banuelos, S. (2013). The influence of Latina/o Greek sorority and fraternity involvement on Latina/o college student transition and success. *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*, 5(2), 113-125.**

The authors began with a literature review of studies conducted regarding affiliations with Latino/a Greek Letter Organizations as well as seminal research regarding the positive impacts of student involvement during the transition to college and the positive impacts of belonging for Latino/a students during the transition to college. The authors then facilitated a cross-case analysis of two Latino/a Greek Letter Organization studies that qualitatively explored students' experiences during their adjustment to college. Common themes from the two studies, which were both conducted via interviews with undergraduate students, included peer-to-peer support and encouragement, sense of belonging, and engagement with campus. Latina and Latino students responses were reviewed for how gender impacts the outcomes of the common themes but major differences between the two groups aren't emergent. Primarily, the common themes were asserted to be true for both Latina and Latino students involved in their culturally affiliated Greek Letter Organizations. The authors suggested continued exploration of the benefits of involvement in these organizations for Latino/a students and that the cross-case analysis be used as a foundation for further research.

*Key words: Latino/a students, transition, peer support, college adjustment*

## **Honors students**

**Scager, K., Akkerman, S. F., Keesen, F., Mainhard, M. T., Pilot, A., & Wubbels, T. (2012). Do honors students have more potential for excellence in their professional lives? *Higher Education*, 64(1), 19-39.**

This study used Renzulli's (1986) Three-Ring Model to determine what student characteristics lead to professional excellence in later life. The authors were particularly interested in discovering if these characteristics are shared by both honors and non-honors students and if not, which of these characteristics have the greatest variance between the two populations. The authors began by discussing the predictive characteristics that lead to professional excellence as defined by Renzulli and developed further by various studies. They then discussed how they adapted the Three-Ring Model to fit their research questions and their student population. This was followed by an examination of the research on differences between honors and non-honors students, particularly focusing on studies and meta-analyses conducted in the last ten years. The authors then turned their attention to the

design of their own study. They first outlined the six characteristics that are under study: intelligence, creative thinking, openness to experience, the desire to learn, persistence, and the drive to excel. They next discussed how they developed their research questionnaire, which they did by using parts of several existing validated instruments that measure these characteristics. After administering the self-report questionnaire, the authors used SPSS to conduct multivariate analysis of variance between honors and non-honors students. The results showed that honors students did in fact score higher on five of the six characteristics (everything except persistence). Furthermore, the authors identified three characteristics that were rated substantially higher (desire to learn, drive to excel, and creativity) for honors students, while intelligence and persistence were the least differentiated. The authors recommended that practitioners use these findings to reexamine admissions criteria into honors programs.

**Key words:** *honors student*

**Wawrzynski, M. R., Madden, K., & Jensen, C. (2012). The influence of the college environment on honors students' outcomes. *Journal of College Student Development, 53(6), 840-845.***

This study examined the influences that participating in an academic living learning community (ALLC) has on honors students' learning outcomes and peer relationships. The authors use Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological paradigm as their conceptual framework. The study data was pulled from a larger study of students' experiences of living in a residence hall. All residential students were asked to complete a web-based survey (Resident Hall Environment Survey), which is a 76 self-report questionnaire. The authors teased out data related to honors students and used MANOVA to analyze the survey results. The analysis revealed that honors students who participated in an ALLC reported higher levels on all five variable scales the authors tested. ALLC honors students reported that they felt a greater sense of belonging, had more academic interactions with peers, felt they were in a more enriching educational environment, had more frequent interactions with faculty, and had more frequent intellectual conversations with peers. These findings led the authors to recommend that faculty work to increase their presence in the living learning communities, particularly within the residence hall, and work to develop ways to encourage students to make and recognize connections between what happens in the classroom to what happens outside of class in their living spaces.

**Key words:** *friends/friendships, student-faculty interaction, college adjustment, honors student*

## **Immigrant & Undocumented Students**

**Hernandez, S., Hernandez, I. Jr., Gadson, R., Huftalin, D., Ortiz, A., White, M., Yocum-Gaffney, D. (2010). Sharing their secrets: Undocumented students' personal stories of fear, drive, and survival. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2010(131), 67-84.**

This chapter illuminates the unique psycho-emotional barriers to success of undocumented students in higher education. The authors used a narrative qualitative research design and present the lived experiences of five Hispanic undocumented students as expressed by those students. The authors invited these students to reflect on and share their personal stories and then the authors examined those stories for points of commonality and to discover where those students had similar and dissimilar experiences. The narratives were further analyzed to uncover larger themes of college life as an undocumented student. Emergent themes included undocumented students creative use of available resources, the stress attendant on keeping their status secret, and the widespread sense that they must “give back” or “pay forward” to their communities because of the opportunities they've been able to take advantage of. Recommendations for student and academic affairs professionals included creating welcoming and supportive environments, the need to create trust and “safe spaces” where students can share their secrets, and the need to keep abreast of the latest legal regulations and policies that can impact undocumented students in order to provide the highest levels of service.

**Key words:** *Undocumented students, academic, policy, support*

**Lopez, J. (2010). Undocumented students and the policies of wasted potential. In S. Gold & R. Rumbaut (Eds.), *The new Americans: Recent immigration and American society* (n.p.) El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.**

This monograph exemplified the educational challenges faced by undocumented students, particularly those seeking higher education in the state of North Carolina. This work is the published culmination of a multi-year ethnographic study undertaken by the author. Lopez was interested in exploring how state laws and institutional policies restrict access to undocumented students and how this restriction impacts the students, the institutions, and the state. The author also examined how these restrictive policies work against student and academic affairs professionals as they seek to form relationships with and serve as advocates for undocumented students. Lopez also discussed the ways in which these policies serve to disadvantage not only the students but the institutions and the state as well and she makes a compelling case that these policies are weakening the state economy by encouraging bright and dedicated future workers to move elsewhere in order to pursue their educational dreams. Individual chapters are devoted to reviewing the literature on undocumented students and providing overviews of

relevant theoretical models, detailed descriptions of current practices, and in-depth explorations of the effects of these practices on students and the state of North Carolina.

**Key words:** *policy, undocumented students*

**Munoz, S. & Maldonado, M. (2012). Counterstories of college persistence by undocumented Mexicana students: Navigating race, class, gender, and legal status. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 25(3), 293-315.**

This article is an examination of the lived experiences of undocumented Mexicana students in higher education. The authors found Critical Race Theory to be a useful lens through which to explore the factors that contribute to this subpopulation's rate of persistence and retention. The authors delved further into Critical Race Theory and use a sub-theory, Latino/a Critical Race Theory as the framework through which to examine how undocumented Mexicana students navigate the often unfamiliar and frequently hostile landscape of higher education, both in terms of how they create positive self-images and how they successfully progress through school. The authors collected data by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews and a facilitating a follow-up focus group. The interview and focus group questions were designed to uncover the counter-narratives that the students use to contravene the stereotypical expectations of undocumented students and the strategies these students use to successfully increase their self-efficacy and success. The authors selected a small sample to serve as a case study in order to contextualize and document the experience of undocumented Mexicana immigrant women in higher education. The authors recognized the limitations involved in using such a small sample (four students), but argue that their aim is "not to make generalizations but to bring to the fore alternate stories of race, gender, class, and legal status" as lived experiences (p. 296). One of the most compelling emergent themes uncovered in these narratives was how undocumented Mexicana students view themselves as "silenced outsiders" in the college environment. Recommendations included ways to ensure the inclusion of the experiences, challenges, and needs of these students be met in order to increase a sense of belonging for undocumented students on campus.

**Key words:** *undocumented students, retention, student success*

**Perez, P. (2010). College choice process of Latino undocumented students: Implications for recruitment and retention. *Journal of College Admission*, 206, 21-25.**

This study specifically sought to understand the barriers to attendance of undocumented students at four-year institutions of higher education and to discover strategies that counseling, admissions, and outreach professionals can employ to help undocumented students move more smoothly through the

enrollment process. The author began by providing justification in the research literature for why such a study is necessary and the impact that the adoption of California AB 540 has had on college choice decisions of undocumented Latino/a students. He proceeded to discuss how factors such as the availability of financial aid, the costs of attendance, and how both socio-economic status and social support networks influence the decisions students make about where to apply to and where to attend college. Perez used a mixed-method approach including both qualitative interviews and quantitative demographic questionnaires to collect the data for his study. His key findings were that complications of cost are among the most salient and significant barriers to applying to selective four-year institutions and that college choice was disproportionately influenced by social support networks, particularly siblings and peers, among undocumented Latino/a students. Recommendations included exploring alternate funding models to offset the costs of attendance and targeting siblings and peers specifically with additional “college knowledge” particularly by creating high school to college bridge programs and peer groups.

**Key words:** *undocumented students, Latino/a students*

**Nguyen, D. & Serna, G. (2014). Access or barrier? Tuition and fee legislation for undocumented students across the states. *Clearing House*, 87(3), 124-129.**

The authors examined governmental policies that determine access to higher education for undocumented individuals. A review of federal policy was explored as well as state policies specifically related to in-state tuition policies. Implications presented by the authors indicated that the lack of a federal policy has implications for all states regardless of their own in-state tuition policies. Arguing that educational opportunities lay a foundation for success in one’s future, the authors urged for federal legislation that allows for equal access to education regardless of the state one lives in. Specifically, the authors of this article reviewed research and policy in relationship to the DREAM Act and suggest that comprehensive policy such as the DREAM Act be enacted to reduce implications of the status quo piecemeal and varied state-by-state legislation.

**Key words:** *undocumented students, policy*

## **Learning communities**

**Chism Schmidt L., & Graziano, J. (Eds.) (2016). *Building synergy for high-impact educational initiatives: First-year seminars and learning communities*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition.**

Citing the trend among institutions to merge high-impact practices (HIPs), first-year seminars and learning communities, the editors called for a review of the practice to understand the trend and confirm the success of the combined programming decision. The text is split into two sections, the first examines the rationale behind the trend to combine these HIPs beginning with a historical perspective on the development of first-year seminars and learning communities and how they came to be identified as HIPs. There is further examination of how the combined programming might look, modeling the types of seminar courses that might anchor a learning community as well as more complex models. Further conversations in section one included those about program design and implementation and concepts related to course integration. Section two presented seven case studies that examined the combined approach and the practical success of the programming decision. The practical application present models at both two-year and four-year institutions, and one program that provided a bridge between two-year and four-year institutions, and provided examples of specific situations in which the combined approach has the ability to provide instructive data. Each of these cases focused on different measured outcomes ranging from cost-effectiveness for the institution, residential programs, institutional collaborations, metacognition, and the success of designing integrated programs between institutions, and all the approaches impacts on student success. The result is a comprehensive view of the outcomes of combining these HIPs. Findings in the text included the emergent intersections of community and integration among these HIPs and justified a deepened view moving forward to continue these core values while emphasizing assessment and the integration of additional HIPs in further design and research.

**Key words:** *first-year students, learning communities, program evaluation, student success*

## **LGBTQ+ students**

**Alessi, E. J., Sapiro, B., & Kahn, S. (2015). Exploring the Influence of Minority Stress on the Transition From High School to College Among LGBTQ Young Adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 56(2), S94.***

This paper examined the impact of LGBTQ orientation on the high school to college transition process for sexual minority first-year students. The authors' research was guided by Meyer's (2003) minority stress model, which attempted to explain why difficult social situations lead to chronic high stress levels for members of stigmatized minority groups. A total of 21 second-year students who self-identified as having a LGBTQ orientation participated in qualitative focus groups and were asked questions on experiences of prejudice and stigma, internalized homophobia, and concealment of sexual orientation. The authors used Strauss & Corbin's (1994) grounded theory principles to analyze the interview transcripts and identify emerging themes in the participants' narratives. The data suggested that a minority sexual orientation amplifies the social challenges first-year students face in their

college transitions. Other results that have implications for practitioners included the range of coping strategies participants described for managing stress and the importance given to campus organizations that provide LGBTQ students with “islands of safety” to their college transition.

**Key words:** *transition, first-year students, orientation, LGBTQ students*

**Bazarsky, D., Morrow, L. K., & Javier, G. C. (2015). Co-curricular and Campus Contexts. *New Directions for Student Services, 2015(152), 55-71.***

This article discussed supporting students with LGBTQA+ identities in the co-curricular context of college. After providing historical and sociopolitical contexts for LGBTQA+ students in higher education, the authors discussed the importance of LGBTQA+ student inclusiveness across co-curricular departments and units as well as in the wider campus environment. The authors advocated for colleges and universities to adopt a universal design approach with a view that policies or changes that benefit LGBTQA+ students, such as “preferred” name policies and all-gender bathrooms, will have a widespread positive impact beyond that community. Furthermore, the author indicated that practitioners should take note stay engaged with the continuously changing nature of LGBTQA identities, terminology and language, community expectations, and social customs and be receptive to feedback from students instead of maintaining a fixed, authoritative idea of best practices in these arenas. To this end, the authors provided three example scenarios of how student affairs professionals may make students feel excluded or alienated based on assumptions about their identities or inconsistent application of well-intentioned practices. The author also provided suggestions for changes, from small tweaks in practice to big shifts in frameworks, that co-curricular departments and units can adopt to intentionally support LGBTQA+ students. These included offering staff training on baseline concepts relating to gender, sex, and orientation and the use of inclusive language, creating unit-specific LGBTQA+ services and supports for students and developing unit-specific expertise on LGBTQA+ topics, developing inclusive procedures and policies, and creating inclusive programming, marketing materials, and physical signage.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, policies, support*

**Brazelton, G. B., Renn, K. A., & Stewart, D. (2015). Recommendations. *New Directions for Student Services, 2015(152), 85-94.***

This article presented recommendations from the authors for the future of scholarship and practice within the field of student affairs with regard to students with minoritized identities of sexuality and gender (MioSG), a term that includes identities within the LGBTQ acronym while being inclusive of identities and experiences that other acronyms exclude. The authors' recommendations for directions for future research addressed both potential areas of focus and methodological approaches best suited for understanding the experiences and

outcomes of students with MIO SG. Their policy recommendations centered around the idea that policy changes should not create conditions that reify existing binaries and stereotypes, use exclusionary language, or focus on very limited identity categories. Finally, their practice recommendations included advocating for student affairs professionals to adopt critical philosophies and perspectives in their work and resist the development of “best practices” that assume a uniform experience for students with MIO SG. While this article does not provide readers with concrete suggestions for immediate application, it does offer some frameworks, overarching ideas, and topics for consideration that can guide their practice in supporting students with MIO SG and advocate for systemic and structural changes.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, policy, support*

**Dugan, J. P., & Yurman, L. (2011). Commonalities and differences among lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students: Considerations for research and practice. *Journal of College Student Development, 52(2), 201-216.***

This study investigated within-group differences among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students across a number of college experiences. The authors' goal was to examine the appropriateness of collapsing these three student groups into a single category in quantitative research designs, given that previous studies of campus climate, student identity, and collegiate experiences and outcomes for LGB students have rarely disaggregated the groups and considered differences between them. The authors analyzed data collected from a sample of respondents to the national Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) consisting of 980 self-identified LGB students from 52 colleges and universities. The findings of the study suggested that LGB students are more similar than different across a range of 13 different college experiences and measures of engagement, such as perception of campus climate and participation in peer mentoring, study abroad programs, and internships. Significantly, the results indicate that bisexual students had lower scores for perceptions of campus climate and appreciation of diversity, which the authors suggest may relate to ostracism, discrimination, and oppression bisexual students often feel from both heterosexual and gay communities. A major recommendation of the paper is that researchers test to see if there are within-group differences before conducting their primary analysis when investigating the experiences of LGB students.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, engagement, mentoring, environment*

**Ivory, B. T. (2012). Little known, much needed: Addressing the co-curricular needs of LGBTQ students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 36(7), 482-493.***

This literature review examined the available research on LGBTQ students that is intended for student support personnel at two-year community colleges. It is somewhat surprising that this article, published in 2016, still argues that LGBTQ



students are invisible on college campuses. The author based this claim on a supposed dearth of relevant research in the literature but it is more likely that he has not conducted a particularly robust search of the available resources. Regardless, the author proceeds to review the literature he was able to unearth. The subsequent literature review was focused on research-based best practices for student support services and personnel who are involved in co-curricular programming for (or that includes) LGBTQ students. This review included research on problems in identifying LGBTQ students on campus, combating hostile campus climates, challenges to students in creating healthy sexual identities, and deterrents to staff establishing connections to LGBTQ students. Recommendations for creating more inclusive and welcoming campus environments include revising existing anti-discrimination and harassment policies and procedures, implementing new recruitment strategies for LGBTQ students, and creating “brave spaces” on campus. The author also recommended establishing and supporting LGBTQ student organizations and building connections to those organizations internally within student affairs, with the institution at large, and with outside organizations and national resources.

*Key words: LGBTQ students, community college, support, environment*

**Jaekel, K. S. (2015). Recommendations from the Field: Creating an LGBTQ Learning Community. *Learning Communities Research and Practice*, 3(2), Article 8. Retrieved from <http://washingtoncenter.evergreen.edu/lcrjournal/vol3/iss2/8>**

The author noticed that even though her campus includes safe spaces and offers an LGBT Student Services office, many of the LGBTQ students in her courses fail to persist in her classes and at her college. To counter this attrition, the author designed and delivered an LGBTQ Learning Community (LBGTQ-LC). The author was hoping to determine if participation in such a peer learning community would increase the likelihood that students would persist in the course and at the institution. After establishing the rationale for the LBGTQ-LC, the author discusses the research on the efficacy of Learning Communities in general and the process she went through in creating the LBGTQ-LC. The LBGTQ-LC was designed to be welcoming and inclusive to all students and was therefore available for open enrollment to anyone who wished to explore and learn more about LBGTQ topics. However, as it turned out all of the participants identified as LBGTQ. Interestingly, the LBGTQ-LC was structured as a sequential series of courses, rather than the more traditional model of linked classes within a single semester. The author reported that on the whole the first class of the LBGTQ-LC was favorably received and that participants considered it to be a worthwhile experience. However, many of the participants did not enroll in the related spring course. The author also mentioned some other challenges related to the LBGTQ-LC. The most challenging aspect was recruitment into the LBGTQ-LC in the first place, partly because of the reluctance of advisors to recommend the LBGTQ-LC to students who weren't publically out and partly because students were unclear as to the value and structure of the LBGTQ-LC.

The author also found it challenging to link more courses into the LGBTQ-LC because of a lack of available courses that touch on LGBTQ topics. Recommendations for improvement included partnering more closely with student affairs, particularly advisors, to publicize the LGBTQ-LC and creating more meaningful links to a greater number of potential course pairings.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, retention*

**Jourian, T. J. (2015). Evolving nature of sexual orientation and gender identity. *New Directions for Student Services, 2015(152), 11-23.***

This chapter examined how the fluid terminology in queer studies and in queer communities has evolved and argues that understanding this fluidity and the operational terms in use at the moment can help educators to better understand and communicate with LGBTQ students. The author was careful to point out that this chapter does not necessarily serve as an exhaustive treatment of the definitions and terminology of the queer community (although a great many definitions are offered) but rather as an opportunity for educators to develop an understanding of how students may identify themselves and to be able to appropriately respond to those students. After this introductory material, the author moved on to an historical overview of how people with queer identities have named and categorized themselves over time. The author then moved on to an examination of the foundational concepts of sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Next was a discussion of why it is necessary to situate queer students within a cultural framework of systematic oppression and how these systems of oppression operate. This is followed by a discussion of how terminology relating to LGBTQ students has undergone a gradual “queering” and the shape and meaning of this new vocabulary. The next section explored the evolving nature of this discourse and the attendant complexity inherent in linguistic studies of emerging and evolving populations. The author closed by arguing that in order to more fully engage with our students the onus is on us as educators to be aware of the fluidity in queer terminology, to maintain an openness to shifting language conventions, and to participate in practices that promote individual and community identity formation so that we foster more equitable and inclusive campus environments.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, engagement, academic, environment*

**Linley, J. L., & Nguyen, D. J. (2015). LGBTQ experiences in curricular contexts. *New Directions for Student Services, 2015(152), 41-53.***

The authors used Lattuca & Stark's ecological model to explore curricular contexts as intersections between learners, instructors, and course content, particularly with regards to how these dynamic interactions are experienced by LGBTQ students. The article began with an examination of the external sociocultural influences on curricular contexts and then moves on to a discussion of the ways in which specific institutions can influence the curricular contexts of their campuses, for instance in

the mission, campus climate, availability of services and resources, etc. This was followed by a look at how faculty and staff serve as microunits that can both positively and negatively influence the curricular context. The authors concluded with recommendations for how to create positive curricular contexts for LGBTQ students, including training for faculty and the inclusion of content that is responsive to the unique perspectives of LGBTQ students.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, environment*

**Kirsch, A. C., Conley, C. S., & Riley, T. J. (2015). Comparing psychosocial adjustment across the college transition in a matched heterosexual and lesbian, gay, and bisexual sample. *Journal of College Student Development, 56(2), 155-169.***

This study explored the differences between and heteronormative students over five psychometric dimensions in order to see where these populations experience similar and dissimilar experiences as the transition into and through the first year of college. The authors used matched sampling to cull data from a larger, multi-year longitudinal study tracking the psychosocial adjustment during the transition into college. Participants complete an initial online survey at the beginning and end of the first year and are invited to complete yearly follow-up surveys. The authors used multiple validate and normed scales to create five broad composite measures of psychological development including psychological wellbeing, distress, cognitive-affective strengths and weaknesses, and social wellbeing. Both groups reported lower levels of wellbeing and increase psychological distress during the initial transition period and greater cognitive-affective strengths at the end of the first year. However, LGBTQ students had disproportionately higher levels of distress, greater cognitive vulnerability, and lower levels of social wellbeing. Recommendations were that all first-year students need additional psycho-educational resources and LGBTQ students in particular would benefit from specifically tailored services and programs.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ student, transition, first-year students*

**McKinley, C. J., Luo, Y., Wright, P. J., & Kraus, A. (2015). Reexamining LGBT Resources on College Counseling Center Websites: An Over-time and Cross-country Analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 43(1), 112-129.***

The authors of this study conducted content analysis of college counseling websites (CCWs) in order to determine the amount of information available to LGBTQ students in regards to counseling and wellness services and resources offered by their institutions. The article begins with an introduction to the literature regarding the challenges of acceptance and engagement often experienced by LGBTQ students and the sometimes dire consequences of those challenges. Drawing from various information-seeking models and theories, the author sought to determine if the

information provided on CCWs was sufficient to help LGBTQ students get the counseling and mental health services they might require. This study updated and extended a previous study by the same authors. The authors compiled a representative sample of 10% of the institutions listed in the NCES and kept the variables consistent with their prior research. They trained undergraduate students to code the variant data using Scott's pi. Findings indicated that less than half (47%) of the institutions' CCWs in the sample mention specific services or resources for LGBTQ students, although a majority did at least indicate that they offered individual counseling for all students. Recommendations were to provide more specifically designed LGBTQ student support services and to better market, highlight, and promote these services through the CCW.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, engagement, support*

**Mobley, S. D., & Johnson, J. M. (2015). The role of HBCUs in addressing the unique needs of LGBT students. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2015(170), 79-89.**

This chapter serves as a literature review of the experiences of LGBTQ students at Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs). It begins with a look back at how HBCUs came into being and an exploration of their traditional role as disruptors of the status quo. Next the authors began to examine the available research to fill the gap in critical inquiry as to the experiences of LGBTQ students at HBCUs. The authors made recommendations based on the literature that include a suggestion that HBCUs re-examine their traditions and policies that inhibit the expression of individuality and that schools work to provide forums where diverse bodies can learn from one another and benefit from hearing others' perspectives. The final recommendation was a call to action for developing resources and services specifically for LGBTQ students.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, HBCU, policy*

**Yost, M. R., & Gilmore, S. (2011). Assessing LGBTQ Campus Climate and Creating Change. *Journal Of Homosexuality*, 58(9), 1330-1354.**

This article examined campus climate self-study around LGBTQ issues at Dickinson College, a small residential liberal arts college in Pennsylvania. The campus climate questionnaire was developed by the authors to assess sexual- and gender-based prejudice, perceptions of institutional climate and student/faculty experiences in the classroom, and whether student involvement in co-curricular activities was related to those perceptions. A total of 274 college employees and 562 students participated in the study, with most of the respondents in both groups being White, female, heterosexual, and cisgender. The authors compared the responses of heterosexual and cisgender respondents with LGBQ and transgender participants on all measures, and analyzed results separately for faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The discussion of the results included excerpts from survey responses

as examples of campus constituent experiences and opinions, which practitioners may find helpful to read. Overall, the authors found that most respondents expressed low levels of sexual prejudice and positive perceptions of campus, but that positive attitudes were stronger among heterosexual and cisgender participants than LGBTQ participants in the study. In particular, LGBTQ individuals were more likely to experience harassment on campus and many were less engaged in co-curricular activities. The authors concluded with a narrative of how the results of the campus climate survey were used to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff in programs, departments, and systemically at the institutional level.

**Key words:** *LGBTQ students, small-college, environment*

## **Low-Income Students**

**Castleman, B. L., & Page, L. C. (2013). The not-so-lazy days of summer: Experimental interventions to increase college entry among low-income high school graduates. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2013(140), 77-97.***

This paper examined the impact of summer outreach and support from colleges on the successful fall matriculation of low-income students who have recently graduated from high school. The focus of this paper is a phenomenon called “summer melt,” which described the process by which students who are accepted to college in the spring fail to enroll in the fall. Following a discussion of the possible causes of summer melt for low-income students in particular, the authors discussed the experimental interventions they designed to lessen summer attrition for these students. These interventions included proactive outreach by peer mentors or school counselors to provide individualized guidance and assistance and text messages from the intended institution that provide students with personalized reminders about administrative tasks they must complete to successfully matriculate. The authors suggested that proactive summer outreach may increase enrollment of low-income students by 3 to 8 percentage points at a cost of \$7 to \$200 a student.

**Key word:** *low-income students, academic support*

**Condon, M. V., Morgan, C. J., Miller, E. W., Mamier, I., Zimmerman, G. J., & Mazhar, W. (2013). A program to enhance recruitment and retention of disadvantaged and ethnically diverse baccalaureate nursing students. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 24(4), 397-407.***

This article described and evaluated a model developed to promote academic success for undergraduate nursing students from ethnically diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds called Success in Learning: Individual Pathways Program (SLIPP). Disadvantaged and ethnically diverse nurses are often at a higher

risk for attrition than traditional nursing students who matriculate with stronger academic preparation. The SLIPP model was developed based on a study of 777 culturally diverse baccalaureate nursing students from 22 schools of nursing in California in combination with a review of nursing education research and literature. The model combined pre-entrance preparation, academic support, social support, financial support, and faculty development workshops. Between 1999 and 2003, 77 ethnically diverse and disadvantaged students, many of whom had applied but not met the requirements of a BSN program, participated in SLIPP. All 77 students were accepted into baccalaureate nursing programs, 90.9% graduated from a nursing program, and 98.6% of graduates passed the NCLEX-RN exam. To evaluate SLIPP, the authors used a summative evaluative design that considered student records, the results a survey instrument, and qualitative interviews with a sample of SLIPP participants. A significant finding of the evaluation was that SLIPP students felt they would not have been able to complete the program without the financial support it provided.

**Key words:** *low-income students, academic preparation*

**Cox, R. D. (2016). Complicating conditions: Obstacles and interruptions to low-income students' college "choices". *Journal of Higher Education*, 87(1), 1-26.**

This article explored barriers that low-income students face when planning on attending institutions of higher education. The author used data from a qualitative longitudinal study of black and Latino low-income students she conducted over three years (the last two years of high school and the first year post-graduation). The study consisted of a series of interviews and focus groups and was designed to elicit information on how decisions to attend college are made and how college going plans are disrupted. The author began by critiquing existing models of college choice that lack an accounting for paths and plans that include delayed enrollment and choosing to attend community colleges. The author contended that this critique is even truer when examining college choice for low-income minority students. The longitudinal approach allowed for the author to follow students as they made their initial college plans and how those plans changed as the students progressed through high school and graduation. Findings indicated that many economic and situational obstacles derailed the college choices and plans for participating students; complex familial relationships, unstable living arrangements, and the need to work and contribute financially to their families made it difficult to secure tuition, transportation, and financial aid. The author concluded by recommending that public two and four-year institutions strengthen existing programs and relationships with high school professionals in order to remove these barriers for low-income minority students.

**Key words:** *low-income, students of color, community college*

**Jack, A. A. (2014). Culture shock revisited: The social and cultural contingencies to class marginality. *Sociological Forum*, 29(2), 453-475.**

The lack of cultural and economic capital often make it harder for low-income students to successfully navigate and transition into college; however, some students respond by becoming “isolationists” while others become “integrationists”. This study sought to add to the research on how different pre-college paths prime students' to have very different experiences in college, even when they come from similar low-income families and neighborhoods. Using the case study method, the author investigated the experience of black low-income students at an elite, urban, private college. In analyzing the data that author was able to identify to specific sub-groups, the Privileged Poor (those who were able to attend private or preparatory programs of secondary schools) and the Doubly Disadvantaged (those who attended local public high schools). The author detailed many of the differences between these two groups and includes both quantitative (e.g., SAT scores) and qualitative (e.g., excerpts from interviews) data in his findings.

**Key words:** *low-income students, transition, students of color*

**McLoughlin, P. (2012). The Transition Experiences of High-Achieving, Low-Income Undergraduates in an Elite College Environment. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 24(2), 9-32.**

This study explored how low-income students on full financial aid packages navigate and experience the transition to and through elite colleges. The study used the phenomenology to elicit information about the lived experiences of the participants as they reflected on the college transition experience. The phenomenological approach allowed the author to ask questions about how socio-economic status (SES) affects the experience of attending an elite college, in which ways elite colleges are particularly challenging for low-income students, and how these students successfully negotiate those challenges. The author coded the responses to interviews and narratives into two major themes, recognizing class and SES differences and struggles with academic under-preparedness. Recommendations included making available support services more visible and easily understood so that low-income students can more effectively navigate the unfamiliar landscape of an elite college environment.

**Key words:** *low-income students, transition, academic preparation, support*

**Soria, K. (2012). Creating a successful transition for working-class first-year students. *Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 20(1), 44-55.**

Citing the challenges and barriers that exist for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as well as the existing research on social integration and sense of belonging, the author presents the need to explore perceptions of campus climate, engagement, and interaction for students in this population. Bourdieu's theory of

social reproduction provided as a foundation for the study which sought to expose the experience of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as they transition to universities that have populations predominantly of middle/upper class socioeconomic status. It is noted that Bourdieu's theory has been used in previous studies as a foundation to explore social and cultural capital for these students and the previous research findings that indicate that socioeconomic status is invisible on campuses, leading to a deficit in attention for these students. The study utilized the spring 2010 Student Experience in the Research University to examine 23,331 first-year students from 11 large, public, Carnegie Foundation classified research institutions. The survey asked students questions related to their levels of engagement and perceptions of campus climate as they transitioned into their first-year. A review of the responses exposed statistical differences between lower socioeconomic status students and those from middle/upper socioeconomic statuses in terms of perceptions of campus climate, feeling welcome, engagement academically, and fewer academic interactions with their peers. Some of these differences are modest but the significant differences present themselves in the areas of academic engagement and perceptions of campus climate. The author suggested practitioners working in orientation and first-year programming attempt to make social class visible by talking about issues of power, privilege, and inclusiveness to strive for a more welcoming campus climate for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and encourages summer bridge programs as a potentially useful strategy to support students from this population citing a correlation between working class families and first-generation student status as additional justification for providing additional support. The author advocated that priorities be placed on attention to the academic adjustment to college for this population of students to encourage positive engagement and feature support services prominently.

**Key words:** *low-income, college adjustment, environment, first-year students, orientation programming, support*

## **Orientation (General)**

**Warywold, D.M., & James, J.J. (2010). First ascent wilderness orientation programs. *Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 17(2), 40-51.**

Considering the prominence of wilderness extended orientation programs, the researchers analyzed the perceptions of students participating in First Ascent, an extended orientation program for first-year students at Appalachian State University. A literature review examined outcomes found for those who participate in wilderness orientation programs and also provides Astin's and Barefoot's work on peer interactions' influence on student development. The four-day program was also examined to provide understanding of the depth and breadth of activities, interactions, and desired outcomes for first-year students participating in the program. The researchers conducted a qualitative evaluation and analysis of the



students' perceptions of the program and establish four themes. The first theme was interpersonal focusing on interactions and the positive effect on self-concept. The next theme was intrapersonal as students reflect on their personal accomplishments through the program. The third theme that emerged was that of natural world due to the mental and physical experiences students face in the outdoors. Finally the fourth theme was a theme of personal welfare is observed as students acknowledge their own physical limitations and the perception that they were unprepared for their experiences. The researchers asserted the positive influences overall and advocate for programs such as First Ascent to be part of a comprehensive first-year programming strategy.

**Key words:** *Orientation programs, extended orientation, first-year students*

**Ward-Roof, J. A. (Ed.). (2010). *Designing successful transitions: A guide for orienting students to college (Monograph Series, No. 13, 3rd Edition)*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.**

A partnership between the National Orientation Directors Association and the National Resource Center for the First-Year and Students in Transition in its third edition is presented to assist orientation practitioners with evolving trends in the field. Divided into four parts, the first explored the history and need for orientation programs including theory and evidence of support. The second section provided organizational insight into structuring orientation programs and considers topics including community college orientation, parent orientation, and programs beyond orientation. In the third part of the monograph topics on inclusion and new trends are explored including diverse student populations, transfer students, and students who are not of traditional age. The fourth and final section discussed strategies for establishing orientation programs through partnerships and assessment for long-term success. The text concluded with parting thoughts from professionals in the field observing the evolution of orientation, transition, and retention programs.

**Key words:** *first-year students, transfer students, parent and family programs, orientation programs, community college*

## **Parent & Family**

**Englert, P. & Hume, J. (2011). *Developing intentional and comprehensive parent programs utilizing an interdivisional approach-A case study of Bellarmine. AHEPPP Journal, 2(2), 18-34.***

The authors shared insight behind the rapid growth of parent programming within institutions of higher education citing the relationship between millennials and their parents. The dynamic between these populations involved a level of trust that has required colleges and universities to develop initiatives that help to infuse the institution into this close relationship. Qualitative and quantitative questions on a

survey drove the design of inter-divisional collaborative parent and family programming at Bellarmine University. The data from these surveys as well as National Survey of Student Engagement data informed the practice presented by the authors. Themes emerged as guidance for best practice, these themes include: thoughtful use of technology, intentional programs to help with appropriate participation, and diversity in programs offered. Specifically, the recommendations indicated that opportunities for a sense of belonging for parents was wanted, as well as opportunities for interaction with staff and faculty alongside their students. Implications from the authors included the value of inter-divisional collaboration for parent programs to increase resources and also to increase awareness across divisions of the important role parents play in their students' attitudes about their institution.

**Key words:** *Parent and family programs, sense of belonging*

**Furry, A. N., & Sy, S. R. (2015). The influence of perceived parental expectations and pressures on women's academic achievement during the first year of college. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 27(1), 49-67.***

Referencing previous findings on the effects of parental expectations for students in K-12 education, the lack of findings on the effects of parental expectations for college students, and citing the need to account for cultural differences in familial dynamics the authors conducted a thorough review of the literature to present the findings and trends among perceived expectations and pressure. The authors proceeded to conduct a survey with 843 first-year, female participants from two large public institutions in Southern California to identify their 620 participants. The research attempted to uncover the relationship between ethnic group and parental expectation and pressure as well as how perceived pressure and expectations impact academic performance and if those impacts vary by ethnic group. Participants are students who identify as Latina, European American, or Asian American averaging 18 years of age. Conducting a one-way analysis and a multivariate one-way analysis the researchers uncovered a number of correlations. Results indicated the perceived parental pressure to complete and undergraduate degree and pursue a graduate degree is higher among Latina and Asian American populations. Among all participants, perceived parental expectations correlated with academic achievement, and those indicators are significant among Latina and Asian American students. Citing methodological limitations in the scope of ethnicities included in the study and a lack of depth in the exploration of culture, alongside the small pool of students surveyed, the authors cautioned not to apply these findings to all college students and advocated for more research on this topic. Regardless of limitations, valuable implications can still be drawn including acknowledgment of parental pressure and expectations by practitioners to assist students in coping with the psychological ramifications of the behavior and to be sure first-year programming presents students with the resources necessary to process their academic relationship with their families.

*Key words: parents and family, parental expectations, first-year students, students of color*

**Self, C. (2013). Parent involvement in higher education: A review of the literature. *AHEPPP Journal*, 4(1), 1-11.**

The author provided data points that verify parental involvement in college students' college selection and ability to attend college; further cited were the negative stereotypes of parental involvement in a student's academic career at colleges and universities and the need for a review of the literature to examine healthy parental involvements implications. Prior research was explored as related to parent-student communication, parent involvement and "helicopter parenting". Parent-student communication was found to be incredibly frequent between students and their parents, and students cite that they value this communication and that they rely on their parents for advice, guidance, and ultimately, influence. Research on parent involvement suggested students were interested in having involvement as they adjusted to college and they value their parents' interest; research also suggested that parents who are engaged with their students' transition support identity development. Simultaneously, studies indicated that some separation is beneficial for students in their adjustment to college. It is noted that low involvement from parents can have negative implications for academics. Implications of the research conducted on the term helicopter parents found overall that involvement isn't the problem, but how that involvement manifests is key. The author suggested that some of the research is conflicting and more research is necessary, particularly on how parent-student communication influences social choices, college experiences, and identity. Further the author suggested practitioners review theories on emerging adulthood alongside the literature reviewed and consider the best ways to support parents but also to support staff and faculty who may interact with parents so that positive relationships can be forged and negative myths can be dispelled. Finally, the author suggested practitioners view partnerships with parents through the lens of what is best for students, and in some cases that may be involvement from their parental support.

*Key words: parents and family, parental involvement*

**Yazedjian, A., & Toews, M.L. (2016). Development, validity, and reliability of the parental support scale - student version. *Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 28(1), 9-26.**

The authors reviewed the changing dynamics in parent-student relationships as related to the college experience and the existing measures to examine these relationships, the Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ) and the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA). In reviewing studies that have examined the PAQ, the literature revealed that Hispanic and Black students at PWI's who have a secure attachment to their parents display better adjustment to college; gender was

also revealed as a factor for some racial groups. In reviewing studies that have examined the IPPA, the findings revealed further indication that parental attachment has influence on adjustment to college including themes such as social and emotional competence. Some literature in the review revealed that impacts may only be related to adjustment during the first year as students identify the security parents offer as a significant source of support. It is noted in the literature review that for some students this attachment can be reversed, with students responsible for providing support to their parents and indications that this behavior is a stress factor. The authors acknowledged that this previous literature does not adequately account for all layers of attachment and proceed to conduct a random sample survey with the newly designed Parental Support Scale-Student Version (PSS-SV) resulting in 1,351 completions of the survey. The PSS-SV intends to measure students' perceptions of their parents support. Using the PAQ and IPPA scales to measure the parental attachment and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) to measure adjustment, the authors' findings indicated that the PSS-SV is a valid measure of parental support for students in their college years. The findings also indicated the potential need for revisions of the understanding in the field of the dynamics of the parent-child relationship and the expectations of college students as these dynamics shift. Implications include the need for institutions to recognize the changing relationships of parent-college age child, the positive impact parental support can provide and the need to identify those for whom that support is vacant and identify alternate strategies for support, and the need for colleges and universities to prepare to address the mental health needs that stem from family dynamics. The limitations of the study included the limited sampling from one institution and the limitations of some of the sampling tools; the authors call for further research to take a deeper look at the nuances of various populations and for more research to use the PSS-SV to continue to validate it as a tool for measuring parental attachment and support and the impacts on students.

**Key words:** *Parents and family, parental attachment, college adjustment, students of color*

## **Retention (General)**

**Alarcon, G.M. & Edwards, J.M. (2013). Ability and motivation: Assessing individual factors that contribute to university retention. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 105*(1), 129-137.**

The focus of this study was to investigate differences in ability and motivation factors of retention among first-year college students. The authors discussed ability as relating to standardized tests measuring achievement and past learning such as the SAT and ACT and grade point average while also outlining two potential motivation factors, conscientiousness and affectivity, as having a potential impact first-year student retention. A total of 584 students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at a Midwestern university served as the sample for this study,

and it should be noted that the students participated for credit. The authors used a quantitative methodology for this study, collecting the students' GPAS, SAT/ACT scores, and responses to a survey combining the Conscientiousness subscale of the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999), the Positive and Negative Affect schedule (PANAS; Watson et al, 1988), and questions about their parents' level of education during the first quarter of the semester, all of which was matched with student enrollment data over a series of quarters during their first academic year. The resulting data about relations among cognitive ability, conscientiousness, affectivity, and retention outcomes were analyzed with discrete-time survival mixture analysis (DTSMA; Muthen & Masyn, 2005). The authors noted that this is believed to be the first study that uses DTSMA to predict first-year student retention. The results of this analysis indicated that both ability and motivation are predictors of first-year student retention. Conscientiousness, however, was not a predictor when affectivity was added to the model, indicating it may not be the best aspect of motivation for predicting student retention. Given that no qualitative data were collected in this study, the authors cannot account for why students who left the university were not retained, nor did they attempt to disaggregate the data among students of different racial and sociodemographic backgrounds.

**Key words:** *academic motivation, first-year students*

**Aljohani, O. (2016). A comprehensive review of the major studies and theoretical models of student retention in higher education. *Higher Education Studies*, 6(2), 1-18.**

This article presented a critical review and analysis of theoretical models and empirical studies focusing on college student retention. The author aimed to highlight common patterns and themes in student attrition as well as best practices and emerging trends related to student retention for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Practitioners new to the field of student success and retention may find the author's discussion of the historical background and theoretical foundations of student retention models, as well as the typology of models, particularly useful context for the rest of the paper. Among the seminal retention models and theories reviewed were the Undergraduate Dropout Process Model (Spady, 1970, 1971), the Institutional Departure Model (Tinto, 1975, 1993), the Student-Faculty Informal Contact Model (Pascarella, 1980), the Student Attrition Model (Bean, 1980, 1982), and the Student Involvement Theory (Astin, 1984). Professionals seeking to apply research to practice may also take note of the author's discussion of some of the limitations of retention theories and models, such as a lack of range in research methodologies utilized in retention research as well as the limited generalizability of some of theories to other institutional settings and contexts.

**Key words:** *retention, academic success*

**Bowman, N. (2014). Conceptualizing openness to diversity and challenge: Its relation to college experiences, achievement, and retention. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39(4), 277-291.**

This paper explored openness to diversity and challenge (ODC) as a form of openness to experience, which the author argued is a student characteristic that may be predictive of student engagement, achievement, and retention. The author contextualized ODC, including student engagement with social, religious, cultural, and political values different from their own, as a desired outcome of higher education in a diverse and globalized society. To examine the relationship between ODC and student success outcomes, the author conducted a hierarchical linear modeling analysis with a large, longitudinal, multi-institutional dataset of first-year students, the 2006-2009 Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, to determine whether ODC correlates with subsequent college experiences, first-year GPA, and first-to-second year retention. The author's goal was to isolate the unique effects of ODC in order to ascertain whether ODC is a more consistent predictor of student engagement and success than other more commonly considered variables. The results of the study indicated that ODC positively relates to engagement with academic challenge and diverse experiences as well as frequent faculty/staff interactions, high-quality peer interactions, and good teaching/learning experiences.

*Key words: engagement, retention, academic achievement*

**Butler, L. (2011). Do we have a retention problem... Or do we have a problem "about" retention? *New England Journal of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.nebhe.org/thejournal/do-we-have-a-retention-problem-%E2%80%A6-or-do-we-have-a-problem-about-retention/>**

This paper discusses what the author, an education consultant, described as the "meta-problem" of student retention. The paper's thesis is that this meta-problem arises from tensions between the way institutional leaders publicly frame concerns about student retention, the constraints of place and time, and the sometimes contradictory and ineffectual mandates and strategies administrators and faculty are expected to implement in order to improve student retention and completion. The author recommended that institutions reevaluate the approaches they are taking to solving perceived retention problems and determine what strategic response to student attrition is actually warranted. Readers are provided with a series of issues to consider and practical questions to ask in order to examine the causes and effects of student retention and attrition in their particular institutional context. In particular, institutional stakeholders are encouraged to determine the extent to which the reasons behind student attrition are beyond the institution's control and gauge the significance of student in the context of historical performance, peer institutions, forgone revenues, and the satisfaction levels of students who do reach completion.

*Key words: retention, persistence*

**O’Keefe, P. (2013). A sense of belonging: Improving student retention. *College Student Journal*, 47(4), 605-613.**

Drawing on data from studies conducted in the United States and Australia the author sought to uncover roots of student attrition considering attrition rates in both countries measure between 20 and 50 percent. The author cited problems with attrition including the cost to institutions and society and recognizing that those most at risk for not completing a degree are students who are from historically underrepresented populations, those who have less privilege, and those with mental illness. Previous research on the necessity of a “sense of belonging” was reviewed and correlated to persistence, examples include: the challenge for part time students to become engaged, diverse students with diverse needs struggling for balance, technology increasing remote learning, large class sizes, and a general lack of personalization in the education experience. Additional research is reviewed to understand the connection between feeling cared for and persistence, discovering that students who feel safe and valued are more likely to persist in the environment. Additionally, research indicating the correlation between student-faculty interactions was cited as a critical component in building relationships that keep students engaged is presented. A variety of research emphasized the necessity of support services and resources that address specific population needs, particularly related to those populations most likely to drop out. The author dedicated a final section of the research review to an acknowledgement to the individual student’s responsibility to adjust, connect, and engage. This final section presented research that indicates that this accountability is important, the institution is responsible for clearly communicating expectations and cultural norms and also acknowledging that this transition will come easier for some populations; additional research cautions that without attention, this mentality may encourage assimilation for some populations on campus and further advocacy is presented which argues that students should be able to remain true to themselves even as they adapt to the college culture. In conclusion, the author acknowledged the research suggesting the onus remains with the student to adjust to the institution but asserts the advocacy presented by the larger body of research supporting the responsibility of the institution to create a safe, welcoming, engaging, and comfortable environment for students in an effort to improve retention.

*Key words: underrepresented students, students of color, engagement, persistence*

**Slanger, W. D., Berg, E. A., Fisk, P. S., & Hanson, M. G. (2015). A longitudinal cohort study of student motivational factors related to academic success and retention using the College Student Inventory. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 17(3), 278-302.**

Considering the troubling trend over 20 years of decreased persistence toward degree attainment the researchers explore the impacts of the climate of low

retention rates including the economic implications and the disproportionate effect on individuals from lower socioeconomic statuses. Utilizing the data from the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI), an assessment designed to identify early intervention needs for first-year students who demonstrate risk for academic challenges and potential for attrition. A literature review examined theories related to social and academic integration, levels of commitment, attrition factors, and cognitive behaviors. Additional literature highlights the factors that predict academic success including high school performance, socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, and factors from institutions like the support resources provided and financial aid assistance, as well as the culture of an institution. Additionally motivation factors related to student disposition were reviewed. With all the factors for consideration the researchers sought to further understand the motivational factors that predict college success and retention utilizing the CSI to uncover which CSI measured variables are most predictive and over what time frame are they relevant. The CSI was issued to ten first-year cohorts at one medium sized, public, research institution over ten years for a total of 6,043 students measured against academic performance variables from the institution and the CSI. Consistently, motivational factors were predictive of academic achievement and retention, as well as ratio of credits earned to credits attempted, semesters attended, and GPA. The findings verified the CSI as an effective tool in predicting GPA, persistence, and progression toward degree attainment. The researchers recommended utilizing the CSI throughout students' academic careers to determine the need for intervention and support via academic advising. The researchers called for future research to analyze this recommendation. They further advocated for using the CSI data to examine motivation and consider ways to encourage motivation institutionally. Ultimately, the researchers asserted the value of the CSI over self-selected surveys for determining the specific outcomes related to GPA, course load capacity, confidence, motivation, and defining proactive interventions for student success.

**Key words:** *retention, low-income students, academic performance*

**Soria, K.M. & Stubblefield, R. (2015). Knowing me, knowing you: Building strengths awareness, belonging, and persistence in higher education. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 17(3), 351-372.***

Citing trends in Student Affairs practice toward positive psychology and strengths-based initiatives intended to assist students in focusing on their strongest qualities rather than their deficits, the authors called for an examination of the assessment of these trending methods. Beginning with a review of the philosophy and guiding principles of a strengths-based approach to practice, the authors presented Lopez and Louis' five principles of strengths-based education: measuring strengths, offering individual educational opportunities based on students' strengths, creating space for students to network with others to articulate and understand their own and others' strengths, designing opportunities inside and outside the classroom for



students to utilize their strengths, and fostering students ability to design their own strengths-based experiences in new arenas. The philosophy of strengths-based initiatives is connected to the individual student but grounded in the active participation of practitioners to encourage dialogue among students to foster their own understanding of their own strengths as well as their relational dynamics. For purposes of their study, the authors chose Gallup's *Clifton StrengthsFinder Assessment*, an online assessment that measure individuals talents and presents them with their top five strengths out of 34 themes. The researchers asserted that 1 million college students in the United States have taken this assessment to uncover their top five strengths but little research has been conducted to verify that the approach is valid. The researchers present two goals of their study, to understand how strengths-based practice can influence students' sense of belonging and to examine whether these initiatives play a role in student retention. Piggybacking off of activities related to strengths-based initiatives at a large, public, research institution in which all incoming first-year students took the *Clifton StrengthsFinder Assessment* and participated in a variety of strengths-based programming during welcome week, the authors issued a survey to all participating students which had a response rate of nearly twenty eight percent. Survey responses were compared against the following measures: sense of belonging, awareness of strengths, interactions related to strengths, demographics/personal characteristics, interactions with the institutions such as living situation and major, and academic achievement and persistence. The quantitative analysis demonstrated that regardless of demographics, characteristics, and interactions with the institution, students expressed positive associations with sense of belonging, awareness and interactions related to strengths, and positive persistence to the second year. The researcher's qualitative analysis demonstrates positive indicators toward self-awareness and confidence, forming connections and building relationships, and creating community around a common understanding lending toward a strong sense of belonging. The researchers acknowledged that there are limitations to the data considering respondents were overwhelmingly female, and predominantly white. However, the findings provided empirical evidence for the positive impacts related to positive psychology in student affairs practice and specifically strengths-based initiatives and warrant for further understanding of the positive influence that these initiatives can play for students.

**Key words:** *academic strengths, persistence, sense of belonging*

## **Spirituality and/or Religious Affiliation**

**Brooks, J. E., & Allen, K. R. (2014). The influence of fictive kin relationships and religiosity on the academic persistence of African American college students attending an HBCU. *Journal of Family Issues*, 2016(37), 814-832.**

This study examined how fictive kin relationships and religion impact retention and graduation rates of African American college students. Fictive kin relationships are defined as relationships with individuals within a family system and support system but of no biological relation. The authors positioned this study in addressing a gap in the literature around how cultural factors influence academic persistence among African American students. Using a life course perspective as their conceptual framework, the authors interviewed 14 juniors and seniors at a Historically Black University in the Southeastern United States about their college experiences. After analyzing interview transcripts, the authors argued that fictive kin relationships and religiosity might be seen as coping mechanisms that contribute to the academic persistence of African American students. In particular, the authors discuss the students' relationships with community members, peers, and faculty/staff members as fictive kin and aspects of their religiosity and faith, including prayer and religious service attendance. A highlight of the article is the inclusion of many interview excerpts through the discussion, allowing readers to experience the participants' own words about these themes.

**Key words:** *African American students, persistence, relationships, retention*

## **Spring Admits**

Brady, K., & Sliuzas, R. (2014, July). Mid-year entry students: Their expectations and experiences. The International First Year in Higher Education Conference, Darwin.

The authors conducted a small-scale study that examined the specific transition and orientation needs of mid-year entry students. Mid-year students completed a mandatory online survey at the conclusion of a new mid-year orientation program and were invited to participate in follow-up interviews. Challenges specific to this population included social isolation and administrative barriers and errors. However, the most challenging aspect of mid-year entry students as reported in this study happened in the classroom and was rooted in faculty behavior. Students reported that the faculty assumed that all of their students were now in the second semester of college and thus incorrectly assumed that the mid-year entry students had more institutional knowledge and college readiness than they did, and further (incorrectly) assumed that students had already acquired content knowledge that would have been covered in a previous semester. Recommendations included making general improvements to mid-year orientation programming to remove or reduce administrative difficulties and specifically focus on awareness-training for faculty to remind them of the fact that their courses should stand on their own unless prerequisites are specified and to increase awareness of the unique challenges that mid-year entry students face in their classes.

**Key words:** *transition, orientation, orientation programs*

**Sliuzas, R., & Brady, K. (2015). A mid-year orientation program: Addressing the needs of mid-year entry students. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 6(1), 61.**

The authors detailed the design and development of a new mid-year orientation program at their university, which was intended to introduce mid-year entry students to their new academic and social environment. The authors began with an overview of their institution, a review of the literature on the general characteristics and expectations of mid-year entry students, and a description of their new mid-year orientation program. This was followed by a brief description of the small-scale study in which students took an online survey as part of the orientation program and participated in two follow-up interviews. Results indicated that the mid-year orientation program was well received by the students and that they felt the program was beneficial both academically and socially. Recommendations included retooling the program to offer additional support and resources to help students better manage their family, work, and academic commitments.

**Key words:** *mid-year students, orientation programs, environment*

## **Student Athletes**

**Comeaux, E., Speer, L., Taustine, M., & Harrison, C. K. (2011). Purposeful engagement of first-year Division I student-athletes. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 23(1), 35-52.**

This study explored how first-year student-athletes form academic and athletic identities as part of their college transition and how engagement in educationally purposeful activities may influence those self-conceptions. A sample of 147 student-athletes from four NCAA Division I public universities participated in the study by answering a questionnaire developed to help the authors understand the first-year transition experiences of student athletes. The authors used Astin's (1984) theory on student involvement and Chickering and Gamson's (1987) "Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" as a guiding framework for the questionnaire. In their analysis of the questionnaire results, the authors found differences between student-athletes participating in revenue-generating sports (men's basketball and football) and student athletes playing non-revenue sports. Notably, first-year nonrevenue athletes report a high academic identity as compared to the other group. The authors also discuss findings that indicate that Black student-athletes may have higher self-perceptions of leadership and academic identity than White student-athletes. The article concludes with recommendations for how head coaches and student affairs professionals might use the study's results to create more opportunities for transitioning student-athletes to engage in educationally purposeful activities.

**Key words:** *Athletes, college adjustment, engagement, first-year students, involvement, self-concept/image*

**Gayles, J. G., & Baker, A. R. (2015). Opportunities and challenges for first-year student-athletes transitioning from high school to college. *New Directions for Student Leadership, (147), 43-51.***

This article highlights many of the unique challenges and opportunities first-year college athletes face in their transition from high school to college, including balancing athletic, academic, and social demands of the college experience. The authors argue that it may be a challenge for student athletes to make the same gains in learning and personal development that their non-athlete peers are expected to make due to the time and energy required by athletic training. However, athletic participation also creates an environment that supports the transition and development of first-year students. This includes reducing anxiety around social belonging through teammate bonding and creating opportunities for students to form relationships and become effective communicators with people different from themselves. Practitioners may be interested in the authors' discussion of how coaches, athletic administrators, and student affairs professionals might consider theories of psychosocial, cognitive, and moral development in order to better support student athlete transitions.

**Key words:** *Athletes, college adjustment, first-year students, sense of belonging, development theory*

**Higbee, J. L., & Schultz, J. L. (2013). Responding to the concerns of student-athletes enrolled in a first-year experience course. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research, 6(2), 155.***

Researchers asked weekly reflective questions in their large lecture first-year seminar for student athletes. The answers were summarized and used to provide direction for future class meeting, as well as insights into the student transition. This article describes this process and presents the responses to one such weekly question: What is the biggest unanswered question you have about college? (p.159). Responses were coded into one (or more) of ten themes, including faculty and academic expectations, time management, balance, and stress, athletics, majors and careers, and future concerns. Individual examples of each theme highlight the individual and group challenges of first-year student athletes.

**Key words:** *Athletes, college adjustment, first-year students, first-year seminar*

**Johnson, J. E., Wessel, R. D., & Pierce, D. A. (2013). Exploring the influence of select demographic, academic, and athletic variables on the retention of student-athletes. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 15(2), 135-155.***

This study was designed to determine which demographic, academic, and athletic variables most strongly predict student attrition and which variables increase retention of first-year student athletes. The researchers gathered demographic, academic, and retention data on the participants from the student information system. Findings indicate that African American students in revenue-generating sports who are more than 250 miles away from home are at the greatest risk of attrition. The authors indicate that students in that sub-group may need more support and specific programmatic efforts in order to be successfully retained.

**Key words:** *African American students, Athletes, first-year students, retention*

## **Students of Color**

**Adelman, H., Taylor, L., & Nelson, P. (2013). Native American students going to and staying in postsecondary education: An intervention perspective. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 37(3), 29-56.**

The focus of this article is the postsecondary education gap for Native Americans in the United States, which the authors argue begins in the primary education system, and includes aspects of poverty, cultural identity, and language. The authors inventoried and discussed existing recruitment, transition, and retention efforts targeting Native American high school and college students, as well as analyzed research that has specific applicability to the barriers to success and completion that Native American college students face. This article's main critique of existing policy and practice around access, transition, and retention of Native American students in higher education is that there is no cohesive system of support for this sub-population. Rather, the authors argue, existing policy has resulted in a fragmented and piecemeal approach to programs, initiatives, and projects. To that end, the authors offer three recommendations for a comprehensive system of student and learning supports and interventions for Native American students from pre-kindergarten through college graduation. These recommendations will be of great interest to practitioners who already work with Native American students or who aim to expand access and retention efforts for Native American students at their institution.

**Key words:** *Access to higher education, Native American students, policy, retention, transition*

**Bosse, S., Duncan, K., Gapp, S., & Newland, L. (2011). Supporting American Indian students in the transition to postsecondary education. *Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 23(2), 33-51.**

This qualitative study used an ecological systems approach to examine the ways in which micro- and macro- systems impact the persistence and retention of American Indian students. The study builds upon earlier research by gathering further insight into factors that increase retention of American Indian students and by comparing the sometimes competing perspectives of students and student affairs personnel as to existing barriers and available support systems/programs. Results indicated that the level of a student's academic preparation, academic self-efficacy, and interpersonal and culturally relevant relationships on campus were the primary factors in successful persistence and retention. The study reinforces previous research that demonstrated the strong positive impact that supporting cultural connectedness can have for American Indian students.

**Key words:** *Academic preparation, campus environment, Native American students, relationships, persistence, retention*

**Brooks, M., Jones, C., & Burt, I. (2013). Are African-American male undergraduate retention programs successful? An evaluation of an Undergraduate African-American male retention program. *Journal of African American Studies, 17(2), 206-221.***

The researchers' goal in this study is to assess the effectiveness of academic programs designed to support and retain African-American male students beyond their first year of college. The authors provide context for this study by reviewing the literature on the factors impacting the retention and completion rates African-American males in higher education and inventorying existing retention strategies for this sub-population. Using a mixed-methods research design, the authors attempted to evaluate the impact of academic intervention program they designed on 136 African-American male first-year students at a large Southeastern university. This program consisted of a weekly freshman orientation seminar paired with peer mentoring by upperclassmen students and academic monitoring by program staff, academic advisors, and retention coordinators. During the study, participants took pre- and post-test survey assessments designed to quantitatively measure academic acculturation, social integration, and self-esteem at the beginning and end of the semester. Additionally, participants wrote responses to open-ended questions about the mentor/mentee relationship at the conclusion of the semester, while mentors kept logs on their interactions with mentees for program staff to review. The results of the study indicated that participants had better academic acculturation and social integration and increased GPAs as compared to a control group. Over all, the authors conclude that there is evidence that academic retention programs may positively impact African-American male first-year students when they include elements of mentoring, supplemental non-academic instruction, and academic monitoring. Notably, they suggest peer mentoring is important tool institutions can utilize to help African-American male students overcome challenges and provide them with a sense of belonging and purpose.

*Key words:* African American students, first-year students, mentoring, orientation programs, sense of belonging

**Carter, D. F., Locks, A. M., & Winkle-Wagner, R. (2013). From when and where I enter: Theoretical and empirical considerations of minority students' transition to college. *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*, 28(2013), 93-149.**

This chapter addresses many areas of interest and concern related to the transition to college for students of color, including Asian American, Latina/o, African American, and Native American students. The authors begin with a review of traditional theories and approaches to student transitions to college and discuss the limitations of this scholarship with regard to students of color. Then, they analyzed two emergent theories, academic capital formation and validation models, and their relevance to students of colors' transitions. The chapter then moves to a discussion of the common themes that emerge from this scholarship about challenges racial and ethnic minority students face, including financial barriers, academic preparation, and negative racial climates at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), as well as interventions and supports that can help students succeed in spite of these challenges. The chapter closes with the authors' recommendations for future research concerning students of color and their college transition, including the need for research that disaggregates students by racial and ethnic group, gender, socioeconomic status, and immigration status and considers differences between them.

*Key words:* African American students, Asian American students, development theory, Latino/a students, Native American students, transition

**Cerezo, A. & McWhirther, B. T. (2012). A brief intervention designed to improve social awareness and skills to improve Latino college student retention. *College Student Journal*, 46(4), 867-879.**

This study evaluates the effectiveness of an intervention program aimed at increasing retention of Latino students by positively impacting their social awareness and skills. The program, called the Latino Educational Equity Project (LEEP), was tested with a group of 40 Latino students at three predominately White institutions (PWIs) in the Pacific Northwest. The design of LEEP was informed by the Villalpando's (1994) Critical Race Theory framework, using peer facilitators and dialogue to build Latino student social skills and overcome structural and institutional barriers to success. Delivered in a single one-day session, the LEEP curriculum specifically focused on helping Latino students build supportive peer networks, understand university culture and how to balance academic and family demands, and increase their political awareness of race, higher education, and the importance of their individual success for the entire Latino community. Participants took both pre-test questionnaires and post-tests at the three- and eight-week marks, and the researchers compared the results against

a control group. While the results of the study were mixed overall, the researchers found that LEEP participants demonstrated significantly improved social adjustment to college. In their conclusion, the authors emphasize that student affairs practitioners can help Latino students adjust to college by encouraging them to join organizations that will allow them to build relationships with other Latinos.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, Latino students, development theory, relationships*

**Costen, W. M., Waller, S. N., & Wozencroft, A. J. (2013). Mitigating race: Understanding the role of social connectedness and sense of belonging in African-American student retention in hospitality programs. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 12(1), 15-24.***

This study focused on how social connectedness and sense of belonging may impact the retention of African-American students in undergraduate hospitality and tourism management programs, particularly at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) where the large majority of hospitality and tourism programs are located. The authors recruited both black and white students from a hospitality program at PWI in the Southeastern United States to participate in the study. They chose a qualitative focus group methodology with a semi-structured interview protocol to examine how connected students' felt to their university, college, and department. The authors' findings suggested that connectedness to the program and the university, supportive relationships with faculty, and the presence of ethnic minority faculty in the program may positively impact African-American student retention in hospitality management programs. The authors position this study as being important to both PWIs and the hospitality and tourism industry, as African-Americans are underrepresented among total graduates at PWIs and the ranks of hospitality management, the latter of which serves a diverse clientele all over the world. While the scope of this study is limited to the experiences of students in a single program at a single university, these findings may have broader implications student success and retention research in general, particularly for those concerned with the experiences of minority students at PWIs.

**Key words:** *African American students, college adjustment, student-faculty/staff interactions, retention, sense of belonging*

**D'Lima, G. M., Winsler, A., & Kitsantas, A. (2014). Ethnic and gender differences in first-year college students' goal orientation, self-efficacy, and extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. *The Journal of Educational Research, 107(5), 341-356.***

This research study considered ethnicity and gender differences in early student motivation in order to determine how it may impact student retention and graduation rates for different ethnic groups and genders. Specifically, the authors were interested in three aspects of motivation, goal orientation, self-efficacy, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. The aim of this study was to examine differences in



students' motivation levels varied over time during their first semester of college and links between motivation and student academic performance. Using a quantitative research design, the authors recruited nearly 600 participants enrolled in 100-level courses at an ethnically diverse mid-Atlantic university to take a survey with subscales aimed at assessing these different aspects of motivation. Most of the students were in the first semester of their first year at college. The survey was administered in the first three weeks of the semester, and again during the last two weeks of the semester. Additionally, the authors obtained student GPA data to measure student academic performance during this period. The results of the study indicated that significant differences in early student motivational profiles for students of different ethnicities and genders do exist, and the authors posited that college instructors should assess these different aspects of motivation in their students in order to identify which students may need support and assistance.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, first-year students, motivation, retention*

**Farmer, E. D. & Hope, W. C. (2015). Factors that influence African American male retention and graduation: The case of Gateway University, a historically black college and university. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 17(1), 2-17.**

This article presents findings from a study designed to identify which pre-college and first-semester of college variables have the greatest impact on retention to the second semester of African-American males at an HBCU. The study used archival academic data on the quantitative rates of GPA, retention, and graduation data from a pre-selected cohort. The data were analyzed using logical regression and other statistical methods. Findings are in line with other published studies in that higher GPAs (both pre-college and first-semester) predict greater rates of retention and that in-state students are retained at higher levels than out-of-state students. Furthermore, and not surprisingly, in-state students with higher GPAs are the most likely to be retained to the second semester and graduate at much higher rates.

**Key words:** *Academic performance, African American students, HBCUs, retention*

**Flynn, S. V., Duncan, K., & Jorgensen, M. F. (2012). An emergent phenomenon of American Indian postsecondary transition and retention. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 90(4), 437-449.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2012.00055.x>**

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe themes that impact the retention rate of American Indian students entering postsecondary education. The authors used a phenomenological approach in which they interviewed students in addition to reviewing the relevant journal literature and counseling codes of ethics. The interviews were semi-structured and were coded for generalized themes and emergent phenomena. Three dominant themes emerged: institutional barriers, financial barriers, and social/interpersonal barriers. Understanding how these

barriers are experienced by American Indian students may help OTR professionals design and develop more culturally appropriate interventions in order to increase feelings of inclusion and to increase rates of retention.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, Native American students, retention*

**Hoston, W. T., Graves, S. L., & Fleming-Randle, M. (2010). Individual practices to increase the graduation rate of African American students at predominantly white colleges and universities. *The Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 18(1), 69–77.**

This article presents the results of a qualitative study designed to elicit recommendations from faculty as to the most successful individualized, as opposed to institutionalized, retention strategies for African-American students at predominantly White colleges (PWC). The authors addressed common barriers to success and institutional strategies that work to help students overcome these barriers in addition to the more individual strategies that are the main focus of the article. The authors then detailed ten individual strategies that faculty suggest are the most productive in terms of helping African American students in particular to succeed in their classes. While the recommendations reinforce student success strategies from existing research (i.e., sitting in the front of class), this article may be useful to those who are looking for a readable and succinct set of recommendations to share with students.

**Key words:** *African American students, academic success*

**Ingram, P., Chaudhary, A. K., & Jones, W. T. (2014). How do biracial students interact with others on the college campus? *College Student Journal*, 48(2), 297-311.**

This study explored the unique needs of bi- or multiracial students and provided recommendations for inclusive and supportive initiatives for multiracial students. The study was conducted via an online survey developed by the author and the resultant data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings were mixed, with some students advocating for specific multiracial student organizations and services and other strongly suggesting that such organizations and services would serve only to make multiracial students more segregated and stigmatized. The authors recommend that decisions about organizations be left to the students on individual campuses. They further recommend that all campuses work to be more welcoming to and inclusive of multiracial students by incorporating both awareness training for faculty, staff, and students and inclusion of multiracial issues into classes and curricula. The open-response comments included in the article are particularly of interest to faculty and staff working with multiracial populations, as they provide the most insight into the lived experiences and expressed desires of the students surveyed.

*Key words: Bi/Multiracial students, transition programs*

**Johnson, L. (2013). The benefits of a comprehensive retention program for African American students at a predominately White university. *Interdisciplinary Journal Of Teaching And Learning, 3(1), 38-54.***

This article presents the findings of a qualitative research study designed to assess the experiences of African-American students, faculty, and staff involved in the on-campus retention program at a predominantly white institution (PWI). The study sought to determine how those experiences impact the effectiveness of the retention initiative. The author details some of the most prevalent issues faced by African-American students and gives a brief overview of retention efforts at PWIs before delving into the specifics of her study. The study was conducted through taped interviews with selected retention program staff/faculty and with students who participated in that retention program. The data was analyzed using a grounded theory approach to coding and triangulation. The retention program included both peer and faculty/staff mentoring, both of which were found to be beneficial to the students.

*Key words: African American students, mentoring, retention*

**Lee, J. A., & Barnes, A. R. (2015). Predominately White institutions: Transition programs to address academic under-preparedness and experiences of discrimination. *Translational Issues In Psychological Science, 1(4), 401-410.***

This review article examined the literature on the history and development of transition and orientation programs designed to specifically address the needs of black students at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). The authors synthesized research dealing with various factors that disproportionately and negatively impact black student success and retention, such as academic under-preparedness, discrimination, and oppression. The authors then turned their attention to the relevant literature related to building successful transition programs for black students, including a lengthy discussion of the most prevalent academic and social outcomes reported in the literature.

*Key words: African American students, orientation, transition programs, academic success*

**Lee, J., Donlan, W., & Brown, E. F. (2010). American Indian/Alaskan Native undergraduate retention at predominantly white institutions: An elaboration of Tinto's theory of college student departure. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 12(3), 257-276.***

This article reports the results of a research study undertaken to determine the factors that influence the persistence and retention of American Indian students. The authors use Tinto's integration-commitment model of attrition as both the lens through which the study was designed and through which the findings are interpreted. The authors used four different methodological tools (statistical analysis of institutional data, a survey, interviews, and focus groups) to conduct their research. The authors used these methods to identify the most common reasons why American Indian students decide to leave school and potential strategies that could reverse those decisions. The findings indicate that having financial difficulties was the most frequently cited reason for leaving school. Competing family obligations were also frequently mentioned. The authors use the qualitative narrative data to further illuminate these findings. The authors concluded with a discussion of institutional strategies that may help alleviate these challenges for American Indian students.

**Key words:** *Native American students, retention*

**Mayhew, M., Stipeck, C., & Dorow, A. (2011). The effects of orientation programming on learning outcomes related to academic and social adjustment with implications for transfers and students of color. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 23(2), 53-73.**

This study explored the impact of orientation programming on the academic and social adjustment of first-year and transfer students of color at a predominantly White institution (PWI). The authors used one of the StudentVoice validated survey instruments to collect their data. The survey was completed by over 40% of the incoming freshman and transfer students in the study period. Results of the survey indicate that orientation programs are more valuable at increasing social adjustment than academic adjustment for first-year students. This was particularly true for students of color. However, the data indicates that the opposite is true for transfer students (i.e. they reported more gains in academic rather than social adjustment). The authors suggest that these findings can be used to improve orientation programs for specific audiences, for example, increasing the academic content for first-year students and increasing the social content for transfer students. Student affairs professionals in particular may find this article helpful as it details many of the ways in which orientating programming can contribute to creating a welcoming environment for students of color.

**Key words:** *College adjustment, first-year students, orientation, transfer students*

**Musoba, G. D., Collazo, C., & Placide, S. (2013). The first year: Just surviving or thriving at an HSI. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 12(4), 356-368.**

This study was designed to elicit information about the unique challenges and opportunities faced by students of color at a Hispanic serving institute (HSI). The study also sought to discover the unique needs that met by existing first year experience (FYE) programming and which needs were not met. The study was conducted through qualitative interviews and the findings are presented in the case study model. The interviews were evaluated and coded for emerging themes individually by all the researchers and the responses were then triangulated and analyzed. The two most dominant themes that emerged were the critical importance of a sense of institutional belonging and the value of an institutional mentor. The researchers also found that a lack of major and career planning was a particular challenge for students of color and that students of color often feel that the institution is not adequately communicating important information to the students. The article is strongest in illustrating how FYE personnel can serve as mentors and as ambassadors of the college culture.

**Key words:** *Latino/a students, mentoring, transition programs*

**Pino, N. W., Martinez-Ramos, G. P., & Smith, W. L. (2012). Latinos, the academic ethic, and the transition to college. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 11(1), 17-31.**

The research described in this article examines factors that contribute to the academic ethic for Latino/a students. In this study, the authors examined survey results from 679 Latino/a undergraduate students, which was as a segment of a larger study on academic ethic and the transition to college. Factor analysis was conducted on 29 items about behavior in college and study habits and that was compared to survey responses about high school academic ethic. Findings from the study indicated that high school academic work ethic did not specifically affect GPA but did affect whether a student engaged in pro-academic or anti-academic behaviors. Whether a Latino/a student was first or second-generation appears to influence academic ethic, particularly for Latinas. Prior research and findings from this study indicate a need for additional research on the potential significant differences of Latinos and Latinas.

**Key words:** *Academic success, Latino/a students*

**Sandoval-Lucero, E., Maes, J. B., & Klingsmith, L. (2014). African American and Latina(o) community college students' social capital and student success. *College Student Journal*, 48(3), 522-533.**

This article examined factors that contribute to the attrition, success, and the cultural implications for African American and Latino/a students. Focus group interviews were conducted to explore success as related to grades, retention and enrollment, progress to graduation, and to eventual graduation. Only students with a 2.5 GPA or higher and who had previously identified as African American or Latino/a are selected for the research. Emerging themes for successful students

included a positive relationship with faculty, support from family, and campus engagement and support. An unintended finding, the researchers discovered that African American students who were full-time are more successful than African American students who were part-time; conversely, Latino/a students who were part-time are more successful than Latino/a students who are full-time. The researchers assert that the three themes indicated that positive outcomes in terms of cultural and social capital are achieved and noted that the study was limited because there are no African American males in the focus groups. The authors asserted that previously held notions about diverse student family support is more diverse and nuanced. Other cultural capital is exposed as positive factors and assertions are made about consideration of perspective when designing retention initiatives for these populations of students.

**Key words:** *African American students, Latino/a students, parents and family, retention*

**Wilson, D. (2014). Follow me to the baccalaureate: Reflections and advice from African American community college transfer student journeys. *The Community College Enterprise*, 20(2), 72-84.**

An examination of enrollment statistics demonstrates increased enrollment trends but not degree attainment trends for African American students motivating the author's study. Beginning with literature reviews focused on the intention to transfer, the transition to community college, and graduation rates for community college students degree attainment, the author presents Padilla's model of minority student success and Yosso's community cultural wealth model as conceptual frameworks to examine the experiences of African American college students who have transferred to four-year institutions and attained a degree. The author conducts interviews and surveys to attempt to understand the students' experiences. Findings indicate that those who have successfully transferred as intended and earned a baccalaureate degree are those who utilize academic support services, are invested in their academic and campus experience, and share positive reflection regarding their identity development and confidence specifically as related to culture and support. The author recommends African American students develop strong academic habits and get engaged in campus activities that will foster learning and personal growth.

**Key words:** *Academic success, African American students, transfer students, community college*

**Wortham, F. B. (2013). Social networking: Engaging prospective and admitted African American and other minority students before they arrive on campus. *About Campus*, 18(1), 21-24.**

Charged with supporting the needs and success of minority students and educating the campus community around inclusivity, the author reviews the success of an implemented program combining social media interactions with prospective students and ongoing mentoring relationships for students who ultimately enroll. The Connector program ran for five years and minority students served as mentors to small groups of incoming students. Using peer to peer interaction via Facebook to develop a relationship between incoming minority students and Connectors; the program provided a space for candid conversations between students whose commonalities bonded them. Using the established connection, the program resulted in increased attendance at events and programs designed for minority students. Those who participated in the program indicated satisfaction and recommended the program continue. The author suggests continuing to explore the ever-changing landscape of technology to find ways to use social media opportunities as a foundation for relationship building between incoming minority students and peer mentors.

***Key words:** Academic success, African American students, Students of color, Peer support*

## **Transfer Students**

**Allen, J. M., Smith, C. L., & Muehleck, J. K. (2013). What kinds of advising are important to community college pre-and post-transfer students? *Community College Review*, 41(4), 330-345.**

This study focused on academic advising of community college transfer students. In order to find out more about what aspects of advising are particularly helpful to students who transfer from community college to four-year colleges and universities, the authors investigate the importance ascribed to 12 different advising functions by both pre- and post-transfer students. Participants in the study consisted of a sample of 1,932 students from two community colleges who intended to complete bachelor's degrees (pre-transfer students) and 7,172 students from five public 4-year institutions who had transferred from community colleges (post-transfer students). Participants completed a survey instrument, the Inventory of Academic Functions-Student Version, developed by the authors intended to assess experiences with 12 functions of academic advising falling into four general areas: integration functions, referral functions, information functions, and shared responsibility function. The authors found that both groups of students rated all advising functions above a 4 on a 6-point scale, which they suggested meant that advisors who work with pre- and post-community college transfer students need to be prepared to offer a comprehensive set of advising skills and experiences. Another highlight among the findings was that students rated receiving accurate information about degree requirements and transfer policies, timelines, and procedures very highly. Also of interest is that pre-transfer students ascribe importance to advising

that assists them with choosing among general education options and deciding what kind of degree to pursue.

**Key words:** *transfer students, academic advising*

**Allen, J. M., Smith, C. L., & Muehleck, J. K. (2014). Pre- and post-transfer academic advising: What students say are the similarities and differences. *Journal of College Student Development, 55(4), 353-367.***

This paper presented the results of a study on the pre- and post-transfer academic advising experiences of community college students who either intend to transfer or have transferred to four-year institutions. The study used a concurrent nested research design that employs both qualitative and quantitative methods but is guided by a predominant method, which in this case is quantitative analysis. Participants in the study consisted of 1,932 students from two community colleges and 7,172 students from five public four-year institutions who took a survey instrument with both Likert-type scales and open-ended questions. In their analysis of the data, the authors examined whether students differ in satisfaction with the advising they receive pre- and post-transfer, whether either group of students is less satisfied with academic advising than with their overall educational experience, and what factors might explain their findings. The results suggested that pre-transfer students are more satisfied with their advising experiences than post-transfer students, but that both groups are less satisfied with advising than with their overall educational experience. Practitioners at four-year institutions in particular may be interested in the finding that post-transfer students report experiencing more dire consequences for advising errors at their four-year institutions. Other factors that contributed to relatively low satisfaction levels with academic advising for both groups include receiving inaccurate and inconsistent information from advisors, the inaccessibility of advising at their institutions, and the lack of individuation they receive in their advising experiences. The authors concluded the paper with a discussion the implications of the study for practitioners. They also provided recommendations for addressing student concerns, such as advising departments experimenting with the use of advising e-portfolios for students across the transfer process.

**Key words:** *academic advising, transfer students*

**Bahr, P. R., Toth, C., Thirolf, K., & Massé, J. C. (2013). A review and critique of the literature on community college students' transition processes and outcomes in four-year institutions. In *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research, Vol. 28 (pp. 459-511)*. Springer Netherlands.**

This chapter examined scholarship on the transition experiences and outcomes of community college transfer students at four-year institutions. The authors argue that while much has been written about the community college side of the transfer equation, relatively little scholarship has focused on the role that four-year



institutions play in the transition, retention, and degree-completion of community college transfer students. To this end, the authors' aim for this literature review is to identify common concepts that emerge in the literature about students' post-transfer transitions, situate these concepts within the literature on student retention and success in higher education, critique and summarize the findings for each concept as they relate to students' post-transfer experiences, and provide recommendations for future scholarship and inquiry in this area. The concepts that the authors discussed included baccalaureate degree completion, academic performance, academic and social integration, involvement, environmental pull, capital, and transfer receptivity. Dozens of articles are carefully analyzed so that the authors are able to define each concept, discuss how it may be measured, and examine related findings.

**Key words:** *transition, transfer students, retention*

**Chin-Newman, C. S., & Shaw, S. T. (2013). The anxiety of change: How new transfer students overcome challenges. *Journal of College Admission*, 2013(221), 14-21.**

This study examined challenges faced by community college transfer students at a four-year institution. The authors conducted structured qualitative focus groups with 14 new junior-level transfer students at a regional four-year university in order to identify common obstacles the students experienced before and after the transfer process. Findings from the focus group interviews are presented into two different stages: prior to acceptance to their transfer institution, and after acceptance. The authors included significant excerpts from the interviews so that readers can experience the students' narratives in their own words. Students described feeling frustrated with receiving incorrect information from community college counselors and advisers pre-transfer, and feeling overwhelmed by unfamiliar systems at their new university post-transfer. A major source of anxiety for participants in the study was not knowing which of their community college credits would be accepted by their new institution. This related to concerns over the time it took for their transcripts to be evaluated and fears about having to take more classes than they expected, leading to a delay in their graduation. The authors noted that much of the stress and anxiety students feel during the transfer process is due to students not having needed information readily available to them. To this end, they make several recommendations that both community colleges and four-year universities can implement to help transfer students make the transition and acclimate to their new settings with less stress.

**Keywords:** *transfer students, community college, college adjustment, transition, two-year institution*

**Clark, K. M., & May, I. C. (2015). Upper-division transfer students: Designing a supplemental instruction program for nursing students within a**

**science based curriculum. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(6), 499-514.**

This paper presented an assessment of an academic support initiative developed for a cohort of junior-year transfer students in a nursing program at a public university in the University System of Maryland. The initiative, which consisted of Supplemental Instruction, workshops on accelerated learning techniques, and individual tutoring, was specifically developed to help new transfer students succeed in pathopharmacology, a challenging course with a high withdrawal/fail rate for new juniors in the program. The authors conducted a retrospective quantitative study on a sample of 55 first-semester nursing juniors in the fall 2006, 78% of whom were community-college transfer students, to investigate whether transfer students who participated in academic support initiatives performed better in the required pathopharmacology course after considering previous academic success and preparation. The data suggested that participation in the academic support program positively impacted transfer students' GPAs at the end of the first semester and contributed to a reduced rate of failure or drop out (from 15% to 7%) in subsequent semesters. Study participants indicated that peer tutoring was the most useful intervention in the academic support program. While the results of this study are not generalizable to other programs or institutions, the authors suggested that the academic support program assessed in this paper could serve as a model for similar academic support initiatives for transfer students in other contexts.

**Keywords:** *transfer students, academic support*

**Clausen, C. & Wessel, R.D. (2015). Transfer shock: Predicting academic success after transition. *The Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 23(1), 15-27.**

This article focused on the transfer shock phenomenon which is the observation that transfer students experience difficulty adjusting to their new academic environment resulting in decreased grade point average as students adapt to the new academic structures of the institution; the study examined predictors of post-transfer GPA and graduation rates for students transferring to Ball State University (BSU). A literature review explored Tinto's theory of individual departure and the nature of social integration as related to transfer students. The sample of the study was comprised of 1,857 BSU transfer students entering between 2004-2006 and was analyzed via a statistical quantitative analysis. The study found that the average post-transfer GPA dropped significantly from the pre-transfer GPA and that nearly sixty percent completed their degree in six years. Predictors for post-transfer GPA were found first to be pre-transfer GPA, followed by age with older students having higher GPAs than younger transfer students, and then by the type of institution students transferred from with those executing a vertical transfer earning better post-transfer GPAs than those executing a horizontal transfer. Examination of predictors for six-year graduation began with age again indicating that older students are more likely to achieve degree attainment, followed by sex with

indicators that women are more likely to graduate in six years, and then by transfer institution type, which indicated that horizontal transfers were more likely to graduate in six years. While major did not play a significant role in this study's findings for post-transfer GPA, some majors did show statistically significant graduation rate predictors; those majors are Nursing, Journalism and Telecommunications, and Education. Some of these findings confirm previous transfer research while other data is in conflict with some previous research. The researchers recommended that these predictors be analyzed at the point of admission and that transfer students connect early with academic support to have a continued, stable point of contact. Additionally, the researchers suggested conducting qualitative studies to align with the statistical data for a more robust picture of the indicators of success for transfer students.

**Keywords:** *transfer students, college adjustment, academic performance*

**Coston, C. T. , Lord, V. B. , Monell, J. S. (2013). Improving the Success of Transfer Students: Responding to Risk Factors. *Learning Communities Research and Practice, 1(1), Article 11. Retrieved from <http://washingtoncenter.evergreen.edu/lcrpjournal/vol1/iss1/11>***

This study examined the impact of participation in a disciplinary-specific transfer student learning community on student stress levels. The focus of the study was a Criminal Justice Transfer Learning Community with 15 student participants at a large southeastern public university. Students in the Criminal Justice Transfer Learning Community took two linked courses, participated in structured study groups, volunteered with criminal justice agencies, attended lectures on job skills, and interviewed professors in criminology and criminal justice about their teaching and research initiatives. The authors were interested in any changes in transfer student stress levels over the course of the two-term learning community as well as the means of coping students developed in response to their stressors. Students identified stressors at the beginning of the first term and rated the intensity of that stressor at the beginning of the first term, beginning of the second term, and at the end of the academic year. Common stressors identified by students include limited number of transfer credits accepted, navigating a new campus, and the expense of books. The authors found that reduction in stress levels occurred over the course of the learning community, and that students reported the feeling of belonging in their learning community cohort and university community had the largest impact on stress reduction.

**Keywords:** *transfer students, sense of belonging, college stress, learning community*

**Gard, D. R., Paton, V., & Gosselin, K. (2012). Student perceptions of factors contributing to community-college-to-university transfer success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 36(11), 833-848.***

This study focused on the actual mechanisms of the process of transferring from a community college to a four-year institution. Building on the work of Townsend (1995), this study used semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and a follow-up survey to elicit information on transfers students' perceptions of the transfer process. Student responses were coded and categorized into themes of issues with advising, psychosocial integration, development courses, and financial aid. Academic advisement was by far the most commonly mentioned challenge and the authors detailed the many ways in which advising was problematic for the transfer students. These findings were consistent with the work of Townsend (1995) and others. Recommendations called for increased communication and partnerships between the advising offices of 2- and 4-year institutions.

**Keywords:** *community college, transfer students, academic advising*

**Harper-Marinick, M., & Swarthout, J. (2012). Developing a culture of transfer and student success in Arizona. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2012(160), 79-89.**

This article is an in-depth examination of the Arizona statewide transfer model. This model was initiated by the formation of an Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC), which was overseen by a council of the presidents of all the institutions of higher education in the state. The APASC is charged with providing oversight to the transfer policies and procedures of all the public 2- and 4-year institutions in the state. This body also oversees several sub-groups that determine course sequencing and content to ensure a streamlined credit transfer process. The APASC is also responsible for the APASC Consortium for Transfer and Alignment (ACTA) which works to foster collaboration among k-12 and higher education in the state (the "P-20 Continuum") in order to enhance curricular alignment between pre-, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions. APASC is ultimately responsible for Arizona's general education curriculum and its transfer pathways. This article detailed not only the history and work of the APASC and its many sub-groups and sub-committees, but also highlighted some of the most promising and innovative practices, such as the Shared Course Numbering System, that these groups have developed and implemented.

**Keywords:** *two-year institutions, four-year institutions, transfer students*

**Handel, S. J. (2013). The transfer moment: The pivotal partnership between community colleges and four-year institutions in securing the nation's college completion agenda. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2013(162), 5-15.**

This chapter began with a brief overview of the OECD data and the United States' ranking of 6th among developed nations in percentage of working-age adults with an associate degree or higher. The author then went on to describe the national call for increased educational attainment, which led into a discussion of the role of the

community college in the college completion agenda and of how the traditional transfer pathways need to be reexamined and revised to meet national educational goals. Then followed a description and overview of the research on the current status of these transfer pathways and includes areas for improvement. The article concluded with a lengthy justification of the importance of the community college system to the college completion agenda and a call for more research in this area.

**Keywords:** *community colleges, two-year institutions, transfer process*

**Hoover, S. C. (2010). Designing orientation and transition programs for transfer students. Designing successful transitions: A guide for orienting students to college, 181-192.**

This chapter began by describing the different definitions of a transfer student and how transfers can be multi-directional (vertical, horizontal, and reverse), which makes defining a “typical” transfer student exceedingly difficult. The author then moved on to an exploration of the challenges of the transfer student experience and of programs that can mitigate these challenges. The next section detailed ways in which institutions can work to encourage successful transfer experiences, including defining the typical transfer student at your institution, designing effective local orientation programs for transferring students, and developing parent and family orientation programming. The chapter highlighted the importance of having peer transfer student leaders and the roles they can play in transfer student seminars. Recommendations included establishing transfer offices to oversee all of these programmatic efforts and developing state and institutional articulation agreements to ease the transfer process.

**Keywords:** *transfer students, college adjustment, engagement, peer support*

**Hope, J. (2016). Facilitate transfer, degree completion with concurrent enrollment program. Recruiting & Retaining Adult Learners, 18(7), 1-7.**

This article described an innovative new model of transfer between a community college and a partnering four year institution, This model was truly revolutionary in that it eliminates the “transfer” altogether. The Degree Partnership Program enables students to be admitted to both institutions simultaneously. Students are able to take classes at both institutions throughout their academic careers. The article went on to detail how this program works and how it benefits not just the students but also both institutions. The article concluded with concrete examples of partnership programs, support services, and events.

**Keywords:** *community college, two-year institutions, four-year institutions, transfer students*

**Jackson, D. L., & Laanan, F. S. (2015). Desiring to fit: Fostering the success of community college transfer students in STEM. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(2), 132-149.**

This study sought to find ways to enhance the STEM student transfer pathway between 2- and 4-year institutions. Using Weidman's (1987) Socialization Theoretical Framework, the authors conducted an ex post facto survey research design to examine the factors that influence the transfer and acculturation experiences of STEM transfer students. Data were collected using the Transfer Student Questionnaire and was examined using exploratory factor analysis. Findings indicated that STEM transfer students experienced academic distress (lower grades, increased stress) in the first semester post transfer but that this leveled out over time. The same was true for social adjustment. The authors recommended developing STEM transfer student peer mentors and tutors to mitigate the specific challenges faced by transferring STEM students.

**Keywords:** *two-year institutions, four-year institutions, academic performance, peer support*

**Jain, D., Herrera, A., Bernal, S., & Solorzano, D. (2011). Critical race theory and the transfer function: Introducing a transfer receptive culture. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 35(3), 252-266.**

In this article, the authors used the lens of critical race theory (CRT) to develop a theoretical framework for creating a transfer receptive culture (TRC) that can inform and examine the ways in which 2- and 4-year institutions can foster inclusive and welcoming transfer experiences. Using CRT allowed the authors to include factors such as the racialized experience of education in their model, which they feel is often left out of the relevant literature on transfer students. The authors gave a detailed introduction to CRT and a comprehensive review of the literature on the transfer experience of all students (and particularly of students of color) as move from 2- to 4-year institutions. The authors then discussed the development of the TRC framework and its five distinct elements (establishing transfer as an institutional priority, providing outreach and resources, offering financial and academic support, acknowledging the lived experiences of transfer students, and creating an institutional framework to assess and assist in the creation of a TRC and related programs and initiatives.

**Keywords:** *transfer programs, two-year institutions, four-year institutions*

**Lester, J., Leonard, J. B., & Mathias, D. (2013). Transfer student engagement: Blurring of social and academic engagement. *Community College Review*, 41(3), 202-222.**

Citing seminal and traditional thinking about the link between student success and student involvement and painting a picture of community college students that

allowed for the diversity of their experiences, the authors asked for a more nuanced consideration of student involvement and student development for community college students hoping to transfer from two-year to four-year institutions. Recognizing that tools like the National Study of Student Engagement and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement report on the experiences of students in either a two-year or four-year environment but do not specifically address the transfer student experience, the authors conduct a study of transfer students at one four-year institution to measure social and academic engagement and also to ensure that research captures the differences in transfer engagement from their peers who have maintained enrollment only at one institution; ultimately the researchers wish to discover how engagement affects sense of belonging for transfer students. The authors justified the need for a focus on transfer students citing various social and economic systems that have increased the appeal of beginning one's college career at a two-year institution. A literature review was conducted to demonstrate that traditional measures of student engagement for transfers indicates low campus engagement but highlights the possibility that transfer students ways of engagement may differ in ways that previous research has been unable to capture. Participants were recruited via email and must have matriculated to the institution within the three prior years and members of Tau Sigma National Honor Society were also invited to participate and 31 students participate in semi-structured interviews. These interviews focused on themes related to academic preparation and experience at their current institution and their previous institution, their transition to their current institution, and their own perceptions of academic and social engagement. The transfer students interviewed conveyed that social engagement is critical to their success academically and suggested that they view any and all social engagement, whether directly connected to the campus or not, as productive and valuable to their college experience. Student development outcomes related to self-efficacy were reported and reflection regarding the learning available from these interactions is positively reinforced, even though they aren't necessarily on campus. While they report positively on social engagement, the transfer students interviewed did not specifically cite these social situations as critical to their transition. The participants in this study reported respect for the academy and for meaningful interaction with faculty but also report low faculty interaction; ultimately, students report feeling engaged academically because they feel challenged academically and view this challenge as positive. Sense of belonging was the least consistently similarly viewed factor in the surveys. The authors asserted that transfer students could be more motivated by academic engagement than by social engagement and that practitioners may choose to consider efforts related to academic involvement over social involvement. Ultimately the researchers called for more research for transfer student needs and success strategies to be assessed.

**Keywords:** *community college, two-year institutions, four-year institutions, transfer students, engagement, sense of belonging*

## **Transition (General)**

**Brooman, S., & Darwent, S. (2014). Measuring the beginning: A quantitative study of the transition to higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(9), 1523-1541.**

In this study, the authors aimed to gain an understanding of the impact of certain early interventions on first-year students by measuring changes in self-efficacy, autonomous learning, and social integration during their transition to higher education. These three factors were identified by the authors in their previous studies as influencing the success of first-year college students. The authors collected quantitative data from questionnaires at two different response points from cohort of first-year undergraduate law students participating in a required module of academic interventions during the first five weeks of the semester at a university in the United Kingdom. These interventions included lectures, tutor-led workshops, group information sessions, reflective writing prompts, and a group-work assignment. The authors reported that the results of the study did not align with their predictions that self-efficacy, autonomous learning, and several aspect of social integration would increase between the two data collection points. Rather, they found that student responses in these areas indicated no change or even a decrease for some factors. However, they did find that students who reported greater support from staff also reported higher self-efficacy, autonomous learning beliefs, and study habits, as well as a greater sense of belonging, during the course of the study, indicating the importance of early connections with academic program staff. The authors also considered the impact of gender, work, and accommodation as independent variables that may have influenced the outcomes of their study, and discuss the need for future research that measures the impact of interventions integrated into the curriculum over the course of a semester rather than in a standalone module during the first weeks of the semester.

**Key words:** *first year students, transition, academic performance*

## **Two-Year College Students**

**Barnes, J. (2012). The first-year experience impact on student success in developmental education. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 20(1), 27.**

This study examined differences in academic performance, retention, and persistence between community college students in developmental education who participated in a First-Year Experience (FYE) program and those who did not participate. The conceptual framework of this study was based on work on integration, involvement, validation, and retention by Tinto (1993), Astin (1984), and Rendon (1994). The authors used a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design to investigate success outcomes for 148 developmental-education students who participated in a FYE program at an urban community college between 2007 and



2009. The FYE program included required assessment, placement, and orientation as well as enrollment in Personal Growth courses taught by college counselors. In addition to analyzing student data, the authors conducted focus groups with 16 participants in the program in order to collect qualitative data on student experiences and perceptions. A major theme that emerged from the focus groups was support and validation, which students discussed in reference to peer support and counselor support in the FYE program. Notably, the authors found that participants in the program persisted at higher rates compared to developmental education students who did not participate. The persistence of Latino participants in particular was highlighted by the authors, which has significant implications for community colleges that have Latino student populations with low persistence levels.

**Keywords:** *community college, first-year experience, two-year institutions, peer support, Latino students*

**Bers, T., & Younger, D. (2014). The first-year experience in community colleges. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 2013(160), 77-93.***

This article focused on characteristics of first-year experience programs at community colleges and their impact on student success. The authors first analyze scholarship about core first-year experience components at community colleges, including first-year seminars, learning communities, early alert systems, and student engagement and success initiatives, before identify strategies community college practitioners can use for integrate research into program delivery and make data-driven decisions about program improvement. These strategies included identifying data sources, assigning responsibility for collecting and storing data, and encouraging collaboration and respect between institutional research professionals and first-year experience program personnel. The authors also discussed challenges with designing, implementing, assessing, and conducting research about first-year experience programs specific to the community college setting, such as working with transient student populations that are difficult to track and part-time students who exhibit low engagement levels with the college. A major consideration for community college practitioners that the authors noted early on is that research about what works at four-year institutions may not be relevant for impacting student success at community colleges.

**Keywords:** *first-year experience, community colleges, two-year institutions, first-year seminars, engagement, academic performance*

**Blaylock, R. S., & Bresciani, M. J. (2011). Exploring the success of transfer programs for community college students. *Research & Practice in Assessment, 6(2011), 43-61.***

The focus of this paper is an outcomes-based assessment evaluation of Transfer Bridge, a free transitional summer program designed to aid underrepresented

California community college students transfer to a regional public university. As part of the evaluation, the authors identified four learning outcomes associated with transfer student transition support and outlined both direct and indirect measures of student learning to assess in relation to each outcome. The learning outcomes the authors identified were in the areas of academic advising, library literacy, financial literacy, and peer mentor relations. Additionally, they collected student feedback through a survey with questions aligned to each learning outcome. The authors outlined the program elements, detailing how each learning outcome was addressed in the program design and including student feedback on program components. They concluded the article with a narrative of how they used the assessment to improve Transfer Bridge for subsequent participants, provided a step-by-step outline for outcomes-based assessment program evaluation planning, and offer recommendations to student affairs practitioners about data-driven program decision making.

**Keywords:** *community college, transfer students, transition programs*

**Crisp, G., & Taggart, A. (2013). Community college student success programs: A synthesis, critique, and research agenda. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 37(2), 114-130.**

This article provides readers with a narrative review and critique of empirical research on three common programmatic interventions offered at community colleges: learning communities, student success courses, and supplemental instruction. The authors considered empirical research and assessment published in academic journals, conference presentations, dissertations, policy reports, and book chapters as part of this review. After reviewing the available research, the authors concluded that more work is needed to understand the impact of these specific interventions on community college students. Then, they offer a critique of the current body of literature, discussing limitations of different studies, research methods and strategies used, differences between program the ways programs were described and subsequently implemented and measured, and the prevalence of selection bias among the studies they reviewed. A main critique by the authors was that a large number of studies on program effectiveness are not published in peer-reviewed journals but rather remain unpublished, appear only online, and are not easily accessible by practitioners.

**Keywords:** *community college, student success, learning communities*

**Crosta, P. M. (2014). Intensity and attachment: How the chaotic enrollment patterns of community college students relate to educational outcomes. *Community College Review*, 42(2), 118-142.**

This paper presented institutional researchers with a way to visualize the relationship between student enrollment patterns and student outcomes, such as degree completion and transfer, at community college. The author used data from

two cohorts of students at five colleges to illustrate community college enrollment patterns and performs a cluster analysis that groups different types of enrollment patterns based on their features. The resulting clusters can be used to find correlations between enrollment behavior and the probability that students will earn credentials and transfer to a four-year institution. This data visualization method may help institutional researchers make sense of enrollment patterns at their own community colleges and analyze the behaviors of groups of students who made the same enrollment decisions. The author suggested that performing this kind of analysis on historical data in particular will help faculty, advisers, and student affairs professionals more clearly understand student pathways and identify points in the pathways at which students may have encountered barriers. Recommendations for future research included studies that examine how certain enrollment patterns (such as switching from full-time to part-time or vice versa) impact students and what characteristics are associated with specific enrollment transitions. The author also acknowledged that research on enrollment patterns has implications for policy makers, as policies related to financial aid, tuition, and placement testing may push students to take suboptimal enrollment pathways.

**Keywords:** *community college, two-year institutions, transition*

**Dudley, D. M., Liu, L., Hao, L., & Stallard, C. (2015). Student engagement: A CCSSE follow-up study to improve student engagement in a community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 39*(12), 1153-1169.**

This paper presented a qualitative case study at a Los Angeles community college that focuses on gaps in student engagement levels. The authors used Yin's (2009) framework for using a case study as a research method to investigate why students' engagement levels were persistently low in key areas identified through analysis of results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Additionally, the authors wanted to examine disparities in student engagement as reported by students in the CCSSE and by faculty in the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE). As such, they conducted nine focus groups with a total of 63 students to better understand student perceptions and behaviors as they relate to student engagement. Themes that emerged from the focus group interviews include students' high expectations of faculty, students' low preparation and effort in relation to faculty expectations, the impact of faculty standard-setting and encouragement on student engagement, the impact of course subject area and difficulty level on student engagement, and the role of institutional support in student engagement. The authors highlighted that while students often admit to putting forth minimal effort in their courses, they still express high expectations for challenging work and high standards from faculty. Other notable findings from the focus group indicated that students want clear and constructive feedback from faculty in a timely manner, that faculty expressiveness and enthusiasm for the subject matter influences their motivation levels, and that faculty encouragement has a positive impact on student engagement levels. The authors concluded the

article with several recommendations that have implications for teaching faculty, academic affairs staff, and student affairs practitioners. These included creating interventions that highlight the importance of effort and time management for first-year students, offering professional development opportunities for faculty to explore instruction methods and activities that promote active and collaborative learning, including class participation as a portion of course grades, and advertising student support services in a way that minimizes any stigma associated with seeking help.

**Keywords:** *engagement, community college, two-year institutions*

**Hatch, D. K., & Bohlig, E. M. (2015). An Empirical Typology of the Latent Programmatic Structure of Community College Student Success Programs. *Research in Higher Education*, 57(1), 72-98.**

This article sought to create a common framework and vocabulary and to define a consistent terminology to describe student success programming at community colleges. Data were collected from responses to the Community College Institutional Survey and was analyzed using a mixed method hybrid combining factor and latent class analysis. The authors found five programmatic elements distributed over four types of student success programs (minimalist, student success, collaborative academic, and comprehensive). The authors argued that using this common terminology and framework to describe these programs and their elements will help synthesize and generalize the research in this field. They further suggested that adopting this framework and vocabulary could help practitioners to unify the research and the programs for student success in community colleges.

**Keywords:** *student success, community college, two-year institutions*

**Jaeger, A. J., Dunstan, S. B., & Dixon, K. G. (2015). College student access: How articulation agreements support rural students. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 90(5), 615-635.**

The article begins by setting the stage for the increased need for access to higher education in the wake of President Obama's America College Promise and the college completion agenda. The authors point out the need to improve access to and transfer processes of community colleges as the entrance point to higher education so that students receive "seamless education". The authors then discussed why this is particularly true for rural students and move into an examination of the numbers of rural and transfer students in the state of North Carolina. The authors reviewed the literature on the role of the community college in education in general and for rural students specifically. Then followed a discussion of the college access barriers for rural students, including a lack of academic preparation, issues of affordability, and a lack of college going support and resources. The authors used this information to argue for the place of the community college to serve as a bridge into higher education and a pathway into a four-year institution. The remainder of the article

was spent examining the development, structure, and impact of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) between University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community Colleges systems. The authors particularly stressed the importance of academic advising and the guaranteed transferability of courses as foundational to a successful articulation agreement. The authors highlighted specific benefits and limitations of the CAA and finish by calling for practitioners and researchers to continue to study how community college and comprehensive articulation agreements can support access to and attainment of bachelor's degrees for rural students.

**Key words:** *Access to higher education, community college, rural students, transfer students*

**McKinney, L. (2010). Evaluability assessment: Laying the foundation for effective evaluation of a community college retention program. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 34(4), 299-317.***

This article argued that educators need to improve their evaluative methods for measuring the impact of their student success initiatives (SSIs), particularly because as funding has been increasingly tied to retention, progression, and graduation (RPG) rates, widespread efforts have been made to increase those rates at all levels. However, while SSIs have increased on campuses at large, they have not always been appropriately evaluated. The SSIs need to be evaluated, McKinney argues, at the programmatic level in order to begin to judge the SSI's impact on RPG and to give stakeholders useful data so that they can make informed decisions about allocations of resources. McKinney recommended implementing an initial evaluability assessment (EA) to determine whether an SSI is even capable of being assessed at a level that will yield meaningful and useful data before attempting to conduct a costly and time-consuming comprehensive program assessment. He is also interested in reporting on the value of using EA as a planning and assessment tool. McKinney introduced EA as a three-step process in which the values, resources, activities, and outcomes of an SSI are described, analyzed, and studied for scalability and sustainability. McKinney detailed this process with one of the SSIs on his campus and ends with a recommendation to include EA as part of a sustainable and comprehensive plan for developing, administering, and assessing an SSI on any campus.

**Key words:** *community college, assessment, program evaluation*

**McKinney, L., & Novak, H. (2013). The relationship between FAFSA filing and persistence among first-year community college students. *Community College Review, 41(1), 63-65.***

This article examined how the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) serves as a gatekeeper to higher education and in particular how this is disproportionately true for community college students. The article began with a

comprehensive review of the literature that shows that community college students are much less likely to file a FAFSA than their peers at four-year institutions, which is particularly troubling as the research also shows that community college students are more likely to need such aid. The review continues to examine the research on why community college students are more likely to fail to fill out and file a FAFSA and the detrimental effects of such failures on community college persistence and retention rates. The data for the study itself was pulled from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Study (BPS) from the NCES. The researchers used data showing inter-year rather than year-to-year attrition because the research shows that financial considerations are more likely to disrupt studies mid-year while academic considerations are more likely to affect year-to-year attrition. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression to determine the relationship, if any, between filing a FAFSA and the likelihood of retention in the second semester. Findings indicated that there is indeed a negative relationship, in that students who do not file for a FAFSA are less likely to persist to the second semester. Recommendations included strengthening the working relationships between advising, financial aid, and enrollment management to ensure that all students who are eligible for federal financial aid complete and file a FAFSA each semester. The authors also called for qualitative studies that might explain why eligible students fail to file.

**Key words:** *community college, financial aid, persistence*

**Mertes, S. (2013). Community college retention: A critical race theory perspective. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 21(1), 21-26.**

This review article examined the extant theories and models of student retention through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) to determine where these theories fall short, particularly in describing the experiences of minority students at community colleges. The author began with a review of several of the leading theories of student retention and their applicability to two-year colleges. This was followed by an examination of CRT as a critical perspective through which to assess these models of student retention and progression. The author suggested that the prevailing models, as viewed through the CRT lens, fail to account for, and in some ways further marginalize, minority students. The author recommended various ideas for improving these theoretical models and includes strategies to put into practice (e.g., including family dynamics in student retention theories and as a result creating smaller orientation programs that include parents and families).

**Key words:** *community college, students of color, retention*

**Mertes, S. J. (2015). Social integration in a community college environment. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(11), 1052-1064.**

This study was conducted to explore the differences and similarities between various theoretical models of social adjustment in college. The researcher noticed

that the leading theorists differed in their constructs of social adjustment, particularly between the experiences of students and 2- and 4-year institutions. He sought to determine if the models of Maxwell (2000) and Deil-Amen (2011) support or undermine Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) seminal model. The researcher surveyed a representative sample of students enrolled at his 2-year institution and coded the resultant data to a simple numerical value, which he analyzed using SPSS. Results indicated a high degree of correlation between the constructs of Maxwell, Deil-Amen, and Tinto, and suggested that these constructs are similar in practice, with one exception. Female students tended to report higher scores in relation to faculty caring and concern, which would not be predicted in Tinto's model, but was evident in the other models. Recommendations were for faculty to increase their interactions with all students, in and out of class and for program directors to develop and encourage more opportunities for faculty participation in the social life of the college.

*Key words:* community college, college adjustment, student-faculty/staff interaction, relationships

**Monaghan, D. B., & Attewell, P. (2015). The community college route to the bachelor's degree. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 37*(1), 70-91.**

This study sought to determine if the prevailing theories of the educational attainment of transfer students adequately explain the disparity in bachelor's degree attainment between students who begin at community colleges and students who begin at four year institutions. The researchers presented decades of research that overwhelmingly indicate that students who begin at two year institutions are less likely to go on to earn a bachelor's degree than equivalent students who begin at four year intuitions. However, the researchers point out that recent scholarship has debunked many of the older rationales for why this is true. In looking for new explanations, the researchers designed a study to examine a more recent national cohort of transfer and traditional students to see if there is still a higher attrition rate once at the four year institution, and if so, why that disparity exists. Using the most recent Beginning Postsecondary Student Survey (BPS) from the NCES, the researchers collected transcript, transfer, and graduation data and analyzed that data using the counterfactual model of causal inference. The researchers found that contrary to previous findings, community college transfer students are on average as likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree as equivalent students once they have successfully transferred to a four-year institution. The findings also indicated that students who pay a larger "transfer penalty" (the loss of non-transferable credits), are less likely to earn their bachelor's degree than both other transfer students and those who began at a four-year institution. Recommendations included creating programs and policies that increase the facilitation of the credit transfer process and entering into more effective and stronger articulation agreements between institutions.

**Key words:** *community college, transfer students, performance, degree attainment*

**Moschetti, R. V., & Hudley, C. (2015). Social capital and academic motivation among first-generation community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(3), 235-251.**

The authors of this study noticed a dearth of research on White, working class, first-generation students at community colleges and designed a study to fill that gap. They began with a literature review that covers the challenges of being a first-generation student, the challenges of being a low-income student and how those challenges are compounded by being both. The authors went on to provide an overview of the theory of social capital and how that is experience on college campuses. They also included information about how hard it can be for all students at community colleges to form social bonds and why this is particularly detrimental to first-generation students. The authors conducted a qualitative interview study to discover how white, working class, first-generation students at one community college managed their social and academic integration, their biggest challenges to integration, and the factors these students considered most valuable in making a successful transition into college. The interviews were semi-structured and featured open-ended questions which were taped and transcribed. These interview transcripts were then analyzed using the grounded theory approach. Categories that emerged fell into four general themes, institutional support, personal characteristics, family support, and financial resources. The findings support previous research that indicates that the lack of college knowledge experienced by many first-generation students impacts the amount of social capital that these student bring with them to college, which in turn negatively influences their rates of persistence and retention. Of particular interest to the authors was the finding that working-class White first-generation students were more likely than their minority peers to believe that it was their individual responsibility to make it through college and that they were less likely to seek support from their families, peers/friends, and the institution. Recommendations included creating supportive peer groups targeted specifically at this population in order to educate these students as to the value of social support and how to increase their social capital.

**Key words:** *community college, peer support, academic motivation*

**Nakajima, M. A., Dembo, M. H., & Mossler, R. (2012). Student persistence in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 36(8), 591-613.**

The authors of this article argued that existing retention models (specifically Tinto (1993) and Astin (1987)) are not sufficient for explaining retention at two-year institutions primarily because the students at two-year colleges differ so considerably from students at four-year institutions. The authors also found the previous research on retention at two-year schools somewhat limited in that is usually focused on single variables or single institutions. The authors designed a study in response to these limitations in order to assess what background,



financial, academic, and psychosocial variables have the greatest influence on student persistence at two-year colleges. A random sample of students were invited to complete a pencil and paper survey and the researchers used institutional enrollment data to identify which of the participating students were still enrolled in college three semesters later. The survey was assembled using questions from several available national instruments and data was also collected from the Cooperative Institutions Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey. The data from the researchers' survey and the CIRP survey in conjunction with the institutional enrollment data were analyzed using MANOVA to predict student retention based on a number of individualized and composite variables. Findings indicated that cumulative GPA is the strongest single variable predictor of student retention. Contrary to the researchers' expectations, with the exception of faculty concern, academic and psychosocial variables played little to no role as single variables on student retention. The major finding of this study was a reaffirmation of how interrelated all of the variables are and the degree to which this study showed that attrition is almost always a combination of multiple factors. Recommendations were to increase institutional early-warning alerts tied to GPAs to identify at-risk students and that retention strategies for community college students will be more successful if they are introduced in the classroom.

***Key words:*** *community college, persistence, academic performance*

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