College Access and Success Assessment: A Conceptual Framework for Assessing High School College-Going Cultures

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Background

• Inequitable postsecondary access for traditionally underrepresented students

• High schools need effective college-going cultures to foster postsecondary success for all students

• Lack of tools to assess college-going culture
Purpose

• Present the College Access and Success Assessment (CASA) conceptual framework to examine college-going culture within high schools

• Measure college-going culture by assessing perceptions of the high school environment, student attitudes, and student behaviors
Current State of Assessments

• Recent growth of curricular assessments for college-readiness as a result of Common Core State Standards

• Limitations of tools assessing elements of college-going culture
  – Lack holistic assessment
  – Few links to postsecondary outcomes
  – Measure only student or teacher perspectives
  – Not widely available
Adapted from Engberg and Wolniak (2010)
• Growing body of literature linking the high school context to postsecondary access
• Postsecondary access
  – Enrollment in any postsecondary institution and a four-year institution
• Postsecondary success
  – Full time enrollment at any postsecondary institution and retention after first year
Student Level Factors

• Background characteristics

• Attitudes
  – Basic awareness of college information and valuation of a college degree
  – Self efficacy, grit, academic motivation

• Behaviors
  – Basic academic effort, college search preparation
  – Writing a statement of purpose, completing FAFSA, etc.
School Level Factors: College-Going Culture

- Environmental
  - Perspectives from teachers and counselors
  - Student views

- Attitudinal
  - Aggregated measures from student attitudes

- Behavioral
  - Aggregated measures from student behaviors
Implications for Research

• Guide the design of future research and assessments examining college-going culture

• Aid the development of additional measures that comprehensively and accurately evaluate college-going culture
Implications for Practice

• Assist administrators in assessing current college-going culture
  – Creating benchmarks
  – Developing initiatives to improve environment and postsecondary outcomes

• Provides measures of accountability when outcomes are linked to college-going culture
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Paper

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