

2004 AIR/NPEC DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

**States, Schools, and Students:  
Contextualizing Community College Outcomes**

Data sets of interest:  
National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS)  
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Grant Amount Requested: \$14,980

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Do community colleges serve as a democratizing force in higher education or do they perpetuate social inequality? The proposed project broadens previous inquiries on this question by examining how characteristics of community colleges and their organizational environments affect educational and occupational attainment of community college students. The goal of the study is to provide a more comprehensive and policy relevant understanding of the successes and challenges faced by community college students. Its findings will be relevant to researchers in the areas of education and stratification, as well as practitioners in the social policy arena who are concerned with the future of community college education.

The study will combine characteristics of students, community colleges, and state environments to identify and systematically examine a much broader range of factors influencing students' educational and occupational attainment than has been done in previous research. By introducing organizational environment into the study of student outcomes, the project will broaden the definition of context considered in previous studies and examine more thoroughly which factors improve or hinder students' educational and labor market outcomes. Moreover, by illuminating specific community college practices and characteristics of state environments affecting students, the study will contribute to an informed policy debate and suggest how government and community college leaders could facilitate students' success within community colleges and the academic and occupational world beyond. This is particularly important since large and growing numbers of students commence their postsecondary education in community colleges and a disproportionate number of those students are members of disadvantaged groups.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Since the founding of the first community college in 1901, community colleges have attained a prominent place in U.S. higher education, enrolling 36 percent of all students and 47 percent of students attending public institutions (NCES, 2001b)<sup>1</sup>. In addition to accommodating a large proportion of students, community colleges enroll disproportionate numbers of disadvantaged as well as non-traditional students (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 2001; NCES, 1998). Understanding the degree to which U.S. higher education facilitates social mobility and what can be done to improve educational and labor market outcomes of disadvantaged groups, thus, requires an examination of the successes and challenges faced by community college students.

Although research on community colleges has proliferated in recent decades, the debate regarding whether community colleges serve as a democratizing force in higher education or “cool out” disadvantaged students and perpetuate social inequality continues (for review see Dougherty, 2001). In order to contribute meaningfully to this discussion, I propose to broaden previous inquiries by examining how characteristics of community colleges and their organizational environments promote or hinder educational and occupational attainment of community college students. This approach will offer a more comprehensive understanding of the educational and labor market accomplishments of community college students, as well as specific policy recommendations for facilitating students’ success in community colleges and the academic and occupational world beyond.

### Educational and Labor Market Outcomes of Community College Students

Community colleges originally focused on academic/transfer programs, but they transformed into “vocational institutions” during 1970s (Brint & Karabel, 1989; 1991;

Dougherty, 2001). More recently they also became what Adelman (1992) refers to as “occasional institutions” (see also Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Grubb, 1991). Notwithstanding these transformations, approximately three-fourths of community college entrants still aspire to transfer to four-year institutions. However, only about 20-40 percent ever transfer,<sup>2</sup> and about one third of those who transfer earn bachelor’s degrees (NCES, 2001a; 2003a).

Low transfer rates and baccalaureate attainment of community college students partly stem from their individual characteristics. Community college students tend to have lower academic achievement in high school and are more likely to be female, working class, and nonwhite than their four-year counterparts (Grubb, 1991; Lee & Frank 1990). They are also more likely to have dependents, be single parents, work full-time, be enrolled in school part-time, and delay entry into postsecondary education after high school (NCES, 1996; 1998). Almost half of the community college students have two or more of these “persistence risk factors” (NCES, 2003b). Therefore, it is not surprising that students who begin their postsecondary education in community colleges are less likely to earn any kind of a degree, and especially a bachelor’s degree, compared to those who enter four-year institutions (NCES, 1996).

Lower educational attainment of community college students is consequential for their labor market outcomes as each year of schooling generally increases income – with “degree” years, and some would argue especially completion of a bachelor’s degree, having a bonus effect (Belman & Heywood, 1991; Jaeger & Page, 1996). However, net of educational attainment, community college entrants fare well in the labor market. Community college students who earn bachelor’s degrees receive the same economic rewards as bachelor’s degree holders who start at four-year institutions (Adelman, 1992; Monk-Turner, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991;

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<sup>1</sup> In this proposal, the term “community college” refers to public two-year institutions granting associate degrees.

Whitaker & Pascarella, 1994). In addition, there is ample evidence that community college education enhances earnings of students aspiring to sub-baccalaureate education (Adelman, 1992; Arum & Hout, 1998; Grubb, 1996; 1997; Lewis, Hearn, & Zilbert, 1993; Lin & Vogt, 1996). Grubb (1999) reports that completing an associate degree significantly improves individual's labor market outcomes: men with associate degrees earn 18 percent and women 23 percent more than high school graduates (see also a review in Kane & Rouse, 1999).

Although educational and labor outcomes are influenced by individual characteristics, even when compared to students with similar backgrounds and academic abilities, community college students have lower educational attainment than students who start postsecondary education in four-year institutions (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1991; 2001; Monk-Turner, 1995; Velez, 1985). These findings suggest that factors beyond individual characteristics influence students' educational and occupational attainment. Building on recent research in the areas of stratification, community colleges, and organizational theory, I attempt to illuminate how structural factors, including characteristics of community colleges and their environments, affect students' educational and labor market outcomes.

### Characteristics of Community Colleges

Recent stratification research presents convincing evidence that characteristics of educational systems influence students' educational and occupational attainment (see reviews in Kerckhoff, 1995; Treiman & Ganzeboom, 2000). Similarly, recent research on community colleges has shown that the degree of vocational focus and branch status of community colleges affect student outcomes. Studies using institutional (e.g., Armstrong & Mellissinos, 1994) and state-level data (e.g., Grubb, 1989), as well as community college course offerings (Cohen &

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<sup>2</sup> Determining transfer rates is complicated since it depends on a definition used. See NCES (2001a) report for an excellent discussion about various definitions of "potential transfer students" and their transfer rates.

Ignash, 1994) find that the more vocational the community colleges or community college systems the lower the transfer rate to four-year institutions. In addition, students who attend two-year university branches have a higher likelihood of transfer and B.A. completion than their counterparts in non-branch campuses (for a review see Dougherty, 1991; 2001).

Although these studies make an important contribution to contextualizing the study of student outcomes, they are limited in several respects. Previous findings, particularly those regarding branch status, are based on case studies; authors rarely control for background differences between students who begin at different types of community colleges; and in their acclaim of two-year branches authors ignore potentially consequential variation between them – e.g., regional campuses of the University of Connecticut are entirely academic while branch systems in other states such as Alaska, Hawaii, Kentucky, and New Mexico maintain strong vocational programs (Dougherty, 1991). Moreover, these studies do not consider the effects of resources on students' educational and occupational attainment, even though studies of secondary schools have documented the importance of resources for student outcomes (Arum, 1996; 1998; Card & Krueger, 1992; 1996; Wenglinsky, 1997).

Therefore, simultaneous consideration of multiple factors (e.g., vocational focus, branch status, school resources) in a nationally representative sample is needed to further assess these claims and examine the effects of community college characteristics on students' educational and labor market outcomes.

### Characteristics of Organizational Environment

Focusing exclusively on characteristics of community colleges yields a narrow definition of context and overlooks a long standing argument in organizational literature that environment shapes organizational practices (for a review see Scott, 1995; 1998). A neoinstitutional

perspective, which re-introduced environment into the study of organizations, has been highly influential in theorizing about school practices (e.g., Meyer, 1977; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Meyer, Scott, & Strang, 1994; Scott & Meyer, 1987). Although neoinstitutional researchers focus on the study of institutional forces, definitions of organizational field and mimetic forces (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) suggest that a range of institutional, political and economic factors in the environment affect organizational practices.<sup>3</sup> In order to adequately contextualize outcomes of community college students, it is thus necessary to consider how organizational environmental shape community college characteristics, and through them, student outcomes.

Community colleges operate in highly differentiated organizational environments. Although some states exercise fairly tight control over community colleges, others allow them substantial autonomy. This is the case with respect to the amount of funding provided to community colleges (NCES, 1999), governance and coordinating structures (ECS, 1997; Tollefson & Fountain, 1994; Richardson & de los Santos, 2001) and implementation of articulation agreements regulating transfer of students and credits among institutions of higher education (ECS, 2001; Ignash & Townsend, 2000; 2001). Community colleges also exist in states with different occupational opportunities, resulting in disparate demands for community college training, as well as varying amounts of competition from four-year institutions.

Although numerous studies map out the structural landscape of higher education, they do not connect their findings to either community college characteristics or student outcomes. For example, are community colleges that are regulated by higher education boards more vocationally focused (in order to avoid duplication and competition with four-year institutions) than those governed by community college boards? Are community colleges that receive more

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<sup>3</sup> Institutional, political, and economic aspects of the environment are interdependent, e.g. state actions are influenced by competition from the private sector (Arum, 1996) and economic considerations (Dougherty, 2001;

resources from the state more vocationally focused, due to a traditional emphasis of state government on occupational training in community colleges<sup>4</sup>? And how does that affect students' transfer to four-year institutions and/or labor market outcomes?

One may assume that the relationship between environment and organizational practices is direct. For example, it may be expected logical that students attending community college in states with strong articulation agreements would have more opportunities to transfer and complete bachelor's degrees. But this may not necessarily be the case – organizational literature reveals numerous ways in which organizations can respond to government mandates in symbolic ways without substantially altering their practices (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Sutton et al., 1994) and how government's initial intentions can be mediated by organizational actors (Edelman, 1992) or have unintended consequences (Fligstein, 1990). The effects of organizational environment on characteristics of community colleges and student outcomes, thus, need to be empirically evaluated.

In rare instances when community college studies consider the effects of organizational environments, they emphasize distinctions between community colleges and four-year institutions and therefore neither provide adequate accounts of variation among community colleges nor link the three levels of analysis, including environmental forces, community college practices, and student outcomes (Dougherty, 1991; 2001; Brint & Karabel, 1989; 1991). For example, Brint and Karabel (1989) suggest that community colleges developed much more slowly in states that had a large number of private institutions or state universities that had a tradition of relatively open access, but they never examine whether that has an effect on either practices of community colleges (e.g., vocational focus) or student outcomes.

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Grubb, 1988). However, for simplicity of presentation, each factor is assigned to one category.

## Proposed Study

Students bring their individual backgrounds and preferences to community colleges, but they are also constrained by the characteristics and policies of the institutions they enter. Concurrently, community colleges are influenced by their organizational environments. Understanding educational and occupational attainment of community college students, therefore, necessitates consideration of their embeddedness in educational institutions and larger social contexts.

To contextualize the study of community college outcomes, the proposed study examines two questions. First, how do characteristics of community colleges such as branch status, resources, and degree of vocational focus affect students' educational and occupational attainment? Second, how do institutional, political, and economic factors in the community college environment (e.g., presence of four-year institutions, state-wide articulation agreements, proportion of revenues received from the government) shape their characteristics, and through them student outcomes? Findings of the project will be relevant to researchers in the areas of education and stratification, as well as practitioners in the social policy arena concerned with the future of community college education.

Contribution to knowledge. The study will combine characteristics of students, community colleges, and state environments, and thereby identify and systematically examine a much broader range of factors influencing students' educational and occupational attainment than has been done in previous research. By introducing organizational environment into the study of student outcomes, the project will broaden the definition of context considered in

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<sup>4</sup> For references describing the relationship between state funding and vocational training see Brint & Karabel (1989); Cohen & Brawer (1996); Dougherty & Bakia (2000).

previous studies and examine more thoroughly which factors improve or hinder students' educational and labor market outcomes. In addition, by connecting the effects of environmental forces with individual-level outcomes, the project will extend organizational research on schools to consider often neglected links between macro and micro-levels of analysis.

Policy relevance. The proposed project will examine how specific characteristics of community colleges and their state environments influence student outcomes. Therefore, it will allow for informed policy debate and suggest ways in which state and community college leaders could improve student outcomes. For example, if I find that community colleges have low transfer rates in a particular organizational environment (such as government funding focused on vocational training, small number of four-year institutions in the area, no connections to four-year institutions), state and local governments could develop policies and programs to alleviate or counter these effects. Similarly, through examination of specific community college characteristics, the study will offer recommendations for community college administrators advising students and developing school policies.

Moreover, by examining how the relationships between two-year and four-year institutions (in terms of enrollment, tuition, formal connections, and coordinating structures) 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 thus suggest ways for changing community college environments and characteristics to assist students' progress through community colleges and their success in the academic and occupational world beyond.

#### Data and Methods

The primary source of data is the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS 1988-2000), a nationally representative dataset which contains information on respondents in their mid-twenties, the majority of whom have completed educational transitions and entered the labor market.<sup>5</sup> NELS dataset includes excellent background information on each student (including parents' surveys) and uses some of the most advanced testing procedures for assessing students' cognitive abilities (Rock and Pollack 1995). Extensive background controls are necessary for this study because community college students represent a diverse population, and because they have different background characteristics from students who enter other types of higher education institutions. Unless background differences are adequately controlled, effects of community college characteristics and organizational environments will be misspecified.

In addition, NELS reports Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) codes for the postsecondary institutions attended by students and thus can be merged with IPEDS datasets. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) contains institutional-level data on approximately 9,900 postsecondary institutions, which will allow me to obtain information on institutional characteristics of community colleges. IPEDS also includes addresses of higher education institutions, which will enable me to locate community colleges within their state environments.

Because NELS began with a nationally representative sample of eighth-graders in 1988, the sample in the study will not be representative of all students in community colleges. In particular, the sample includes relatively young individuals (on average 26 years old in 2000), and thus the findings of the study will not be applicable to all community college students, and particularly not to older students who did not enter community colleges soon after high school

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<sup>5</sup> I will use a restricted version of the NELS dataset because it includes more detailed information on background and postsecondary enrollment. Detailed explanation of the NELS sample and procedures can be found in the Base-

completion. However, the sample will represent a majority of students in community colleges: 67 percent of all students and 85 percent of full-time students in public two-year institutions are 30 years of age or younger (NCES 2001b). Although limited in this respect, by providing extensive background data, IPEDS codes for postsecondary institutions, and detailed postsecondary enrollment history, I believe NELS to be the optimal dataset for answering the questions posed in this study.

Sample. NELS 2000 contains information on 12,144 respondents. With the use of proper weights, this sample is representative of high school graduates in 1991-1992 academic year. The sample for this study will include all students who enter postsecondary education within two years of high school graduation by enrolling in a community college (i.e., report that the first postsecondary institution attended is a community college). With the above mentioned weights and restrictions, the sample includes 2,618 respondents. Since community college is defined as a public two-year institution, students in private two-year institutions are excluded from analyses. Public institutions constitute an appropriate sample because I am examining state-level variation, emphasizing the role of government in shaping community college policies, and 93 percent of students in two-year institutions attend public institutions (NCES, 2001a).

Models. The analysis of the proposed project will include two sets of models (for a graphic representation of the models see Figure 1 in the appendix). Both sets of models will be conducted for the entire sample and separately by gender since community college curriculum is gender segregated, as is the labor market students enter upon completion of their training (Adelman, 1992; Grubb, 1997; NCES, 2001a). The first set of models will use standard OLS and logistic regression models to address the question: *how do characteristics of community colleges affect students' educational and labor market outcomes?*

The second part of the analysis will utilize hierarchical linear models (HLM's) to address the second question of the project: *how do institutional, political, and economic characteristics of community college environment affect their practices, and through them student outcomes?*

Hierarchical linear models are appropriate in this case because of the presence of multiple levels of analysis (individual, community college and state) and multiple observations on each level – presenting a classic example of a nested model. Hierarchical linear models employ a more sophisticated treatment of error structures, correcting for clustering of observations at each level, and thus producing better estimates than standard regression models (for elaboration see Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; DiPrete & Forristal, 1994; Kreft & de Leeuw, 1998; Singer, 1998).

Variables. Dependent variables will measure both educational and labor market outcomes of community college students. Educational outcomes will include: overall educational attainment (bachelor's degree vs. associate degree vs. neither), likelihood of transfer to a four-year institution, and likelihood of B.A. completion for students who transfer. I will also examine three labor market outcomes: likelihood of unemployment, yearly income, and occupational location (professional and managerial vs. other).

Independent variables will include measures on the on individual, community college, and state-levels and reflect the theoretical discussion in the text of the proposal. Community college characteristics will include: branch status, resources, and degree of vocational focus. State-level measures will include: percent of students in higher education attending four-year institutions, governance structure of higher education, state-wide articulation agreements, proportion of community college revenues received from state government, ratio of two-year and four-year in-state tuition, and occupational characteristics of the labor market. For a complete list of variables used in the modes and their definitions, see Table 1 in the appendix.

### Progress to Date

I, as well as my committee, are aware of the scope of this project. We are also confident that I have the necessary support and skills to successfully complete it. So far, I have finished six semesters of coursework, together with two comprehensive exams (Sociology of Education and Organizational Theory) and a required research paper in three years of graduate study. The dissertation proposal is also approved by my dissertation committee and the Human Subjects Board. Moreover, through my involvement in a range of projects over the last couple of years (with Richard Arum, Adam Gamoran, Eric Grodsky, Doug Guthrie and Marc Scott) I have acquired the necessary skills for completion of the proposed project, such as proficiency in SAS, SPSS, and STATA, experience working with large datasets (including NLSY, HS&B, PSID and GSS), merging, cleaning and managing data, etc. With respect to the dissertation proposal, I have made substantial progress in gathering the necessary information, obtaining the three datasets, and conducting preliminary coding of variables.

By this time, I have selected needed variables from both NELS and IPEDS datasets, and I am in the final stages of coding them. I have also collected a range of state-level variables measuring organizational environment and compiled them into the “State Environment” dataset. This dataset includes variables from different sources such as *Digest of Education Statistics* (e.g., percent of full-time equivalent students in four-year institutions, ratio of two-year and four-year in-state tuitions) and the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (e.g., unemployment rate, occupational characteristics of the job market). The dataset also contains information from a

range of articles and reports such as the percent of community college revenues received from the state government (NCES, 1999), articulation agreements (ECS, 2001; Ignash & Townsend 2000; 2001), and governance structures (ECS, 1997; Richardson & de los Santos, 2001).

### Research Schedule and Dissemination of Results

After I conclude coding the variables needed for analyses in the three respective datasets, I plan to proceed as follows:

I. Merge datasets, complete coding and preparation of the data (01/04-04/04). Use a two-step process to merge datasets (merge NELS and IPEDS using community college IPEDS codes; merge this combined student-institution dataset with State Environment dataset using state codes). Prepare data for analyses, i.e., run descriptive statistics, checking for any irregularities and non-conformances with the requirements for regression analyses. Make any adjustments in coding, address concerns regarding missing values, etc.

II. Data analysis and dissemination of results, Model I (05/04-08/04). Conduct data analysis for Model I. Submit results for presentation at professional meetings (Association for the Study of Higher Education, November 2004) and publication to a journal (e.g., *Sociology of Education*).

III. Data analysis and dissemination of results, Model II (09/04-12/04). Run analyses for Model II and submit results of Model II for presentation at professional meetings (Eastern Sociological Society, February 2005; AIR Forum, May 2005) and publication in a journal such as *Review of Higher Education*.

IV. Dissertation writing and dissemination of results (01/05-05/05). Write one chapter illuminating theoretical contributions of the project and one outlining its policy implications. Submit both chapters for publication in academic journals (former to *American Sociological*

Review and letter to Research in Higher Education). At the conclusion of the project, begin considering ways of transforming the research findings into a book, written in a way accessible to a broad audience.

## APPENDIX

Table 1. List of dependent and independent variables and their definitions

**Dependent Variables**

<i>Educational attainment</i>	Overall educational attainment (B.A., A.A., neither) Transfer to a four-year institution Completion of a B.A. (for students who transfer)
<i>Labor market</i>	Likelihood of unemployment Yearly income Occupational position (Professional/managerial vs. other)

**Independent Variables**

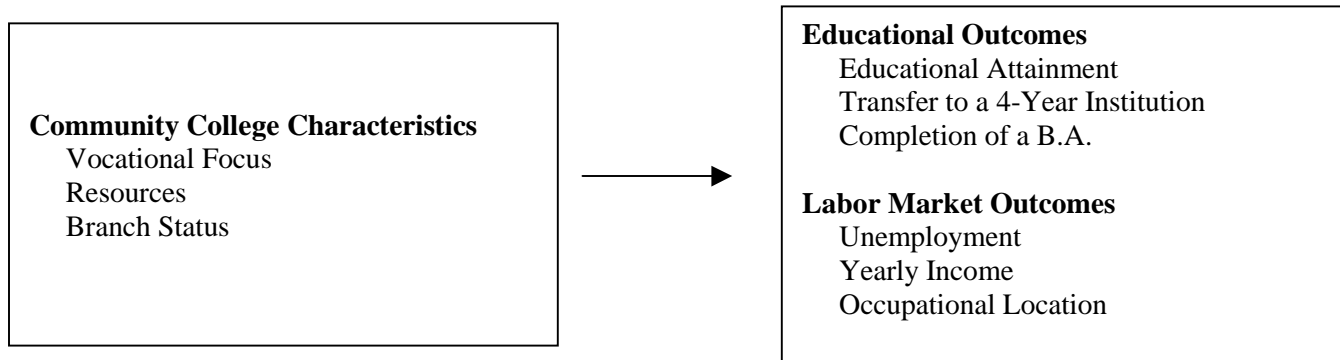
<i>Organizational Environment (State Level)</i>	
Institutional	Percent of full-time equivalent students in 4-year institutions Coordination and governance structures
Political	Type of formal state-wide articulation agreement Percent of community college revenues received from the state government
Economic	Ratio of two-year to four-year tuition for full-time equivalent students Proportion of semi-professional jobs in the labor market
<i>Community College Characteristics</i>	
Vocational focus	Percent of students earning vocational certificates Percent of students earning vocational associate degrees
Resources	Student-teacher ratio Expenditures per student Faculty characteristics (full-time status, training)
Branch Status	Whether community college is a branch

**Control Variables**

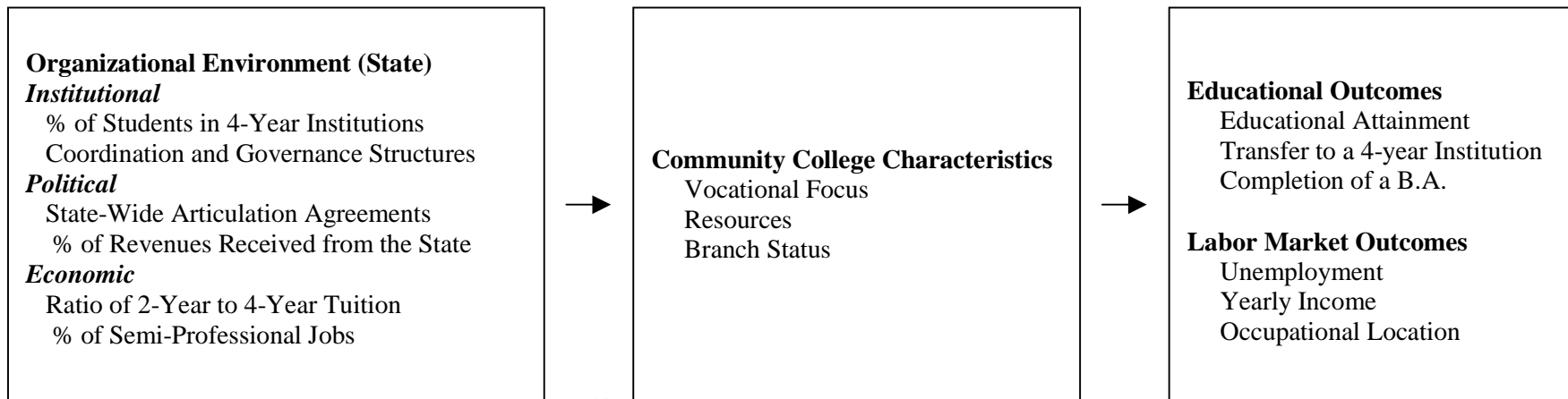
<i>State Level</i>	Region (dummy for South) Unemployment rate
<i>Community College Level</i>	Size (number of full-time equivalent students) Location (urban vs. other) Percent of students who are racial minorities
<i>Individual Level</i>	Gender (in models run with entire sample) Race Reading and math test scores High school grades High school track (academic vs. vocational vs. general) Educational and occupational aspirations Family socioeconomic status Marital status Presence of children Full-time vs. part-time enrollment (education analyses) Full-time vs. part-time employment Associate degree (in analysis of transfer) Educational attainment (in labor market analyses)

Figure 1. Graphic representation of models proposed in the study

Model 1:



Model 2<sup>6</sup>:



Organizational environment is likely to have both direct and indirect effects on student outcomes. This study focuses on indirect effects, mediated by community college characteristics, since they are more meaningful in light of organizational and educational research and will offer a more comprehensive understanding of community college effects on students' educational and labor market outcomes.



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National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (1999). Current funds, revenues and expenditures of degree-granting institutions: Fiscal year 1996. (Report from Postsecondary Studies Division, NCES 1999-161). Washington DC: S. Barbett & R. A. Korb.

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National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2003a). Community college students: Goals, academic preparation, and outcomes. (Postsecondary Education Descriptive Analysis Reports, NCES 2003-164). Washington, DC: G. Hoachlander, A. C. Sikora, L. Horn, & C. D. Carroll.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2003b). Descriptive summary of 1995-1996 beginning postsecondary students: Six years later. (Statistical Analysis Report, NCES 2003-151). Washington DC: L. Berkner, S. He, E. F. Cataldi, & P. Knepper.

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Treiman, D. J., & Ganzeboom, H. B.G. (2000). The fourth generation of comparative stratification research. In S. P. Quah & A. Sales (eds.), The international handbook of sociology (pp. 123-150). Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.

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## JOSIPA ROKSA'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

My primary research interests include areas of stratification and organizational theory in the realm of higher education, with focus on practical application of gained knowledge through public policy. I am interested in understanding how larger social structures affect individual outcomes and what practices and policies could alter observed patterns. In my dissertation, I will examine how educational and occupational attainment of community college students is shaped by characteristics of community colleges and their organizational environment. Through combination of stratification research and organizational theory, I aim to provide a more comprehensive and policy relevant understanding of the successes and challenges faced by community college students.

During my graduate career, I have used a range of datasets and methods and collaborated with a number of prominent scholars. In my “Early research paper”<sup>7</sup>, I examined how college major and sector of employment interact to shape labor market outcomes of college graduates. For that project, I used the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY) to model earnings and occupational position of college graduates via ordinary least squares and logistic regressions<sup>8</sup>. I am also studying individual’s labor market trajectories in more detail using hierarchical linear models in a sub-sample of NLSY in collaboration with Marc Scott, Professor of Educational Statistics at New York University.

Currently, I am in the process of preparing a manuscript for publication in a comparative volume on higher education in collaboration with Adam Gamoran (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Eric Grodsky (University of California, Davis), and Richard Arum (New York University). We have prepared a comprehensive analysis of stratification in the U.S.

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<sup>7</sup> “Early research paper” is required of all Ph.D. candidates in the Department of Sociology.

<sup>8</sup> This manuscript currently has a “revise and resubmit” status in *Sociology of Education*.

postsecondary education over the course of the twentieth century, including both the amount of education completed and different types of educational institutions attended. In this project, we have used four nationally representative datasets: General Social Survey (GSS), the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS-72), High School and Beyond (HSB), and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS).

Furthermore, I am involved in two collaborative projects nearing completion. The first project examines marital outcomes of college graduates (“Who Marries Whom? College Stratification and Marital Outcomes” with Richard Arum and Michelle Budig), and the second explores corporate philanthropy to schools (“Corporations and Schools: The Education Emphasis in Corporate Philanthropy” with Doug Guthrie and Richard Arum).

I have also excelled in the academic realm, participated in a range of professional development programs, and engaged in professional and community activities, as the attached curriculum vitae illustrates. I have completed all departmental requirements as of May 2003: coursework, early research paper, comprehensive exams in Education and Organizational theory, and proposal defense. Since then, I have made substantial progress on my dissertation project, as described in the text of the proposal.

The AIR/NPEC grant would enable me to obtain needed software and reference materials and to focus exclusively on my dissertation research during the Fall 2004 semester. It would also facilitate my attendance at professional meetings, which is essential for conducting quality research and disseminating findings to the community of scholars and practitioners.

Development of my skills as a researcher and a participant in intellectual and policy discussions regarding the future of community college education would greatly benefit from the opportunities that would become available through the AIR/NPEC Grant.

## **JOSIPA ROKSA**

### **EDUCATION:**

**New York University**, Ph.D. candidate, Sociology (expected: May, 2005).

Comprehensive Exams: Sociology of Education and Organizational Theory.

Dissertation: *States, Schools and Students: Contextualizing Community College Outcomes*.

Committee Members: Richard Arum (Chair), Doug Guthrie, and Caroline Hodges Persell.

**Mount Holyoke College**, B.A., *summa cum laude* in Psychology (May, 2000).

### **FELLOWSHIPS:**

Teaching Assistantship, New York University, (9/01-5/04).

MacCracken Fellowship, New York University (9/00-5/01).

Bardwell Memorial Fellowship, Mount Holyoke College, 2000.

Summer Research Fellowship, Mount Holyoke College, 1999.

Elmer and Ruth Schwantes Fellowship (9/96-5/00).

### **SELECTED HONORS & AWARDS:**

Sarah Williston Scholar, Mount Holyoke College, 1998-2000 (academic excellence, awarded to students in the top fifteen percent of the class).

Sarah Williston Prize, Mount Holyoke College, 1998-2000 (academic excellence, awarded to the five highest ranked students in the class).

Who's Who Among Students at American Colleges and Universities, 1998.

#### *Inducted Membership:*

Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society (2000).

Phi Beta Kappa (1999).

Psi Chi National Honor Society (1998).

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

Roksa, Josipa. "Double Disadvantage or Blessing in Disguise? Understanding the Relationship between College Major and Employment Sector." Submitted for presentation at the Eastern Sociological Society Meeting, New York (February 2004).

Roksa, Josipa, Eric Grodsky, Richard Arum, and Adam Gamoran. 2002. "Changes in Higher Education and Social Stratification in the United States," *International Sociology Association Research Committee on Social Stratification*, Oxford, England (April) and *The Comparative Project on Higher Education*, Prague, Czech Republic (June).

Deutsch, Francine M., Josipa Roksa, and Cynthia Meeske. 2000. "How Gender Counts When Couples Count Their Money." *Work and Family Conference*, San Francisco (March).

Roksa, Josipa and Francine M. Deutsch. 2000. "Fairness of a Factory Closing: The Employee's Perspective," *Eastern Psychological Association Conference*, Baltimore (March).

### **PUBLICATIONS:**

Roksa, Josipa. "Double Disadvantage or Blessing in Disguise? Understanding the Relationship between College Major and Employment Sector." (Revise and resubmit, *Sociology of Education*)

Deutsch, Francine M., Josipa Roksa, and Cindy L. Meeske. 2003. "How Gender Counts When Couples Count Their Money." *Sex Roles* 48:291-304.

### **PROJECTS & PAPERS IN PROGRESS:**

Roksa, Josipa, Eric Grodsky, Richard Arum, and Adam Gamoran. "Changes in Higher Education and Social Stratification in the United States." (Book chapter in preparation for comparative volume on higher education co-organized with Yossi Shavit.)

Arum, Richard, Josipa Roksa, and Michelle Budig. "Who Marries Whom? College Stratification and Marital Outcomes." (Manuscript in preparation for publication.)

Guthrie, Doug, Richard Arum, Josipa Roksa, and Sarah Damaske. "Corporations and Schools: The Education Emphasis in Corporate Philanthropy." (Manuscript in preparation for publication.)

Scott, Marc, and Josipa Roksa. "When Does a B.A. 'Kick In'? Modeling Returns to College Degree." (Project in progress.)

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

Teaching Assistant, *Sociology of Education*, New York University, Department of Sociology, Fall 2003.

Instructor, *Basic Statistics II*, New York University, School of Education, Summer 2003.

Teaching Assistant/Lab Instructor, *Graduate Statistics*, New York University, Department of Sociology, Spring 2003.

Teaching Assistant/Lab Instructor, *Research Methods*, New York University, Department of Sociology, Fall 2002.

Teaching Assistant, *Introduction to Sociology*, New York University, Department of Sociology, Spring 2002, Fall 2001.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

*Using National Longitudinal Study Restricted Files and Their Accompanying Software*, ASHE pre-conference workshop, conducted by Clifford Adelman, Senior Research Analyst at the U.S. Department of Education. ASHE Conference, Portland, Oregon, November 13, 2003.

*Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference*, Portland, Oregon, November 12-16, 2003.

*Sociology of Education Workshop*, New York University, September 2003-present.

*Community College Research Center Seminar Series*, Teacher's College, Columbia University, September 2003-present.

*Color Lines Conference: Segregation and Integration in America's Present and Future*, Harvard University, August 29-September 1, 2003.

*Sociology of Teaching and Learning*, Practicum Seminar led by Prof. Caroline Hodges Persell, September 2002-December 2002.

## **COMMUNITY & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

*Assistant Editor*, Sociological Forum, New York University, September 2002-present.

*Committee on Graduate Curriculum and Training*, New York University, September 2003-present.

*Conference Coordinator*, New York University, September 2002-September 2003. Coordinating the meeting of the *Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility (RC28) of the International Sociological Association* "Education and Social Inequality", August 22-24, 2003.

*Graduate Curriculum Committee*, New York University, September 2002-September 2003.

*Center for Advanced Social Science Research Committee*, New York University, September 2002-September 2003.

*Blank Fellow Mentor*, New York University, January 2001-December 2002. [Mentoring a high school student preparing a project for the Intel Science Talent Search.]

*Research Coach*, Salomon Smith Barney Quality for Life Research Competition, September 2000-January 2001.

*Conference Committee*, New York University, September 2000-May 2001.

### *Association Membership:*

Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2003-present.

International Sociological Association (Section: Social Stratification and Mobility), 2001-present.

American Sociological Association (Sections: Race, Gender and Class; Undergraduate Education), 1999-present.

## RICHARD ARUM'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Arum is Chair of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Professions – a Department created three years ago through the efforts of Ellen Lagemann, current Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education – and Associate Professor of Sociology, New York University. He received a Masters of Education in Teaching and Curriculum from Harvard University in 1988 and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley in 1996. At Berkeley, he worked as research assistant to Mike Hout, Director of University of California Berkeley's Survey Research Center.

Arum's experience with weighted sample surveys includes internationally recognized peer-refereed published work that has utilized more than a half dozen datasets including:

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth – *Inequality by Design*, Princeton University Press;

"High School Experience and the Risk of Incarceration," *Criminology* 37:515-539; "The Early Returns: Transitions from School to Work in the United States," *Educational Qualifications and Occupational Destinations*, Oxford University Press).

High School and Beyond – "Secondary Vocational Education and the Transition

from School to Work," *Sociology of Education* 68:187-204; "Do Private Schools Force Public Schools to Compete?" *American Sociological Review* 61:29-46;

"The Effects of Resources on Vocational Student Educational Outcomes: Invested Dollars or Diverted Dreams," *Sociology of Education*. 71:130-151.

Panel Study of Income Dynamics – *The Resurgence of Self-Employment: A Comparative Study of Self-Employment Dynamics and Social Inequality*, Princeton University Press;

"Trends in Male and Female Self-Employment: Growth in a New Middle Class or Increasing Marginalization of the Labor Force," *Research in Social Stratification and*

*Mobility* 15:209-238; "Labor Market Regulation and the Growth of Self-Employment,"  
*International Journal of Sociology* 30(4):1-26.

National Educational Longitudinal Study, School and Staffing Study, Office of  
Civil Rights Educational Data, Common Core of Data – *Judging School Discipline: The  
Crisis of Moral Authority in American Schools*, Harvard University Press.

Arum has an extensive knowledge of statistical modeling techniques. Approaches used in previous research include: log-linear, adjacent/ordered logit, multinomial logit, two stage least squared, tobit, meta-analysis, hierarchical linear, event-history, competing risk, fixed-effects, instrumental variable. Arum's research has received funding from the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Justice, the National Academy of Education and the Spencer Foundation.

Arum's prior work has privileged training and mentoring of doctoral students in education and social stratification research (e.g., his forthcoming work at Harvard University Press involves collaboration with four graduate students at the University of Arizona). His students have been successfully placed at major universities and research organizations including: Association for Institutional Research (Jennifer Thompson), University of Massachusetts (Michele Budig), University of Pittsburgh (Karen Christopher), Vanderbilt (Richard Pitt), and University of Wisconsin (Pat Goldsmit).

**RICHARD ARUM**  
(Abbreviated CV)

**EDUCATION:**

**University of California**, Berkeley, Ph.D. in Sociology (May, 1996).

**Harvard University Graduate School of Education**, M.Ed. in Teaching and Curriculum (May, 1988).

**Tufts University**, B.A., *magna cum laude* in Political Science (May, 1985).

**ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:**

*Chair*, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Professions, School of Education, New York University (8/01-present).

*Associate Professor*, Department of Sociology and School of Education (joint), New York University (7/00-present).

*Assistant Professor*, Department of Sociology, University of Arizona (8/96-6/00).

**BOOKS:**

Arum, Richard with Irene Beattie, Richard Pitt, Jennifer Thompson, Sandra Way. (2003). *Judging School Discipline: The Crisis of Moral Authority in American Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Arum, Richard and Walter Mueller, eds. (Forthcoming 4/04). *The Resurgence of Self-Employment: A Comparative Study of Self-Employment Dynamics and Social Inequality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Arum, Richard and Irene Beattie, editors. 2000. *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Publishing Company.

**REFEREED PUBLICATIONS:**

Arum, Richard. 2000. "Schools and Communities: Ecological and Institutional Dimensions," *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26:395-418.

Arum, Richard, Michelle Budig and Don Grant. 2000. "Labor Market Regulation and the Growth of Self-Employment," *International Journal of Sociology* 30(4):1-26.

Arum, Richard and Irene Beattie. 1999. "High School Experience and the Risk of Incarceration," *Criminology* 37:515-539.

Arum, Richard. 1998. "The Effects of Resources on Vocational Student Educational Outcomes: Invested Dollars or Diverted Dreams." *Sociology of Education*. 71:130-151.

Arum, Richard. 1996. "Do Private Schools Force Public Schools to Compete?" *American Sociological Review* 61:29-46.

Arum, Richard. 1996. "Trends in Male and Female Self-Employment: Growth in a New Middle Class or Increasing Marginalization of the Labor Force." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 15:209-238.

Arum, Richard and Yossi Shavit. 1995. "Secondary Vocational Education and the Transition from School to Work." *Sociology of Education* 68:187-204.

### **BOOK CHAPTERS:**

Arum, Richard and Sandra Way. "The Significance of School-Business Institutional Ties: Effects of School Assisted Job Placement on Male and Female Early Labor Market Outcomes" in *After the Bell: Family Background and Educational Success*, Dalton Conley and Karen Albright, eds. (New York: Routledge; forthcoming).

Persell, Caroline Hodges, Richard Arum and Katherine Seufert, "Racial and Ethnic Inequality in Global Perspective," in *Handbook of Social Problems*, George Ritzer, ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications; forthcoming).

Arum, Richard. 2002. "Education and Crime," *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice*, Joshua Dressler editor. (New York: Macmillan); pp. 607-613.

Arum, Richard and Michael Hout. 1997. "The Early Returns: Transitions from School to Work in the United States" in *Educational Qualifications and Occupational Destinations*, edited by Walter Mueller and Yossi Shavit (Cambridge: Oxford University Press); pp. 471-510.

Fischer, Claude, Michael Hout and Richard Arum. 1996. "But Is It Intelligence?" in Fischer et. al., *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); pp. 55-69.

Fischer, Claude, Michael Hout and Richard Arum. 1996. "Who Wins and Who Loses," in Fischer et. al. *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); pp. 70-102; 225-239.

### **GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS:**

Spencer Foundation. "School Rights Project." Richard Arum, Lauren Edelman, Calvin Morrill and Karolyn Tyson. (pending, 2004-2006, \$398,500).

Center for Advanced Social Science Research, New York University. Seed grant to develop "School Rights Project" with Lauren Edelman, UC Berkeley, Calvin Morrill, UA, Karolyn Tyson, UNC (2001). \$2,500.

National Institute of Justice. "The Impact Of School Desegregation And Educational Quality On African American, Hispanic And White Incarceration Rates, 1970 to 1990," (2000-2001). Gary Lafree and Richard Arum. \$114,904.

National Science Foundation. "The Causes and Consequences of Changes in School Disciplinary Practices," (1998-1999). \$99,473.

National Academy of Education's Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship (1998-1999). \$45,000.

Kellogg Foundation/University of Arizona Community Partnership Grant. "Welfare Reform Assessment in Tucson," (1998-1999). David Snow, Tim Finan and Richard Arum. \$32,500.

Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute Small Grant, "Welfare Reform in Tucson," Richard Arum and David Snow (Fall, 1998). \$1,500.

Spivack Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy, "Welfare Reform in Tucson," Richard Arum and David Snow (Spring, 1999). \$2,500.

Foreign Travel Grant, University of Arizona (May, 1997). \$700.

Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute Summer Grant Development (Summer, 1997). \$5,000.

Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, University of California, Berkeley (1995-1996). \$12,000 plus tuition.

#### **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

*Executive Board Member*, Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility (RC28), International Sociology Association (2002-2004).

*Advisory Board Member*, National Household Education Survey, WESTAT (2001).

*Editorial Board*, *Sociology of Education* (1998-2000).

*ASA Session Organizer* (Sociology of Education, 2003; Organizations, Occupations and Work; Sociology of Education; 1999); Best Graduate Paper Awards Committee: Organizations, Occupations and Work, 2002; Sociology of Education 2001).

*Manuscript Referee*: *American Sociological Review*, *Sociology of Education*, *Social Forces*, *Demography*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Social Science Research*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, National Center for Research on Vocational Education

#### **UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL SERVICE:**

*Strategic Assessment Committee*, Steinhardt School of Education (2003-current).

*Academic Priorities Committee*, NYU Presidential Transition Team, New York University (2001-2002).

*Advisory Committee*, Center for Advanced Social Science Research, New York University (2000-present).

*Advisory Committee*, Social and Behavioral Science Research Institute, University of Arizona (1999-2001).

## PROPOSED BUDGET

TITLE: States, Schools, and Students: Contextualizing Community College Outcomes

### Personnel

Josipa Roksa (4.5 months @ \$2,000/month) \$9,000

### Travel to Professional Meetings

AIR Forum \$850

ASHE Annual Meeting \$740

ESS Annual Meeting \$420

Total Travel Expenses \$2,010

### Other Direct Costs

Tuition Remission (@ 37 percent) \$3,330

Statistical software

HLM 5 (Raudenbush and Bryk) \$395

HLM User Manual \$40

Materials and supplies

Reference books \$95

Copying articles and storing files \$30

Publication costs \$80

Total Other Direct Costs \$3,970

### Indirect Costs and Cost Sharing

Indirect costs will be assumed by New York University in accordance with the Association for Institutional Research/National Postsecondary Education Cooperative guidelines (NYU's standard overhead rate is 53%).

### **TOTAL AMOUNT OF AWARD**

**\$14,980**

I am requesting salary for the Fall 2004 semester. Graduate student salary during the 2004-2005 academic year as stipulated in the contract for the NYU graduate student union is \$18,000. Following these guidelines the total amount of the AIR/NPEC award does not provide sufficient resources for salaries and fringe benefits throughout the 12 month grant period (June 1, 2004-May 31, 2005). Consequently, I am requesting salary solely for the Fall semester, whereas the other items included in the budget cover a range of expenses throughout the grant period as I

will conduct dissertation research during the entire grant period, write the progress report according to AIR/NPEC guidelines, and prepare a presentation for the AIR Forum in May 2005.

I also intend to present a paper at the annual meetings of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (November 2004) and Eastern Sociological Society (February 2005). This will allow me to reach a broad and diverse audience since ASHE generally includes researchers and practitioners interested specifically in higher education while ESS is attended largely by sociologists. The spacing of the conferences is also beneficial in that I will be able to present my work and receive feedback throughout the year, which is indispensable for improvement of the project and development of a notable scholarly contribution.

With respect to other direct costs, the budget includes tuition remission, which New York University charges for graduate students in lieu of fringe benefits at a rate of 37% of student salary. In addition, since my research design includes hierarchical data structure (students, schools, and states), I need a specialized statistical software that can adequately estimate models in this type of a complex design. HLM is often used in sociology and has been adopted “as the official software for educational multilevel analysis”(Kreft and de Leeuw, 1998).

Under materials and supplies, I am requesting resources to acquire two key reference books regarding community colleges and hierarchical linear models essential to my research. Remaining costs include copying recent articles which are not yet available on-line and buying CD-R's and floppy disks for data and document storage and back-up. Lastly, I am requesting funds for publishing and in other ways disseminating findings of this research project. These costs include copying and mailing manuscripts to journals, submission costs to journals, preparing transparencies and handouts for conferences, and producing reprints.

## CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT

I am employed part-time as a teaching assistant in the Department of Sociology during the academic year. Teaching assistantship covers tuition remission, stipend (\$8,000 per semester), and health insurance. I have no funding during the summer months, no grant resources for conferences and other research-related expenses, and I receive no compensation for the research projects I am involved in.

During the funding period covered by AIR/NPEC grant (June 1, 2004 – May 31, 2005), I will dedicate my time primarily to the dissertation research. Although I am currently engaged in a couple of other research projects (as described in the biographical statement), I anticipate that they will either be completed or not require substantial amount of my time by the beginning of the grant period. I also do not intend to work as a teaching assistant during this time.

In order to obtain resources that would allow me to focus solely on my dissertation research next year, I have applied for Spencer Dissertation Fellowship and National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant. I will inform AIR/NPEC staff if I am awarded either of those fellowships.

## FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER RESOURCES

The most important resources I need to conduct the proposed study are the three datasets described in the proposal and software for statistical analysis. At this time, I have access to all three datasets. I have a restricted data license for National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) through my dissertation director, Prof. Richard Arum, and we have just received the most recent release of the 2000 data. Prof. Arum has office space in the Department of Sociology, which I have access to, where restricted data files and necessary documentation is kept (269 Mercer Street, room 438). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is publicly available and I have downloaded needed files. Lastly, I have compiled the State Environment dataset as described in the text of the proposal.

I rely primarily on SAS for data management and analysis. I have a personal license for SAS on my home computer and Prof. Arum has a license for the computer located in the office with the restricted data. However, SAS is limited in its ability to model hierarchical data structure; therefore I intend to purchase HLM software for the analysis of the second model (please see text of the proposal and budget section for details).

Regarding other resources, I have access to a copier, telephone, and a fax machine in the Sociology Department, as well as internet access in the Sociology computer lab. I also have access to the NYU Bobst Library system, which includes extensive interlibrary privileges and a number of electronic databases such as Sociological Abstracts, Lexis-Nexis, ERIC, and ISI citation database.

SPECIAL INFORMATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION



Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Professions  
246 Greene 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10003-6677  
Telephone: 212.992.9406  
Fax: 212.995.4832

December 8, 2003

To: AIR/NPEC Focused Grant Program  
From: Richard Arum, Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair  
Re: Josipa Roksa's recommendation

I am writing to provide an enthusiastic recommendation for AIR/NPEC to support Josipa Roksa's dissertation research. Roksa is quite simply the strongest doctoral student I have ever encountered in my professional career (including the four years I spent working at the University of Arizona's top-ten nationally ranked Sociology program). The early evidence provided by her performance in the doctoral program at New York University's Department of Sociology suggests that she is destined for greatness. In addition, her dissertation project is well designed to have a major impact in the field of educational research on higher education.

First, it is worth providing a brief biographical note on Josipa Roksa that explains her extraordinary academic abilities in terms of "selection bias" factors that have affected her life course. Josipa grew up in Croatia in the 1990s and was one of only three adolescent girls selected from the former Yugoslavia to come to America and live with a host family. Roksa moved to Alaska at age 16 under these circumstances and quickly became fluent in English, graduating high school with numerous academic awards. She ignored her host parents' advice to attend a low-cost public University and instead applied and won a four-year merit-based scholarship to Mount Holyoke where she excelled as a student. In Fall 2000, she came to New York University's Department of Sociology, turning down a fellowship offered at the University of Chicago to train with a group of young, innovative sociologists working on issues of education (including Dalton Conley, Doug Guthrie and myself).

In the Sociology Program here she quickly excelled and has become known as the Department's "star" prospect – not just amongst her cohort, but in the overall body of sixty doctoral students enrolled in Sociology. I began working with Josipa in her first semester at New York University in the context of my teaching the first year sequence of introductory methods and statistics courses for the Sociology Department's graduate program. During that time, I quickly spotted Roksa's impressive ability, academic motivation and professional dedication. Her work at the end of her first year of graduate school was comparable to a level most students are only able to attain at the end of their entire doctoral training.

Roksa is one of those rare students that confront faculty with the problem of how to keep up with their needs for advanced, accelerated training. I have been able to accommodate Roksa's demands for advanced instruction by taking advantage of my joint appointment in two Schools at NYU as well as the fact that I am well networked with prominent national scholars working in her area. Roksa thus has taken advanced coursework in educational statistics from Marc Scott in the School of Education, simultaneous with her coursework, collaboration and independent studies with NYU sociologists working on education including Dalton Conley, Doug Guthrie and Caroline Hodges Persell. In addition, at my suggestion she traveled uptown to take courses in organizational theory with Heather Haveman, a nationally prominent scholar in organizational research working at Columbia's Business School.

Roksa has also spearheaded a collaborative effort with Adam Gamoran, Chair of the University of Wisconsin's top ranked Department of Sociology, Eric Grodsky (U.C. Davis) and myself. The work involves preparation of a manuscript on how expansion and differentiation of the higher education system over time in the United States affected associations between social origins and post-secondary educational attainment. The manuscript will be included as a chapter in a larger cross-national comparative volume on this topic, organized by Yossi Shavit, Chair of University of Tel Aviv's Department of Sociology, and involves leading scholars from twelve other countries. Roksa's work on the project involves use of four large datasets: the General Social Survey, National Longitudinal Study (1972), High School and Beyond, and the National Educational Longitudinal Study. It is worth noting that Roksa will be first author on a chapter with three prominent educational researchers – including two chairs of major academic departments – an impressive accomplishment for a student to have achieved in her second year of doctoral study!

Roksa's application is also worth supporting simply on the merits of her topic. She proposes to combine NELS and IPEDS data to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the educational and occupational successes and challenges encountered by students who begin their postsecondary education in community colleges. Josipa will conduct her analysis in two stages. First, she will examine how characteristics of community colleges (such as resources, branch status, and vocational focus) affect students' educational and occupational attainment. Following, she will explore how state-level environmental factors (such as amount of funding received from the government, labor market characteristics, presence of four-year institutions) influence characteristics of community colleges, and through them student outcomes. In addition to the academic merits of the knowledge gained through this research project, its findings will be relevant to policy discussions regarding improvement of student outcomes and the future of community college education. I also anticipate that her dissertation work will be extended through the exploration of path dependence in course taking in collaboration with social statistician Marc Scott and in further collaboration with me that would explore related investigation in labor market outcomes and variation over time.

In short, I can imagine no more talented student to fund than Josipa Roksa and no more worthy and significant a project. I strongly recommend approval of this application.