

Evaluating the Perceived Capacity of High School Seniors to Value, Pursue and Complete a Four-Year Degree: The College Capital Index

Jerome Lucido, Ph.D.

Scott Andrew Schulz, Ph.D.

Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice

University of Southern California

ACT Enrollment Planners Conference

July 16, 2009

Chicago, Illinois





Purpose of this Session

- Provide an overview of the Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice at the University of Southern California
- Address today's current context
- Explain the original purpose of the College Capital Index
 - Target audience
 - Research team
 - Collaborators
- Describe the theoretical framework
- Provide an overview of the initial nationwide pilot study
 - Methodology
 - Data Analysis
 - Findings
- Address how the index project is evolving
- Describe the project's next steps
- Seek your reactions and feedback



Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice

- 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

CENTER FOR ENROLLMENT RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE


[Overview](#)
[Goals](#)
[Staff](#)
[Board Members](#)
[Contact](#)

July 13, 2009



Research

[Podcast Series](#)
[Enroll. Citation Clearinghouse](#)
[Research](#)

 CERPP
Sponsored

[Presentations](#)

 CERPP
Other

[Publications](#)
[Conferences and Symposia](#)

ENROLLMENT NEWS

Financial Aid in Flux as NASFAA Members Gather in San Antonio

Obama Student Loan Plan Wins Support in House

Budget Cuts Force Cal State to Close 2010 Spring Admissions

CERPP Proposal Accepted by ASHE! "Motivation Matters; Using a Multidimensional Theoretical Framework to Assess What Enrollment Structures Reveal about Institutional Priorities" will be Presented in Vancouver in November!

"Aid in an Age of Uncertainty" Symposium Proceedings **NOW AVAILABLE!**

Commissioned Papers from the Center's Inaugural Conference **NOW AVAILABLE!**

Enrollment News Archives

CENTER CALENDAR

The 2009 Research Grant Recipients have been announced!!!

July 16, 2009
Center presents at the ACT Enrollment Planners Conference in Chicago, IL (1:45p-2:45p)

September 24-26, 2009
Center presents at the CHIEF pre-conference workshop (9/24 from 7:30a-12:30p) and a session (9/26 from 10a-11:15a) at the NACAC National Conference in Baltimore, MD

October 21-23, 2009
Center presents a session at the College Board National Forum in New York, NY

January 13-15, 2010
Current dates held for "What Matters Now: College Access and Success in the Age of Obama" in Los Angeles

PROFILE OF THE WEEK



Name:
Michael Bastedo

Position:
Associate Professor of Education

Institution:
University of Michigan

[more...](#)

WEEKLY POLL QUESTION

Should all lending be shifted to the government's direct lending program?

- Absolutely
 Probably
 Probably not
 Absolutely not
 Other:

[View Results](#)
[PollDaddy.com](#)



Today's Current Context

- We know that college is important
 - Bachelor's degree holders earn approx. \$21,000 more annually than high school graduates and \$1 million more during their working careers
 - Bachelor's degree holders tend to be healthier
 - Bachelor's degree holders tend to be more civically engaged

- We know that President Obama has set the goal of making the U.S. the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020

Today's Current Context

- We know not enough students are enrolling in college
 - Over 30% of students who complete high school do not immediately enroll in a postsecondary institution
 - 42% of 25- to 29-year olds have no college education whatsoever
 - Gaps in the college enrollment rate continue to persist by race/ethnicity, family income, and parental education
- We know not enough students are completing college
 - 42% of students who immediately enroll in a four-year institution will not graduate within six years
 - Less than one-third of the U.S. population has completed a bachelor's degree
 - The bachelor's degree attainment gap between white and non-white students has widened in the last three decades



College Capital Index – Purpose

- The idea was to create a tool that could evaluate the extent to which high school seniors perceive:
 - A college degree to be of importance
 - They have the knowledge necessary to apply to and enroll in college
 - A personal capacity to academically and financially earn a 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 college
 - An expectation for college success

College Capital Index - Reporting

- Anticipated creating an overall national index that annually shows whether the general student population perceives to have more or less college capital each year
- Anticipated creating a college capital index of actual college-bound seniors (using data from test-takers)
- Anticipated creating local college capital indices (by school, district, or state)
 - Locals could benchmark to attitudes of actual college-bound seniors
- All indices would include:
 - An overall index measure, also reported by various student demographic profiles
 - Percentages by survey item that show the extent to which students perceive to have various components of college capital, also reported by various student demographic profiles



College Capital Index – Target Audience

- Federal, state, and local K-12 administrators, counselors, teachers, and policymakers
- Postsecondary enrollment practitioners
- Scholars focused on student access and success issues
- Members of the general public

College Capital Index – Research Team

- 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:
 - Wayne Camara, Ph.D. – Vice President of Research and Analysis, The College Board
 - Steve Conroy, Ph.D. – Associate Professor of Economics, University of San Diego
 - John Parker – Chief Technology Officer for the College of Letters, Arts, & Sciences at USC
 - Charles Ramos – Director of Outreach Services, ACT, Inc.
 - James Sconing, Ph.D. – Director of Statistical Research, ACT, Inc.
 - Noemi Tagorda – Director of Research and Analysis in the Enrollment Services Division at USC

College Capital Index – 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

- 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 college degree, a credential institutionalized by society as capital with economic value
 - College capital is the latent variable we hoped to measure with the index

College Capital Index – Theoretical Framework

□ 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 – Theoretical Framework

- 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 Pilot Study - Methodology

□ Data Source

- National stratified random sample outlined by race/ethnicity within designated geographic regions
- 12th 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 (gender, race/ethnicity, state of residence/zip code)

College Board Index Pilot Study - Methodology

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

Question 2: With assistance if necessary from others (parents, teachers, and/or counselors), in addition to my own understanding, I know how to apply for financial aid.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
	5012	8337	1904	1852	555	17660	SUM
Percentages	0.28380521	0.472083805	0.10781427	0.104869762	0.031426954		
Multipliers	5	4	3	2	1		
	1.4	1.9	0.3	0.2	0.0	3.9	Relative Value
						100	Base Index Value
						75.6%	Percent of respondents who reported some level of agreement

Statement 3: Using personal resources, family resources and/or expected financial aid, it would be feasible for me to afford to attend a four-year college next fall.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
	5580	6460	2418	2184	908	17550	SUM
Percentages	0.317948718	0.368091168	0.137777778	0.124444444	0.051737892		
Multipliers	5	4	3	2	1		
	1.6	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	3.8	Relative Value
						100	Base Index Value
						68.6%	Percent of respondents who reported some level of agreement

Statement 4: I have a parent or guardian who wants me to earn a four-year college degree.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
	15658	902	366	98	155	17179	SUM
Percentages	0.911461668	0.052505967	0.021305082	0.005704639	0.009022644		
Multipliers	5	4	3	2	1		
	4.6	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	4.9	Relative Value
						100	Base Index Value
						96.4%	Percent of respondents who reported some level of agreement

Statement 5: I have a parent or guardian who is familiar with the college application process (what I need to do to get into college).

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
	5320	4586	1866	2471	2955	17198	SUM
Percentages	0.309338295	0.266658914	0.108500988	0.143679498	0.171822305		
Multipliers	5	4	3	2	1		
	1.5	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	3.4	Relative Value
						100	Base Index Value
						57.6%	Percent of respondents who reported some level of agreement

College Capital Index Pilot Study – Analysis and Findings

- Approximately 40 different analyses conducted
- Response patterns were similar among SAT and ACT participants
- Missing data was evident later in the survey (participant fatigue)
- The instrument was statistically reliable
- The factor analysis revealed factors that were not consistent with capital literature:
 - Self-confidence
 - Knowledgeable and supportive counselors isolated from teachers
- Evidence the sample population skewed our capacity to measure general student attitudes

An Evolving Project

- There was concern following the pilot study that relying on attitudes alone is too one-dimensional and problematic
 - Does the index help schools identify ways that *schools* can actually improve college-going and success?
 - Is the index of value to schools if attitudes improve locally but college attendance does not – problems with an attitudes only survey
 - What else correlates with college-going and success?



An Evolving Project

- College-going culture has been defined as the environment, attitudes, and behaviors in schools and communities that support and encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspectives to ensure access to and success in postsecondary education
 - *UC Berkeley School/University Partnership Program*

Proposed College Access and Success Assessment (CASA)

- CASA's three part foundation is designed to help schools comprehensively assess their college-going culture
 - Environment
 - Draws upon a survey instrument informed by best practices literature to assess what schools are doing/offering to foster a college-going culture
 - Attitudes/Perceptions
 - Utilizes the College Capital Index in development to assess student attitudes regarding their perceived capacity to value, pursue, and complete a college degree
 - Behaviors
 - Applies components of the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) to measure the extent to which student behaviors both in and out of the classroom reflect college-going and college-ready indicators



Proposed College Access and Success Assessment (CASA) – Environmental Component

- Plan to survey students (9th – 12th graders)
- Example School Environment Constructs
 - Communication
 - Curriculum
 - School Climate
 - Student Support
 - School Leadership
 - School Facilities
 - Student Co-Curricular Opportunities
 - Support for Parents/Family Members
 - Resources Dedicated for College-Going Services



Proposed College Access and Success Assessment (CASA) – Attitudinal Component

- Essentially incorporates elements of the original College Capital Index
- Plan to survey and track attitudes of student cohorts, possibly beginning in the 9th grade



Proposed College Access and Success Assessment (CASA) – Behavioral Component

- Plan to survey and track behaviors of student cohorts, possibly beginning in the 9th grade
- Example questions might include:
 - Thinking about this school year, how often have you attended class with readings or assignments completed?
 - Have you visited a college campus?
 - How many hours during a typical week do you spend doing volunteer work?

Proposed College Access and Success Assessment (CASA) Outcomes

- Outcomes – A customized series of reports that will allow secondary schools to individually:
 - Examine the extent to which their educational environment is conducive to a college-going culture
 - Reveal the extent to which students believe they have a capacity to value, pursue, and complete a college degree
 - Highlight how students are making use of their time and opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom
- Each element of these components will be correlated with actual college-going and first-year success/retention
- Each component's overall statistic and a CASA Total will be benchmarked to other schools within the pool of participating schools and to schools with similar demographic profiles
- Benefits
 - Provides each school with a snapshot of the extent to which they have a college-going culture to inform efforts to more effectively target limited resources in ways that will create and foster a college-going and college ready culture within America's high schools



CASA's Next Steps

- Holding advisory meetings with noted scholars to inform the creation and refinement of each component within the comprehensive assessment tool
- Facilitating additional pilot studies in October and February
- Engaging in exploratory conversations with the College Board Advocacy Group, Long Beach Unified School District, Green Dot Public Schools, and the USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative about opportunities to test and refine our instruments



2009 Presentations and Discussion Forums

- College Board Western Regional Forum in February
 - Denver, CO
- WACAC Conference in June
 - Orange, CA
- ACT, Inc. Enrollment Planners Conference in July
 - Chicago, IL
- NACAC Conference in September
 - Baltimore, MD

Questions and Feedback



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

Click on: CERPP Presentations

