Do Higher Ed Accountability Proposals Narrow Opportunity For Minority Students and Minority-Serving Institutions?

What New Research Tells Us

Tuesday, September 2, 2014 -- 9:00 to 12:00
U.S. Capitol Visitors Center, Congressional Auditorium & Atrium

BACKGROUND:

Students of color have not achieved equal opportunity for higher education and many of the institutions that serve them are struggling with economic and policy challenges. Some critics of the Obama Administration claim that recent accountability and financial aid policy changes would close the door to college for many deserving students. As these proposals are being discussed, we invite you to a lively forum presenting new and original empirical studies. These seven (7) research papers examine the issues with the goal of avoiding unintended negative consequences.

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Stella Flores (Vanderbilt University)**: how racial gaps in college completion rates are associated with pre-college characteristics of students and institutional characteristics of the colleges and universities they attend
- **Marybeth Gasman (University of Pennsylvania)**: MSIs and a demographic comparison of students at those institutions versus students nationally
- **Sara Goldrick-Rab (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**: why the development of financial aid policy requires recognition of the broad diversity of institutions attracting students and families who rely on loans
- **Nicholas Hillman (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**: how market-based accountability mechanisms in the proposed ratings system could result in "education deserts" that limit choices for students
- **Sylvia Hurtado (UCLA)**: how ratings criteria fail to credit institutions that do better than expected in degree attainment for the low-income, first-generation and underrepresented minority students they serve
- **Willie Kirkland (Dillard University)**: a case study detailing how Dillard and other Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been negatively impacted by reforms to the Parent PLUS loan program
- **Anne-Marie Núñez (University of Texas at San Antonio)**: how the shortcomings of a postsecondary ratings system could lead to shortchanging HSIs and their outcomes
- **Gary Orfield (UCLA Civil Rights Project)** will moderate the briefing

Sponsorship does not indicate endorsement for policy proposals.

This event is made possible with the generous support of The Ford Foundation.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Twitter: #CRPEdForum

8:30-9:00	**Check in (light refreshments available)**
9:00-9:05	**Welcome and Introductions: Gary Orfield**, Civil Rights Project
	Panel #1
9:05-9:15	**Sara Goldrick-Rab,** University of Wisconsin-Madison: *The Color of Student Debt: Implications of Federal Loan Program Reforms for Black Students and Historically Black Colleges and Universities*
9:15-9:25	**Willie Kirkland,** Dillard University: *The Impact of Financial Aid Limits on a Leading HBCU and its students*
9:25-9:35	**Respondents: Brian Bridges**, United Negro College Fund; **Stella Flores**, Vanderbilt University
9:35-9:45	**Q & A**
	Panel #2
9:50-10:00	**Stella Flores,** Vanderbilt University: *The Racial College Completion Gap in Texas: Who is responsible*
10:00-10:10	**Marybeth Gasman,** University of Pennsylvania: *Minority Serving Institutions: A Data-Driven Student Landscape in the Outcomes-Based Funding Universe*
10:10-10:20	**Respondents: Sylvia Hurtado**, UCLA; **Deborah Santiago**, *Excelencia* in Education
10:20-10:35	**Q & A**
10:35-10:45	**Short Break**
	Panel #3
10:45-10:55	**Sylvia Hurtado**, UCLA: *Metrics, Money, and Degree Attainment: Identifying Engines of Social Mobility*
10:55-11:05	**Nicholas Hillman**, University of Wisconsin- Madison: *Differential Impacts of College Ratings: The Case of Education Deserts*
11:05-11:15	**Anne-Marie Núñez,** University of Texas-San Antonio: *How the Shortcomings of a Postsecondary Ratings System Could Lead to Shortchanging HSIs and their Outcomes*
11:15-11:35	**Respondents: Lorelle Espinosa**, American Council on Education; **Sara Goldrick-Rab,** Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison; **Anne-Marie Núñez,** UTSA**; Jamienne Studley**, Deputy Undersecretary, US Dept. of Education
11:35-11:50	**Q & A**
11:50-12:00	**Event Summary: Gary Orfield**

PRESENTER BIOS

Brian K. Bridges serves as United Negro College Fund's Vice President, Research and Member Engagement, and leads UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute (FDPRI). In this role Dr. Bridges serves as UNCF's chief research officer, principal editor and contributor for FDPRI's publications and the manager of internal and external projects involving capacity building, evaluation and assessment. Immediately prior to joining UNCF, Brian served as Vice Provost for Diversity, Access and Equity at Ohio University. Brian has also served as the Associate Director for the Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity (CAREE) at the American Council on Education (ACE) and held various roles at the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), including Associate Director. While at NSEE, Brian managed a million-dollar subcontract for the Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) project, a national initiative funded by Lumina Foundation to assist minority-serving institutions' use of NSSE results for institutional improvement. In addition, he has served on numerous panels and advisory committees on issues related to HBCUs, learning environments at minority-serving institutions and success factors for African American college students at predominately white institutions. Brian earned his Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Indiana University-Bloomington, a Masters in Public Administration from University of North Carolina-Charlotte and a Bachelor of Arts from Francis Marion University.

Lorelle Espinosa joined the American Council on Education in September 2013 as assistant vice president for ACE's Center for Policy Research and Strategy, where she manages the center's research agenda. Espinosa has served the higher education profession for over 15 years, beginning in student affairs and undergraduate education at the University of California, Davis; Stanford University; and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her 2009 dissertation, *Pipelines and Pathways: Women of Color in STEM Fields and the Experiences that Shape Their Persistence*, was cited for excellence by the Association for the Study of Higher Education and published in the *Harvard Educational Review*. She has contributed opinion and scholarly works to peer-reviewed journals, academic volumes and industry magazines on a variety of topics. In 2012, Espinosa was the recipient of an Australian Endeavour Executive Award sponsored by the Australian government. Prior to ACE, Espinosa served as a senior analyst at Abt Associates, Inc. in Bethesda, Maryland, and as director of policy and strategic initiatives for the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington, DC. Espinosa holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in education from the University of California, Los Angeles; a B.A. from the University of California, Davis; and an A.A. from Santa Barbara City College (CA).

Stella M. Flores is Associate Professor of Public Policy and Higher Education at Vanderbilt University, with a secondary appointment in the Department of Sociology. Her research employs large-scale databases and quantitative methods to investigate the effects of state and federal policies on college access and completion rates for low-income and underrepresented populations. Flores has written about Minority Serving Institutions, immigrant students, English Language Learners, the role of alternative admissions plans and financial aid programs in college admissions in the U.S and abroad, demographic changes in U.S. education, and Latino students and community colleges. Her work was cited in the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court *Gratz v. Bollinger* decision (dissenting opinion) and in amicus briefs in *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* Supreme Court cases on affirmative action in higher education admissions. She currently serves on the editorial boards of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* and *The Review of Higher Education.* Her publications include peer-reviewed articles in The *ANNALS of the American*

Academy of Political and Social Science, Educational Researcher, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis and others as well as three co-edited volumes. She was named a 2010 National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow to investigate the college access and completion trajectories of English Language Learner youth in Texas. Flores holds an EdD in administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University, EdM from Harvard University, MPA from The University of Texas at Austin, and BA from Rice University. Previously, she was program evaluator for the U.S. General Accountability Office and program specialist for the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

Marybeth Gasman is Professor of Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania and also serves as the Director of the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions. She is the author of 21 books, including *Educating a Diverse Nation*, which is forthcoming from Harvard University Press. In addition to her scholarly work, Marybeth regularly contributes opinion pieces to newspapers throughout the nation and authors policy reports related to Minority Serving Institutions.

Sara Goldrick-Rab is Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is also the Founding Director of the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, the nation's first translational laboratory focused on postsecondary education. In 2014, Dr. Goldrick-Rab received the Early Career Award from the American Educational Research Association, and in 2010 she won a Faculty Scholars Award from the William T. Grant Foundation. In 2013, she testified on college affordability before the U.S. Senate HELP Committee. Her latest book on financial aid reform, co-edited with Andrew Kelly, was just published by Harvard Education Press. Her recent policy papers including a proposal for a free two-year college option, and an analysis of the impacts of federal student loan reform for Black students. She is currently leading an NSF-funded randomized trial of the impact of need-based aid on STEM college pathways, a national evaluation of Single Stop USA, a four-university ethnographic study of college affordability, and a randomized trial on the impact of text nudging on FAFSA renewal.

Nicholas Hillman studies state and federal higher education finance. His state policy research examines the effectiveness of state financial aid programs, the impacts of market-based finance reforms (e.g., performance-based funding, tuition vouchers, tuition discounting), and the politics of redistributive financing. His federal policy research focuses on trends in federal student loan borrowing, loan default, and income-related loan repayment. Through his research, Dr. Hillman seeks to understand how policies affect college access and equity, particularly for students who have historically been underrepresented in higher education. He teaches courses on higher education finance, quantitative research methods, and is the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Student Financial Aid*. Dr. Hillman earned his MPA and PhD both from Indiana University-Bloomington where he was a McNair Scholar.

Sylvia Hurtado is Professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and Director of the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. She has written over 100 publications that focus on student development in college, sociology of education, and diversity in higher education. She is known for her publications on campus climate as it affects different racial/ethnic groups, and also co-authored *Enacting Diverse Learning Environments* (Jossey-Bass), *Intergroup Dialogue* (University of Michigan Press), and *Defending Diversity* (University of Michigan Press). She served as President of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in 2005. *Black Issues in Higher Education*

(*Diverse* magazine), named her among the Top 15 Influential Faculty who personify scholarship, service and integrity and whose work has had substantial impact on the academy. She has conducted several national projects on diverse learning environments and retention, diversification of the scientific workforce, preparing students for a diverse democracy, and innovation in undergraduate education. She grew up in San Antonio, Texas and received her degrees from Princeton in Sociology (A.B), the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Ed.M.) and UCLA (Ph.D. in Education).

Willie Kirkland serves as Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Dillard University. He has worked in the field of institutional research for 25 years. Prior to Dillard, he served as Assistant Director of Institutional Research, and later, Associate Registrar for Information processing at the University of New Orleans. Prior to the University of New Orleans, he served as a policy planning specialist and Director of Neighborhood Planning for the City of New Orleans. Kirkland is a native of Dothan, Alabama. He attended Dothan High School where he was named to the state all-star football team. He received his B.S. degree in Social Sciences from Troy State University, Alabama. He received a M.A. degree in Political Science from the University of New Orleans and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of New Orleans Over the years, Dr. Kirkland has served on numerous civic bodies in the New Orleans area, including: the Iberville Cemeteries Advisory Council, the Mayor's Task force on Human Services, Human Services on Cable Board of Directors, United Way of Greater New Orleans Executive Planning Committee, Oak Island Homeowners Association, and the Oak Island Security District Board of Directors. Dr. Kirkland has a variety of research interests that includes publications on topics such as campus tobacco use, student retention, New Orleans elections, and hurricane Katrina's impact on student behavior.

Gary Orfield is Distinguished Research Professor of Education, Law, Political Science and Urban Planning at UCLA, Professor Emeritus of Education and Social Policy at Harvard University, and Co-founder/director of the Harvard Civil Rights Project. Orfield moved the project to UCLA in 2007, which he now co-directs with Patricia Gándara. In this capacity, he has commissioned and edited hundreds of original studies of civil rights issues and organized many national conferences. Orfield's central interest is the development and implementation of social policy, focusing on the impact of policy on equal opportunity for success in American society. Works since 2000 include eleven authored or edited books (many with co-authors) and numerous articles and reports. Orfield has been involved with development of governmental policy and also served as an expert witness or special master in several dozen class action civil rights cases related to his research. His book, *Diversity Challenged*, was cited by the Supreme Court in its 2003 *Grutter* decision upholding affirmative action at the University of Michigan. In 2006, 2012 and 2013 he organized, with colleagues, social science briefs to the Supreme Court, signed by hundreds of U.S. scholars, summarizing research on school desegregation and affirmative action in higher education. He was awarded the American Political Science Association's Charles Merriam Award and received the 2007 Social Justice Award of the American Education Research Association. He is a member of the National Academy of Education, received honorary doctorates from Wheelock College and the Pennsylvania State University and has lectured widely in the U.S. and abroad. A native Minnesotan, Orfield received his B.A. *summa cum laude* from the University of Minnesota, and M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Anne-Marie Núñez is an associate professor in the higher education program of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). Her award-winning scholarship addresses how to promote equity in postsecondary access and success, particularly for historically underrepresented groups. Dr. Núñez's research has been published in several outlets, including the *American Educational Research Journal*, *Educational Researcher*, and the *Harvard Educational Review*. In June 2014, she presented a policy brief about Hispanic-Serving Institutions and the proposed postsecondary ratings system to the White House Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. In addition, she is serving as Program Chair for the Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), to be held later this year in Washington, D. C.

Deborah A. Santiago is the Co-founder, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Policy at *Excelencia* in Education. For more than 15 years, she has led research and policy efforts from the community to federal and national levels to improve educational opportunities and success for all students. Her current work focuses on federal and state policy, financial aid, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and effective institutional practices for student success. She has been cited in numerous publications for her work, including The Economist, the New York Times, the Washington Post, AP, and The Chronicle of Higher Education. Deborah serves on the board of the National Student Clearinghouse the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), and the advisory board of Univision's Education Campaign.

Jamienne S. Studley has been Deputy Under Secretary of Education since September 26, 2013. Her focus is on higher education issues including quality, access, accountability, completion and student information. Jamie served as deputy and acting general counsel of the Department in the Clinton Administration from 1993-99. Secretary Duncan appointed her to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) in 2010, which she chaired in 2012-13. Her federal service also includes membership on the Jacob Javits Fellowship Commission and as special assistant to HEW Secretary Patricia Roberts Harris in the Carter Administration. Jamie was President and CEO of Public Advocates Inc., a San Francisco based civil rights advocacy group, from 2004-2013. Earlier she was President of Skidmore College; Associate Dean and Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School, and Executive Director of the National Association for Law Placement and the California Abortion Rights Action League-North. She has served as board member and treasurer of the American Association of Colleges and Universities; vice chair of The Annapolis Group; scholar in residence at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; policy committee member with the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Campus Compact and the New York State Council of Independent Colleges and Universities, and as a member and chair of the San Francisco Ethics Commission. Jamie earned her Bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa from Barnard College and her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. She has been recognized with the Distinguished Alumna Award from Barnard College and as a Champion for College Opportunity from the Campaign for College Opportunity (California).

ABSTRACTS

The Racial College Completion Gap in Texas: Evidence from Texas
Stella Flores, Toby J. Park and Dominique Baker

While the U.S. has experienced increased rates of college access for all race and ethnic groups, there has been less progress on college completion rates and even less success in closing the gaps on this metric by race and ethnicity. For this analysis, we focus on the college completion gap between underrepresented minority (URM) students and White students, or the Hispanic-White and Black-White racial college completion gap, given the unprecedented demographic growth of these populations in the U.S. as well as the nation's public K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions. Using a variance decomposition method, we find that pre-college characteristics (a combination of individual and high school context factors) contribute upwards of 61% of the total variance for both Hispanic and Black students as compared to their White student counterparts. That is, more than half of the completion gap is explained by pre-college characteristics. Postsecondary factors explain approximately 35% of the total variance. In addition, although pre-college characteristics explain nearly the same amount of variance of the college completion gap by Hispanic-White and Black-White statuses, economic disadvantage is the factor driving the Hispanic-White gap while academic preparation drives the variance explained in the Black-White college completion gap. Thus, the data suggest that college completion is not just a postsecondary issue. Our results have strong implications in an era of increased accountability in postsecondary education that compares colleges along such metrics as graduation rates and job placement success. A straightforward comparison of these measures would only be fair if all colleges were working with similarly prepared students who possess similar resources. Thus, there may be serious bias in comparing outcomes across colleges without adequate information to accurately adjust for factors beyond the colleges' control. Such a circumstance is likely to disproportionately harm low-income and minority students and the colleges that serve them.

Minority Serving Institutions: A Data-Driven Student Landscape in the Outcomes-Based Funding Universe
Marybeth Gasman, Thai-Huy Nguyen, Andrés Castro, and Daniel Corral

Minority Serving Institutions emerged in response to a history of racial inequity and social injustice due to racial and ethnic minorities lacking access to majority institutions. Representing 20 percent of the nation's college students, MSIs are now an integral part of American higher education. The purpose of this paper is to bring to light the contributions MSIs are making to postsecondary education, including: performance with men of color, teacher education, STEM education, and the two-year (community college) environment. We use statistics from the National Center for Educational Statistics and the National Science Foundation to call for deep consideration of the unique mission MSIs serve, especially with regard to educating low-income, students of color and within the universe of outcomes and performance-based evaluation. Recommendations and implications for policy conclude this paper.

The Color of Student Debt: Implications of Federal Loan Program Reforms for Black Students and Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Sara Goldrick-Rab, Robert Kelchen and Jason Houle
Borrowing federal loans in order to finance college expenses is now a common student experience, and policymakers are expressing concerns about the size of loans, their functions, and the likelihood of repayment. In upcoming debates over the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965, several responses are being considered, including efforts to hold colleges and universities more accountable for reducing student borrowing (through the use of cohort default rates) and/or lowering costs (by introducing college ratings), attempts to reduce borrowing by improving financial education and loan counseling, and changes in eligibility criteria for certain federal loans (particularly Parent PLUS Loans) in order to restrict borrowing. This paper argues that these discussions need to take into account a critical issue conspicuously absent from public debate about reforming higher education financing, and student loans in particular: There is a substantial racial disparity in families' need to borrow for college, such that black students depend more heavily on access to loans. Research indicates that wealth has a powerful effect on college attainment in the United States, above and beyond the impact of income. Moreover, the racial wealth gap is large, growing, and unlikely to disappear anytime soon. Black students whose families do not own homes or retirement accounts and who cannot rely on intergenerational transfers for support are far more likely to borrow not only federal subsidized and unsubsidized loans, but also have fewer alternative sources of credit beyond Parent PLUS loans. Therefore, policies that penalize students and/or schools for borrowing, or make it harder to borrow, will likely have unintended consequences for equity of educational opportunity, and racial equity in particular. Recommendations for federal loan reform efforts can will reduce the risk associated with borrowing but not limit educational opportunity are discussed.

Differential Impacts of College Ratings: The Case of Education Deserts
Nicholas Hillman
Despite innovations in technology and distance learning, geography and place still matter when deciding where to go to college. This study examines the geography of educational opportunity by locating "education deserts" – communities across the country where there are few public alternatives nearby for place-bound students to enroll in college. It finds education deserts are drawn along lines of race and class, where Hispanic communities and those with lower levels of educational attainment have the fewest public options. Considering that lower-income, working class, and minority students are the least geographically mobile, their range of "choices" are the most constrained. When rating colleges, it will be important to account for these factors and to avoid penalizing public colleges that may be the only option in some communities.

Money, Metrics and Degree Attainment: Identifying Engines of Social Mobility
Sylvia Hurtado, Adriana Ruiz Alvarado and Kevin Eagan
Institutions that educate the most low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students face considerable challenges compared with other institutions that restrict enrollment. Raw graduation rates fail to account for the characteristics of the student population or the level of institutional resources. The authors use metrics that either adjust for student characteristics (input-adjusted performance indicators) or account for institutional resources (efficiency scores) by assessing degree productivity for these populations. Key findings indicate that lower selectivity institutions, instructional expenditures per FTE, and amount of federal grant aid for first time, full time students predict better than expected input-adjusted institutional

performance on degree completion for these three student populations. Further, given institutional resources, historically Black institutions and Hispanic serving institutions are more efficient at producing STEM degrees among Black and Latina/o college students (respectively) than non-minority serving institutions. The authors recommend policies that identify and reward institutions that serve as engines of social mobility as a high priority in advancing President Obama's equity and degree attainment goals, using metrics that are fair to students and to institutions that are doing the most to remain accessible and affordable.

The Impact of Financial Aid Limits on a Leading HBCU and Its Students
Willie Kirkland

This study examines the independent effect of unmet financial aid need amount controlling for eight other independent variables in predicting retention for three consecutive entering freshmen cohort groups (N=341) (N=354) (N=351) at a private Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Furthermore, it is determined that the independent effect of this variable is time sensitive. We predicted unmet need amount would be negatively related to retention. The evidence showed that unmet need exerted influence on retention in all three cohorts. As expected the strength of unmet need was found to vary during the matriculation cycle. It was consistently the most potent predictor during the period between the first semester and the second semester of the first year. Thus, it is concluded that unmet need amount is a consistent predictor of retention. The implication of this is that any substantial decline or reduction in the availability of financial support to students is likely to increase individual unmet need among many and have a negative impact on retention and overall enrollment.

How the Shortcomings of a Postsecondary Ratings System Could Lead to Shortchanging HSIs and Their Outcomes
Anne-Marie Núñez and Awilda Rodríguez

The proposed postsecondary institution ratings system (PIRS) aims to increase postsecondary access, affordability, and success for students and families across the United States. However, many concerns have been raised about its accuracy and utility for students and families, as well the consequences of using such a tool to gauge postsecondary institutions' performance, in particular graduation rates, and thereby determine certain types of federal resource allocation to these institutions. One common proposed solution to these concerns is the use of regression-adjusted methods to take into account unequal student and institutional inputs, particularly for institutions that serve historically underrepresented groups, such as Minority-Serving Institutions. In this policy brief, we examine how Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) would fare using the regression adjusted approach. We find that the application of this methodological approach eliminates the average differences in graduation rates between HSIs and non-HSIs in performance. However, when adjusting the graduation rates of individual colleges, the adjustments can be volatile and subject to the data in included in the regression model. Missing data among variables that are currently collected and the omission of the most important factor related to institutional graduation rates – student academic background characteristics – pose significant barriers to the use of regression in developing a ratings system. We conclude with recommendations for more equitable and accurate institutional performance evaluation.