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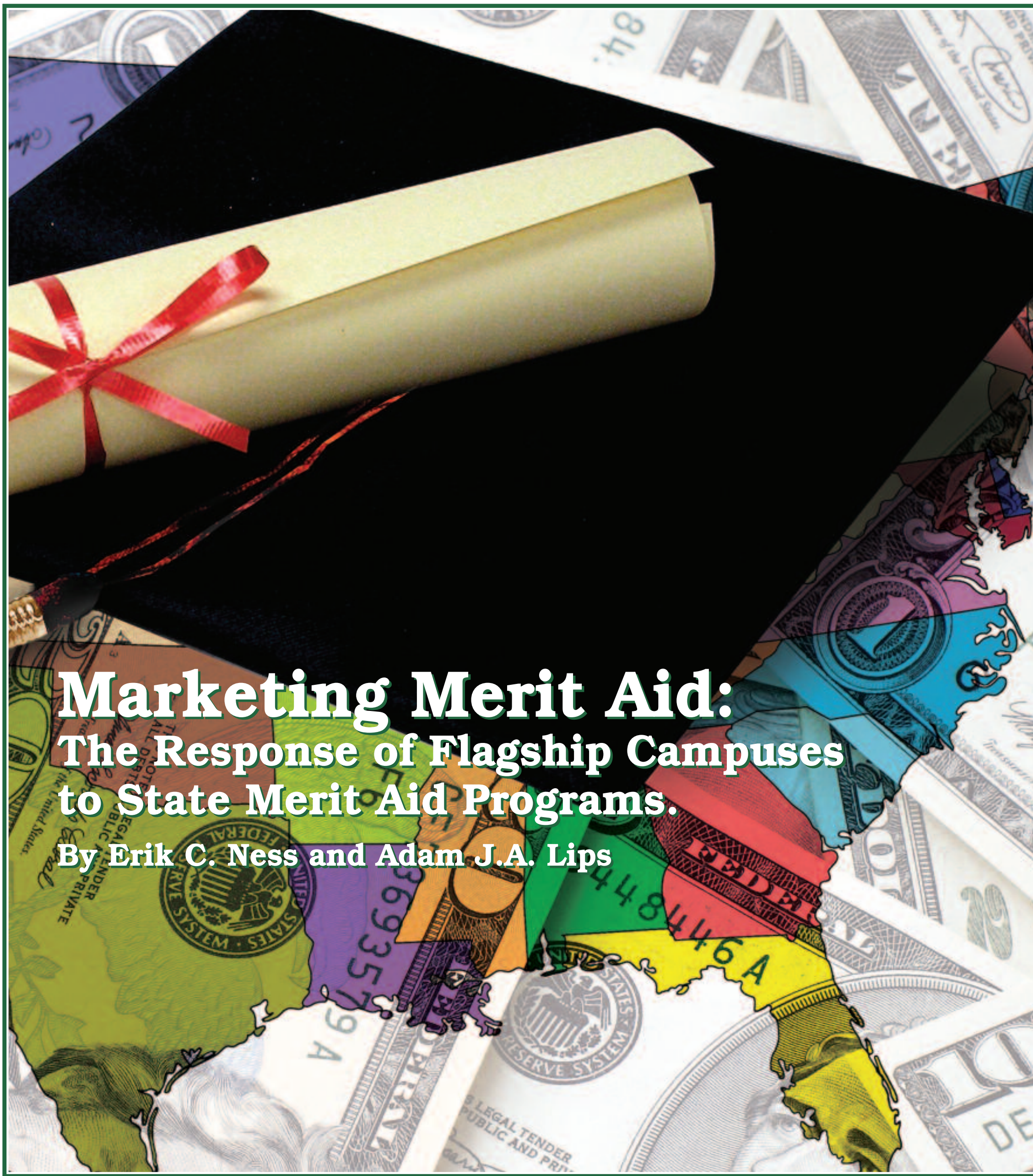

Marketing Merit Aid:
The Response of Flagship Campuses to State Merit Aid Programs.

By Erik C. Ness and Adam J.A. Lips

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Editor's Column: Practicing Kindness

Sometimes aid administrators focus too much on data, processes, and regulations and not enough on the human dimension of our work. We deal with students and their families whose personal needs and aspirations can be affirmed or undone by our actions and decisions. With the volume of applicants and the variety of issues needing attention, it's easy to become jaded or blasé. By intentionally practicing kindness, however, we can save ourselves from these pitfalls.

Practicing kindness doesn't mean acceding to every request that comes our way. Rather, it means making certain that we consider alternatives and be an advocate for students and their families. Certainly aid resources may be limited and the answer to a request may ultimately be "no", but how carefully we have pondered the decision and the manner in which it is delivered are important and cannot be ignored. We should view helping students understand processes, the limits of resources, and the import of regulations as a part of our job.

In constructing student expense budgets, aid administrators can, on a case by case basis, take into account special circumstances of the student. Financial aid may not be available to cover an expanded budget, but in some situations it may. Recognizing the student's needs at least gives assurance that someone cares and is trying to help. NASFAA Monograph 20, *Developing the Cost of Attendance*, provides guidance on various dimensions of budget construction.

Determining financial need is another area in which we can practice kindness. Federal statute explicitly allows aid administrators to exercise professional judgment. It may be appropriate, for example, to consider loss of wages through unemployment, extraordinary expenses resulting from medical bills, support of extended family, or accommodation of private elementary and secondary schooling costs. Adjusting need analysis in individual cases to the particular circumstances of students and their families demonstrates that we are not bound by the lockstep of forms and formulas. Aid administrators can use NASFAA Monograph 22, *Professional Judgment in Eligibility Determination and Need Analysis*, to consider the ways to address particular family financial situations.

Even though resources may be short and regulations may be an impediment, aid administrators still have a role in counseling students and their parents. Listening carefully, exploring alternatives, and proposing alternate strategies in financing may help allay concerns and salvage the situation.

The biblical prophet Micah enjoined humans to "do justice and love kindness." In our daily lives as aid administrators we advance the cause of justice by providing education opportunity one student at a time. Let's also make certain that we deliver assistance to each student in a humane and sensitive manner by practicing kindness.

In this Issue

We are pleased to present four articles to readers of the Journal,

- **Erik Ness**, an assistant professor at University of Georgia, and **Adam Lips**, founder and director of Viridian College Consulting, delve into the world of state merit aid. Comparing 16 public flagship campuses with and without state merit aid programs, the authors developed three thematic campus responses that characterize how state aid has shaped aid programs and enrollment goals.

- **James Condon,** an associate professor at Georgia Health Sciences University**, Lori Prince,** an assistant professor at Georgia Health Sciences University, and **Erik Stuckart**, a clinical document improvement specialist at Doctors Hospital, examine pertinent research on the Georgia HOPE Scholarship since its 1993 inception. Notably, the authors focus on strengths and weaknesses of the program as well as discuss the reasons for recent changes in HOPE Scholarship eligibility.

- **Nathan Daun-Barnett**, an assistant professor at the University at Buffalo, discusses various types of tuition guarantee programs in order to set the context of how the Kalamazoo Promise, a tuition guarantee program in Michigan, offers another way in developing local economies and increasing college enrollment.

- **Mark Bandre**, the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Development at Baker University as well as a doctoral student at George Fox University, brings to light a summary of the available financial aid, enrollment, and retention research on student athletes attending Division III colleges and universities.

Joe Paul Case
Editor

Marketing Merit Aid: The Response of Flagship Campuses to State Merit Aid Programs

By Erik C. Ness and Adam J.A. Lips

Erik C. Ness is an assistant professor for the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia. Adam J.A. Lips is the founder and director of Viridian College Consulting.

This study examines the differences in the portfolio of institutional scholarships and the marketing of these awards between flagship campuses with and without state merit aid programs. Using content analysis techniques to analyze institutional websites of the 16 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) flagship campuses, three thematic responses emerge that characterize and illustrate the ways in which flagship campuses have shaped their own aid programs to take advantage of state merit scholarships and to advance enrollment goals. These responses can be seen through the reach of the institutional scholarships, the transparency of the university merit aid programs, and the marketing aims of the scholarship efforts.

The proliferation of merit-based scholarship programs represents one of the most striking trends in state-level financial aid over the last 15 years. As one of the first merit aid programs, the Georgia HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) Scholarship program has received the greatest attention from researchers and policy analysts studying institution- and state-level program effects. Despite the "negative social consequences" of disproportionate eligibility rates for under-represented students (Heller & Marin, 2002, 2004), state merit aid programs, such as the Georgia HOPE Scholarship, successfully meet their aim to reduce "brain drain" from the state (Cornwell, Mustard, & Sridhar, 2006; Dynarski, 2004; Zhang & Ness, 2010). At the institution-level, anecdotal accounts suggest that the University of Georgia has benefited from the state program by attracting the "best and brightest" students, thereby improving its institutional reputation and ranking (Fischer, 2006).

There has also been an emerging emphasis on the marketing of higher education. Recent and popular books by Bok (2003), Kirp (2003), and Zemsky, Wegner, and Massey (2005) emphasize careful attention to the marketplace, specifically through "branding" and other strategies aimed to help colleges more effectively compete for students. When such marketing infuses institutional financial aid practice, the tendency is to base awards more heavily on academic qualifications as opposed to financial need. As a result, market-based strategies can have adverse effects on students underrepresented in higher education (Davis, 2001; Heller, 1997, 2002a; McPherson & Shapiro, 1998). However, despite likely ill effects, states continue to adopt merit aid programs as a means to reduce the migration of the best and brightest students to out-of-state colleges. Thus, the primary aims of our study are to examine the differences in the portfolio of institutional scholarships and the marketing of these awards between flagship campuses with and without state merit aid programs.

Marketing of Higher Education

Higher education market influences and the market-like behavior of colleges and universities are not new phenomena. However, the roles of the "marketplace" (Bok, 2003), "marketing" (Kirp, 2003), and "branding" (Toma, Dubrow, & Hartley, 2005) have recently received greater attention from higher education researchers and leaders. For instance, Kirp (2003) argues that institutions are more directly connected to the economy today than ever before. Furthermore, capitalizing on colleges' primary asset—their institutional culture—is seen as a means of "building brand equity" (Toma et al., 2005). This attention to the marketing of higher education spans institution-type (public and private, research and liberal arts) and topic (from curriculum and faculty research to student admissions and institutional advancement).

In addition to these broader trends, Christopher Morphew and Matthew Hartley have examined the roles of institutional mission statements and college viewbooks in marketing efforts. These two studies reach surprisingly different conclusions. While the thematic analysis of mission statements (Morphew & Hartley, 2006) finds little evidence of institutions using aggrandizing aspirational language, their study of college viewbooks (Hartley & Morphew, 2008) points to "callous marketing" that minimizes academic rigor and accentuates co-curricular activities, especially athletics. While mission statements serve as "signals" and "reflect distinctive values" of institutions, college viewbooks offer variations on a theme of well-manicured quads, smiling faces, mascots, and bold buildings and increasingly convey messages intended to make the prospective student feel important. As one viewbook declared, "it's all about you," Kane (1999) argues that this individualized marketing has also permeated the financial aid awarding practices at colleges and universities.

Despite the rich literature considering the effects of institutional financial aid on college access and affordability (Heller, 1997; Hossler, Schmidt, & Vesper, 1999; McPherson & Shapiro, 1998; Paulsen & St. John, 2002), institutional financial aid marketing remains under-studied. Laura Perna (2005) calls attention to this "gap in the literature" by emphasizing the importance of financial aid opportunity awareness and understanding, especially for under-represented students. Perna suggests additional research given the variability in sources of information that students and families consider. For instance, Venegas (2006) responds and argues that although low-income students have access to computers and the internet, they lack the capital and resources to successfully navigate the financial aid process. Indeed, increasing calls for "college knowledge" aim to provide useful information to supplement the information supplied directly by colleges and universities (Vargas, 2004).

State Merit Aid

The impact of state merit scholarship programs has primarily been explored at the state-level, although institution-level analysis is increasing. Studies examining state-level merit aid investigate its effect on college access (Heller & Marin, 2002, 2004; Ness & Noland, 2007), on increasing enrollment (Cornwell, Mustard, & Sridhar, 2006; Dynarski, 2004), and on educational quality (Henry & Rubenstein, 2002; Henry, Rubenstein, & Bulger, 2004). These studies consider the extent to which state merit aid programs meet intended objectives and address statewide postsecondary funding priorities. By contrast, institution-level studies emphasize the campus response to this state policy.

The primary responses of higher education institutions to state merit aid relate to college costs and admissions. Two empirical studies find that colleges and universities increase prices following state adoption of a merit scholarship program. Using the Georgia HOPE Scholarship program as a natural experiment, Long's (2004) examination of in-state institutions' responses finds that, on average, all institutions increased college pricing. The finding included evidence of a "substitution effect" at private institutions, which decreased institutional aid by 13 percent in response to HOPE. Similarly, McLendon, Hearn, and Hammond (2006) find that among flagship campuses a rise in state merit aid is associated with a five percent tuition increase. Consistent with the tuition-related responses, Binder and Ganderton (2002) uncover an institutional reaction related to access. The authors observe that at the University of New Mexico the proportion of low-income students decreased and the number of marginal academically qualified students increased following the introduction of New Mexico's Lottery Success Scholarship. Their findings suggest that the state's flagship campus responded to the adoption of a state merit aid program by appealing to students' hopes that they would earn a Lottery Success Scholarship, which is awarded to students earning a 2.5 GPA after 12 credit hours. The authors posit that many of these students would have otherwise attended a regional university or community college. The evidence from New Mexico and Georgia suggests that flagship campuses in states with merit aid programs have responded to these aid initiatives by redirecting resources and providing incentives for the "best and brightest" students to remain in-state.

Methods

Following the research design employed to examine higher education marketing through college viewbooks (Hartley & Morphew, 2008) and mission statements (Morphew & Hartley, 2006), we conduct a content analysis on the Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid websites of selected institutions. We systematically analyze these websites' text, images, and design by following Krippendorff's (2004) steps of sampling, unitizing, reduction, and, ultimately, making inferences about emergent themes and messages. Content analysis has often been applied to examine symbolic messages and channels of communication and to classify large bodies of information, such as national newspaper coverage of a particular issue. Accordingly, this method is appropriate for our study of institutions' marketing of financial aid.

To examine the campus response of state merit aid programs, we draw a "cluster sample" (Krippendorff, 2004) consisting of the 16 member states of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). We do this for two reasons. First, broad-based state merit scholarship programs are concentrated in the southeast – 8 of the 14 programs identified by Heller (2004) are in this region. Second, this cluster sample conveniently yields 8 states with merit aid programs and 8 states without such programs, and allows for direct comparisons between institutions in the SREB states. Within these 16 states, we analyze the marketing of financial aid to prospective students in a single public "flagship" campus. This narrow definition, while imperfect, allows us to compare an equal number of relatively similar institutions. In many SREB states, multiple institutions can rightly claim flagship-status. However, the number of potential flagship institutions per state varies widely. As a result, our sample simply includes the "University of [SREB state]" in all cases with the exceptions of West Virginia University and Louisiana State University.

Prior to analyzing marketing approaches, we describe the financial aid portfolios of these campuses by classifying award types based on eligibility criteria and selectivity (Table 1). We then identify themes through both inductive and deductive strategies. We analyze and code websites to inductively identify common elements. To examine institutional response to state goals, we also deduce themes from three primary state merit aid program goals: to increase college access and attainment, to encourage academic achievement in high school, and to "stanch the brain drain" (Heller, 2002b). Both strategies yield five primary themes, which we ultimately reduce to two award marketing themes reflecting the closely related underlying elements. We merged "promoting access" and "improving affordability" to "access & affordability." We also merged "reducing the brain drain," "attracting the high achieving students," and "rewarding academic achievement" to "best & brightest." These two themes capture the broader messages marketed through institutional websites and provide a sharp contrast between these two approaches.

Table 1 summarizes the institutional merit scholarship programs available to incoming freshmen at each of the 16 SREB state flagships. Universities are grouped together based on the presence of a state-sponsored merit-based scholarship program. The four separate columns falling under the "award type" heading characterize the institutional scholarship portfolio. The two categories provided under the "award marketing" heading point to different strategies used by the individual flagship institutions to promote their scholarship programs.

Merit awards falling in the "prestigious" category provide funding equal to or greater than the institution's total cost of attendance. "Guaranteed" awards are those with clear eligibility requirements (or "cutoffs"), meaning that students know the required academic credentials necessary to obtain a published scholarship amount. Flagships that offer "defined levels" of scholarships provide bands of awards of varying prestige and dollar amounts. The number of these levels is provided in the final "Award Types" column. Under the "award marketing" heading, flagships marked in the "best & brightest" column are those endorsing the role of institutional scholarships in attracting high-achieving applicants. Universities promoting "access & affordability" highlight the utility of their scholarship programs in reducing the cost of attendance and promoting attendance of a wider population of students.

Table 1: Elements of Flagship Financial Aid Portfolios

		Award Types				Award Marketing	
Institution	State Merit Aid	Prestitious	Guaranteed	Defined "Levels"	Number of "Levels"	Access & Affordability	Best & Brightest
Louisiana State University	X	X	X	X	9	X	
University of Florida	X						
University of Georgia	X	X		X	3	X	
University of Kentucky	X	X	X	X	5	X	X
University of Mississippi	X		X	X	2		X
University of South Carolina	X			X	5	X	X
University of Tennessee - Knoxville	X		X	X	3	X	X
West Virginia University	X	X	X	X	6	X	
University of Alabama		X	X	X	3		
University of Arkansas		X		X	5		X
University of Deleware		X				X	
University of Maryland - College Park		X		X	3		
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill		X		X	2		
University of Oklahoma			X			X	
University of Texas - Austin						X	X
University of Virginia		X					X

Findings

This section reports the differences between Merit Aid State Flagship (MASF) campuses and Non-Merit Aid State Flagships (non-MASF) with regard to the type of institutional scholarships offered and the marketing of the awards.

Award Types

Prestigious Scholarship Awards. Six of the 8 non-MASF universities offer prestigious programs compared to four of the MASFs. While a difference of two institutions is not substantial, the varied presentation of prestigious awards at merit and non-merit flagships seems noteworthy. For example, the scholarship programs at four non-MASFs – University of Arkansas, University of Maryland - College Park, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, and University of Virginia – make their prestigious scholarships a prominent centerpiece of their institutional merit aid programs. In each of the four cases, scholarships are characterized as highly-competitive and promoted as offering social and academic benefits beyond financial assistance. Additionally, non-MASF prestigious awards are more commonly marketed as their own "brand" with separate websites and their own logos (e.g., the University of Virginia's *Jefferson Scholars Program*) or touted as central components in university honors programs (e.g., the University of Arkansas' *Prestigious Fellowships*).

The prestigious award presentation at the four participating MASFs contrasts the practice at the non-MASFs. With the exception of the University of Georgia's *UGA Foundation Fellowship,* MASF prestigious awards are listed and described alongside other merit-based scholarships and not promoted on their own websites. The marketing of the prestigious scholarships at MASFs such as Louisiana State University and the University of Kentucky more closely resemble the award presentation at flagships that *do not* offer prestigious awards including the University of Mississippi and the University of Tennessee – Knoxville. Instead, MASFs – both those with prestigious awards and those without – build their institutional scholarship programs around clearly presented scholarship levels.

While differences in the *number* of MASFs and non-MASFs offering prestigious awards are evident, more telling are the differences in the *presentation* of the scholarships for public consumption. The distinctions suggest that in constructing their scholarship programs, MASFs rely on the state merit program as a complementary funding source. Because the state-sponsored awards can be added to smaller scholarships to reach the cost of attendance, the merit flagships appear to be widening the scope of their institutional merit programs and capture a larger number of "talented" students.

Guaranteed Scholarship Awards. Five of the 8 MASFs offer some variety of a guaranteed scholarship, compared to two of the flagship institutions in the non-merit aid states. As with the prestigious awards, the differing strategy of MASFs and non-MASFs in awarding scholarships is evidenced by varied treatment of guaranteed awards. The dissimilar approaches of the two groups are illustrated in the examples of two flagships in proximate states – the University of Kentucky and the University of Arkansas.

The University of Kentucky (UK) offers five different levels of merit-based scholarships for incoming freshmen. The first two award levels contain scholarships that require no separate application beyond the admission application and have transparent eligibility requirements. Potential applicants know the minimum amount of merit-based aid they will receive from the institution even before they apply for admission. For example, the requirements for UK's *Provost Scholarship* are stated as such:

> Incoming freshmen whose minimum ACT (American College Testing) score is 28 or combined Math and Critical Reading SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) score is 1250, and achieve a 3.30 unweighted high school GPA (Grade Point Average), will automatically be offered a Provost Scholarship. The Provost Scholarship provides $1,500 per year, for up to four years of undergraduate study. No application is required. (UK, 2008a)

The approach taken by UK suggests an institutional intent to straightforwardly explain the scholarship-related benefits to its academically talented applicants.

Conversely, the five award levels provided through the merit scholarship program at the University of Arkansas, a non-MASF, do not carry clear eligibility requirements or cut-offs. Instead, the institution states that "scholarship recipients are in the top 5% of students nationally" and "candidates typically have a minimum 3.75 GPA and 28 ACT/1240 SAT" (University of Arkansas, 2008). The award presentation is well organized, but emphasizes that the scholarships, requiring an additional application, are extremely prestigious and competitive.

The difference in the number of MASFs and non-MASFs that offer guaranteed awards suggests a varying approach to institutional merit aid between the two groups. The unambiguous eligibility requirements that characterize guaranteed scholarship awards make clear to state merit scholars the amount of aid they will receive above and beyond the state money. Non-MASFs, on the other hand, may not benefit as much from guaranteed awards and thus appear to seek out other options in their effort to attract gifted and talented students.

Scholarship Levels. With the exception of the University of Florida, 7 of the 8 MASFs publicize distinct levels of scholarship awards. Among non-MASFs, four universities have designed their institutional merit programs into award tiers. Differences between MASFs and non-MASFs along this "award type" dimension are exemplified in the cases of the University of South Carolina, a MASF, and the University of Oklahoma, a non-MASF.

The seven different levels of scholarship awards at the University of South Carolina (USC) range from $2,000 per year up to $10,000 per year. Higher-level scholarship recipients are selected from among Honors College applicants who "have excellent grades on a strong high-school curriculum and present average SAT scores over 1300 on critical reading and math sections combined (or ACT composite score of 29)" (USC, 2008). For the smaller awards, students with a 1200 SAT/28 ACT and "excellent grades in high school" are eligible for the award. Applicants not selected for one of the higher level awards are likely to receive one of the several lesser award amounts.

The University of Oklahoma (OU) offers smaller merit-based awards (typically $1500 or less). The institution provides "general academic criteria" for the awards – a 27 ACT or 1220 SAT score – but does not have a structured multi-tiered scholarship program. Students are prompted to enter demographic and academic information on the scholarship page search engine to find individual scholarships which are funded by donor gifts. Unlike the multi-level merit aid program at USC, there is not a comprehensive university-wide program at OU. Instead, each scholarship is described as its own "program," with details contained in a 192 page guidebook on the institution's financial aid website (OU, 2008).

The organization and presentation of scholarships at the University of Oklahoma and other non-MASFs stand in stark contrast to those at many MASFs. At non-MASFs, award descriptions can be difficult to locate and challenging to decipher. For example, the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Delaware offer few specifics attached to their scholarship awards and do not clearly present specific levels of scholarships. The approach differs from that of MASFs including Louisiana State University and West Virginia University, which present awards in a user-friendly grid that details eligibility requirements and amounts. One notable non-MASF exception is the University of Alabama, which offers a scholarship program with multiple scholarship levels, and clearly stated scholarship requirements.

Award Marketing

Access and affordability. A commonly presented goal of state merit aid programs is to make college education more accessible by decreasing costs for families. Flagship institutions in merit aid states are more likely to promote the promise of access and affordability inherent in their institutional scholarship. Six MASFs highlight their scholarships as making attendance more affordable and accessible, compared to three of the eight non-MASFs. Examples of MASFs marketing their scholarship programs as effectively improving access and affordability include the University of Georgia and the University of Kentucky.

The University of Georgia (UGA) frames its institutional merit award program as one that seeks to make the institution accessible by addressing issues of affordability. In describing its merit aid offerings, the university writes that "a UGA education continues to be one of the most affordable in the country. That's why respected sources such as *MoneyMagazine*, *Kiplinger's,* and *U.S. News & World Report* agree that UGA is one of the best educational investments you can make" (UGA, 2008). The merit aid website includes quotations from these sources, drawing a direct link between the UGA scholarship program and affordability.

The University of Kentucky is another MASF that consciously markets its institutional merit aid awards with attention to access and affordability. The university has made an effort to brand its multi-tiered merit scholarship program as the *2020 Scholars* program, which is described as "a broad-based scholarships initiative designed to increase access to higher education among Kentuckians while pushing more students to take rigorous math and science courses in their junior and senior year of high school" (UK, 2008b).

The approach taken by the MASFs is different from that taken at the institutions in non-merit aid states. While MASFs commonly use access and affordability language in describing their institutional scholarship programs, the non-MASFs more commonly (and perhaps more appropriately) use it to describe their need-based programs. Institutional merit offerings are more regularly discussed in a straightforward manner. Examples include the University of Alabama and the University of Maryland – College Park, where there is no promotion of the potential utility of scholarships in making college affordable or accessible.

Best and brightest. In laying out goals for merit based financial aid programs, adopting states commonly point to the initiatives' ability to attract the "best and brightest" students to attend public institutions (Heller, 2002b). A total of four MASFs and three non-MASFs employ a "best and brightest" rationale in the marketing of their institutional scholarship programs. The small difference between the two groups is a surprising result, as is the fact that only four MASFs utilized "best and brightest" rationale. It was expected that a greater proportion of MASFs would aggressively promote their programs' abilities to attract "best and brightest" students. Examples from the University of Florida and West Virginia University, two MASFs that *do not* directly market "best and brightest" aims offer some insight into MASF response to the goals of the state merit programs.

The University of Florida's (UF) Office of Student Financial Assistance website offers very little information on institutional merit-based scholarships. Instead, visitors are provided with a detailed explanation of the state's merit program - the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship (UF, 2008). The Bright Futures description is one of the most in-depth and comprehensive descriptions of any financial aid program, and the university does not attractively market scholarships above and beyond Bright Futures in an effort to attract best and brightest students.

West Virginia University (WVU) is another MASF that does not directly market its institutional aid program as one aimed to attract "best and brightest" student. However, the institution clearly links its scholarship program to the PROMISE scholarship – West Virginia's merit aid program. On its Undergraduate Scholarship Office Website, WVU states that "West Virginia high school students may also be eligible for the PROMISE Scholarship, which is awarded by the State of West Virginia. 1300 students in the current freshman class are PROMISE Scholars" (WVU, 2008).

The examples in Florida and West Virginia illustrate that even in MASFs that do not directly market "best and brightest" goals there is an institutional response to the state merit programs. Both cases point to universities relying on the state-run programs to attract strong students to their campuses. The practice appears to supplement the merit aid response of offering larger numbers of smaller transparent scholarships, which also points to some dependence on the state funds to help achieve enrollment goals.

Discussion and Implications

Based upon our review of the institutional scholarship programs at the 16 SREB state flagship institutions, there is evidence that MASFs have crafted institutional aid programs that respond to their state's merit program. More specifically, there are three responses that characterize and illustrate the way in which MASFs have shaped their own aid programs to take advantage of state merit scholarships and to advance enrollment goals. This response can be seen through the *reach* of the institutional scholarships, the *transparency* of the university merit aid programs, and the *marketing aims* of the scholarship efforts.

Scholarship reach. With a few exceptions, flagships in non-merit aid states tend to make their prestigious awards the hallmark of their institutional merit programs. Conversely, the scholarship programs at MASFs tend to be constructed in a way that benefits a wider range of students with various academic credentials. Such award type variations are an example of MASFs responding to the state-run merit programs in their states. While non-MASFs seek to attract academically talented applicants through sizable awards, the MASFs benefit from portable state merit scholarship money obtained by incoming students. The smaller awards at MASFs have a wider reach because they "top off" the state merit scholarships and provide scholarship offerings to a wide range of talented students. The expanded reach of the MASF scholarships suggests an effort by the institutions to attract more and better quality students. Similar to mission statements serving as signals of distinctions between universities (Morphew & Hartley, 2006), the wider reach MASF merit aid serves as a distinguishing institutional characteristic.

Transparency. When compared to non-MASF scholarships, the awards at MASFs are far more likely to be presented with transparent eligibility requirements. The presence of guaranteed scholarships and well-defined award levels make it simple for prospective applicants to definitively determine their potential scholarship eligibility and, in many cases, the specific amount of financial support they will receive. The expanded *scholarship reach* at MASFs appears to be enhanced by the transparency of their institutional merit programs – not only are more students eligible, but they also know the amount they will qualify for. Additionally, state merit aid eligibility requirements are commonly transparent, and the response of the MASFs toward transparency aligns closely with the state approach. Transparent merit aid criteria and consistent messages between states and institutions seem to enhance awareness and understanding of financial aid opportunities and "college knowledge" (Perna, 2005; Vargas, 2004).

Marketing aims. With the exception of the University of Florida, every MASF uses either "best and brightest" or "access and affordability" rationale to market institutional scholarship programs and half of the MASFs use both concepts. While Long (2004) and McLendon et al. (2006) empirically find that campuses respond to state merit aid by increasing tuition, our study suggests that six of the eight MASFs market their financial aid portfolios by highlighting "access and affordability." Indeed, this approach differs from our expectation that MASFs would market scholarships to the "best and brightest" students, which would be more consistent with the aims of state merit aid programs (Heller & Marin, 2002, 2004). Notwithstanding the unexpected marketing approach of MASFs, our study also shows MASFs to be more engaged in marketing institutional aid than flagships institutions in non-merit aid states.

Despite this difference in marketing themes between MASFs and state merit aid programs, flagship campus response is best summarized by the observation that MASFs have constructed programs that act as complements to the state program. Through both the structure and marketing of institutional awards, the flagships attempt to expand their ability to attract academically strong students with an emphasis on improving affordability. Compared to the considerable variance in award types and marketing efforts of non-MASFs, there appears to be a consistent flagship campus response to state merit aid programs that leverages state-funded scholarships with varying levels of transparent institutional aid offerings and actively markets these resources.

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Georgia's HOPE Scholarship Program after 18 Years: Benefits, Unintended Consequences, and Changes

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Since its inception in 1993, Georgia's HOPE Scholarship Program has provided thousands of state residents the opportunity to pursue a college education. This study examines the history and recent changes to the merit-based program along with interesting consequences resulting from its implementation. This study demonstrates how the program has thrived and continues to grow because of its role in encouraging students to perform better academically in high school and by increasing enrollment at state institutions of higher education.

In June 2011, Georgia's HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educa tionally) merit-based Scholarship Program turns 18 years old. Started in 1993, HOPE is the idea of former Governor Zell Miller. The program has not only survived, countering predictions made by its detractors and opponents, but has, in fact, thrived. The purpose of this essay is to synthesize research that has been conducted on the HOPE Scholarship Program and to examine the benefits, consequences, unexpected outcomes, and changes made to HOPE as a result.

The HOPE Scholarship Program

History

The HOPE Scholarship Program was both conceived and named by former Governor Zell Miller. The scholarship program, as envisioned by Governor Miller, was to be funded by proceeds from a state lottery. Soon after his inauguration in 1991, Governor Miller called for a statewide referendum on an amendment to the state's Constitution authorizing the establishment of a lottery. The resolution to place the proposed amendment before Georgia voters passed both the Georgia House and Senate overwhelmingly. On November 3, 1992, the voters of Georgia narrowly (52% - 48%) approved the amendment authorizing the establishment of a state lottery (Eby-Ebersole, 1999).

According to Fatimot Ladipo (2007), legislative liaison of the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC), the objectives of the HOPE Scholarship Program are twofold:

- increase academic performance and quality of Georgia's high school students, and
- decrease the number of high-achieving students leaving Georgia to attend more "elite" schools in other states

Ms. Ladipo remarked that both objectives have been achieved. Additionally, according to the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts (2011), over 1.2 million HOPE scholarships and grants have been awarded to Georgia students since 1994. The value of these scholarships and grants is over $5.3 billion.

Qualifying for HOPE

Georgia students, who graduate from high school with at least a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale, are eligible for the HOPE Scholarship Program if the students attend any one of the University System of Georgia's (USG) 34 two and four year colleges and universities. In addition, if an eligible student desires instead to attend one of Georgia's 37 private two- and four-year colleges and universities, he or she could receive an annual HOPE scholarship of up to $4,000 (Carnes, 2011).

Published Research on HOPE

Although the HOPE Scholarship Program started in 1993, little scholarly research was published on it before 1999. Since 1999, however, a steadily growing body of research has emerged examining many different aspects of the program. Published research on the HOPE scholarship includes such topics as HOPE program attrition, high school grade inflation and grade manipulation, effect on the Pell Grant and other need-based scholarships, the presence of income redistribution associated with the Georgia Lottery and HOPE, impact on the quality of course-taking behavior, the consequence of qualifying for and then losing access to the program, and whether the program caused higher education institutions to raise tuition, fees, and living expenses. A thorough literature review revealed that, in general, scholarly research that focuses specifically on the HOPE Scholarship Program and its outcomes has been published about once per year since 1999.

HOPE Attrition

The earliest published scholarly research on the HOPE Scholarship Program was by Dee and Jackson (1999), who investigated student attrition from the program. Statistics indicated that roughly half of HOPE recipients lost their scholarship during their first year of studies. Dee and Jackson examined unique student-level data from first-year students at the Georgia Technical Institute in an attempt to determine student characteristics that relate to HOPE program attrition. The results of their research revealed that student race or ethnicity was not significant as indicators of attrition; rather, they found "large, robust, and statistically significant links between students' courses of study and their success at retaining HOPE Scholarships" (p. 389). Students who were majoring in the sciences, engineering, and computing disciplines were 21% to 51% more likely to lose their HOPE funding than similarly-qualified students in other disciplines. The authors concluded that students who selected more challenging courses of study were unfairly financially punished, possibly discouraging future students from selecting curricula in which increased risks existed for HOPE scholarship attrition.

HOPE's Impact on High School Educational Quality

By setting minimum eligibility standards, HOPE seeks to improve high school and college education by encouraging students to achieve a 3.0 GPA. In 2002, a study by Henry and Rubenstein established that the merit-based aid made accessible by the HOPE Scholarship Program had improved the quality of education for students planning to attend college and had made educational outcomes across ethnic groups more equitable. They also concluded that more students achieved a 3.0 high school GPA each year since the inception of HOPE. Finally, they noted that both female and male African American students responded most strongly to HOPE's merit-based aid incentive by increasing their average Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) scores by over 20 points.

HOPE and the Georgia Lottery

Rubenstein and Scafidi (2002) researched the entire program by attempting to determine who funds the lottery and who benefits from the lottery-sponsored HOPE Scholarship. Their research revealed that spending on Georgia Lottery products showed an inverse relationship between funders and beneficiaries of HOPE. As a percentage of income, lower-income nonwhite households purchased more lottery products and received fewer HOPE Scholarship Program benefits, while the opposite was true for higher-income white households. This finding suggested that the HOPE Scholarship Program itself and patterns of spending on lottery products demonstrated a regression of net benefits and that HOPE scholarships accrued disproportionately to certain demographic groups in Georgia.

In research similar to the Rubenstein and Scafidi (2002) analysis of payers and users of the HOPE Scholarship, Campbell and Finney (2005) investigated whether certain Georgia localities obtained more HOPE scholarships than would be expected, thereby reducing the observed disproportionate redistribution of lottery-funded scholarships. Their results indicated that some of the poorer and African American counties were able to secure more HOPE scholarships than would have been expected. The authors further theorized that these counties influenced local grading standards by engaging in excessive grade inflation. The authors concluded that "…low-cost, local pressure - however manifested - allows greater access to HOPE scholarships, hence returning more lottery revenues than one would otherwise expect" (p. 756).

HOPE and High School Grade Manipulation

Because the HOPE scholarship is merit-based, eligibility is based on high school GPA. In 2003, Bradbury and Campbell reviewed whether local school districts, because of the subjective nature of assigning grades, were lowering academic standards and rewarding higher grades to students so more would qualify for HOPE scholarships. They concluded that systemic grading differences across counties existed and suggested that there was grade manipulation in some county and district high schools to increase the number of their graduates earning HOPE scholarship eligibility.

HOPE and College Financial Aid Behavior

Consistent with the theory that the introduction of Medicare in 1966 ultimately produced higher health care costs, Long (2003) discovered that the introduction of the HOPE scholarship in 1993 increased the cost of higher education, especially in the category of student charges. The cost increases were particularly pronounced in private institutions. Increased student tuition and fees resulted in a reduction of the scholarship's intended benefit and the expansion of the cost of higher education for HOPE scholarship non-recipients.

Receiving Then Losing HOPE in College

Henry, Rubenstein, and Bugler (2004) compared a cohort of HOPE scholarship non-recipients, all of whom matriculated into college with a GPA slightly below 3.0, with a borderline cohort of HOPE recipients, all of whom matriculated with GPAs of 3.0 or slightly above. Results of their research revealed that the HOPE recipients accumulated more credit hours, attained slightly higher GPAs, and were more likely to graduate after four years of college than the HOPE non-recipients. Interestingly, they also discovered that 70% of the entire cohort of HOPE freshman recipients at a USG institute lost their HOPE scholarship eligibility after attempting 30 quarter hours. Ultimately, only 13% of the freshman cohort maintained the scholarship for four years.

HOPE and Student Academic Behavior

Promoting academic achievement is one of the goals of Georgia's merit-based HOPE Scholarship Program. The requirement to maintain a 3.0 GPA through college in order to maintain HOPE eligibility may have elicited undesirable academic behavior when a student faced the potential loss of HOPE eligibility. Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard (2005) found that HOPE reduced full-time credit-load enrollments, boosted course withdrawals, and increased the number of students taking summer term courses either to repeat course work or to catch up in the academic program. The authors stated that summer term grade distributions were "significantly" more generous than other terms and therefore conducive to such behavior (p. 902).

HOPE's Effects on Need-Based Aid

Past empirical evidence suggested that merit-based aid programs, such as HOPE, exhibited robust enrollment outcomes, while need-based aid programs, such as The Federal Pell Grant, produced outcomes that were not as striking and "insignificant" (Singell, Waddell, & Curs, 2006, p.79). Their research found that the availability of the HOPE scholarship improved college access for needier students and, in fact, a synergistic effect occurred whereby needier students received increased Pell assistance. In addition, the authors discovered that, despite predictions to the contrary, Pell recipients were not being excluded from Georgia's more selective colleges as a result of HOPE's goal of retaining the best Georgia high school students.

Analysis of the Research

After an examination of peer-reviewed published research conducted on the HOPE Scholarship Program to date, a number of benefits, both expected and not expected, and several unanticipated consequences have emerged throughout the 18 year history of the program. This section of the report will first present the benefits and the unplanned outcomes, followed with a description of the most recent changes made to the HOPE Scholarship Program.

Benefits

Students who had borderline GPAs of 3.0 or a slightly above, and who were therefore eligible for the HOPE scholarship, narrowly outperformed their peers whose GPAs were just below the minimum standard required for HOPE eligibility (Henry et al., 2004). Borderline students who attended four-year institutions and who were able to maintain HOPE eligibility in college were more likely to graduate in four years than their non-recipient peers. This suggested that a certain number of borderline students who, in the past, might not have persisted to graduate upon completion of four years, now did.

The appeal of the HOPE scholarship to families has resulted in a 30% increase in residential construction on the Georgia side of metropolitan statistical areas that share a border with a neighboring state (Bradbury & Campbell, 2003). For example, along the Savannah River, which forms the Georgia-South Carolina border, people with children have chosen to settle on the Georgia side of the river and have caused property values to rise at a higher rate than property values on the South Carolina side (Greene, 1997). This phenomenon also has brought with it jobs and increased tax bases to the Georgia counties that have experienced the influx of new residents.

The HOPE scholarship's merit-based financial aid has improved the education quality of Georgia's college-bound high school graduates (Henry & Rubenstein, 2002). Research has determined that an increasing number of Georgia high school students have attained a 3.0 GPA and have increased their Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, suggesting that grade inflation has not affected grading standards at the high school level. In addition, the same study has found that both male and female African American students have responded most strongly to HOPE's grade incentives.

Recent research suggested that the presence of HOPE scholarship merit-based aid has not only improved needy students' access to college but has also increased the presence of Pell Grant recipients at two-year and less selective four-year institutions (Singell et al., 2006). Consequently, the research rejected the notion that HOPE harmed Pell Grant recipients' opportunities at the most selective institutions, and suggested that needy students have benefited from HOPE on the same level as less-needy students.

Research conducted by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University revealed that, since 1993, more college-bound high school seniors have taken more advanced or more college preparatory courses, such as physics, calculus, and four years of mathematics (Jaschik, 1999). Also discovered was an increase in the percentage of students who took Advanced Placement courses, which indicated that the presence of HOPE has induced high school students to seek out more academically rigorous courses.

For African Americans, HOPE significantly increased enrollment at four-year institutions, which jumped 24% between 1993 and 1998 (Wright, 2001). In addition, African American enrollment expanded by 12% at private colleges.

HOPE, according to former University of Georgia president Dr. Charles Knapp, has "...begun to transform Georgia into a state with an education culture. HOPE sends a message to primary and secondary schools that education is important" (Spaid, 1997, p. 3). Supporting Dr. Knapp's comments, the HOPE scholarship has enabled Georgia to retain many of its brightest high school graduates who otherwise would have enrolled in universities and colleges in other states.

Unintended Consequences

There have been a number of outcomes resulting from the HOPE Scholarship Program that were not anticipated. For example, Dee and Jackson (1999) discovered that Georgia Institute of Technology students, who had enrolled in more difficult degree courses of study, such as the sciences, engineering, and computer science, were 21% to 51% more likely to lose their scholarship eligibility than students in less difficult courses of study. This disparity could have discouraged students from seeking scientific and technical degrees that are highly desired in the workplace and needed in the workplace of the future Georgia.

Spending on the Georgia Lottery has been found to be unevenly distributed among certain groups. Rubenstein and Scafidi (2002) found that nonwhite lower-income households spent a higher proportion of their income on lottery products whereas a greater number of white higher-income households spent less. This discrepancy suggested that higher-income households received a proportionately greater share of HOPE's benefits than lower-income households. Other research has shown that poorer counties and counties more heavily populated by African Americans were able to mitigate some of the unequal redistribution of lottery benefits; they influenced local grading standards by engaging in grade inflation (Campbell & Finney, 2005). This mechanism returned more scholarship benefits to poorer counties than might otherwise have been expected.

Significant Changes to HOPE

In 2007, there were major adjustments made to HOPE Scholarship Program eligibility – students must now earn a 3.0 GPA to qualify. Before the adjustment, students needed only an 80% average to qualify (using a 60 – 100 scale). There were, however, problems with this formula as a student could receive four "Cs" (i.e., 79, 79, 79, and 78) and a high "A" (i.e., 99) from five classes and still qualify for HOPE, earning an 83% average, for example. The consequence of this formula was that too many students, who perhaps shouldn't have, received HOPE scholarships. Under the new requirement, students must achieve a 3.0 GPA to qualify. The same four "Cs" and a high "A" student used in the previous example would have earned a 2.4 GPA and would not have qualified under the new HOPE requirements. According to Ladipo (2007), since this new policy was implemented at the beginning of 2007, about 33% fewer students have been eligible.

July 2008 brought additional changes to the HOPE Scholarship Program according to GSFC.org (2011). The first of these was that students who attended private colleges in Georgia were eligible to receive a reduced maximum anount of $3,500 scholarship per academic year. With the implementation of Georgia Senate Bill 492, the residency requirements for students who did not graduate high school as a Georgia resident increased to 24 months to be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship Program. Another change to the program permitted students who were not previously eligible for the HOPE Scholarship a chance at eligibility by scoring in the 85th percentile on either the SAT or ACT examinations. Expanded eligibility included students who were home schooled, ineligible high school graduates, and those who successfully completed the General Educational Development (GED) requirements. This change was a result of the implementation of Georgia House Bill 152.

Recent Changes to HOPE

Rising tuition costs and enrollment growth combined with flat lottery revenues during the last few years have induced spending on HOPE scholarships to exceed revenues contributed by the Georgia Lottery (Williams, 2010). The GSFC had forecasted a HOPE scholarship program deficit of $243 million for the 2010-2011 school year, and a $317 million shortfall in 2012 (Applerouth, 2011). In order to shore up the program so that HOPE remains fiscally viable into the future, on March 15, 2011, Governor Nathan Deal signed legislation, which limits HOPE and raises standards for the top scholarship recipients. Examples of changes to the program included the discontinuation of reimbursement for books and mandatory fees and a reduction of the amount of tuition paid from 100% to 90%. Further, increases in tuition after a student's freshman year will now be borne by the student. Only students who graduate from high school with a 3.7 GPA, or who serve as valedictorian or salutatorian of their high school classes, will be eligible for the new "Zell Miller Scholarship," which pays 100% of tuition. The Zell Miller scholars must also score 1200 on the SAT Math/Reading score or 26 on the ACT, and maintain a 3.5 GPA to keep tuition coverage at 100% (Carnes, 2011).

Other changes of note include tying scholarship funding to lottery revenue rather than to tuition increases, limiting students whose college GPA falls below 3.0 to only one opportunity to regain the scholarship, and mandating that high school students complete more challenging courses to be eligible for HOPE (Carnes, 2011).

Conclusion

The HOPE Scholarship Program has been a tremendous asset to the state of Georgia. The program has been so successful that other states have attempted to model their own programs after it. According to Heller and Marin (2004), fourteen additional states adopted similar merit-based scholarship programs. The program is solvent and has already funded over a million scholarships and grants. It has also brought awareness of the importance of higher education to the residents of Georgia. When problems or inequities with the program have been identified, the legislative branch has been quick to address them and the executive branch quick to implement the remedies. Most important, HOPE has provided the opportunity for every Georgia student to attend college or technical school and has provided parents the chance to see their children earn post-secondary school degrees without overburdening families with college costs.

We believe that scholarly research should continue to analyze all aspects of HOPE and its funding mechanism, the Georgia Lottery. Georgia lawmakers must diligently continue adjusting the program as situations warrant. High schools must be held accountable for the level of education preparedness of their graduates so that as many as possible qualify for and maintain HOPE scholarships. Institutes of higher education, both public and private, must not be allowed to take advantage of the presence of HOPE by artificially raising costs. Finally, the state must continue to market the HOPE program, making sure that all Georgia parents and students are aware of it early on and understand how to qualify for it.

Perhaps putting the HOPE Scholarship Program into perspective, Ladipo (2007) remarked that "Zell Miller's program changed the education culture in Georgia by bringing the conversation regarding higher education to the kitchen table." The momentum developed as a result of these kitchen table conversations must continue well into the future.

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The Kalamazoo Promise: A New Twist on Tuition Guarantees

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In 2005, Kalamazoo, Michigan launched a bold and innovative economic development strategy, The Kalamazoo Promise (KP), which guarantees tuition to every high school graduate in the district. Since KP inception, high school enrollments are up and college attendance has increased, creating national attention. This paper analyzes the benefits and limitations of six types of tuition guarantees, including KP. For those communities hoping to emulate the success of KP, they should recognize that tuition guarantees are neither a new concept nor work equally well across the board. However, drawing from this paper's analysis, broad themes of examining the nature, scope, and funding sources should be considered when launching a tuition guarantee program.

In 2006, the superintendent of Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) led a community wide effort to stimulate economic development in the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan by launching a tuition guarantee program for every KPS high school graduate. The Kalamazoo Promise (KP) is a place-based initiative intended to attract people to live in the city center, with the specific purpose of growing the economy. The guarantee was simple – if you finish high school and go to college, you will qualify for four years of tuition to a public community college or university (scaled according to the amount of time spent in the district). There were no conditions placed upon family income and it was not predicated on some measure of academic merit. Rather, it was a simple, elegant commitment of financial support to every KPS student who went to college.

From an economic perspective, more than 70% of KP students remain in Kalamazoo at either Kalamazoo Valley Community College or Western Michigan University; home sales and median home price both rose (6.7% and 3.6% respectively) in 2005 when both economic indicators were declining across the state; and commercial real estate sales were up (Miller-Adams, 2008). The educational outcomes are promising as well. During the 2005-06 academic year, KPS reached an enrollment low of 10,238 students. Furthermore, two years following the announcement of the program, KPS grew their total enrollments by 12%, a significant turnaround at a time when Michigan and its major metropolitan districts continued to experience enrollment declines (Miron & Cullen, 2007). High schools found that the proportion of enrolled low-income students actually increased by 3% suggesting more students were staying in school to take advantage of the program. Increasing enrollments generated an estimated $7 million additional revenue to the district as well as the hiring of 45 new teachers (Miller-Adams, 2008).

Early signs of success in Kalamazoo have signaled a national movement in communities. Across the United States, cities (e.g., Pittsburgh, Denver, San Francisco, Peoria, and El Dorado) have all announced similar KP initiatives to support postsecondary attendance among their public school students. In January of 2009, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm signed legislation to incentivize the creation of Promise Zones across the state. A similar idea was proposed as part of New York States' Commission on Higher Education.

Given the enthusiasm for the Kalamazoo approach, it is tempting to conclude that we are entering a new era in P-16 educational reform and metropolitan revitalization. In some ways that may be true, but tuition guarantees are not a new strategy. The GI Bill in 1944 was the first and largest guarantee program, providing college and vocational training for returning World War II Veterans. Since that time, tuition guarantees have become a central feature of intervention programs, state policy initiatives, and private philanthropic efforts. If we hope to understand and maximize the potential of the Promise, then we must first examine what is known about tuition guarantee programs. Place-based strategies are markedly different from other iterations of the tuition guarantee and as such, we must develop a clear definition of place and a framework for evaluating which places are appropriate for a Promise-type program.

This paper examines the range of tuition guarantee programs across the US, including those initiated by state, institutions, communities, private philanthropy, and local organizations. The level at which the guarantee is provided makes a difference in terms of who is eligible and for what. Next, the paper explores more specifically the new place-based version of the tuition guarantee, popularized by Kalamazoo, MI. The focus on the importance of community as the definition of place is relatively recent, but even within this subset, there exists tremendous variation in the types of guarantees made to students and parents. The paper concludes by considering three dimensions – the nature of the guarantee, the scope of the guarantee, and the sources of support – of place-based initiatives that change the complexion of the program and will likely result in different sets of outcomes.

Tuition Guarantees

In 1990, the General Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report documenting the prevalence of tuition guarantee programs and found essentially four different types: (1) sponsorship programs where an individual or private organization provides the financial support and academic services to a small group of students, (2) "last-dollar" programs which guarantee students the remaining assistance after all other sources of aid are taken into account, (3) university-based programs that guarantee admission and tuition at a particular institution, and (4) "pay-for-grades" where benefactors contribute modest funds for higher education based upon high school grades. In the time since the GAO report, a range of new programs has evolved and at least two additional types have emerged: (5) state sponsored financial aid tuition guarantees and (6) place-based economic development initiatives like the KP. Each of these program types is motivated by different goals and is funded in unique ways.

Sponsorship Programs

The most visible and widely recognized sponsorship programs are rooted in the experience of Eugene Lang and the creation of the I Have A Dream (IHAD) Foundation. In 1981, Lang returned to his East Harlem middle school to speak to a class of sixth graders. Struck by the odds stacked against these sixth graders, he made a pledge to fund their college education if they stayed in school and graduated from high school. IHAD currently boasts more than 200 programs across the country, but they are limited in a number of important ways (I Have A Dream Foundation, 2008). First, the programs are small scale, sometimes guaranteeing tuition to a single sixth grade class for one year or for some period of time. An extended commitment may have some influence on the school but a commitment to single class cohorts does little to promote school change. Second, while the programs may include academic support and/or personal mentoring, that is largely up to the funder and the partnering agencies.

This category of program is complicated by the fact that a number of programs are rooted in the IHAD tradition that may or may not be affiliated with the Foundation and vary in the degree of financial support. The One on One Mentoring program sponsored by the YMCA in Milwaukee, WI is an example. The program was founded in the mid-1980s and was inspired by the successes of the Eugene Lang model. The Milwaukee YMCA partnered mentors from the local business community with a select group of middle school students, who attended Milwaukee Public Middle Schools. There was no tuition guarantee with this program. The YMCA sponsored the *Black Achievers* program providing some financial support but only a fraction of program participants were selected.

According to the GAO report, sponsorship programs were the most common type of tuition guarantee program. However, these programs tend to be small, vary in duration, are available to a very small proportion of school age students, and unlikely to stimulate substantive school reform. Focused primarily on schools in high poverty areas with scarce resources, sponsorship programs were limited in reach because these programs were place-based, meaning that they were selected specifically for some characteristic of the school. Typically, sponsorship programs targeted their services to high percentages of low-income students.

Last Dollar and Institution-Based Programs

The GAO report spoke of last-dollar and institution-based programs separately, perhaps because a number of private organizations offered last-dollar tuition guarantees. However, university based programs are nearly always last dollar in nature and this type has grown in recent years. Last-dollar programs vary tremendously depending upon how they are constructed and there are examples of private organizations, state, and institutions offering these programs.

A prominent example of a private organization providing a last-dollar tuition guarantee is the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation sponsors highly qualified minority students pursuing selected majors from across the country. Those students apply for support from the foundation, and are chosen through a selective process. Participating students are eligible for full tuition and fees, renewable each year they are in school subject to satisfactory progress (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2008). The program provides a last-dollar award, but it will cover all unmet need at public or private institutions. GMS is a unique model, particularly in an Affirmative Action-aware climate, which focuses specifically on high achieving under-represented minority students. State-aid programs targeted toward minority students have been systematically challenged but a number of private programs continue.

Colleges and universities have provided tuition guarantees for many years, particularly geared toward high achieving students. For example, a number of community colleges offer free tuition to the top 10% or 20% of the graduating high school class (or some portion of that total cost). More recently, universities have begun to provide tuition guarantees, specifically targeted to high achieving, low-income students. For example, AccessUVa (University of Virginia) and the Carolina Covenant (University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill) are two institution-based tuition guarantee programs at very highly selective flagship public universities. These tuition guarantee programs replaced student loans with grants for each admitted student below a certain income threshold, following similar guarantees at Harvard, Yale and a growing number of elite, private not-for-profit colleges (Brandon, 2006). These institutions focus on a very narrow band of highly prepared students. These guarantees are very generous to qualifying students, but few students attending these institutions qualify because the income threshold is set lower than most household incomes.

Pay-for-Grades Initiatives

One of the essential barriers to college access is the degree to which students are prepared to do college-level work by the time they finish high school. A number of state and institutional level initiatives are designed specifically to improve preparation and the pay-for-grades initiatives were designed to provide incentives for students to prepare for college. These programs are not strictly tuition guarantees. Rather, the GAO (1990) found that these programs provided financial rewards to students for high grades. The money would be placed in a bank account, which was to be used for college participation. While the banked amount was not sufficient to cover the full cost of college, the money earned for good grades subsidized a portion of the tuition.

More recently, an alternative version of the pay-for-grades approach has been used to create incentives for Advanced Placement (AP) participation and success. The pay-for-grades approach is a reward for success, but in this case, the reward is directly tied to the successful completion of AP courses that earn college credit. The National Math Science Initiative (NMSI) provides a student incentive program where students receive between $100-500 for a score of 3, 4, or 5 on an eligible AP exam (National Math and Science Initiative, 2008). Typically, the course is offered at no expense to the student, except for the cost of the examination. The incentive is intended to insure AP students take the tests, and the incentive compensates at least for the cost of the exam, making it a tuition guarantee contingent upon merit, or earning a qualifying score.

State Programs

A number of states have begun utilizing the tuition guarantee to promote both economic development and college access. Two programs illustrate how states have utilized guarantees. Georgia adopted the HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) scholarship program in 1993, which guaranteed tuition to any Georgia public college or university, for every student with at least a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). Within two years, the need-based requirement was eliminated altogether (Dynarski, 2000). Georgia HOPE was justified in a number of ways, including college access, but it was fundamentally designed to stem the out-migration of highly qualified college going students. In short, the incentive was to keep top students from attending college out of state with the assumption that once they leave it is more difficult to bring them back.

Indiana took a different approach with the tuition guarantee. Governor Evan Bayh launched the 21st Century Scholars Program (CSP) in 1990 to improve college participation rates among low-income students. All eighth grade students who qualified for free or reduced lunch (i.e., National School Lunch Program) were eligible to sign the pledge to participate in the program. The first class of CSP entered college in 1995 and the program was more lenient in terms of requirements – eligible students earned a 2.0 or greater and were accepted to a college or university. The results show that Scholar participants were more likely to attend all types of college than their non-Scholar peers (St. John, Musoba, & Simmons, 2003).

Both Georgia and Indiana utilize a similar mechanism in the tuition guarantee but they target it in very different ways. Georgia focuses on merit and expects the program will create an incentive for students to better prepare for college. In the mean time, most of the money is awarded to students already likely to attend college – which is consistent with the economic development goals of the state, but it has only a modest impact in terms of promoting increased college access among low-income students. Meanwhile, Indiana's program targets low-income students more where affordability is critical college access issue, but Indiana's program suffers from a different sort of problem. St. John et al. (2003) found far fewer students take advantage of the program than are qualified because the program initiates in eighth grade.

Place-Based Initiatives

Local organizations have launched tuition guarantees as well. The Detroit Regional Chamber in Michigan formed the Detroit Compact Scholarship, effectively guaranteeing every Detroit Public School graduate the cost of tuition at 1 of 11 participating public universities or the community colleges. In exchange, students must meet a minimum set of requirements: for four-year institutions, GPA of 3.0 and a minimum score of 21 on the American College Test (ACT) or 990 on Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) reading and math and for two-year institutions, 2.5 GPA with a score of 18 on the ACT (Detroit Regional Chamber, 2008). The Detroit Compact Program was designed as place-based initiatives in the Detroit Public Schools, but the Detroit Compact differs from the KP because Detroit Compact is a merit contingent, last-dollar program where participating institutions cover the full cost of tuition and fees above and beyond whatever financial assistance a student receives. The Detroit Compact program has been in place for nearly 20 years and has provided a strong guarantee for those that become eligible, but the district enrollment has continued to decline. The merit component is designed to improved academic preparation, but it also minimizes the motivational potential of the "guarantee." It would be a significant risk for a family to choose to live in Detroit on the chance that their student will earn the necessary grades and score sufficiently on the ACT to be a recipient of the award. As a consequence, the program has had no appreciable effect on reversing out-migration and the Detroit Chamber was never able to raise the funds necessary to provide a substantial scholarship to qualified students.

Kalamazoo on the other hand has taken a decidedly different approach to the "guarantee" and their results suggest that the economic development piece is possible. The KP scholarship is a guarantee of full tuition to any public college or university in the state. It is not contingent upon grades or test scores (aside from minimal standards) and the money is given to every Kalamazoo graduate that is admitted and goes to college. From an economic development perspective, there is comparatively much less risk associated with moving into the district or transferring students from the private institutions to the public school system.

The challenge of the KP model for many communities is that it requires a sizable private investment to fully fund and some argue that it is an inefficient investment of resources because many of the benefiting students would have attended college already. Similarly, the program does not either target low-income, first-generation students where cost is a considerable access issue, or reward and incent better academic preparation in high school which remains a persistent barrier for success for a number of students once they reach college. It is possible then, that a successful place-based initiative could improve college participation simply by attracted a new group of students into the district. This is an important critique that must be taken into account when making decisions about the appropriateness of place for future programs. However, the program may get at some of these priorities in a different way. For many, the definition of place is commonly situated in the context of an urban school district. From an economic development perspective, there is a growing recognition that young college educated talent is attracted to metropolitan communities. At the same time, the knowledge producing sectors of the economy are growing and they require a college educated workforce. Metropolitan centers then are viewed as talent magnets for growing companies that will employ more people – college educated and non-college educated.

The focus on metropolitan centers may be advantageous from an educational perspective for very different reasons. Large urban school districts frequently serve high proportions of low-income, first generation, and under-represented minority students. Such students often suffer from poor achievement and completion outcomes. Large urban schools have difficulty keeping students in schools. These are many of the same students that proponents of need-based aid programs are attempting to serve. Whether or not the guarantee program is a successful economic development tool, the place-based program may still achieve important educational outcomes for the local communities.

Discussion and Implications

Since tuition guarantee programs have been around for many years and have been adopted and constructed in a variety of ways for many different purposes, it is possible to learn from established tuition guarantee programs to inform how new programs are structured. Based upon the limited evidence in terms of outcomes, it is not possible to conclude that certain features are better than others, but it is possible to examine the different dimensions of these programs and to suggest which elements may be appropriate given the goals of the program.

Nature of the Guarantee

Defining the guarantee can be elusive in many cases. The pay-for-grades programs are not guarantees in any formal way though they pay for some portion of the cost of qualifying credits. For the purposes of this discussion it is important to ask whether the guarantee gives students and parents the perception that the barrier of cost will be eliminated. Institutionally based programs that provide free tuition for eligible high school students may cover the costs for some number of courses or a percentage of the cost of those programs, but often they do not cover the full cost of attendance. From a human capital perspective, parents (and to a lesser degree students) will make decisions about what is best for their educational futures by weighing the benefits of staying where they are versus switching schools to take advantage of the guarantee. That calculation will consider the quality of the current education, the cost of attending college, the families' ability to afford the cost of college, and the total value of the tuition guarantee. The value of the guarantee is then considered relative to the risk involved. If the odds are high that a student will qualify for the guarantee, then the risk is low and the perceived benefits will be more attractive. When the program is targeted or contingent upon criteria that are not yet fulfilled, risk is high and the potential value is less.

The Detroit Compact is a guarantee bound by a number of important strings, none the least of which is gaining admission to a subset of specific institutions (e.g., the highly selective University of Michigan and Michigan State University) that agree to cover the cost of qualified students. Those developing programs around the tuition guarantee model must think about the nature of the guarantee they hope to provide and how it aligns with their anticipated goals. Is the purpose of the guarantee to attract new residents and district school students? Is the purpose to diversify institutional enrollments? Should the guarantee be contingent upon some merit criterion or targeted to specific groups including low-income, first generation, and under-represented minority students? The intended outcomes should influence the nature of the guarantee.

Scope of the Guarantee

In addition to the clarity of the program it is important to consider the limits of the guarantee. In the case of KP, students were restricted to 43 public 2-year and 4-year institutions in Michigan. The award covers all tuition and fees where housing and dining are the responsibility of the individual (or met through other state, federal, institutional, or private sources of support). The Detroit Compact provides a similar award but only for 11 participating institutions. The Gates Millennial Scholars can attend any institution in the country, public or private. The state programs provide guarantee awards to attend public colleges and universities within that state.

Institutionally-based programs typically replace loans with grants for all admitted students or only those within a certain income bracket, but the program is only applicable at a single institution, which are in many cases highly selective institutions. A subtle but important limitation of these programs is that the student must be admitted first to a qualifying institution so the scope of the award may be limited by how competitive a student is in a given process. For example, the Jackson Legacy program is limited to only those institutions in Jackson County, MI; so a student may have a choice of public or private, but their options are constrained by their ability to be admitted.

Sources of Support

Ultimately, many of these programs are defined in large part by the sources of financial support. The GMS program targets high achieving underrepresented minority students, which is a small subset of the overall college going cohort, but they provide a substantial award to attend any institution in the country. Private support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation makes the program possible to operate at that level of support. The same is true for KP. Private donors have guaranteed $200 million over 20 years and while the guarantee is simple and risk free, it focuses on a similarly small proportion of the college going population and the potential value of the award is more modest.

State resources on the other hand are typically utilized in one of two ways. In the case of Georgia, the resources were intended to develop the collective human capital of the state as a means to stimulate economic development and were targeted to every merit-eligible student in the state. Indiana on the other hand, was investing in human capital but targeted those resources to academically eligible students least likely to be able to afford the cost of college. The redistributive function is an equally important strategy for investing state resources but the priorities are different. In a few cases, local communities will fund the program through local taxes. For example, Davenport, IA has designated "not more than 30% of an existing local option sales tax" to be used to fund the program (Moltz, 2009). In the case of the Detroit Compact, most of the financial support is in the form of institutional aid, and as such, institutions utilized the programs to fill specific priorities aligned with their respective missions. The sources of support ultimately play an important role in shaping the character of the programs and defining the parameters of the guarantee and the value of the award.

Conclusion

It should be clear that while a number of "Promise" scholarship programs are going to develop in the next few years, they are all likely to look very different from KP as they will from one another. Every community will start with a unique set of assets and opportunities. Some will begin with a large commitment of resources from private sources like Kalamazoo, MI. Others will have a strong, well-established network of supplementary services to support students on their way into college. A few communities may benefit from state-level incentive programs similar to the Michigan Promise Zones or the proposed New York Empire Promise Zones. Some communities may begin with the leadership of an institution of higher education and the sources of support may come, in the form of tuition discount. In Michigan, Detroit's leadership has been provided by the Regional Chamber of Commerce, whereas Jackson's leadership stems from the community foundation.

A number of these programs will be specifically tailored to grow local economies. An equal number may launch their programs specifically to meet the needs of a group of students that might not otherwise be able to afford college. A few will follow the KP model and provide first-dollar support to every student. Many will require students to file their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and will cover the last dollar of expenses remaining after applying state and federal aid. A number of "places" will launch programs where there are few opportunities to attract businesses and employers. A few of these programs may even consider how to assist non-traditional age students. All of these factors will come into play as communities across the U.S. consider tuition guarantee programs. The research community will recognize that these programs vary in important ways and we can utilize that variation, allowing us to examine the relative value of a range of program characteristics.

Evidence from KP suggests that the program has the potential to improve student outcomes. Time will tell if other versions of the program will yield similar results. In the mean time, we can pay attention to how these programs are constructed, how they are rationalized, how they are funded, and whether the economic and educational indicators suggest that variations on the program offer the same potential.

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The Impact of Financial Aid on the Enrollment and Retention of Student Athletes at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III Colleges and Universities: A Review of the Literature

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This article aims to review current literature on the enrollment and retention of student athletes at NCAA Division III institutions. However, the review identifies very few studies that specifically focused on Division III programs and none that looks at the influence of financial aid on the enrollment and retention of student athletes at Division III institutions. Discussing and connecting research from student athletes' experiences at Division I institutions as well as research on influences of student aid on college students, this literature review offers some insight on how student aid might influence college enrollment and retention for student athletes at Division III institutions.

Colleges and universities across the United States offer intercollegiate athletic programs for a variety of reasons. These programs range in size from the highly televised and marketed National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I teams to the much less visible NCAA Division III level as well as the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). There are also separate classifications for community colleges and schools that choose to compete solely in a Christian college athletic coalition. Many schools offer intercollegiate athletic competition to help with enrollment goals while also providing opportunities for participants to develop athletic ability in the course of their academic program. Schools with large athletic programs view these extracurricular offerings, especially football and basketball, as a potential source of revenue while all types of colleges and universities view sports as an important community building mechanism for the full constituency of the given institution (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2001).

Regardless of the reasons any college chooses to participate in intercollegiate athletics, recruiting student athletes is a common need. No intercollegiate athletic program can be successful over the long term without recruiting students who possess exceptional academic and athletic abilities (Judson, James, & Aurand, 2004). Recognizing that the recruiting process lends itself to many facets of study, this review opens with two specific questions in mind: What impact does financial aid have on the enrollment and retention of student athletes at NCAA Division III colleges and universities? Given that some schools are more athletically successful than others (as defined by win/loss record), are there discounting strategies that are more effective in achieving a greater percentage of winning programs while maintaining compliance with Division III financial aid rules?

Current literature does not include a great deal of study related to these specific questions, thereby indicating a need for further research. Despite the current literature gap, this review describes related literature in support of the contention that financial aid may affect college enrollment and strives to establish the need for further study in the specific NCAA Division III sector.

Impact of Financial Aid on College Enrollment for Athletes and Non-athletes

As attempts are made to influence the scope of attributes new matriculates bring with them, colleges and universities have direct control over which students will be admitted and what sort of financial aid will be offered to those so selected (van der Klaauw, 2002). Receipt of grants or a combination of grants and loans had a positive impact on attending first choice institutions (Kim, 2004). These two statements make a fair amount of intuitive sense, but various studies have taken on the task of further examining the impact of financial aid on enrollment.

Braunstein, McGrath, & Pescatrice (1999) examined several years of data pertaining to accepted freshmen (i.e., students with no previous college experience) applications from a specific college to study the effect of financial factors on student enrollment. Their study did not look at athletic interest or the potential individuals might have in sports but considered race, ethnicity, gender, number of family members, legacy status, commuter or resident status, various preparatory academic variables, and perhaps most important for the current project, financial variables. After using logistic regression analyses to analyze the data, they concluded that financial aid does have a positive impact on the enrollment of accepted applicants. As the amount of financial aid offered was increased by $1000, the probability of the given student enrolling increased between 1.1% and 2.5% (Braunstein et al., 1999). The study also found that increases in grants or loans had a much more significant impact than did increases in work-study offerings.

For first generation college students, athletics, financial aid, and many other issues impact college choice and individual persistence towards graduation (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). These same authors noted that being involved outside the classroom and interacting with college classmates, in general, can assist greatly in the development of cognitive and social skills. Furthermore, their study suggested that federal and state financial aid policies may allow access to college itself, specifically for low-income students, but not to the full range of personal and social endeavors that are all a part of a traditional college experience. In other words, growth ideally occurs for college students both inside and outside the classroom.

Another study found that federal policy may impact the amounts of money families save for college if they expect funds to be available from other sources such as Social Security or financial aid (Reyes, 2008). To arrive at this conclusion, Reyes analyzed how families handle their asset portfolios when planning for the college investment. This is an issue because the federal need analysis formula excludes the net worth of primary home equity and retirement accounts. An especially skilled investor could reinvest assets and effectively shield dollars from need analysis consideration. Since asset portfolios tend not to be a consideration for low-income families, it can accurately be determined that Reyes (2008) and Pascarella et al. (2004) looked at different types of families; however, it is significant to note that both recognized the importance of financial aid on enrollment.

Pacey (1982) used regression analysis from a representative sample of female athletes attending two NAIA schools in different divisions to determine the importance of grant dollars in increasing participation rates. Among other findings, she concluded that grant dollars expand athletic opportunities for females in college athletic programs. Knowing that financial aid is an important factor in determining women's rate of participation in intercollegiate sports further validates the aid-related conclusions mentioned previously, such as the positive impact of receipt of grants, scholarships, and loans on enrollment at first choice institutions.

Unique Features of NCAA Division III Colleges

Because of the NCAA Division III program structure, Division III colleges create a unique college experience for its students athletes. Schools participating at this level must offer at least 10 programs, five each for men and women, of which a minimum of two for each gender are of the team sport (e.g., basketball or soccer as opposed to golf or tennis) variety. Student athletes at this level receive no financial aid of any sort related to athletic ability or potential, and funding for all phases of the athletic department happens like any other area of the institution. A key additional differentiation between Division III and other levels is that the primary focus is on the experience of the athlete as opposed to the spectator (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2007). Typically, Division III schools are not concerned about the number of spectators who attend a contest, and many do not charge admission to attend such events. A person who is a student first and an athlete second is the rule as opposed to the exception at Division III schools.

While there are numerous newspaper and magazine articles in existence that discuss Division III programs, extensive searching on EBSCO Host, JSTOR, ProQuest Education Journals, and other library databases identified very few research studies in this area. The narrower focus of the impact of financial aid on such programs is even less studied. Clearly, there is a need for additional research with regard to NCAA Division III programs in general, and particularly when considering financial aid variables. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions (e.g., Robst & Keil, 2000; Mignano, Brewer, Winter, & Raalte, 2006; Todd & Brown, 2003).

Robst & Keil (2000) looked at the graduation rates and cumulative grade point averages of athletes as compared to non-athletes at a specific Division III institution. The authors used various statistical means to compare data in these areas for athletes versus non-athletes and by individual athletic program. Because the school selected for the study attracted a significant number of transfer students, the project also compared transfer and non-transfer athletes to non-athletes. The authors noted that many stereotypes exist generalizing that athletes are not typically as academically prepared as non-athletes. The results of the study demonstrated the opposite, indicating that Division III athletes take more credits per year and more difficult classes than do non-athletes, and have a higher graduation rate (Robst & Keil, 2000).

Along the lines of strong academic emphasis among athletes, Mignano et al (2006) compared levels of athletic identity among females at women's colleges and coeducational colleges. The authors created an Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) composed of seven items crafted to reflect the social, cognitive and affective components of athletic identity (Mignano et al., 2006). Because the researchers collected data solely from athletes at Division III colleges, their findings correlated with the academic emphasis identified in the Robst and Keil (2000) study, indicating a unique relationship between academics and athletics on Division III campuses. Again, they noted that opportunity for further study clearly exists in this area.

Another unique Division III feature was found by Todd and Brown (2003) who, while noting that athletes are notorious for superstitious behavior, tried to determine the extent to which type A behavior pattern, athletic identity, and locus of control could predict superstitious tendencies among Division I and Division III track and field athletes. In their literature review, the authors provided a 'level of competition' section that included a summary of the different levels of emphasis placed on athletics by these two classifications of schools. Highlighted factors included the lack of athletic scholarships at the Division III level and the general difference in the quality of athlete attracted to the two divisions. The authors appeared somewhat surprised to note little difference in the percentages of superstitious behavior exhibited between the two Division I and III programs. This finding was rationalized by noting that Division III athletes, while generally not as physically skilled as their Division I colleagues, are just as dedicated to having a college athletic career (Todd & Brown, 2003).

Influences on the Enrollment Choices of Student Athletes

Athletic, academic, and campus-related influences were all factors that impact the enrollment choice of small-college student athletes (Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan, 2006). To reach this conclusion, the authors administered an athletically oriented college choice profile to 229 entering freshman student athletes. These students had enrolled in six different small, private, church-affiliated colleges, half of which competed at the NAIA level and half at the NCAA Division III level. The 25-item survey asked students to use a five-point Likert scale ("one" indicated little or no influence while "five" reflected a great deal of influence) to show how much influence each item had on their matriculation decision. Based on mean scores, the five most influential items were degree programs, opportunity to play, head coach, academic support services, and spiritual guidance with the five least influential items being pro-sport opportunities, high school friends, high school teammates, school colors, and television exposure. The main point taken from this study was that all involved in the recruitment process at smaller colleges should develop marketing strategies that provide an accurate reflection of campus student life including academic, athletic, and general campus elements (Goss et al., 2006).

Similiarly, Judson et al. (2004), who focused on NCAA Division I athletes and universities, concluded that schools must develop and employ recruiting strategies based upon attributes that student-athletes identify as important to their decision making process. These researchers tried to determine what criteria were most important to student-athletes recruited to two specific schools in addition to looking at gender and ethnicity issues involved in the process. They concluded that male student athletes were more concerned about athletic characteristics of the school, while their female contemporaries were more focused on academic variables.

In a study that intentionally focused on gender differences as they related to 19 variables considered by students when making their college choice, Mansfield & Warwick (2005) reached a similar conclusion for females. Their study did not consider the athletic variable, but nonetheless concluded that females focused on academic criterion while males were more concerned about tuition. Interestingly, Mansfield and Warwick (2005) found that parents of both male and female students expressed more concern about academic issues.

A study by Klenosky and Troutman (2001) used the laddering interview technique to obtain data from 27 football players at the Division I level. The authors used a means-ends theory (Gutman, 1982) to evaluate their data and determine what elements separated the school chosen by these young men from other schools they had considered. This evaluation method allowed the researchers to examine relationships between anticipated outcomes and personal values and show why certain attributes, such as facilities, coaches, equipment, academic variables, and level of personal comfort with the program, were important to the individuals interviewed. The authors concluded that it is vital for Division I schools to understand what issues are important to prospective students and for them to conduct their recruiting activities accordingly (Klenosky & Troutman, 2001).

Toma and Cross (1998) found that there was a strong relationship between large universities that win an athletic championship and college applications. The researchers identified the schools who won NCAA Division I championships in football and men's basketball over the years 1979 to 1992, and then studied admissions data these universities reported to the *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges and Universities*. In addition to information reported over the same period by four to five peer institutions, they examined data from the three years prior to the championship and the three years after. The authors noted their interest in learning information about the quality of students who compose these increased admission application numbers and whether this same phenomenon occurs more at selective institutions. This latter point especially would be germane to a study of Division III colleges.

Conclusion

The cost of a college education is among the most significant investments many people make in the course of their lives (Kim, 2004; Reyes, 2008). Whether this price is borne personally by the student or provided by a parent, it is still a substantial sum. Therefore, it makes logical sense that financial aid, whether in the form of grants, scholarships or loans, will be of significant interest to students and families.

This article intended to examine the NCAA Division III option within the realm of intercollegiate athletics. A review of the available literature revealed work that focuses on issues influencing choices student athletes at all levels face when making college decisions. Included were academic offerings, factors within athletic programs, and other influences. Interestingly, however, the review identified very few studies that specifically involved Division III programs, and none that looked at the influence of financial aid on the enrollment and retention of student athletes at this type of college.

Because NCAA Division III colleges have the unique characteristic of not allowing athletic ability or involvement to be considered when preparing financial aid offerings, it seems likely that researchers have simply chosen to ignore the impact institutional aid packaging decisions have on student athletes and, in turn, on athletic programs at these schools. Since the aid-related studies reviewed here provide conclusions indicating that financial aid *does* affect matriculation decisions, it is reasonable to conclude that a need exists for further study of this relationship in NCAA Division III colleges.

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