

# SOCIAL TRENDS

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## *2007 Environmental Scan Committee*

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## **SOCIAL TRENDS COMMITTEE**

### **Final Report**

**Introduction:** Education has always been seen in America as a means of upward social mobility. Even as a college education becomes increasingly imperative for social and economic success, access to college is problematic for nontraditional or high-risk students. This situation is due to issues of academic, social and economic readiness. Additionally, access is further threatened by reductions in governmental aid to assist citizens in meeting the escalating costs of obtaining a college degree. For these reasons and others, the charge has been made that "...the U.S. education system tends to reinforce rather than compensate for differences in family background." Policy brief – "Opportunity in American: The Role of Education"

#### **TREND 1: Many students continue to enroll at colleges academically unprepared for college level work.**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- 1) College readiness is one of seven national education priorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). In a national study of community college education, 41% of entering community college students and 29% of all entering college students are underprepared in at least one of the basic skills of reading, writing and math.
- 2) The study, "Defining College Readiness From the Inside Out: First-Generation College Student Perspectives," provides understanding of college readiness from the perspectives of older first-generation college students who transferred from community colleges. Results indicate that life experiences contribute to academic skills, time management, goal focus, and self-advocacy. Research is recommended to improve nontraditional student advising and placement, community college to university transfer, and college reading instruction.
- 3) The research report, "Charting a Path to Success: The Association Between Institutional Placement and the Academic Success of Latino Students," examined the effects of alternative institutional placement policies on student academic success. Results showed that when placement methods considered multiple measures of academic preparedness, students were initially placed into higher level mathematics courses in which they achieved equal or greater academic success than when only standardized test scores or only high school preparation was considered.
- 4) In SC, a very small proportion of 8th graders take algebra. Eighth graders are not well prepared to succeed in challenging high school courses. Their performance on national assessments in science, reading, and writing is poor, even though South Carolina students have shown improvement on all three measures over the past several years. The percentage of 8th graders performing well on national assessments in math is only fair.
- 5) Over the past 12 years, the percentage of non-white young adults (ages 18-24) who earn a high school credential has decreased. In addition, blacks in the 9th to 12th grades are only two-thirds as likely as whites to enroll in upper-level math and science courses.

- 6) The percentage of South Carolina's working-age adults enrolled in college-level education or training is very low compared with other states.
- 7) Young adults (ages 18-24) from high-income families are about three times as likely as those from low-income families to attend college. This is among the widest gaps in the nation.
- 8) Among 18- to 24-year-olds, a substantial gap exists between whites and non-whites in college participation, even though South Carolina has narrowed this gap over the past decade.
- 9) South Carolina has experienced one of the steepest increases in the nation in the percentage of high school students enrolled in upper-level science courses.
- 10) More than half of MTC students begin their college careers needing developmental work.

#### SOURCES:

Byrd, Kathleen L. & MacDonald, Ginger, "Defining College Readiness From the Inside Out: First-Generation College Student Perspectives," *Community College Review*, fall 2005 (1-1&2)  
 The New York Times, published 10/24/06, *Community Colleges Want You*, by Elizabeth Olson. (1-3)

Marwick, Judith D., "Charting a Path To Success: The Association Between Institutional Placement and the Academic Success of Latino Students," *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, March 2004 vol 28 Issue 3 p263-280 (1-3)

#### **TREND 2: College affordability has declined, especially for those from low-income and lower-middle income families.**

#### FINDINGS:

- 1) Net college costs for low- and middle-income students to attend community colleges represent 41% of their annual family income. (Net college costs equal tuition, room, and board after financial aid.) For these students at public four-year colleges and universities, net college costs represent 54% of their annual family income. These families earn on average \$17,708 annually. Over 80% of students in the state attend public two- and four-year institutions. Personal incomes in SC have stayed roughly the same over the last few years, yet college tuitions continue to increase. This places a major burden on the lower-income residents of SC, because the shares of their incomes being put toward college are increasing faster than the shares of higher-income residents.
- 2) In 2005, SC ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for personal income per capita (in constant, year 2000 dollars). "Over the past several years (in SC), the share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college expenses at public four-year institutions has increased from 28% to 36%." Since their creation in 1972, Pell Grants have steadily decreased in purchasing power since grant moneys have not increased as steadily as tuition costs. As a result, the grants that once covered up to 80% of college costs now only make up roughly 35% of student costs.

- 3) In South Carolina and across the nation, it is becoming more difficult to afford a college education. Tuitions for SC's two largest public universities, USC and Clemson, rose 6.75% and 5.8% this year, respectively. This, coupled with years of double-digit tuition increases, made USC's tuition about 33% higher than the national average, and it made Clemson's tuition 60% higher than the national average. Also, "The state makes a very low investment in need-based financial aid compared with top-performing states."
- 4) The percent of tuition that Lottery Tuition Assistance covers has been dropping since the program's creation in 2001. The program was passed with the intent to finance 100 percent of technical college tuition. By 2004, that figure had dropped to around 85% at Midlands Technical College. Lottery Tuition assistance currently funds 66 percent of tuition at Midlands Technical College.
- 5) At 38%, South Carolina is 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for children in single parent homes. Many of our students will therefore have issues with childcare, transportation, college tuition, housing and medical expenses.

#### SOURCES:

*NASFAA Journal of Student Financial Aid* Vol. no. 1, 2006, pp. 7-24. (2-1)

"Measuring Up 2006 – The State Report Card on Higher Education."

<http://measuringup.highereducation.org/docs/2006/statereports/SC06.pdf> (2-1)

<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0660.xls> (2-1) (2-2)

"S.C. college costs above national average," *The State Newspaper*, October 25, 2006. (2-3)

"The 2007 Statistical Abstract: The National Data Book." U.S. Census Bureau.

<http://www.ipspr.sc.edu/scip/SocWelfare/defaultsw.asp> (2-5)

#### **TREND 3: Community colleges will need to embrace the diversity of their communities in order to increase participation in higher education.**

#### FINDINGS:

- 1) One of the greatest challenges facing community colleges is how to keep black male students long enough for them to obtain a degree or the preparation necessary to transfer to a four-year school.
- 2) Community colleges face widely varying needs related to their diverse student populations. Rendon (2000) maintains that community colleges ought to view themselves as unique institutions functioning for the purpose of providing access to a range of students. In this way, these institutions focus on educating and encouraging students to become active and responsible citizens.
- 3) SC Hispanic population increased by 211% from 1990 to 2000. South Carolina's immigrant population grew by 47 percent since 2000.
- 4) An estimated 681,000 people in South Carolina have a disability, or 17.7% of the population age 5 and over. (2005)

- 5) The percentage of the population in SC under 18 is expected to decline from 25.2% in 2000 to 22.2% in 2030. The percentage of the population 65 and older is expected to increase from 12.1% in 2000 to 22.0% in 2030.
- 6) As they begin to hit retirement years, baby boomers are expected to flood community college for the credentials and training they will need to reposition themselves for second careers.

#### SOURCES:

Smith, Starita, "Invisible Men," Black Issues in Higher Education 16 no9 14-15 Je 24 1999 (3-1)  
 Jarrell, Camille L., "Creating a Foundation for Student Success: From Research to Practice," Community College Journal of Research and Practice, v28 n6 p513-524 July 2004. 12 pp. ISSN: 1066-8926 (3-2)

Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education, V20 No 5, p 7-8, May 2006. (3-2)

<http://www.ipspr.sc.edu/publication/Population%20In%20SC.pdf> (3-3)

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14348539/> (3-3)

[http://www.pascenter.org/state\\_based\\_stats/state\\_statistics\\_2005.php?state=southcarolina](http://www.pascenter.org/state_based_stats/state_statistics_2005.php?state=southcarolina) (3-4)

<http://www.ors2.state.sc.us/population/census2030.asp> (3-5)

Pew Research Center (3-6)

#### **TREND 4: More colleges across the country are adapting their operations to minimize negative impacts on the environment.**

#### FINDINGS:

- 1) Many college and university officials in the United States, Canada and elsewhere are involved in the greening process on their campuses and are actively implementing important changes in the way they conduct day-to-day business. From recycling programs and waste reduction to energy management, green cleaning, green buildings and product-purchasing initiatives to environmental stewardship, campuses are leading the way in going green.
- 2) Many campuses around the country first implemented sustainability measures -- recycling, for example -- years ago, but their efforts seem to have expanded in recent years. Work done by newly formed environmental groups in the 1990s has taken hold and reached more people. Industry has established national standards for "green" buildings. Climate and energy issues have received more mainstream attention, and students began pressuring campus officials to adopt more environmentally-friendly policies. Going green has meant changes in the way colleges maintain their grounds, construct their buildings, perform their research and even teach their courses.
- 3) In recent years, college and university campuses have proven to be crucial leaders in the movement to make large-scale, resource-demanding institutions more environmentally friendly. Many have implemented projects that promote alternative energies, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability.
- 4) Colleges and courses will become "greener." Evidence from university business administrators, faculty and architects all indicate that institutions of higher education must, are, and will become "greener" in the next ten years. Some are forced by higher energy prices to consider all options. Other colleges are becoming more socially conscious as their

faculty teaches new courses in environmental history and green engineering. One survey result produced this thought, “This study reveals that planning, building, and purchasing by colleges and universities are more heavily influenced by green and sustainable considerations than ever before.”

#### SOURCES:

<http://find.galegroup.com/ips/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T003&prodId=IPS&docId=A145472834&source=gale&userGroupName=midlandstc&version=1.0>. (4-1)

[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/282232\\_greencampus23.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/282232_greencampus23.html) (4-2)

[http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_4162.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4162.cfm) (4-3)

Akel, Martin. September 2006. “A Greener Attitude.” University Business. Fall, 2006.

<http://www.universitybusiness.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=549>. (4-4)

#### **TREND 5: Student behavior problems on campus and in the classroom are increasing.**

#### FINDINGS:

- 1) Uncivil student behavior against faculty in higher education has gained increased media attention. According to recent reports, such behavior may be increasing, thus jeopardizing the welfare of faculty, students, and the overall educational process. Uncivil student behavior can disrupt and negatively impact the overall learning environment for students who are uninvolved in the disruptive or inappropriate behavior and is a blatant violation of student rights.
- 2) The use of alcohol on campuses has from times past presented problems to college and university administrators. However, problems associated with both alcohol and other drug use have escalated in recent years. Over 90 percent of college students report regular consumption, averaging two to four drinks per occasion, and most studies suggest that approximately 20-25 percent of students have drinking problems. Other studies also found a direct relationship between drinking on campus and poor academic performance.
- 3) Gang activity in Richland and Lexington County could affect student’s education plans.

#### SOURCES:

International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/volume5/morrisette.html> (5-1)

The Influence of College Environments on Student Drinking;  
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PreventingSubstanceAbuse/Influence.html> (5-2)

Assessing Collegiate Substance Abuse: Current Trends, Research Needs, and Program Applications; <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PreventingSubstanceAbuse/Assessing.html> (5-2)

Infofacts Resources: College Academic Performance and Alcohol and Other Drug Use;  
[http://www.higheredcenter.org/pubs/factsheets/fact\\_sheet2.html](http://www.higheredcenter.org/pubs/factsheets/fact_sheet2.html) (5-2)

[www.wistv.com](http://www.wistv.com) Published 11-13-06 Article Title- Second Gang Summit in Columbia focuses on prevention, solutions (5-3)