

# Measuring College Capital

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College Board Regional Forum

February 24, 2009

Denver, Colorado





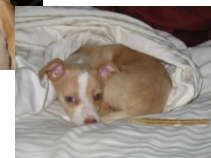
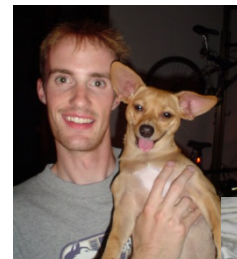
# Purpose of this Session

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- Provide an overview of the Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice at the University of Southern California
- Explain the purpose of the College Capital Index
- Explain how the index is being developed
- Explain what the index tells us about students
- Describe how the index may be useful to your work
- Seek your reactions and feedback to:
  - Refine the index
  - Refine the way it is presented
  - Find the most effective method of disseminating its findings to inform the work of practitioners

# Who is Scott Andrew Schulz?

- Originally from The Last Frontier
- Former lead singer of Kincaid ([www.soundclick.com/kincaidak](http://www.soundclick.com/kincaidak))
- Chihuahua owner (x2)
- Father of a new daughter
- Graduate of the doctoral program at the U of AZ
  - Dissertation focused on applying existing organizational theories to new theoretical contexts
- Program Director – Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice at the University of Southern California



# Who is Rick Bischoff?

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- Grew up in Ridgefield, WA
- Graduate of Macalester College
  - I never visited as part of my college search
- Father of a 6 year old
  - He escaped from his after school program last week (but has now been found)
- 1 dog (yellow lab) and 2 cats (if you're interested in adopting two cats please see me after the presentation)
- Graduate degree is an MBA from the University of Minnesota in Information Systems
- I was the first and last (thus far) in my family to go to college



# Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice

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- Founded in 2007 at the University of Southern California
- Center Goals
  - Provide forums such as organized events, on-line communities, and written publications that allow scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to share their perspectives and further generate ideas that enhance our understanding of enrollment issues
  - Conduct and sponsor research that is intellectually worthy, useful for practitioners, and has a direct and lasting impact on students, institutions, and society
  - Enhance the level of professionalism within the enrollment management field by opening new educational avenues for practitioners to develop and hone their professional skills
  - Serve as the nation's central hub for information relating to enrollment issues to advance a collective agenda focused on improving access to higher education and maximizing student success



# College Capital Index – Purpose

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- The idea was to create a tool that could evaluate the extent to which high school seniors perceive:
  - A four-year college degree to be of importance
  - They have the knowledge necessary to apply to and enroll in a four-year college
  - A personal capacity to academically and financially earn a four-year degree
  - Access to informed and supportive parents, teachers, and counselors
  - The outcomes of the admission process to be favorable
  - A personal commitment to enroll in a four-year college
  - An expectation for college success



# College Capital Index – Target Audience

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- Scholars focused on admission and financial aid issues
- Enrollment practitioners
- Policymakers
- Members of the general public



# College Capital Index

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- Designed by:
  - Jerry Lucido, Ph.D. - Executive Director
  - Scott Andrew Schulz, Ph.D. - Program Director
  - Ray Gonzales, Ph.D. – Senior Director of Research and Reporting in the Enrollment Services Division at USC
  
- Support provided by:
  - Steve Conroy, Ph.D. - University of San Diego
  - John Parker, Chief Technology Officer for the College of Letters, Arts, & Sciences at USC



# College Capital Index

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## □ Collaborators

### ■ The College Board



- The College Board is a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity and is a collaborator in the production of this report

### ■ ACT, Inc.



- ACT, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to help people achieve education and workplace success and is a collaborator in the production of this report

# College Capital Index – Theoretical Framework

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- What is capital?
  - Capital represents power over the field, powers that define the chances of profit (Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998)
- What is college capital?
  - We have defined college capital as the capital required to value, pursue, and complete a four-year degree, a credential institutionalized by society as capital with economic value
  - College capital is the latent variable measured by the index



# College Capital Index – Theoretical Framework

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- The Value of Measuring Perception
  - The Thomas Theorem
    - People's behaviors are influenced by their own perceptions of the viability of their behavior (Thomas & Thomas, 1928)
  - Other Research

# College Capital Index – Theoretical Framework

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## □ Constructs

### ■ Economic Capital

- Access to and power over necessary resources (Bourdieu, 1986)

### ■ Cultural Capital

- Knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that provide status in society – may be intergenerational (Bourdieu, 1986)

### ■ Social Capital

- Resources gained through relationships, network associations, and group memberships (Bourdieu, 1986)

### ■ Human Capital

- Skills and knowledge that serve as a mean's of production, affecting one's ability to contribute to economic development (Becker, 1990)

# College Capital Index - Methodology

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## □ Data Source

- National stratified random sample
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school students entering the fall of their senior year during the 2008-09 school year
- Must have registered for or completed the SAT® (offered by the College Board) and/or the ACT® standardized tests as of the month of June prior to their senior year
- Must have provided either the College Board or ACT, Inc. with:
  - An e-mail address
  - Demographic data



# College Capital Index - Methodology

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## □ Data Sample

- Based on a 95% confidence level and plus/minus 3 point confidence interval
- Sample numbers were outlined by race/ethnicity within designated geographic regions using a simple sample calculator and sent to The College Board and ACT, Inc.



# College Capital Index - Methodology

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- The College Board and ACT, Inc. randomly drew names within each designated geographic region of students who had reported, gender, race/ethnicity, zip code, and an e-mail address
- Total numbers were then reported to the PIs, who created unique IDs and corresponding URLs for each name
- This information was then sent back to The College Board and ACT, Inc. accordingly
- The College Board and ACT, Inc. each e-mailed their own versions of a recruitment letter in November 2008 to the students on their particular lists using the URLs provided

# College Board Index - Methodology

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- Data Instrument
  - Online survey
  - Consists of 21 survey items + 3 questions inserted to test for item validity
  - Each survey item a statement with response options based on a 5-point Likert Scale
    - Strongly agree – Strongly disagree
    - A high level of agreement reflects the existence of college capital
  - Each survey item is informed by research relating to one or more types of capital



# College Capital Index - Methodology

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- Data Collection continued
  - Survey data was received at the center
  - The unique IDs associated with survey respondents were then compiled and returned to The College Board and ACT, Inc.
  - The College Board and ACT, Inc. then merged demographic data as available with the response IDs
    - This ensured the anonymity of respondents
      - Known only to The College Board and ACT, Inc.
    - This allows the study's researchers to view response data by:
      - Gender
      - Race/Ethnicity
      - Student Geographic Region
      - Parental Education
      - Family Income
      - Student HS GPA



# College Capital Index – Data Analysis

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- Checking for and eliminating duplicates within each data set
- Testing the reliability and validity of the instrument
  - Comparing ACT, Inc. and College Board data
  - Analyzing reverse code survey items
  - Conducting a factor analysis
  - Validating by regions
  - Creating sub-indices by various profiles – weighting when necessary



# College Capital Index - Reporting

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- ❑ An overall index that annually shows whether students perceive they have more or less college capital each year
- ❑ Percentages by survey item that show the extent to which students perceive to have various components of college capital
- ❑ The overall index measure and percentages by survey item according to various student demographic profiles

# College Capital Index – Initial Findings

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- Overall College Capital Index
  - Relative Value = 4.2
  - Base Index Value = 100
- See Excel spreadsheet for specifics by survey item



# College Capital Index – Dissemination of Information

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- 2009 College Board Regional Forum
  - Denver, CO
- 2009 WACAC Conference in June
  - Orange, CA
- 2009 ACT, Inc. Enrollment Planners Conference in July
  - Chicago, IL
- Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice Annual Conference in July/August
  - Los Angeles, CA
- 2009 NACAC Conference in September
  - Baltimore, MD
- 2009 ASHE Conference in November
  - Vancouver, British Columbia
- 2009 College Board National Forum
  - New York, NY



# College Capital Index – A Practitioner's View

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# Feedback and Responses

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Presentation will be available at: <http://www.usc.edu/cerpp>

Click on: CERPP Presentations