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Center for Urban Education

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Doing Research That Makes A Difference

February 2006

Dear Colleague:

In this issue, we highlight two recent new publications by Alicia C. Dowd, Visiting Scholar at the Center for Urban Education. We also feature a chapter I recently co-authored with Imanol Ordorika, which was published in an edited volume by Robert Rhodes and Carlos Torres. Lastly, we are excited to announce our new Equity Scorecard partnership with the University of Wisconsin System, as well as our co-sponsorship of the Best Practices for Institutional Assessment in Community Colleges symposium with UMass Boston's "Community College Student Success Project" (CCSSP).

- ◆ [Data Don't Drive: Building a Practitioner-Driven Culture of Inquiry to Assess Community College Performance, by Alicia C. Dowd.](#)
- ◆ [Equity and efficiency of community college appropriations: The role of local financing by Alicia C. Dowd.](#)
- ◆ [The University, State, and Market: The Political Economy of Globalization in the Americas, by Estela M. Bensimon and Imanol Ordorika.](#)
- ◆ [New Partnership with the University of Wisconsin System](#)
- ◆ [Best Practices in Institutional Assessment in Community Colleges Symposium](#)

Highlighted Publications



Dowd, A. C. (2005). [Data Don't Drive: Building a Practitioner-Driven Culture of Inquiry to Assess Community College Performance.](#) Research Report by Lumina Foundation for Education

This report explores a range of data-based benchmarking practices. In examining these various practices, Dowd builds a compelling case, not merely for data-driven decisions, but for decisions based on thoughtful interpretation and use of data by well-informed and well-supported practitioners at the nation's community colleges. The report also attempts to gauge the practical value of these various methods by assessing their capacity to truly inform understanding of institutional productivity and effectiveness in serving students.

The report reiterates two crucial issues for all who are engaged in the important work of enhancing student success. First, reliable data must guide decisions about what types of services are offered to students. Dowd suggests that only by collecting and properly analyzing sufficient information can educators and administrators identify areas of greatest need and implement the most effective steps to meet those needs. Second, people charged with collecting, analyzing and using the data must have the expertise and the resources to do their jobs effectively.



Dowd, A. C., & Grant, J. L. (2006). [Equity and efficiency of community college appropriations: The role of local financing.](#) *The Review of Higher Education*, 29(2), 167-194.

This study analyzes the equity of community college financing and demonstrates intrastate variations in appropriations to community colleges. The ratio of 90th to 10th percentile values ranges from 2.0 to 2.8 in half of the states analyzed, levels which are considered high in comparison to K-12 finance inequities. In 10 states with high revenue disparities, the direction of revenue deviations is more often progressive in state-funded than in local-share states, suggesting that the local role may undermine equity. This paper explores differences in economies of scale, geographic costs, and program costs as factors determining funding disparities.



Bensimon, E., M., & Ordorika, I. (2006). Mexico's Estimulos: Faculty Compensation Based on Piecework. In R. A. Rhoads & C. A. Torres (Eds.) in [The University, State, and Market: The Political Economy of Globalization in the Americas.](#) Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

This volume explores the complex relationships among universities, states, and markets throughout the Americas in light of the growing influence of globalization. It offers a biting critique of neoliberal globalization and its anti-democratic elements. In seeking to challenge the hegemony of neoliberal globalization, the authors highlight the ways in which corporate capitalism, academic capitalism, and increased militarization—both in the form of terrorism and in the international war against terrorism—are directing societies and institutions.

New Partnership with the University of Wisconsin System

CUE is currently partnering with the University of Wisconsin System's Office of Academic Diversity and Development (OADD) to pilot the Equity Scorecard. The project is led by Vicki Washington, OADD Interim Vice President, and is being piloted at six UW campuses: UW Whitewater, UW Parkside, UW Oshkosh, UW Milwaukee, UW LaCrosse, and UW Colleges. To kick off the project, a one-day orientation was held on December 12, 2005 in Madison, Wisconsin. Team leaders of each participating college and key UW system administrators, including UW System President Kevin Reilly, attended the successful orientation.

For additional information, please visit the OADD Equity Scorecard Website at:

<http://www.uwsa.edu/oadd/equity/index.htm>

Developing Communities of Inquiry: Best Practices for Institutional Assessment in Community Colleges, January 9 -10, 2006, Los Angeles, CA.

CUE co-sponsored the "Developing Communities of Inquiry: Best Practices for Institutional Assessment in Community Colleges" symposium in collaboration with UMass Boston's "Community College Student Success Project" (CCSSP). The CCSSP project is directed by Alicia C. Dowd. The symposium brought together practitioners from Massachusetts community colleges and others affiliated with the CCSSP with campus team leaders affiliated with the "Equity for All: Institutional Responsibility for Student Success" project. The participants discussed best practice strategies for the assessment of institutional effectiveness and focused on ways of structuring the processes of institutional data analysis to inform curriculum redesign.

Thank you for your support and interest in our work.

Sincerely,

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