



Access to the UW System Follow-up

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May 10, 2001

Follow-up Activities



- Focus groups of pre-college students at UW-Milwaukee Pre-college Academy
- Survey of high school guidance counselors
- Review of campus recruitment programs
- Examination of impact of family income on UW System service rate
- Survey of high school juniors and seniors

None of these studies, in and of themselves, was designed to provide a definitive causal analysis upon which to base policy decisions. However, taken together they provide a rich source of data to inform the policy discussions of the next two months.

For example, a focus group study is a structured way of obtaining anecdotal data, providing corroborating evidence and for generating hypotheses. This focus group study is somewhat limited in that it included only 21 students at the UW-Milwaukee Pre-college Academy, all of whom were African American. Nevertheless, it provides us with some insight into how these 21 young people were thinking about college.

The survey of 356 H.S. guidance councilors was conducted to obtain their perspectives on why males don't take the ACT exam and whether there is a difference between White males and male Students of Color. The study also elicited the perceptions of these educators as to the causes of any differences.

The survey of campus recruitment programs conducted by the UW System Internal Audit Unit was conducted to see how well UW System recruitment activities align with what we know is good practice for recruiting students of color.

When Do Students take the ACT Exam?



| Access Follow-Up | Year in school students first seriously think about taking the ACT exam | Caucasian Students | | Students of Color | |
|------------------|---|--------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| | | Male% | Female % | Males % | Females % |
| | Before freshmen year | 2% | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| | During freshmen year | 3% | 6% | 2% | 4% |
| | During sophomore year | 27% | 37% | 22% | 27% |
| | First half junior year | 37% | 38% | 30% | 35% |
| | Second half junior year | 29% | 15% | 34% | 25% |
| | First half senior year | 1% | 0% | 9% | 6% |
| | Second half senior year | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% |

Clearly, of the four groups, White females tend to take the ACT examination earlier in their H.S. careers than any of the other groups.

White males and female Students of Color, demonstrated similar patterns of later test taking.

Male Students of Color tend to take the test later in their H.S. years than any of the other groups.

Why do Fewer Males take the ACT Exam?



Guidance Counselors' Perceptions:

- Male students are less inclined to take the ACT exam than females because they favor short-term rewards and are more likely to be opportunistic
- Males are more inclined to enter the labor force because of the availability of jobs that satisfy their immediate needs
- Males are more inclined to participate in recreational activities; females are more inclined to participate in social activities
- Females are more likely to start planning for college early

Why do Fewer Males take the ACT Exam?



Pre-college Focus Group Perceptions:

- Females believe lack of support from family and friends and lack of determination may explain why a student does not consider college
- Males want “immediate satisfaction” available through sports, music, or other lucrative careers

How can we Increase the Proportion of Male Students Taking the ACT Examination



- Fundamental social and cultural factors must be addressed
- Pre-college programs must emphasize planning for college, particularly with male students of color

These findings are not new or startling. They are very consistent with what we found in the literature on gender differences in college attendance. However, they point to the fact that social and cultural factors explain gender differences and that any changes in outcomes will have to be directed at these underlying causes, and cannot simply be addressed by changes in recruitment techniques.

However, in terms of addressing factors that influence Students of Color, particularly male students, the UW System Pre-College programs provide a mechanism to reach students at an early age and have an impact on these underlying social and cultural factors.

Why do students of color have lower application and yield rates than white students?



Guidance Counselors' Perceptions:

- White males are more likely to see college as affordable than male students of color
- Male students of color tend to think about taking the ACT exam later than white males
- White males are more likely to have positive encouragement and known visible role models

In addition, from the focus group, we learned that some students expressed regret that they did not begin planning earlier for college. They also indicated that family members, particularly parents, play a key role in encouraging students to think about college.

How can we increase the application and yield rates for students of color?



Pre-college Focus Group Perceptions:

Most important factors in determining college-going decisions:

- Tuition
- Financial aid
- Availability of majors

What are our current recruitment efforts for students of color?



- Institutional recruitment activities include:
 - Recruitment materials
 - Personal contacts
 - Networking
 - Student recognition
 - Student identification

Institutions identify “direct and personal contact” as the most effective recruitment strategy.

The UW System Internal Audit Unit surveyed UW campuses to determine how System institutions were using their recruiting funds, particularly the funds allocated to each campus for minority recruitment in the 2000-01 budget.. They found that “Institutional recruitment activities include:.....

What are our current recruitment efforts for students of color?



- Institutions are generally using the 2000-01 budget allocation to hire additional staff to expand existing recruitment efforts
- All UW institutions have established performance measures for assessing recruitment activities, however, these measures differ from institution to institution

What are our current recruitment efforts for students of color?



- Focus group participants indicated that they:
 - Prefer communication that is personal
 - Value meaningful and honest representation of diversity on campus

What Must be Done to Recruit Students of Color?



- Recruitment activities should be focused to the early high school years
- Parents must be an integral part of pre-college programs
- Career planning needs to be an integral part of pre-college programming
- Early and targeted pre-college programs for male students of color should focus on academics and psychological skills needed for higher education

The way we recruit Students of Color is important. We must focus our efforts on maintaining a direct relationship with these students all the way through the application process. We learned from the surveys that UW institutions are using their existing and new resources in a variety of activities designed to maintain personal contacts in their recruitment efforts. Specifically, we learned that:

Administrative Actions to Insure Effective Recruiting



- Campuses will report recruitment activities on a regular basis and measure success using a uniform performance indicator
- UW System will conduct evaluations of pre-college programming to ensure that these programs are achieving both their academic and affective goals
- A continuous improvement model will be used in reviewing pre-college programs
- The impact of pre-college programs on improving access and yield rates will be measured

Our survey of recruitment efforts and our on-going work with pre-college programs indicates that we are doing many of these things. However, in order to insure that we attain our objectives, we will institute the following procedures:



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