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The Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program: a Documentary as a Performative Social Science

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**THE BUCKNELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: A
DOCUMENTARY AS A PERFORMATIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE**

By

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An Artist Statement

A Proposal Submitted to the Honors Council

For Honors in the Education Department

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share their experience so the audience could not only live their experience with them but construct meaning from it is admirable and I thank you.

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INTRODUCTION:

College access is an issue that has been the focus of many studies, post-secondary institutional mission statements, and individual advocates for decades. While the primary focus has been on access for racially diverse groups, tuition costs have increased significantly and as such, access for students of a low-socioeconomic background has been, and is becoming more of a priority (National Center for Education Statistics). This statement only begins to shed some light on the complexities surrounding this topic and in the United States, this issue is especially important. The United States has one of the highest levels of income inequality among high-income countries. In fact, the United States is one of only a few countries that has had income inequality actually increase since the 1980's and disparities in degree completion continue to remain an issue (US Department of Commerce).

With only 30% of the United States population attaining baccalaureate degrees, the need to better educate and prepare the US citizens remains imperative the US aims to remain competitive internationally (US Census Bureau). Unfortunately, this remains a challenging goal. According to a 2007 report by Jobs for the Future, to correct the disparity in degree completion among historically disenfranchised groups, degree production would need to be increased by approximately 37%. Fortunately, the US Government has not turned a blind eye to this situation. President Barack Obama remains resolute in his commitment to providing access to Higher Education and offers a commitment to community colleges as a short term solution:

“With the changing economy, no one has lifetime employment. But community colleges provide lifetime employability. Community colleges play an important role in helping people transition between careers by providing the retooling they need to take on a new career.” – President Barack Obama

Almost 40% of the population has either an associate’s degree or a baccalaureate degree, which could suggest that a portion of the population is taking the President’s advice. The unfortunate reality though, is that those with a baccalaureate degree average an income that is 64.9% higher than that of those with an associates degree (\$51, 194, and \$31,046 respectively) (US Census Bureau). The need for transfer articulation programs, then, is apparent.

Transfer articulation programs do exist at most community colleges across the country. However, these programs are typically established with local state and state funded institutions. Transfer programs and individual transfer to highly selective institutions are rare and are only accessible to few students. In fact, a recent survey indicated that the number of community college students attending a public, four-year institution is approximately 55%, while the number of community college students in private education is smaller than .01% (Cohen& Kisker, 2011; Dowd & Gabbard, 2009). Additionally, according to a study that was commissioned by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the Lumina Foundation for Education, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation:

“For the least affluent in our society, the chances of transferring from a community college to an elite institution are practically negligible.”

To further articulate the importance of this situation, it should be noted that the number of students enrolling in community colleges is increasing. In fact, almost half of all undergraduate students are currently attending community college. It's not to say that community college students don't perform well, either. When community college students have been offered transfer to elite, private institutions, their degree completion rate has been higher than 75%. Regardless, the opportunities for even the most talented community college students are dwindling in number (Dowd & Gabbard, 2009).

An effort is being made. Organizations such as the Jack Kent Cooke foundation, the Lumina Foundation and the Gates Foundation are all currently working to bring high performing high need students from community colleges to elite four-year institutions. Unfortunately, these organizations are only reaching a few institutions, such as; The University of Michigan, Bucknell University, Cornell University, Amherst College, University of Southern California, and The University of California, Berkley. Most organizations only have the resources to work with a couple hundred students and at most a dozen institutions. With over 1300 US Community Colleges and over 2600 four-year institutions in the country, there is a need for an expansion of these programs (Cohen & Brawer, American Association of Colleges and Universities). Recently, a non-profit organization by the name of The Edvance Foundation has been created to address some of these concerns. Brian Mitchell and Kurt Theide, previously employed at Bucknell University, left the institution to start this foundation. Although the program is fairly new, it offers some hope, as it is one of the first organizations to offer a national approach to college linkage programs (The Edvance Foundation).

According to Sharif, in his study of the perceptions of upward mobility among community college scholars, preserving the status quo will only hurt elite institutions and erase an aspect of American higher education identity:

“...This would neutralize the role of elite higher education institutions as vehicles for upward social mobility for those in the greatest need. The lack of socioeconomic diversity of students at elite institutions will also hurt the overall ability of these schools to truly diversify their student bodies and provide an education that nurtures critical thinking among students, promotes the understanding and acceptance of differences, and above all, prepares students for success in the world that they will enter as graduates.”

With the understanding of the lack of college educated US citizens, an increase in the disparities of degrees offered for historically disadvantaged groups, the benefit of the presence of these groups on college campuses, and the large amount of students enrolled in community colleges, one might question the lack of focus on the aforementioned community college linkage programs (US Census Bureau; US Department of Commerce; Cohen and Brawer, 2011; Dowd & Gabbard, 2009)

Among the Jack Kent Cooke elite schools, Bucknell University was chosen as the “model”. The program has many unique factors, including a summer pre-enrollment college preparation program and the retention rates of the program are astounding. Of the 97 students that have transferred to Bucknell, only three have left the institution. However, beyond the matriculation data, there has been no real measure of the effect of the program. What is the effect on faculty and staff at the institution? Were there any

unintentional results surrounding the happiness transfer students or their development as students at Bucknell? What were the outcomes regarding any effect on the general student body? The institution as a whole? This study aims to answer these questions through a qualitative survey of those effected by this program at Bucknell University. Specifically, participants answered a number of questions and their responses were documented on film. Following this introduction, a brief history will be given followed by a description of a documentary as performative social science research, shared experiences, limitations and a discussion/conclusion.

BUCKNELL CONTEXT

To understand the uniqueness of Bucknell with regard to its success among elite institutions with community college transfers, the history has to be explained. Bucknell was one of a few institutions that previous experience working with community college students and already had existing framework from a past community college linkage project.

In 1989, the STEP program was started as a faculty initiative. There was a select group of faculty that had a desire to create a program that would bring underrepresented groups from an urban setting to Bucknell. This desire was met with the Community College of Philadelphia; a large community college with about 20,000 students in an urban community that enrolled many underrepresented students. This program was set up to offer free classes to a select group of students during the summer with verbal encouragement to apply to Bucknell in the following year. However, as time progressed, fewer students were enrolling in Bucknell after the attendance in summer program. (Wade & Midkiff)

In 2004, the step program was canceled. Only one year later (2005), Bucknell was asked to fill out a request for proposal (RFP) for a grant to enroll community college students at Bucknell from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (a non-profit foundation with a mission to “help under-resourced students of exceptional promise reach their full potential through education” (Jack Kent Cooke foundation, 2008). As a part of the mission of the foundation, Bucknell was identified among 150 other selective colleges and universities and requested them to apply for a grant from the foundation.

Bucknell progressed from being one of one hundred and fifty identified schools to eventually one of eight colleges and universities selected to receive the grant. These eight institutions received a total of \$6.78 million over four years and were expected to enroll 1,100 new transfer students from more than 60 partnering community colleges (Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, 2008). While schools such as Cornell University, Amherst College, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill varied in their delivery of their program, Bucknell was the “shining example”. Many other institutions created programs that facilitated individual student transfer without a cohort based model or large level institution partnerships. Bucknell worked to benefit the community colleges by working with them institutionally and requiring degree completion before transfer. They offered a summer program that includes academic and extracurricular components with resident support. Classes are co-taught by Bucknell and community college faculty, and the Teaching Assistants are current community college transfers enrolled at Bucknell. (Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, 2008); so much so, that the foundation granted an extra year of funding to the program.

Costing nearly \$1,000,000 a year, this program is extensive and is largely financed by Bucknell (as the foundation has given \$900,000 to Bucknell in total). The Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program works with five different community colleges in the surrounding area to find students for their program (Harrisburg Area Community College, Lehigh Carbon Community College, The Community College of Philadelphia, Montgomery County Community College, and Garret College of Western Maryland). To be qualified to apply for the program, one must have maintained a 3.5

cumulative GPA and qualify for substantial need based aid. These students then move through a rigorous admissions process including an application and interviews to secure enrollment into the summer program. After successfully completing the summer program, and a subsequent year at their respective community college, these students re-apply to Bucknell for full acceptance based on their curricular and co-curricular performance. Over 100 students have participated through the summer program of which 83 have come to Bucknell for full-time enrollment.

PERFORMATIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE, DOCUMENTARY & ME

As I explored qualitative research methods (grounded theory practice, shadowing, etc.) I realized that I would also have to be an active participant in the research while I'm acting as the researcher. Further, I wanted to be active in helping to construct the meaning of those that experienced my research. I searched for research that had a narrative approach that was able to share my experiences and my story in a way that also allowed the participants to share their stories directly (O'neil and Harindranath, 2006). That realization led me to performative social science research. Brian Roberts, a Sociology professor at the University of Glamorgan in the UK gives a starting point for the definition of performative social science:

"What 'performative' refers and relates to in social science is the communicative powers of research and the natural involvement of an 'audience', whether that be a group of peers or a group of students, a physical audience or a cyber audience, even an individual reader of a journal or a book. We believe that these efforts deserve a

foundation for this emerging aesthetic, both to ground performative social science as well as to encourage reflection on it.”

Additionally, I was drawn to a different type of research method because of the number of limitations with regard to traditional social science methods. Humans have five distinct senses that they use to gather information and create knowledge (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching). Traditional methods typically only work with the visual and are even limited to the confines of language descriptors with that. Performative social science can work with these senses in addition to conveying emotions and spiritual experiences (Law and Urry, 2004). Performative social science aims to overcome the way we gather information and create knowledge beyond textual means by expanding research beyond the traditional, collaborating with other disciplines and expanding our understanding into an experiential realm.

I appreciated this type of research because I found my interest in this topic a bit conflicting. I wasn't sure if I would be able to remove myself from the research in a way that I wouldn't be shaping the final product. This type of research doesn't require that. Often the researcher is the one producing the narrative, performing, or interpreting their experience as basic results. In performative social science, the researcher has been compared to a public journalist because of the nature of the way the information is narratively shared with the public (Denzin, 2001). In fact, much of the information surrounding performative social science research suggests that the lines are blurred between the researcher, the subject, and the participants as well as who is doing the research and who is being studied (Denzin, 2003). Additionally, as a community college

scholar and active participant in the research, I found other positive aspects for choosing performative social science methods for this research. With traditional social science research, I would have been forced to textually classify their experiences in some way, yet I knew how complex and meaningful their experiences were beyond one classification, so by pursuing this type of the research it helps the audience to experience the entire individual. For example, instead of trying to convey what the experience may be like for the community college scholars, this research helps the audience to experience that by putting themselves in the community college scholar's shoes. In particular, this documentary allows you to physically listen and see the subject speak about their transformation as part of the program and feel the subjects emotional state surrounding the topic; something traditional textual methods can't allow for. This focus on experientialism relies on the understanding that ones experience is also a source of knowledge.

The role of the researcher and the means in which they and the subjects convey their story and answers is key to why I chose a documentary as a medium of performative social science research. To understand the lives of the scholars and effect of the program, the audience can do so by listening and viewing their experiences first hand. They will be able to emotionally feel their responses and, while the audience may not know the participants or the institutions included, they will be able to participate in the knowledge transfer as if they were. While I am not included in the Documentary, my voice is consistent throughout. With over a hundred hours of footage, my understanding of the program and the research I did is told by what the audience is undergoing. Every moment

of the audience of the documentary was a choice made by me in light of my understanding of the information shared and my personal stake in the program.

I, as the author, am a community college scholar. I started my education at a community college and have been lucky enough to receive a full tuition scholarship to Bucknell. As an education major that is studying College Student Personnel, I find the collegiate experience and all of its facets to be fascinating. The combination of this admiration and my experience with this program led me to this study.

When I graduated from high school, I had little idea that I would attend college, let alone pursue a career in it. During my attendance at Community College, I spent a great deal of time fretting over how I was going to afford to transfer to another school. My parents had little money and as a result, the burden of my post-secondary education was entirely reliant on me. When I was offered a full tuition scholarship to Bucknell, I was ecstatic, and much like the participants in my documentary, it changed my life.

When I was at Bucknell, I noticed the severe lack of diversity among historically socially disadvantaged groups. I also noted that there was such a strong push for diversity at Bucknell. This was perplexing to me. At the community college, there was an abundance of diverse students who, from my perspective, would be quite excited about the possibility of attending an institution like Bucknell on a full tuition scholarship.

I asked myself often; “why this partnership wasn’t being maximized?” Bucknell boasted the success of this program among its peers and faculty and staff involved spoke positively of the retention and matriculation rates as well as anecdotal stories concerning the benefit to Bucknell’s curricular experience. These questions, led me to some of the

questions that drove my research: Are there negative implications of the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program that Bucknell has not examined? Is there a lack of understanding or a lack of knowledge shared about the program? Are my experiences similar to other community college scholars? I had gained some experience with film and as stated above, had found a recent interest in performative social science research, so the idea of creating a documentary to attempt to answer these questions was quite appealing.

Documentaries, in themselves, can be a mode of performative social science. Since the 1920's, documentaries have been used to convey information and share knowledge about a diverse array of occurrences. However, in the last twenty years, a visually ethnographic form of research, especially anthropologically, has emerged. Roberts illustrates this arrival more clearly with his explanation about the use of media in performative social science; *"while the current focus on "performance" opens up further considerations—the range and shifting nature of performance or how we communicate through a variety of channels and across many forms of representation, as well as how to employ performative methods."* (Roberts, 2008).

This documentary, in particular, is aimed at helping the audience to experience and understand the program, like documentaries and "free video" did in the 20's and 50's surrounding everyday life in disparaged communities (Roberts, 2008). I'm using my perspective as a researcher who spent over one hundred hours interviewing subjects to actively create a piece that will help the audience to visually and audibly understand the program. Additionally, to influence this, I introduced a musical score. I commissioned a musical composer to watch the documentary in it's entirety, construct his own meaning

and convey it in the accompanying score. He took no direction from me and as such adds another dimension to the research. By connecting with other arts, I was able to use “various narrative paths, rather than having (one) singular narrative direction” (Denzin, 2003). That is to say that there are multiple perspectives to understand, consider, and create into knowledge as the music undoubtedly effect the emotional knowledge created when viewing the documentary. Informed by the research questions posed, their own experiences, and their encounter with the documentary emotionally, audibly, visually, and perhaps spiritually, the audience will construct meaning. That is to say that the results are, by design, what the viewers construct as performative social science documentaries "have effects; they make differences; they enact realities; and they can help to bring into being what they also discover"(Law and Urry, 2004).

DATA COLLECTION

The scope of this research project was somewhat broad in nature when compared to similar works at the University. The project was intended to evaluate the effect of the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program on both Bucknell and the partnering institutions. However, the program is also limited in the number of participants with approximately 100 students transferring to Bucknell, less than 50 staff members working with the program at Bucknell and one to two at each of the partnering institutions. As a result, participant selection was achieved using the key informant methodology initially and identifying others using the Snowball sampling methodology following. That is to

say that initial experts were identified and through their knowledge base they recommended others.

The research was collected using dozens of 45 minute – one-hour interviews. The interview questions were structured to ask common questions to participants in addition to asking personalized questions based on the key informants. The questions were designed to gain the most information possible but common enough to gauge trends among different groups. There were different categories identified and questions were created based upon those categories. They include; Community College Scholars, Students at Large, Faculty and Staff, Graduated Community College Scholars, and Higher Education Experts.

The questions are as follows:

Community College Scholar Questions:

1. What is the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program?
2. What was your life like before the Community College Scholarship Program?
3. What is your life like now, after (or during) the community college scholarship program?
4. Would you recommend this program to other community college students? Other universities?
5. What do you think the benefits are of the Community College Scholarship Program? The faults? (to both students and the university)

Students at large

1. What is the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program?
2. Do you know any Community College Scholars? If so, in what capacity? If not, why do you think that is?
3. Do these students seem different in any way? Please elaborate. (Actions in class, in co-curricular involvement, age, demographics, etc)
4. What do you think the benefits are of the Community College Scholarship Program? The faults? (o both students and the university)
5. Would you recommend this program to other Universities?

Faculty & Staff

1. What is the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program?
2. Have you worked with the program? If so, in what capacity?
3. Why do you continue to work with the program?
4. How did the program come to exist at Bucknell?
5. Do you know any Community College Scholars? If so, in what capacity? If not, why do you think that is?
6. Do these students seem different in any way? Please elaborate. (Actions in class, in co-curricular involvement, age, demographics, etc)
7. What do you think the benefits are of the Community College Scholarship Program? The faults? (both students and the university)
8. Would you recommend this program to other Universities?

Graduated Community College Scholars

1. What is the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program?
2. What was your life like before the Community College Scholarship Program?
3. What is your life like now, after (or during) the community college scholarship program?
4. Would you recommend this program to other community college students? Other universities?
5. What do you think the benefits are of the Community College Scholarship Program? The faults? (to both students and the university)
6. What are you doing now, after the community college program? Where do you think you would be if you did not complete the Community college program

Higher Education Expert Questions

1. What is the effect of diversity on college campuses?
2. Is higher education accessible for all people?

In terms of data analysis, the documentary served that purpose. As an active participant in the study and the research, my experiences in understanding the common trends and important extracted data were modeled in the final presentation of the documentary. Much like the data synthesis that occurs in a traditional research study, where hundreds of pages of interview transcriptions are condensed to a few pages, one

hundred hours of filmed events and interviews were condensed to twenty minutes by synthesis and analysis.

SHARED EXPERIENCE AND MY PERCEPTION

Before I start the next section, I would encourage the reader to first watch the documentary. Below I will share my experience in working with the documentary, what I learned, and what knowledge I constructed. However, what I've experienced, learned and constructed, should not dictate what the reader should take away. Performative social science is about sharing the experiences of others as well as the researchers experience to construct one's own meaning. At its most basic, performative social science research is knowledge transfer. To construct my understanding as one's own would be a detriment to and would contaminate their learning experience because it wouldn't be complete. The documentary is the culmination of my (the researchers) experience in tandem with the participants (Jones, 2006).

As I conducted interviews, I found a few trends emerge in the work that aligned with some of my expectations. My only real assumption moving into this project was concerning the experience of the Community College Scholars. A number of the subjects shared what I have felt as well: a development of self-efficacy. When I started my experience at the community college, I was not a high-achieving academic. I graduated in the bottom 90% of my class in high school and never intended to go to college. Through the two-year admissions process, the summer program, and my experience at Bucknell, I've found that I believe that I can do anything. As a group, I would assert that regardless

of how, we ended up believing that we had a limited potential before Bucknell University Tyler McClenithan'12 supported this when he said “ *The Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program instilled in me the value of dreaming and the value of thinking that you can make something big of your life and you can affect this world in a bigger way than you think you could*” (McClenithan,16:44). Because of this program and our successes, it seems that we have found a way to believe in ourselves.

Additionally, it seems that most of the Community College scholars had a negative perception of social mobility. “*This type of program embodies what I think America was supposed to be about, and I hear about the ‘American Dream’ and I don’t see that for a lot of people. But this program represents a piece of that that is real and extant that I’m lucky enough to receive*” (Dugan, 18:34). That is, to say that, we were the lucky few that found a “ladder out of poverty” (Lackford, 19:54).

I found that the CC Scholars also seemed to learn a lot from the students at Bucknell. “*I was initially pretty taken back when I met the Bucknellians and honestly, it put a bad taste in my mouth. I was really upset that I had to go to school with a bunch of rich white kids, but it turns out that they actually aren’t so bad*” (Slagle, Documentary out-takes). While there are a number of claims to the benefit of having the different perspectives of the scholars for the benefit of the traditional Bucknell student, there is also something to be said for the CC scholar really learning about the perspectives of the traditional Bucknell student.

Aside from their growth of individuals there were a number of commonalities that existed in their shared experience that I would like to highlight. They all spoke in their

interviews about their barriers to education. Most of them, some of them being adult learners, shared a common experience of the familial and situational contexts that initially prevented them or continues to hinder them in their pursuit of a post-secondary degree. *“I mean it hurt to know that they didn’t understand, you know ‘dad’s leaving and I’m going to miss you and all that’ But I understand what I’m doing, I’m trying to be their dad (be there) and try to get an education to be a better father”*(Lackford, 13:06). As stated above, these CC scholars developed a strong self-efficacy. Similarly, they all spoke that they did so by overcoming some significant challenge and succeeded in doing so because of the optimum balance of challenge and support. Finally, a number of them seemed to have similar experiences with their education in the past. For some reason or another, many of the scholars, including myself, didn’t feel a strong connection or dedication to their studies. *“I was proud...everyone was like wow, you did it. I thought you were never going to achieve anything, you were a screw up”* (Lackford, 12:08). However, through paying for their education and being offered a strong financial package at an elite four-year institution, they’ve come to embrace their academic pursuits.

I also was very enlightened by some of the interviews I had with current students at Bucknell. Their perspective was one that I didn’t initially value as much until I interacted with them. I think that it was somewhat difficult for some of them to answer difficult questions about the CC Scholars when they knew that I was, in fact, one of them. However, I think one of the trends that emerged is that they generally enjoyed having CC scholars in class. Many of the individual students spoke about experiences that they had had in the classroom where a CC Scholar shared their personal experience and how it

related to the class work at hand. *“In my sociology class, we have a particular, gregarious student who always helps myself and a few other students understand certain topics. When something is in the theoretical, it’s difficult to understand, but many of these students, help me (use) see it in a practical light”* (Falivene, Documentary Outtakes). A few students admitted that it helped them to get a better handle on some of the concepts and it helped others in constructing papers that allowed for an understanding of different points of view. The one view that they held, which was consistent with my own and some of the faculty that I interviewed, was that the CC Scholars added to the classroom with their to maturely share some of their past experiences and take risks in the classroom. In my personal experience, we’ve had some really deep conversations and I’ve learned a lot from the “traditional Bucknell student” with what they took the risk to share.

When I interviewed the staff that worked with the program, I was initially very surprised and emotionally taken back with this experience. I still remain touched by some of the tears that were shed by involved staff. Their experience was almost resounding and echoing together as if they were all saying the same thing. This program rejuvenated their spirits and motivated them to come back to work. *“it’s my motivation to come to work everyday...it’s, the reason I got into higher education”* (Midkiff, Documentary Outtakes). Some said that this experience has reminded them of why they chose to get involved with academia and others simply enjoyed the friendship that can blossom with mature and adult learners. Either way, the people who were involved with the program in some professional way or another can all agree on one thing; they hope to come back and work with it again next summer.

I found this to also be consistent with the faculty that simply had CC scholars in class. The faculty were all very excited to have CC Scholars in their class and had nothing negative to say about the scholars. The comments that were echoed with the staff I interviewed were: “exceedingly motivated, dedicated to their academic pursuits, focused on the learning more than the grades, take risks in class, add diversity to class discussions, and challenge the faculty as to why they were teaching the class the way they did” (Murray, Abowitz, MacKenzie, Gillespie, Daubman, Milofsky, Documentary Outtakes). Personally, I found this extremely rewarding to hear this. I often have thought about this program in how it affects me and the other CC scholars, but to really here that we add to the curricular nature of the institution really affected me.

Finally, I’d like to share my experience with the effect on the CC staff and the CC as an institution. During my interviews, the CC staff shared most of the same sentiments as the staff that work with the CC scholars at Bucknell. They loved the experience and shared that it was the highlight of their career. The effect on Bucknell’s campus is really illustrated in their curricular effect, but the effect on the CC isn’t very apparent. Because the students spend the majority of the time at Bucknell’s Campus after the going through the transfer program, it’s tough to evaluate and determine the effect. However, Bucknell’s partnership is unique among transfer articulation programs in its requirement of the Associates degree. The CC is reliant, just like four-year institutions, on degree completion statistics. Most transfer articulation programs work to benefit the student but often take students out of the institution before they complete their degree. I loved

hearing how Bucknell focused on assuring that the CC students get their associates degree at before matriculation to Bucknell.

I imagine that a lot of this perception is shared in the knowledge that is constructed by the audience. After all, it was what led me to include the above themes in the documentary. I think that this is where my voice is most prevalent and I'm grateful that I'm able to interact and share knowledge directly with the audience through the documentary.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PROGRAM

My experiences during the data collection and analysis of the emergent themes have been consistent with those theories and published research surrounding the study of Student Affairs, College Student Personnel and Higher Education Administration. During the process, I was consistently grounding my experiences in that study as the culmination of my degree came to a close. Interestingly enough, these disciplines were a core element of the academic background of many of those that were instrumental in designing the program. The purpose of this section is to outline the study's recurring trends and explain possible causes using student affairs theories and research.

The first and most reoccurring theme was the development of self-concept and self-efficacy in community college students. The most common shared possible indicator or cause of this was the difficulty and struggle of the summer preparation program. That is, a crisis or a situation where simply, one feels unequipped to address a new situation, problem, or life stage. While many theories in the cognitive and psychosocial realm

address the use of crises in student development, Nevitt Sanford (1968) provides the most logical explanation of this development of self-efficacy in this theory of challenge and response. He argues that to cultivate learning and development effectively, the student must experience optimum dissonance or the perfect balance of challenge and support. However, there are risks involved. If a student is offered too much support, their development may become stagnant and the student may not become strongly self-authored and if a student experiences too much challenge, without support, it is likely that the student may remove him/herself from the situation (ie: dropout, quit, etc.) (Sanford, 1968). With regard to the Bucknell Community College Program, the authors of the program explained that they were very intentional with the creation of the program (Mifkiff, Documentary Outtakes). They focused quite strongly upon facets that would provide enough support for these students to cope well with the intense academic rigor, for example; a Resident Director to coordinate and build community to relieve academic stress, the creation of a large cohort for a shared experience and social support, individual mentors to discuss academic and personal struggles, and scheduled trips to home communities to name a few. Ultimately, it can be argued, that this program is an example of creating an optimal balance of challenge and support for students and the result was a feeling of pride and self-efficacy in their future endeavors.

Secondly, the experiences of the community college scholars during their transition to Bucknell and their eventual success in that transition can be traced in student development theory and research. While there are many theories that deal directly with adult learners and their barriers to education, this study will focus more on the quality of

the transition and the retention during their four-year education. Schlossberg (1984) has done extensive work with psychosocial student development with regard to life transitions and their effects. Specifically, there are three non-discrete types of transitions. According to Goodman (2006), the three transitions are best described as: “*Anticipated Transitions, which occur predictably...Unanticipated Transitions, which are not predictable or scheduled, and Non-events which are expected to occur but do not*”. Most would agree that the transition of the community college scholars is anticipated. While their initial level of self-efficacy may suggest an unanticipated transition (they are surprised about their admissions status) there’s still substantial time to anticipate said transition. Further, the level of effect of the transition is determined by the context of the transition, one’s association to the event and it’s setting, and the impact, the amount the transition affects the daily operations of the individual (Goodman 2006; Schlossberg, 1984). Finally, the four factors that influence the result of the transition are Self, the characteristics, development and maturity of the individual, Situation, factors of the transition, support, levels of assistance the individual has available to them in their success, and ultimately strategies, the knowledge and foresight available to plan and cope with the transition (Goodman 2006; Schlossberg, 1984; Anderson, 2006).

Evaluating the effectiveness of a transition for an entire subsection of the population may be difficult to evaluate on each level. However, it may be easier to outline the support and situation available on an institutional level to ease the transitional process. Among the measures of institutional support, the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program Administrators are mostly successful in meeting them. They are

successful in providing affirmation through the mentoring program and providing honest feedback surrounding their performance during the summer program and their initial time at Bucknell after transferring (two measures of support). However, in the categories of aid and affect, the levels of institutional support are relatively immeasurable. With regard to situation, the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program creators were very careful to include the matriculation of 15-20 community college scholars as a cohesive group. Not only does this assist in the transition of the scholars by offering them a strong personal support group and individuals that are experiencing a similar transition concurrently, but it serves as a very strong retention tool.

The early departure of today's college students is a major issue in higher education. According to Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997), almost half of entering students at two-year institutions and a quarter of all students at four-year institutions leave the institution by the end of their first year. While there has been many successful retention efforts in the past few decades, attempts to reduce student departure has been characterized as a "puzzle", in part because of the effort's effect on different student groups in the institution (Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Tierney, 1992). This makes it particularly troubling for post-secondary institutions to deliver retention programs that are effective for minority student groups. The effect is depicted in the lower retention rates of minority students at both two-year and four-year institutions when compared to their dominant group counterparts (Tinto, 1993).

In addition to Vincent Tinto's research regarding retention, he also offers a strong theory with regard to reducing the number of students departing from post-secondary

institutions early. At the most basic level, research shows that the most common predictor of minority student retention is the individual students ability to identify with, at the very least, a sub-culture of the campus academically and socially (Tinto, 1993). The Authors of the program deliberately brought these students to Bucknell as a group for their support during their two years at Bucknell. Many of these students are older than the traditional Bucknell student, most are dissimilar with regard to socio-economic status, not to mention the differences in self-authorship, self-concept, cultural capital, etc. However, these students are all at least similar in the alienation that they experience at the institution, and as Tinto suggests, this is enough for the student to stay enrolled at Bucknell; 3% of community college scholar students have left Bucknell before degree completion.

While a theoretical framework cannot suggest the reality or causes for certain trends in the data analysis, it can provide a sense or general understanding for the cause of some of the trends. Additionally, the theoretical and research support can offer implications for further student affairs practice and implementation at other institutions and with regard to other transfer articulation programs.

LIMITATIONS & QUESTIONS

In evaluating a small program, holistically, for it's broad effect, there are bound to be some limitations. First, it should be noted that there were limited subjects to interview. Because the program is so small, only 100 people have been processed through the program and as such, only a portion were willing to be filmed on camera. Second,

there was some user error that caused for a lack of diversity in subjects featured in the Documentary. CC Staff, CC students, Bucknell students, and others were interviewed, however the data was ultimately contaminated by a combination of human error and technological failure. To combat this, a number of their responses were included in the quoted outtakes made in the above sections. Additionally, I worked to include responses from other interviews that reflected the general content of the lost data. Third, and finally, the research questions may have been too broad to determine some of the specific effects. While there were definite trends indicated in response, I would encourage future research with a more specific lense on just one of the outcomes I was intending to measure.

After completing the research, I think there is still much to be learned and investigated. In regard to the trends of self-efficacy, is this isolated only to community college scholars? Research comparing self-reported levels of self-efficacy comparing community college scholars to the general Bucknell population should be completed. Additionally, the Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program should be compared to other programs like POSSE that have a high-level of staff involvement to compare the trends in emotional investment and positive utility in happiness among involved staff. Outside Bucknell, further questions exist comparing Bucknell to other transfer articulation programs and the relative success to programs outside of the Jack Kent Cook foundation.

CONCLUSION

The culmination of this documentary and statement are at the peak of my academic career. After a year of filming over 100 hours, days spent traveling to local community colleges, countless hours spent troubleshooting, over 100 hours of film editing, and the task of sharing this experience on paper has been one that I'm able to share through this Documentary.

The Bucknell Community College Scholarship Program is and continues to be a large component of Bucknell's diversity mission and the model linkage program for the partnering community colleges. In addition to that, it has been claimed to be the model for other community college linkage programs in the nation. Part of performative social science research is the element of constructed meaning on the audience's part. As the reader, what is the effect on faculty and staff at the institution? Were there any unintentional results surrounding the happiness transfer students or their development as students at Bucknell? What were the outcomes regarding any effect on the general student body? The institution as a whole?

Regardless of the direct findings of this study, college access for low-SES students still remains a concern. However, if this linkage program is found to be positive for all parties involved, what are the implications for practice and implementation elsewhere? Community college students were among the brightest students that the faculty admitted working with, current students admitted great benefit to their learning, the President admitted it's need at the institution for compositional diversity, and current scholars described it as a life changing experience. (Milofsky, Falivene, Documentary

outtakes; Bravman, Dugan, Slagle, Lackford, Schrock, Documentary). Based on my encounter with this experience, I would argue that this piece does encourage application at other elite schools and community colleges across the nation.

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