

BUILDING CULTURAL CAPITAL IN FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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College student persistence continues to be a vexing problem for colleges and universities. In *Rethinking College Student Persistence* (2014), Braxton, Doyle, Hartley, Hirshy, Jones, and McLendon explored the indirect role between cultural capital and first-year student persistence. The significance of this role becomes more important when one considers the impact first-year persistence has on the likelihood of graduation. The current article begins with an exploration of the indirect role of cultural capital in the persistence of first-year students, then shifts focus to examining currently-implemented practices and procedures at colleges and universities that are explicitly or implicitly designed to facilitate the development of cultural capital. These practices are recommended for institutions seeking to increase first-year persistence, especially primarily residential institutions.

During the first year of college, students encounter various social challenges. Such challenges include making friends and selecting extracurricular activities for their participation. The level of cultural capital first-year students possess plays a significant role in the meeting of such social challenges. It also plays an important but indirect role in the likelihood of a student persisting

from the first to the second year of attendance. Braxton et al. (2014) describe this indirect role in their book *Rethinking College Student Persistence*.

College student persistence remains a vexing problem for many colleges and universities given that 66.5% of first-year students return to their college of initial enrollment for their second year, according to a 2012 report issued by the American College Testing Program. More specifically, this report indicates that the first to second year persistence rate for private bac-

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calaureate-granting institutions stands at 67.3%. Given that this article focuses on private residential colleges and universities, this persistence rate should garner the attention of institutional leaders of such institutions of higher education.

An institution's retention rate occupies the attention of institutional leaders because it affects the financial resources available to a college or university as well as its reputation. To the student, persistence in college provides an entry point for the accomplishment of other forms of student success, such as development of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions, occupational attainment, preparation for adulthood, and citizenship and other types of student success described by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) in *How College Affects Students* in their review of the research literature on the effects of college on students. Put differently, success in college requires persistence to graduation, and first-year persistence is integral to persistence to graduation.

As previously stated, the level of cultural capital with which students enter college plays an indirect role in their likelihood of persisting from their first to their second year of attendance. In this case, this role for cultural capital occurs in private residential colleges and universities, given that private residential colleges and universities provided the setting for the research reported in *Rethinking College Student Persistence* by Braxton, Doyle, Hartley, Hirschy, Jones, and McLendon (2014). To be sure, the authors fully recognize the possibility for students entering private residential colleges and universities to have predispositions that differ from those entering public institutions or others that are dissimilar to private residential institutions. Nevertheless, knowing the overall profile of an incoming class and how an institution might meet the class's needs, regardless of institution type, is important, and the information presented in this article, while geared toward private residential colleges and universities, can likely be applied to institutions that are different than private residential campuses.

This article begins with a presentation of the empirically derived indirect role of cultural capital in the persistence of first-year college students. Subsequently, the focus shifts to approaches that colleges and universities may use to help first-year students who enter college with lower levels of cultural capital meet the social

challenges of the first year of college. It is important to note that this article is not recommending ways for institutions to identify the levels of cultural capital with which their students enroll, though this is an important part of developing a plan to meet the needs of at-risk first-year students. Thus, institutions are encouraged to further explore ways in which they might identify levels of cultural capital upon matriculation. Such practices are explored below.

The Indirect Role of Cultural Capital in First-Year Student Persistence

In this case, cultural capital pertains to the degree to which students were involved in cultural activities such as reading books, attending concerts and plays, and visiting museums during their last year in high school. Involvement in such cultural activities constitutes one aspect of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1981). The entry level of cultural capital of the first-year students entering the private residential colleges and universities of the focal study of this article differs on one of three student characteristics. Students with more highly educated parents hold higher levels of cultural capital than their college student peers with parents with fewer years of schooling. However, students with parents of varying degrees of estimated annual income as well as White-Caucasian students and students of color differ little on their entry levels of cultural capital. Thus, students of color and students from families of lower levels of income enter the private residential colleges and universities that occupy attention in this article on a relatively equally playing field in terms of their entry level of cultural capital. We derived these findings from an additional analysis of the data for residential colleges and universities described in *Rethinking College Student Persistence* (Braxton et al., 2014) we conducted for this article.

The indirect part that cultural capital plays in student persistence transpires through several key aspects of the college experience of the first-year student.

All of these key aspects received empirical affirmation through a longitudinal panel design of 408 first-time, full-time, first-year students in eight private residential and religiously affiliated colleges and universities, as reported in *Rethinking College Student Persistence* (Braxton et al., 2014). The definitions of such concepts

as psychosocial engagement, social integration, and subsequent institutional commitment that appear in the key aspects below were also derived from *Rethinking College Student Persistence*. The four aspects are:

1. *The greater the students' level of cultural capital, the greater their degree of psychosocial engagement.* Psychosocial engagement pertains to the amount of psychological energy students invest in their social interactions with peers and in their participation in extracurricular activities. Engagement recognizes that aspects of collegiate social life require a considerable amount of time and a considerable investment of psychological energy by college students. Higher levels of cultural capital equip students with the level of self-esteem and social self-confidence needed to engage in social interactions with their student peers and participate in extracurricular activities. This explanation for the role of cultural capital offered in *Rethinking College Student Persistence* (Braxton et al., 2014) provides a nuanced understanding of the role of cultural capital as used in this article that assures fidelity in the enactment and modifications of the policies, programs, practices, and activities that we describe in this article.
2. *The greater the students' level of psychosocial engagement, the greater their degree of social integration.* Social integration reflects the students' perception of their degree of social affiliation with others and their degree of congruence with the attitudes, beliefs, norms, and values of the social communities of a college or university.
3. *The greater the students' degree of social integration, the greater the level of commitment to their college or university of enrollment.*
4. *The greater the level of commitment to their college or university, the greater their likelihood of persisting from the first to the second year of their enrollment at the focal college or university.*

Implications for Practice: Meeting Social Challenges

This article describes two basic approaches colleges and universities can use to help first-year students who enter college with lower levels of cultural capital to meet

the social challenges of the first year of college. One approach entails steering students toward experiences that will give them opportunities to meet students with similar precollege cultural experiences, attitudes, and values, in particular, as well as other students in general. This approach is referred to as “encouraging social interaction.” The second and more detailed approach entails institutional efforts to encourage students to attend cultural events. This approach is referred to as “cultural enrichment activities.”

In the chapter titled “Students at Risk in Residential and Commuter Colleges and Universities,” Braxton, Hartley, and Lyken-Segosebe (2015) pinpoint students with lower levels of cultural capital (e.g., visiting an art museum, attending a symphony concert, or traveling abroad) at entrance as at risk for first-year departure from residential colleges and universities. For this reason, colleges and universities that are able to identify students with lower levels of cultural capital should give serious consideration to the implementation of both of these approaches. Accordingly, it is incumbent on residential colleges and universities to collect information from entering students on their level of involvement in cultural activities during their last year in high school. Such information should be available at both an aggregate level and by individual student. This information becomes part of the student record and should be afforded all appropriate treatment and protection. To be sure, the authors do not recommend utilizing this information while making admission decisions; rather, it is recommended that institutions rely on this information after selecting the entering class in an effort to provide support to students with lower degrees of cultural capital. Again, the practice by which this information is gathered goes beyond the scope of this article. This discussion focuses on efforts to increase at-risk students' levels of cultural capital through the aforementioned means.

ENCOURAGING SOCIAL INTERACTION

Major responsibility falls on faculty and academic advisors who advise first-year students to steer their advisees with lower levels of cultural capital toward opportunities for them to socially interact with other students. In the previously mentioned book chapter titled “Students at Risk in Residential and Commuter

Colleges and Universities,” Braxton et al. (2015) describe ways for faculty and academic advisors to encourage their advisees with lower levels of entering cultural capital to meet other students. We highlight these suggested ways below:

- Encourage such advisees to join various clubs and organizations in order to meet other students with similar cultural experiences, interests, and values.
- Encourage such advisees to discuss course content with other students outside of class, make an effort to study or socialize with other students, and attend campus movies, plays, concerts, or recitals.
- Encourage such advisees to select learning community courses and courses that emphasize active learning. Such courses provide students with opportunities to meet other students with attitudes, values, and cultural experiences similar to their own. Tinto (2000) describes learning communities as the block scheduling of courses with the same group of students taking a set of courses together. As a consequence, there are greater opportunities for social interaction among members of these courses. Likewise, opportunities for social interaction with classmates emerge from such active learning activities as debates, role-playing, discussion, and group and pair work (Braxton et al., 2014).

Braxton et al. (2015) also stress that faculty and academic advisors should make such suggestions to advisees with lower levels of cultural capital during advising sessions held during a mandatory fall orientation for entering first-year students and in advising sessions during the academic year. The role of faculty and academic advisors to encourage social interactions for their advisees with lower levels of cultural capital provides one specific approach to fostering social interactions. However, colleges and universities may wish to use a less targeted approach and implement programs and activities designed to encourage the social interactions of all first-year students.

As was previously stated, a goal of every institution, and our charge to faculty and academic advisors in particular, should be to encourage students to interact with each other. This is especially important for first-year students as they seek to identify a core

group of peers who can share in and support them through the transition to college. Housing and residential professionals can also play an important role in supporting these efforts. By establishing first-year housing complexes the psychological, or perhaps social, size of the institution is significantly reduced, making it easier for students to meet and interact with peers who share in their precollege experiences, attitudes, and values, as well as to meet students who present positive differences.

An institution can also dedicate professional and paraprofessional staff to the work of identifying students who are not feeling connected within their residential or campus community. They can then actively support these students in targeted efforts to engage with peers, student governance structures within residence halls, and student organizations.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

As previously indicated, the provision of cultural enrichment activities provides another approach to help first-year students who enter college with lower levels of cultural capital to meet the social challenges of the first year of college. This section describes cultural enrichment activities that encourage incoming and current first-year students to engage with cultural enrichment activities.

The Institution-Selection Process

The Carnegie Classification system was used to randomly select 50 institutions. Parameters were developed to select from institutions that are four-year, primarily or highly residential, and Bachelor Arts and Sciences. Table 1 displays the resulting group of institutions. Private, highly residential, moderately selective, four-year institutions constitute the predominant institutional type selected.

Method of Data Collection

After obtaining the list of randomly selected institutions, information was gathered from the websites of each of the 50 randomly selected colleges and universities. Key search terms used included *cultural enrichment*, *cultural life*, *cultural experience program*, *cultural engagement*, *cultural activities*, *cultural requirements*,

Table 1. Institutions Reviewed

Institution	Type	Size	Selectivity
Agnes Scott College	Private	VS4/HR	Selective
Austin College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Beloit College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Bowdoin College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Bryn Mawr College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Claflin University	Private	S4/HR	Not available
Claremont McKenna College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Coe College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
College of the Atlantic	Private	VS4/R	More Selective
College of the Holy Cross	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Colorado College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Connecticut College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Denison University	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Eastern Nazarene College	Private	S4/HR	Not available
Fort Lewis College	Public	M4/R	Selective
Franklin and Marshall College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Gordon College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Green Mountain College	Private	VS4/HR	Selective
Gustavus Adolphus College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Hampshire College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Hanover College	Private	VS4/HR	Selective
Haverford College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Hillsdale College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Hiram College	Private	S4/HR	Selective
Hope College	Private	M4/HR	More Selective
Johnson C. Smith University	Private	S4/HR	Not available
Juniata College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
The King's College	Private	VS4/HR	More Selective
Ohio Wesleyan University	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Ouachita Baptist University	Private	S4/HR	Selective
Patrick Henry College	Private	VS4/HR	Not available
Reed College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Salem College	Private	VS4/HR	Selective
San Diego Christian College	Private	VS4/HR	Not available
Sarah Lawrence College	Private	S4/HR	Not available
Savannah State University	Public	M4/R	Not available
Shorter University	Private	S4/HR	Selective

(Continued)

Institution	Type	Size	Selectivity
Southern Catholic College	Private	VS4/HR	Not available
Southwestern University	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
St. Olaf College	Private	M4/HR	More Selective
Swarthmore College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Thomas Aquinas College	Private	VS4/HR	More Selective
University of Puget Sound	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Wabash College	Private	VS4/HR	Selective
Wartburg College	Private	S4/HR	Selective
Washington and Lee University	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Washington College	Private	S4/HR	more Selective
Wellesley College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective
Wesleyan College	Private	VS4/R	Selective
Williams College	Private	S4/HR	More Selective

cultural learning, and *cultural appreciation*. In selecting these search terms, there is an inherent assumption that institutions each utilize the same definition of the word *cultural*. We recognize this assumption and contend that for greater accuracy in identifying specific efforts, future studies should include conversations with current student affairs professionals at these institutions.

Each institution's degree requirements were also examined to identify mandatory coursework, beyond the traditional Liberal Arts curriculum, that introduced and/or exposed first-year students to activities or education associated with cultural enrichment.

After identifying the activities/programs, curricular requirements, and any additional institutional-sponsored events that promoted cultural enrichment, the findings were categorized into three groups: precollegiate programs, curricular programs beyond standard Liberal Arts requirements, and activities or programs associated with residential education or student activities.

ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS DESIGNED TO INCREASE CULTURAL CAPITAL

Cultural capital includes engagement with activities such as attending musical performances or taking music lessons, visiting museums, and studying a foreign language (Braxton et al., 2014). Therefore,

this article set out to identify programs or policies, at the randomly selected institutions, that, at face value, appear to provide incoming first-year students with experiences related to the aforementioned activities. While the programs or policies may not explicitly seek to build cultural capital, Braxton et al.'s (2014) findings would suggest that increased exposure to such activities will likely increase one's degree of cultural capital. Accordingly, three main categories of programs or policies that appear to promote building students' levels of cultural capital were identified: precollegiate programs, curriculum programs beyond standard liberal arts requirements, and activities or programs associated with residential education or student activities.

Each category is briefly described with a presentation of how each has been implemented or adopted on college and university campuses. At the conclusion, possible limitations surrounding each of the categories are presented. It should be noted that the purpose of this article is not to provide concrete metrics on the success of these programs, but rather to draw attention to institutional efforts that are congruent with the aforementioned theoretical framework. Thus, there will not be a discussion of the success of the individual programs with quantitative analysis.

PRECOLLEGIATE PROGRAMS

Based on the findings presented above, working to build students' degrees of cultural capital should be a priority of all colleges and universities. Perhaps, in an effort to be as successful as possible, such work should begin before the student arrives on campus for the first year. There are several institutions that sponsor programs that take place before the academic year begins, presented henceforth as precollegiate programs.

Given that a student with a greater degree of cultural capital is more likely to persist to the second year than a student with a lesser degree of cultural capital (Braxton et al., 2014), the latter can be considered to be at risk for departure. Therefore, precollegiate programs have the potential to make great strides in assisting students in building their foundation to make persistence more likely for them. The United States Department of Education provides federal funds for a series of programs that seek to "identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds" (United

States Department of Education, 2015). In this case, a disadvantaged background—having a lesser degree of cultural capital—might simply be coming from a small, rural town where art exhibits and theatrical performances are too far for a high school student to visit or attend, or having a younger sibling who needs attention after school, thus precluding a student from taking musical lessons.

The majority of precollegiate programs identified on institutional websites take the form of Summer Bridge programs, which are primarily funded by the U.S. Department of Education as a TRIO program. These initiatives seek to "give highly motivated students a solid foundation for their college experience" (St. Olaf College, n.d.) and provide "exposure to activities designed to promote leadership, cultural awareness, and self-confidence" (Fort Lewis College, 2015a) in an effort to "increase the rate at which participants ... enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education" (Ouachita Baptist University, 2015).

Due to the specificity of the TRIO guidelines and eligibility of participants, the specific institutions identified which house TRIO programs will not be discussed, as this article aims to present efforts that can be made available to all students. However, campus-based programs are encouraged to continue these types of experiences for all students, including those with lower levels of cultural capital. More information about these programs can be found in Table 2.

CURRICULUM PROGRAMS BEYOND STANDARD LIBERAL ARTS REQUIREMENTS

Despite the possibility of increasing cultural capital prior to matriculation through precollegiate programs, many students do not have the means or opportunity to participate in these programs. At a select few of the institutions studied herein, curricular efforts that transcend the standard liberal arts requirements appear to be designed for the facilitation of increasing cultural capital. Without singling out students with lower levels of cultural capital, curricular programs require that all students experience enrichment activities to graduate. These programs address one of two central topics: understanding diverse perspectives and developing an appreciation for fine arts and intellectualism.

Programs Designed to Address Diverse Perspectives

Several of the programs identified offer ways for students to expand their individual worldviews beyond the limits of their own backgrounds. By providing windows into other cultural practices and perspectives, these programs would seemingly allow students to think critically about their own beliefs and engage in a process of dialectical learning. This type of learning encourages students to clarify their own beliefs through discussion of opposing views and dissenting opinions. This Socratic approach to resolving conflicting ideas exposes students to the norms of other students, which may indirectly encourage the pursuit of greater cultural capital.

Students at Hampshire College are required to carry out a “campus-engaged learning activity,” which encourages lateral learning, or in other words, learning from one another, expanding individual learning to include multiple perspectives and ideas (Hampshire College, n.d.a). Additionally, in their second year, Hampshire College students must complete a multiple perspectives requirement. This requirement asks students to reflect retrospectively on how these interactions with other people in their coursework have shaped their worldviews and overall academic concentration as well (Hampshire College, n.d.b). By encouraging students to focus on diverse perspectives, institutions like Hampshire College bolster the inclusivity of their student communities, thereby increasing the likelihood that students with lower levels of cultural capital feel less excluded from learning and engagement. Eastern Nazarene College is yet another example of this type of requirement. Students are required to complete a Cultural Perspectives curriculum designed to help students “transcend their own cultural contexts and begin to see the world from the perspectives of others” (Eastern Nazarene College, n.d.). Presumably, this requirement exposes students to new ideas and new ways of thinking in a manner similar to the Hampshire College requirement that increases the likelihood that students with lower levels of cultural capital are less excluded from learning and engagement.

The University of Puget Sound offers a new tool called “Diversity in the Curriculum,” which assists students in course schedule planning by identifying

courses that include “significant diversity content” (University of Puget Sound, 2015). While this still requires that faculty advisors provide guidance in supporting students in determining the courses most appropriate to their majors and levels of cultural capital, this tool would appear to, at the very least, call greater attention to courses that offer an expansion of perspective and understanding. Similarly, at College of the Holy Cross, students can explore the Cross-Cultural Studies program, which takes them out of the classroom to enact theories from the classroom in the community (College of the Holy Cross, 2015). This program allows students to critically examine the “assumptions underlying cultural differences,” which can be extended to conversations about differing levels of cultural capital predicated on background and privilege (College of the Holy Cross, 2015).

Programs designed to develop an appreciation for fine arts and cultural capital. More directly, institutions may choose to offer programs that specifically address the lack of cultural knowledge or preferences of some first-year students. Such programs may be in the form of a formal requirement to the curriculum or a series of speakers and special guest exhibits on campus, all of which are designed to provide opportunities for students to gain greater cultural knowledge.

A prime example of this type of program can be found at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. The Wartburg College Artist Series invites musicians, actors, and dance programs to the university at no charge to students (Wartburg College, 2015b). Additionally, the Convocation Series at Wartburg College offers opportunities for students to hear about a variety of academic, political, and social issues. The Convocation Series is scheduled at a time during the week when there are no conflicting classes and is again free for students to attend (Wartburg College 2015b). By carving out a specific time for this program, Wartburg normalizes and encourages attendance, thereby avoiding the notion that this program is only for students who enter with lower levels of cultural capital. Students are also required to take multiple courses in inquiry studies that are designed to provide them with the tools to critically examine their surroundings and effectively communicate their own positions and opinions (Wartburg College, 2015a).

Table 2. Activities and Requirements Designed to Increase Cultural Capital for First-Year Students

Activity or Requirement	Description	Institution	Further Information
Precollegiate programs	Our research led us to precollegiate programs primarily sponsored and informed by the U.S. Department of Education's TRIO programs. More specifically, we examine Upward Bound programs and initiatives.	Beloit College	http://www.beloit.edu/sel/services/bridge/
		Coe College	http://www.coe.edu/campuslife/student-services/aap
		College of the Holy Cross	http://www.holycross.edu/holy-cross-community/academic-outreach
		Fort Lewis College	https://www.fortlewis.edu/upwardbound/
		Johnson C. Smith University	http://www.jcsu.edu/uploads/db/9e/db9ebab3b50e070fcfe89264726822b6/Freshman-Summer-Scholars-Program-Admissions-Website-Revision-5-15-14.pdf
		Ouachita Baptist University	http://www.obu.edu/specialprograms/upward-bound/
		Southwestern University	http://www.southwestern.edu/offices/ub/about/
Curricular programs beyond standard Liberal Arts requirements	While most institutions have curricular requirements related to the Liberal Arts generally, these institutions offer programs that go beyond the standard curricular requirements and ensure that all students engage with diverse perspectives, arts, music or drama, and learning outside of the traditional classroom.	St. Olaf College	http://wp.stolaf.edu/sss/sss-summer-bridge-program/
		College of the Holy Cross	http://catalog.holycross.edu/node/1381 http://catalog.holycross.edu/academics/cis
		Eastern Nazarene College	http://www.enc.edu/academics/programs/gened/
		Hampshire College	https://www.hampshire.edu/academics/division-i-first-year-program https://www.hampshire.edu/academics/cel-1-requirement https://www.hampshire.edu/dof/multiple-cultural-perspectives-requirement
		Hanover College	https://www.hanover.edu/search?v=degree+requirements
		Johnson C. Smith University	http://www.jcsu.edu/uploads/db/9e/db9ebab3b50e070fcfe89264726822b6/Freshman-Summer-Scholars-Program-Admissions-Website-Revision-5-15-14.pdf http://www.jcsu.edu/uploads/f0/92/f09214a4f72e0e85bf77b33a0ae848e0/JCSU-Catalog-Final-Version-2014-2015.pdf
		Thomas Aquinas College	http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/a-liberating-education/degree http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/a-liberating-education/beyond-classroom
		University of Puget Sound	http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/curriculum-courses/diversity-curriculum/
		Wartburg College	http://catalog.wartburg.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=53 http://catalog.wartburg.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=293
		Denison University	http://denison.edu/campus/series
Activities or programs associated with residential education or student activities	In addition to curricular requirements, these institutions offer programs through residential education or student activities that are designed to encourage students to engage with the fine arts, speakers on a wide array of topics, and field trips to local intellectual exhibitions.	Hampshire College	https://www.hampshire.edu/cbd/culture-brain-and-development-program-cbd
		Juniata College	http://www.juniata.edu/services/diversity/championsofdiversity.html
		Salem College	http://www.salem.edu/community/cultural-events/index.html
		Thomas Aquinas College	http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/a-liberating-education/lecture-concert-series

Often, programs of this nature are a part of new student orientation, as is the case at Hanover College. As part of the liberal arts degree requirement, students must complete the “August Experience” (Hanover College, 2015). This program provides an intense overview of collegiate inquiry; offers skills building in writing and public speaking; connects students to their faculty advisors; and includes activities such as films, field trips, and speakers to bolster learning outside of the classroom (Hanover College, 2015). This type of experience functions as an orientation but is enhanced by its standing within the academic curriculum, again normalizing participation in these activities as a widespread practice.

In an effort to provide students with tools to be successful long term regardless of level of cultural capital, Johnson C. Smith University requires students to complete a “Foundations” requirement, whereby they complete coursework in a variety of topics, including computers in society, health and physical education, mathematics, non-native languages, rhetoric, and the Smith Seminar (Johnson C. Smith University, 2015). The Smith Seminar is specifically designed to provide additional support to first-year students (Johnson C. Smith University, 2015).

Regardless, it is clear that these institutions are working to provide avenues for the development of cultural capital. Because all students are required to participate in these programs, students with lower levels of cultural capital upon matriculation have opportunities to increase their knowledge without feeling as though they must take remedial courses or stand out from their peers. In addition to formal academic requirements, many institutions of higher learning also offer additional opportunities to increase cultural capital through residential education or student activities.

Activities or Programs Associated With Residential Education or Student Activities

In addition to the formal academic curriculum, some of the randomly selected institutions offer optional events designed to give students and faculty greater access to cultural knowledge at little to no cost. Despite not being a requirement, these lectures, artist exhibitions, and music or drama performances are open to the entire student body, which allows those with less

cultural capital to expand their own knowledge without the added burdens of cost, transportation, or access.

Several of the institutions examined offer a series of events over the course of the academic year. At Salem College, the Cultural Events series “seeks to engage, educate, and inspire through the fine arts; scholarship and discussion; the written and spoken word; and performances of all kinds” (Salem College, 2015). By bringing authors, speakers, musicians, and performers to campus, Salem College tackles the issues of access and transportation head-on. This program also features faculty and student work, giving participants the opportunity to engage in lateral learning, or the idea that students might learn from one another as peers (Salem College, 2015). Denison University is another example of an institution committed to bringing cultural events to campus. Their program is called the “Campus Series” and features engagement with the arts and sciences through lectures, performances, exhibitions, and academic programming (Denison University, 2015). Similarly, Thomas Aquinas College encourages students and faculty to attend the Lecture and Concert Series, which is part of the curriculum supporting the institution’s Catholic mission (Thomas Aquinas College, 2015). The series encourages students to utilize the Socratic discussion method in the context of cultural and intellectual events that are free and open to the public (Thomas Aquinas College, 2015). In all three cases, opportunities to engage with cultural enrichment activities abound for the student body with few, if any, obstacles to participation.

Often, programs that offer enrichment on an optional basis are created through the residential education system or the student activities office. Multicultural Affairs offices are also heavily involved in providing such programming for students. However, in many cases, both of these programs are for select populations of the student body, rather than for the entire undergraduate population.

LIMITATIONS AND OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Both encouraging social interactions and cultural enrichments activities present significant issues that require consideration by colleges and universities interested in

their implementation. For institutional implementation of the suggested ways to encourage social interactions, we echo some of the issues raised in the chapter titled “Students at Risk in Residential and Commuter Colleges and Universities,” by Braxton et al. (2015). These issues center on necessary institutional arrangements made necessary because of the major responsibility placed on faculty advisors and professional advisors who advise first-year students to direct their advisees with lower levels of cultural capital toward opportunities for them to socially interact with other students.

These necessary institutional arrangements include:

- The institution makes information about the entering cultural capital levels of first-year students available for use by advisors during first-year orientation for advising purposes.
- All first-year students are required to participate in orientation programs at the start of the fall academic term.
- Students and their advisors meet at a designated time during the orientation program and at regular intervals during the academic year.
- The institution collects information about faculty and the courses they teach and makes such information freely available to advisors. Such information includes the frequency of faculty use of active learning practices in their courses.
- The institution offers credit-bearing learning communities for first-year students.

Several issues surround the implementation of cultural enrichment activities. These issues include:

- Is participation in a set number of cultural activities a requirement for graduation for all students? Is it a credit-bearing graduation requirement? As a requirement for graduation for all students, students entering college with lower levels of cultural capital are not singled out. Because faculty members typically bear responsibility for setting graduation requirements, faculty support for such a requirement looms necessary.
- How can faculty advisors measure an individual's growth in the pursuit of cultural capital? Each institution must work to develop their own metric

in order to operationalize implementation for faculty advisors who likely come from many different departments across the institution. This metric must take into account the variables for the institution's specific population, programs already in place, and expected outcomes.

- Does the institution have the financial resources to have on-campus cultural enrichment activities involving artists not employed by the college or university? If the college or university is located in or near a major metropolitan area with cultural activities readily available, then this issue is less of a concern than if the institution is located in a rural area.

In addition to the concerns regarding necessary institutional arrangements as well as potential issues with implementing cultural enrichment activities, there are three additional limitations. First, the information presented in this article was gathered from readily available information on institutions' websites. Deeper exploration might reveal additional support for the effectiveness of these programs, as well as additional initiatives that are not as easily identified on a web page. Second, the search terms identified may have provided a limited scope for cultural enrichment activities. Utilizing additional terms and phrases, as well as direct contact with institutions, might reveal programs or policies related to building students' levels of cultural capital. The final limitation has to do with the type of institutions researched. For this article, only primarily private, highly residential, moderately selective, four-year institutions were examined.

As a function of these limitations, it is recommended that future research examine information beyond that which is available online, search terms or phrases that are perhaps more inclusive or broader in scope, and programs at institutions that go beyond the type described above (i.e., public, large, two- and four-year institutions, as well as commuter schools).

Conclusion

Encouraging social interactions and cultural enrichment activities provides different pathways for increasing the self-esteem and social self-confidence of first-year

students with lower entering levels of cultural capital at residential colleges and universities. By increasing their self-esteem and social self-confidence, such students will presumably become more psychosocially engaged. Their increased levels of psychosocial engagement will likely indirectly influence their first-year persistence in a residential college or university. As previously stated, their persistence in college may lead to their attainment of such other forms of student success as the development of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions, their occupational attainment, their preparation for adulthood, and citizenship. Moreover, because psychosocial engagement fosters peer interactions, students may also experience an array of psychosocial outcomes and changes in their attitudes, catalogued by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) in their extensive review of research presented in *How College Affects Students*.

Thus, a compelling rationale for institutional action embracing the suggestions described herein for encouraging social interaction and cultural enrichment activities springs forth. Moreover, these various suggestions are provided with the goal of sparking the generation of additional approaches by colleges and universities, as the aforementioned suggestions should not be viewed as exhaustive.

The suggestions put forth herein should work in conjunction with other policies and practices that colleges and universities seeking to increase their first-year student retention rate have implemented. Although the suggestions made here center attention on students entering residential colleges with lower levels of cultural capital, other students may also benefit from them.

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