



Increasing Access to College

**Extending Possibilities
for All Students**

Edited by William G. Tierney and Linda Serra Hagedorn

INCREASING ACCESS TO COLLEGE

SUNY series

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INCREASING ACCESS
TO COLLEGE

EXTENDING POSSIBILITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS

Edited by

WILLIAM G. TIERNEY AND
LINDA SERRA HAGEDORN

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Introduction

Cultural Capital and the Struggle for Educational Equity

LINDA SERRA HAGEDORN AND WILLIAM G. TIERNEY

Education has long been called “the great equalizer.” We are well aware that the delivery of quality elementary and secondary education combined with college access in ways that are blind to student ethnicity and income status will not only benefit the students themselves, but will also benefit society in general. Yet intuitive awareness has not given birth to programs that have exacted fundamental educational change. Even in the twenty-first century, “the great equalizer” remains a theory —abstract and theoretical. The chapters in this book begin to chip away at the divide between theory and practice. They address programs that attempt and sometimes succeed at increasing the quality of elementary and secondary education and/or paving roads to college access.

Historically, special programs and policies generally have assumed a deficit model and have centered on enabling students to overcome: (a) insufficient funds to pay for college, (b) insufficient academic preparation, and (c) insufficient understanding of the world of higher education. Despite what might be termed “gallant efforts” by some programs there has not been a dramatic increase in college attendance, retention, and graduation for low income and minority youth. First generation African American, Hispanic, and Native American youth still lag behind the college-going rates of their white and Asian American counterparts. Present practices have neither ameliorated nor quashed the academic divide. Although the status quo is unacceptable on many levels, we find it especially objectionable for the following reasons:

- Those who would most directly benefit from a postsecondary education—low income and minority youth are not receiving appropriate service.

- Public postsecondary institutions increasingly are unwilling and/or unable to provide services for remedial education; of consequence, effective college preparation programs take on increased importance.
- If the United States is to maintain a competitive edge in the present era of the “global economy,” an educated workforce is more important than at any other time in our history.

As American schools in general, and urban schools in particular, continue to grapple with a myriad of apparent long-term structural problems, educators and policy makers have turned to discrete solutions that offer an immediate chance for success for today’s students. College preparation programs are one of those purported solutions. Our assumption is that if fundamental changes for *all* school children cannot be realized immediately, then college preparation programs might serve as demonstrations to point out ways to succeed, and in doing so, also help *some* children who otherwise would not have gone to college.

For the purposes of this book, we define college preparation programs as enhancement programs that supplement a school’s regular activities and are aimed at low-income youth who otherwise might not be able to attend college. More specifically, we are not interested in programs aimed at high achievers (i.e., programs for the gifted) who will likely go to college, or at students who attend private academies or live in upper income neighborhoods. Thus we are not addressing advance placement courses or the equivalent of programs serving neighborhoods like Beverly Hills or Chappaqua. Instead, we are interested in initiatives on local, state, and federal levels that try to increase access for low-income urban youth. Some of these programs may begin in the elementary school years and others might not occur until the senior year of high school; and still others occur at a college, community agency, or housing project. Appendices 1, 2, and 3 sketch a taxonomy of the kind of programs that exist and delineate programmatic goals. A brief glance at the abundance of programs and multitude of goals highlights a basic tension of the programs: How might one decide which programs are most appropriate for particular kinds of students? Even more fundamental, we are concerned that the very logic behind college preparation programs may have deep wrinkles. As indicated in the chapter by William Tierney, we have neither a good sense of which programs are effective nor have we identified the characteristics of successful programs. Thus in our present state of knowledge we are unable to replicate success nor eliminate ineffective practices.

In this book we provide a way to think about the range of options that exist, we offer some solutions about defining what counts for success, and we underscore the importance and difficulty of defining problems and solutions.

In what follows we sketch the parameters of the book and tie the various chapters together.

Experimentation and Integration

A college degree can no longer be considered a luxury, but is rather a necessary passport to the middle class. In response, we have witnessed a burgeoning array of college preparation programs. For example, there are numerous school-college partnerships seeking to create opportunities and incentives for precollege students to achieve academically, to “test the waters” before full-time college study, to explore various career options, and to understand the commitment necessary to be successful in a given field (Wilbur, et al., 1987; Stoel et al., 1992). Important objectives of most programs are the smoothing of the transition from school to college, improvement of study habits, increase of general academic readiness, and expansion of academic options. Many programs also include counseling (both personal and academic) and remedial assistance. Other programs may include objectives to provide students with realistic job experiences and to improve attitudes about work. Some projects employ a variety of rewards and incentives to encourage students to elect and successfully complete the necessary academic subjects that will allow them to pursue the widest range of career options, an especially important concern in the mathematical, science, engineering and technical fields.

Finally, there are “articulation” programs that exist primarily for the purpose of smoothing the transition for students moving from high school to college and universities, to community colleges, and to vocational and technical programs. Many programs include careful attention to student guidance, advisement services, and the improvement of curriculum and instructional support services. Also included are collaborative arrangements that expand the academic options for students, reduce curriculum duplication, and credit transfer difficulties, encourage acceleration, and address the needs of special groups (e.g., second language learners).

Although a vast array of programs exist, we agree with Ann Coles and others that “it is surprising how little empirical data exists about program effectiveness in terms of college participation rates or strategies that make the most difference” (1993, p. 25). In short, there is not a sufficient knowledge base to decide which ones are effective and which are not. In the recent past we have made great strides in understanding the dynamics of effective schooling. We know, for example, what the determinants are of effective preschool programs for students at risk. Researchers have shown the kinds of programs and practices that create an effective environment for kindergartners (Slavin,

et al., 1994). We have a better understanding of class size on student learning, and how one-on-one instruction can enhance student abilities (Slavin, 1989).

Until recently, however, most of the information that we have had available as indicators of success about college preparation programs are anecdotal stories of individuals, or brief project summaries by those who have conducted a particular study. Indeed, as Clifford Adelman and Scott Swail and Laura Perna point out in their chapters, even the conceptual terrain has been murky. We also know that the educational world has changed. A degree of experimentation with options such as charter schools, vouchers, and different teaching methods has created a climate for innovation and change in American public education.

College preparation programs are an additional response for the climate of innovation and experimentation that currently exists. Although some programs such as Upward Bound have existed for a generation, others initiatives such as the federal government's *Gear-Up* are relatively new. The underlying assumption of these programs is relatively straightforward. Regardless of structure or format, individuals assume that students who participate in an enhancement program are more likely to go to college than if they did not. Further, individuals usually assume that these programs will be able to serve as models and be integrated into the core activities of a school. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to say convincingly that all such programs are successful, and in reality, very few programs have become models for best practice, or integrated into the general fabric of a school.

The overarching goal of this book is to provide a channel of integrative ideas, theories, models, and concepts about enhancement programs to enable researchers, policy analysts, practitioners, and others to think through some of the more thorny issues that confront college preparation programs. The book compiles and entwines the various recent research projects of the authors. Throughout this book the authors work either explicitly or implicitly from three primary perspectives: a theoretical framework pertaining to cultural capital, an individualistic framework pertaining to cultural integrity, and a social framework pertaining to the idea of merit.

Cultural Capital

Many college preparation programs implicitly or explicitly accept the role of cultural capital in creating the appropriate environment for college attendance. In its simplest terms, one might think of college preparation programs as a structural response to low-income children's deficit of cultural capital—a response that simulates the conditions to deliver the social and academic capital necessary to succeed in college. Several of the authors (Makeba Jones and her colleagues, Patricia Gándara, and Linda Hagedorn

and Shereen Fogel) cite Pierre Bourdieu's work and use his theories as central to their chapters. As a whole, the book extends Bourdieu's notion and stretches the definition in several ways. First, cultural capital is not viewed as unidimensional. Unlike fiscal capital that can be measured in one currency (for example, American dollars), cultural capital is convoluted and consists of multiple denominations that cannot be interchanged. In the chapter by Amaury Nora as well as that by Tierney, it is clear that even if programs were able to equip children with the capital that delivers them to the college door, they often do not have the requisite capital to actually graduate from college. Simply stated, the academic capital that brings a student to the college door may not accrue the requisite interest to sustain him/her through until college graduation. Thus there is the need for structural changes to take place to create closer working relationships between schools and postsecondary institutions. We must cultivate the kind of cultural capital that will not only sustain students *to* college, but will evolve and grow to nurture students *through* college.

An additional way to think of cultural capital is less by way of equipping children with capital but instead how to engage those institutions and groups that hold capital to become more responsive to the needs of their constituencies. In this light, colleges and universities are akin to banks where administrators and faculty are the bankers. The Jones and Oakes chapters outline the challenges that need to be confronted when essentially conservative institutions are met with needs from low-income youth. How might we equip such institutions so that they become more responsive? Rather than banks that seek to preserve capital and have little interest in spending finite resources, we need to think of postsecondary institutions more as lending libraries that seek to increase academic capital. Unfortunately, as our colleagues point out, such a notion will not easily take place. Faculty are surely not a monolith who all think alike, but they also for the most part are neither ready nor rewarded for greater engagement with local communities.

One danger of using the notion of cultural capital as a driving framework is that it can be wrongly viewed as little more than assimilationist. One might assume that cultural capital is simply a warmed over culture of poverty framework. Proponents of such a notion assume that poor people live impoverished lives—economically and culturally—and the role of educational and social agencies is to help them assimilate into the mainstream. Our approach is decidedly different.

Cultural Integrity

As Jeannie Oakes and her colleagues point out, rather than insist on all students assimilating into the mainstream, the approach suggested here takes

into account the cultures that students bring with them. It is incorrect to imagine that low-income students come devoid of culture, allowing schools and programs to fill empty vessels with mainstream traditions. Rather, all students regardless of income, race, or other criteria are surrounded by a culture, which may differ from that promoted by the mainstream. We promote a sense of cultural integrity that honors, affirms, and acknowledges the diverse identities that account for America within multiple educational practices.

As Adelman is quick to point out, high academic standards (academic capital) are the clearest indicators about whether children will go on to a postsecondary institution. However, as Michelle Knight and Heather Oesterreich suggest, such standards need to come framed in meaningful ways to those who are being educated (cultural integrity). Without cultural integrity, students will not respond either because the programs do not meet their specific needs, or because they do not feel the programs are actually designed for them. Students approach school with multiple identities and if programs are to be successful they need to honor those identities in culturally specific ways so that learning fits.

Education and Merit

There are two implicit assumptions in the very existence of college preparation programs:

1. Schools are failing to adequately prepare students for college. The need for such programs extends from the inability of schools to properly execute their function. Thus school reform is needed (although there is little consensus about what those reforms should be).
2. Public postsecondary institutions and systems seek to enroll the types of students who have traditionally been left out of the system.

The second assumption in large part speaks to the nation's commitment to access. In a postsecondary system as diverse as that existing in the United States, the manner in which a commitment to access has been operationalized is in large part defined by state policies. Community colleges, state universities, and to an extent, public research universities have as one of their basic tenets access for the broad public.

True, public higher education is not as tightly defined as K–12 public education, but throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was a broad commitment to increased access. The land grant movement, the false deflation of tuition, the GI Bill, and various federal and state loan and grant policies all have been geared to enable individuals who otherwise could not go to college, to get a college education. Underlying such poli-

cies was the idea that public education should be open to everyone, not just the wealthy few.

Over the last decade, however, there has been increased discussion about an alternative public policy that pertains to the idea of merit. Who merits entrance to college? Of course, when capacity is sizable and demand is low, those who merit admission are those who apply. When capacity is confined, however, and other policies have increased demand, then questions and debates come into play with regard to who merits admission to a public institution.

We raise this issue here because college preparation programs may be involved in an increasingly impossible undertaking, no matter how effective and successful they become, if those who work from a strict constructionist interpretation of what constitutes a meritocracy prevail. Our simple point here is that merit is a socially constructed idea; We work from the notion that those who merit a postsecondary education has more to do with the capacity of the state to provide viable postsecondary options to its citizenry than with an individual's test scores. As long as public funding to public higher education decreases, we will face increasingly complex and controversial discussions about who deserves entry to a postsecondary institution.

Our modest proposal instead is that two major sea changes take place in the public arena. First, as Oakes and her colleagues suggest, there needs to be a reinvigorated dialogue about expanding access to public higher education via increased, stable, long-term public funding. Second, those who are involved in activities such as enhancement programs need to do a better job of assessing and determining the elements of effectiveness. As Hagedorn and Fogel demonstrate, not all activities are equally promising. Thus on the one hand we call for cost containment and effectiveness, and on the other, we suggest an expansion of the public sector's commitment to postsecondary education and a movement away from what we see as unhelpful arguments about who merits a college education.

Hans Christian Andersen's famous fairy tale of the *Emperor's New Clothes* provides a suitable closing metaphor. The present system of postsecondary instruction can be likened to that vain emperor who mistakenly believed that tailors could construct a cloth so perfect and exquisite that it would be visible *only* by those sufficiently intelligent and competent to appreciate its quality. Without checking their credentials, the emperor paid the tailors to produce their magical cloth. Thus the sham continued and the emperor soon was dressed in cloth made of nothing but air and paraded before his people. Despite the emperor's nakedness, his people did not speak out in fear of being labeled as foolish or incompetent. Finally, a young boy spoke the words that all were thinking: "The Emperor is naked."

Like the tale, inherent to our postsecondary education system is the assumption of its perfection—that those who criticize it are not sufficiently

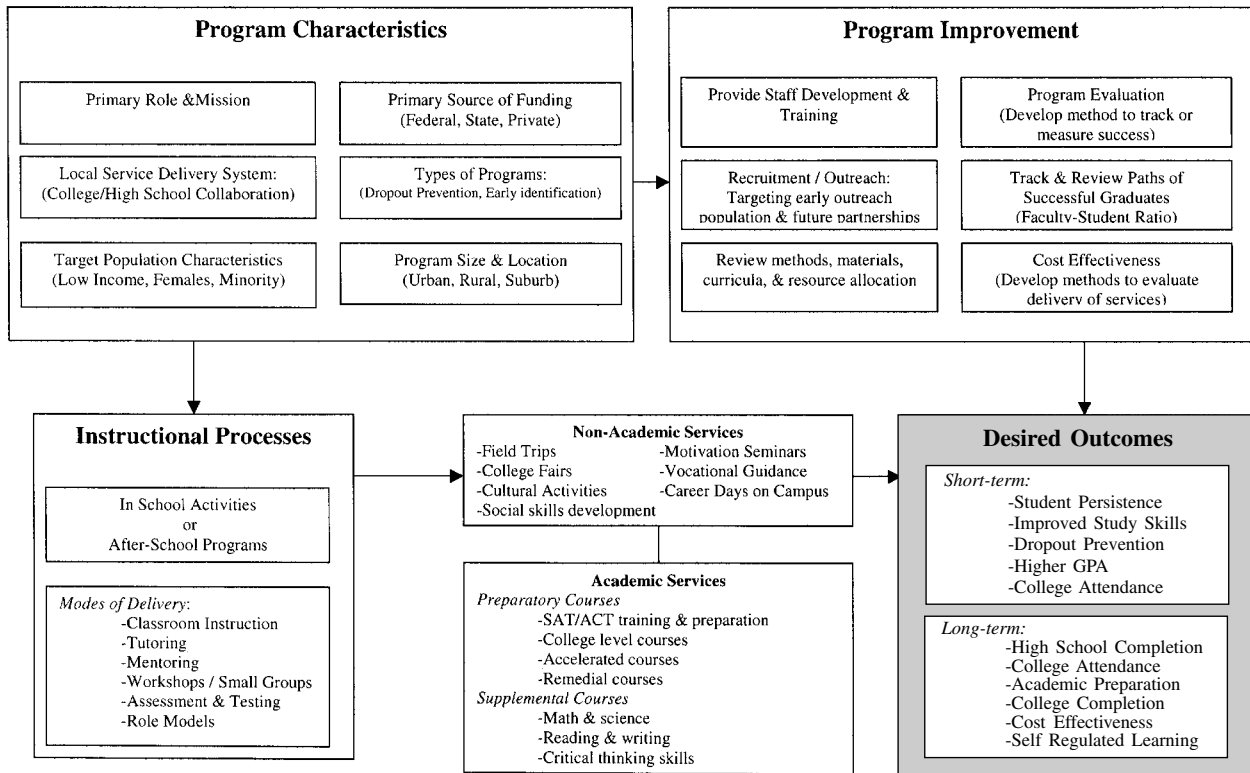
intelligent or competent to appreciate its quality. Further, expensive college preparation programs abound without appropriate check of their credentials. Few speak out about the lack of testing of these expensive programs because they do not want to be labeled as foolish or incompetent.

In this book, we play the role of the boy who spoke out and announced what he saw. We leave it to you, the reader, to finish the metaphor.

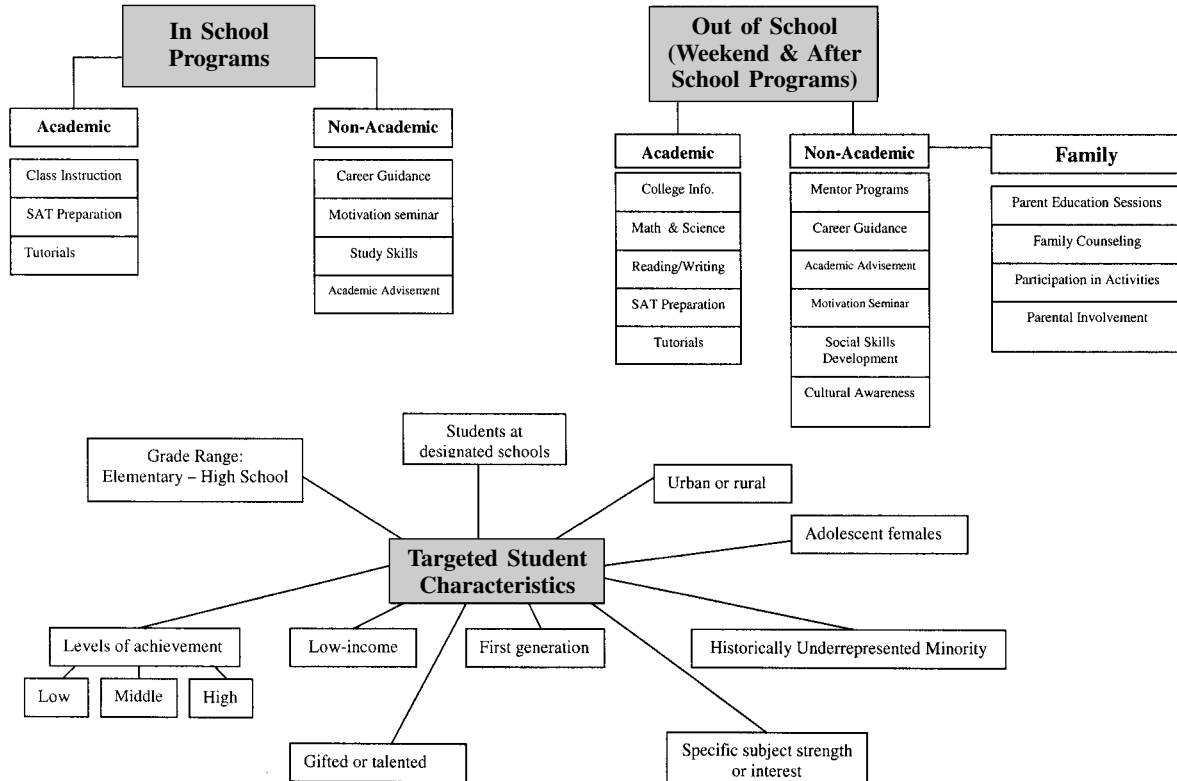
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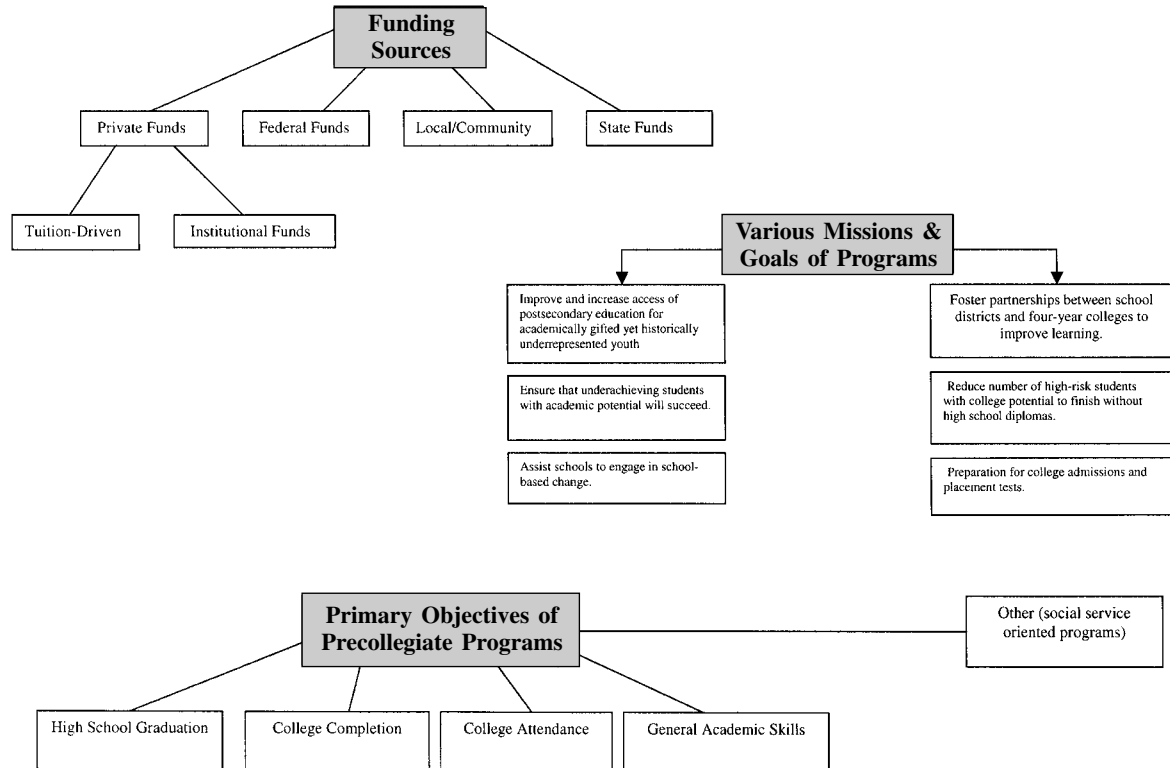
Appendix 1. Model of College Preparation Program Effectiveness



Appendix 2. College Preparation Programs Overview



Appendix 3. General Characteristics of Programs Nationwide



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P A R T I

The Landscape of College Access

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Pre-College Outreach Programs

A National Perspective

WATSON SCOTT SWAIL AND LAURA W. PERNA

Introduction

As the other chapters in this volume attest, despite dramatic increases in postsecondary enrollments at American colleges and universities gaps still exist in who goes to college and who ultimately succeeds. Low-income, African American, Hispanic, and Native American populations continue to be underrepresented at institutions of higher education relative to their representation in the traditional college-age population (Nettles, Perna, & Freeman, 1999). Yet billions of federal, state, and private dollars have been spent to close the enrollment and degree attainment gaps (Gladieux & Swail, 1998).

One reason for the persisting gaps may be that traditional approaches to increasing college access (e.g., student financial aid programs) have focused too narrowly on the issue of college enrollment, without sufficient attention to the steps required to be academically, socially, and psychologically prepared to enter and succeed in college. Achieving the goal of increasing college success for underrepresented students is a complex task, particularly in consideration of the many confounding factors that have an impact on a student's potential to succeed. Our ability to further improve the college-going and college-completion rates for our most disadvantaged students is based on the involvement of stakeholders from all areas of society. Success certainly is a concern for our elementary and secondary levels of education, because they are responsible for cultivating the academic potential within students. Success certainly must concern the colleges, for they are responsible for shepherding students through higher education. Yet success is ultimately dependent upon the ability of our society at large to address inequities that affect education and opportunity for all groups.

Working within the constraints of our decentralized system of education only serves to complicate the process. While our entire system of education is arguably the best in the world, there is some noise in the machine that has reduced our ability to better address the needs of education's underclass.

In response to these concerns, policy makers have begun to look at non-traditional mechanisms to improve the education of our students. Three mechanisms in particular sit at the forefront of this policy movement. First, charter schools have become the lightning rod for the conservative movement in education and are the main avenue traveled by many states and localities to foster a sea change in public schooling. But the capacity of charters to have broad structural and systematic impact on the system as a whole is unlikely. The second mechanism is the push for school vouchers. Similar in many ways to the charter concept, voucher programs allow families to choose to enroll their children in a particular public or private school. In addition to providing a choice for families, voucher proponents also share the charter premise that increased competition will ultimately push all schools to change. While some gains may be made through this strategy, it is important to understand that education is very much a closed system. In the voucher-school model, one child's gain may result in another child's loss.

The third focus of policy makers is to look at programs designed to supplement school-based learning. These early intervention programs—designed to improve the academic preparation and college readiness of under-represented groups—do not necessarily have an impact on the systemic problems within our schools. They do provide a safety net for thousands of students who do not get the level of support—academic and social—within their current educational environment to become college ready. Federal and state governments, along with some private organizations, have sponsored these types of programs since the mid-1960s. The most widely known is the Federal TRIO program, established as part of the Johnson administration's War on Poverty. The recent establishment of GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness through Undergraduate Preparation) extended the federal government's role in early intervention. As well, several states established their own early intervention programs during the 1990s (Perna, 1999), the most publicized being the huge support thrown behind pre-college outreach in the State of California in an attempt to counteract the negative effects on campus diversity associated with the ban on affirmative action established by Proposition 209 (see chapters 7 by Jones, Yonezawa, and Mehan; 6 by Oakes, and 4 by Gandara for more discussion).

Despite the focus and resources devoted to early intervention programs by both the public and private sectors, only minimal data and information are available to describe these programs. Our knowledge is largely based on examinations of the federal TRIO Programs, particularly Upward Bound, and other high-profile programs, such as I Have a Dream, MESA, and AVID.

Even for these programs, however, surprising little is known about program outcomes and effectiveness (see Tierney chapter 10). Moreover, we know virtually nothing about the thousands of other programs that are currently operating across the nation. We don't know how many there are, where they are, what they do, whom they serve, and what impact they have on the educational opportunity and success of the students they serve. Clearly our capacity to make prudent programmatic and funding decisions is restricted by this lack of knowledge.

In an attempt to reduce this information and knowledge gap, the College Board, in association with The Education Resources Institute (TERI) and the Council for Opportunity in Education, conducted a national study in 1999–2000 to identify and collect information from all types of early intervention programs operating nationwide. To supplement the survey data, a series of focus groups were conducted with program directors and administrators over the same period. We briefly describe the history of programs designed to increase college access and success and describe the characteristics of programs currently in operation, based on analyses of the data and information obtained from the survey and focus groups.

A Brief History

Over the past thirty years, the doors of opportunity through postsecondary education have opened dramatically for all groups in the United States. More than 14 million students were enrolled in colleges and universities nationwide in fall 1996, a more than twofold increase since 1967 and tenfold increase since the mid-1940s (NCES, 1999). Growth has occurred at both two-year and four-year colleges and universities and among all racial/ethnic and income groups. The number and representation of African American, Hispanic, and low-income undergraduates attending the nation's colleges and universities are higher today than ever before.

Despite this dramatic increase in access to American colleges and universities, underrepresentation continues. African Americans represented 11.3 percent of first-time, full-time freshmen attending four-year colleges and universities in 1996 but 14.3 percent of the traditional college-age population (18–24 years). Only 6.0 percent of first-time, full-time freshmen attending four-year institutions were Hispanic in 1996, compared with 13.7 percent of the traditional college-age population. The gaps are even more dramatic among bachelor's degree recipients. In 1996 only 7.7 percent of bachelor's degree recipients were African American and 4.9 percent were Hispanic (Nettles, Perna, & Freeman, 1999).

Historically, federal intervention at the postsecondary level has focused primarily on reducing economic barriers to higher education to ensure that no

academically qualified citizen is denied access to college for financial reasons. In 1998–1999, \$43.6 billion of the \$64 billion in financial aid awarded to students from all sources was from the federal government and represents about two-thirds of all federal on-budget outlays for postsecondary education (The College Board, 1999; Hoffman, 1997).

The continued gaps in college enrollment and degree completion despite the dedication of such large amounts of resources suggest that a more comprehensive approach to college access and success is needed. Merely making financial aid available for students to attend college is not enough to ensure that all students have equal access to the benefits associated with earning a college degree (Gladieux & Swail, 1998). A variety of factors influence college enrollment behavior, including educational expectations and plans, academic ability and preparation, information about college options, availability of financial aid, and support from teachers, counselors, family members, and peers (see for example Perna, 2000).

The Federal Approach

The federal government has played a critical role in the development of pre-college outreach and early intervention programs. The federal approach to increasing access to colleges has historically focused on making financial aid available to students through the Pell Grant, campus-based, and subsidized- and unsubsidized-loan programs. More comprehensive programs aimed at increasing postsecondary educational opportunity for educationally and economically disadvantaged students have recently taken on more importance.

As mandated by Congress, two-thirds of the students served by TRIO programs must come from families with incomes below \$24,000. Upward Bound, authorized by Congress in 1964 as part of the Educational Opportunity Act, provides students with academic instruction on college campuses after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer. Over 700 Upward Bound programs are operating around the country. One-third of all TRIO funding in 1998 (\$600 million) was dedicated to Upward Bound (\$220 million) and Upward Bound Mathematics and Science (\$20.1 million).

Talent Search and the Student Support Services programs were added to Upward Bound to form the core of the TRIO programs during the authorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965. In 1992 the federal government expanded its commitment to early intervention-type programs by authorizing the National Early Intervention Scholarship Program (NEISP). This program offers matching grants to states for programs providing financial incentives, academic support services and counseling, and college-related information to disadvantaged students and their parents. Funding for the NEISP was \$200

million in 1993 and nearly \$400 million in 1994, but was reduced to just \$3.1 million in 1995, \$3.6 million in 1997, and \$3.6 million in 1998. Nine state programs have been funded under the NEISP at an average of \$500,000 (Fenske, Geranios, Keller, & Moore, 1997).

As part of the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress established a new program, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP),¹ to supercede the 1992 NEISP. GEAR UP grants are available not only to state governments, but also to partnerships composed of: (a) one or more local educational agency representing at least one elementary and one secondary school; (b) one institution of higher education; and (c) at least two community organizations, which may include businesses, philanthropic organizations, or other community-based entities. The GEAR UP legislation also includes the “21st Century Scholars Certificate” program. This program, later endorsed and retitled by President Clinton as the “High Hopes” program, notifies low-income sixth to twelfth grade students of their expected eligibility for federal financial assistance under the Pell Grant program. Congress appropriated \$120 million for GEAR UP in 1999 and \$200 million for 2000—a substantial increase over the \$3.6 million provided for NEISP in 1998. More than 670 partnerships applied for the first GEAR UP grants in 1999, and 180 awards were made.

Nongovernment Programs

Early intervention programs are also sponsored by nongovernment entities, including private organizations, foundations, and colleges and universities. Perhaps the most prominent private early intervention program is the I Have a Dream (IHAD) Program, established in 1981. Now almost a part of popular American folklore, the program originated when Eugene Lang, a New York businessman, made a visit to his former East Harlem elementary school and guaranteed the 61 students in his presence the financial resources for college if they graduated from high school. That promise has expanded to 180 projects in over 60 cities across the nation, serving more than 13,000 students, and has doubtless led other philanthropists and agencies to establish similar programs.

Other large-scale programs have shown success in serving needy students. The MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement), MSEN (Math Science Education Network), and Puente Programs are examples of efforts that have been replicated across the nation to form networks of programs.

There are hundreds of other examples of programs around the country that provide support via some outreach mechanism. Colleges and universities sponsor outreach programs, many supported by TRIO and GEAR UP, but