

Introduction

The book showcases the best minority student articles that have appeared in the *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*. By providing these cutting edge articles, colleges, universities, national, state and government policy makers can gain additional insight into this important topic and use the material to enhance minority student retention.

Minority student retention continues to be a major issue in and a vexing problem for the higher education community. Year after year colleges and universities spend vast amounts of money on programs and services to help students persist. Particular interest has been paid to underrepresented groups of students whose retention rates continue to be below those of majority students.

In 1999 the *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* was founded to provide a voice to the educational community concerning college student retention issues. The *Journal* continues to be the premier journal devoted solely to the issue of college student retention worldwide.

A panel of well-known retention scholars was assembled to review all *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* articles pertaining to minority student retention. The “best of the best” articles which appeared in the *Journal* have been brought together in a coherent whole to provide the educational community with a resource to help minority students persist.

As with the U.S. population, college enrollments are becoming more diverse. College enrollments in 1990 (United States Department of Education, 1998) were made up of 77.5% white students while 19.5% were minority students (numbers do not add to 100% due to international student enrollment). Of the 19.5% minority students, 9% were African American, 5.6% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and .7% American Indian.

By the year 2000 (United States Department of Education, 2000) whites made up 68% of the students enrolled in higher education, and minorities made up 32% of college enrollments. The 32% minority enrollment consists of 13% African Americans, 12% Hispanics, 6% Asians, and 1% American Indians.

According to Seidman (2005):

Although minority students are entering college at a higher rate than in previous years, they continue to leave at a higher rate than nonminorities. The

data is quite revealing. The Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) is sponsored by the Center for Institutional Data Exchange and Analysis at The University of Oklahoma, which consists of over five hundred four-year colleges. The CSRDE (2002) data for first-year retention rates of students entering four-year colleges in 1999 reveal the following: for all types of institutions, regardless of selectivity, whites were retained from the first year to the second year at an 80.3% rate; blacks were retained at a 74.7% rate, Hispanic students at a 75.7% rate, and American Indians at a 67.2% rate. Asian students were retained at an 86.9% rate—the highest persistence rate of any ethnic group.

When looking at the CSRDE (2003) six-year graduation rates for students who began college in the fall 1994 semester, we find that for whites 56.9% graduated within six years, compared with 41.7% of black students, 41.7% of Hispanics, and 35.8% of American Indians. Again, Asian students not only persisted at the highest rate but graduated at the highest rate, 61.1%. The correlation between first-year retention rates and six-year graduate rates of ethnic groups is also obvious (p. 8).

So, it is no wonder colleges and universities are concerned with minority student retention and so many pages of the *Journal* have been devoted to minority college student retention issues.

This book is in six sections: African American Students (5 articles), Latino/a Students (2 articles), Asian and Asian Pacific Students (1 article), Native American Students (1 article), Biracial Students (1 article), and Institutional (4 articles) retention efforts. Each topical area is self-explanatory.

From all indications, there is still a continuing need for research and practice to help minority students persist through academic and personal goal attainment. It is the hope of this book to show what is currently being done, raise questions, and stimulate debate and hopefully more research on this ever important topic. This collection of articles showcases what has been and currently is being done, raises questions, and stimulates debate and can serve to clarify future research.

My sincere thanks to my panel of scholars who when asked to review 28 articles, enthusiastically volunteered knowing the importance of this endeavor. I am grateful to Stuart Cohen, president of Baywood Publishing Company, Inc. who encouraged this important project. And finally I would like to thank my wife Barbara for her continued support of my efforts.

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