DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 415 HE 021 281

AUTHOR Crosson, Patricia H.
TITLE Environmental Influences on Minority Degree Attainment. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Nov 87
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Baltimore, MD, November 21-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Academic Advising; *Academic Persistence; Ancillary School Services; Case Studies; College Admission; *College Students; Guidelines; Higher Education; *Minority Groups; *School Holding Power; Self Evaluation (Groups); *Student College Relationship; Student Financial Aid; Student Needs; Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

Findings concerning environmental factors that relate to minority degree achievement in predominantly white four-year colleges and universities are discussed, based on a study sponsored by the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance. The findings are used to suggest adaptations to a "Framework for Evaluating Institutional Commitment to Minorities: A Guide to Institutional Self-Study," which was developed under the auspices of the American Council of Education. The study was entitled "Organizational Influences on Baccalaureate Achievement by Minorities: Ten Case Studies." Successful campus efforts to improve minority degree achievement in a majority of the 10 institutions were: strong programs to help students with academic preparation problems; emphasis on pre-college programs and relations with elementary and secondary schools; emphasis on multicultural environments; successful resolution to the organizational dilemma of separatist versus support programs for minority students; proactive approaches to financial aid; and opportunities for on-campus housing. The following five areas of the institutional self-study framework are addressed: admissions and recruitment; financial aid; counseling, support services, and placement; curriculum; and environment. The "Framework for Evaluating Institutional Commitment" is appended and 11 references are included. (SW)

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON MINORITY DEGREE ATTAINMENT

Patricia H. Crosson
Associate Professor
Higher Education
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass.

Paper presented at the annual meeting, Association for the Study of Higher Education, Baltimore, Md., November, 1987.

ASHE
ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Texas A&M University
Department of Educational
Administration
College Station, TX 77843
(409) 845-0393

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, November 21-24, 1987. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

This paper will report the findings to date concerning environmental factors that relate to minority degree achievement in predominiantly white four year colleges and universities from a research study currently being conducted under the auspices of the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance.[1] The reported findings will then be used to suggest adaptations to a "Framework for Evaluating Institutional Commitment to Minorities: A Guide to Institutional Self-Study" developed under the auspices of the American Council on Education (ACE).[2] This paper represents an initial and decidedly tentative exploration. Its purpose is to pause and ask if we are ready to attempt to link research results to specific suggestions for colleges and universities ready to examine their own campus environments.

Backround.

The presumption of even a tentative effort to link findings from a study still in progress and a self-study instrument currently in use must be defended on the basis of the importance of the issues and the severity of the problems.

---

[1] "Organizational Influences on Baccalaureate Achievement by Minorities: Ten Case Studies" is being conducted under the directorship of Richard Richardson, Jr. at the Research Center of Arizona State University as part of the research program of the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance. The project is supported by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. The author of this paper is one of ten senior researchers on the project. It is important to note that the findings reported here are those derived from an analysis of ten year one research reports by the author of this paper, and do not necessarily reflect the conclusions and interpretations of other project researchers, or of the team as a whole. The formal results of the study will be reported in book form in 1988.

[2] The Framework was disseminated by ACE in 1976 and is not copyrighted. The adaptations proposed in this paper have not been reviewed by and should not be considered in any way authorized by the American Council on Education.

After decades of growth in minority enrollment in higher education, the 1980's brought a dramatically different picture. Black college enrollment peaked around 1980 but has declined significantly since that time--close to 4% between 1980 and 1984. Hispanic enrollment grew only 1.9 percent from 1982 to 1984, a growth rate far below that experienced by this group throughout the previous decade. American Indian enrollment declined 5.7 percent from 1982 to 1984. Of all racial/ethnic groups, only Asians continued to show a consistent pattern of enrollment increase (Mingle 1987). The enrollment declines seem especially troublesome when we look to the future. Demographers have noted and projected important shifts in the racial/ethnic mix of traditional college-age populations. The minority proportion of the 18-24 year old cohort will shift from approximately 15 percent in 1980 to more than 30 percent in 2000, and close to 40 percent by 2025 (Mingle 1987).

The picture with respect to persistence and baccalaureate degree acheivement is no more positive. Using a restrictive definition of persistence, or "fast track," to include those enrolled full time following high school graduation and continuing full time for four years in postsecondary education and data from the High School and Beyond Survey, Mingle (1987) shows enormous disparities among racial/ethnic groups. One of three Asians and one of five Whites but only one of seven Blacks, one of ten Hispanics, and one of twelve American Indians are on the "fast track" through higher education. Studies using more extended time frames and comparing minority and majority degree completion for enrolled college students over periods as long as ten or twelve years, find that the gap between majority and minority students closes slightly but continues to exist (Lavin et al.

1986). For a variety of reasons, minority students do not attain the baccalaureate degree in the same proportions as do majority students. The American Council on Education reports an overall five percent decline in degree awards to minority students between 1980-81 and 1982-83 (ACE 1986).

Recent interest in the subject suggests that colleges and universities have in fact begun to take the problems of minority recruitment and degree acheivement seriously. Colleges and universities seem to have moved beyond altruistic philosophies of access and equal opportunity and to have recognized a self interest in minority recruitment and retention. They are giving renewed, perhaps more serious, attention to campus policies and practices that relate to minority students.

There is another issue that goes beyond the numbers. It is becoming more and more obvious that racial climates on college and university campuses are not healthy. Reports in the Chronicle of Higher Education and in the popular press describe serious racial incidents and problems on campuses with ever greater frequency. These incidents have occurred at prestigious universities with strong liberal traditions, at selective liberal arts colleges, and at other institutions throughout the country. So far, there appears to be no pattern by institutional type, size or location. It is difficult to know what to make of these events. Many argue that they are isolated occurences which do not reflect the tenor or climate on these campuses or in other colleges and universities. Others argue that they are only the tip of the iceberg, the few reported among the many more numerous demonstrations of racism and discrimination on these and other campuses. While we do not

know the scope and depth of racist and discriminatory attitudes and behavior and we do not know enough about the effect of such incidents on the total campus academic and social environment, it is clear that predominantly white four year colleges and universities have somehow failed to live up to their ideals as civil and tolerant social communities which respect diversity and pluralism. It is also clear that many minority students perceive predominantly white campuses to be hostile to their interests and needs. In the area of campus racial climate, too, colleges and universities are looking for answers. They are trying to understand what is happening and what they can do to improve campus environments. It is important and timely then, to focus on the internal environments of four year colleges and universities and to attempt to understand the influence of institutional environments on minoirity degree attainment.

The issues are certainly not new to scholars in Higher Education. Researchers have been working for decades to understand the complex interactions of individual attributes and characteristics, social and economic backround factors and various factors within collegiate environments that relate to student intellectual development, academic performance, college satisfaction and degree completion. Many scholars have focused specifically on minority students and tried to understand the causes and consequences of differences between minority and majority groups and among minority groups in enrollment, persistence, performance and degree completion. Work in this area has been reported frequently at ASHE conferences and in the journal literature. There are many important controverisies about research designs and methods and a continuing struggle to identify adequate measures for academic performance and environmental impact.

It is not the purpose of this paper to review all the literature that relates to collegiate environments and minority degree achievement but a few words will help to suggest the complexity of the problems and issues.[3] Vincent Tinto (1987) has provided a valuable theoretical model of the complex process of college leaving which stresses the importance of "fit" between the individual and the college environment and the importance of social and academic integration. Pascarella, Terenzini, Bean, Weidman, Kuh and many others in many multiple regression analyses based on complex theoretical models have contributed a now lengthy list of environmental variables that are known with certainty to be importantly related to student academic and social integration and to successful college experiences. The most freqently mentioned include adequate academic preparation for college, frequent contact with faculty members, positive perceptions of campus climate, curriculum flexibility, availablitly of financial aid, and on-campus residence. Nettles (1984,1985) and Allen (1987) have performed studies with large samples of black and white students in predominantly white and predominantly Black institutions and have helped us understand the factors related to lower grade performance and lower levels of satisfaction with college for Black students on predominantly white campuses as compared to whites on white campuses and Blacks on Black campuses. These include lower levels of academic integration, poorer study habits, feelings of discrimination and alienation, and a greater incidence of interfering

[3]For a more adequate review of the literature, see P.H. Crosson "Four Year College and University Environments for Minority Degree Achievement", a paper prepared for the "From Access to Achievement" Conference sponsored by the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance and others, November, 1987.

problems, often connected with financial difficulties. Olivas (1987) has collected a set of important studies which focus on the questions of why so many Latino students drop out during high school and/or fail to enroll in college, and why Latino's experience high levels of stress and alienation in college.

Yet another stream of research works from case studies and seeks to build understanding of the environmental factors that affect minority degree achievement from close examination of particular environments. Studies in this tradition usually start with questions about what seems to be working in particular situations, often compare findings from several case environments, and usually conclude with specific recommendations for institutional policy and practice. While case study research is plagued by methodologic problems even more severe than those in the more theoretical and factor analytic tradition, study results make more immediate and direct connections to the worlds of policy and practice within colleges and universities. Given these characteristics, and the severity and timliness of the problems related to minority degree attainment and campus racial climate, it likely that college and university administrators will look to the case study research for ideas and solutions. Among the many recent case studies, the "Organizational Influences" study, discussed in the next section, relates most directly to issues of campus environments and minority degree achievement.

The Organizational Influences Study

"Organizational Influences on Baccalaureate Achievement by Minorities: Ten Case Studies" (hereinafter referred to as the Organizational Influences study

or simply the study) involves the in-depth examination of ten public, predominantly white colleges and universities which award a substantial number of degrees to minority students. The overall purpose of the study is to understand the organizational factors that relate to minority student success. Study duration is three years, with the second year currently nearing completion.

The ten institutions in the study--Brooklyn College, California State University/Dominguez Hills, Florida International University, Florida State University, Memphis State University, Temple University, the University of New Mexico, Wayne State University, the University of California/Los Angeles, and the University of Texas/El Paso--were selected on the basis of the following criteria: 1) public baccalaureate granting; 2) less than 50 percent degrees awarded to minorities; 3) track record of degree awards to one or more minority groups that is significant within its state and from a national perspective; 4) institutional commitment to minority degree achievement; and 5) confirmation from knowledgeable state or regional officials that the institution represents an appropriate case given the purposes of the study. The application of the criteria was intended to produce a set of public, predominantly white institutions with enough of a track record and commitment to minority access and degree achievement to suggest that some useful lessons might be learned from more detailed examination. The institutons were not selected as "models" of success or good practice. The findings to date suggest that it is essential to bear this in mind. While many important lessons can be learned from this study, we are still a long way from identifying model institutions or exemplary programs and practices.

The research team consists of a senior researcher for each of the ten institutions who is not affiliated with the institution and a cooperating researcher from within each institution. Following a detailed protocol to enable comparability across institutions, information is being gathered about the campuses, the students, the local communities, and the state policy environment. On each campus, researchers are gathering documentary evidence of institutional orientation and commitment to minority degree achievement through the in-depth examination of enrollment, persistence and graduation rates; programs and services for all students and special programs for minority students; staffing patterns; organizational arrangements and resource allocations. Senior researchers have made lengthy visits to the campuses to interview administrators and faculty members. Opinions about the campus environments have been gathered from recent graduates via mailed survey and telephone interviews.

In a recent Change article, Richardson, Simmons, and de los Santos (1987) describe six lessons that have been learned to date about graduating minority students from the ten institutions:

-- Minority achievement is viewed as a preparation problem rather than a racial problem.

--Campus environment is recognized as a critical factor in student involvement and success.

--Small numbers of minority faculty members and limited involvement in equal opportunity strategies by all faculty members are recognized as problems needing urgent attention by these universities.

--There is visible evidence of administrative commitment.

--Strategies for promoting the success of minority students (in predominantly white institutions), or for promoting the success of all students (in multicultural institutions), were comprehensive and systematic rather than fragmented and sporadic.

--The most progress has occurred among universities where institutional commitment and good educational practices are enhanced by a favorable state policy environment. (pp22-25)

In order to amplify these observations and to focus specifically on internal campus environmental factors, I have also analyzed the ten "Year One" reports from the study. According to information in these reports, the policies, programs, practices and factors that are considered by campus officials and by project researchers to be particularly important to successful campus efforts to improve minority degree achievement in a majority of the ten institutions are strong programs to help students with academic preparation problems; emphasis on pre-college programs and relations with elementary and secondary schools; emphasis on multicultural environments; successful resolution to the organizational dilemma of separatist versus integrated support programs for minority students; proactive approaches to financial aid; and opportunities for on-campus housing. Each is discussed below.

1. Strong programs to help students with academic preparation problems.

All ten institutions in the study believe that the most important problem related to degree attainment for many minority, as well as many

majority students, is the problem of inadequate academic preparation for college work. They consider student preparation problems to be institutional problems and have initiated a wide variety of programs and services to help overcome them. All ten institutions use diagnostic tests, remedial/developmental courses, academic tutorials; peer counseling and tutoring, learning skills laboratories, writing and math centers, special language programs and any number of devices to help students. Although there is enormous variety in specific program activities and services, all ten endorse their programs from the top, devote extensive campus resources to them, and staff them with individuals genuinely dedicated to student learning. Additional common characteristics include systems for early diagnosis and immediate response to academic problems, individualized approaches to student needs, and academic environments that do not stigmatize students who use special academic programs and services.

2. Emphasis on pre-college programs and relations with elementary and secondary schools.

This has become something of a trend in higher education over the past decade. Most institutions in the study have recognized that they can do a great deal to influence the educational aspirations, motivation and academic preparation of students during their high school and even elementary school years. They have recognized that pre-college activity can be particularly important to educationally disadvantaged populations. Special college-run programs reach out to students and involve them in math or science projects in their early years, special counseling and tutorial projects help motivate young students to choose the right preparatory

courses. many programs involve the parents in study skills workshops. Other efforts link college and high school faculty members in curriculum projects designed to improve the high school curriculum and relate it more directly to college level work. Administrators and faculty members in the study institutions believe that these efforts are paying off in community support and in improved application rates. enrollment and retention statistics and they are devoting extensive resources to them.

3. Emphasis on multicultural environments based on significant proportions of minority students in the undergraduate population.

Research on minority students in higher education has long recognized the importance of a critical mass of minority students on each campus in order to provide the "comfortability" factor that helps students and potential applicants perceive the institution as an attractive place to be (Peterson et. al. 1978). In the "Organizational Influences" study, the institutions considered by minority students and community leaders to be exciting, interesting places. genuinely committed to minority degree achievement, were all institutions in which the proportions of minority students in the undergraduate student body had approached or exceeded thirty percent. There was a noticeable difference between the genuinely "multicultural" institutions and others in study.[4] In these institutions, student groups

[4] It is import nt to remember that criteria for inclusion in the study excluded institutions that are predominantly minority institutions, so it is not possible to make comparative judgements btween predominantly minority and multicultural institutions on the basis of study findings. Also, it is not yet clear to study researchers to what extent findings for the dominant minority groups in each of the ten institutions hold for other minority groups on the same campuses.

created lively student cultures which were accepted by majority students. Campus social, cultural and co-curricular activities and programs reflected the diversity of the student bodies. Simply having a large enough presence of minority students seemed to create a campus climate which did not isolate minority students into separate subcultures. The institutions were alive with activities and events which brought different groups together and which took full advantage of diverse traditions and multiple cultural contributions. There was a dynamism on these campuses that is difficult to describe but seemed to make the totality of the campus environments a positive influence on all students, especially minority students.

4. Successful resolution to the organizational dilemma of separatist versus integrated support programs and services for minority students.

There has been an extensive debate about the best organizational arrangements for programs and services for minority students. The debate centers on the question of whether it is best for institutions, and for their minority students, to provide distinct and separate service units for minority students or to expect all offices and units to be responsive to minority student needs and concerns. Beginning in the late 1960's and early 1970's, in an effort to make their proportionally small minority student populations more comfortable on predominantly white campuses, and in response to student demands for separatist organizations, many colleges and universities established special programs, offices, and organizations to provide services for minority students. As noted by Peterson et al (1978), however, by the late 1970's it had become apparent that this organizational strategy had

created serious problems for many institutions. Adequate attention to the diversities within and among minority groups, and to the range and variety of their needs, required such an abundance and variety of programs and services that they often duplicated the full range of student affairs offices. For most institutions this was prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, separatist programs and structures allowed large segments of the campus community to remain indifferent to the problems and concerns of minority students.

By the late 1970's, and throughout this decade, most colleges and universities began the complicated and often acrimonious process of reorganization designed to bring minority student services under the organizational umbrella of "regular" academic and student support services. Many institutions are left with some sort of mixture--all offices are responsible for all students but a few special programs cluster minority students and staff. The mixtures often strain relationships and produce dissatisfacton within minority groups. Staff members, often minority, feel embattled, peripheral and unsupported. They often question the extent of commitment from regular services and programs. Other staff members often feel uncomfortable with the special programs, ignore them, or shift their own responsibilities for serving minority students onto them.

The Organizational Influences study shows that many institutions, even those which are successful at graduating large numbers of minority students, have not yet found successful solutions to this organizational dilemma. In three institutions we found that although the institutional philosophy and policy stressed that all campus units and programs were responsible for

serving all students, and there were no special arrangements for minority students, in fact, a few dedicated (often minority) staff members in a very few units were making the critical difference to minority student success.

In the seven multicultural institutions, however, (defined as those with minority enrollments that approached thirty percent), we most often found both the philosophy and practice of well-integrated programs and services. These institutions had an abundance of academic and social support services and programs which served all students. Minority students took full advantage of them. Staff members throughout the campuses seemed genuinely interested in, and assumed responsibilitiy for, all students. The size of the minority student body made it possible for these institutions to successfully integrate their programs and services and to have confidence that all offices would serve all students well.

5. Proactive approaches to financial aid.

All colleges and universities have financial aid programs. Institutions have long recognized that financial aid can help keep students from dropping out of college to go to work and that aid can minimize the amount of off-campus work for students and allow more time for study and involvement with campus life. Campus based, as opposed to federal or state, aid is considered important because campus financial aid officers can know and work with individual students and their families. They can reach out to students, provide timely information, provide a bit of extra help at just the right moment, and help look for creative ways to augment resources and reduce costs.

All campuses in the study considered financial aid to be extremely important to their efforts to attract minority students and to keep them enrolled and all have what might be called "aggressive" financial aid policies and programs. These campuses devote extensive campus resources to financial aid. They also seek out ways to assist students and their parents to take maximum advantage of state and federal programs; offer minority scholars programs with strong inducements to attract well qualified minority applicants, and work with community groups to attract new sources of scholarship support for their students.

6. Opportunities for On-Campus Housing.

Although nine of the ten institutions in the study are urban and largely commuter institutions, a majority of them consider residence halls to be an important component of their efforts to recruit and to serve minority students. Campus officials believe that residence halls can help reduce the distractions and increase opportunities for social integration and involvement with campus life. They believe that residence hall programming can help improve campus racial climates and provide settings for special academic support services. They work hard to ensure a visible minority presence among residence hall staff and advisers.

Many of the institutions in the study are seeking to build or expand residence hall systems. In addition, many have housing policies that result in larger minority student proportions in the residence halls than in the general student body, especially during the freshman year.

These findings on environmental variables from the Organizational Influences study are remarkably consistent with findings from the theoretical and factor analytic research.

The Framework for Evaluating Institutional Commitment

Among its many priorities, the American Council on Education (ACE) seeks to direct attention to policies and programs that affect minorities in postsecondary education. In 1975, the Council staff convened a group of experts to advise on the issues and the panel recommended that ACE develop an instrument to be used by institutions for assessing responsiveness to minority concerns. Working with a group of professional experts drawn from a variety of different fields and from different racial and ethnic groups, Council staff developed the instrument as a framework for evaluating institutional commitment.

The framework is intended to be used in a self-assessment or self-study mode by institutions to measure the extent to which their campuses are commited to equal eductional opportunity. It consists of a series of specific questions in the areas of admissions and recruitment; financial aid; counseling and support services; curriculum; graduate and professional programs; faculty and staff; administrative policies; and the environment. Those who drafted the questions and ACE were particularly careful to caution that institutions must define their own performance standards and that only institutions themselves could decide what constituted "effective" "adequate" and "proper" practices and programs.

The Framework questions are exellent ones. Colleges and universities concerned about the recruitment and degree attainment of minority students and about improving campus environments would be well served by paying attention to the results of a self-assessment that seriously attempts to answer these questions. Given the severity of the problems that currently face predominantly white colleges and universities in the area of minority recruitment, degree attainment and campus climate, it is timely and important for institutions to rediscover and use the ACE framework. There are several areas, however, where additions to the framework or shifts in emphasis seem warranted from the results of research over the past decade and particularly from the results of the Organizational Influences study. As a first step in this direction, the following sections propose general adjustments to five of the areas within the Framewok--admissions and recruitment; financial aid; counseling, support services, and placement; curriculum; and environment. The questions in each area are summarized in the sections below, but they are reproduced in full in the Appendix.

I. Admissions and Recruitment.

The questions on undergraduate admissions and recruitment ask institutions to assess their recruitment strategies and techniques, their staffing patterns and staff qualifications; the adequacy of resources dedicated to student recruitment, and the flexibility of admissions criteria. They are good questions and provide an excellent starting point for institutions.

Work over the past decade, however, suggests that in addition to these questions institutions should also assess campus efforts in pre-college programming and should focus much more directly on relationships with the schools. One question on relations with school counselors is included in the Framework, but it seems important as well to assess the scope and quality of early identification programs for minority students and to examine curricular work with the schools. It may be appropriate to create a new section in the Framework for this purpose.

In addition, it now seems appropriate to encourage institutuions through the Framework to examine closely the relationships between the use of special admissions criteria for minority or disadvantaged students, the availability and use of academic support services, and overall minority retention patterns. Is there evidence that minority students admitted under special criteria are being provided adequate academic support services and persisting to baccalaureate degrees? If not, what adjustments to programs and services are needed?

It is also appropriate in 1987 to suggest that the Framework ask for institution-specific studies on the impact of required SAT or other pre-admissions tests on minority student enrollment, academic performance and persistance. Research has provided enough general evidence to doubt the validity of SAT's as predictors of academic success in college to suggest that each institution should examine the relationships and impacts at the campus level in order to establish appropriate admissions policy.

2. Finacial Aid.

Institutional financial aid has become much more critical to minority student access to higher education over the decade since the preparation of the Framework because of reductions in federal aid programs and a basic shift in federal philosophy. We have shifted from a 1960's and early 70's concept of federal aid as a means of helping financially disadvantaged persons to achieve equal educational opportunities to a post-1975 notion of federal aid as "self help" for the majority of students through packages relying heavily on loans. Many minority students would not be able to enroll in colleges and universities without institutionally-based financial assistance. The Framework, written in a different federal policy environment, asks colleges and universities to assess institutional priorities in providing institutional resources for needy students and poses a number of more technical questions about the quality of the information given to students, the appropriateness of the packaging of aid arrangements, the care with which work study assignments are developed to complement eduational programs, the procedures for increasing aid during the school year, the ability to respond to special financial emergencies, and the quality of assistance with personal budgeting for students.

The questions in the Framework are important but, in the current context, many additional questions should be added to this area. Institutions should be asked to assess the impact on minority recruitment and enrollment of current institutional financial aid distributions. It is important for institutions to assure themselves that they have not quietly begun to reflect, through inattention to the actual consequences of aid policies, the

philosophical shift and lessened commitment to minorities so evident elsewhere in society. In addition, it is important for institutions to ask if programs of grants for high ability students and policies of distributing smaller amounts of institutional aid across ever larger numbers of students have had adverse effects on the enrollment of minority students. Do colleges attract minority students with generous first year awards and then watch them dropout for lack of sufficient funds to continue? How do colleges react to the growing loan burden on students and do they recognize the long term negative differential impact of loans on minority students? Are financial aid offices sufficiently pro-active? Do they help prospective applicants and their families engage in adequate financial planning for college early enough to make a difference? Do senior institutional officers concern themselves with financial aid and make it their business to examine the implications for minority enrollment and persistence. These are all important questions that the Framework could help bring to the attention of college and university leaders.

3. Counseling, Support Servies, and Placement
4. Curriculum.

The section on Counseling, Support Services and Placement poses a number of important questions about the quality, quantity and sensitivity of counseling and advising, special academic support services, remedial programming and career counseling and placement. A separate section on curriculum asks about inclusion of minority issues and work by minority scholars in the classrooms, and about the integration of ethnic and cultural studies into the curriculum. It also asks about teaching methods, about the

relation of the "regular" curriculum to the support service courses, and about the availability of work by minority scholars in libraries and bookstores. Each question in both sections seems important and worthy of consideration.

The underlying assumptions and approach for these sections might profit from re-examination, however. The separation of academic support services from the curriculum section and its inclusion with counseling and placement implies an acceptance of academic support services for minority students as special and separated activity for students who somehow don't measure up. Lessons from the Organizational Influences study suggest that it is time to treat academic preparation problems as academic problems rather than counseling problems. The Framework could help institutions ensure that they have in place a constructive and comprehensive approach to help with the academic preparation problems. A new section on academic support services or an adapted curricular section with many of the questions now contained in the counseling and placement section would be helpful. Additional questions might focus specifically on diagnostic and/or assessment testing and the implications for minority student retention and degree attainment. The Framework could also suggest that each institution examine its organizational arrangements for minority student services to ensure that they are effective from the perspective of the students.

5. Environment

The section in the Framework on Environment poses a series of questions about the extent to which organziations and clubs, social customs and regulations, extra-curricular activities, social and cultural programs and

student disciplinary procedures are sensitive to minority student concerns and seek to include minority students in campus programs and activities. Several questions speak directly to issues of racial prejudice and racial/ethnic discrimination and ask institutions to examine the extent to which institutional programs and activity help reduce prejudicial attitudes and behavior. Given the strong possibility that racial climates on many campuses are as strained as those on campuses in which major racial incidents have been reported over the past two years, it seems particulary important for questions about campus environments to be included in the Framework and particularly important for institutions to engage in serious self examination of their campus climates. Serious attention to all ten questions in this section of the Framework could provide an excellent starting point.

Researchers in the Organizational Influences study gathered information about campus climates in the ten institutions but did not find particularly tense environments. This would have been expected by the fact that institutions were selected for the study on the basis of demonstrated commitment to minority student access and achievement and impressive records of minority degree production. The concept of "multicultural" as elaborated in the study, however, suggests an additional set of questions that might be fruitfully posed in the Framework for exploration by institutions. In the Organizational Influences study, multicultural institutions were those with a minority student enrollment that reached thirty percent of the total population. In such institutions, the minority student presence was seen as a positive feature of campus life. Student organizations, cultural activities, community relations and a variety of other programs and services were

perceived as much more interesting and dynamic because of the involvement of students from various minority groups. The Framework could help by asking institutions to explore the areas in which minority student and faculty involvement has made a positive difference to the campus community and to devise new and creative ways to build on these contributions. Building on existing strengths might help institutions achieve a critical mass of students in each minority group and an overall representation of significant proportions.

In summary, this paper has tried to suggest that is is particularly important at this time for colleges and universities to pay attention to the relationships between internal campus environments and minority degree achievement. Further, it has used the findings to date from a major case study to suggest possible adaptations to a Framework for Evaluating Institutional Commitment to Minorities. This exploratory paper has attempted to show that serious attention to self assessment, guided by a set of questions reflecting current knowledge about important environmental variables, can prove helpful to colleges and universities.

References

Allen, W. R. (1987) Black colleges vs. white colleges: The fork in the road for Black students. Change, 19 (3), 28-34.

American Council on Education. (1986). Minorities in higher education. Washington, D.C.: Office of Minority Concerns, American Council on Education.

_____ (1976). Framework for evaluating institutional commitment to minorities. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.

Lavin, D.: Murtha, J.; Kaufman, B.; & Hyllegard, D. (1986). Long term educational attainment in an open-access university system: Effects of ethnicity, economic status and college type. Paper presented at the annual meeting, American Educational Research Association.

Mingle, J.R. (1987). Focus on minorities: Trends in higher education participation and success. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Nettles, M.E. (1984) Racial similarities and differences in the predictors of student college achievement. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED247 843)

Nettles, M.E., Thoeny, A., & Gosman, E. (1985). A comparative analysis of the predictors of Black and White students' academic achievement in college: A case for expanding admissions policies to include quality of the college experience. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 259 625)

Olivas, M. A. (ed.) (1986). Latino college students. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Peterson, M.; Blackburn, R.; Gamson, Z.; Arce, C.; Davenport, R.; & Mingle, J. (1978) Black students on white campuses. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Richardson, J.; Simmons, H.; & de los Santos, A. (1987) Graduating minority students. Change, 19 (3), 20-27.

Tinto, V. (1987). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Appendix X

Framework for Evaluating Institutional Commitment to Minorities

A GUIDE TO INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
ONE DUPONT CIRCLE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO MINORITIES

I. Undergraduate Admissions and Recruitment

Suggested Reviewers: Admissions Staff

A. Does the institution have a means of identifying minority persons interested in training offered by the institution? Is the method effective?

B. What is the nature of the relationships between institutional student recruitment personnel and counselors at secondary schools having large minority student enrollments?

C. Are there institutional means for facilitating the recruitment of minorities for disciplines in which they are under represented? Do these strategies include making special funds for recruitment, financial aid, and retention techniques available for these efforts? To what extent have the methods changed the distribution of minority students among the various disciplines?

D. Are admissions decisions on minority applicants made by persons who have sufficient experience and contact with minority student candidates to understand the special characteristics of their backgrounds, needs, and interests?

E. Are all applicants for admission judged by flexible criteria? How flexible are the criteria? (Can admissions staff give less weight to test scores for students whose secondary school records and other data show promise?)

F. Are information and materials made available to applicants which present an accurate picture of program requirements and campus life? What is the impact of the materials on student decisions to attend? Are minority students, faculty, and administrators consulted in an attempt to assess whether the overall image transmitted reflects the experience of minority students at the institution?

G. How does the proportion of minorities in the student body relate to the proportion of minorities in the geographical region(s) from which the institution mainly draws its students?

H. How does the proportion of minority students admitted under standard admissions criteria compare with the proportion of academically high risk minority students admitted? How closely are these proportions related to the institution's programs, purposes, and goals in student academic support?

II. Financial Aid

Suggested Reviewers: Financial Aid Staff

A. What priority is given in the use of institutional (non federal) student financial aid funds to supplementing student assistance from federal sources and providing full support for needy students?

B. What emphasis is given to ensuring that campus work assignments directly complement the student's educational program and career interests? Is this aspect of the financial aid package routinely evaluated for its effects on minority students? What changes in work assignment procedures have resulted from such evaluations?

C. Is it institutional policy to remind students that they must, and when they must, apply for financial aid? Is the reminder effective in obtaining on time applications from minority students? Is it necessary to keep funds in reserve for late applicants?

D. Are special packages (combinations of programs) of student financial aid offered to educationally disadvantaged and minority students? What means are used to determine the adequacy of the aid package in relation to the student's real needs?

E. Has a routine institutional procedure been devised to allow increases in an individual's financial aid package, should the need arise during the school session? Are discretionary funds available for emergency loans?

F. Are special technical assistance and counseling in budgeting matters given, as a matter of policy, to financially disadvantaged and minority students? How effective is this guidance in increasing the size and number of individual financial aid awards?

III. Counseling, Support Services, Placement

Suggested Reviewers: Counseling, Equal Opportunity Program, Learning Skills, and Placement Staffs

A. Is there an institutional effort to cooperate with secondary school administrators and counselors in increasing the scope and effectiveness of professional guidance? In this context, how are the particular guidance needs of minority students from various cultural backgrounds addressed? Are personnel at schools having substantial numbers of minority students involved in the process?

B. How much emphasis is placed on intensive early freshman orientation and preregistration counseling for minorities? Are these programs important factors in retention of minority students? Is peer counseling used in the programs, and how useful is it?

C. How important a role does career counseling (including guidance on graduate education) play in the design of institutional student support mechanisms? Do minority students use these support mechanisms advantageously?

D. Is there an institutionwide attempt to ensure that the academic advisors assigned to minorities are sensitive to the emotional and academic needs and the cultural backgrounds of the minority student, especially during the first year of involvement with the institution? How is the effectiveness of the assignments monitored?

E. Are the study skills remediation and tutorial services provided by the institution commensurate with demand and need? Are *all* educationally disadvantaged students encouraged to attend these special programs? How, and how early, are students who need these services identified?

F. Do stigmas attach to students who participate in remediation programs? Is there an institutional effort to address this problem?

G. Are there support service courses (remedial, learning skills courses) for which academic credit should be awarded?

H. Are support programs that provide services to minority students staffed by regular faculty or by persons outside the regular tenure track? How is the competency of the staff judged, and how are high performance levels rewarded?

I. Do the directors of support service programs participate in administrative decisions that affect the students served by the programs? How influential is the advice of the directors? How are student insights obtained to inform these decisions?

J. What methods are used at the institution to measure students' academic progress and assess the effectiveness of support service courses? Does the institution administer academic competency programs or tests? How much is known about the academic progress of minority students at the institution? Are special academic support services provided for students for whom English is a second language?

III. Counseling, Support Services, Placement (continued)

K. Are remedial programs provided for undergraduates who fail to qualify by testing, or whose grade point averages are insufficient for admission to graduate or professional school? What influences do the programs have on later attendance at graduate and professional schools by minority undergraduates?

L. What aid is given to students in finding summer employment? What stress is placed on fitting summer employment experiences to the student's academic interest? Do minority students use the summer placement programs fully?

M. How is the institution's placement office monitored to ensure that minority students are treated with fairness, both in temporary student employment and in contacts with recruiters from business, government and industry? How are minority students encouraged to use the placement system? Are placement records of minority students maintained?

N. Can and should career counseling, academic advising, and placement functions be better coordinated throughout the institution? How has this matter been addressed by the personnel directly involved and by the responsible administrators?

IV. Curriculum

Suggested Reviewers: Department Heads, Academic Affairs Staff

A. How is the regular curriculum assessed for adequacy in study and analysis of works by minority authors and works focusing on minority concerns and experience? Are adequate means available for introducing more works of these kinds into the curriculum?

B. Do the institution's libraries and bookstores regularly carry publications by minority authors and publications devoted to minority issues? How is the completeness of inventories in this area verified?

C. How are changes in curriculum and teaching methods assessed to determine their influences on the education of minority students? Are the educational needs and interests of minority students used as the bases for revisions in curriculum and teaching methods? By what means are these needs and interests explored?

D. Is there an institutional mechanism for assessing the amount of undergraduate and graduate research being conducted on minority concerns? How can research of this type be encouraged?

E. How closely related are the subject matter and teaching methods of the regular curriculum to the subject matter and teaching methods of support service courses?

F. How successful are teaching techniques in support service courses introduced into the regular curriculum? How are faculty members encouraged to develop skill in using effective techniques?

G. How accepted, stable, and integral are ethnic and cultural studies at the institution? Are ethnic studies offerings properly publicized?

V. Environment

Suggested Reviewers: Student Government, Student Affairs Staff, Student Organization Representatives, Community Service Staff

A. Are studies conducted on the causes of undergraduate and graduate attrition of minority students? Are the factors that influence minority student attrition fundamentally the same as or different from those affecting the majority?

B. How much emphasis has been placed on developing institutionwide procedures to improve minority student persistence? What are the roles of administrative staff and department heads in this process?

C. Are minority students eligible for all scholastic honors awarded at the institution? How does the proportion of scholastic honors awarded to minorities compare with the proportion of minorities in the student body?

D. Are institutional programs conducted with department heads and faculty to reduce racially prejudiced attitudes and to increase interest in minority students and faculty? What are standard institutional responses when instances of prejudice have been detected?

E. Are there adequate and responsive complaint/grievance procedures available to all students? Do minority students use the procedures fully? Are channels available for discussing "minor" problems (negative faculty attitudes, problematic dormitory relationships, etc.) before they become factors in student decisions to withdraw? Do "major" problems (especially forms of unfair treatment) receive a full and prompt hearing and resolution?

F. How are campus organizations monitored to determine whether they are congenial to minority students and whether minorities are encouraged to participate?

G. Is there a general institutional process by which the social customs and accepted rules of conduct on campus are reviewed for their receptiveness and congeniality to minorities?

H. How much participation is there by minority students in extracurricular activities such as music and drama clubs, social clubs, debating and service groups, newspaper and yearbook staffs, and intramural sports? What efforts are being made to increase minority participation?

I. What institutional procedures ensure that student entertainment and activity programs include appropriate amounts of literature, art, music, and lectures that feature minority artists and intellectuals, and which reflect the interests of minority students?

J. Is it institutional policy to demonstrate concern for the welfare of minority communities in the region through operation of various community service programs? How are minority students and faculty involved in these programs?