

Assessing minority student enrollment and  
retention at a predominantly white university - Part 1

Eucabeth Odhiambo, Ed.D.

Associate Professor

Teacher Education Department

Shippensburg University

Gwendolyn Durham, Ed.D.

Assistant Professor

Teacher Education Department

Shippensburg University

For the most part, predominantly white universities are considering and attempting to determine avenues in which to attract African American and Hispanic students. Studies show that overall underrepresented minority student enrollment rates have improved over the last few years considerably reducing the gap with white students (Hudson, Aquilino & Kienzl, 2005). However, graduation rates have not improved proportionately (Boesel and Fredland 1999; Smith 1995, 1997; Carey, 2004). This study examines enrollment and retention of African American and Hispanic students. The presentation will focus on findings regarding (a) the issues related to minority student college retention and dropout; (b) the views of minority students regarding dropout; (c) the reasons why students transfer; and (d) reasons why students choose not to enroll initially. The results found in this study could be used to impact existing programs that are intended to increase retention and enrollment. Conclusions drawn from this study could be generalized to other institutions of higher learning.

Research Paper

Key Words: Minority, retention, dropout

References

Hudson, L., Aquilino, S., & Kienzl, G. (2005). Postsecondary participation rates, by sex and race/ethnicity: 1974–2003 (Report No. 2005–025). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Boesel, D., & Fredland, E. (1999). *College for all? Is there too much emphasis on getting a 4-year college degree?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Library of Education

Smith, T. (1995). *The educational progress of Hispanic students (NCES Report 95-767)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Smith, T.M. (1997). *Minorities in higher education 1997 (NCES Report 97-372)*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Carey, K. (2004). *A matter of degrees: Improving graduation rates in four-year colleges and universities*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust.