

Connecting the Parts: A Hispanic/Latino Reality for Achieving More Timely Degree Completion

Carol P. Fimmen, Burton O. Witthuhn, Debi L. Riggins & Jamie Carson

Working Paper No. 34

November 1997

ABSTRACT

This working paper examines the various factors impacting the timely completion of college degrees among Hispanics. The authors use various data sources to examine factors affecting timely degree completion among Hispanics, including the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Current Population Reports, The National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, American Council of Education, and the several colleges Hispanic enrollment rates. The study shows that only a small percentage of Hispanics are completing college in four years, with most students still enrolled in year 5. Further, Hispanic students leave college at higher rates than other students without earning degrees. Some barriers faced by Hispanic students with regard to degree completion include high costs of tuition and non-traditional pathways to college. Needed are more college-going support during formative years (K-12), providing more resources to students while in college, remaking the curriculum to fit the needs of Hispanics in order to promote college completion, and providing broad community and college partnerships that facilitate college completion. The authors suggest the implementation of the following specific steps to increase college completion rates of Hispanics: multicultural training for all recruitment, admissions, and academic support personnel and the use of non-traditional recruitment methods appropriate to the needs of selected Hispanic audiences.