Pathways to College: Linking Policy with Research and Practice

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Financing Access to Success
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 economics 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, and
  - Proximity

- Paralleled developments at state level
  - Community colleges

- Changed focus for the 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 rate –
    - some credential – 54%
    - toward bachelors – 39%
What works in promoting access

- Affordability matters
  - How much makes a difference
    - Where for middle-class
    - Whether for poor
  - How financed 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
  - Parent’s education
  - College environment
  - Full-time is a strong correlate of success
So, what do we do about it

- Moving from knowledge to hunches
- 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 vigor
  - Reinforce remediation, where it is 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.