Creating a College Culture: Putting Theory into Practice

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Origins of college culture work

Research tends to focus on what *individuals* do to advance educationally

Examine what *institutions* can do to support individuals

How can K-12 institutions cultivate a college-going mentality

Patricia McDonough, Karen Jarsky, Amy Fann, Anne-Marie Nuñez and partners
What is a culture? Why focus on it?

An organization’s underlying values, beliefs, and meanings which are deeply held, static, and enduring.

Culture influences daily operations through: expectations; assumptions; language; flow of information; content of information; and specific options highlighted or downplayed.
Theoretical and Empirical Bases

Sociological frameworks addressing why gaps in educational attainment endure

Human capital, Social capital, Cultural capital

Individual habitus and organizational habitus (Pierre Bourdieu)

Research literature on college access
College Culture Goal

All students are prepared for a full range of post-secondary options through structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities.
College Culture Objectives

- School leadership is committed to building a college culture
- All school personnel provide a consistent message to students that supports their quest for a college preparatory K-12 experience
- All counselors are college counselors
- Counselors, teachers, and families are partners in preparing students for college.
Principles of a College Culture

- College Talk
- Clear Expectations
- Information & Resources
- Comprehensive Counseling Model
- Testing & Curriculum
- Faculty Involvement
- Family Involvement
- College & Community Partnerships
- Articulation
Faculty must be active, informed partners with counselors, students, and families and professional development opportunities must be available.

**Indicators:**
- Display information in classroom “college corners”
- *College Talk* during class time
- Math and English teachers work with PSAT-takers
- Discuss the connections between course content and preparation for college and careers
College and Community Partnerships

Active links between K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and the community

Indicators:
- Go Centers
- Community college and university outreach and bridge programs
- Tutoring
- Speakers bureau: financial aid, transfer
- Regional business and organizations
College Culture in Practice

- Parent workshops
  - Elementary school through community college
- Curriculum development
- Professional development for school counselors and outreach programs
- Professional development for district teams and P-16 Councils
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