#### How Do Race and Socioeconomic Background Influence Experiences of Good Practices in Undergraduate Education?

#### Presented by:

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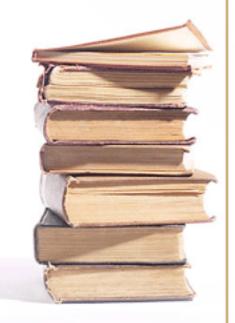
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## Background

 Existing research focusing on equity in higher education as a question of access.

 Equity of experience -specifically the experience of vetted good practices in undergraduate education.



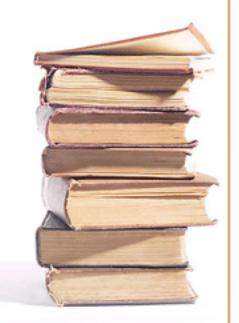
#### **Good Practices**

- student-faculty contact
- cooperation among students
- active learning
- academic effort/time on task
- prompt feedback to students
- high expectations
- respect for diverse experiences and ways of knowing (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1991, 1999).



## Importance of Good Practices

- Good practices relate to desirable higher education outcomes.
  - Graduation rates
  - Cognitive development
  - Educational aspirations
  - Openness to diversity
  - Orientations to learning



#### Our Research Questions

 Do low SES students experience good practices to the same extent as students from higher SES backgrounds?

 Do students of color experience good practices differently than White students?

#### Method

#### **National Study of Student Learning**

- Sample
  - 18 four-year and 5 two-year colleges & universities (N=2400)
- Data
  - NSSL pre-college survey
  - CSEQ and NSSL follow-up



#### Variables

- 19 dependent measures distributed across 7 principles of good practice:
  - o Student-faculty contact
  - Cooperation among students
  - Active learning / Time on task
  - Prompt feedback
  - High expectations
  - Diverse ways of knowing & learning
  - Quality teaching
- Independent variables:
  - SES –set of dummy variables representing SES quartile (lowest quartile served as the reference category)
  - White- dummy variable, coded 0 for Students of color; 1 for White



#### Analyses: Stepwise OLS Regression

- Model 1 controlled for:
  - Gender
  - o ACT/SAT
  - HS grades and involvement
  - HS work obligations
  - Academic motivation
  - Respondents' dependent children
  - College attended was first choice
  - Plans for a graduate degree
- Model 2 additionally controlled for:
  - On-campus residence
  - Number of credit hours completed
  - Hours worked on- and off-campus for pay
  - Course taking patterns in several areas
  - Institution type



#### SES Results – Effects of Model 2

#### Greater exposure to Good Practices

- Most statistically significant effects were found between the highest SES quartile and the lowest quartile (the reference category)
- Students in the highest SES quartile reported greater exposure to the the following good practices than did those in the lowest SES quartile
  - o Faculty interest in teaching & student development
  - o Course-related interactions with peers
  - o Academic effort/involvement
  - o Number of textbooks read
  - o Number of term papers written
  - Non-course-related interactions with peers
  - o Cultural & interpersonal involvement

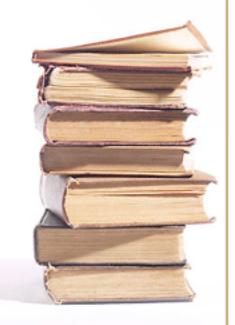
## Race/Ethnicity Results – Effects of Model 2

- White students reported greater exposure to the following good practices than their non-White peers.
  - o Quality of non-classroom interactions with faculty
  - Faculty interest in teaching & student development
  - Academic effort/involvement
  - Number of essay exams in courses
  - Using computers for academic work
  - Instructional organization and preparation



# Inequities in Experiences – Possible Factors

- It is not institutional differences, the types of courses taken, living on or off campus, and how much a student works.
- Experience (or lack of) may drive behaviors – cultural capital
- Are colleges and universities focusing on the needs of minority and low SES students once they reach campus?



# Inequities in Experience – A Cause for Concern

- Our research reaffirms the Greater Expectations findings.
- Experiencing good practices contributes to positive learning outcomes and positive development.
- We expect institutions and faculty to universally support the notion that educational experiences should not depend on students' race or SES background.

### Taking Action - Research

- We need further research to substantiate and update our findings.
- The Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, a longitudinal study funded by the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College, will provide a significant opportunity to replicate the present findings with data more reflective of today's postsecondary students and their experiences.

## Taking Action – Policies and Practices

- Recognizing and encouraging students in orientation, first-year programs, and advising.
- Encouraging faculty to enhance their teaching.
- Enhancing and implementing programs for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

#### **Audience Discussion**

- What do you think accounts for these findings?
- What is happening on your campus?
  - Is there an experience gap? What do your NSSE/CSEQ findings show?
  - What perpetuates the gap? How are you trying to close it?
- What policies and practices would you recommend based on the current findings?
- What additional research would you like to see?



#### Conclusion

- Our commitment to equality and equity cannot end with the acceptance letter. We should strive to ensure equal opportunity for all students throughout their college experience.
- For a copy of our paper, contact:

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