

## **2012 Cohort Dissertation Abstracts**

### **Jonathan Todd Finnell**

#### *Shared governance and job satisfaction effecting community college leaders*

The purpose of this study was to explore differences in the perceptions among executive college leaders regarding the importance of shared governance, and to investigate whether these perceptions effect their job satisfaction. This quantitative study explored these factors in order to provide insight into this relationship and provide college leaders with information with which to inform their own development and that of other leaders in their institutions. This study used extant data collected in 2012 using the National Survey of Community College Leaders (NSCCL) instrument, which surveyed 212 senior community college leaders regarding their perceptions of shared governance and job satisfaction. The analytic procedure used in this study employed a four-stage design, to include 1) exploratory data analysis, 2) factor analysis, 3) ANOVA, and 4) correlation and regression, to explore whether there were differences in perceptions among leadership rank and whether these perceptions effect job satisfaction among college leaders.

*Presidents* had significantly higher mean scores for their perceptions of the importance of *building stakeholder relations* than did *deans*. *Presidents* also had significantly higher mean scores for their perceptions of the importance of *governing board relations* than did both *vice presidents* and *deans*. When exploring the relationship between perceptions and job satisfaction, the findings in this study concluded the most recurrent determinant of a leaders' job satisfaction was *building stakeholder relations*. The perception of the importance of building stakeholder relations was identified as a significant predictor of job satisfaction across all significant models, to include *professional success*, *professional credibility*, *collegiality*, and *ability to facilitate institutional change*. Additionally, perceptions about the importance of institutional strategic planning was found to be predictive of a leaders' satisfaction with their ability to facilitate institutional change, while perceptions about personnel issues were predictive of their satisfaction with collegiality.

Our understanding of the relationships between these perceptions and job satisfaction will influence leadership development programs and professional opportunities for our college leaders, and will pave the way toward efficient, effective institutions that embrace the spirit and intent of a participatory, collegial, and shared governance culture in our colleges.

### **Veronica A. Gerace**

#### *A Quantitative Investigation of the Effectiveness of Social Media in Delivering a Tuberculosis Health Communication Campaign to Millennial College Students*

Millennial college students prefer communication and andragogical approaches that incorporate the use of social media, but college educators and administrators are underutilizing these tools to reach Millennial college students. This disconnect is impacting student health and student learning (Flew, 2008; Ullrich, Borau, Luo, Tan, Shen, & Shen, 2008), which in turn presents various challenges and opportunities for administrators who are responsible for maintaining healthy campuses. Hence, it is critical for college administrators to know if employing social media would improve the physical and mental health education of students on their campuses. Although the effectiveness of health communication campaigns for improving health outcomes has been well established and the use of social media by Millennial college students has been well documented, the effectiveness of a social media based health communication campaign targeting Millennial college students has not been previously studied.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of using social media to deliver a tuberculosis health communication campaign targeting 18 - 24 year old Millennial college students; investigate participants' likelihood of sharing health information depending upon whether they were exposed to a social media health campaign or a traditional media campaign; investigate participants' media preferences for obtaining health information; and gain insight into the social media preferences of Millennial college students. Tuberculosis was selected as the health topic because it is a serious and growing problem on many college campuses causing over 1.4 million deaths worldwide each year (World Health Organization, 2013).

One hundred fourteen Millennial students from a large university in southern California participated in this quasi-experimental study. An experimental group was exposed to tuberculosis related information via social media and a comparison group was exposed to tuberculosis related information via posters and brochures. Using Social Presence Theory as the theoretical framework, data was collected using a Health Belief Model based instrument augmented with additional questions, to measure participants' self-efficacy, their likelihood of sharing the information, and their preferences for obtaining health information.

The results of the study indicated that a social media based health communication campaign had a clear advantage over a traditional media based health communication campaign for affecting self-efficacy and the likelihood of sharing information. Furthermore, participants consistently indicated a strong preference for social media over other types of media, both for receiving and sharing information.

This research provides college health communication policy makers and college administrators insights for developing health communication strategies and challenges current Student Health Services paradigms. Additionally, this study provides data for advancing health communication theories related to the use of social media in developing health communication campaigns. By quantitatively clarifying the effectiveness of using social media in delivering health information,

these results impart scientific rationale for shifting to social media (Web 2.0) technology as a beneficial tool for health communication campaigns targeting Millennial college students.

### **Holly Reed**

#### *An Examination of Critical Thinking Skills in Traditional and Simulated Environments for Occupational Therapy Students*

The profession of Occupational Therapy (OT) has traditionally included in-class learning paired with authentic clinical experiences in community settings. Currently, academic OT programs are considering the use of simulation experiences for level I fieldwork as a possible addition to or alternative for traditional clinical experiences. Due to the changing healthcare market there are significant shortages of traditional level I sites across the country. Therefore, there is a need to explore alternative ways for students to gain clinical skills. There is a minimal body of research for scenario based learning in the form of simulation within OT. This study is designed to examine the experience of Level I occupational therapy students participating in a combined clinical and simulation experience. It was hypothesized that this simulation experience would build the student's critical thinking skills, as well as or better than, a traditional level I fieldwork experience. This study was a mixed methods experimental design using the Health Sciences Reasoning Test (HSRT) portion of the California Critical Skills Test (CCST) for pre- and post-testing. Qualitative data were collected based on students' answers to questions triangulating their expectations for performance, experience within the simulation, and comparison of the simulation to traditional clinical level I experience. Data indicate that, while there is no significant difference in critical thinking skills for students participating in the combined experience as compared to traditional level I experience, the simulation experience added value to the students' learning and changed their perceptions of their own skills. This has significant implications for occupational therapy education programs. It is recommended that programs begin exploring the use a combined model that may relieve some pressure on clinical sites while giving students a strong hands-on component. Future research should explore the effects of this model, looking at how it could be applied to all areas of occupational therapy practice.

### **Marian Spaid-Ross**

#### *A Phenomenological Study of the Older Adult Learner's Community College Experience*

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the college experience of older adult learners who are at least 50 years of age and attending full/part time in a California community college. Twenty older adult learners who met these criteria participated in semi-structured interviews conducted during fall

2014. The following research questions guided this study: 1) What is the community college experience of the adult learner who is 50 years or older? and 2) How can institutional support and resources be created or enhanced at the community college to promote a more positive experience for the older adult student?

Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of four major themes offering insight into the older adult student's college experience: (a) Do I Fit in Here? (b) Returning to College is Not Easy; (c) Navigating the Institution; and (d) Interactions with Faculty and Peers Impacts the Experience. Overall, participants reported having had a positive experience at the community college and believed that the community college provided them with an opportunity to obtain knowledge and skills that would support or enhance a 21st century career. For most of the participants, returning to college was not easy. Students who felt they had the best supports from the institution and their family were the most successful.

Many participants expressed that the lack of financial resources presented a major challenge to the completion of their educational goals. Although many shared that they had positive interactions with faculty, others admitted feeling they did not fit in within the classroom environment and experienced feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear of failure.

Recommendations as to how community colleges might attract older adult learners include having visual images of older adult students on all college websites, brochures, and other college materials. Institutions need to enhance their resources and services to better support these learners once they enroll. For example, they might consider designating an older adult to serve as the Adult Student Ombudsmen on campus who would be accessible at varied hours. Student support services might consider an adult student fellowship program that includes mentoring, networking, and adult student support groups. Further, community colleges might target the needs of the older adult learner, by creating a Never Too Late to Learn Campaign. Community college leaders need to advocate for the importance of serving the older adult learner and implement services, resources and programs to support their success.

### **2011 Cohort Dissertation Abstracts**

**Lisa Carulli**

*Examining Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury: Their Social Experiences in Postsecondary Settings*

Persons with traumatic brain injury (TBI) who are return or entering for the first time postsecondary institutions often display a gamut of cognitive, emotional and physical limitations and other learning limitations that create barriers to academic success. Many studies have examined this occurrence and consequently have made

recommendations for academic accommodations to help them to succeed, however, academic attainment and retention for this population still is low. Students with TBI that arrive on college campuses describe feelings of loneliness and social isolation. This often leads to them lacking a sense of belonging in the campus life, which in turn leads many to give up. Research Questions: How do persons with TBI in a postsecondary setting perceive satisfying relationships inclusive of family, friends and significant others with regard to their feelings of belonging on postsecondary campuses, and how do these perceptions influence feelings of wellness and connection to others, and, lastly what factors contribute to positive and appropriate social interactions in a postsecondary setting? Research Design: The study employed a phenomenological, qualitative research design based on the analysis of 12 in depth interviews with participants with TBI between 18 and 35 years of age, who were at least six months post injury, but less than five years. Methods and procedures: Participants attended a community college brain injury support program located in the Southwestern part of the United States. The theoretical foundation of the study was based on the Native American Medicine Wheel. Four interview questions were embedded in each of the four paradigms of the Medicine Wheel, including the Spiritual, Emotional, Intellectual, and Physical domains, resulting in a total of 16 interview questions. Results: Seven themes emerged that revealed that persons with TBI are challenged in feeling social satisfaction and inclusion, but despite this they have very positive outlooks with regard to their futures. Overall they feel that TBI happened for a reason and grateful to be given a second chance at life. Many participants indicated they are now pursuing academic choices that involve helping others as a result of their TBI. Conclusions: This study provided new insights into post-TBI psychological adjustment, personality changes, identity shifts, social isolation and engagement. This study offers findings to influence research, policy, and practice for postsecondary environments supporting serving the academic and social development needs of students with TBI.

## **Trudy Gerald**

### *Perspectives of Leadership Competencies by Multi-Campus Community College Leaders*

This qualitative study explores the unique characteristics of a multi-campus community college system and how the organizational structure and associated operating norms can impact the perception and execution of critical leadership competencies. To date, limited research has addressed the unique nature of the multi-campus environment. The data from this exploratory study support and expand on the findings of existing research. The significance of the study is that the increased need and demand for education and vocational training at the community colleges is colliding with a projected shortage of leaders. Because of their wide-ranging missions, different populations served, and the size of the institutions, it is understood that not all community colleges are the same. While generalization in leadership development plans cannot be avoided to some extent, one size does not fit all. In order to increase the ability to prepare future leaders for growth and

success in a particular environment, individual districts need to become self-reflective and purposeful in determining how to best address the needs within their own system. This research offers insight into that quest by offering perspectives of how multi-campus community college structures impact the mid-level leader's perception and execution of the American Association of Community Colleges competencies (AACC, 2005). Specifically, the investigation identified the characteristics of those competencies that are unique to the multi-campus environment. Determining how current and past leaders perceive the competencies and how to best execute those skills for effective leadership in their respective organizational structure will enable leadership development programs to more accurately support efforts to ensure that future community college administrators meet the challenges they will predictably face.

## **Ashanti Hands**

### *Perceptions and Frequencies of Classroom Incivilities on Community College Campuses*

Maintaining civility on college campuses is a growing concern amongst educators. Subsumed in notions of teaching and learning is the belief that educators are tasked with developing and preparing students for lives of moral and civic responsibility. This notion is critical to two-year institutions whose multiple missions of transfer, career technical, basic skills and lifelong learning bring diverse groups together to meet individual and communal needs. While not as prevalent as national tragedies, classroom incivilities are more common occurrences that frequently disrupt learning and inhibit the building of community on college campuses. This quantitative study examines faculty and student perceptions of uncivil and disruptive behavior and the perceived frequency of behaviors in community college classrooms. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following research questions: What classroom behaviors are considered to be uncivil by community college faculty and students? What is the perceived frequency of uncivil student and faculty behaviors in community college classrooms? And, Do student perceptions of disruptive behavior differentiate by race? This study converges with the extant literature that validates that both students and faculty perceive, experience, and engage in disruptive behaviors in the classroom environment. Findings also show that perceptions of faculty and students differ by type and levels of disruption. Findings provide insight into the potential motivation for civility amongst faculty and students in community college academic environments. Key among these insights are the need for purposeful and intentional dialogue that fosters a sense of civility in the learning environment, enhanced policies that are more prescriptive regarding civility and responsive to identified disruptive behaviors, collaborative civility initiatives involving key stakeholders (including students) led by faculty and college administrators who oversee conduct processes, and, finally the use of empirically driven data than can inform methods of response, mitigation and elimination of student and faculty incivilities in the classroom setting.

## **Pearl Lopez**

### *Outcomes-Based Assessment Program Evaluation of a Summer Bridge Program for Underrepresented Students at Suburban Community College*

In light of President Obama's declaration to make America "the most educated country in the world" by 2020, California community colleges are experiencing an educational reform to meet this demand (Higher Education, n.d.). In addition to a need to increase student success, there also has been a growing demand for accountability. Small scale programs, such as summer bridge programs, are being scrutinized and questioned regarding their effectiveness for promoting student success (O'banion, 2013). The purpose of the outcomes-based assessment program evaluation was to measure the learning outcomes and various program components of the Summer Bridge Program (SBP) at Suburban Community College (SCC) in southern California. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. Qualitative data consisted of individual interviews, focus groups and written responses on pre- and post- surveys. Quantitative data consisted of an analysis of pre- and post-survey responses using a Dependent T-Test to assess significance. The results of all the analyses were positive toward program operations and indicated that the SBP is meeting its program and student learning outcomes and that program components are supporting student success. Recommendations for program improvement were provided to SBP stakeholders and recommendations for further research were provided to support continued outcomes-based assessments of student success programs.

## **Daniel Nakaji**

### *Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumers who Were Supported by Rehabilitation Services Administration to Pursue Postsecondary Education*

The purpose of this study was to identify consumer attribute data and service delivery data regarding four groups of Deaf and hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals served by state-federal rehabilitation agencies (VR) nationwide whose cases were closed during FY 2012. The study focused on the association between that data and the DHH consumers' records of postsecondary education completion.

VR support for consumers to pursue postsecondary education is considered a relatively expensive service. Expenditures tend to be larger, and service duration tends to be longer. This is especially true for populations of DHH consumers. While studies examining predictors of vocational rehabilitation outcomes can be found in the published literature, very few have focused exclusively on DHH consumers in receipt of specific rehabilitation services as conducted in this study nor have recent studies compared the DHH consumer population to the general population of

consumers with other disabilities. Further, this investigation focused on critical outcomes that provided objective guidance to those at the state and federal levels to assist with planning and budgeting. The two general research questions addressed in this study were:

1. Among four subgroups of the DHH population as defined by RSA, what differences exist in terms of postsecondary education attainment, rehabilitation services provided and rehabilitation outcomes attained at the time of case closure? The four DHH subgroups as defined by RSA are: Deafness, Primary Communication Visual (n=7,866); Deafness, Primary Communication Auditory (n=3,213); Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Visual (n=2,907); and, Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Auditory (n=21,590). and, 2. Among the entire VR consumer population, what differences exist between the DHH subpopulation and the population of consumers with other disabilities (n=535,967) in terms of postsecondary education attainment, rehabilitation services provided and rehabilitation outcomes attained at the time of case closure?

The methodology employed in this study was a quantitative, ex-post-facto design using an extant data file, the RSA911 national case service record for FY 2012. There were several significant findings that emanated from this study. Based on these findings, several recommendations were offered. Among these recommendations, several suggested areas for additional research that might employ additional data sources and methodologies. There were also a number of recommendations for professionals in rehabilitation service programs and postsecondary education settings regarding efficacious service delivery strategies.

## **Gopa Patnaik**

### *Lived Experiences of Iraqi Refugee Students in Community Colleges*

This is a study of Iraqi refugee students in a large suburban community college called East County Community College (ECCC) in Southern California. This study explores the lived experiences of Iraqi refugee students as they transition into a new education system in a new country. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study seeks to illuminate and understand the essence of the meanings that Iraqi refugee students attach to their community college experiences in a new country and make sense of these experiences. Refugee students enrolled in postsecondary education face academic challenges vastly different from students that come from non-refugee backgrounds. Although there is some existing literature on refugee and immigrant students' experiences in elementary and secondary education, there is a paucity of research on the specific experiences of Iraqi refugee students in higher education. This research addresses this gap in knowledge and focuses on exploring the experiences of Iraqi refugees as they transition into a community college in their new homeland. Data was collected by interviewing Iraqi refugee students who were recruited from Educational Opportunity Programs and Services Department (EOPS).



Purposive sampling was utilized and data was transcribed and then analyzed using software called Saturate. In exploring the process of transition for each student, the three themes that emerged were: 1) Navigating the System; 2) Academic Barriers; and 3) Sense of Belonging. Bourdieu's notion of habitus and forms of capital served as the theoretical framework for this research. The findings from this study may be utilized to enhance understanding of the barriers and support mechanisms that affect Iraqi refugee students' community college experiences. It is the intent of the researcher that study findings will be used by campus administrators to implement strategies, programs, and policies that enhance the success of Iraqi refugee students at ECCC.

### **Cynthia Rico**

#### *Investigating Effective Student Educational Planning Practices in the California Community Colleges*

In 2009, the American Graduation Initiative was announced charging postsecondary institutions with graduating a higher proportion of college students by 2020. This initiative, which has become known as the completion agenda, has emerged as the single most important goal for community colleges. In 2011, California Community Colleges' Board of Governors enacted a process of reform by appointing the Student Success Task Force. The task force issued twenty-two formal recommendations. In 2011, several of the recommendations were enacted under California legislation, SB1456, which mandated that student education plans be part of a trio of services identified as the Student Success and Support Program.

Given the challenge of increased enrollments, fiscal constraints, and limited human and technological resources, colleges have been seeking practices to bring to scale student educational planning services. The purpose of this study was to explore counselors' and academic advisors' perceptions of effective student educational planning practices, with the goal of identifying effective practices currently in place statewide. The methodology included a survey designed in consultation with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The survey was distributed to Counseling Department Chairs or their designees at the state's 112 community colleges. The findings revealed that there were no significant differences between effectiveness ratings of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered face-to-face or online and no significant differences between effectiveness ratings of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered by counselors and those delivered by other personnel.

### **Charlotta Robertson**

#### *Emergency and Disaster Preparedness in California Community Colleges: Administrative Response and Responsibility*

Though community colleges credential approximately 80 percent of the nation's first responders, many two-year colleges struggle with executing disaster/emergency preparedness and response plans. An American Association of Community Colleges 2005 survey of administrators showed that their level of emergency preparedness plans ranged from very thorough to not prepared at all. A 2010 survey of 232 of the nation's top college and university administrators revealed that 70% had a moderate to low concern about their campus experiencing natural disasters or chemical spills and 31.7% did not conduct emergency trainings. This study focused on California community colleges and their unique challenges and student populations. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the role of California community college administrators in disaster and emergency preparedness planning, the prioritization thereof, and to explore strategic approaches to emergency planning. A mixture of administrators from three California community colleges participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that emergency preparedness was an integral part of the planning processes at some colleges and in its infancy at others. The level of awareness of emergency preparedness planning varied among administrative ranks. Support from senior leadership, financial and human resources influence the level of priority of emergency preparedness planning. Implications and recommendations for policy and practice are discussed. As one of the first studies to examine the role of California community college administrators in emergency preparedness planning, it serves as a foundation for future research.

### **Claudia Tornsauer**

#### *Comparing Student Retention in On-Campus, Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Credit Courses at California Community Colleges*

Online learning has become a reality for many students in postsecondary education. However, the dropout rates for online learners are proportionally higher than for on-campus learners. This quantitative study compared retention rates among California community college students with different racial/ethnic backgrounds, gender and age to determine if the types of interactions, as provided in different instructional methods, play a role in achieving higher retention rates. The three instructional methods under investigation included synchronous online courses with the opportunity for immediate interactions, asynchronous online courses with the opportunity for delayed interactions and on-campus classes with the traditional forms of interactions. The results of the factorial analyses revealed that retention rates between on-campus and online students tended to be significantly larger for some racial/ethnic and age groups as well for male students in the asynchronous learning environment when compared with the synchronous online setting. Those students who have the opportunity to communicate promptly with instructors and peers are more likely to persist than those students who must wait for a response. Therefore, one strategy to help increase retention in online courses is to provide

students with increased immediate interaction by promoting a strong sense of community through the Community of Inquiry (CoI).

### **Marissa Vasquez-Urias**

#### *Predictors of Sense of Belonging among Latino Men in Community College*

Community colleges serve as the primary pathway into public postsecondary education, not only for Latino students in general, but particularly for Latino men. However, while the majority of Latino males enroll in two-year colleges, a vast number of them do not attain their educational goals. Thus, if community colleges are to be successful in supporting Latino men towards degree completion and transfer, a better understanding of this population is needed. This study seeks to fill this void by providing insight into factors that may serve to influence sense of belonging among Latino men in community colleges. The goal of this quantitative study was to create a model of sense of belonging for Latino males that may guide institutional leaders in developing interventions and policies that support their success. Findings from the analysis revealed background, environmental, academic, social, and institutional factors that positively and negatively predicted sense of belonging among Latino men in community college. Implications for research, policy, and practice are discussed.

### **2010 Cohort Dissertation Abstracts**

### **Mary K. Benard**

#### *Grow Your Own Leaders: Case Study of a Community College Leadership Development Program*

Community colleges across the nation are facing a critical void in leadership during a time of unprecedented budget constraints due to the retirements of baby boomer presidents and vice presidents who started their careers in the 1960s and 1970s. Results from the Career and Lifestyles Survey (Weismann & Vaughan, 2007) indicated that 84% of the community college presidents across the nation planned to retire by 2016. The leadership development options that currently exist to train future community college leaders include university-based educational programs (Ed.D and Ph.D), short-term conferences and workshops, and internal succession planning “grow your own” (GYO) programs. Succession planning programs known as GYO programs emerged in the early 2000s as a strategy to recruit employees who are interested in career advancement into the leadership pipeline and prepare them for leadership positions.

This study explores the results of a GYO succession planning program in recruiting and preparing employees for career advancement. A qualitative case study was conducted to gain an in - depth understanding of the GYO program participants' experiences in the program, the impact of the program on their career advancement behaviors, and the effectiveness of the program in filling the leadership pipeline. The AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders and two of Malcolm Knowles' assumptions on andragogy were used as theoretical frameworks to guide investigation of the GYO program. This study is intended to inform community college leaders, those professionals who create leadership development programs, and aspiring leaders about the status of one GYO program.

### **Wendy Craig**

#### *Euro-American Students as Solidarity Allies at Historically White Institutions: Principled Support of the Interests of African Students*

Despite more than forty years since the attempts to provide access and support to African and other oppressed students at Historically White Institutions began, these students still cope with racial microaggressions and inhospitable campus environments that affect their ability to persist and graduate. Historically, the onus has been put on African students to assimilate and cooperate within hostile campus environments, forcing them to create safe spaces that allow them to survive. Most of the efforts to include African students on campuses are derived from a white perspective. Reform efforts such as multicultural curriculum and diversity initiatives use a multinationalist perspective that does not take into account the worldview of African and oppressed people and requires students to suppress or renounce their culture in order to be "successful," which is also defined within a lens of whiteness. Historically, any real change that has made a qualitative difference in the lives of African students on campus has come from student movements; only through student demands have changes been implemented such as ethnic studies programs or educational opportunity support programs. However, these programs were quickly co-opted as soon as they were launched to ensure that students could not organize for meaningful change. This dissertation proposes that Euro-American students have a responsibility to support the interests of African students at HWIs, and this support must come in the form of transformative action, not reform efforts. This study offers a definition of a new type of white ally – the solidarity ally – which addresses the problems found in current literature about racial justice and social justice allies, by using a grass roots revolutionary theory called African Internationalism. Qualitative methods were used to illuminate the lives of eleven Euro-American students who were defined as allies by three African student leaders on campuses or professors who taught courses in ethnic studies or multicultural education. The study explored their definitions of allyhood, how they became allies, and the actions they took that resulted them being named as allies. Students from two universities and two community colleges in the southwest region of the United States participated in two face-to-face semi-structured interviews each as part of

phenomenological study. Four major themes emerged from the interviews: 1) what it means to be an ally; 2) development as an ally; 3) the practice of being an ally; and 4) organizing as allies. The findings from this study have implications for practitioners in higher education as well as research implications for future inquiries on student allies and social justice.

### **Janice Goforth-Melroy**

#### *Universal Design for Learning: A Program Evaluation of Faculty Implementation*

This study, designed as a program evaluation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Scholar Program, explored the ways that the application of UDL principles in courses and curriculum design may facilitate equity in student learning, and improve student success. Designed as a summative process and outcomes-based evaluation, the intent was to add to the body of knowledge available to faculty, administrators, and others by providing insight into the effectiveness of UDL as an educational strategy to make differences in student achievement and/or engagement in the learning process. The researcher utilized the concurrent triangulation design, a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis to explore the experience and perceptions of the UDL Scholars as participants of the program, as well as efficacy of the program. The researcher collected and analyzed data using SPSS 22 statistical analysis software to perform descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data and Atlas.ti (version 7) analysis software to perform content analysis and coding of qualitative data. Findings indicate that the UDL scholar program was effective in providing training to faculty, staff, and administrators about the principles, techniques and strategies of UDL. Some scholars made lasting pedagogical changes that had a positive impact on student learning and success in terms of the number of students succeeding in their courses, as well as on students who demonstrated a broad range of abilities, learning styles and preferences.

### **Bridget Herrin**

#### *Predicting First Year Student Success: An Evaluation of Assessment Testing and Self-Efficacy*

With the passing of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, California community colleges are hoping to improve access and success in our institutions by providing effective matriculation services including, assessment and placement (Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, 2012). The purpose of this inferential quantitative study was to determine whether there is a relationship between college assessment test scores, students' academic self-efficacy scores, and academic achievement in first-term community college freshman at Southern California Community College (SCCC). This study utilized a sample of 96 first-term

freshmen at SCCC and conducted multiple regression analyses to determine the predictive relationships between assessment, achievement, and self-efficacy variables. Results indicated self-efficacy scores accounted for 12.2% of the total 21.8% of variance in GPA and 9.8% of the total 17.3% variance in unit completion rate. Test-taking efficacy accounted for the most unique variance in semester GPA, math course grade, English course grade, and unit completion rate. Students with higher confidence in their test-taking skills, also have higher GPA's, better course grades, and complete a higher percentage of their units. Math assessment score was also a significant predictor of semester GPA and math course grade, accounting for over 30% of the variance in math grade. Additionally, math assessment score was a significant predictor of test-taking efficacy, indicating that the assessment process may be influencing self-efficacy. The researcher encourages the use of self-efficacy measures in assessment and placement practices and recommends further exploration into the influence assessment and placement may have on student's self-efficacy and subsequent motivation and performance in coursework.

### **Andrew McNeill**

#### *An Examination of the Effects of Using a Sustained-Theme Content-Based Instruction Approach in a Community College ESL Program*

One of the most effective approaches in facilitating second language learning is Content-Based Instruction (CBI). CBI is an approach to language acquisition using discipline content to deliver language instruction. Studies have shown that using CBI in college ESL courses has not only increased English Language proficiency, but has prepared students for traditional college courses by teaching them skills that promote success in those courses (Kasper, 2008). Although previous studies have examined the use of CBI in the design of ESL classes and programs, little research has been done to examine the effect of using a CBI approach while implementing sustained themes across each level of a community college ESL program as it relates to the success, retention, and persistence rates of students within such a program. There is also a lack of research that examines the association between Sustained-Theme Content Based Instruction (STCBI) use and the wide variety of demographic characteristics that are represented in the post-secondary population. The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between the use of a STCBI approach in ESL and academic success of a diverse population of students preparing for college-level courses in an ESL program at a Southern California Community College. The strength of that association was determined by gathering and analyzing quantitative data concerning the academic success, retention, and persistence rates of the 416 students who took the English as a Second Language Placement Assessment and subsequently enrolled in the program during the four-semester period of fall 2010 through spring 2012.

## **Lynn Neault**

### *Challenges with transfer in the 21st century*

Lower division transfer preparation for the university has been the primary mission of community colleges since their inception creating an important pathway to baccalaureate degree attainment for many students who may not otherwise have the opportunity for higher education. Once considered fairly straightforward, the transfer pathway has become overly complex and difficult for students to navigate. The underlying issues with community college transfer are multifaceted and profound, and often the focus of much attention by public policy makers. This study explored the extent to which the complexity with transfer is rooted in flawed state and local policy coupled with insufficient capacity to meet the growing demand for postsecondary education at many public universities in California.

This embedded case study examined the transfer pathway in one large region in southern California in the first decade of the 21st century. The study investigated the implications of flawed public policy and insufficient capacity at some public universities on the development of local policy, and the unintended consequences for transfer students who are denied admission to transfer. Further, the study described how these policy decisions are hindering access and equity in the public postsecondary education system in the region under investigation. Amidst fluctuating economic conditions, the public higher education system in California has struggled to meet increasing enrollment demand. With the ongoing deterioration in state appropriations for higher education in California, the need for increased baccalaureate degree attainment to meet the future economic demands of the state is more critical than ever.

## **Camille Nebeker**

### *Learning Theories and Principles Applied to Responsible Conduct of Research*

Academic research institutions provide the formal training ground for developing reasoning and critical thinking skills embedded within the application of the scientific method. For many, this training includes instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) where trainees become acquainted with rules, regulations, professional codes and standards of practice that influence research integrity. This qualitative case study examined an RCR instructional model developed for science graduate students preparing for cross-sector science professions (e.g., business, government and non-profit). The research questions explored how instructional content and process contribute to developing knowledge of practices that influence research integrity in the academic and corporate settings. The model was field tested in conjunction with a student internship experience involving a student intern, faculty member and employer as participants. The How People Learn (HPL) principles for design of effective learning environments and Malcolm Knowles' original four assumptions on andragogy

formed the theoretical frameworks to guide examination of the course. Results indicate that core content typically associated with RCR (e.g., data management, conflict of interest, collaboration) combined with instruction that actively engages participants in the learning process through inquiry, discussion and case based reasoning can facilitate learning about RCR and its application to a corporate setting. To advance this model for adoption within science graduate programs, research is needed to assess employer perceived value of ethics education as a component of employee professional development. The broader implications for RCR educators suggest adoption of the HPL framework as a tool to guide examination of existing RCR instruction for alignment with theories of human learning supported by research.

### **Kim Perigo**

*The Rhetorical Leader: Lessons in the Rhetoric of Education*

Unmistakably, whether positive or negative, postsecondary leaders affect the institutions they lead. Their influence and visibility extend past the doors of their institution because postsecondary institutions have high visibility in the community, as well as at the state and federal level. Postsecondary leaders must be able to manage their internal and external influences and communicate to their various constituencies. One opportunity a CEO has to influence all of these groups at one time is through convocation. Convocation, at many institutions, is the occasion designed to launch the new academic year and as such, it can be an important leadership moment. Northouse (2010) outlines four communication components of leadership: 1. Leadership is transactional; 2. Leadership is influential; 3. Leadership functions in groups; and 4. Leadership reinforces goals. Through the analysis of this dissertation, the conclusion was offered that convocation is a rhetorical enactment of leadership by applying Northouse's components to the twenty convocation speeches from both community colleges and universities. Considering this conclusion, this dissertation offers suggested areas of consideration for CEOs as they construct their convocation addresses based on principles of persuasion as well as the outcomes they seek to achieve.

### **Nick Pettit**

*An Investigation into At-Risk Student Athletes' Experiences and Academic Performance: A Case Study at San Diego State University*

This case study examines academic performance of student-athletes who are considered academically at-risk when they enroll at San Diego State University. Much of the research in the field has focused on systemic academic challenges for student-athletes as a unique population, but has not focused specifically on those deemed academically at-risk by the institution. To conduct this study, a mixed



method research design was employed using Astin's Inputs- Environment- Outcomes (IEO) model as the theoretical framework. NCAA GOALS survey data and academic performance levels of the 2012-13 at-risk student-athlete population were analyzed to report significant findings. In addition, qualitative data were collected from institutional leaders that have a vested interest in the academic performance of student-athletes. The results of the study indicated that the at-risk population's mean cumulative GPA was less than that of all student-athletes at 2.69 and 2.84, respectively. There were also statistically significant differences in mean GPA among the at-risk population with regard to gender, major, sport participation, and year in school. However, incoming eligibility index score did not have a statistically significant impact on GPA. Correlation between high school GPA, index score, and college GPA indicated significant relationship between high school GPA and college GPA. Analysis of the survey data revealed 21 of the 90 variables as statistically significant correlations with GPA, ten of which also correlated positively or negatively among the predictor variables. Moreover, regression modeling, including all predictor variables, accounted for 53% of the variance in cumulative GPA and resulted in 7 significant predictors of mean GPA. By and large, campus leaders reported that at-risk student-athletes are supported in their quest to graduation. They also offered many suggestions that may improve the educational experiences of this population. By better understanding the nuances of student-athletes' academic success, the athletic department and university can provide valuable services to assist at-risk student-athletes in succeeding academically. The results of this study serve as a valuable guide for athletic and academic administrators by offering suggestions for assisting student-athletes in their quest of graduation. Lastly, this case study may also be used as a tool by peer institutions to better understand the challenges they must overcome to ensure the academic success of their student-athletes, both in terms of institutional factors and individual factors.

## **Saman Yaghmaee**

### *Predicting Completion Rate with Institutional Characteristics and Practices at Public Community Colleges in California*

Public policies and economic conditions have raised the expectations toward institutions of higher education, community colleges in particular, to produce more graduates and skilled workers. As a result, state actions to increase college completion are growing and stakeholders are holding community colleges accountable by increasingly linking budget allocations to college completion rates. The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of institutional characteristics and administrative practices on completion rates at public community colleges in California. The data on completion rates represents the 2006-2007 cohort of students who were tracked for academic years of 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, and 2011/12. The data on other variables were collected from California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Data Mart Management

Information system and were averaged for six academic years to match the same academic years on completion rates. The study conducted one-way ANOVA analysis to predict completion rates based on the institutional size, geographical location, and the number of community colleges in a district. It also conducted multiple regression analysis to predict completion rates based on the ratio of employment categories at each public community colleges in California. Results indicated that a) small and medium size institutions had lower completion rates than large and very large ones, b) rural institutions trailed behind their suburban and urban counterparts in regards to completion rates, c) having two or three community colleges in a district predicted the highest completion rate compared to single district colleges and districts with four or more colleges, and d) tenured or tenure-track faculty was the only variable that positively and significantly correlated with the completion rate when compared to other types of CCC employment categories. Based on the overall findings, a number of recommendations were made to increase institutional role and improve completion rates at public community colleges in California.

### **2009 Cohort Dissertation Abstracts**

#### **Glyn Bongolan**

##### *Perceptions and Expectations of the Initiation of Student–Faculty Interaction Outside of Class at a Community College*

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the context of the different levels of initiation in student–faculty interaction outside of class for community college students and faculty members. The researcher examined the meanings constructed about the initiation of interactions between faculty members and students and how those interactions contributed to the construction of the students' identities and academic experiences.

Constructivist grounded theory was utilized in this study. A total of 14 students were interviewed through one focus group and individual interviews. Five faculty members were interviewed individually. Grounded theory methods lead to the following four themes: (1) student attitudes toward initiation of student–faculty interaction, (2) faculty attitudes toward initiation of student–faculty interaction, (3) initiation of student–faculty interaction, and (4) perceptions of student–faculty interactions. An overarching theme of underutilization of student–faculty interaction emerged from the data.

Described in this study, reasons for low levels of interaction outside of class included the following: (1) underestimation of benefits of student–faculty interaction by both students and faculty, such as increased intellectual self-identity and academic performance; (2) lack of intentional initiation of interaction by

faculty; (3) lack of faculty knowledge of strategies for interaction outside of class; (4) student intimidation of faculty sometimes interpreted by faculty as an absence of interest; and (5) an absence of an equity-minded perspective that provides validation and empowers students through interaction outside of class. Recommendations for practice are discussed.

## **Wendy Bracken**

### *Interaction between engagement and the Big Five personality characteristics on academic success of first year college students*

Within this research, a version of the person-environment fit model, adapted for use in higher education, was tested. It was postulated that stable personality characteristics (represented by the big-five personality traits) interact with engagement with the college environment resulting in good or bad fit, as measured by semester-to-semester persistence and cumulative GPA. Data were collected via a self-report online survey containing questions about personality characteristics, degree of academic effort made, degree and quality of perceived campus support, number and quality of faculty-student interactions, and number and quality of college peer relationships. The final sample was comprised of 129 students from San Diego area postsecondary institutions. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to determine the degree to which personality characteristics interacted with level of engagement with the college environment to predict cumulative GPA. The degree to which various biodemographic variables (e.g., ethnicity, gender, level of parental education) predicted GPA was also examined using ANOVA. Due to small sample size (n=6), all results reported represent findings for a sample of students who intended to persist in college. Results indicated that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and engagement with faculty, peers and campus environment significantly predicted cumulative GPA for students who intended to enroll in the upcoming semester of college. Institutions are encouraged to employ this person-environment fit model in pinpointing students who are at greater risk of academic failure and devise strategies to assist them in attaining academic goals based on the strategic assessment of personality and environment interactions.

## **Max Branscomb**

### *How do HSIs communicate with their Latino communities*

Communication is often an overlooked responsibility of community colleges, which is unfortunate because district residents need to know about their local college. Understanding the factors that contribute to successful communication is important if community colleges are to have success in the political arena, explaining their evolving mission to policymakers and the community, and informing potential students of new requirements.

This study was conducted to learn what communication strategies are in place at selected California community colleges and to inform college leaders about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to current communication practices. It seeks to provide useful information about current practices, identify problems with existing forms of communication, and suggest improvements.

Results of the study indicate that the messages and target audiences of community college communication professionals have shifted substantially. "Welcome, come look around" has been replaced by "prepare and declare," a reflection of looming legislation to require California students to declare majors and have a Student Education Plan in order to receive financial aid. Opinion leaders are now the primary communication targets of the public information officers interviewed. Messages focus on financial stewardship and sound management during a challenging fiscal period.

Community colleges should develop strong and effective communication offices led by experienced communication professionals to reach out to prospective students, community leaders, potential partners and elected officials. Community colleges should continually assess the content of the messages they communicate, the media they use for communication and the publics they want to reach. They need to remain open to the changes in media, particularly social media. Communications to opinion leaders gains importance during hard fiscal times and college public information officers are the key communicators to these leaders.

## **Paul DeWine**

*The influence of structural environments on the success of the student transition process from a community college to a research university*

The purpose of this case study was to explore through a constructivist lens, the influence of university structural environments on the transition process of community college students to a research university. The findings of this study will help to inform the development of university programs and services that will assist community college transfer students.

This study consisted of one-on-one interviews with students and staff at Western University and a document analysis. It was determined that the structural environments in place at Western University included academic support, faculty, social support, orientation, pre-enrollment programs, and university communication, all of which influenced the transition process of community college students. Most of these programs and support services (environments) contributed to a successful transition. Some recommendations for improvement were also provided.

The findings from this study may contribute to the improvement of the community college student to university transition process at other four-year institutions

because of the structural environments that were identified and needed to influence successful community college student to university transition.

### **Sylvia Garcia-Navarrete**

#### *The Effects of Using OUR READING TOOLBOX: The Reading-Thinking Connection in a Community College Developmental Reading Class*

Nationwide, 75 percent of the 2010 high school graduates were not considered ready for college, according to the American College Testing (ACT, 2010). The achievement gap has not narrowed for this group of learners, not only hindering their success in college, but also limiting their opportunities to compete in the workforce at a local, national, and global scale. The use of developmental education as a strategy to address the achievement gap in postsecondary education, specifically in the area of reading, continues to present questions and challenges. There is no question that there is a need to assist students who are unprepared for college-level work; however, little research has been carried out on the effectiveness of programs that have been designed to help individuals enrolled in developmental education courses. Regardless of the broad range of remedial programs and pedagogies, there is no strong consensus about how to carry out developmental education most effectively and “there is very little research that reliably measures the causal impact or different approaches to remediation” (Bailey, 2009, p. 2).

This study examined one innovative approach to developing reading competency at a California community college. The effects upon students’ academic performance and their perceptions of the classroom environment and course activities, the art of reading, and of themselves as learners when using OUR READING TOOLBOX as an intervention in a community college developmental reading class were evaluated. This intervention consists of a set of twelve specially designed tools that bring the “thinking-centered approach” to life by becoming a functional part of students’ learning processes.

Data were gathered from students (N=60) representing two sections of developmental reading at one community college. A number of demographic variables that were hypothesized to account for differences in academic performance in the course were examined, and the statistical tools used for this study incorporated a variety of multivariate analysis models. The distribution of demographic variables governed the specific choice of statistical models. Information obtained for this study was derived during the Spring 2011 semester from routine course materials and assessments. This information included results from the course lessons, exams, and other activities ordinarily encountered in regular class sessions. Students completed a Student Survey Questionnaire, a Student Open-ended Questionnaire, and a Student Information Sheet, so as to gather the students’ learning experience while enrolled in this course as well as demographic information.

Outcomes revealed that for the participants' academic performance, there was statistical significance with the course assignments when associated with the Post-Tests. The outcomes provided initial data indicating the effectiveness of this new intervention as a way of approaching developmental reading. The learning environment and course activities helped to create a culture of thinking in the classroom. The information gathered from the research instruments in this study focused on students' attitudes, their sense of involvement and participation in the classroom, their motivation and interest to read course assignments, and their sense of purpose in daily lessons activities in class and outside of class. Second Language learners demonstrated a higher level of comprehension and thinking ability after using the TOOLBOX. Adult learners, age 25 and older, benefited from using the TOOLBOX as an intervention in a developmental reading class. The classroom context in which OUR READING TOOLBOX was used was characterized by guidance and nurturing. This fostered a sense of confidence and courage among the students, contributing to a positive view of themselves as learners. Using the TOOLBOX as an intervention transformed students' perceptions with regard to the art of reading and of themselves as readers.

According to the findings of this study, students achieved a higher-level of academic performance in thinking and understanding when using OUR READING TOOLBOX as an intervention in the developmental reading classroom. Overall, their ability to think purposefully about what they read showed a dramatic increase over the course of the semester as they applied these tools. This dramatic change contributed to the creation of a culture of thinking in the classroom.

Given the initial findings, further research needs to be conducted to examine the effects of using the TOOLBOX in a broad array of academic disciplines across the community college campus. Further, there is a need to develop effective evaluation designs, such as the approach used in this study, as the basis for determining how well a variety of other developmental reading interventions promote high-quality student learning. Providing professional development for faculty to use the TOOLBOX as a primary approach to teaching developmental reading may offer a viable way to integrate these thinking-centered approaches and to help foster a culture of thinking in which students can succeed.

### **Christopher Hayashi**

#### *Academic self-efficacy beliefs in Mexican American community college students*

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to investigate the academic self-efficacy beliefs of Mexican-American community college student. The study used a mixed-methods approach to assess the academic self-efficacy beliefs of this group, to determine the congruence of those beliefs to academic skills, and to identify the types of experiences that shaped those beliefs. The academic self-efficacy beliefs of a sample of 428 Mexican-American students from a southern California community

college were measured using the SELF-A and analyzed across a number of demographic variables. Congruence of academic self-efficacy beliefs to academic skill was determined by comparing scores on the SELF-A to self-reported past academic performances. The sources of academic self-efficacy beliefs were explored through data obtained via additional survey items and also through interviews conducted with 16 of the students from the original sample.

Findings indicated that positive academic self-efficacy beliefs existed for the sample and were congruent with academic skill. The four sources of academic self-efficacy identified in past research applied to the academic self-efficacy beliefs of the students in the sample, but in ways that differed from what past research had suggested with other student populations. Additional sources of academic self-efficacy that were equally influential were identified. Given the poorer academic outcomes of Mexican-American community college students compared to other student populations, the findings of the study were used to propose cost-effective suggestions for practices and programs intended to improve the academic outcomes of this group.

### **Scott Herrin**

*Strategies and interventions needed in order to increase student success among under-represented groups of student-athletes enrolling in the California Community Colleges*

Research indicates that community college student-athletes need to study and compete at institutions that offer programs that align with student-athletes' talents and needs. A lack of such alignment has been associated with outcomes that have negative consequences for student-athletes as well as institutions (Cunningham, 1993, p. 7-8).

This study was undertaken in the form of a program evaluation of the Athletic Academic Support Office (AASO) at County College. The goal of this study was to furnish findings that would enable the AASO to operate in the most efficient manner possible, given available resources. Although the AASO has a broad range of goals, this study specifically focused on student academic achievement and success.

This study employed three different investigative strategies. First, a discrepancy analysis (Fox, R.D., 2011) was conducted to compare the current AASO structure and function to a set of nationally prescribed and recommended standards. This comparison also included an examination of other programs in the region and state. Next, a series of individual interviews with key stakeholders was conducted to assess their perceptions of the AASO and its ability to meet the academic needs of County College's student athletes. The third investigative strategy involved an examination of the statistical association of between three sets of variables; (1) student athlete demographic characteristics, (2) their responses to a survey designed to assess their perceptions of the adequacy and quality of the support they

received through the AASO and (3) indicators of their academic success, including; GPA, retention rate, units attempted and units completed.

The findings of this study included recommended resources and experiences needed to ensure success among student-athletes of diverse backgrounds at County College. Findings also included recommended strategies to more effectively meet the needs of student-athletes prior to entering universities. Data collection tools and analysis methods employed in this study may be implemented by the AASO to monitor its progress towards meeting recommended and prescribed national standards.

### **Valita Jones**

*In Search of Conscious Leadership: A Quality Study of Postsecondary Educational Leadership Practice*

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of postsecondary educational leaders who are practicing what can be described as responsible and accountable leadership or conscious leadership. Eight senior postsecondary leaders participated in face-to-face interviews designed to identify conscious leadership qualities and practices. All of the participants took a Conscious Quotient Inventory (Brazdua, 2011) to measure their global consciousness and awareness. Data from the interviews were used to answer four research questions designed to investigate what they were doing on a daily basis and why they have become more responsible and conscious leaders. Findings suggest that participants incorporated a variety of conscious leadership practices into their daily practice. The leaders demonstrated an awareness of: a) a social systems orientation or approach to leading; b) patterns and themes that informed the work environment; and c) the benefits of a shared or participatory leadership practice. Results provided insight into responsible and conscious leadership practices and offers direction for developing future conscious leaders.

### **Cecilia Medina**

*An examination of factors that aid and impede the academic success of first-year Mexican-American students in community college*

Nationwide, Latino students are entering college, yet are not completing a four-year degree at the same rate when compared to other ethnic groups. Between 1992 and 2007, only 5 percent of Latinos successfully earned a four-year college degree, and that number is lower than any other ethnic group (College Board, 2007). California Community College Chancellor's Office [CCCCO] (2010) revealed that 50% of students drop out of college after their first semester; furthermore, the California Community College [CCC] system houses the largest percentage of Latino students



in the state. In short, these statistics are staggering in terms of showing the underachievement of Latinos in higher education.

Policy makers, administrators, faculty and staff need to find better ways to effectively help increase the academic success of the Latino student population. This lack of academic success among Latinos is a serious problem, especially considering the implications it could have for the state and national economies. Latinos represent 56 percent of the nation's population growth, and Mexicans represent the largest sub-group among Latinos (Census, 2010). If the Latino population continues to fall further behind in educational attainment compared to other groups, while continuing to increase at a faster rate than other ethnic groups, then this might have negative implications for the U.S. economy and society, especially in states like California.

The conceptual framework used for this study was based on Laura I. Rendon's (1993) Theory of Validation. This theory was used to examine factors that are perceived to have the greatest effect on impeding and promoting the success of first-year Mexican-American community college students. Factors include faculty and student interaction within and outside the classroom, learning opportunities and instructional strategies, counseling and student interaction, and support services utilized by students. These factors were examined from the perspectives of students and faculty representing various disciplines using a qualitative methods approach.

Grounded theory was the research foundation used in the study (Creswell, 2009). The researcher unraveled and compared data, themes emerged and patterns were identified. This method was intended to compare data from different groups to identify the similarities and differences of faculty and students perception regarding academic success of Mexican-American college students.

The community college where the participants were drawn from is a single college district with a student enrollment of 22,000. This Hispanic serving public institution (HSI) is located in Southern California. The three research questions addressed were (1) What institutional factors are perceived to promote the academic success of first-year Mexican-American community college students? (2) What institutional factors are perceived to impede the academic success of first-year Mexican-American community college students? (3) How do the perception of students and faculty compare concerning the academic success of first-year Mexican-American students.

The research consisted of seven structured interviews with tenured faculty members, seven focus groups and two student interviews, for a total of 26 student participants. A total of eight themes and sub-themes emerged from the data. The themes were categorized into effective methods and ineffective methods. The sub-themes were "instructional strategies," "instructor/student relationships," "instructor behaviors," and "student support services."

There was a high degree of congruence between faculty and student respondents on the factors that enhance and impede the academic success of Mexican-American college students. Based on the study findings, recommendations for research and practice were made in order to increase the success of first year Mexican-American college students.

### **Henri Migala**

#### *Program Evaluation of a Pilot Intensive ESL Program for Refugees and Immigrants*

Serving almost half of all undergraduate students in the country, community colleges are a vital part of the postsecondary education system in the United States. Nearly 50 percent of these students either come from an immigrant background, are permanent legal residents, are naturalized U.S. citizens or children of immigrants, and increasingly, refugees and asylees. Nowhere is the challenge of teaching refugees being experienced more acutely than at Cuyamaca College in the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District in East San Diego County – a primary place in the country where Iraqi refugees are being resettled. The first step to self-sufficiency in the United States is for an immigrant to learn English. For many, this often begins with non-credit ESL courses. Unfortunately, according to the research of Chisman and Crandall (2008), of all students who begin their studies with non-credit courses “only 10 percent make the transition to further education of any kind”. In response to both the increasing need of teaching ESL to refugees and facilitating the academic success of students who begin their studies in non-credit, Cuyamaca College developed an innovative ESL-Link program which begins with intensive (150 hours/semester) of non-credit instruction. For those students who successfully pass this course, they are guaranteed admission into the first level credit course (ESL 80). The study evaluated the efficacy of this pilot ESL-Link program by comparing the academic success in credit ESL 80 of the ESL-Link students to those students who did not participate in the Link program. Quantitative data (final course grades) and qualitative data (interviews of participating ESL faculty members) were used to evaluate this program. Further research should examine the longer-term academic and personal benefits of participating in the ESL-Link program, the benefit of linking additional courses to the sequence of linked classes, and the role of student support services in supporting the unique psycho/social and emotional needs of refugees.

### **Freddy Ramirez**

#### *The relationship between counseling, writing support and mentoring on student learning outcomes in the Puente Project*

The purpose of this study was to identify the association between services offered through the Puente Program at North County College (NCC) and the academic

success that student participants experience. The study examined the academic success outcomes of Puente student cohorts from Academic Years 2002-2003 to 2008-2009. The study identified a comparison group based on demographics and level of academic readiness and examined its academic outcomes for the same time period. A quantitative, causal comparative research methodology was used to compare the academic outcomes of both groups based on eight indicators of student academic success: GPA, number of units enrolled, number of units completed, retention and persistence rates, transfer readiness and transfer rates, and number of academic awards received. The results from this study indicated that the services received through the Puente Program had a significant impact on the eight measures of academic success examined by this study. The results from this study may serve as the basis for expansion of academic support programs aimed at improving the academic success of under prepared student groups and Latino students in particular. This study includes recommendations for expansion of the Puente Program at NCC.

### **2008 Cohort Dissertation Abstracts**

#### **Justin Akers**

##### *Budget Cuts and Latino Community College Students*

Budget cuts have become an invasive force within the California Community College system, leading to the down-sizing of course offerings and services and the internal restructuring of how funding is allocated. This coincides with the growth of enrollment in the California Community College system, especially amongst the low-income Latino/a student population.

To address diminished funding at the state level, policymakers have had to make choices about how to continue operations with diminished capacity. Furthermore, the prospect of diminishing funds into the foreseeable future has also influenced the development of new philosophical trends seeking to re-make California Community Colleges as more economically viable within the context of the “free market.” This has influenced the cutting of needs-based programs such as the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), which disproportionately serves low-income Latino/a students.

Since the cutting of these funds directly affects this student population, it influenced the development of this study. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to analyze how low-income Latino/a students that are enrolled in needs-based programs in the community college experienced the implementation of budget cuts. It was also intended to understand student perceptions of the nature of the cuts in the community college system, including reductions in state-funded, need-based programs such as EOPS. The study involved two sets of interviews based on student

and faculty perceptions. Eleven students enrolled in Frontier Community College and also in the EOPS Program were interviewed, as well as two Frontier Community College staff members. While the focus of the study is student perceptions, the staff members' interviews were included to show another perspective of student experience. The research questions were: (a) how do low-income Latino/a students enrolled in EOPS perceive the affect of education budget cuts on their persistence in the community college?; and (b) how do low-income Latino/a students in the EOPS program perceive the nature of the budget cuts?

The study used the qualitative method, a phenomenological approach, and was framed using the advocacy/participatory worldview. Data were analyzed using the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis. For research question 1, analysis of the research yielded the themes of Diminished Access, Reduced Support, and Delayed Completion pertaining to student perceptions of their experiences. For research question 2, analysis of the research yielded the themes of Devaluation of Education and Race & Class Discrimination pertaining to student perceptions of the nature of the budget cuts. For the staff, the themes of Reduced Access and Services and Inequity emerged from their perceptions of student experiences and the nature of budget cuts, validating the student perceptions. Implications of the results for research and practice are discussed in the context of the budget cuts and the responsibilities of the California Community College system in providing quality education for low-income, Latino/a students.

## **Joi Lin Blake**

### *A Program Evaluation: The African American/Latino Male Community College Leadership Summit*

For decades, educational and political leaders have grappled with the challenge of closing the achievement gap and providing educational equity for students in all segments of education. Despite legislative mandates on the federal, state and local levels, the achievement gap stubbornly persists in all segments of education. The purpose of this study was to conduct a process and outcomes-based program evaluation of a high school to college transition program for African American and Latino males at a large urban community college. A combined evaluation method was conducted to measure both qualitative and quantitative data. The process evaluation measured qualitative data which were the perceptions and experiences of the student participants and chaperones. The outcomes-based evaluation examined student satisfaction with program activities, effectiveness of program processes and activities, program's influence on student understanding of higher education options, and academic performance measured by grade point average, retention, and persistence. The study also examined differences in perceptions and achievement between African American and Latino participants to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups.

The evaluation included analysis of data from approximately 250 eleventh and twelfth grade African American and Latino males and 14 chaperones who attended the program in one or more years from 2007-2010. Results from attitudinal surveys, interviews and one focus group revealed an overall satisfaction with the program related to motivation and inspiration, cultural relevance, program information/activities and program quality as dominant themes throughout the findings. Academic performance data indicated no statistically significant difference in term one and term two retention, persistence and grade point average between African American and Latino students. Research results from this evaluation revealed the need for institutions to design more intentional pre-collegiate, outreach, recruitment and transition programs that include the following components: long-term follow-up; mentoring; financial literacy; resource development; and integrated tracking systems. The results of this research will benefit policy makers, practitioners and postsecondary institutions with information needed to develop more effective high school to college transition initiatives for African American and Latino male high school students.

### **Maricarmen Cedillo**

#### *Community College Retention among Latino male students*

There are pervasive disparities among Latino students' academic achievement in higher education. Although the percentage of Latino students enrolling in post-secondary education has significantly increased every decade since the 1970s, an achievement gap exists among Latino students and other racial/ethnic groups. In addition to the achievement gap between these two groups, there are significant differences in the retention and persistence within the population of college-bound Latinos. Latino male students continue to lag behind Latino females in post-secondary degree attainment. Previous studies have examined the academic achievement of Latino students and a limited number has studied Latino male students. However, most studies have focused on Latinos attending four-year institutions and these studies tended to focus on students' perspectives. Little is known about faculty's perspectives of the academic performance of Latino students, particularly Latino male students in community colleges. Thus, there are still gaps in our understanding of this phenomenon.

The purpose of this study was to explore community college faculty members' perceptions of Latino male students' academic performance. The study employed qualitative research methods and a phenomenological approach. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Alexander Astin's Student Involvement Theory and Laura Rendón's Validation Theory. Seventeen full-time faculty members were recruited from Bay Community College (BCC) in Southern California. Individual face-to-face interviews, journal notes, demographic information questionnaires and one focus group were conducted to address the following three research questions: (1) What factors contribute to the academic performance of

Latino male students in community colleges?, (2) How are faculty members involved in Latino male students' academic and social activities?, and (3) How do faculty members view the institution's role in validating Latino male students' academic achievement? All interviews and focus group were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Interview and focus group transcripts were analyzed using the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis. Data triangulation, respondent checking, and peer debriefing were employed to ensure credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the data and the interpretation.

Analysis of the research yielded the following themes pertaining to faculty perceptions of the academic achievement of Latino male students. For research question number one, three themes emerged from the data: Becoming a College Student, Student Engagement, and Identity of Latino Male Students. For research question number two, one theme emerged: Interactions between Faculty and Latino Male Students. For research question number three, the theme Validation and Sense of Belonging surfaced describing the institution's role in validating Latino Male Students. Based on the study findings, implications and recommendations for research and practice were made in order to address the academic success of Latino male students at Bay Community College.

## **Erin Charlens**

### *African American Students Voices: What Makes Learning Communities Effective For Students of Color*

The purpose of this study was to gain African American student perceptions about their experiences in an Umoja Community program. Specifically, this study examined the effectiveness of an Umoja Community through the voices of African American students. Two research questions guided this study: (1) What are the experiences of African American students in an Umoja Community? (2) What elements of an Umoja Community program are most effective according to African American students? Ten African American California community college students, ages 19-28 years old, were selected as participants for this study. Each student was a participant in the Umoja Community program at Oceanview Community College (OCC) between 2007-2010. This qualitative study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and a focus group to capture the lived experiences of students in the Umoja Program at OCC. Results of this study yielded six major themes: (1) Formation of Fictive Kinships; (2) Validation and Sense of Belonging; (3) Pedagogy; (4) Relationships with Faculty; (5) Post-Phenomenon Adjustment; and (6) Beyond the Umoja Classroom. Each of these themes will be discussed in great detail in Chapters IV and V of this study. Results from this study contribute to the miniscule body of research surrounding African American students in community colleges. Furthermore, this study expands the body of research that exists surrounding learning communities and student success.

## **Chaz Compton**

### *An Exploration of the Attitude, Values, and Beliefs of Young SSI/DI Beneficiaries at or near the Completion of Postsecondary Education Regarding Work*

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes, values and beliefs of young (30 years of age or younger) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries at or near the completion of postsecondary education regarding self-sustaining employment. The study also sought to identify the challenges that young SSI/DI beneficiaries face in the transition to employment, their knowledge and use of the Ticket to Work (TTW) and other work incentives available through the Social Security Administration (SSA), and their preferred methods of communication with SSA. Young beneficiaries in postsecondary education have the greatest potential to transition to financial and system independence, but only 50% obtain employment at any level, and less than .5% go to work at a level that removes them from SSA support.

This qualitative study of 49 young beneficiaries, interviewed in focus groups and individually, utilized grounded theory methods that identified four theoretical categories that emerged from the data: education as a pathway, work equals worth, efficacy expectations formed by challenges and strategies, and work incentives as a disincentive to work. The young beneficiaries in this study were optimistic about their futures and were investing in their human capital in order to obtain self-sustaining employment that would give their lives meaning, purpose and fulfillment. Many of the participants had never heard of the TTW or other work incentives, and those that were familiar with them found the work incentive system to be complex and confusing. Experiences with overpayments and reporting problems through SSA resulted in feelings that the work incentive system discouraged return-to-work behavior, especially in low-paying, part-time work that has the benefit of building a paid work history and developing positive efficacy expectations.

This study includes recommendations that SSA abolish or significantly simplify the work incentive system, update and market the website to target young people, and develop a peer mentoring network. Recommendations for State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs) include the development of career plans, the provision of benefits planning, and the incorporation of internships and other work experiences in consumer plans. Recommendations for the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) include lobbying for changes to the work incentive system and providing policy guidance to SVRAs.

## **Donna Maria Daly**

### *"Foster Youth Educational Attainment" A Phenomenology*

In the last decade, a body of literature has emerged on the topic of foster youth educational attainment, mostly quantitative in nature. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to provide an opportunity for eight former foster youth to give "voice" to how they are preparing for and experiencing the transition into higher education. This study explored, firsthand, the facilitating and inhibiting factors that affected their transitions. By conducting this study I hoped to gain insight into the personal, social and academic factors affecting former foster youth as they pursue postsecondary education.

Through three in-depth interviews, the study explored the following key questions: 1) How will former foster youth describe the success factors and challenges associated with their transition from high school/GED to two or four year college?; and 2) What advice do former foster youth have for educators and child welfare staff who aim to support them in their transition from high school to college? The study also provides policy and program recommendations to child welfare services administrators and staff, legislators, current and former foster youth, and educators.

### **David Fierro**

#### *Mexican American Community College Student Perceptions of Science Related Education*

The community college is in a unique position to help advance the education of students in all sectors of society. As this new century begins however, many Hispanic and Latino students begin college at the community college level, but do not transfer to universities in significant numbers. Embedded in this observation are the low numbers of this population who complete baccalaureate studies in science, technologies, engineering and math (STEM) majors. As such, the study focuses on a Mexican American segment of the Hispanic/Latino population and examines the factors related to their successful transition through their STEM education in a Southern California community college that is also a Hispanic Serving Institution. Using the Grounded research methodology, the researcher determined that Mexican American students who have persevered into upper level community college STEM courses had engaged in social connections throughout their STEM educational experience. Social connections were in the form of family support, institutional inclusion, peer engagement and faculty involvement. Central to these connections were demonstrated examples of student validation, institutional involvement, and various forms of student integration.

### **Marsha Gable**

#### *Bringing Voice to Silenced African American Women Administrators at Predominately White Institutions*



While African American women are increasingly becoming equipped with the appropriate educational credentials and have made scant gains in the advancement to senior administrative roles over the past 20 years, African American women leaders remain in a quandary. Little has changed. Scholars have conducted extensive studies on issues related to African American women in higher education, yet the unique leadership experiences of African American women administrators remain absent in the literature. Research on African American women in higher education have asserted the need for additional and more targeted research on the experiences that African American women face in the academy, and most importantly at predominantly White institutions, to bring voice on the unique leadership experiences of African American women at the senior and executive level in higher education.

Therefore, this dissertation describes the leadership experiences of African American women senior- and executive-level administrators at predominantly White public institutions in California. Through a phenomenological research design, and triangulation of data collected through document analysis, informal and formal interviews, and naturalistic observation, this study explored the unique experiences, challenges, and perceptions of seven women, as they navigate as “firsts” and “the only” African American women serving in their leadership roles at predominantly White institutions in southern, central, and northern California. Using a social constructionist framework, through the epistemological lens of Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Thought and a Womanist Ideology, and a leadership framework, this study sought to document the leadership experiences, retention strategies, effects of support networks, how power impacts their roles as leaders, what meanings they ascribe to their experiences, and how experiences may differ based on institution type.

The data demonstrated that African American women senior- and executive-level administrators at predominantly White public institutions in California (a) have unique paths to leadership, (b) possess leadership styles based on purpose and core values and ideals, (c) experience multiple challenges rooted in issues related to race and gender, and (d) maintain resilient retention strategies which assists them in progressing and advancing in their administrative roles. The unique leadership experiences of African American women administrators is truly a phenomenon.

## **Martha Garcia**

*Understanding the Experiences of Adult Latino Learners at Rural Community Colleges: A Phenomenological Study*

This is a study of 12 Hispanic adult learners enrolled at Rural Community College of the West (RCCW). This study provides awareness of the challenges this population phases while trying to achieve their educational goals. In addition, the study provides insight of the factors that impact success. Moreover, this study adds to the

qualitative studies in the published literature, since most of the studies previously published about this phenomenon are quantitative. This study depicts each person's lived experience as they interpret it.

Phenomenology was the qualitative approach utilized during this study. The participants in this study included 12 Hispanic adult learners, six males and six females, enrolled at Rural Community College of the West, a rural community college in Southern California. The data collection methods utilized in this study were two individual interviews and a focus group.

The theoretical framework I used in this study was Validation Theory by Laura Rendón. The five thematic categories that illustrate the experiences of the 12 Hispanic adult learners enrolled at a rural community college are the following: (a) El Deseo de Tener Éxito en la Vida – The Desire to Succeed in Life; (b) Factores que Facilitan el Éxito de Estudiantes – Factors that Facilitate Student Success; (c) La Educación no es Fácil – Education is not Easy; (d) Tener Apoyo Te Da Valor – Having Support Gives You Courage; and (e) Soy un Estudiante Adulto y mis Experiencias son Únicas – I am an Older Student and my Experiences are Unique. The data revealed that adult learners are motivated to succeed and achieve their educational goals regardless of the barriers they experience. Family and institutional support are vital and contribute to success for this population. In addition, it was evident that validating agents, such as Hispanic instructors play a significant role for Hispanic adult learners and provide an affirmation that they can persevere.

The findings of this study can inform educators and administrators who desire to support the success Hispanic adult learners in community colleges, specifically in rural community colleges. Recommendations for implementation and future research are presented.

## **Lauren Halsted**

### *Students' Perspectives about Success in Developmental English*

This dissertation presents a new approach for studying students enrolled in developmental English classes at community colleges. Multiple quantitative studies have documented the low success rates of these students; however, few studies have examined their experiences. Using a liberatory discourse theoretical framework, this action research study investigated the experiences of developmental English students through a series of in-depth focus groups. The data were then analyzed in collaboration with students using a coding process to identify themes that emerged across the data. Student voices informed the data at every step of the inquiry process, from data collection to data analysis and presentation. This study found that students defined success by their understanding of the course curriculum more frequently than by grades. Also, students were more likely to succeed when the curriculum was challenging, and when they felt a personal connection with instructors. The most significant finding of this study was that

successful communication between the instructor and students was the greatest facilitator of success, and unsuccessful communication was the greatest barrier to success. The most significant implications of the data are that the curriculum in basic skills English classes should be challenging, that faculty should engage students in the learning process, and that colleges should offer faculty meaningful professional development opportunities in which they can improve their communication skills. This study is significant to the field of education because it painted a complete picture of student success, complementing the wealth of quantitative research that currently exists. This study recognized the voices of students and documented their perspectives so that researchers and practitioners could design programs and implement policies that addressed the needs of students.

### **Pamela Kersey**

#### *The Transition Experience of New Community College Nursing Faculty: Implications for Addressing a Nursing Faculty Shortage*

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the lived experience of nurses who have transitioned into a career as community college nursing faculty. The majority of nurses in California receive their training in community colleges where the nursing faculty shortage is expected to worsen in the next ten years. This study addresses the gap in research specific to community college faculty and the impending loss of faculty due to retirements. A phenomenological research design was used to extract the essence of the experience of a specific phenomenon (i.e., a nurse transitioning from a clinical position to a nursing faculty position in a community college). Individual interviews were conducted to gather rich data that is trustworthy and credible (validity) as well as dependable (reliability).

Nine nursing faculty who teach in Southern California community colleges were interviewed during fall 2010. Individual interviews were conducted and transcripts were coded and analyzed in order to identify successful transition strategies that can be implemented to address the nursing faculty shortage. Exploring the experience of these faculty who are in the early stages of their careers revealed some of the causes and implications of the nursing faculty shortage. The following research questions guided this study: 1) What is the transition experience of new community college nursing faculty? 2) How can the recruitment of community college nursing faculty be enhanced? and 3) How should support be constructed to promote retention of community college nursing faculty?

Interpretation of the emerging themes and sub-themes enabled the researcher to draw meaning from the data, leading to lessons learned about the participant's experiences. The emerging themes included: 1) New nurses get an orientation, why not new faculty? 2) This is difficult in a different way; 3) The many rewards of my

job do not come in the form of a paycheck; 4) I don't want to quit being a nurse! and 5) We need to build our team!

Important recommendations on how to recruit and retain new community college faculty have been generated from this study. A model is proposed to Recruit, Retrain, and Retain (RRR) community college nursing faculty. Recruitment strategies include identifying nurses who demonstrate effective teaching skills and to begin these efforts when they are young. The retraining aspect is built on an individualized Orientation Needs Assessment Tool (ONAT) that includes offering interested nurses a job shadow experience prior to accepting employment. The retention component includes compensating experienced faculty members for the time they spend orienting new faculty through the provision of professional development or committee participation credit.

### **Bernice Lorenzo**

#### *Perceived Barriers to Academic Success among Community College Female Students in the TANF/CalWork Program*

The number of women enrolling in Post-Secondary Education (PSE) is on the rise except for women of color and for women on public assistance. Restrictive Welfare-to-Work policies, a lack of resources and the effects of race and gender maybe impacting their educational goals. There is a gap in the literature regarding TANF/CalWORKs students and their academic barriers. To address this gap, focus groups and individual interviews of 20 CalWORKs students from a community college were conducted. The research questions were:

What barriers to academic success did female, single parent TANF/CalWORKs students experience in community college?

What strategies did female, single parent TANF/CalWORKs students use to contend with the barriers?

Using a continuous comparison method, five themes emerged: (a) Mental health erosion, (b) Perceptions of support, (c) A failing system: Welfare-to-Work,(d) Finding support, and (e) Taking back control.

Findings indicated participants first developed protective strategies such as "don't ask," for any support and don't tell," anyone about receiving public assistance. Later, participants demonstrated an adaptive model to surviving college. The students also worked to create a college identity.

Future studies might review: 1.) assessments offered by the Department of Social Services and colleges regarding academic needs or readiness of these students, 2.) knowledge and use of resources by these students. Progressive Welfare-to-Work

policies could support TANF/CalWORKs students to reach their academic endeavors, thus improve their employability and indirectly reduce recidivism.

### **Luis Perez**

#### *Chicanos in Community College: Understanding the Experiences of Transfer Bound Chicano Men*

This is a study of 10 resilient Chicano/Latino men who reconstruct their gender and ethnic identity to ultimately attain transfer success from Urban Community College.

The study provides insight into the impact institutional and external factors have on identity development that supports transfer. In addition, this study responds to the published literature indicating Latinos experience the lowest transition rate at each stage of the educational pipeline. The result is a documented crisis of the vanishing Latino male in higher education.

Phenomenology was the qualitative research methodology that dictated the strategies of inquiry and procedures guiding the design and execution of this study. The participants in this study involved 10 Chicano men at Urban Community College in southern California. The data collection for this study involved document analysis, individual interviews, and a focus group.

The two theoretical perspectives I used for this study were Critical Race Theory and Validation Theory. The four thematic categories that captured the shared experiences of the 10 transfer bound Chicano/Latino men are the following: (a) disorientation and shock; (b) *los caminos del hombre*; (c) intervention of elders; and (d) resilience and recommitment. Early education socialization was found to be a significant impact in the participants' academic preparation and masculine identity development. The data also revealed the lack of masculine identity validation within the academic pathway. As a result, nontraditional validating agents played a significant role in affirming Chicano men's intelligence.

The findings of this study can inform educators who seek to support the academic success of Chicano/Latino men in community colleges, especially as it pertains to gender and ethnic identity development for incoming students. Recommendations for implementation and future research are offered.

### **Gonzalo Quintero**

#### *Latino Students' Sense of Affirmation at Border Community Colleges*

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of student services on the validation of First Generation, Generation 1.5, Second Generation, and Third Generation and Beyond students (Gen. 1, Gen. 1.5, Gen. 2, and Gen. 3+) at a border

community college. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature that establishes an appropriate framework for achieving the purpose of this study. First, this chapter details the social world and system in which Gen. 1, Gen. 1.5, Gen. 2, and Gen 3+ students learn, while attending Border College. Additionally, this chapter explores the literature on student validation as conceptualized by Laura Rendon, the founder of Validation Theory. Issues of diversity and access, institutional culture, the physical setting of the campus environment, and practices of faculty and student services professionals and how they relate to student socialization and validation are also discussed in this chapter.

In her paper, *Reconceptualizing Success for Underserved Students in Higher Education* (2006), Laura Rendon asserted that current higher education students are diverse in multiple ways: gender, race, ethnicity, generational status, class, residential and immigrant status, academic preparation, religion, spirituality, age, language needs, ability and disability, learning style preference, and worldview. With immigration becoming one of the nation's most important public policy issues, Gen. 1, Gen. 1.5, Gen. 2, and Gen 3+ students are faced with challenges regarding residency, education, and the collision of those worlds. Gen. 1.5 students are the children of immigrants who are foreign-born, partially foreign-educated, and partially U.S. educated. Their dominant language may be either the language of their parents or English (Roberge, 2005). Gen. 1, Gen. 1.5, Gen. 2, and Gen 3+ students have very specific needs and backgrounds that must first be understood in order to address placement in college-level reading and writing courses. Additionally, their validation may be challenged at multiple levels.

Border College serves students from the United States as well as Mexico. The dominant ethnicity at this institution is Hispanic, more specifically 'Mexican'. 'Mexican' can be a Mexican-American (an American citizen of Mexican decent) born, raised, educated and living in the United States. 'Mexican' can also mean a person born, raised, and educated in Mexico and now living in the United States (Merriam Webster's Dictionary Website). The term 'Mexican' can also be an example of Gen. 1.5; foreign-born, partially foreign-educated, and partially United States educated, but raised in Mexico and later moved to the United States sometime during the K-12 educational period (Roberge, 2005). Additionally, the term 'Mexican' can be another example of 'Gen. 1.5' foreign-born, partially foreign-educated, and partially United States educated raised in Mexico and continues to live in Mexico crossing the border daily, sometimes since childhood, to attend United States schools (Roberge, 2005).

The cultural limbo that exists for 'Mexican' students of 'Generation 1.5' is associated with a phenomenon referred to as "academic incongruity". Academic incongruity occurs when students are unable to fully function in an academic environment where they have few faculty role models, the curriculum is Euro-centered, and the perspectives of students are silenced or marginalized. To deal with cultural and academic incongruity, many students turn to their families and siblings for support if they happen to have attended college themselves. Others form peer groups on campus to maintain their own cultural identities (Longerbeam, Sedlacek & Alatorre,

2004). Students of color are particularly affected by cultural and academic incongruity.

For example, American Indian and Alaska Native students have historically emphasized the need for a culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy. Rendon (2006) noted that African American cultural values are often counter to the values of the academic culture where students are asked to pursue contradictory thoughts, challenge ideas and authority figures in-class, be aggressive in accessing information and/or presenting ideas in-class, as well as learn to function in a fiercely competitive environment. Kenneth Gonzalez (2000) found that Hispanic students were marginalized and alienated by three elements of the campus culture, labeling them (a) the social world, (b) the physical world, and (c) the epistemological world.

The social world is a system of cultural representations that includes the racial and ethnic makeup of students, staff, and faculty. The physical world is based on cultural representations of architecture, campus topography, sculptures, artwork, and other physical symbols. The third system of representation is the epistemological world that includes knowledge shared on campus (Gonzalez, 2000). It is these systems where hegemonic, predominantly white cultural perspectives maintain entrenched values and traditions and simultaneously marginalize and alienate students who do not “fit” into these representations. In her dissertation, *Validating the Experiences of Male Mexican American Community College Transfer Students Studying at Catholic Universities*, Eliazer Ayala-Austin (2007) focused on student success, specifically the concept of student involvement and being engaged in institutional life. However, Ayala-Austin asserted that many low-income, first-generation students benefit from what Rendon (1994) has called validation. Validation and involvement are two different constructs. The notion of involvement includes students taking the initiative to engage in a campus’ programs and services. However, validation does not assume that students can form connections independently. Instead, Rendon urges college faculty and staff to take the initiative in reaching out to students to help them learn more about college, believe in themselves as learners, and have a positive college experience.

While involvement in college and engagement in institutional life certainly are important activities that can promote retention and student development, underserved students who have experienced invalidation in the past (e.g., being called stupid or lazy; being told they will never succeed in life) are not likely to get involved and/or utilize campus services easily. These students will likely interpret probing questions about their personal lives as an invasion of privacy and will be reluctant to reveal personal problems that might shame the family (Ayala-Austin, 2007).

Students may be afraid to ask questions because they do not want to be treated as incompetent. They also may not ask for help because they do not know enough about college to ask clear questions. How does one ask for something one does not know exists? How does one form a question to ask for help when one does not know

what is available to help meet his or her needs? Also, it should be noted that in some cultures asking for help could be interpreted as a sign of weakness (Ayala-Austin, 2007).

Understanding the success of underserved students requires a deepened awareness of educational and social inequalities, unspoken assumptions about students who do not seem to “fit” traditional postsecondary institutional environments, and the unique factors that shape their success. However, success should not be left to chance. Postsecondary institutions should be engaged in transforming their academic and social structures to foster success of all students; not only those with privileged characteristics. Postsecondary institutions are challenged with serving a student population that values diversity and seeks to realize an education that values them as capable learners and views them as whole human beings.

### **Andrea Rollins**

#### *A Case Study: Application of the Balanced Scorecard in Higher Education*

The purpose of this study was to examine the application of the Balanced Scorecard as a management tool within the External and Business Affairs (EBA) unit at University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Specially, the study sought to examine how the Balanced Scorecard was communicated throughout the organization, how the data is used within the organization and how the data is used for decision making, paying particular attention to the four perspectives of UCSD’s EBA’s personalized Balanced Scorecard. These four perspectives are financial/stakeholder, internal processes, innovation and learning, and the customer.

This descriptive case study; a review of program records, a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with EBA employees utilizing the constant comparative method and descriptive statistics identified four lessons learned: the truly informed employees are at the top of the organization and they find value in the Balanced Scorecard, most employees are unaware of availability and usefulness of the Balanced Scorecard data, even an unbalanced Scorecard improves business operations and the annual performance evaluation process is an opportunity to reinforce the Balanced Scorecard.

The study includes three recommendations for EBA. The recommendations are EBA leadership needs to communicate the Balanced Scorecard process, outcomes and application with greater clarity to all employees in the organization, there needs to be an institutional plan for sustainability of the Balanced Scorecard to ensure it transcends the current people and environment and the Balanced Scorecard process within EBA must be flexible for future organizational evolution.



## **Nesha Savage**

### *A Phenomenological Study: Exploring the Academic and Social Experiences of African American Male Students at an Urban Community College*

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the academic and social experiences of African American male students in an urban community college. This qualitative study utilized the phenomenology tradition as a model to provide insight into the academic and social practices that promote participation and success among African American male students in an urban community college. The primary research question that guided this study was: "What are the experiences of African American men enrolled at an urban community college?" Additionally, the following related sub-questions were explored: (1) How does academic involvement help student learning and persistence for African American male students at an urban community college? (2) How does social involvement help student learning and persistence for African American male students at an urban community college? (3) What learning activities are most meaningful in college experiences of African American male students at an urban community college? (4) How do African American men perceive their in-class and out-of class experiences at an urban community college? (5) What institutional factors facilitate and serve as barriers to academic success for African American men? The theories that were used to guide this study were Rendon's (1994) theory of validation and Steele and Aronson's (1995) theory of stereotype threat.

The sample was comprised of ten African American males varying in age, academic background, and other life experiences. The data were triangulated through multiple methods, including a recorded interview with each participant, and a focus group interview. Participants were selected purposefully to ensure a participant pool comprised of individuals who would potentially have the most insight into the research questions and examined phenomenon. The analysis process resulted in the identification of five thematic categories that captured the essence of the participants' shared experiences. The categories are: (1) barriers to academic achievement; (2) strategies to ensure success; (3) pedagogy of engagement; (4) deconstructing stereotypes; and (5) diversity and supportive learning environments. The qualitative findings from this study contribute to broadening the discourse and informing the field of education of the perspectives and challenges facing African American men who attend community college.

## **Kathleen Sheahan**

### *Perceptions of Cooperative Learning in Introduction to Community College Spanish Classes*

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions and behaviors of language learners and native speakers as they participated in collaborative learning activities to learn Spanish in a large suburban community college. In order

to gain language skills, particularly speaking skills, students must be given opportunities to use the language and to exchange ideas. Collaborative learning strategies are a particularly effective way to create opportunities for students to accomplish this. For this reason, the use of collaborative learning techniques is common in foreign language education. However, there is a paucity of research done to examine the collaborative learning experiences of students studying a foreign language in a community college. Furthermore, little has been done to create opportunities for expert students and novice students to collaborate in the learning of language within the classroom. This study utilized the methods of collaborative learning to develop and implement a curricular innovation in which novice students (i.e., Spanish language learners) and expert students (i.e., native speakers of Spanish) collaborated to learn the language and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Over the period of one semester, data were gathered via participant observation and semi-structured personal interviews conducted of two groups of students: 1) Spanish language learners enrolled in an introductory Spanish course and 2) native speakers of Spanish who served as language facilitators. The present study was unique in that it examined qualitatively the interactions and perceptions of students who participated in a peer learning experience based on the principles of collaborative learning as applied to second language acquisition.

Using a grounded theory methodology, the findings from this study were examined to reveal four overarching themes: 1) the importance of psychological comfort, 2) students' desire for interaction, 3) scaffolding, and 4) validating experiences. Students expressed a preference for learning environments that foster a sense of psychological comfort, where they feel comfortable speaking, making mistakes and asking questions of one another. Also, students expressed a strong desire to interact and make personal connections with their peers in the classroom. The findings from this study supported the notion that learning is a social process in which students learn via interaction and exchange with one another. Finally, the native speakers interviewed in this study described feelings of satisfaction when they were able to help their peers learn Spanish, and from the understanding that their peers valued their language. The findings from this study support Rendón's theory of validation (1994) and they highlight the importance of acknowledging the contributions students can make within the context of their learning environment. When students find that they have something to offer others, they feel a stronger connection to the college and it reinforces their belief that they are members of the campus community.

### **SaBrina Bre White**

#### *Community College Transfer Shock and the Student Athlete*

With the presence of intercollegiate athletics on a 4-year college campus, athletics provides students with a reason to attend college and an opportunity to stay connected to the university after they graduate. At what cost is the student-athlete's

academic experience compromised if they are not prepared for a 4-year university? The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine what causes student-athletes' Grade Point Averages (GPAs) to change after their first and/or second semesters at the 4-year institution and offer observations and recommendations to strengthen the transfer experience for student-athletes from a community college to a 4-year university.

Eight one-on-one interviews with transfer student-athletes provided research and insights into answering the following research questions: 1. In what ways does the transfer shock phenomenon manifest itself among student-athletes who transfer from community colleges to Division I 4-year institutions? 2. How did academic support services impact your transfer experience from the community college to the 4-year institution? 3. What Athletic Department practices and strategies facilitate the success of student-athletes who transfer from community colleges to Division I 4-year institutions?

This study focused on student-athletes on scholarship who transferred to a Division I 4-year institution from a community college.

One-on-one interviews were conducted on eight transfer student-athletes from four sports which included three male sports and one female sport. The research results provided recommendations for 2- and 4-year institutions on how to make the transfer process for 2-year student-athletes a smoother process which supported academic success. This study was my hope to understand and find an answer the question regarding the transfer shock phenomenon for the student-athlete population to enable student-athletes to have every resource available to them for academic success.

### **2007 Cohort Dissertation Abstracts**

#### **Jill Baker**

##### *Building a Culture of Evidence: A Case Study of a California Community*

This case study focused on one California community college six years after it began its effort to build a culture of evidence. A culture of evidence was defined by Brock et al. (2007) as a college culture where administrators, faculty, and staff “gather, analyze, and use data to transform their practices and cultures in order to help more students succeed” (p. 6). The college’s accrediting commission revised its standards in 2002 to accentuate the importance of student learning outcomes and other practices associated with data-informed decision making for the purpose of increased student success. The new standards provided the impetus for the college’s change initiative. The study targeted faculty perceptions of the progress made toward building this culture.

The problem under investigation in this study was how a culture of evidence is created and its practices are implemented as a new paradigm at the community college level. There are numerous obstacles to building a culture of evidence and implementing its practices, including the need for institutional support in the semblance of vision, personnel, and funding, and faculty concerns such as workload and adequate time to fully master the concept and carry out this research-based mission (Brock et al., 2007; Morest & Jenkins, 2007). The process requires acceptance and trust by all stakeholders and the access and delivery of meaningful data and research in order to be fully implemented.

### **Julianna Barnes**

#### *The First-Year Experience Impact on Student Success in Developmental Education*

Developmental education is perhaps one of the most important topics in higher education today. Over half of the undergraduates in the United States are enrolled in community college, with a majority who are in need of remediation. Unfortunately, the success among the diverse population of community college students who enroll in developmental courses is dismal, with most who never complete them, much less graduate or transfer. Much of the research in the field has been focused on traditional student populations enrolled in four-year universities. Understanding the factors that contribute to the early success of developmental learners in a community college setting warrants focused attention. Improving the educational outcomes of community college students enrolled in developmental education is particularly critical to the economic health of our nation.

Increasingly, students are entering college more unprepared to take on college-level work, and like many states, in California a large proportion of underprepared students are enrolling in community college. While over half of California community college students are enrolled in developmental education courses, data show that they are not succeeding (Shulock & Moore, 2007). This lack of success is particularly pronounced in the first year of college, and is especially impacting students of color given their overrepresentation in developmental education.

The problem under investigation in this study was to determine student success (academic performance, retention, and persistence) based on the first-year experience of community college students directed to developmental education at an urban community college in southern California. Additionally, this study sought to understand the students' perspectives relative to the impact that a First-Year Experience program had on their success.

### **Randy Barnes**

### *Community College Learning Communities: Impact on Student Success in Developmental English*

This investigation was a case study to measure the effectiveness of the linked course learning community model in developmental English courses at an urban community college. This study used student demographic and course outcome data to quantify the extent to which learning community participation could contribute toward remedying the historically low success, retention, and persistence rates among diverse student populations in community colleges. The learning communities in this study consisted of developmental reading and writing courses linked in pairs at the same level, considered to be one and two levels below college level English.

The problem under investigation in this study was whether learning communities were effective ways to improve student success in developmental community college English courses, and whether there were differences in learning community outcomes among gender and racial/ethnic groups. Student success was defined, for the purpose of this study, as successful course completion, retention within the semester, and persistence to the following semester.

### **Reggie Blaylock**

#### *Outcomes-Based Assessment Program Evaluation: A Bridge for Successful Transfer from Community College to University*

The state's educational systems must collaborate together to enable transfer students to gain the necessary skills that support degree completion strategies. Given the current economic state, an investment in California community college transfer students that provide the best possible university transition would seem wise and fiscally responsible. This outcomes-based assessment program evaluation focused on the evaluation of a new transitional program for transfer students at Western State University (WSU), called Transfer Bridge.

In this study, the results are discussed of the learning outcomes as evaluated by qualitative tools and reinforced with quantitative tools. The outcomes informed the design of the evaluation tools in this outcomes-based assessment program evaluation methodology. Data collected from this evaluation describe what the program accomplished and failed to accomplish, and for whom, and thus clarifies the trade-offs of resources and benefits that managers ultimately have to make (Weiss, 1998).

This outcomes-based assessment program evaluation involved the collection and consideration of a variety of program data which provided strong evidence that all four learning outcomes were achieved for most participants with 88.9% overall student agreement. The program evaluation identified the effectiveness of the

Transfer Bridge program in relation to the learning outcomes, and in a manner that allows for program improvement which supports student success and retention.

### **Patrice Braswell-Burris**

#### *Factors Affecting Educational and Personal Success in Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals*

The purpose of this research study was to examine the support strategies and mechanisms that led to academic and personal success for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Historically, deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH) students have struggled to meet their personal or academic goals within postsecondary educational institutions. For example, individuals who have a hearing loss represent only 4.8% of the California community college campus student population. This study described how deaf or hard of hearing individuals utilized effective support strategies to assist them with meeting their personal and/or academic life goals.

The problem that this study addressed is directly related to (D/HOH) students, specifically prelingual (D/HOH) students from hearing families who pursue higher education and do not reach degree completion or personal goal attainment. This may be due at least partially to their need for remedial coursework in English. Due to the fact that most college classes are not accessible in their natural, visual language, American Sign Language, deaf or hard of hearing students' academic success may be compromised not only by remediation in Basic skill courses, but also by the non-existence of curriculum which utilize a direct instruction model.

### **Jerry L. Buckley**

#### *Evaluation of Integrated Planning Systems in Southern California Community Colleges*

California community colleges in the twenty-first century serve an increasing number and diversity of students with fewer state financial resources. Limitations in both state and federal funding for these institutions require new models of planning and resource allocation. The diverse mission of community colleges has become more difficult to support as funding has become scarce. Identification and implementation of effective planning models may assist colleges to maintain high quality educational programs in this challenging financial environment. Efficient planning and budgeting methods described in this study will be essential to maintain open access and financial equity for students served by the California Community Colleges.

Lack of compliance with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges/Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC/ WASC) integrated planning requirement (Standards III A-D) has been documented as the most

frequent accreditation problem among California community colleges during 2008-2009. Limited financial resources will negatively impact delivery of educational services and programs, access, and equity within California community colleges without improvements to planning and resource allocation.

### **Gail Conrad**

#### *A Survey of Mental Health Practices in the California Community Colleges*

In a memorandum from the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (2007), "increased numbers of students who need mental health services...have overwhelmed the capacity of colleges and universities to respond". The purpose of this research study was to identify the mental health services available in California community colleges and to identify effective practices that would support students with psychological disabilities in this setting to be successful.

With the passage of Proposition 63 in California, the Mental Health Services Act of November 2004 became law and a taxpayer's taxable income in excess of one million dollars now has an additional 1% tax. These funds were to be used to transform the public mental health systems without supplanting existing mental health budgets. These funds would support the development of new services in the community colleges in conjunction with the California Department of Mental Health. This study will analyze the data from a survey that collected information on services currently available at the community colleges in California and services that are desired by college staff to provide necessary support to students with psychological disabilities.

### **Jill A. Moreno Ikari**

#### *Environmental Sustainability Curricular Theme: Impacts on Developmental English Students*

Community college students are underprepared for academic success, especially students of color, and are often required to enroll in developmental education courses, where academic success is a major challenge for students. Environmental sustainability is a movement that is not being introduced to community college students, especially students of color, who are most impacted by environmental injustice. This study identified and assessed the impacts of an instructional practice for developmental education students, especially students of color, in English studies using environmental sustainability as a thematic approach to teaching developmental English. The problem under investigation in this study is that there is little known about the effect on student success and attitude using environmental

sustainability as a thematic approach in developmental English courses at the community college level.

### **Tammi Marshall**

#### *Impact of Learning Communities on Underrepresented Students Success in a Prealgebra Context*

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2006), 36% of all college students have taken at least one basic skills course. The students who took basic skills courses were more likely to be underrepresented students as well with 43.1% of all African American, 43.9% of all Native American, and 41% of all Latino students compared to only 32.7% of all White students having to take remedial courses (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Of those who took basic skills courses, 76.9% were in mathematics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). The achievement gap involving students of color and those from low-income families “demonstrate that too many students are left behind” (McClenney & Greene, 2005, p. 2).

According to Gablenick, MacGregor, Matthews and Smith (1990), learning communities change how students experience the curriculum and the way in which they are taught. Tinto (2002) showed four positive effects of learning communities: students work together more often outside the classroom by forming a supportive group; students participate more in the classroom, including after class; the quality of student learning is increased; and students persist at a much higher rate compared to students in a traditional classroom. By linking a section of prealgebra with a student success course that focused on study skills in math as well as time management, the researcher created a cohort of students in the hopes of increasing the retention, success and persistence of underrepresented students enrolled in prealgebra.

The success rates of underrepresented students in basic skills mathematics continue to be dismal and the achievement gap between underrepresented students and those not underrepresented will continue to widen if something is not developed to help increase the success in basic skills math classes. Because of this it becomes clear that only a small percentage of students who start in a developmental math course persist to an associate degree or transfer level math course. In addition, many students in developmental math courses do not have the study skills necessary to succeed since a student may need a slightly different set of skills to succeed in math than in other subjects.

### **Greg Sandoval**

#### *Leadership Preparation of Senior Student Services for Community College Presidency*



The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the characteristics contributing to the success of student services leaders as community college presidents. By examining the professional experiences and identifying the professional competencies of former chief student services officers, vivid portraits of seven current community college presidents were presented. The California community colleges will find the research findings meaningful and insightful to appreciate what chief student services officers have to offer to a college presidency.

Specific leadership theories were explored that are relevant to current successful college administration. Based on the composites of student services administrators detailed in the study, student services administrators are found to possess the leadership qualities of each theory. This assessment adds credibility to student services administrators receiving serious consideration for college presidencies.

The success of the research study was due to the qualitative methodology based on grounded theory methods. By interviewing the college presidents who were former student services professionals, four general research questions generated valuable research data that encompassed the backgrounds, opportunities, challenges, experiences, and preparation necessary for the college presidency.

### **Chris Sullivan**

*Basic Writing and the Process of Engagement: Student and Faculty Perceptions from a Multi-Campus Community College District*

The high school graduating class of 2010 will be the largest in California's history; ARCC data (2009) indicate that a majority of the 2.9 million students enrolled in California community colleges need instruction at the basic skills level in mathematics and English; statewide, 33.9% of students who assessed into basic skills English courses placed into the course one level below transfer (CB21-A), the focus of this study. The purpose of this study was to show how student and faculty perceptions about the process of being engaged with teaching and learning in a basic skills composition course one level below transfer (CB21-A) affect – and are affected by – the larger institutional culture. The problem under examination in this study is how the interplay between basic skills writing students and their instructors influences – and is influenced by – institutional culture at the macro (mission/culture) and micro (curriculum) levels.

### **Lauren Weiner**

*Exploring the Implementation of Characteristics of Quality Service-Learning Programs in a Two-Year and a Four-Year Institution*

The purpose of this cross-case comparative study was to explore through a constructive lens, the characteristics that lead to sustainable, high quality service-learning programs and how they are implemented at Western Community College, a public two-year institution and the University of the Coast, a private four-year institution. The findings from this study may be noteworthy for educators at community colleges and universities, who are at various stages in developing service-learning programs, or who are transforming faltering programs, trying to make them sustainable.

As part of the study at the University of the Coast and Western Community College, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with students, faculty, and/or staff, and community partners in addition to conducting student focus groups, document analysis, and observations. The researcher determined that the University of the Coast and Western Community College have implemented sustainable service-learning programs by developing strong collaborative partnerships, connecting curricular and co-curricular experiences, providing reflection opportunities, eliciting feedback, and conducting assessments.

Although more institutions of higher education are offering service-learning programs, not all of them have components that are successful and sustainable. While there are certain characteristics that may be present in quality service-learning programs, which may lead to sustainability and add a new and extremely meaningful dimension to the entire college educational experience, there are also certain factors that can hinder its success and sustainability. If colleges are not diligent in avoiding pitfalls that will have a negative effect on even the most successful service-learning programs, there will be no sustainability, much to the detriment of students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. Without flourishing partnerships between all entities, proper oversight and assessment, incentives, and, of course, commitment, service-learning programs will not be institutionalized, and therefore, they will not be sustainable.

## **Irina Weisblat**

*Basic Skills and Global Competencies for Business Major Graduates: A comparative study of California community colleges' and employers' perspectives*

The projected shortage of skilled workers for the global economy elevates concerns about California's economic growth and competitiveness in the world. The purpose of this study was: (a) to identify basic skills and global competencies that business major graduates from community colleges need in the global economy; (b) to determine employers' demands towards the skilled workers in the 21st century; and (c) to examine how well California community colleges have adjusted their business curriculum in order to meet the needs of employers operating in the global business environment. This purpose was achieved by using survey methodology,

which analyzed data collected from two populations: community college educators and business leaders.

Perspectives of managers from randomly selected companies in California, as well as business deans, business faculty, and career advisors from California community colleges, were compared utilizing statistical tests (t-test, ANOVA, and MANOVA) that measured differences in their views. This comparison shed light on the issue of effectiveness of business education in community colleges. At the same time, the study also examined employers' satisfaction with the business major graduates' academic preparation and their readiness to function productively in the global economy.

The findings uncovered in this research point to the differences in California community college educators' and employers' views of skills and competencies expected from graduates with a business major. All respondents concurred that basic skills were more important than global competencies for students' success in the global marketplace. Yet, the two populations had contrasting opinions about the quality of teaching of the job-related skills and relevance of business curriculum to the economic needs. This gap between educators' and employers' perspectives suggests that more can be done to align the community colleges' business curriculum with the expressed needs of the business community in California.

