1. Proposal Cover Page

2006 AIR/NPEC RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

The Relationship between College Costs, Local Labor Market Conditions and Persistence among Community College Students

Dataset of Interest:
National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988-2000

Grant Amount Requested: $30,000

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2. Project Summary

A number of factors are taken into consideration when students are deciding to enroll in college and remain enrolled until completion of a degree program. The most notable are the direct and indirect costs and benefits of postsecondary education. Community college students tend to be more sensitive to changing college costs and labor market conditions than four-year college students, since the former are more likely to be from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and work full-time while enrolled. Previous research has found that the characteristics of the local economy play an important role in the enrollment decisions of community college students. However, the relationship between community college costs and re-enrollment decisions has not been formally tested.

The proposed study seeks to close the gap in the literature by focusing on the year-to-year enrollment decisions faced by a cohort of traditional-aged students who attended community colleges in the early 1990s from National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. The project has two objectives:

(1) Develop and test a new model of community college persistence that takes into account the continuous cost-benefit analysis that postsecondary students conduct while they are enrolled in college; and

(2) Test the robustness of this new model by estimating the impact of direct and indirect college costs within quartiles of the socioeconomic distribution.

Ultimately, two innovations to the existing literature on college persistence are introduced in this study. First, a new dynamic model of postsecondary persistence is developed to estimate the influence of time-dependent direct and indirect costs on student decision-making. This approach will allow estimating the probability of persisting in postsecondary education.
based on students’ sensitivity to annual changes in in-state tuition and shifts in local labor market conditions after controlling for a number of demographic and family background variables. This study will test whether the costs in tuition and external employment opportunities have a negative and stronger effect on the persistence of community college students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The second contribution to the existing literature of this study is the application of a unique demarcation of local labor markets called commuting zones.
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4. Project Description

a. Statement of Problem

A number of factors are taken into consideration when students are deciding to enroll in college and remain enrolled until completion of a degree program. Traditional economic theory claims that the most notable are the direct and indirect costs and benefits of postsecondary education (Becker, 1967; Mincer, 1974). The direct costs are mainly composed of the tuition and living expenses that students incur during their studies, while the indirect costs mostly refer to the opportunity costs of not receiving the salary for the hours devoted to studying. The benefits are, in general, the increase in future earning related to additional years of education. The assumption is that students view costs (direct and indirect) and benefits as jointly determined, such that changes in costs are weighed simultaneously against changes in benefits. For example, a tight labor market may see wages increase, but the opportunity costs to the individuals also rise and, in doing so, could affect the likelihood of certain students to either temporarily stop out or drop out completely from postsecondary education.

Community college students tend to be more sensitive to changing college costs and labor market conditions than four-year college students, since the former are more likely to be seeking a credential in an occupational field and combine school and work (Bailey et al., 2004). Previous research has found that the characteristics of the local economy play an important role in the enrollment decisions of community college students (Betts and McFarland, 1995; Grubb, 2002), but there has been a paucity of studies that have formally linked direct and indirect college costs to the persistence of community college students.

Additionally, individuals consider the costs and benefits not only when deciding whether to enroll in college but when (Light, 1996). Implicit in this statement is a warning about the time-
dimension problem as students can change their enrollment behavior over the schooling period. However, most researchers rely on estimation strategies that largely fail to account for these changes over the course of the enrollment period. Thus, to properly model students’ transitions through postsecondary education, time-varying covariates and time-dependence correlation must be taken into account.

In this project, we propose to develop a new model to study college persistence. This new model is dynamic, and allows us to control for covariates that change as the students experience postsecondary enrollment. Our model also includes economically rational measures of the direct and indirect costs of pursuing additional education, and allows us to estimate the interrelationship between them. This new model will be tested on a sample of first-time community college students. Since these students are most likely to be at the margin between college and work, we expect them to be most affected by changing college costs and labor market conditions. Finally, we will test the robustness of this dynamic persistence model by estimating the impact of direct and indirect college costs within quartiles of the socioeconomic distribution. Our hypothesis is that the effects of indirect and direct college costs should be larger for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The primary objectives of this study are to:

1. Develop a new model of college persistence. This dynamic model will allow us to estimate the effect of changes in local labor market characteristics and in-state tuition on the drop-out and re-enrollment decisions of community college students; and
2. Test whether direct and indirect college costs have a differential impact on community college students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.
In order to define a local labor market, we use an innovative unit of geography, called *commuting zones*, to demarcate a local labor market.

**b. Literature Review**

Most of the models discussed in the student persistence literature have explored the contribution of high school academic preparation, opportunities for academic and social integration into the postsecondary institution, ample guidance and counseling efforts, and alignment of educational and occupational expectations on the probability of staying in college and, ultimately, attaining a degree (Adelman, 1999; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). These models have been expanded to include the impact of financial aid on college persistence (Cabrera, Nora, and Castaneda, 1992; DesJardins et al., 2002 and St. John et al., 1995). However, the models used in these studies were designed with the traditional four-year college student in mind and perform rather poorly when used to explain the enrollment behavior of community college students (Bailey and Alfonso, 2005). Also, none of the studies have taken into account how year-to-year changes in direct and indirect college costs affect student persistence.

While the counter-cyclical relationship between labor market conditions and postsecondary enrollment is well-established (Betts and McFarland, 1995; Grubb, 2002; Rouse, 1994), the connection between wages, unemployment and employment growth on student persistence has been the subject of less empirical research. Gustman and Steinmeier (1981) use the 1976 Survey of Income and Education dataset to argue that wages have a larger impact on postsecondary re-enrollment decisions than on initial college enrollment. Using National Longitudinal Study of the Youth, Light (1996) finds that higher wages, working more hours a
week, and increased school costs significantly reduce the probability of college re-enrollment. Her results suggest that enrollment and persistence should be affected by unemployment rates and college costs. More recently, Arkes (2005) uses the 1980 Census microsample and finds that higher unemployment rates lead to increased educational attainment. His finding suggests that unemployment affects educational attainment through a substitution effect—a higher unemployment rate lowers the opportunity cost of schooling—rather than through an income effect—which posits that a higher unemployment rate leads individuals to drop out to help supplement family income. Lastly, using the Beginning Postsecondary Longitudinal Survey of 1989, Stratton et al. (2005) find that a higher unemployment rate increases the probability of remaining continuously enrolled in college.

A limitation of these studies is that their measurements of labor market conditions are either at the national or state level. Labor market conditions vary considerably within and across states and, thus, national or state unemployment rates cannot fully capture the true opportunity costs of attending college. An additional limitation is that they do not distinguish between enrollment at two-year and four-year colleges, although college choice studies suggest that students who enroll in community colleges are more sensitive to college costs than those who choose a four-year college (Alfonso, 2005; Manski and Wise, 1983; Ordovensky, 1995; Rouse, 1994).

Thus, this study will develop a new model of college persistence by focusing on the continuous cost-benefit analysis that students face every year that they are enrolled in college, which could better explain re-enrollment and transitional behavior of community college students. This study will also contribute to the economics literature by applying a new measure of local labor market conditions that takes into account community college students’ areas of
residency, instead of the aggregate state level labor market characteristics, and by accounting simultaneously for the impact of local labor markets and tuition costs.

c. Proposal of Work
c.1. Empirical Methodology

Accounting for variation in the local economy is a crucial factor that can explain student persistence in higher education, but it is rarely examined. Measures of labor market vitality are especially relevant when examining educational outcomes of community college students because such institutions are uniquely tied to local business and industry (Grubb, 2002). With constantly changing economic conditions, it is reasonable to assume that students reevaluate their costs and benefits after each year (Light, 1996 and Stratton et al., 2005). Thus, time-dependent models of postsecondary enrollment with information on local labor market conditions that vary over time are necessary (Kienzl and Diehl, 2005).

To estimate our persistence model, we will rely on a technique, generalized estimating equations (GEE), that allows the correlation between observations—correlation that arises from the nature of the longitudinal process and the existence of repeated observations of a given student—to be modeled and used to characterize the marginal expectation of a set of outcomes as a function of a set of explanatory variables.

In this study, the outcome will be measured as persistence towards a degree for a sample of student who began at a community college. A general model for these students can be expressed in a multilevel cost-benefit (or utility maximization) process as follows:

\[ y_{it}^* = \beta_0 + X_i \beta_1 + X_t \beta_2 + v_{it} \quad (i = 1, \ldots, N; t = 1, \ldots, j, \ldots, T) \] (1)

\[ y_{it} = 1 \text{ if } y_{it}^* > 0 \text{ and } = 0 \text{ otherwise} \]
where \( y^* \) is the unobservable individual propensity to persist in postsecondary education, \( y \) is the observed binary outcome, \( i \) denote each student and \( t \) is the time period, which in this study will be an academic year. The complete set of covariates should include \( X_i \), a vector of individual characteristics, fixed or assumed fixed over time, like gender, race, ability or parental background; and \( X_{it} \), a vector of local labor market characteristics and college costs that vary over time.

The statistical method we will use to model outcomes of community college students is an extension of the single risk discrete-time hazard model (Allison, 1984; Singer and Willett, 2003). Rather than one observation per student, we will have a person-period dataset with \( n \) observations per student—one for each academic year enrolled (see Singer and Willett, 2003, chapter 2, or Scott and Kennedy, in press). Time-invariant variables remain constant for each person in each period, and time-varying variables can take on different values in different time periods. The most basic analyses only require a specified event in which we are interested (the \textit{whether} question) and a specification for time (the \textit{when} question). Our event is persistence and in our framework we will say that students are “at risk” of persisting after each academic year enrolled.

c.2. Data

This study will rely on data from National Education Longitudinal Survey of 1988 (NELS:88). NELS:88 is a nationally representative dataset that samples 8th graders in 1988 and follows them for 12 years. One of the advantages of NELS:88 is that students are followed for 8 years after their high school graduation. This is a sufficient length of time for students to attain a postsecondary credential, but it also gives us enough time to observe some of the students who leave but later on return to college.
Another advantage of NELS:88 is the inclusion of college transcripts, which allow for precise documentation of when students attend college and where they attend (Adelman et al., 2003) and for reducing measurement errors in college transitions inherent in self-reports. A final advantage of NELS:88 is that it contains information on students' location in high school, as well as throughout their time in college. Geographic information on all of the postsecondary institutions attended is used to place students within a given commuting zone, which will be described in more detail below.

We will complement the individual information from NELS:88 with data for each year from 1991 to 2000 provided by the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Current Employment Survey (CES). We will use IPEDS to compute in-state tuition, which measures the direct costs of college. We will use CES to compute the local economic information that is used to measure the opportunity costs of college.

Our sample will consist of students who start postsecondary education at a community college. Of the more than 12,100 students in NELS that were interviewed in all waves of the survey, 3,278 started their postsecondary education at a community college as evidenced by their transcript records. We will further restrict our sample to high school graduates (or with a high school equivalency diploma) who delayed their college entrance by no more than 3 years after high school graduation. This restriction allows us to observe students for 5 to 8 years, and we will include only those students for which there is complete information in each of the variables described below. Our final sample is estimated of approximately 2,000 community college students.
Since we will use a dynamic persistence model, our file of 2,000 community college students will be converted into a person-period file. A period in this study is defined as an academic year, starting on July 1\textsuperscript{st} of a year and ending on June 30\textsuperscript{th} of the following year. This means that we will have up to eight periods per student. Our person-period file, after the restrictions explained above, will include approximately 7,000 observations.

c.3. Variables

Our dependent variable will be a dichotomous variable that equals 0 if the student drops out prior to attaining a credential and 1 if the student is continuously enrolled or still enrolled by the end of the data collection period. We include two time-dependent explanatory variables. They are the annual in-state tuition of public two-year colleges in the state where the student first attended college (direct costs) and the average wage in the local labor market (indirect costs). Given that measures of the economic conditions of the area in which an institution is located are central to this analysis, a unit of geography is needed that is large enough to include employment opportunities in a reasonable commuting distance. In this study we will use \textit{commuting zones} as our geographic unit of analysis. Commuting zones are geographic units somewhere between counties and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in size (Tolbert and Sizer, 1996), and there are 741 of these geographic units in the United States. In addition to being one of the few empirically based definitions of “local,” commuting zones cover every county in the country. Moreover, they are based on a contiguous cluster of counties, so county-level employment information can be aggregated. The specific measure of local economic vitality in this study will be the average wage in the commuting zone.

Given that the sample is based on students who have presumably already decided that the benefits of acquiring additional education outweigh the costs, it is necessary to capture the
relative change in costs and benefits. To accomplish this, we will calculate the ratio between the in-state tuition of public two-year colleges and the average wages in the commuting zone. The rationale behind the inclusion of this variable is that, at the margin, if the increase in tuition outpaces increases in the average wage in the commuting zone, students are likely to leave postsecondary education—either permanently or return when conditions improve.

This study will also use a common set of student background characteristics: race/ethnicity, sex, test scores from the 12th grade, type of high school diploma, the student’s educational expectations, and the socioeconomic status of the student as measured in 1992. We will also use the socioeconomic quartiles to separate the sample of community college students into four sub-samples to estimate the impact of direct and indirect college costs within each socioeconomic group.

d. Dissemination Plan

The findings from this study will be disseminated through a variety of presentation and publication outlets. We will present project findings at the AIR Annual Forum and at the AIR/NPEC Conference on Student Success. We anticipate submitting presentation proposals based on this research project to the annual meetings of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and the American Educational Research Association.

The PI and co-PIs of this project are affiliated with research centers that distribute information to all ASHE members and to a wide audience of community college professionals and researchers. Updated news of the findings from this research project will be published in the Center for Higher Education Policy (CHEPA)’s, the Center for Urban Education (CUE)’s and the Community College Research Center (CCRC)’s newsletters and mailed to their list
recipients. CHEPA, CUE and CCRC maintain updated websites, and we will use these websites to publish working papers based on this project.

All co-PIs have published in education and economic journals, such as the *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Economics of Education Review*, and *Research in Higher Education*. Manuscripts based on this proposed study will be submitted for publication to at least one of these scholarly journals.

e. Policy Relevance

There is a growing interest among policymakers on the declining affordability of college, as evidenced by the panel recently convened by the U.S. Department of Education to study this issue, among others (Field, 2005). College affordability can easily be equated to tuition and opportunity costs, which constitute the bulk of college costs and significantly impact college enrollment, persistence, and degree completion.

This study will inform federal, state and local policymakers how sensitive are community college students to changing conditions in the local labor market, to increases in tuition, and to changes in the perceived cost and benefits of postsecondary education. This information will allow education policymakers to coordinate policies with labor and economic development policymakers that better reflect the inter-relationship between the labor market, the local economy, and the training of future workers.

Results from this research project will also be useful to community college administrators and institutional researchers. The research that can be conducted by institutional researchers on the factors contributing to student persistence is limited by the type of information these researchers can collect, which is basically institutional policies and data on students’
characteristics. Thus, this research project can expand the knowledge available to community college administrators on those factors external to the institution that have significant impacts on student persistence.

**f. Innovative Aspects of the Project**

The proposed project contains three main innovations. First, we develop a new model of postsecondary persistence to estimate the influence of time-dependent direct and indirect costs on student decision-making. This dynamic model will allow us to estimate the effect of changes in local labor market characteristics and in-state tuition on the drop-out and re-enrollment decisions of community college students, who are those most likely to be at the margin between college and work and most affected by direct and indirect college costs. Second, we will apply a unique local labor market demarcation scheme, called *commuting zone*, which takes into account community college students’ areas of residency instead of the aggregate state level labor market characteristics. A final innovation of this project is that we will be accounting *simultaneously* for the impact of local labor markets and tuition costs, assuming that at the margin, if the increase in tuition outpaces increases in the average wage in the commuting zone, community college students are likely to leave postsecondary education—either permanently or return when conditions improve.

**g. Audience**

The new model we propose to develop and estimate will be of interest to researchers in the fields of higher education, economics, and sociology. The findings from this study should be of interest to federal, state, and local policymakers in the areas of postsecondary education, labor,
and economic development. Findings should also be of interest to community college administrators and institutional researchers trying to understand the factors external to their institutions that affect student re-enrollment behaviors.

h. Appendix

h.1. Conceptual Framework

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Persistence} & \quad \text{Benefits – Costs > 0} \\
\text{In-state tuition} & \quad \text{Direct} \\
\text{Indirect} & \\
\% \Delta \text{ in in-state tuition} & > \% \Delta \text{ in avg. wage in CZ}
\end{align*}
\]

h.2. Map of Commuting Zones
5. References Cited


6. Biographical Sketches

a. Tatiana Melguizo

Tatiana Melguizo (PI) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California in the Rossier School of Education. She received a Ph.D. in Economics of Education from Stanford University and an M.A. in Social Policy from the London School of Economics. Her research interests have focused on educational outcomes of minorities, the impact of community colleges on minority college completion and future earnings and gender differences in faculty productivity and earnings. Previously, she worked for the SPHERE Institute on research and evaluation of projects for the State of California. She teaches higher education courses in quantitative analysis, multiple regression, the economics of higher education and accountability. She has conducted an extensive study on the impact of types of postsecondary institution attended on students’ educational outcomes, using HS&B and NELS:88.

PUBLICATIONS

WORKING PAPERS
Melguizo, T. (2005) “Quality matters: assessing the impact of selective institutions on minority college completion rates over the last two decades.” Submitted to Economics of Education Review.


Melguizo, T. (2005) “Why were Hispanic community college transfer students receiving less bachelor’s degrees in the 1990s than in the 1980s?”

Melguizo, T. and Dowd, A. (2005) “Are community college transfer students better off transferring to a selective four-year institution?”


Melguizo, T. (2005) “Will Hispanics graduate from college if they take more math in high school?”

REPORTS


HONORS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Marquis Who’s Who in Education 2006

Higher Education Finance Roundtable May, 2004
Nominated and selected to participate in the 2004 Houston Roundtable on Higher Education Finance. This roundtable is sponsored by the University of Houston Law Center's for Higher Education Law and Governance (IHELG).

RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation $250,000, June 2006
Evaluation of the Kauffman Scholars Inc. (KSI) program. KSI is a comprehensive, multi-year program designed to help promising, yet challenged, low-income urban students in Kansas City prepare for and complete a college education. Principal Investigator: William Tierney. In collaboration with Adrianna Kezar and Tatiana Melguizo.

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, $516,721, March 2005
Lumina Foundation for Education and Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Economic, Informational, and Cultural Barriers to Community College Transfer Enrollment at Selective Institutions. Principal Investigators: Alicia Dowd and Glenn Gabbard. In collaboration
with Estela Bensimon Director of the Center for Urban Education, Tatiana Melguizo and the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute.

**University of Southern California**  
$30,000, March 2005  
Urban Lecture Series Grant “Metropo[latinization]: The Emerging City.” Lecture given to Estela Bensimon. In collaboration with Tatiana Melguizo, Dowell Myers and Harry Pachon of the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development and Leland Saito of USC College, Sociology.

**American Education Research Association (AERA)**  
Dissertation grant (two-year).  
$20,000, 2001

**Spencer Foundation Research and Training Grant**  
One quarter half tuition  
$4,000, 2001

**Leo Rowe Fund, Organization of American States**  
Competitive interest free loan  
$5,000, 1999

**Colombian Foundation for Postsecondary Education (COLFUTURO)**  
Competitive Loan/Grant  
$60,000 1998

**Colombian National Science Foundation (COLCIENCIAS)**  
Grant for project on education and development, (Colombian National Institute for the Sciences)  
$16,000, 1998

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MEMBERSHIPS**

**MEMBER**

Association for the Study of Higher Education  
American Education Research Association  
American Education Finance Association  
Council for the Study of Community Colleges  
Comparative and International Education Society  
Association for the Study of Higher Education  
General Conference proposal reviewer  
Mentor to the ASHE/Lumina dissertation fellows  
American Education Research Association  
Annual Conference Proposal Reviewer  
University of Los Andes, Economics Department  
Jury for the award for best undergraduate monograph  
Regional Conference on International Comparative Education  
Organizer the conference at Stanford University

23
International Comparative Education
Editor, (ICE) Newsletter 2000

OTHER SERVICE
Faculty Search Committee, for Associate Professor of higher education, member Spring 2005
Volunteer after school program, Garfield Middle School 2002
Financial Officer, Colombian Student Association at Stanford 2003

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

REFEREEED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


INVITED
Harvard University, Graduate School of Education Fall 2005
Latinos and Education Speaker Series
Why did the college completion rates of Hispanic transfer students decrease in the early 1990s?

Stanford University, Economics of Education Seminar Fall 2005
Why were Hispanic community college transfer students receiving fewer bachelor’s degrees in the 1990s than in the 1980s?

New York University, Steinhardt School of Education Spring 2005
Sociology and Economics of Education Seminar
Why were Hispanic community college transfer students receiving less bachelor’s degrees in the 1990s than in the 1980s?
b. Gregory S. Kienzl

Gregory S. Kienzl (co-PI) is a Research Analyst at the Education Statistics Services Institute of the American Institutes for Research (AIR), and is a Research Affiliate at the Community College Research Center (CCRC), Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Kienzl received his Ph.D. from the Economic and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. He received an M.A. in Public Policy and Management from the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University and a B.A. in Political Science from Moravian College.

During his time as a Research Assistant for the American Association of Community Colleges, Dr. Kienzl published the findings of three national studies on technology at community colleges; the labor market participation of sub-baccalaureate degree holders; and the impact of welfare on two-year institutions. More recently, he has co-authored articles on the influence of individual and institutional effects on the graduation rate of four-year colleges, as well as the determinants of the two- to four-year transfer.

His research interests include estimating the economic benefits of postsecondary education, mapping the various educational transitions taken by students in higher education, and examining the impact of labor markets on the educational achievement of college students.

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Peer-reviewed Publications


Book Chapter


Non-referred Publications


**Working Papers**

Kienzl, G. “New insights into the schooling and work behaviors of young adults.”

Calcagno, J. and Kienzl, G. “Discrete-time hazard models with unobservable heterogeneity: A semi-parametric approach for higher education outcomes.”

Farrell, P. and Kienzl, G. “The effect of non-need, merit-based scholarship programs on college attendance and retention of high school graduates.”

Melguizo, T. and Kienzl, G. “The hidden costs of transferring from a two-year college to a four-year college.”


Wang, L. and Kienzl, G. “Predicting technical and comprehensive college choice in Taiwan.”

**SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS**


Kienzl, G. (2005, September). The community college student in the new millennium. Keynote address delivered at the 2005 Faculty Convocation at Passaic County Community College, Paterson, NJ.


Kienzl, G. (2002, October). Is the most popular path the most profitable path? Presented at meeting of the National Council for Workforce Education, Portland, OR.


FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS AND AWARDS

Council for the Study of Community Colleges Dissertation of the Year, Broome Community College, 2005


Community Colleges and Minority Degree Attainment. Ford Foundation, 2003-2004
Influences of the National Academy Foundation Career Academy. National Academy Foundation 2002-2003
Credential Attainment Among Participants Enrolled in Associate Degree Programs. U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Vocational Education, 2002
A Study to Assess the Participation and Outcome Patterns in Postsecondary Occupational Education. U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Vocational Education, 2000-2003
Community Colleges and the Growth of For-Profit Postsecondary Educational Institutions. National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 1999-2000

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, ACTIVITIES, AND SERVICE

Member
American Educational Research Association, 2004-present
Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2004-present
Council for the Study of Community Colleges, 2004-present
National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 2004-present
National Technical Review Panel, Data on Vocational Education, 2004-present
National Technical Review Panel, Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Survey, 2004-present
National Technical Review Panel, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1998

Reviewer

Service
Vice President, Society for Economics and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2002-2003
Mentor, WISE Quality of Life Program, Bronx High School of Science, New York, 2004
c. Mariana Alfonso

Mariana Alfonso (co-PI) is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Public Policy at Brown University's Taubman Center for Public Policy and American Institutions. She is also a Research Affiliate at the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, and a Faculty Affiliate at the Center for Latin American Studies, Brown University. She received her Ph.D. in Economics and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University and a B.A. in Economics from Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, in Argentina.

Dr. Alfonso conducts research on postsecondary access and attainment. Her dissertation, titled “The Role of Educational Expectations and College Choice in Transfer and Baccalaureate Attainment of Community College Students,” was partly financed by a research fellowship from the College Board, and analyzed (1) what contributes to the formulation of baccalaureate degree expectations, (2) how students with B.A. expectations choose to enroll at a community college, and (3) the impact that this decision has on the probability of attaining the B.A. degree using NELS:88. Articles derived from this dissertation are being published in academic journals and have been presented at several academic conferences. Dr. Alfonso is currently working on a research project funded by Princeton University to study the impact of changes in affirmative-action admission policies on minority enrollments at public universities of different selectivity levels in the state of Texas.

Before coming to Brown, Dr. Alfonso worked as a Senior Research Assistant at CCRC. At CCRC she worked on several projects that used NCES datasets such as NELS:88, Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study of 1989 and 1995, and National Household Education Study of 1995, 1999 and 2001. One of these projects, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, analyzed the impact of occupational postsecondary education on degree attainment.
She also participated in projects funded by the Ford Foundation and by Lumina Foundation, analyzing issues of higher education access and attainment by low-income and minority students.

Dr. Alfonso has published single-authored and co-authored papers in a variety of journals such as *Economics of Education Review, Review of Higher Education, Research in Higher Education* and *Teachers College Record*. She has also published funded research in edited books and peer-reviewed institutional reports.

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles**


**Book Chapters**


**Reports**


**WORKING PAPERS AND WORK IN PROGRESS**

**Working Papers**


**Work in Progress**

Changes in affirmative action policies or demographic shift? Understanding variations in minority enrollment at public universities in Texas

Financial aid and its impact on community college students: Evidence from Florida with Juan Carlos Calcagno.

Transfer or transitory? The role of community colleges in students’ multi-institutional enrollment with Thomas R. Bailey and D. Timothy Leinbach
EXTERNAL RESEARCH SUPPORT

2005 – 2006  Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project, Princeton University ($16,000)
2005        The College Board ($1,500)
2003 – 2004 The College Board ($22,500)
2003        Harvard Civil Rights Project and Pew Hispanic Center ($2,000)

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

2005        American Educational Research Association; Council for the Study of Community Colleges
2004        Association for the Study of Higher Education; Latin American Studies Association; Comparative and International Education Society.
2003        Association for the Study of Higher Education; The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University; American Educational Research Association; Latin American Studies Association; NALFO Educational Fund; American Association of Community Colleges; Comparative and International Education Society
2002        WB/IADB/LACEA Poverty Net at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella; Comparative and International Education Society
2001        WB/IADB/LACEA Poverty Net at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella
2000        WB/IADB/LACEA Poverty Net at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella

HONORS/AWARDS

2003-2004  Community College Research Fellow, The College Board
2002        Donald G. Tewksbury Memorial Award, Teachers College, Columbia University
1999-2002  International Development Scholar, Teachers College, Columbia University
1999-2001  Fulbright Commission and Ministry of Education of Argentina Scholar, Buenos Aires, Argentina
1998        Fulbright Commission and Council of Science and Technology Grantee, Córdoba (declined)
1997        University Honor Prize in Economics, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba
            Honor Prize in Economics, School of Economic Sciences, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba

OTHER INFORMATION

Professional Memberships
Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2003-present
Comparative and International Education Society, 2002-present
Council for the Study of Community Colleges, 2004-present
Latin American Studies Association – Education and Educational Policies Section, 2003-present

Service as Referee
Economics of Education Review, 2005
Revista de Economía y Estadística, 2005
Annual Graduate Student Conference Education Across the Americas, 2003-2004

Participation in Multi-institutional Research Projects
Summer Data Workshop, Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project, Office of Population Studies, Princeton University, July 2005
Achieving the Dream – Community Colleges Count, financed by Lumina Foundation for Education, 2004-2005
Community Colleges and Minority Degree Attainment, financed by Ford Foundation, 2003-2005

Leadership Skills
President, Society for Economics and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2000-2004
Alumni Affiliate, Association of Latin American Scholars, Teachers College, Columbia University

Recognitions
Biography included in Who’s Who in America 2006 Edition
Biography included in Who’s Who in American Education 2006 Edition

Volunteering Work
Representative of Asociación Incluir
7. Budget

a. Itemized Budget

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

2006 AIR/NPEC RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

The Relationship Between College Costs, Local Labor Market Conditions and Persistence
Among Community College Students

June 1, 2006 – May 31, 2007

Salaries
Tatiana Melguizo 12.5% Effort, $51,000 2006-07 AY Base $6,375
Fringe Benefits 32% of Salary $2,040
Total Salaries and Fringe Benefits $8,415

Consultant
Gregory S. Kienzl $8,000
Mariana Alfonso $8,000
Total Consultants $16,000

Travel to Conferences
AIR Annual Forum $920
  2 nights
    Air travel: $500
    Lodging: $320
    Registration: $100
AERA $920
  Air travel: $500
  Lodging: $320
  Registration: $100
ASHE $920
  Air travel: $500
  Lodging: $320
  Registration: $100
Total Travel $2,760
Other Direct Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editing of publishable material</td>
<td>9 hours at $60 per hour</td>
<td>$540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATA Software</td>
<td>$715 initial copy, $210 per extra copy</td>
<td>$1,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>$96/ month x 12 mos</td>
<td>$1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Direct Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,825</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Grant Amount
Requested $30,000

b. Budget Justification

b.1. Project Time Frame

This is a 12-month project, proposed to begin on June 1, 2006 and end on May 31, 2007.

The estimated total project costs being sought from AIR/NPEC are $29,998. These include remuneration for the personnel described below; traveling to professional conferences; editing of reports and other publications; and software supplies.

b.2. Personnel

Tatiana Melguizo, principal investigator, will spend 12.5 percent of the academic year 2006-2007 on this project. She will be co-responsible for overall guidance of the project. She will analyze the results produced by Kienzl; write reports and journal articles; write proposals for participation at professional conferences; and prepare presentations of the research products.

Gregory Kienzl, senior research advisor, will act as consultant during the academic year 2006-2007 on the project. He will manage the data, design the regression models suited for the analyses proposed in this project, and conduct the statistical analyses. Kienzl will write the technical methodological portions of any reports and papers resulting from the project.

Mariana Alfonso, senior research advisor, will act as consultant during the academic year 2006-2007 on this project. She will be co-responsible with Melguizo for the overall guidance of the project. She will analyze with Melguizo the results produced by Kienzl; write reports and
journal articles; write proposals for participation at professional conferences; and prepare presentations of the research products.

b.3. Fringe Benefits

These costs are calculated for Tatiana Melguizo only at a rate of 34 percent.

b.4. Subcontracts

The University of Southern California will subcontract consultants Gregory S. Kienzl and Mariana Alfonso. A contractual arrangement will be agreed with American Institutes of Research for Kienzl’s time, and with Brown University for Alfonso’s time.

b.5. Travel

The PI and Senior Research Advisors will travel to three academic conferences (AIR, ASHE and AERA) to present findings from this study. All travel expenses included in this item are based on actual expenditures from attending these conferences in the past.

b.6. Other Direct Costs

This budget includes the services of an editor that will help us prepare manuscripts for publication. It also includes funds to purchase the computer program, STATA, that will be used to conduct all statistical analyses related to this project. A monthly general office supplies budget is requested for paper, inkjet cartridges, phone cards, and mailing.
8. Current and Pending Support

Tatiana Melguizo

Source: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
Project: Evaluation of the Kauffman Scholars Inc. (KSI) program
Amount: $250,000
Duration: June 2005 – May 2006
Melguizo’s time: 10%

Source: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education and Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Project: Economic, Informational, and Cultural Barriers to Community College Transfer Enrollment at Selective Institutions
Amount: $516,721
Duration: March 2005 – January 2006
Melguizo’s time: 25%

Gregory S. Kienzl

Source: Education Statistics Services Institute-Statistics
Project: Vocational Education Support
Amount: $15,000,000 per year (renewable for 10 years)
Duration: January – December 2006
Kienzl’s time: 80%

Mariana Alfonso

Source: Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project, Princeton University
Project: Changes in Affirmative Action Policies or Demographic Shift? Understanding Variations in Minority Enrollment at Public Universities in Texas
Amount: $16,000
Duration: January – August 2006
Alfonso’s time: 4.5 FTE months
9. Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources

The proposed study will be conducted at the Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California (USC), at the Taubman Center for Public Policy, Brown University, and at American Institutes for Research. These three institutions provide the computer and library support needed to carry out the project. The co-PIs offices are equipped with a personal computer, a laptop computer, a printer, a photocopier, and telephone, fax, and internet services.

The three co-PIs have licenses from the National Center for Education Statistics to conduct research based on the restricted NELS:88 dataset at their home institutions.

USC’s Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis and Center for Urban Education, and the Community College Research Center will provide dissemination assistance.