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AUTHOR Miskel, Maryjane
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ABSTRACT

This literature review examines conditions facing the minority student in undergraduate education. Following an overview of enrollment trends, emphasis is placed on barriers to higher education, efforts to lower the barriers, preparatory programs, ethnic studies, and recent developments. A 39-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

ERIC
HIGHER EDUCATION

Research Currents

MINORITY STUDENT ENROLLMENT

by Maryjane Miskel
Research Associate, ERIC/Higher Education

Conditions facing the minority student in higher education appear to be entering a new phase. This report will examine some of the conditions that point to a change in emphasis. Some of the changes to be examined are: enrollment trends, barriers to higher education, efforts to lower these barriers, and related developments in undergraduate education.

ENROLLMENT

The data used in this study are based on a variety of sources. Methods of data collection vary; thus, slight inconsistencies in data are inevitable. The American Council on Education (ACE) statistics are based on student response during registration while the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) statistics are estimates provided by member institutions. A 10 percent error factor is possible (Crossland 1971, p.9).

A summary of current estimates of minority enrollments provided by ACE (1968; 1969; 1970; 1971; 1972), NASULGC ("Minority Enrollments . . ." 1973), and Crossland (1971, p.20) appears at the bottom of this page.

ACE statistics indicate that the proportion of minority students has increased from 1968 to 1972. The 1972 NASULGC survey of 122 member institutions indicates a marked increase in minority enrollment over their 1970 data. In the fall 1970, minority students made up 9.4 percent of the total enrollments (graduate and undergraduate) at institutions responding to the NASULGC survey. There were 155,414 minority students out of the total enrollment of 1,659,446; however, the 1970 survey did not include data on parttime enrollment that was included in the 1972 survey. According to the 1972 survey, minority groups made up slightly more than 11 percent of the total fall *graduate and undergraduate* enrollment. However, when examining just *undergraduate* enrollment, 121 institutions reported 257,267 minority students out of a total student body of 2,134,004, with minority students making up 12.1 percent of the total enrollment.

UNDERREPRESENTATION

Although increases in minority enrollment are evident, minority underrepresentation is still apparent. Fred E. Crossland in *Minority Access to College* (1971, p.20) estimates the 1970 freshmen class (see table) to be much lower in minority representation than ACE or NASULGC estimates. According to Crossland, in order to end minority underrepresentation in American higher education in the next four or five years, major adjustments would have to be made. These adjustments are:

- The number of 1970 black freshmen should be increased by 89 percent or 117,000 (from 132,000 to 249,000).
- The number of 1970 Mexican American freshmen should be increased by 189 percent or 34,000 (from 18,000 to 52,000).
- The number of 1970 Puerto Rican freshmen should be increased by 88 percent or 7,000 (from 8,000 to 15,000).
- The number of 1970 American Indians should be increased by 350 percent or 7,000 (from 2,000 to 9,000).

These figures are based on the concept that the 1970 national freshman class reflects the composition of the total population. Any change in composition would necessarily cause a change in these figures if equal representation is to be achieved.

Although inconsistencies in minority statistics lead to some confusion, minority underrepresentation is evident. Crossland's enrollment adjustments were based on a total enrollment of 2 million. The NASULGC 1972 survey indicates proportionate representation only in the case of the American Indian, assuming the error factor is low. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ("College-Going . . ." *1973,* p.1) reports the percentage of June 1973 black high school graduates going to college is about the same as the percentage of white high school graduates. The major reason for this equality is not that the percentage of blacks going to college has increased but that the percentages of whites has dropped. In 1972, 54.1 percent of white high school graduates and 47.1 percent of blacks attended college. This year, 1973, the percentage of

	ACE					Crossland	NASULGC
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1970	1972
White	87.3	90.9	88.6	91.4	87.3	Total Enroll. 2,000,000 (100%)	Total Enroll. 2,134,004 (100%)
Black	5.8	6.0	9.1	6.3	8.7	Black 132,000 (6.6%)	Black 179,524 (8.4%)
Indian	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.9	1.1	Indian 2,000 (0.1%)	Indian 9,490 (0.4%)
Oriental	1.1	1.7	0.9	0.5	1.1		Oriental 21,872 (1.0%)
Mexican				1.1	1.5	Mexican 18,000 (0.9%)	Spanish Speaking ..41,455 (1.9%)
Puerto Rican				0.2	0.6	Puerto Rican 8,000 (0.4%)	
Other Minorities	5.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.8	All Others 1,840,000 (92%)	Other Minorities 4,926 (0.2%)

blacks increased only slightly (47.6 percent), but the percentage of whites dropped (49.4 percent).

BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Minority students face many barriers to entrance into higher education. These barriers encompass background and group characteristics, language, testing and admissions, racial discrimination, finances, and poor preparation.

To a large extent Mexican Americans, blacks and American Indians are more isolated than were the Irish, Italians, and Poles. The latter minority groups were less easily identified, thus making it easier for them to be assimilated (Hamilton, 1973, p.5). Apart from the obvious factor, the Irish, Poles, and Italians were far from their homeland, so cultural ties were easier to break. The Mexican American, heavily concentrated in the southwest and west are geographically close to their cultural homeland and family. This, too, is the case of the American Indian and his proximity to the reservation. The black is faced with a similar situation.

The language barrier presents a major obstacle to minority students. Indian tribal language, black English, and Spanish often place the minority student at a disadvantage. Different expressions can easily be misinterpreted and a free flowing dialogue is limited due to lack of understanding. In this way language barriers can have a devastating effect upon a student's academic performance.

Similarly, the minority student is at a disadvantage in testing and admissions (Jacobson 1973, p.1). Both areas are too often designed with the majority student in mind. Minority students are measured according to how they may adapt to majority standards (Castillo 1972, p.16).

Eugene Leitka (1973, p.45) and Arthur McDonald (1973) view value conflicts as a major cause of dropouts among both American Indians and Mexican Americans. "The coercive assimilation policy by both the state and federal school systems has resulted in the classroom and school becoming a kind of battleground . . ." (Castillo 1973, p.17).

Financial insecurity presents an obstacle to higher education. A recent report by John Artichacker and Neil Palmer (Castillo 1973, p.17) discovered that insufficient funds, especially for clothing and spending money for entering freshmen, was found to be a decisive factor in the Indian's academic failure. If tuition allowances are given to minority students, in most cases there is no consideration for living allowances. In order to assimilate without losing one's cultural heritage, the minority student must be free to engage in on- and off-campus activities and to improve his wardrobe if desired. Without this additional freedom to intermingle or assimilate, the minority student is again out of the mainstream.

Another aspect of the financial problem is the lack of federal aid for needy students, many of whom are members of minority groups. Many students who had hoped to go to college with the help of opportunity grants will be turned down. Basic opportunity grants will average $260 with a $450 maximum. First-time freshmen whose family income is $11,000 or less will qualify. Currently over 214,000 students have applied to the program, and approximately 40 percent are eligible for aid. (Winkler 1973, p.2)

The last barrier, poor preparation, is the most crucial. The College Entrance Examination Board (Anderson 1973, p.1) reports that white students with low grades are almost three times as likely to go to college as are blacks with low grades. This is due partially to the lack of funds available to assist minority students, lack of social pressure, and possibly some disillusionment that the outlay of finances for college will be justified by the long-range return in job opportunities. For the minority student, special tutoring programs may reinforce a negative self-concept that, when combined with additional problems, may increase the attrition rate.

LOWERING THE BARRIERS

There is no simple solution to the problems facing minority students. However, in an effort to help the minority student many programs have been designed to meet their needs. Two major areas covered by these programs are the precollege preparatory and the in-college ethnic programs. Preparatory programs are basically designed to assist in lowering entrance barriers. Remedial assistance, enrichment programs, and counseling often form the bulk of the program content. Ethnic studies programs were designed in an effort to preserve a student's cultural heritage, to develop a stronger and more positive self-concept, to provide a multicultural education system, and to offer an understanding of various ethnic groups.

PREPARATORY PROGRAMS

Preparatory programs provide high school students with the necessary skills and assistance to enter and succeed in a college environment. Examples of these programs include the Transitional Year Program (TYP), Upward Bound, and Project Opportunity.

The Transitional Year Program is a coeducational, multiracial program providing an intensive one-year course of study. It is designed to strengthen basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics and to introduce the student to college level work. TYP is designed to bridge the gap between high school graduation and college admission. During the year the TYP student is able to consider the kind of college and course of study best suited to his needs, interests, and abilities. Experienced advisors assist the student in the selection process. Most TYP students receive scholarships that fully meet their needs (Goldstein 1971, p.144).

Project Opportunity is a talent search and encouragement program operating at high schools in the South. Colleges and universities participate in the program by providing tutoring, consultative services, on-campus facilities for summer enrichment programs, and assistance for counselors in the college advisory process (Goldstein 1971, p.145).

Upward Bound is a federally funded program that currently exists at colleges throughout the country. The program is designed to provide high school students with three summers of counseling and remedial assistance prior to entrance to college. Sessions are held throughout the year where students receive further tutoring and counseling (Goldstein 1971, p.144).

Preparatory programs ease the transition of the high school student into the college. The NASULGC ("Minority Enrollments . . ." 1973) survey indicates that minority students who were first-time freshmen made up a smaller proportion of the undergraduate enrollment than they have in past years. Beginning students in 1972 were 26.9 percent of the undergraduate minority enrollment compared to 37.7 percent in fall 1970. At the 83 member NASULGC institutions able to provide enrollment figures, there were 50,995 first-time freshmen out of a total minority undergraduate enroll-

ment of 189,786. This equal distribution in the classes testifies to the achievements of the special programs aimed at helping minority students to succeed in the college environment.

ETHNIC STUDIES

Ethnic studies programs have been developed by many colleges and universities as a response to the significant needs of various ethnic and racial groups. A survey of courses and enrollment in ethnic/racial studies (Dutton 1973) of 451 institutions of higher education, designed by the ACE Higher Education Panel, indicates that approximately 61 percent of all institutions offered at least one or more ethnic studies areas during the fall 1972 term. Generalizing the response of the 451 institutions, which represent a 20 percent sample of the population of 2,578 institutions, it is estimated that 1,272 institutions (49%) offered at least one course in Black Studies; 394 (15%) offered at least one course in Spanish-Speaking Studies; 344 (13%) offered at least one course in American Indian Studies; and 272 (10%) offered at least one course in Asian American Studies.

Ethnic studies research seems to indicate the success of the programs; however, additional comprehensive studies are necessary. Eugene Leitka (1973, p.45) in a study of Native American Studies Programs (NASP) found that institutions with NASP in existence for one year have a lower dropout rate than those without NASP. Richard Clark (1972, p.16) indicates that the success of Indian programs at Arizona State University, Brigham Young University, Fort Lewis College, and Northern Arizona University can be seen in the attrition rate, which has dropped to a level comparable or below the attrition rate of non-Indians since the inception of the programs.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The potential for preparatory programs and ethnic studies in our multicultural society is great but in light of recent trends the outlook for their future is dim.

In California, the State Coordinating Council on Higher Education recently released a report (Sievert 1973, p.54) urging decreased spending on ethnic studies, claiming that enrollments in these courses at state-aided colleges have been small and are becoming smaller. The Council urged that most California campuses drop their degree programs in ethnic studies and incorporate ethnic studies into traditional courses.

Ethnic studies programs were created hastily to satisfy the demands of minority groups. The difficulties facing the programs vary with each institution housing them; however, several problems common to a number of programs include: poor program planning, low academic quality, grudging acceptance by traditional white academic circles, lack of qualified faculty, and cutbacks due to the fiscal problems at these institutions (Crowl 1972, p.6).

The outlook for preparatory programs is equally dim. Lack of financial support plays a decisive role in the difficulties facing these programs. Foundation grants are generally offered to initiate and support a program for a specified period of time. Richard Neblett, a spokesman for Exxon, indicated that "most corporations structure their grants to demonstrate innovation. They can't fund an independent program ad infinitum." ("Vale . . ." 1973, p.50). Harlem Prep, an alternative preparatory program created in 1967 is faced the withdrawal of support by various foundations and donors. This program was designed to assist the high school dropout. Rather than offering the routine vocational courses, Harlem Prep emphasized college math, English, biology, and economics. A diploma was not granted until the student had been accepted into college. During the six years of its existence, 637 of the 1,000 students who attended went to college. In those same six years, the concern of private donors decreased. Lack of financial support forced Harlem Prep to appeal to the New York Public School System for assistance. The school board has agreed to take over the school on the condition that public school regulations are obeyed ("Vale . . ." 1973, p.50).

SUMMARY

Higher education in America has made enormous advances in the last few years in minority education. Enrollment of minority students has increased; efforts are being made to offer equal educational opportunities; and special preparatory and ethnic studies are offered to meet the needs of minority students. These activities have helped upgrade minority education and offer equal opportunities and are important but are not sufficient to qualify as the end result. Underrepresentation, the uncertainty of many preparatory and ethnic studies programs, and lack of financial aid all point to areas needing further effort.

To alleviate some of the problems, the following suggestions are offered:

- Creation of intensive courses to train teachers for ethnic studies programs (Crowl 1972, p.7).
- Increased recruitment of minority students and young faculty members in colleges and universities (Hamilton 1973, p.8).
- Increase the number of qualified minority high school graduates who enter college ("College-Going . . ." 1973, p.1). This is the role of both primary and secondary education.
- Increase federal aid to minority students (Jacobson 1972, p.7).
- New, effective state planning to meet the needs of minorities in state colleges and universities (Institute for Higher Educational Opportunity, 1970).
- Initiation of minority enrollment policies at institutions of higher education (Crossland 1971, p.102).
- Employment of minority group members as counselors and administrators (Janssen 1972, p.2).
- Development of programs and relationships which will enable institutions of higher education to reach out to minority high school students (Johnson 1973, p.26).
- Encouragement of research on minority enrollments, minority programs and minority problems.

CONCLUSION

Institutions of higher education have made many changes in an effort to respond to minority students' needs. These changes have eased the frustrations felt in the 1960's, yet many minority students are still faced with barriers to higher education, particularly poor preparation and financial need. This is compounded by the feeling of alienation on predominantly white college campuses where the curricula, living arrangements, and social life remain white-oriented (Weidlein, 1972, p.4). Fred Crossland suggests that during the 1960's "we were intoxicated with our own expectations that through education we could solve all our problems. Now we realize that you can't undo the problems of the past over-

night. It's a long, tough job, calling for sustained efforts." (Anderson, 1973, p.1). In light of recent program cutbacks, institutions of higher education should be sensitive to the social implications of not continuing to sustain their efforts to aid minorities in whatever form required.

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