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# Community Colleges and Low Income Populations

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## A Select Bibliography

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**March 2002**

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*Prepared for Community Colleges and Low Income Populations:  
Lessons from Research . . . Priorities for Policy*

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# COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND LOW INCOME POPULATIONS

## A Select Bibliography

Prepared for  
*Community Colleges and Low Income Populations:  
Lessons from Research . . . Priorities for Policy*

Updated April 2002

### Jobs for the Future

*The following bibliography includes studies, reports, and books that address different aspects of the topic of the conference Community Colleges and Low Income Populations. Some works are descriptive, focusing on trends and statistics for community colleges and higher education in general. Others focus on particular challenges facing community colleges as they work to improve their services for low-income populations (e.g., remedial education, instructional quality, student financial aid, transfer, non-credit programming).*

*Many of these studies recommend practices and policies that can advance the equity agenda; some propose strategies for promoting desired changes. Together, these publications provide a rich library of data, case studies, assessments, and proposals related to community colleges and their efforts to help low-income youth and adults advance.*

*Note: The bibliography combines an earlier version distributed at the conference with additional materials from conference participants.*

*This project has been funded by the Annie E. Casey, Ford, and KnowledgeWorks foundations.*

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**Adelman, Clifford. 1999. *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelors Degree Attainment*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.**

The report is based on a study of academic and socioeconomic factors, such as high school curriculum intensity and quality, class rank, grade point average, scores on standardized tests, family income and parents' education, and how they relate to eventual attainment of a bachelor's degree. Results show that by far the most significant factor is curriculum intensity and quality. The highest level of mathematics studied has the strongest relationship to eventual attainment of a bachelor's degree. Finishing a course beyond the level of Algebra 2 (for example, trigonometry or pre-calculus) more than doubles the odds that a student who enters postsecondary education will complete a bachelor's degree.

**Adelman, Clifford. May/June 2000. *A Parallel Universe, Expanded: Certification in the Information Technology Guild*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.**

An updated version of an earlier article, this paper looks at the certification system that has emerged in the information technology industry, granting 1.7 million certification in the 1990s outside the traditional higher educational structure. Adelman argues for the need to understand this emerging "parallel universe" and to include it in our assessments of future demand for higher education, provision of learning opportunities, and other higher education research and policy. Download at:  
[www.aahe.org/change/paralleluniverse.htm](http://www.aahe.org/change/paralleluniverse.htm).

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**Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. 2000. *Access Denied: Restoring the Nation's Commitment to Equal Educational Opportunity*. Washington, DC: Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.**

The Advisory Committee is an independent body established by federal law to advise the Congress and the Secretary of Education on student financial aid policy. This report documents a growing gap in the availability of financial aid for students from low-income families. The report argues that this gap is serious even for academically qualified young people who could attend four-year schools but do not because of financial need. The report explains how economic and demographic pressures, combined with policy changes away from need-based aid and student decisions in response to inadequate aid, are making inevitable an income-related widening in participation, persistence, and completion gaps in the coming 15 years.

**Alssid, Julian L., David Gruber, Davis Jenkins, Christopher Mazzeo, and Brandon Roberts. 2002. *Community College Career Pathways Report*. New York and San Francisco: Workforce Strategy Center.**

This national study identifies practices and policies that put community colleges at the center of regional workforce development systems. The research is designed to help community college leaders; community, regional, and state policymakers; and funders understand the ways in which community colleges can effectively provide individuals with education and training that leads into a career progression. Funded by the James Irvine Foundation and the Ford Foundation, the study examines and assesses best practices among community colleges, in regional partnerships, and in state policies that foster and support these efforts.

**Alssid, Julian L., David Gruber, and Christopher Mazzeo. Forthcoming. *Developing Career Ladders: Contextualized Basic Skills Report*. New York and San Francisco: Workforce Strategy Center.**

This national study, to be released in spring 2002, examines best-practice examples of contextualized basic skills as a first step in an ongoing career ladder in exemplary programs on community colleges and community-based organizations. The focus of this report is to encourage practitioners in workforce development to collaborate in the development of career pathways that incorporate

contextualized basic skills as a key element. The study, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, consists of a literature review and discussion with leading researchers, the identification of successful program models, and an analysis of best practices in structuring contextualized basic skills as a critical element in developing a career pathway.

**California Tomorrow. 2002 *A New Look at the 'New Majority' in California Community Colleges: Keeping the Promise Alive for Students of Color and Immigrants*. Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow.**

This is an overview description of an ongoing project designed to develop new insights into how the California Community College system is fulfilling its historic mission for the growing number of students of color and immigrant students it serves. The research will combine a literature review and scan of the policy context; in-depth interviews with 300-450 students and 135-185 faculty/staff on nine campuses throughout California; a deep analysis of available system wide data on student participation, completion and transfer rates; documentation of the use and perceived effectiveness of student support, outreach and retention programs; and an analysis of the diversity-focused professional development available and efforts to diversify the faculty. The project will result in publications designed to impact both policy and practice.

**Carnevale, Anthony P., and Donna M. Desrochers. 2001. *Help Wanted . . . Credentials Required: Community Colleges in the Knowledge Economy*. Washington, DC: Educational Testing Service and American Association of Community Colleges.**

This report focuses on the need for market-sensitive credentialing in today's changing, demanding economy. The authors examine the causes and consequences of the proliferation of standards for credentialing skill in community colleges. They raise important questions about the proper balance among degrees, certificates, performance-based certifications, vendor certifications, and noncredit customized training. They challenge community colleges to update planning and offerings in the area of short-term training or risk losing this growing segment of the credentials market. They pose the dilemma of balancing social-equity concerns against the needs of communities, employers, and individuals to adapt to changing economic and technological realities, and they explore the complexities and

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importance of meeting both academic and vocational missions in the current environment.

**Clark, Richard W. 2001. *Dual Credit: A Report of Programs and Policies that Offer High School Students College Credits*. Seattle: Institute for Educational Inquiry.**

Clark reports on the status of programs through which high school students acquire dual credits (high school and college) and presents recommendations for actions related to these programs. These programs enroll a large and growing number of students. The report includes the arguments of proponents and critics. From the perspective of this conference, the phenomenon raises two important issues: 1) the potential for restructuring the sequence of formal schooling and the transition to higher education; 2) the danger that dual credits will drive a further wedge between those who are qualified for college by the eleventh grade and less-skilled, frequently low-income students who cannot take advantage of these accelerated programs.

**Coley, Richard. 2000. *The American Community College Turns 100: A Look at its Students, Programs, and Prospects*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center.**

This is an overview of the status of America's community colleges: student characteristics, enrollment patterns, credentials granted, transfer outcomes, and demographic trends and pressures. Texts and charts convey the diversity of today's community college programs and students and the challenges that these institutions face as they adapt and expand their agendas.

**Community College of San Francisco. 2001. *Prospectus for a National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN): Building an Alternative Pathway for Underserved Student Populations to Access Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities*. San Francisco: City College of San Francisco.**

Through this collaboration, the nation's large urban community colleges and select culturally enriched colleges and universities will work with the member schools of the Council of the Great City Schools to establish linkages that provide an alternative pathway through higher education for traditionally under-represented students. Expected outcomes

are: 1) increased access to career, program, and college admission information; 2) creation of a K-16+ pipeline that focuses on minority student access, retention, and success; 3) improved levels of access to baccalaureate degrees for under-represented minorities; and 4) creation of a sustainable Web-based, online interactive technological infrastructure for students, parents, guidance counselors, faculty, and participating institutions /segments.

**Community College Research Center. 1998-2001. *CCRC Briefs*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College.**

CCRC has published a set of excellent briefs on the issues and opportunities facing community colleges that seek to serve low-income populations more effectively. Titles include: *Multiple Missions of Community Colleges: Conflicting or Complementary*; *The New Economic Development Role of the Community College*; *From Black Box to Pandora's Box: Evaluating Remedial/ Developmental Education*; *Community College and Secondary School Collaboration on Workforce Development and Education Reform*; and *Unrealistic Plans and Misdirected Efforts: Are Community Colleges Getting the Right Message to High School Students?*

**Education Commission of the States. 1998-2000. *Policy Papers*. Denver: Education Commission of the States.**

ECS has published several useful Briefs on the issues and opportunities for community colleges as they try to improve their effectiveness for low-income populations. Titles include: *Fostering Student Retention and Success at the Community College*, *Community Colleges: Connecting the Poor to Good Jobs*, and *Remediation: A Must for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Society*.

**Education Commission of the States. 2001. *State Funding for Community Colleges: A 50-State Survey*. Denver: Education Commission of the States.**

According to ECS's July 2000 survey of its constituents, financing colleges and universities is the number one postsecondary education concern among state policymakers. To give policymakers data with which to address this issue, the ECS Center for Community College Policy provides the results of a 50-state study of community college finance. This report presents a snapshot of "what is" in regard to how states finance two-year colleges, as well as related enrollment policies,

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tuition and fees policies, and state accountability measures.

**Fitzgerald, Joan. 2000. *Community Colleges as Labor Market Intermediaries: Building Career Ladders for Low-Wage Workers*. Boston: Northeastern University, Center for Urban and Regional Policy.**

Fitzgerald looks at the experience of three community colleges—Shoreline, South Seattle and Denver—in the design and development of career ladder programs that help low-wage workers advance into better-paying jobs. She argues that, to succeed, community colleges must not only connect job seekers with good jobs; they must also work with employers to improve job quality. She uses the case studies to draw broad conclusions about the appropriate roles for community colleges in career ladder strategies and the limits to their ability to serve as labor market intermediaries that influence employers to create better jobs.

Download at:

[www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/pubs/Fitzgerald.C.0201.pdf](http://www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/pubs/Fitzgerald.C.0201.pdf)

**The FutureWorks Company. Forthcoming. *Student Aid for Working Adults and Lifelong Learning: Findings from an Analysis of Potential Need and Available Resources*. Belmont, MA: The FutureWorks Company.**

This study, to be released later this year, analyzes the financial-aid constraints facing working adults who pursue education and training at less than a half-time basis (fewer than six credit hours per semester). The principal finding is that traditional financial assistance programs typically fail to meet the occupational and skill development needs of full-time working adults whose job and family obligations preclude them from taking career-enhancing courses more than half-time. This interim report is part of a larger study on how state and federal financial aid programs can better support the education and training needs of low-income working adults.

**Golonka, Susan, and Lisa Matus-Grossman. 2001. *Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Workers*. New York and Washington: MDRC and the National Governors Association.**

Based on a roundtable involving representatives of community and technical colleges and their public-sector partners, this study presents strategies that could help community colleges do a better job of

servicing adult welfare recipients and low-wage workers. It emphasizes strategies that can increase access to education and improve the retention of community college students who have little experience of success in either education or the labor market. Recommendations address both college practices and state policies and range from outreach efforts, program and curriculum redesign, employer involvement, public financing issues, and financial aid, supports and incentives that can increase retention.

**Grubb, W. Norton. 2001. *Guidance and Counseling in Community Colleges*. CCRC Brief #12. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.**

This brief summarizes research led by Norton Grubb at the University of California—Berkeley on the range of counseling services and strategies available at community colleges. Preliminary results indicate an emphasis on “academic” counseling to provide information on the requirements for completion of programs and transfer but relatively little to help students make decisions about their occupational futures. Most colleges emphasize relatively traditional one-on-one counseling sessions, though there is evidence of some innovative alternatives. This is one of a number of Briefs on different community college topics available from the Community College Research Center at [www.tc.columbia.edu/ccrc](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ccrc).

**Grubb, W. Norton, and Associates. *Honored But Invisible: An Inside Look at Teaching in Community Colleges*. New York: Routledge, 1999.**

One of the few close looks at the quality of instruction in community colleges, this study is based on observations of over 250 teachers and interviews with over 50 community college administrators. The authors note the relative neglect of strategies that can improve the quality of teaching within a college. They explore the cultural, institutional, and fiscal challenges to improved instructional quality in academic and vocational degree programs, developmental education, and literacy programs. The authors also point to strategies that hold promise for improving teaching and learning, such as integrating academic and vocational learning, investing in staff development, and creating learning communities, and they address relevant institutional and public policy issues.

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**Grubb, W. Norton. 2001. "Second Chances in Changing Times: The Roles of Community Colleges in Advancing Low Wage Workers." In Richard Kazis and Marc Miller (eds.), *Low Wage Workers in the New Economy*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.**

Grubb summarizes the arguments for community colleges' assuming a greater role in the preparation for further education and better employment of low-wage working adults—and he identifies areas for improvement if the potential is to be realized. He distinguishes among different populations that the institution serves and the implications for college planning and programming. He argues for a reform agenda that focuses on instruction, support services, and connections to other programs and to employment.

**Hungar, Julie Yearsley, and Janet Lieberman. 2001. *The Road to Equality: Report on Transfer for the Ford Foundation*. New York: Ford Foundation.**

This report documents the obstacles facing many students who would like to transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions. It also makes a number of recommendations for college leaders and policymakers on issues ranging from financial aid to admissions and registration, academic support, remedial education, and articulation policies. It includes case studies of state policy environments and transfer performance.

**Jenkins, Davis. 2001. "Realizing the Potential of Community Colleges as Bridges to Opportunity for the Disadvantaged." Unpublished paper. Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute.**

A discussion paper prepared initially to inform the Mott Foundation, this analysis provides excellent background on the potential of community colleges to be effective bridges to opportunity for low-income individuals—and some of the strategies needed to better realize that potential. The report advocates devoting more attention to involving community colleges in sectoral initiatives, engaging policymakers in addressing funding and other obstacles, and paying particular attention to strategies to support working adults, minority youth, and those seriously deficient in basic skills.

**Kipp, Samuel III, Derek Price, Jill Wohlford. 2001. *Unequal Opportunity: Disparities in College Access Among the 50 States*.**

**Indianapolis: Lumina Foundation for Education.**

This study assesses the college opportunities available to all citizens across the 50 states. It classifies more than 2,800 colleges and universities in the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to their "accessibility" to typical state residents seeking undergraduate study. Accessibility requires two components: admissibility (whether a college will admit typical college-bound students in that state) and affordability (whether such students can afford to attend). *Unequal Opportunity* presents a comprehensive picture of student accessibility to the nation's undergraduate institutions, whether two-year or four-year, public or private. It highlights inequalities among socioeconomic groups in terms of college access—and how these patterns vary from state to state.

**Liebowitz, Marty, Leslie Haynes and Jane Milley. 2001. *Driving Change in Community Colleges: Building Systems for Advancement to Self-Sufficiency*. Boston: Jobs for the Future.**

This report, prepared initially for the Ford Foundation, assesses the levers for change that can help move community colleges toward more effective strategies for helping low-income adults advance to family-supporting jobs. Based on interviews with leaders in a number of community colleges and with state and federal policy analysts and advocates, it focuses on three important forces for change: 1) institutional leadership within a community college; 2) partners among local employers and community-based institutions; and 3) policy innovation, particularly at the state level. The report recommends how foundation investments can encourage the effective use of these three levers for innovation and change.

**Melendez, Edwin and Carlos Suarez. 2000. *Opening College Doors for Disadvantaged Hispanics: An Assessment of Effective Programs and Practices*. New York: New School University.**

This study assessed and collected data on four training demonstration projects funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and developed in collaboration with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. The projects aimed to create or promote innovative strategies and approaches within community colleges and universities to provide training and employment

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opportunities for economically disadvantaged Hispanics. Two of the programs offered systems to support students as they pursue education and training in the college: The HispanicNET Program of the Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute; and The Better Opportunities for Hispanics program of Miami Dade Community College. The other two programs create career ladders in the health care industry: The Direct Care Workers Program at the Borough of Manhattan Community College; and The Accelerated Associate's Program for Licensed Nurses of the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico. Download at: [www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/newpubs.html](http://www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/newpubs.html).

**Melendez, Edwin, Luis Falcon, Carlos Suarez, Lynn McCormick, and Alexandra de Montrichard. 2000. *The Welfare-to-Work Policy Shock: How Community Colleges are Addressing the Challenge*. New York: New School University.**

This study examines how, and to what extent, community colleges have implemented welfare-to-work programs in response to welfare policy changes. In part, the community colleges' responses have been determined by the various regulations and funding allocations by state and local authorities. Ultimately, though, the researchers found that the extent to which community colleges have responded to the new policy initiatives has been determined by internal factors such as: the college leaderships' commitment to a comprehensive mission for the college; the existence of programs and prior experiences servicing the disadvantaged; faculty and staff attitudes towards non-degree programs; and on-going relations and collaborations with local labor, business, industries and social service agencies. Download at: [www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/ford.html](http://www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/ford.html).

**McCabe, Robert H. 2000. *No One to Waste: A Report to Public Decision-Makers and Community College Leaders*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.**

This report is a product of a National Study of Community College Remedial Education, organized by the American Association of Community Colleges. McCabe, the former President of Miami-Dade Community College, builds upon a study of 1,520 randomly selected individuals who began remedial programs in 1990 at 25 different community colleges. Of the students, about one-third completed their remedial programs successfully. Follow-up interviews with

71 percent of these successful completers were conducted as a way of understanding the impact of remedial education on their lives, employment, and further education. The report is a readable summary of arguments for increased support and improvement of remedial programming within two-year colleges.

**National Association of Manufacturers. 2001. *The Skills Gap 2001*. Washington, DC: National Association of Manufacturers.**

The primary finding of this study, conducted by NAM, its Center for Workforce Success, and Andersen is that U.S. manufacturers face a persistent skills gap in the workforce, despite an economic downturn and despite billions of dollars spent on education and training initiatives in the past decade. This is the third time in ten years that NAM has conducted a survey of skills and training issues in the manufacturing sector, including information on employers' preferred training partners.

**Phillippe, Kent, ed. 2000. *National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.**

Text and charts present an overview of America's community colleges. The charts focus on trends in enrollment and student demographics, funding, credentials granted, staffing, community impacts, and fiscal health. The text focuses on issues that are explicit and implicit in the tables and charts.

**Phipps, Ronald A., Jessica M. Shedd and Jamie P. Merisotis. 2001. *A Classification System for 2-Year Postsecondary Institutions*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.**

This report explores the development of a classification system for 2-year institutions that can provide a framework for analysis and contribute to the discourse in public policy. The report discusses recent classification strategies put forth by researchers, and outlines a proposed classification system based on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Data Analysis System (IPEDS).

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**Phipps, Ronald. 1998. *College Remediation: What It Is, What It Costs, What's at Stake*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.**

This study argues for the importance of remediation as a core function of two- and four-year colleges and universities. It analyzes the functions and purposes of remediation, discusses the types of remediation, who participates, and how well they are served; examines the financial costs of remediation; appraises the social and economic costs of not providing remedial programs; and proposes strategies that can reduce the need for remedial programs while also enhancing their effectiveness. The study recommends a number of specific reforms, such as a better alignment of college entry requirements with high school graduation requirements, early intervention and financial aid programs targeted to K-12 students that link guidance and tutoring with financial aid guarantees, and treating remediation as a comprehensive program that is not just about tutoring and skill development.

**Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. 2001. *Cultivating Successful Rural Economies: Benchmark Practices at Community and Technical Colleges*. Carrboro, NC: RTS, Inc.**

Benchmark Practices for Local Economies is a project funded by the USDA's Fund for Rural America that has identified, through a competitive process, 43 dynamic and effective programs at rural community colleges, both in the U.S. and other countries, that are helping rural businesses and labor forces adapt to the challenges of the new economy. Profiles, case studies, and other information about benchmark practices at local colleges are available for easy reading, browsing, and downloading on an incredibly well designed website, [www.rtsinc.org/benchmark](http://www.rtsinc.org/benchmark).

**Roberts, Brandon. 2002. *The Best of Both: Community Colleges and Community-Based Organizations Partner to Better Serve Low-Income Workers and Employers*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.**

This report focuses on the ways in which community colleges and community nonprofits develop, operate and sustain their partnerships. It is concerned with such operational issues as articulating roles and responsibilities, financing project activities, delivering effective support services, working with the private sector and building educational pathways. As such, the report

is intended to assist community colleges, community nonprofits and others in developing partnerships to train low-income workers for higher-skilled, higher-wage employment. Download at: [www.ppv.org](http://www.ppv.org).

**Rosenbaum, James. 2001. *Beyond College for All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**

A sociologists' brief for the need for better signaling and communication of expectations among employers, colleges, and high schools, this summary of a decade of empirical and theoretical research argues that the high failure rate of young people in community colleges is largely attributable to young people's misreading of the importance of academic preparation in high school to success in college. Rosenbaum, a professor at Northwestern University, proposes that U.S. policymakers learn from the success of informal linkages that often exist between employers and high schools and from the power of formal linkages in some industrial nations to design a system of multiple pathways to careers and further education.

**Terenzini, Patrick, Alberto Cabrera, and Elena Bernal. 2001. *Swimming Against the Tide: The Poor in American Higher Education*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.**

This report pulls together what we know about low socioeconomic-status students and their experiences in America's colleges and universities. It demonstrates and documents the substantial inequities that remain in higher education. It presents findings from research on: the college search, choice, and selection process; the characteristics of low socioeconomic-status students; their collegiate experiences; their outcomes in terms of persistence and degree completion; and outcomes in terms of learning, education, earnings, and careers. The report suggests policy efforts to address enrollment and degree completion inequities, outreach to parents in middle and high school years regarding college planning, K-16 policy integration and alignment, and a rethinking of financial aid policies to attack the barriers to college going and completion.