

Student Blogs in Recruitment

Most schools wouldn't consider using a picture of a campus restroom on an admissions brochure paired with a direct quote from a current student saying, "There's no freakin' privacy in the JOHN!"

But in a sense, that's the direction in which recruiting appears to be heading as more colleges turn to student-written blogs to give prospective students and their parents a glimpse of real life in college. The excerpt above is taken from a post by one of Ball State University's 12 official student bloggers for the 2005–2006 academic year.

Less than half of colleges are using blogs in marketing to prospective students and their families, said Bob

Johnson, president and senior consultant at the marketing communications firm Bob Johnson Consulting, LLC. But blogs could grow in importance as recruitment cycles lengthen—beginning as early as the seventh or eighth grades, Johnson said.

"Blogs create a constant contact stream between a school and a potential student over a long period of time," he said. As a result, schools using blogs already "have a leg up on competing colleges that are only using traditional marketing efforts."

Some blogs run one way, in that the author, or blogger, posts an entry to be read. More interactive blogs, however, allow readers to post comments and ask

questions, to which the blogger can respond in additional comments or through a new post.

Some institutions might be scared away from using blogs in admissions marketing because it allows current students to make candid comments about their schools. However, when it comes to talking about student life, the students themselves are often the most believable, even when the subject turns to the less desirable aspects of college.

"A parent posted a question about drinking to one of our bloggers who [had written] about attending a recent party," said Nancy Prater, Ball State's Web content coordinator. "While this

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Getting a Clearer Picture of Who Graduates, and Why

The attendance patterns of bachelor's degree-seeking students has changed dramatically, and so should our efforts to track and understand their achievement, says a U.S. Department of Education researcher in a recently released report.

In "The Toolbox Revisited," a follow-up to the 1999 report "Answers in the Toolbox," Clifford Adelman compares the attendance and achievement patterns of degree-seeking students who graduated from high school in 1982 and those who graduated in 1992.

By analyzing a National Center for Education Statistics longitudinal study, he found that members of the class of 1992 who sought bachelor's degrees were much more likely than students a decade

earlier to mix courses from community colleges and multiple four-year institutions on the road to completing their degrees.

Based on these findings, Adelman recommends using an 8.5-year timetable to look at graduation rates. In addition, he makes the following arguments:

1) Time matters more today than place in predicting who will earn bachelor's degrees.

In the report, Adelman asserts that when it comes to students' chances of obtaining bachelor's degrees, how they use their time matters more than where they start.

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may seem like a delicate topic, the blogger turned [it] into a positive opportunity to say drinking does occur but that there are always campus events going on that are alcohol-free.”

The following three steps can help you create a successful admissions-related blog, according to the collegiate Web content directors who recently spoke with *Recruitment and Retention*:

1) Select your bloggers carefully.

Because of the candid nature of blogging, student selection is critical. The students you select must be comfortable speaking in their own voices but at the same time must represent the school.

Letting students say whatever is on their minds may seem like a recipe for disaster, but most schools already using blogs say that using a thorough selection process eliminates much of the risk. Their recommendations for selecting student bloggers include

- asking deans and department heads for recommendations
- approaching students who are already actively involved in campus events
- requesting writing samples to narrow the number of candidates
- interviewing students to judge their communication skills and commitment levels
- looking for diversity in the students you select and including students with varied racial/ethnic backgrounds, geographic locations, ages, majors, class years, and life experiences.

2) Train the students about blog- and Web-writing basics.

Like most Web sites, the more often new content is available on the blog, the more visits it will receive. As a result, it's important that student bloggers know to post frequently, rather than saving up experiences for a longer post.

At Ball State, 12 students produce 12 individual blogs. “One of the tips we give

during training is not to sum up everything from the week in one blog,” said Prater, who instead suggests advising student bloggers think in short segments for their posts.

Xavier University, now in its second year of blogging, found the first year unsuccessful because postings were too infrequent.

“One to two postings per week didn't create a whole lot of attraction,” said Douglas Ruschman, Xavier's Web director. “We learned that to keep people coming back, postings must be fresh, dynamic, and constantly changing.”

One way to accomplish this is to make the blog a group effort. At Xavier, for example, instead of having eight individual journals, one student posts a message and the other seven respond to that message with their own experiences. Ruschman said the shared approach brings in almost daily postings.

Equally important as posting frequency is writing that is Web friendly. “The different writing styles of each student keep the blogs authentic, but it has to be easy to read on the Web,” Prater said.

She recommends advising bloggers to break up the text with paragraph breaks and subheads, keep paragraphs short, and use photos to illustrate ideas instead of just words.

3) Set the bloggers free to do their work.

Once selected and trained, the bloggers need the freedom to offer the firsthand, unvarnished observations and opinions that readers expect from blogs.

The blogs' names often refer to this expectation: Ball State's blog series is titled “Real Life,” for example. Houghton College says that its five student blogs present life at the college “at its best, its worst, and its in-between.”

“Once you've made the selection, the biggest piece of advice I have is to trust your posting students,” said Xavier's Ruschman. “The more marketing spin

you try to push on them, the more it will hurt the effectiveness of the blog.”

That doesn't mean that the school shouldn't look in on what's happening and get some good ideas of what prospective students and their parents want to know about.

“While we do check in on our bloggers, we don't need to watch them,” Ruschman said. “We feel it's more important to let them make their space their own.” ✓

—Carrie Anton

A Sampling of Student Blogs

Here's a look at the variety of approaches different schools have taken to student life blogs:

- Ball State University: www.bsu.edu/reallife

BSU's blogs feature posts from 12 students of varied interests and backgrounds, including international students.

- Xavier University: www.xu.edu/undergraduate_admission/blogs/index.htm

Four Xavier students—a freshman, a sophomore, a junior, and a senior—document the 2005–2006 academic year.

- Houghton College: www.houghton.edu/admission/life/index.htm

Houghton's blog project includes posts from students studying abroad as well as those on the home campus. Houghton takes blogging a step further than most institutions, combining blogs with podcasts and storytelling through photos.

- Simmons College: www.simmons.edu/enews/blogs05/

The website of this undergraduate women's college features blogs from five first-year students.

Study Undermines Argument Against Race-Sensitive Admissions

The “mismatch” hypothesis—sometimes called the “fit” hypothesis—predicts that race-sensitive admissions harm some minority students by placing them in academic environments that are too rigorous and thwart their chances of graduation. A new study by Sigal Alon of Tel Aviv University and Marta Tienda of Princeton University challenges this hypothesis.

There’s not much research that

addresses this question specifically, Alon said in a telephone interview from Princeton.

At first glance, the gap in graduation rates between underrepresented minority students and other students attending the same highly selective institution appears to support the mismatch argument, she said.

On the other hand, William Bowen and Derek Curtis Bok’s 1998 book *The Shape of the River* reports that underrepresented minority students attending selective institutions are more likely to graduate than other minority students attending less-selective institutions. But this doesn’t really get at the question of “mismatch,” Alon said. Students who are admitted to selective institutions are generally well prepared academically, which, in turn, makes them likely to complete their degrees.

To really get at the question, Alon and Tienda compared the graduation rates of students with similar characteristics (SAT scores, family background, geographical region, and other attributes) but who attended institutions with different levels of selectivity.

Alon and Tienda used three different analytic methods to examine three different data sets: two national data sets plus Bowen and Bok’s “College and Beyond” set (which includes data from students attending only selective institutions).

They found that underrepresented minority students did appear to be “mismatched” at highly selective institutions—that their levels of academic preparation according to SAT scores, class rank, and quantifiable measures were indeed lower than the institutional average. However, Alon said, the level of mismatch at more-selective institutions is smaller than that at less-selective institutions without affirmative action.

Alon and Tienda also found that despite a racial gap in graduation rates among students attending the same institution, underrepresented minority stu-

dents attending more-selective institutions had higher graduation rates than minority students with similar observable academic characteristics attending less-selective institutions.

In other words, even if underrepresented students entered more-selective institutions with lower academic credentials than other students there, they were still more likely to graduate than if they had attended a less-selective campus where their academic credentials were better matched to the overall student profile.

So why are students with similar academic credentials more likely to succeed at more selective institutions?

Alon hypothesizes that more-selective institutions often can afford to offer students more resources, including better-prepared classmates, smaller class sizes, strong mentoring, and more financial aid, especially grants.

Of course, not all factors affecting admission and graduation are observable in the data and therefore could affect the findings, Alon acknowledged. High motivation and commitment levels, for example, not only increase a student’s chances of getting into a more-selective school, but also increase his or her chances of graduation.

But when such “unobservables” were accounted for, they altered only the findings drawn from the College and Beyond data set, which includes only students who attended very selective institutions.

Tienda and Alon’s interpretation of that finding is that unobservables tend to be weighed more heavily at highly selective institutions, which are more likely than less-selective institutions to use comprehensive rather than mechanical applicant review.

Assessing the “Mismatch Hypothesis”: Differences in College Graduation Rates by Institutional Selectivity by Sigal Alon and Marta Tienda appeared in the October 2005 *Sociology of Education*. ✓

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For example, if students who graduate from high school in June and aren't enrolled in some form of postsecondary education by the following January, their chances of finishing a four-year program "just plummet," he said during a recent interview.

This is especially true for less-prepared or -driven students, he said. "When students are sort of borderline, not the greatest academically or less than committed [to attaining a degree], I say this to guidance counselors: 'Get them to go as fast as you can, or you're going to lose them.'"

Another factor positively affecting a student's chance of attaining a bachelor's degree is how many credits he or she earns in the first calendar year of enrollment, Adelman said. Students who earn at least 20 credits in that first year are much more likely to graduate than students who don't.

Students are also becoming savvier about making the summer count, Adelman said. "There's no such thing as summer vacation anymore. Students are being very smart about that. They're using the full calendar year, and you see its positive benefits."

Meanwhile, starting place has become less important in predicting who graduates, because more students who earn bachelor's degrees are starting at community colleges than was the case in the previous decade, Adelman said. And students who do start at a four-year college are more likely than ever to supplement their schedules with coursework offered by community colleges or to transfer to another four-year institution. (See the sidebar for more on this trend.)

"I might come out of that first calendar year with 27 credits, and I might have attended three schools to do it," Adelman said. "And the three schools don't make as much of a difference as the fact that I used my time [well]."

2) Data-gathering efforts need to focus on the student, not just the institution.

In the government and in higher education, "there is a high degree of consciousness of the problem of student tracking," Adelman said. "But then there's the question of how you do it. More and more institutions and state

systems are recognizing that students aren't attending one school all the way through and that they're highly mobile."

The "classic transfer"—moving from a two-year to a four-year institution—is relatively well tracked. But challenges still remain tracking students who move

- from state to state,

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QUICK
"quotes"

Clifford Adelman, a researcher with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Why are bachelor's degree-seeking students more likely today to attend more than one four-year institution than they were a decade earlier?

I think there are a number of reasons for that. One of them, you could say, is that unlike when I went to school in the '60s, individuals' ties to organizations are not as strong as they were. When we went to school, where you started was where you finished, but people's ties to that assumption are looser than they used to be.

You've got, of course, community-college-to-four-year transfer. In fact, the rate of traditional-age community college students transferring to four-year colleges increased between the 1980s and the 1990s from about 27 percent to 37 percent. That's pretty good, and we want to encourage more of that.

Four-year-to-four-year transfer is now a far more pervasive concept than it used to be. In the report, I list some of

the reasons that have come from other studies, and they range from homesickness—families all over the country can tell stories like this—to comfort level. It's not homesickness, but the students aren't very comfortable in the environment they're in, and they choose to come back [home] or go somewhere else.

Another reason is academic program. My favorite story about this is the young woman who starts her academic career at Oklahoma State University as a biology major. In her sophomore year, she takes a class on limnology, the study of freshwater aquatic systems, and her professor is smart enough to set up a laboratory comparing freshwater and saltwater environment. And by the time the student gets done with that, she wants to major in marine biology. God bless Oklahoma State University, but there's no way an ocean will appear in the Panhandle for the study of marine biology for the next 13 geological eras, so she transfers to the University of Rhode Island ... from which she graduates magna cum laude, of course.

You can go on and on with examples like this: "My girlfriend moved to Arizona; I can't live without her." That's cited in the literature, and families all over the country can tell you stories like that—why my kid who started at institution X is finishing at institution Y. ✓

How to Recruit Faculty to Learning Communities

The secret to success in recruiting faculty to learning communities is being more selective about whom you invite, said Shari Ellertson, an assessment consultant at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point.

Ellertson, who has a student affairs background and has conducted research into faculty experiences with learning communities, makes the following recommendations to staff charged with developing and maintaining first-year learning communities.

1) Reach out to midcareer faculty.

Ellertson bases this recommendation on qualitative research she conducted at Iowa State University in the 2003–2004 academic year. The study asked faculty about their work with learning communities and sought to find whether there was a connection between that work and midcareer faculty members' "vitality," or the intensity of their engagement with their work.

Many studies on midcareer faculty report that faculty research publication productivity plateaus or drops at midcareer. This is sometimes mistaken as stagnation, Ellertson said.

"What I was reading about midcareer faculty in the literature did not match what I was seeing, which was [midcareer] faculty members who were very excited, very enthused, and very energized by being involved," she said. "I thought it was too simplified to say all midcareer faculty have this plateau. It's not representative of how complex a role faculty have."

What she found through her research is that midcareer faculty tend to have professional interests and needs that learning communities can fulfill. Indeed, learning community experts Barbara Leigh Smith and Jean McGregor say that midcareer faculty are at the perfect stage in their careers to get involved with learning communities, Ellertson said.

While new faculty are often engaged in research that will help them earn tenure, and while senior faculty are often interested in mentoring new faculty and leaving legacies, midcareer faculty are often interested in

- finding new creative outlets
- networking and collaborating
- developing solutions to institutional problems
- engaging in interdisciplinary work
- engaging more deeply in teaching and mentoring students.

"One thing we can do as student affairs professionals is help facilitate out-of-class connections [between students and faculty] through learning communities," Ellertson said. "Simply having a pizza party and expecting magical interaction to occur between faculty and students is somewhat unrealistic, because most [students and faculty] are unaccustomed to interacting with each other in that informal sense. Yet faculty in my study said that that was one of the unique things about learning communities—that there are these opportunities [for interacting with students] that just don't occur otherwise."

2) Extend invitations directly to faculty who have already demonstrated a passion for undergraduate education.

"Don't necessarily go to the masses," Ellertson said. "A lot of times we have good intentions, and we say, 'Well, we'll send out this flyer, and we'll tell people what it is, and then we'll wait for them to come to us.' But one of the things I learned from my research is that the faculty who participated [in learning communities] were [already] engaged in teaching-intensive opportunities at the institution."

As a result, Ellertson said, when recruiting faculty, the institution should not only ask, "What could we have them

do that's appealing to them?" but also ask, "Where do we find them?"

"I think we find them through our teaching and learning centers on our campuses," Ellertson said. If a campus has no formal center, there's still an epicenter of people who focus on teaching and learning through conferences and informal groups. Institutions can also invite faculty who have won teaching awards. "It seems a little bit obvious, but we aren't always doing those things," Ellertson said. "Those are opportunities to tap into the folks who are really interested in undergraduate education. It happens because of relationships."

3) Understand what motivates faculty to participate, and create programs accordingly.

The motivation for most faculty members who participate in learning communities is intrinsic, Ellertson said.

Learning community work often isn't recognized at both the institutional and departmental levels, she said. It isn't built into many institutions' faculty reward structures. In addition, the faculty she interviewed cited departmental indifference—or even departmental resistance—as a drawback of participating.

"Some [respondents] said that their departments were oblivious to the fact that they were doing it," she said.

On the other hand, faculty cited the pride and satisfaction they get from helping students as the main motivator for participating in learning communities. Faculty also said they liked helping build students' citizenship by engaging them in civic-minded, service-learning projects.

Staff should consider these motivators when creating learning communities, Ellertson said. In addition, they should connect with academic leaders to educate them about the positives faculty can get out of participating, especially in midcareer.

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NewsWire

Institutions to Pilot Transfer Programs for Low-Income, High-Achieving Students

Eight colleges and universities have pledged to enroll more high-achieving, low-income community college students who are seeking bachelor's degrees.

The institutions—Amherst College, Bucknell University, Cornell University, Mount Holyoke College, the University of California–Berkeley, the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Southern California—will use \$27 million total in support from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to build model transfer programs. Recipients are in turn committing \$20.5 million in financial aid and other resources. The institutions will share what they will learn through the process with higher education nationally.

Study Examines Latino High Achievers' Profiles — The personal and academic profiles of high-achieving Latino students are different from those of other high-achieving students, a recent study finds.

Fragile Futures: Risk and Vulnerability Among Latino High Achievers finds that non-Latino high achievers are more likely than Latino high achievers to come from advantaged academic and economic backgrounds and attend high schools that offer Advanced Placement classes and other rigorous courses. The report, available at www.ets.org/research/pic, makes recommendations to address these differences.

Report Tracks Per-Student Recruiting Costs — Four-year private colleges spent about \$2,073 to recruit a single student in 2004–2005—about four times more than what four-year public campuses spent and as much as 30 times more

than what two-year public colleges spent, according to a recent online poll.

Noel-Levitz, a higher education consulting firm, surveyed 163 nonprofit degree-granting schools in November 2005. The poll asked respondents to provide the total number of new undergraduate students (first-year and transfers) who enrolled over the course of all terms beginning in 2005, as well as their 2004–2005 recruitment and admissions budgets.

Median recruitment cost per student decreased modestly from 2004 to 2005 for four-year publics (from \$516 to \$455) and increased slightly for four-year private institutions (from \$1,901 to \$2,073). 2004 figures for two-year public schools were not available. A four-page study report is available by visiting Noel-Levitz's website at www.noellevitz.com and clicking on the "Papers and Research" link. ✓

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- from four-year institution to four-year institution,
- between public and private institutions.

A student transfer "has got to be recognized by both parties," Adelman said. "A lot of state systems aren't recognizing the student who is wandering from one institution to another, and if the student is mixing public and private institutions, people lose track of where the student is."

Some tracking services help institutions find out where former students are enrolled currently, if at all. However, that tracking can't tell institutions how many credits the former students have earned at their new institutions, and it can't always tell institutions whether those former students have graduated.

This is a problem for institutions because they are being held more accountable for students who appear, on the surface, to be dropouts. "But they're not," Adelman said. "And you know they're not. You just have to be able to prove it."

State tracking systems can also offer some—but not complete—assistance. Florida, for example, has an in-state student tracking system Adelman calls "the best," but it can't track students who transfer out of the state.

3) Higher education should examine not only student persistence rates, but also the quality of that persistence.

Ninety percent of bachelor's degree-seeking students persist into the second year, Adelman said, but that number alone doesn't tell institutions whether students are building or main-

taining the academic momentum that will get them to degree completion.

Among about a third of the students persisting to the second year, "the quality of persistence leaves something to be desired," he said. This includes coming into the second year with fewer than 20 credits or low GPAs.

"So I recommend that people look more carefully at quality of persistence as well as the fact of it," Adelman said. "What matters at the family dinner table, at the end of the story, is whether the student completed a degree program, not how many schools he or she went to along the way."

The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College is available at www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevisited/index.html. ✓

Interdisciplinary Program Meets the Needs of Returning Adult Students

Approximately 1,300 of Northern Arizona University's 16,000 undergraduate students are enrolled in the bachelor of arts in liberal studies (BAiLS) program, the university's largest program. The program's popularity and success are not due to a strong recruitment effort—there is no formal recruitment—but rather have been achieved by meeting the needs of a growing undergraduate demographic, the returning adult student.

BAiLS is an interdisciplinary program that is not housed within a single academic department. Students who enroll in the program take courses from a variety of departments on campus, at other locations throughout the state, or online. "We don't have special classes for these students. They take the same courses as everybody else. They may just take a different mix of those courses," said Larry Gould, associate dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Gould chairs a council that includes representatives from the main departments that contribute to the program as well as representatives from the distance learning office, the faculty senate, and the liberal studies council. The council meets twice a month to discuss curriculum changes, funding, and delivery of courses. "It's easy to create a program. It's more difficult to deliver it," Gould said.

Because these programs incorporate courses from different departments, advance planning is essential to ensure that students in the interdisciplinary program can enroll in the courses they need. Gould plans two years in advance to make accommodations for projected student enrollment. Generally the program fills existing course sections, but occasionally student demand will require new sections. If new instructors are needed to teach these courses, the office of distributed learning provides the funding, but each instructor

becomes a member of the department in which his or her discipline is housed.

Currently, student advising occurs within the individual departments. For example, a student within the BAiLS program whose emphasis is in biology would have an adviser from the biology department. However, all the distance learners are advised in a central office. "We're moving toward taking all the advising away from the departments and doing it all in one place because it's our degree," Gould said.

'It's easy to create a program. It's more difficult to deliver it.'

The program's biggest strength is the ability to respond to students' needs. To get a clear understanding of these needs, the programs conduct focus groups with current students, those about to graduate, and recent graduates of the programs. Questions include

- Why did you choose the program?
- What value do you see in the program?
- How do you think this program will help (or has helped) in your career?

The focus groups also ask about individual identity. "By and large, these students had an identity problem. 'I'm not quite sure who I am. Am I a biology major, or am I an interdisciplinary studies major?' That's something we continue to work on. The good part of it, though, is that because of the flexibility of the program, students are able to

fashion a set of courses with adviser approval that are more likely to meet their needs," Gould said.

"I don't want to sound like someone who says, 'The students will tell us what they want, and eventually, like a kid, will eat everything that's good for him.' We know what we want in the program, but there are places where we can make changes without corrupting what we believe is a good set of learning outcomes," Gould said.

The flexibility of the program enables students to combine diverse interests. For example, one student was able to combine his interests in criminal justice and environmental studies. As a criminal justice major, he would have been able to take perhaps up to nine hours in environmental studies. With the interdisciplinary program, he was able to take the basic criminal justice requirements and 24 hours of environmental studies courses.

Most of the students in the interdisciplinary program are adult learners. There are higher percentages of minorities, single mothers, and women than in the rest of the university. "These people have a fairly good idea of what's going to help them succeed. [In focus groups] we may ask them, 'Why do you want something like intercultural education?' They'll say, 'Because that's what I do. I talk to people from very different cultures, and I need to know how to better interact with them,'" Gould said.

Based on a recent program review, the structure of the program will be changed from one that offers only bachelor of arts degrees to one that also offers bachelor of science degrees. Under the current BA-only program, "adult learners suffer through four semesters of a modern language. They're in their 40s and 50s; they're not going to pick up a modern language. They're past that. But they can pick up statistics and research methods [a requirement for a BS]," Gould said.

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In addition to serving adult students, the program also serves as a way of retaining students who, for whatever reason, need to leave campus before graduating. “We can usually keep these students by changing them from on-campus to distance students, and because the program is flexible enough, we can usually get them all the courses they need,” Gould said.

“For anybody contemplating doing something like this, I would urge them to try to address the needs of more than a single group of students. Then you bring in the color, the flavor, the diversity that allows younger students to learn from older students, and the older students will feel more assimilated into the student body. If you have a class that has nothing but 40-year-olds, those students are not assimilated into the university culture. If you have a student body that has nothing but 21-year-olds in it, they don’t have the opportunity to learn from their peers who are a bit older,” Gould said. ✓

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4) Recognize that faculty members already have some understanding of student development.

Student affairs–related staff sometimes believe that student development is their exclusive domain, Ellertson said. However, faculty have student development experience too, and their interest in deepening that experience can be another motivator for participating in learning communities.

“I would encourage student affairs professionals to recognize and honor the contributions that faculty make to student development,” Ellertson said. “Faculty know this stuff from their experiences. They might not be able to name the theory, but they know the cycles of their students, and they’ve seen it.” ✓

Resources

NCSD Annual Conference

The National Council on Student Development (NCSD), an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges, will hold its 2006 conference October 22–24 in Tacoma, Washington. A leadership institute will be held October 20–22. For more information, visit the NCSD’s website at www.nationalcouncilstudentdevelopment.org.

African American Men in College

African American Men in College, a new book edited by Michael J. Cuyjet, includes examples of programs and activities that can enhance African American men’s academic success in a college environment. The 384-page book includes contributions from leading practitioners and scholars in the field. For more information on ordering (\$38), visit www.josseybass.com.

Student Development in the First Year

Student Development in the First College Year: A Primer for College Educators by Tracy L. Skipper is a 115-page book that details theories of college student learning and development, paying particular attention to the first college year. The book also discusses implementation and outcomes assessment. For more information on ordering (\$20), visit National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition’s website at www.sc.edu/fye/index.html.

Closing the Expectations Gap

Closing the Expectations Gap 2006, a new report from the Washington-based nonprofit group Achieve, Inc., says that while several states this past year have more closely aligned their high school curricula with what colleges expect of incoming students,

there’s still quite a way to go. The report may be downloaded through Achieve’s website at www.achieve.org.

Higher Education and the Color Line

Higher Education and the Color Line: College Access, Racial Equality, and Social Change, edited by Gary Orfield, Patricia Marin, and Catherine L. Horn, outlines an agenda for achieving racial justice in higher education in the next generation. The 238-page book includes issues such as shifts in financial aid and the growing importance of community colleges. For information on ordering (\$29.95), visit the Harvard Education Press’s website at <http://gseweb.harvard.edu/hepg>.

State Goals for Increasing Postsecondary Attainment

By the Numbers: State Goals for Increasing Postsecondary Attainment, a report prepared by the Boston-based nonprofit group Jobs for the Future, reports that only 23 states have set specific and measurable goals for increasing postsecondary participation. The report is available through Jobs for the Future’s website at www.jff.org.

NACAC Annual Conference

The National Association for College Admission Counseling will hold its next annual conference October 5–7 in Pittsburgh. More information is available through NACAC’s website at www.nacacnet.org.

National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing, and Retention

Noel-Levitz will hold its National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing, and Retention July 19–21 in Denver. More information is available through Noel-Levitz’s website at www.noellevitz.com. ✓