PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

2006 AIR DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP PROPOSAL

"Gender, Geography, Transfer, and Baccalaureate Completion"

Data sets of interest: BPS:96/01

Grant Amount Requested: $15,000

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Project Summary

Most of the literature regarding persistence in postsecondary education focuses on traditional-aged students who begin in a four-year institution, despite the fact that nearly one-half of all undergraduate enrollments are in two-year institutions. Additionally, the majority of students enrolled in two-year institutions are women, nontraditional-aged, first generation, and low-income. Given this, the notion of the "traditional" student has become a misnomer. While many students who begin in a two-year institution have aspirations to transfer and complete the baccalaureate degree, few actually do so successfully.

This study seeks to improve information for student decisions about postsecondary education, particularly those would begin in the community college. it also seeks to add to the literature by looking at individual and institutional characteristics that make for successful baccalaureate degree attainment of first-time community college students. Specifically, it asks (a) what are the individual and geographic characteristics of first-time community college students who transfer to a four-year institution; (b) do individual characteristics such as gender, age, and risk factor index distinguish first-time community college students who transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree from those who do not; (c) do geographic characteristics such as level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school and first institution attended distinguish first-time community college students who transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree from those who do not; and (d) does geographic location (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school and first institution attended distinguish first-time community college students who transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree from those who do not, by gender?

To answer these questions, the researcher will employ various descriptive and multivariate techniques. Specifically, logistic regression will be used to determine any differences among those who do complete the baccalaureate degree from those who do not, given the stated independent variables. The study proposes a three-stage model, where characteristics of the individual (gender, age, and risk factor index) and level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school and first institution attended are hypothesized to influence baccalaureate attainment of those students who first attend a community college. Data will be drawn from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01). The sample will be restricted to students whose first enrollment was in a community college and then transferred to a four-year institution (n=408).

By identifying those characteristics that influence baccalaureate attainment, this study seeks to inform policymakers and education officials about successful transfer and baccalaureate completion. In particular, the

findings will inform college leaders about how to facilitate baccalaureate degree attainment of transfer students given their specific individual (gender, age, and risk factors) and geographic (level of urbanicity) characteristics.

Innovative aspects of this research include filling the knowledge gap about students who begin in a community college and are successful at baccalaureate degree attainment. This research will make both substantive and methodological contributions in terms of understanding the persistence of a different population of students. However, the most important innovative aspect of this research is the intent to create a new variable that better identifies students who are rural. A significant limitation of the dataset is the missing data on the HSLOCALE variable. This variable is intended to identify the level of urbanicity of the high school attended, yet is derived from SAT/ACT scores. However, many community college students do not take these standardized admissions tests resulting in many cases that are missing. The creation of this variable will enable the researcher to more effectively study and understand the impact of geography on college attendance, transfer, and baccalaureate completion.

Scholars and policymakers alike will find this research useful. Scholars as they continue to seek understanding and knowledge about what makes for successful baccalaureate completion. Additionally, institutional researchers and college level administrators interested in recruiting transfer students and designing programs to facilitate their persistence and successful baccalaureate completion will find this research useful. This will lead to a better design of programs that will facilitate the successful transfer and baccalaureate completion of this population. Finally, policymakers at both the state and national levels will find this research relevant as transfer continues to be a focus of access to the baccalaureate degree.

The need for some form of higher education in today's labor market, coupled with a better understanding of how educational leaders and policymakers can facilitate the transfer and baccalaureate completion process, is critical. This is especially true as our college population demographic changes. Knowledge about these populations is critical for academic and policy leaders so that a higher education is in fact accessible for all who are able and have an interest in pursuing a baccalaureate degree.

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Project Description

Statement of Problem and Variables

Many American families believe that education is a way to a better life. Higher education, in particular, is often viewed as imperative in today's society and to its economy. Research shows the value of a higher education for not only society, but for individuals as well. The median income varies widely according to educational attainment. For example, in 2003 a high school graduate could expect to earn a median income of $30,800; a community college graduate could expect to earn a median income of $37,600; and a graduate with a baccalaureate degree could expect to earn a median income of $49,900. There is a 62% difference in median income between a high school graduate and a bachelor's recipient (College Board, 2004a). Given these disparities in earnings among educational level, it is clear that some form of higher education is crucial in today's society. Despite this, it is estimated that, nearly 2 million low-income students qualified to attend college will not. One reason often sited is the lack of affordability of a higher education (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2002).

Since the early 1980s, college prices have risen at alarming rates, especially at public four-year institutions. The overall increase from 1980-81 to 2004-05 was 103.5% (in constant dollars) (College Board, 2004b). Between 2003-04 and 2004-05, the average tuition and fees for in-state students had increased by 10.5%, from $4,645 to $5,132 (College Board, 2004b).

However, community colleges provide access to higher education for many low-income students because of their lower price. Given the spiraling costs of a public four-year higher education, transfer from two-year to four-year institutions has become an important focus of access for these students. This is because completing the first two years of postsecondary education at a two-year institution is more affordable. It is estimated that nearly 6.5 million students attended community colleges full-time and 4 million attended part-time, accounting for nearly one-half of the total U.S. postsecondary population (American Association of Community Colleges, 2004). Studies indicate that large numbers of these students (25-42%) anticipate attaining a bachelor's degree. Yet in reality, few actually do persist to the baccalaureate degree. According to these same studies only about one-third of these students are successful at baccalaureate degree attainment (Coley, 2000; Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002; Hoachlander, Sikora, & Horn, 2003). Some studies go so far as to imply that without providing additional services and support beyond access, attending a community college may perpetuate rather than ameliorate social stratification in higher education (Velez & Javalgi, 1987; Lee & Frank, 1990; Tinto, 2004).

Significant work has been devoted to student persistence. However, most of this work focuses on students who begin in a four-year institution (Heller, 2002; Cofer & Somers, 2001; St. John, Paulsen, & Starkey, 1996). Yet, with nearly 50% of the undergraduate population beginning their postsecondary careers in a two-year institution, it is important to study the persistence of those students who continue to the baccalaureate degree (Bradburn, Hurst, & Peng, 2001).

Persistence. Although work on persistence has been on-going and varied for the past three decades, two models of persistence have become the basis of academicians' and practitioners' work alike. The most often cited works are Tinto's (1987; 1993) student integration model and Bean's (1980; 1982) student departure model. Although different in their conceptualization, these models are similar in that both view student persistence as a "result of a complex set of interactions over time" (Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora, & Hengstler, 1992, p. 145). Each is explained below.

Tinto (1975) studied the dropout behavior of college students. He developed a theoretical model of dropout behavior known as the student integration model. This model utilizes the concept of institutional fit to understand student persistence behavior. Persistence is dependent upon the match between a student's motivation and academic ability and the academic and social characteristics of the institution. Accordingly, interactions between the student and the academic and social structures of the institution will cause a student to continuously modify educational goals. This model has been the foundation for many researchers' work (Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda, 1993; Sandler, 2000). Yet, there is still a significant gap regarding the role of external factors that influence a student's perceptions, characteristics, and commitments. These external factors include parental support, ability to pay, among others (Bean, 1980; Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda, 1993).

The second conceptual model developed by Bean (1977), focused on external factors that impact student persistence. External factors include such things as attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. These factors shape a student's intentions with regard to persistence. This model known as the student attrition model argues that student attrition is analogous to job turnover (Bean 1980, 1982, 1983).

According to Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda (1993) and Berger and Milem (1999), the two models share many similarities. However, the relationship between college and the student as it relates to persistence is complex. For persistence to occur there must be a strong match that exists between the student and the college because of the pre-college characteristics that affect how well a student adjusts.

Student characteristics such as race, family income, parent/sibling educational level, and high school educational tract all correlate to persistence (Tierney, 1992). Additionally, academic and social integration are important in predicting persistence (Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda, 1993; Sandler, 2000; Tinto, 1975, 1993). The student integration model and the student attrition model are the primary theoretical models used by the vast majority of researchers to study persistence and success. While attempts have been made to integrate the two models, the focus of the majority of research is on students who are considered "traditional" and who begin in a four-year institution. Given this, it appears as though researchers fail to see the need for different theoretical models, specifically, those looking at the persistence of different populations (e.g., nontraditional, rural, beginning two-year, transfer, etc. students). Research advancing understanding about persistence for these nontraditional and special populations might consider how these models could be used. That is the focus of this research.

Nontraditional and special populations. As mentioned, the plethora of research about persistence in higher education (Tinto, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2004; Cofer & Somers, 2001; Paulsen & St. John, 2002) mainly focuses on traditional-aged students and the first year experience in four-year institutions. While some researchers focus on the effect of various individual characteristics and vertical transfer, few look at the effect of geographic characteristics. And, even fewer focus on what makes for successful baccalaureate completion for this special population. Characteristics such as gender, age, risk factor index, level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school, and level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the first institution attended are important when looking at the persistence of students who begin in a community college. It is the intention of this research to look at these variables of interest with regard to the persistence of beginning community college students.

Variables of interest. The variables of interest for this research include gender, age, risk factor index, level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school, and level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the first institution attended. The variables are addressed below.

Women, in particular, are a majority of the community college population. King (2000) found 58% of the community college student population was women. Similarly, in a study using the National Center for Education Statistics, 1995-96 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01) Berkner, He, & Cataldi (2002) found that in 2001, 52% of community college enrollees were women. Non-traditional aged students also frequent community college campuses much more so than the campuses of public four-year institutions. Adelman (1994) found that 26% of community college enrollees had enrolled between the ages of 25 and 30. Similarly, Choy

and Ottinger (1998) found that 26% of community college enrollees were 24 years of age or older. Finally, Berkner, He, & Cataldi (2002) found that one-quarter of those who began their academic careers in a community college in 1995-96 were 24 years of age or older.

The risk factor index includes seven risk factors which are delayed enrollment into postsecondary education, no high school diploma, attending part-time, being financially independent, having a dependent other than a spouse, being a single parent, and/or working full time (Horn & Premo, 1995). Horn and Premo's (1995) study resulted in the development of a risk factor index using these seven risk factors by the National Center for Education Statistics in the Beginning Postsecondary Students study. Research using the risk factor index shows that the more risk factors students have, the less likely they will transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution or anticipate attaining a baccalaureate degree. For those with one or more risk factors, 32% reported they anticipated receiving a baccalaureate degree, while 55% of those with no risk factors reported the same (Hoachlander, Sikora, & Horn, 2003). The presence of risk factors seems to present women with special concerns and barriers when it comes to successful baccalaureate attainment. Freeman, Conley, & Brooks (2005) found that while larger percentages of women transferred and completed a baccalaureate degree then men, women were actually *less likely* to be successful once other variables were factored into the multivariate analysis. Specifically, the prevalence of risk factors seemed to be a significant barrier for women who began in a community college and wished to attain their baccalaureate degree. It was hypothesized that this may be because women are more likely to have risk factors such as being a single parent, having a dependent other than a spouse, and/or having delayed enrollment than their male counterparts.

Few studies have focused on the impact of geography on transfer success, such as level of urbanicity of the high school attended. Despite contradictory results, most studies indicate that students from rural areas have lower transfer and baccalaureate attainment rates than students from non-rural areas. An implicit assumption of these studies is that students attend community college in the same area where they attended high school. This may or may not be the case. Yet, rural students do more often than not attend rural community colleges. Castaneda (2002) analyzed how transfer rates for students from rural community colleges differ from those in urban and suburban locations. She found that, "none of the studies have addressed transfer rates directly as they differ by location of the community college….there appears to be a greater need for in-depth study given the lower attainment of community college students in rural settings" (p. 446). There is need for research that looks at postsecondary educational

attainment of rural students in general, including the baccalaureate degree. Geography may provide one more obstacle to the bachelor's degree for students from rural areas. The two likely challenges may be distance to a four-year institution and the inability or desire to move away from home.

A recent study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education reported differences among urban, suburban, and rural students and their enrollment patterns. The data suggest that rural students were more likely to start out in "sub-baccalaureate institutions." Even more important, however, was proximity to the first institution attended. Of all students studied, 36.7 percent chose their first institution because it was close to home. Related to the importance of the first institution attended and critical to successful baccalaureate attainment of rural students is the location of the four-year institution. Again, if students cannot afford to leave home to attend college in the first place, how will they transfer to a four-year institution if that institution is perceived as being too far from home? Clearly, location is a driving force when students are considering where to first enroll in postsecondary education and whether or not to transfer to a four-year institution. When students can commute, they reduce housing costs. Thus, the overall cost of attending a postsecondary institution is greatly diminished (Adelman, 2005). But at what cost to the overall persistence and completion of the baccalaureate degree?

Clearly, there is a lack of research about the persistence of students who begin in a community college and complete a baccalaureate degree. Additionally, we know very little about the attendance and success of rural students or women. What little we do know about these populations tends to focus on traditional-aged students who begin their postsecondary careers in a four-year institution and the research is contradictory at best. It is contradictory in terms of women's success relative to men (Freeman, Conley, & Brooks, 2005) and it is contradictory regarding the success of rural students in general (Castaneda, 2002). These issues are critical at time when women of all ages are increasing their postsecondary attendance rates such that women comprise the majority of postsecondary enrollees. It is also important to understand postsecondary attendance patterns and baccalaureate completion of rural students given the increased emphasis on the baccalaureate degree in today's economy coupled with findings that rural students are actually less likely to complete that degree than their non-rural counterparts (Castaneda, 2002; U.S. Census, 2000).

While it is encouraging that women are increasing their postsecondary attendance rates, they still experience barriers, some of which are less likely to be experienced by men. For example, being a single parent is a risk factor. Women are more likely to be single parents than men. Other barriers such as the spiraling cost of higher

education, risk factors, and geographic location coupled with the need for a highly educated workforce and the postsecondary attendance patterns of women, particularly non-traditional women, point to the need for further research that focuses on successful baccalaureate degree attainment of women who first attend community colleges. Finally, for many students, particularly women and students from rural areas, the ability to begin and complete postsecondary education may be influenced by their desire to stay close to home in order to manage the cost of attending. Additionally, non-traditional aged students, especially women, have great difficulty in attending a postsecondary institution a great distance from where they live. This is often due to familial and work-related responsibilities.

Given this extensive literature, the assumption is that certain characteristics will impact whether or not students who transfer will complete a baccalaureate degree. Research indicates that individual characteristics such as age, gender, and risk factors distinguish those who transferred from a two-year to a four-year institution and finished a baccalaureate degree. While previous studies have examined intent to transfer and transfer/completion percentages, this study will add to the literature by looking specifically at geography and its impact on transfer and successful baccalaureate attainment of women.

The research will examine the relationship between individual and geographic characteristics and completion or non-completion of a baccalaureate degree among those who transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution. Specifically, this study examines the relationship (a) between individual characteristics and successful baccalaureate completion for those students who begin in a community college, by gender and (b) between geographic location and successful baccalaureate completion for those who begin in a community college, by gender.

Proposal of Work Including Database

The focus of the proposed study is to identify individual and geographic characteristics that impact successful baccalaureate attainment of first-time female community college students. The Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01) will be used to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the individual and geographic characteristics of first-time community college students who transfer to a four-year institution?

2. Do individual characteristics such as gender, age, and risk factor index distinguish first-time community college students who transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree from those who do not?

3. Do geographic characteristics such as level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school and first institution attended distinguish first-time community college students who transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree from those who do not?

4. Does geographic location (rural vs. non-rural) of the high school and first institution attended distinguish first-time community college students who transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree from those who do not, by gender?

These datasets are large and comprehensive and, with weights, are nationally representative which allows for generalizability of findings. Drawing on the theoretical foundations and empirical findings noted earlier, three models that integrate the theories of Tinto (1987; 1993) and Bean (1980; 1982; Bean & Metzner, 1985) will be tested (see Figure 1). Prior research has also integrated these models (Cabrera et al., 1992; 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). These models hypothesize that student and institutional characteristics influence a student's academic and social integration as well as commitment. This in turn influences persistence and eventual attainment. However, researchers have not considered the possible influence of geographic location on student success. Geography is understudied.

Sample. The Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study consists of a sample of all undergraduates, regardless of when they graduated from high school, who enrolled in postsecondary education for the first time in 1995-96 and were last interviewed in 2001, approximately six years later. This survey provides the latest data on degree attainment and persistence six years after the students first enrolled as well as their transfer rates and the outcomes of these transfers. The sample used in this paper will be restricted to BPS students whose first enrollment was in a community college and then transferred to a four-year institution (n=408).

Variables. The unit of analysis is community college students who transferred to a four-year institution. The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator of whether or not the student completed a baccalaureate degree.

Independent variables include gender, age (traditional vs. non-traditional), risk factor index, level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of high school, and level of urbanicity (rural vs. non-rural) of the first institution attended. See Table 1 for a complete list and description of the variables to be used.

Statistical methods. A combination of descriptive statistics and logistic regression will be used to analyze the data. Frequency distributions, means, and logistic regression models will be generated using the Data Analysis System (DAS), Electronic Code Book (ECB), SAS, and SUDAAN. The Data Analysis System (DAS) is a software

package developed by NCES for use with its surveys. It produces weighted percentage distributions, means, and standard errors taking into account the complex sample design. The ECB is a software package developed by NCES that allows users to browse, select, and view data elements included in the BPS data files. The ECB provides variable names, descriptions, value codes and percent distributions for each data element. It allows the user to tag variables and create extract datasets for further analysis. SAS and the SAS callable SUDAAN routines will be used to generate the logistic regression models. SAS is a statistical analysis software package. SUDAAN is a specialty software package that has routines for analyzing complex survey data. Thomas and Heck (2001) stress that using special software packages such as SUDAAN "is by far the most accurate and preferable" (p.530) method for analyzing these kind of data.

Data analysis will be conducted in four stages. First the researcher will create an extract from the BPS. This subset will include only those variables identified in the research questions. This will reduce the overall size of the dataset and increase processing speed. See table 1 in the appendix for a list of the variables to be extracted for analysis. Second, the researcher will compute unweighted frequency distributions for categorical level variables and univariate statistics including means for continuous level variables. Additionally, data will be examined for missing values. Third, the researcher will produce tables using the DAS to examine student and institutional characteristics. Finally, the researcher will conduct logistic regression to answer the primary research questions presented in the study.

Descriptive data analysis. Estimates and the corresponding standard errors will be presented in table format for individual and institutional characteristics. Again, individual characteristics include gender, age, and the risk factor index. The institutional characteristics include level of urbanicity (rural versus non-rural) of the high school and the first (community college) institution attended.

Multivariate data analysis. Logistic regression will be used to determine differences as identified in the research questions identified earlier. Here, the researcher will conduct a logistic regression analysis using a weighted balanced repeated replicate (BRR) design in SAS-callable version 9.0 of SUDAAN.

Logistic regression is an appropriate multivariate technique when the dependent variable is dichotomous (DesJardin, 2001). Mathematically:

$$\log \frac{P_i}{1-P_i} = a + BX_i \quad (1)$$

In this case there are two outcomes or events of interest including (a) transferred and attained a baccalaureate degree and (b) transferred and did not attain a baccalaureate degree. P_i is the probability that a student who began their postsecondary education in a community college and transferred attained a baccalaureate degree and $1 - P_i$ is the probability that the student did not attain a baccalaureate degree. The factors related to degree attainment of transfer students form a set of independent variables, X, and a and B are the intercept and the estimated coefficients of each of the independent variables included in the model, respectively. The null hypothesis (Ho) is that none of these characteristics distinguish those who attained a baccalaureate degree from those who do not Ho: P = 0. The alternative hypothesis (H_A) is characteristics will distinguish those who complete a bachelor's degree from those who do not H_A: P ≠0.

Limitations. There are several limitations to this study. First, while secondary data analysis has become a common method for conducting research, individual survey items are designed such that general questions about many topics are asked, rather than addressing a specific research topic. Broad research interests and policy concerns, rather than specific research questions or hypotheses, guide the development of national surveys. The result is that sometimes variables of interest by the researcher are unavailable or their measurement may be different than what the researcher would have preferred. However, national surveys offer advantages such as government sponsorship, large sample sizes, generalizability, sophisticated pilot tests, built-in mechanisms to address measurement error (e.g., re-interview studies), complex editing and data cleaning strategies, and large budgets that allow maximum nonresponse follow-up.

Second, the BPS sample consists of first-time beginners in postsecondary education. Students who may have stopped out are not included. And, stopping out is a common occurrence for students enrolled at the sub-baccalaureate level (Adelman, 1994).

Finally, the BPS sample size of students at two-year institutions (n=2432), while larger than past studies, may not contain enough cases and some analyses may be affected by missing data or small numbers of students. For example, the variable high school location (HSLOCALE) measured the level of urbanicity of the student's high school, but it was derived from ACT/SAT data. And, given that many community college students do not take these standardized tests, there are many missing cases. While, the variable for level of urbanicity for the high school is inadequate, it is possible and a primary focus of this research to construct a variable to fill in the large number of missing data on geographic location of the high school. Here, the researcher will use the Electronic Code Book

(ECB) to extract the variables INURBAN (location of first institution) and ICMILES (number of miles from first institution to student's home) to create a new variable that would impute for the missing HSLOCALE data. If the number of miles from the student's home to the first institution attended is sufficiently small, then the researcher will assume that the level of urbanicity is the same for the high school and first institution attended. For example, if a student first attended a rural community college and did not take the ACT/SAT, then HSLOCALE will be missing. However, if the student reported the first institution attended was eighteen miles from home, then HSLOCALE will be assumed to also be rural.

Dissemination Plan

This study will be a major component of the author's dissertation. Findings from the study will be disseminated through national conference presentations and scholarly publications. Results will be shared at the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Forum in 2007. In addition, proposals will be submitted to the Association for Higher Education (ASHE), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the Ohio Association for Institutional Research and Planning (OAIRP) for presentation at those conferences in 2007. Scholarly papers based on this research will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals such as Research in Higher Education, Sociology of Education, and Journal of Applied Research in the Community College (JARCC), among others.

Description of Policy Relevance

The proposed project will examine how individual and geographic characteristics impact successful baccalaureate attainment of first-time community college students. Therefore, it will allow for informed policy debate and suggest ways in which state and higher education leaders can improve student outcomes. For example, if findings indicate students who are women, nontraditional aged, or have a higher number of risk factors are less likely to be successful at baccalaureate attainment, then each of these entities could work together and individually to develop policies and programs that alleviate or counter these effects. Similarly, through examination of specific geographic characteristics, the study will offer recommendations for both community college and four-year institution administrators advising students and developing school policies specific to vertical transfer for students from rural areas.

Moreover, by examining how the relationships between two-year and four-year institutions (in terms of geographic location) and how they affect student outcomes, the study will illuminate some ways in which

collaboration among institutions of higher education could improve student outcomes. Overall, the findings of this study will suggest ways for changing educational environments and characteristics to assist students' progress from the community college to the four-year institution and their success in baccalaureate degree attainment.

Discussion of Innovative Aspects

Research conducted using Tinto's and Bean's theoretical models has provided a wealth of information regarding college student persistence. However, much of this research has focused on traditional students who begin their postsecondary careers in a four-year institution. As a result, many institutions have implemented programs aimed at improving the success rates of these students. Unfortunately, the lack of viable research about those students who begin in a community college and persist to the baccalaureate degree has led to a gap in the knowledge base and resulting support structures to ensure their success. This research is designed to fill that knowledge gap in order for policymakers and institutional leaders to better design programs that will facilitate the successful transfer and baccalaureate completion of these populations.

This research will make both substantive and methodological contributions in terms of understanding the persistence of a different population of students. However, the most important innovative aspect of this research is the intent to create a new variable that better identifies students who are rural. As noted, a significant limitation of the dataset is the HSLOCALE variable. This variable is intended to identify the level of urbanicity of the high school attended. However, the variable is derived from SAT and ACT scores. And, given that many community college students do not take these standardized admissions tests, many cases are missing in the dataset. This effectively limits the research that can be conducted on level of urbanicity of students who begin in a community college. The creation this variable will enable the researcher to more effectively study and understand the impact of geography on college attendance, transfer, and baccalaureate completion.

Discussion of Audience to Whom the Project will be Important

The audiences for whom this research will be most relevant are scholars and policymakers. Scholars in education, public policy, and sociology will be interested in the empirical findings as well as its addition to the field of study of student persistence. Included in this group are institutional researchers and college level administrators interested in growing its student population through the recruitment of transfer students. But, it's not just about growing that segment of the student population, it will also be important to these administrators in terms of persistence and successful baccalaureate attainment. Finally, policymakers at both the state and national levels will

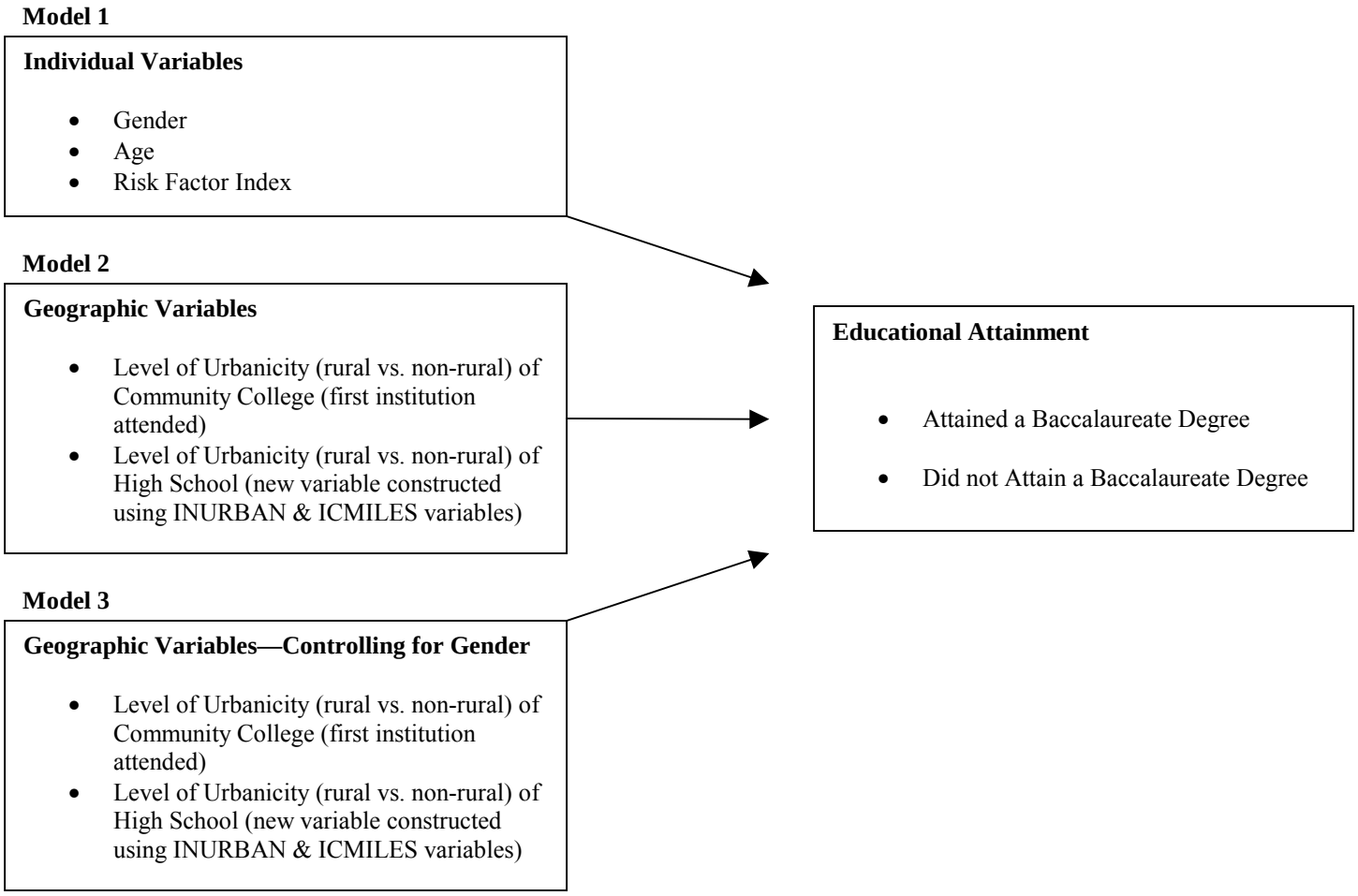
find this research relevant as transfer continues to be a focus of access to the baccalaureate degree. As tuition continues to spiral (Mumper & Freeman, 2005), community colleges increasingly become the entry into postsecondary education. In order for baccalaureate completion to be successful for these individuals, a clear understanding of what facilitates successful completion is imperative. Thus, policymakers can make thoughtful, meaningful policy to assist students at successful baccalaureate completion.

Appendices

Table 1: List of variables & description of those variables

Variables	Description	BPS Label
Filter Variable		
Transfer institutions by level 2001	Transfer institutions by level. Level of first (origin) and second (destination) institutions attended as of 2001. Second institution is the first transferred institution.	ITTRLV2B
Dependent Variable		
Highest degree attained 2001	Highest degree attained through June 2001.	DGREHI2B
Independent Variables		
Gender	Student gender based on student- or institution-reported gender, or gender reported on the FAFSA. Where gender not available, imputed based on student's first name.	SBGENDER
Age during first month enrolled 1995-96	Age during first month enrolled. Respondent's age, calculated from date of birth and first month enrolled, on the first day of the first month enrolled in postsecondary education.	SBAGFM
Risk index 1995-96	Risk index 1995-96. Index of risk. Represents an index of risk from 0-7 related to 7characteristics known to adversely affect persistence and attainment. Characteristics include: delayed enrollment, no high school diploma (including GED recipients), part-time enrollment, financial independence, having dependents other than spouse, single parent status, and working full-time while enrolled (35 hours or more). Since information on student employment is only available for those interviewed, use CATIWT1 for comparisons to prior NPSAS surveys. If 3 or more indicators were missing, SBRSK1Y1 was set to missing.	SBRSK1Y1
Level of Urbanicity of HS	Urban/rural location of High School attended. Variable dichotomized to rural or non-rural. Level of urbanicity is based on Census/NCES definitions. Rural includes "rural" and "small town" which is 25,000 residents or fewer. Non-rural includes all other categories of urbanicity which is more than 25,000 residents	Self constructed from ICMILES and INURBAN
First institution-urban/rural location	Urban/rural location of NPSAS institution. Location of the NPSAS institution based on Census/NCES definitions. Variable dichotomized to rural or non-rural. Level of urbanicity is based on Census/NCES definitions. Rural includes "rural" and "small town" which is 25,000 residents or fewer. Non-rural includes all other categories of urbanicity which is more than 25,000 residents.	INURBAN

Conceptual Model Graph



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Biographical Sketches

Principal Investigator (Applicant): Melissa L. Freeman

After transferring from a community college, and taking courses as a transient student from an international private four-year institution, I received my Bachelor's of Specialized Studies with an emphasis in Political Science, Sociology, and Interpersonal Communication from Ohio University 11 years after my high school graduation. As a first generation college graduate, I understand the myriad of obstacles faced by women who are transfer students, who are non-traditional, who are from rural communities, and who have a variety of risk factors. In 2000, I completed a Master of Arts in Public Administration from Ohio University, where I was awarded the "Outstanding Regional Public Administration Scholar Award." Continuing my graduate education, I enrolled in the Executive PhD program in Higher Education in the Fall of 2003 in the Department of Counseling & Higher Education at Ohio University.

My research interests focus on access to higher education. Specifically, I am interested in understanding the barriers to obtaining the baccalaureate degree for low-income, first generation, at risk, and female students. This encompasses an understanding of individual, institutional, and financial characteristics and barriers. My dissertation will examine the relationship between (a) individual characteristics and (b) geographic characteristics for students who begin in a community college and successfully complete a baccalaureate degree with those who do not.

During my academic career, I have taken several statistics courses covering a multitude of descriptive and multivariate techniques, including, but not limited to multiple regression analysis, logistic regression, ANOVA, Manova, Ancova, and Mancova. In addition, I have taken a course on survey design and nonparametric statistics. A research course required by my program gave me the opportunity to work with a number of data sets including BPS:96/01, IPEDS, NPSAS, and COOL. The requirement of this course was a proposal to be submitted for presentation at a conference. The proposal/paper entitled, "Characteristics that Influence Community College Student Transfer and Baccalaureate Degree Attainment" with Valerie Martin Conley and Gordon P. Brooks was accepted for presentation at the 2005 AIR Forum in San Diego, CA. A modified version of this paper has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Applied Research in the Community College (JARCC) for Spring 2006.

As a Research Associate with the Center for Higher Education, I have had ample opportunity to work on other research projects, aside from my academic papers. In 2005, I co-authored a chapter with Michael Mumper in

Higher Education: A Handbook of Theory and Research entitled, "The Causes and Consequences of Public College Tuition Inflation." The primary research activity in which I am currently engaged with the Center is a project funded by the Ohio Board of Regents. Here, we have conducted a study of college advisors' perceptions, use, and attitudes of the Course Applicability System (CAS). CAS is a web-based information access portal designed to provide advisors and students with specific information about the applicability and transferability of courses taken at one institution toward the fulfillment of a particular degree program at another institution.[1] CAS is one tool students and their advisors may use to facilitate the transfer process among institutions in the state. This study has afforded me the opportunity to present the research findings at several conferences during the past year. Currently, the Center for Higher Education is negotiating the contract to conduct a student study.

Prior to my appointment with the Center for Higher Education, I was the College of Education's Grants Administrator and Assistant to the Dean for Special Projects. I was responsible for building and directing a decentralized office of research to provide support to faculty, act as liaison to the central office of research, manage compliance, and manage restricted budgets. Additional duties were assigned by the Dean in my capacity as Assistant to the Dean for Special Projects such as acting as legislative liaison, conducting policy analysis, and providing editorial comments to faculty during the tenure/promotion process. Prior to coming to the College of Education, I worked for the Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development (ILGARD) at Ohio University, where I managed grant budgets and special projects.

[1] CAS was developed by Miami University of Ohio. For more information about CAS, visit the *About CAS* website: http://www.transfer.org/cas/index.html.

Melissa L. Freeman

EDUCATION

Doctoral Student. *Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*. Higher Education Administration. **GPA 3.96**.

Master of Arts. *Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*. Emphasis in Public Administration. **GPA 4.0**. Awarded "Outstanding Regional Public Administration Scholar" award. (2000)

Bachelor of Specialized Studies. *Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*. Emphasis in Sociology, Political Science, and Interpersonal Communication. Graduated with highest honors **Summa Cum Laude**. (1997)

Completed Courses for Transfer. *American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria*. **GPA 4.0**. Courses completed at the upper division level include Rhetorical Criticism and Analysis, Social Psychology, and Soviet History. (Spring Semester 1997)

Associate of Applied Business. *Hocking College, Nelsonville, Ohio*. Graduated with honors. GPA 3.6. (1989)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Associate. *Center for Higher Education, College of Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio* (2004-present)

Grants Administrator & Special Projects Coordinator. *College of Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*. (1998-2005)

Guest Lecturer. *Department of Counseling & Higher Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio* (Fall 2004)

Temporary Grant/Project Reassignment. *Vice President for Finance, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*. (October 2002-January 2003)

Grant Project Manager. *Center for Higher Education, College of Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.* (1997-1998)

Guest Lecturer. *Department of Political Science, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*. (Spring 1998)

Editorial Consultant. *University Relations, American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria*. (1996-1997)

Public Service Associate *Institute for Local Government Administration & Rural Development, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.* (Summer 1996)

Secretary. *Institute for Local Government Administration & Rural Development, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.* (1990-1996)

Assistant to the Director. *Vehicular Fuels Institute, Hocking College, Nelsonville, Ohio* (1988-1989)

TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Research Administration, Fall 2004, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Grant Writing, December 1999, Universidad Autonomous de Yucatan, Merida, Mexico.

Resume Writing Skills, Spring 1997, American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

Association of Institutional Research (AIR)
Association of the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
Society of Research Administrators
Golden Key National Honor Society
Gamma Pi Delta Honorary for nontraditional students
Phi Theta Kappa National Honorary for two-year colleges

SCHOLARSHIP

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Freeman, M. L., Conley, V. M., & Brooks, G. P. (in press). Vertical transitions: Community college student transfer and baccalaureate degree attainment. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College (JARCC).*

EDITED BOOKS, CHAPTERS, & MONOGRAPHS

Mumper, M. & Freeman, M. L. (2005). The causes and consequences of public college tuition inflation. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: A handbook of theory and research* (pp. 307-361). Norwell, MA: Springer.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Freeman, M. L. & Conley, V. M. (2005). *Course applicability system (CAS) survey of advisors' awareness and usage: Analysis report.* Center for Higher Education, Ohio University: Athens, OH.

Conley, V. M., Freeman, M. L., Wang, P., & Young, R. (2005). *Course applicability system (CAS) survey of advisors: Final descriptive results.* Center for Higher Education, Ohio University: Athens, OH.

Freeman, M. L. (2004). *In her own words*. Atheneum. Athens: Ohio University, College of Education.

Freeman, M. L. (2001). *Project director's grants management handbook*. Athens: Ohio University, College of Education.

Freeman, M. L. (2000). *Merit pay tried, merit pay failed: An analysis*. Unpublished master's star research paper, Ohio University, Athens.

Freeman, M. L. (1998). *Student achievement: Do per pupil expenditures, family income or ADC assistance matter? An analysis*. Unpublished master's star research paper, Ohio University, Athens.

Williams, J. H., Flournoy, M. A., Freeman, M. L., Gan, H., Nemapare, P., & Rota, J. (1998). *Assets hidden: The public presentation of Ohio University's international activities*. Athens: Ohio University, International Council Internationalization of the Curriculum Subcommittee.

Dewees, P. & Freeman, M. L. (1996). *AmeriCorps: Appalachian access and success program evaluation*. Athens: Ohio University, Institute for Local Government Administration & Rural Development.

PRESENTATIONS

Conley, V. M. & Freeman, M. L. (July, 2005) *Legislative and policy changes in Ohio regarding transfer and articulation*. Third Biennial Conference on Transfer and Articulation, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Conley, V. M. & Freeman, M. L. (June, 2005). *Course applicability system (CAS): Survey of advisors awareness and usage*. Ohio Transfer Council, Columbus, Ohio.

Freeman, M. L., Conley, V. M., & Brooks, G. P. (June, 2005). *Characteristics that influence community college student transfer and baccalaureate degree attainment*. Association for Institutional Research (AIR), San Diego, California.

Conley, V. M. & Freeman, M. L. (April, 2005). *Course applicability system (CAS): Survey of advisors awareness and usage*. Ohio Association of Institutional Research (OAIRP), Oxford, Ohio.

Freeman, M. L. & Conley, V. M. (2005). *Course applicability system (CAS) Advisors' survey: Final results*. College of Education 4th Annual Research Conference, Athens, Ohio.

Conley, V. M. & Freeman, M. L. (2005). *Course applicability system (CAS) advisors' survey: Preliminary results*. Ohio Articulation and Transfer Council, Columbus, Ohio University

Freeman, M. L. (2004). *The causes and consequences of public tuition inflation*. College of Education 3rd Annual Research Conference, Athens, Ohio

SKILLS

Knowledge of project and financial management and human resource management, grievance procedure skills, strong familiarity with OMB circulars (A-21, A-110, A-122) and University policy, training/teaching skills and experience, strong writing skills, strong interpersonal and organizational skills, strong quantitative analytical skills including statistical analysis, survey design, and methodology construction, strong qualitative research skills including focus group facilitation, computer skills including Enterprise Development Project ORACLE system, PARIS, CUFS, WordPerfect, Microsoft Office including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access, SPSS, SAS, SUDAAN, DAS, ECB, PageMaker for PC and Macintosh, graphic layout, and HTML.

Faculty Dissertation Director/Chair: Valerie Martin Conley, Ph.D.

Valerie Martin Conley is Assistant Professor of Higher Education and Associate Director of the Center for Higher Education at Ohio University. Dr. Conley joined the faculty of Ohio University in 2002 after completing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Virginia Tech. She also holds a B.A. and M.A. in Sociology from the University of Virginia.

Last year Dr. Conley assumed a leadership role with Ohio University's Center for Higher Education. The Center was established in 1981. Its mission is to enhance higher education in Southeastern Ohio and portions of Appalachia by assisting two- and four-year institutions in the region through instructional, research and service programs. As Associate Director, Dr. Conley led a successful comprehensive program review process, including a self-study and coordination of a strategic planning retreat.

Among the goals of the Center are to conduct research and policy analysis devoted to topics relevant to higher education in the state of Ohio, the Appalachian region and the nation; and to provide faculty and students at Ohio University with opportunities for professional experience and research. During the next five years, the Center will seek opportunities to further these goals in two primary areas of interest: a) student access and success, and b) human resources development.

Dr. Conley teaches courses on institutional research, assessment, management of higher education, policy, and faculty issues. She specializes in quantitative applications for educational policy and research drawing upon her experience as an institutional researcher and consultant to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Active in the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), Dr. Conley is currently Associate Track Chair for Track 3 and served two consecutive three-year terms on the Higher Education Data Policy Committee (HEDPC). She teaches in two summer institutes: Foundations for the Practice of Institutional Research and the AIR/NCES/NSF Summer Data Policy Institute. Part of the curriculum for the institutes includes online applications for accessing national datasets including College Opportunities Online (COOL), the Peer Analysis System, and the Data Analysis System (DAS).

Dr. Conley's research interests focus on faculty retirement, part-time faculty, academic labor market and management issues. Most of Dr. Conley's research is derived from secondary analysis of the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF). She is a member of the NSOPF Technical Review Panel (TRP); however, her

involvement with the study extends beyond this role. Dr. Conley has been integrally involved with the study since 1994 when she became the Special Assistant to the Project Officer for NSOPF. Dr. Conley was responsible for managing projects and coordinating activities with the data collection contractor, as well as outside consultants using the data for research. She is co-author of NCES publications on retirement with Jay Chronister and Roger Baldwin: *Retirement and other departure plans of instructional faculty and staff in higher education institutions* (NCES 98-254); and part-time faculty with David Leslie: *Part-time instructional faculty and staff: Who they are, what they do, and what they think* (NCES 2002-163). Her dissertation focused on connections between these issues, specifically on the characteristics of faculty members who indicated they had previously retired from another position. This established line of research inquiry has resulted in a forthcoming volume of New Directions for Higher Education on phased retirement and invitations to write chapters on retirement for the 2006 and 2007 editions of the National Education Association (NEA) Higher Education Almanac, to serve as discussant for papers on part-time and contingent faculty at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and to attend a TIAA-CREF Institute sponsored conference.

Some of her recent publications include *Exploring faculty retirement issues in public 2–year institutions* (sole author)*; Progress for women in academe, yet inequities persist: Evidence from NSOPF:99* (with Robert K. Toutkoushian); and a forthcoming volume of New Directions for Higher Education, *New ways to phase into retirement: Options for faculty and institutions* (co-edited with David W. Leslie).

Valerie Martin Conley

Professional Experience

2004 –	Associate Director, Center for Higher Education, College of Education, Ohio University
2002 –	Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling and Higher Education, College of Education, Ohio University
2000-02	Principal Investigator, Conley Education and Computer Consulting, Inc.
1997-00	Assistant Director, Institutional Research and Planning Analysis, Virginia Tech
1995-97	Deputy Project Director, U.S. Department of Education Contracts, Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc.
1990-95	Senior Research Analyst, U.S. Department of Education Contracts, Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc.
1989-90	Research Analyst, U.S. Department of Education IPEDS Data Collection, Atlantic Research Corporation
1986-89	Research Assistant, Bureau of Educational Research, University of Virginia

Journal Articles

Freeman, M. L., Conley, V. M., & Brooks, G. P. (in press). Vertical transitions: Community college student transfer and baccalaureate degree attainment. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College.* Scheduled to appear 2006.

Conley, V. M. (2005). Exploring faculty retirement issues in public 2–year institutions. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College, 13*(1), 59-72.

Toutkoushian, R. K., & Conley, V. M. (2005). Progress for women in academe, yet inequities persist: Evidence from NSOPF:99. *Research in Higher Education, 46*(1), 1-28.

Conley, V. M. & Leslie, D. W. (2002). Part-time instructional faculty and staff: Who they are, what they do, and what they think. *Education Statistics Quarterly, 4*(2), 97-103.

Conley, V. M. (2001). Separation: An integral aspect of the staffing process. *The College Student Affairs Journal, 21*(1), 57-63.

Turrentine, C. G., & Conley, V. M. (2001). Two measures of diversity in the labor pool for entry-level student affairs positions. *NASPA Journal*, *39*, 84-102.

Edited Books, Chapters, and Monographs

Conley, V. M. (in press). Demographics and motives affecting faculty retirement. In D. W. Leslie and V. M. Conley (Eds.), *New ways to phase into retirement: Options for faculty and institutions. New Directions for Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Scheduled to appear Winter 2006.

Leslie, D. W., & Conley, V. M. (Eds.). (in press). *New ways to phase into retirement: Options for faculty and institutions. New Directions for Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Scheduled to appear Winter 2006.

Conley, V. M. (in press). The many faces of retirement: Early, phased, and postponed decision-making. *The NEA 2006 Almanac of Higher Education*. Washington, DC: National Education Association. Scheduled to appear March 2006.

Conley, V. M. (2005). Career paths for women faculty: Evidence from NSOPF:99. In John W. Curtis (Ed.), The challenge of balancing faculty careers and family work. *New Directions for Higher Education, 130*, 25-39.

Leslie, D. W. & Conley, V. M. (2004). Early and phased retirement plans among tenured faculty: A first look. Institute Monograph Series, Houston, TX: University of Houston Law Center.

Conley, V. M. (2001). The impact of faculty retirement on the quality of the academy. *International perspectives on quality in higher education*. EPI Monograph Series on Higher Education, Blacksburg, VA: Educational Policy Institute of Virginia Tech.

Government Documents and Other Publications

Freeman, M. L. & Conley, V. M. (2005). *Course Applicability System (CAS) Survey of Advisors' Awareness and Usage: Final analysis report.* Ohio University Center for Higher Education.

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Conley, V. M. (2003). [Review of the book *Using benchmarking to inform practice in higher education*]. *AAHE Bulletin*.

Conley, V. M. (March, 2003). *Early institution contacting for the National Study of Faculty and Students (NSoFaS: 2004)*. AIR Alert 15-1. Association for Institutional Research: Tallahassee, FL.

Conley, V. M. (September, 2002). *National Study of Faculty and Students (NSoFaS: 2004)*. AIR Alert 15. Association for Institutional Research: Tallahassee, FL.

Conley, V. M. & Teeter, D. J. (November, 1999). *Proposed changes to IPEDS staff and salaries surveys*. AIR Alert 9-8. Association for Institutional Research: Tallahassee, FL.

Conley, V. M (2002). *Part-time instructional faculty and staff: Who they are, what they do, and what they think: Supplemental Table Update* (NCES 2002-163u). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Conley, V. M., & Leslie, D.W. (2002). *Part-time instructional faculty and staff: Who they are, what they do, and what they think* (NCES 2002-163). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Hyer, P., Conley, V. M., & McLaughlin, G. (1999). *The campus climate for diversity: Faculty perceptions.* Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Conley, V. M. (1997). *Characteristics and attitudes of instructional faculty and staff in the humanities*. (NCES 97-973). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Chronister, J., Baldwin, R., Conley, V. (1997). *Retirement and other departure plans of instructional faculty and staff in higher education institutions*. (NCES 98-254). Washington. DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Salvucci, S., Walter, E., Conley, V., Fink, S., Saba, M., & Kaufman, S. (1997). *NCES measurement error programs*. (NCES 97-464). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Wenck, S. R., Salvucci, S. M., Bureika, R. Conley, V. & Zimbler, L. J. (1997). Using Cognitive Research to Improve the Accuracy of Postsecondary Faculty Counts, *Proceedings of the Survey Research Section, American Statistical Association, 157*, 245-249.

Conley, V., Fink, S., Saba, M., & Kaufman, S. (1996). An Overview of NCES Surveys Reinterview Programs [Abstract]. *Proceedings of the Survey Research Section, American Statistical Association, 156,* 722-727.

Smith, T., Rogers, G., Alsalam, N., Perie, M., Mahoney, R., & Martin, V. (1994). *Condition of education*, 1994. (NCES 94-149). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Delong, H., Martin, V., & Schlaline, B. (1992). Transforming a mainframe system to the PC. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual SAS Users Group International Conference*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute, Inc.

Research in Progress

Ehrenberg, R. G. & Conley, V. M. (in progress). Report on the survey of faculty retirement policies. *Academe*. Scheduled to appear 2006.

Conley, V. M. (in progress). Retirement and benefits. *The NEA 2007 Almanac of Higher Education*. Washington, DC: National Education Association. Scheduled to appear March 2007.

Conley, V. M. & Janosik, S. M. (in progress). Retiring from an academic career: Emerging patterns.

Conley, V. M. & Leslie, D. W. (in progress). Early and phased retirement: Are tenured faculty interested?

Organizational Memberships and Service

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE)

Invitational Pre-conference Research Forum 2003

American Educational Research Association (AERA)
Reviewer Division J 2005

Association for Institutional Research (AIR)
Associate Chair Track 3 - Academic Program and Faculty Issues 2006
Higher Education Data Policy Committee 1999 - 2005
AIR/AAUP Advisory Committee: Faculty Compensation Survey 2003 – Present
Reviewer Track 6 - Theory, Practice, and Ethics of IR 1999
Reviewer Track 3 - Academic Program and Faculty Issues 1997, 2005

Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
Site Selection Committee 2005
Research Paper Discussant 2005
Reviewer – Conference Proposals 2003 - 2005

European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR)

Northeast Association for Institutional Research (NEAIR)

Ohio Association for Institutional Research and Planning (OAIRP)

Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR)
Vendor/Exhibit Committee Chair - 2001
Nominating Committee - 2000

Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning (VAMAP)
Past President 2001 - 2002
President 2000 - 2001
Fall Conference Chair 2000
Spring Drive-In Program Coordinator 1999
Executive Board 1998 - 2002

National/State

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

AIR/AAUP Advisory Committee: Faculty Compensation Survey 2003 – Present
Committee on Retirement 2002 – Present

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

IPEDS Train–the–Trainer 2003 – Present
IPEDS Peer Analysis System Advisory Group 2002
IPEDS Instructional Activity Working Group 2001 – 2003
IPEDS Redesign Faculty/Staff Working Group 1998 - 1999

National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) Technical Review Panel 1994 – Present

National Study of Instructional Productivity and Cost (Delaware Study)
Out-of-classroom Advisory Committee 2002 – 2005

Ohio Board of Regents (OBR)
Articulation and Transfer Advisory Council's Assessment Committee 2005 – Present

Budget

Item	**Requested**
Salary Support: Freeman, M. L. (1,274.67/month, September 2006-May 2007)	$11,472
Fringe Benefits (15.9252%, no health insurance included)	$1,827
Travel AIR Conference ASHE Conference	$1,701
TOTAL	**$15,000**

Current and Pending Support

I am currently working as a Research Associate and receive funding from the Center for Higher Education at Ohio University. However, the support will terminate at the end of 2005-06 fiscal year (June 30, 2006). At this point, no support for the 2006-07 academic year has been guaranteed.

Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

Access to a computer with the appropriate statistical software is provided through Dr. Valerie Martin Conley, as the Principal Investigator for the NCES restricted-use data license agreement. I am included as a notarized user of the restricted data files and our facility meets the NCES security requirements for use of the restricted data. In addition, I have space through the Center for Higher Education with computers, printers, and a copier. As a doctoral student at Ohio University all resources are available for me to complete this dissertation study including library, statistical, technology support, etc.

Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

Original letter of recommendation from Faculty Dissertation Director/Chair will be faxed/mailed to the AIR office.

January 7, 2006

Dissertation Fellowship Review Committee

Dear Committee Members:

Melissa Freeman is a doctoral student in Ohio University's Executive Ph.D. program in Higher Education and a Research Associate with the Center for Higher Education. As Associate Director of the Center, I am Melissa's direct supervisor. I am also her dissertation advisor. I have gotten to know Melissa very well over the past three years and it is without hesitation that I recommend her for this fellowship.

She has taken several courses with me during her studies and has always excelled in them. As a former community college, transfer, and study–abroad student, Melissa's academic background and experience afford her multiple lenses through which to view higher education. She often makes insightful comments and raises important issues during class discussions. She is an exceptional writer. Melissa looks for opportunities to engage in research, honing her analytical and public speaking skills. She has presented at national conferences and has co-authored a chapter in the *Handbook of Theory and Research.* She has taken several advanced quantitative methods courses and done extremely well in them. In fact, she has taken several methods courses above and beyond the degree requirements for the program.

Melissa has experience working with national datasets. She completed a course I teach on using national datasets as part of her doctoral coursework. She was by far the best student in the class of 22 students. One of the assignments was to complete a conference proposal. The proposal was accepted for presentation and a revised version of the research paper has been accepted for publication in a national journal. Also, I have taught in the Summer Data Policy Institute for several

years, which has given me the opportunity to interact with graduate students from across the country; and I believe Melissa has what it takes to succeed with great potential as an educational researcher.

Her experience with data collection and analysis includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, she worked with me over the past year to design and conduct an on-line survey for the Ohio Board of Regents and the state-wide Articulation and Transfer Council. The results have been widely disseminated and members of the Council were impressed with her work. She is also an experienced interviewer.

Her publications include a chapter in the *Handbook of Theory and Research*, a forthcoming article in the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, and two state grant funded reports. Two of Melissa's papers were selected as Master's Star Research Papers.

I am confident that Melissa will make significant contributions to higher education through her research. I enthusiastically support Melissa's application for an AIR dissertation fellowship.

Thank you,

Valerie Martin Conley, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Higher Education and
Associate Director, Center for Higher Education
Department of Counseling and Higher Education