Developing Public Policy to Support Access to Success

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The evolution of the “access” concept

- We began as elitist
  - Around the concept of “an educated elite”
  - “To advance society”
The evolution of “access”

- The Morrill Act moved us to a meritocratic system
  - To fuel economic need: “economic development”
The evolution of “access”

- The G.I. Bill – an egalitarian experiment
  - Romantically, egalitarian
  - Pragmatically, economic development

- NDEA – along the same vein
The evolution of “access”

- The Higher Education Act of 1965 and amendments of 1972
  - Recognized
    - Affordability
    - Preparation
  - Paralleled developments at state level
    - Community colleges
  - Changed focus from national interests to the citizen’s interest
The evolution of “access”

The modern era

1. From egalitarian to essentialist model
   World leaders on “access to success” – Canada, Finland, Japan, Jordan, Korea
   Our peers/the second tier – U.S., Australia, France, Norway, Spain, Sweden, U.K.

2. Moving from thought to knowledge: our strategies weren’t working well
A leaky production function/our completion sucks

- 4-year
  Institutional graduation/retention rates – 56%

- 4-year
  Aggregate graduation/retention rates – 76%

- 2-year
  Aggregate graduation/retention rates –
  - Some credential – 54%
  - Toward bachelor’s – 39%
What works in promoting access

- Affordability matters
  - Price makes a difference
    - Where, for middle class
    - Whether, for poor
  - How students finance their education makes a difference
    - Borrowing is good
    - Working lots is bad
- Preparation is huge
  - Math in particular
    - “The Great Sieve”
What works in promoting access

- Community of support makes a big difference
  - Parents’ education
  - College environment
  - Full-time is a strong correlate of success
So, what do we do about it

- Early intervention strategies
  - NPEC synthesis
    - Key human contact
    - Rigorous academics
    - Endurance
    - Culture competence
    - Positive peer culture
    - Financial assistance and incentives
College support services

On affordability

- Integrate tuition & financial aid policies
  - To be affordable
  - To look affordable
- Reduce reliance on work, even if via loans
College support services

On preparation
- Reward rigor
- Reinforce remediation, where it’s necessary
- Intervene intentionally and intensively
- Demand high and well-understood standards from high school to college
College support services

- On community of support
  - Pay for performance – pay for “access to success,” not just trying
  - Encourage serious academic engagement
Base policy on

- Good ideas
- Supported by strong evidence
- Don’t give up if we fail – find a better way
In Sum:

GEAR UP for the future