



Digest of Recent Research

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Edited by John M. Braxton

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The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of more than 765 nonprofit independent colleges and universities and higher education affiliates and organizations that has worked since 1956 to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of private higher education's contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on providing services to leaders of independent colleges and universities as well as conferences, seminars, and other programs that help institutions improve educational quality, administrative and financial performance, and institutional visibility. CIC conducts the largest annual conferences of college and university presidents and of chief academic officers. CIC also provides support to state associations that organize programs and generate contributions for their member colleges and universities. The Council is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.cic.edu.

About the Digest

CIC's *Digest of Recent Research* is a compendium of summaries of research that independent college and university presidents are likely to find helpful. Published three times a year, the *Digest* highlights timely research from scholarly journals and other publications with a focus on findings relevant to presidents and to other leaders of independent colleges and universities. Edited by John M. Braxton, professor of higher education at Vanderbilt University, each *Digest* offers a brief summary of selected articles that includes a discussion of the findings and implications for action by the leadership of independent colleges and universities. CIC is grateful to the Spencer Foundation for its support of this new series.

Reviews in the *Digest of Recent Research* can be downloaded as a single document (PDF). For questions or comments about the *Digest*, please contact Hollie Chessman, director of research projects, at hchessman@cic.nche.edu.

About the Editor

John M. Braxton is professor of higher education in the department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations at Vanderbilt University. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of College Student Retention* and served as the editor of the *Journal of College Student Development* from 2008 to 2015. Braxton has co-authored or edited 13 books, including: *Rethinking College Student Retention*, 2013 (with William Doyle, Harold V. Hartley III, Amy Hirschy, Willis Jones, and Michael McLendon), *Professors Behaving Badly*, 2011 (with Eve Proper and Alan Bayer), *Faculty Misconduct in Collegiate Teaching*, 2003 (with Alan Bayer), and *Institutionalizing a Broader View of Scholarship Through Boyer's Four Domains*, 2002 (with William Luckey and Patricia Helland). Braxton also is past president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). Braxton is the recipient of the ASHE Research Achievement Award and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) – College Student Educator International's Contribution to Knowledge Award.

Editor's Note

This issue of the *Digest of Recent Research* contains summaries of five carefully selected articles on a range of topics that presidents and other leaders of CIC member colleges and universities could find informative and useful. One article in particular pertains directly to the role of college presidents: “Troubling Changes in Capital Structures at Small Private Colleges.” The article outlines problems associated with long-term debt for capital projects, and therefore may be of special interest to institutional leaders with professional backgrounds outside of finance. Both presidents and chief academic officers could find informative and useful “A Breath of Fresh Air: Students’ Perceptions of Interactions with African American Faculty.” This article describes the student-centered teaching by African-American faculty members and provides further impetus for institutional efforts to recruit African American faculty members. Other articles summarized in this issue of this *Digest of Recent Research* address the impact of violent crime on campus, factors that affect the academic success of first-year college students, and the development of critical thinking skills. Presidents may wish to refer the summaries of these articles to other campus leaders such as chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, student conduct officers, campus police, and officers charged with the institution’s multicultural efforts.

The selected articles come primarily from four core journals of higher education research: *Journal of College Student Development*, *The Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, and *The Review of Higher Education*. These four peer-reviewed journals maintain rigorous standards for publication as evidenced by their average manuscript acceptance rates of approximately 10 percent.

—John M. Braxton

Long-term Institutional Debt

Ward, J.D. 2016. "Troubling Changes in Capital Structures at Small Private Colleges." *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 31, 57–74.

SUMMARY

This article focuses on problems associated with long-term debt at smaller private colleges and universities used to fund large capital projects, such as the construction of new academic buildings or residence halls and the renovation of existing facilities. James Dean Ward explains that colleges and universities use various methods to fund capital projects such as major gifts, grants, reallocation of currently available money, withdrawals from endowment, borrowing, and issuing bonds. The choice of how institutions fund their projects, depends on the debt adversity each college sets for itself. Some institutions elect to use debt to fund capital projects. Ward issues a caveat to smaller private colleges, stating, "tuition-reliant, less wealthy and highly leveraged institutions are in danger of being overcome by financial deficits" (p. 58).

The author offers two frameworks, static trade-off theory and pecking order theory, originally derived from for-profit sector financial management. Broadly explained, "The static trade-off theory proposes that nonprofit managers balance the costs and benefits of debt to reach an optimal leverage level, while the pecking order theory suggests that managers simply prefer internal funds to external borrowing" (Calabrese 2011 as cited by Ward 2016, p. 62). For example, institutions with diverse revenue streams (e.g., stable enrollment, auxiliary income, consistent donors, varied sources of grant funding) are more likely to use static trade-off approaches. Smaller institutions without diverse revenue streams or larger endowments adhere more closely to strategies described by pecking order theory. However, Ward argues that in the case of some recent institutional closures, smaller colleges and universities were more likely to adopt the static trade-off than the pecking order approaches.

PROBLEMS WITH LONG-TERM BORROWING

Ward describes problems for small private colleges with increasing dependence on long-term borrowing. He states that colleges must assess their financial health and expected ability to repay the debt. Ward admonishes that an institution still must repay the debt even if projected future income fails to occur. Debt-servicing expenses include payments on both the interest on the loan and on the principal and are greater for loans obtained for an extended period of time. He views this warning as especially important for smaller private colleges with smaller endowments and student enrollment challenges. These institutions may struggle to meet their debt obligations because of unmet revenue projections.

Institutions may issue bonds as one form of long-term borrowing. Institutional collateral and creditworthiness determine an institution's ability to borrow funds through bonds. The value of the institution's physical plant, expected tuition revenue, and available cash function as collateral for the loan. The reputation of the institution, projected demand for specific programs, and a continued expectation for tuition revenues contribute to the creditworthiness of a given college or university.

Ward references research by Lyken-Segosebe and Shepherd (2013) conducted for the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association. In that study of 57 smaller private colleges that closed, these authors found that the debt-servicing expenses of these institutions were approximately five times those of other colleges and univer-

sities. (Unfortunately, Ward does not include the amount of the debt servicing expenses for the closed colleges.) Lyken-Segosebe and Shepherd also noted that these 57 smaller private colleges were very dependent on tuition revenue to the point that over half of their revenues came from tuition, especially from part-time students. Based on these particulars, Ward urges smaller private colleges that fit the profile of these 57 closed institutions to be "particularly wary of long-term debt" (p. 68).

Moreover, the creditworthiness of smaller private colleges that fit the profile of the 57 closed institutions may also be problematic. The bond ratings of similar colleges may suffer because of their lack of institutional collateral. Ward states that bond ratings signal to the potential lender risks associated with lending money. Loan risks also translate

to higher interest rates. Ward notes that the bond ratings of many smaller private colleges are declining.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION BY CAMPUS LEADERS

New presidents and presidents with nonfinancial backgrounds should find this article of particular value as it provides an overview of the bond issuing process, case studies associated with long-term institutional borrowing, and theoretical frameworks for borrowing and spending. Institutional expenses for debt service constitute a marker for vigilance by the presidents of private col-

leges and universities. Presidents of colleges that are highly tuition-dependent, have small endowments, and enroll large numbers of part-time students should espouse a high value on institutional debt adversity. The acquisition of high levels of debt accompanied by burdensome debt-servicing expenses can result in rapid institutional financial decline and perhaps closure. CIC presidents should consider use of resources available to CIC member institutions to benchmark the debt levels. These resources include CIC's annual Key Indicators Tool (KIT) and the Financial Indicators Tool (FIT) benchmarking reports.

To maintain institutional viability, some capital projects may need to be undertaken without delay. Presidents should use caution when approving capital projects unless the funds for the project have been secured through means other than incurring the bond repayment debt.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Dean Ward is a doctoral candidate at University of Southern California and a research assistant in the Pullias Center for Higher Education.

LITERATURE READERS MAY WISH TO CONSULT

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Blustain, H., S.T. Cobine, E.S. Gore, J.A. Palmucci, M.K. Townsley, and J. Van Gordon. 2008. *Strategic Debt Management*. In *National Association of College and University Business Officers, Seventh Edition*. College and University Business Administration. Washington, DC: NACUBO.

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Faculty Diversification

Neville, K.M. and T.L. Parker. 2017. "A Breath of Fresh Air: Students' Perceptions of Interactions with African American Faculty." *Journal of College Student Development*, 58, 349–364.

SUMMARY

Kathleen M. Neville and Tara L. Parker raise the question: how do students describe their interactions with and perceptions of African American faculty members? They assert that knowledge of the ways undergraduate college students perceive African American faculty members may provide an "important reason to diversify the professoriate" (p. 349).

The authors used phenomenology as their qualitative research method. Student-faculty interactions stand as their focal phenomena. Neville and Parker center their attention on the individual and shared meanings students derive from their experiences with African American faculty members. Class observations and interviews with students were used to discern these meanings. The students who participated in this study are undergraduate college students at a four-year public institution located in the Northeast who were enrolled in undergraduate courses taught by African American faculty members.

Three African American faculty members agreed to participate in this study, two of them were female assistant professors and the third a male tenure-track instructor. All three faculty members had one to three semesters of teaching experience. Neville and Parker observed five course sections taught by these African American faculty members at three different times. A total of 100 students were enrolled in these five courses. At the end of the semester, the authors sought student volunteers to be interviewed. Of the 22 students who agreed to an interview, 16 self-identified as white.

In making their observations of these classrooms, Neville and Parker center their attention on the nonverbal behaviors of students as they interacted with these individual African American faculty members. They used semi-structured interviews that lasted 45 to 60 minutes. The interview questions focused on the students' experiences and perceptions of their interactions with the African American faculty members.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Neville and Parker derived four major themes from their observations and interviews. They used qualitative coding approaches to develop these themes. The authors found that most of the students shared similar experiences with the African American professors. They described the personal qualities of these faculty members as "a breath of fresh air" (p. 356). Other qualities students described include down-to-earth, open, passionate, and caring. These qualities give rise to the major themes described in the following paragraphs.

The theme of a "breath of fresh air" is the students' views that African American faculty members exceeded

their expectations for assistance with academic and personal matters. Neville and Parker noted that many of the interviewed students viewed such interactions as different from their interactions with other faculty members.

Each day classroom interactions between African American faculty members and students were marked by the faculty member welcoming students to class, calling them by their first name, and informal conversations before and after class. Such interactions characterize the theme of African American faculty members as "down to earth."

The theme of "open" notes that African American faculty members showed their own vulnerability by being open and genuine with students. Because of

this faculty member openness, the majority of students interviewed perceived the classroom as a place where students could state their personal opinions.

The theme of "passionate" denotes the sentiment of most students interviewed that the focal African American faculty members are excited about teaching and "passionate" about what they are doing. Such passion for teaching created a classroom environment that generated "enthusiastic and engaged classroom discussions" (p. 359).

Taken together, the teaching qualities of openness, interest in the academic and personal matters of students, being down to earth, and being passionate indicate that "caring" characterizes these three African American professors.

Hence, the fourth theme of “caring.”

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION BY CAMPUS LEADERS

Beyond institutional goals of increasing the racial diversity of the faculty, these findings offer a cogent rationale for the recruitment and retention of African American faculty members or other faculty members who display these characteristics at CIC colleges and universities. The teaching qualities students valued in their African American faculty members resonate with the teaching cultures of CIC colleges and universities. These teaching qualities reflect a student-centered orientation to teaching.

Neville and Parker assert, “Faculty and administrators of all races and ethnicities may find these results informative as they attempt to create educational

environments that encourage student engagement” (p. 362). African American faculty members can serve as exemplars of the teaching qualities needed for such educational environments. Faculty development units at CIC member institutions should consider the use of these themes as guides for other faculty to emulate.

Tenure and promotion policies at CIC colleges and universities should also reward faculty members for “going above and beyond” to support students in their academic and personal success. Formal recognition of these teaching qualities exhibited by the professors in this study “would go a long way toward retaining a more diverse faculty, while also enhancing the overall climate and culture of the institution” (p. 362). Chief academic officers, academic deans, department chairs, faculty governing bodies, and

faculty tenure and promotion committees should work toward rewarding faculty who embody these teaching qualities.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kathleen M. Neville is the associate dean in the School of Graduate Studies at Salem State University.

Tara L. Parker is an associate professor in the College of Education and Human Development at University of Massachusetts Boston.

LITERATURE READERS MAY WISH TO CONSULT

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Anderson, L.E. and J. Carta-Falsa. 2002. “Factors that Make Faculty and Student Relationships Effective.” *College Teaching*, 50, 134–138.

Smith, D.G., C.S. Turner, N. Osei-Kofi, and S. Richards. 2004. “Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty.” *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75, 133–160.

African American Student Success

Roksa, J. and Whitney S.E. 2017. "Fostering Academic Success of First-Year Students: Exploring the Roles of Motivation, Race and Faculty." *Journal of College Student Development*, 58, 353–348.

SUMMARY

This article by Josipa Roksa and Sarah E. Whitney focuses on the influence of academic motivation, racial group membership (African American and white), and faculty members' interest in student learning and development (student-centeredness) on first-year academic success. Roksa and Whitney are interested in whether higher levels of academic motivation benefit the first-year academic performance of African American students more than white students. The authors also analyze the interaction between academic motivation and racial group membership and its relationship to first-year academic performance across varying degrees of faculty student-centeredness. An increased understanding of factors that influence college student success in the first year results from empirical attention to these foci.

Roksa and Whitney measured first-year academic performance as the students' grade point average at the end of the first year of college. They used a composite scale comprised of eight items to measure academic motivation. Examples of these items are as follows: "I am willing to work hard in a course to learn the material even if it won't lead to a higher grade," "I frequently do more reading in a class than is required simply because it interests me," and "I enjoy the challenge of learning complicated new material" (p. 339).

The authors used a composite scale of five items to measure faculty interest in teaching and student development. These items used the stem "Most faculty with whom I have had contact are...". Examples of statements used to complete this stem are: "genuinely interested in students," "interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas," "outstanding teachers," and "genuinely interested in teaching" (p. 339). Roksa and Whitney view faculty interest in teaching and student development as an indicator of the educational philosophy of a faculty member. The authors view faculty members' interest in teaching and student development as interchangeable if the faculty member is student-centered.

The authors used data collected as a part of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) to obtain these measures of academic motivation, faculty interest in teaching and student development, and first-year academic performance. The WNS includes 43 four-year colleges and universities, which include 28 liberal arts colleges, six research universities, and nine public regional colleges and universities. The WNS used a longitudinal panel design with data collected from students over a four-year period. However, the sample the authors used was derived from the first-year data collection phase of the project. Their sample consisted of 5,993 students, which included 632 African American students.

The authors used ordinary least squares regression to test the influence of academic motivation, racial group membership, faculty interest in teaching and student development, and interactions between being African American and academic motivation on first-year grade point average. They also statistically controlled for other possible influences on first-year grade point average, including student background characteristics (gender and parental education), high school academic achievement level, and SAT or ACT scores.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Roksa and Whitney report that first-year African American students express higher degrees of academic motivation than their white counterparts. However, higher levels of academic motivation do not result in higher grade point averages for African American students. They

state, "African American students benefited less from academic motivation" (p. 342). Moreover, faculty interest in teaching and student development positively influences students' first-year grade point average.

Because of the positive influence of faculty interest in teaching and student development (student-centered faculty),

Roksa and Whitney conducted additional regression analyses for low, medium, and high levels of student-centered faculty members. For students who viewed faculty members as having medium and high levels of being student-centered (interest in teaching and student development) the interaction between being African American and

academic motivation was not statistically significant. However, Roksa and Whitney report when students perceive that faculty are not interested in their learning and development, or have a low degree of student-centeredness, there is a strong negative interaction between academic motivation and being African American. Moreover, the authors report that about 45 percent of African American students indicated that faculty members are not interested in their learning and development or have a low degree of student-centeredness.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION BY CAMPUS LEADERS

Several implications for action by CIC campus leaders result from the positive influence of faculty members' interest in teaching and student development or

their degree of student centeredness on the first-year academic performance of students. These implications include faculty recruitment, the reward structure for faculty, and academic advising of African American students. CIC member institutions should recruit new faculty members who espouse an interest in teaching and learning. Such a focus fully resonates with the teaching culture of CIC institutions. Members of faculty search committees could assess through face-to-face interviews and teaching demonstrations the degree to which a faculty candidate espouses a student-centered teaching approach. The five items used to measure faculty interest in teaching and student development could also be included on course evaluation forms. Faculty personnel decisions such as annual salary adjustments, reappointment, tenure and promotion might

also make use of an individual faculty member's ratings on student-centeredness. Academic advisors should also encourage their African American advisees to take courses from faculty who espouse a high degree of student centeredness.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Josipa Roksa is an associate professor of sociology and education at the University of Virginia.

Sarah E. Whitley is a doctoral candidate in the higher education program at the University of Virginia.

LITERATURE READERS MAY WISH TO CONSULT

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Museus, S.D. and K.M. Neville. 2012. "Delineating the Ways that Key Institutional Agents Provide Racial Minority Students with Access to Social Capital in College." *Journal of College Student Development*, 53, 436–452.

Racial Inequalities in Student Learning

Roksa, J., T.L. Trolian, E.T. Pascarella, C.A. Kilgo, C. Blaich, and K.S. Wise. 2017. "Racial Inequality in Critical Thinking Skills: The Role of Academic and Diversity Experiences." *Research in Higher Education*, 58, 119–140.

SUMMARY

Roksa et al. seek to identify aspects of the college experience that may shape racial differences in the development of critical thinking skills during college. The authors place their research within the context of the literature on racial inequalities in such matters as college access and college completion. They also note that inequalities in learning outcomes have received little attention in the literature. Nevertheless, a few studies report inequalities in the development of critical thinking skills for African American students (Arum and Roksa 2011; Flowers and Pascarella 2013) and Hispanic students (Kugelmass and Ready 2011). However, these studies failed to identify specific college experiences that shape these racial disparities in the development of critical thinking skills. In their study, Roksa et al. focused attention on specific aspects of the college experience that may lead to racial disparities in the development of critical thinking skills.

Accordingly, these authors selected specific dimensions of the academic experience and two forms of diversity experiences as aspects of the college experience that might affect the development of critical thinking skills. Time spent studying and experience with faculty members assessed in terms of teaching clarity and organization constitute the two specific dimensions of the academic experience used in this study. Negative and positive diversity interactions stand as the specific forms of diversity experience. The authors used a composite of four items to plumb negative diversity interactions and three items to measure positive diversity interactions. Both positive and negative diversity interaction items asked students to estimate how often they experienced specific types of interactions with diverse students or students that differ from themselves in terms of race and national origin. Two examples of negative diversity interactions are feeling silenced by prejudice and experiencing hostile interactions as a result of sharing one's story. Positive diversity items include interactions with diverse students or students who differ from themselves in terms of race or national origin marked by meaningful and honest discussions about social justice, discussions about inter-group relations, and shared personal feelings and problems.

Roksa et al. used data collected as a part of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) to obtain these measures of the academic experience and diversity interactions. The WNS includes 43 four-year colleges and universities. Of the institutions, 28 are liberal arts colleges, six are research universities, and nine are regional colleges and universities. The WNS used a longitudinal panel design with data collected from students over a four-year period. The study relied on an analytical sample of 2,636 students.

The authors used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to discern the influence of academic experiences and diversity interactions on the development of critical thinking skills. They used the Critical Thinking Test of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency of the American College Testing (ACT) Program to measure critical thinking skills. Students were administered this critical thinking test at the beginning of their first year in college and again at the end of their fourth year in college.

In addition to critical thinking skills at entry, Roksa et al. also controlled for a variety of background characteristics such as gender and parental education as well as the percentage of students of color at each institution and institutional selectivity (average ACT scores of entering first-year students). The HLM executed also included the two measures of academic experience (time spent studying and teaching clarity and organization) and the two forms of diversity interactions as well as variables for African American, Hispanic, and Asian students.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Roksa et al. report that African American and Hispanic students both experience less growth in their critical thinking skills during college than either white or

Asian students. However, these inequalities in critical thinking skills are reduced to some degree by student experiences with faculty who are organized and exhibit teaching clarity. Teaching clarity and organization also positively influ-

ence the development of critical thinking skills whereas negative diversity interactions yields a negative influence on the development of critical thinking skills. Moreover, neither hours spent studying nor positive diversity interact-

tions affect the development of critical thinking skills. Roksa et al. also tested for interactions among different racial groups, diversity experiences, and academic experiences on the development of critical thinking skills. The results of these interaction tests indicate “the effects of academic and diversity experiences on critical thinking are the same for African American and white students” (p. 133).

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION BY CAMPUS LEADERS

The harmful influence of negative diversity interactions on the development of students’ critical thinking skills coupled with the finding that such negative diversity interactions similarly affect African American and white students is important for campus leadership to note. Roksa et al. state “some observers of

higher education have noted that campus administrators often do not pay close attention to racial interactions until there is a highly publicized incident” (p. 136). Accordingly, Harper and Hurtado urge colleges and universities to “audit their campus climates and cultures to determine the need for change” (2007, p. 20). An audit could result in benefits to critical thinking for all students. Leaders of CIC institutions should consider the Culturally Engaging Campus Environment (CECE) Model instrument developed by Museus, Yi, and Saelua to audit campus climates and culture.

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Kathy S. Wise is the associate director of the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College and the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium.

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Hurtado, S., J. Milem, A. Clayton-Pederson, and W. Allen. 1998. “Enhancing Campus Climates for Racial/Ethnic Diversity: Educational Policy and Practice.” *The Review of Higher Education*, 21, 279–302.

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Campus Safety

Schuck, A.M. 2017. "Evaluating the Impact of Crime and Discipline on Student Success in Postsecondary Education." *Research in Higher Education*, 58, 77–97.

SUMMARY

Amie M. Schuck situates serious violent crime rates and disciplinary action within the context of college student success. She asserts that violent crimes committed on or around college campuses can have both direct and indirect effects on the academic achievement of students that may lessen their chances of graduating within four years of their initial enrollment. Violent crimes include offenses against individuals such as rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated battery. Schuck asserts that victims of such violent crimes may experience both psychological trauma and physical injury. She posits that fear of crime also results from violent crimes. Fear of crime generates feelings of vulnerability that can affect both victims' and non-victims' willingness to participate in college activities important to their academic success and graduation. Based on these formulations, Schuck posits that the greater the serious crime rate at or near a college or university, the lower the institution's graduation rate.

Schuck asserts that disciplinary action regarding alcohol, drugs, and weapons may also influence the four-year graduation rate of the institution. Disciplinary action can take two forms. One form pertains to the referral of crime offenders to the institution's student conduct system. The other form entails reporting the crime to the police, which may result in arrest. Schuck asserts that referrals to the student conduct system likely result in higher four-year graduation rates because student conduct systems seek to help the offender understand the effects of their behavior on both the victim and the campus community. Through such understanding, students come to internalize the norms of the academic community, thereby enabling student development and increasing student achievement.

In contrast, Schuck contends that arrests by the police hinder graduation from college because of the detrimental effects of arrest on the academic achievement of the offender. Schuck lists missed classes, removal from campus housing, and financial expenses incurred because of the arrest. Taken together, Schuck posits that disciplinary referrals to the institution's student conduct system result in higher four-year graduation rates whereas arrest will result in a lower four-year graduation rate.

To test her hypotheses regarding crime and student conduct, Schuck used data derived from two sources: Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), both maintained by the U. S. Department of Education. She restricted her sample to all public and private four-year colleges and universities, which resulted in 1,281 colleges and universities.

Using a general linear model to test her hypotheses, she controlled for a variety of factors that might influence institutional graduation rates such as admissions selectivity, ACT and SAT scores, and percentage of students from different racial/ethnic groups enrolled at the institution.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Schuck reports that colleges and universities with lower violent crime rates have higher four-year graduation rates. As the number of referrals to the student conduct system increases, the four-year graduation rate also increases. Moreover, she found that arrests by police result in lower four-year graduation rates. Through an additional analysis, Schuck found that the detrimental influence of

the violent crime rate on the four-year graduation rate is greater for private than for public colleges and universities. However, she did not find any differences between public and private institutions based on the influence of institutions' disciplinary action in four-year graduation rates.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION BY CAMPUS LEADERS

These findings highlight the complexity of factors that pertain to college graduation rates. One implication suggests that CIC campus leaders pay close attention to reports of violent crime committed on campus and the area around their campus. Presidents and chief student affairs officers bear a particular responsi-

bility for assuring safety on their campuses and developing policies and procedures to prevent violent crimes such as rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated battery. Schuck suggests that community policing strategies employ a problem solving approach to the prevention of crime that changes social and physical conditions in the campus community. Campus police and security guards should adhere to the principles of community policing and aggressive policing should be avoided. CIC campus leaders could consider an institutional

study to understand if there are social and physical circumstances present in the community that may lead to violent crimes.

Students' fear of crime should also concern CIC leaders. Schuck suggests that colleges and university conduct a fear of crime inventory to identify when and where the fear of crime for students is greatest on their college or university campus.

CIC campus leaders should also consider their approach to disciplinary action. The findings of this study suggest

that student conduct systems provide the best approach for student success. A review of the philosophies that underlie campus conduct systems could also be an area for consideration for CIC campus leaders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amie M. Schuck is an assistant professor in the department of criminology, law, and justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

LITERATURE READERS MAY WISH TO CONSULT

References from this article that readers may wish to consult:

*Braga, A.A., B.C. Welsh, and C. Schnell. 2015. "Can Policing Disorder Campus Crime? A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 52, 567–588.

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*This reference is particularly useful for CIC leaders to consult.

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