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After Admission: From College Access to College Success
(review)

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focus on one topic with supporting evidence from various colleges and universities. Title IX, faculty children, Asian Americans, and Congress are discussed in greater detail.

Golden's most compelling case is made in chapter 9, "The Challenge of Wealth Blind Admissions," when Golden provides examples of universities, such as Cal Tech, Cooper Union, and Berea, that serve students and the public without compromising admissions standards for legacies or other special cases. All have survived throughout the years, raising money from donors who expect nothing in return and from government grants which aid the American public.

However, the reader needs to question whether the schools highlighted in Golden's book are representative of all institutions across the country. For one, most of the schools mentioned are private institutions, with very little evidence to support the same claims to their public school counterparts. The reader wonders how prevalent legacy and other privileged applicants infiltrate the entire higher education system. Second, as a native of the East Coast, Golden has gathered most of his information from schools located in the Northeast. Focusing on schools in this geographic area does not provide for a diversified argument or one that could be used when speaking generally. Lastly, the Ivy League schools are a major focus in this book but only represent a small percentage of the students who enroll in higher education.

Golden is clear to communicate his overarching theme which argues for anti-legacy policies and emphasizes the accountability necessary to facilitate an equal playing field within the admissions process. He closes by explaining the heart of the matter revolves around students earning their right to a spot in an elite university, academically, athletically or otherwise, on their own merits and not someone else's.

His final chapter, Golden offers suggestions for reform which leaves the reader a bit unsatisfied and immobile to the deeply rooted "traditions" of some of the nation's oldest and most prestigious institutions. To be fair, Golden rightfully urges a call for action for an intolerably significant and pressing issue.

The Price of Admission would be appropriate for anyone interested in college or university admissions. Parents and their high school students would also benefit from learning the harsh realities at some of the nation's most prestigious schools. Hopefully by reading this, admissions counselors would be challenged to evaluate their current admission policies. The practices discussed in this book should also be incorporated in courses for graduate students studying higher education as they would benefit from learning the challenges they may face as future universities leaders.

After Admission: From College Access to College Success,
by James E. Rosenbaum, Regina Deil-Amen, and Ann E. Person.
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James E. Rosenbaum, Regina Deil-Amen, and Ann E. Person's *After Admission: From College Access to College Success* is an elaboration and extension of

a program of research that Rosenbaum and a seemingly endless series of talented graduate students have been pursuing since the 2001 publication of *Beyond College for All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. The new volume promises to be as influential as the earlier one, and to join ranks with Dougherty's *The Contradictory College* (1994) and Brint and Karabel's *The Diverted Dream* (1989) as pivotal sociological statements on the American community college. Rosenbaum and his colleagues begin by characterizing the community college as "an amazing success and a startling failure" (p. 7). Even more than Dougherty or Brint and Karabel, the present authors appreciate the ability of the community college to lower barriers to access and to serve nontraditional students and nontraditional purposes. Community colleges have become the point of access to post-secondary education for ever-larger numbers of young college-goers. Access, however, does not readily translate into degree completion, with the problem of non-completion particularly serious for blacks and Hispanics.

The authors' basic analytic strategy is to compare the practices and policies of community colleges with those of private occupational colleges. The latter—typically smaller, more entrepreneurial, less bureaucratically-entrenched, and more attuned to the demands of the labor market than community colleges—have recently become a far greater presence in the preparation of workers for the sub-baccalaureate labor market. Rosenbaum et al. acknowledge that the comparison of community colleges and occupational colleges has to be made with considerable care, since their sample of occupational colleges is neither large nor random.

Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person develop a mixed methods research design, employing secondary data analysis; personal interviews with teachers, administrators, and students; field observations; and the analysis of written documents. Such a diverse strategy does of course enlarge their vision, although it can make reliable comparisons across methods a risky enterprise. To their credit, the authors are unfailingly conscientious about noting the limitations of their data and the possibilities of interpretations other than their own.

After Admissions is stuffed with rich and provocative empirical findings. At the risk of some overstatement, these findings come down to the observation that at the end of the day, occupational colleges generally do a better job than community colleges not only in seeing students through to degree completion, but also in setting them on the path to successful employment. Relative to community colleges, occupational colleges are especially successful with minorities. The authors are unflinching in their assessment of what this finding means for the open door and egalitarian tradition of community colleges: "When so many leave college without attaining their goals, is the possibility of opportunity enough, or should we consider way to offer more effective, albeit possibly less idealistic, pathways to success?" (p. 21).

For Rosenbaum and his colleagues, community colleges need to do more to put students on realistic avenues to success, in which motivations, aspirations, and possibilities are in greater mutual alignment. They maintain that instead of "cooling out" ambitious students, as Burton Clark famously claimed, community colleges too often "warm up" the aspirations of underprepared and unrealistic young people. The authors are convincing that "cooling out," if it can effectively set students on career paths with higher probabilities of success, is

actually a good thing. As much as we are used to thinking of cooling out as reproductive of unequal class relations, it may be just the opposite.

Although Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person never adopt the language used by an earlier generation of critics of the cult of self-esteem in elementary education, their analysis of the social stigma attached to community college attendance adopts a similar logic. They argue forcefully that community colleges need to be more straightforward with their students about the consequences of entering college without adequate academic preparation. Rosenbaum et al. believe that the reluctance of community colleges to risk stigmatizing students by requiring clearly identified remedial coursework leaves students uninformed and adrift, when a more direct depiction of what remediation entails would have much more effectively served the needs of all parties.

After Admission will satisfy an academic audience of researchers, but is equally accessible to policymakers and practitioners. Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person apply all the sociological theory that they need to make sense of their findings, but no more than they need. They rely on a few sturdy theoretical concepts (e.g., cultural capital, signaling, chartering, stigma) but steer clear of more sustained or abstract theoretical discussion. Given their intention of affecting policy, this is a salutary decision, although some might be frustrated that the full theoretical implications of their empirical findings are not fully developed.

After Admission is not the last word on the constantly changing landscape of the community college, nor should it be. Rosenbaum and his colleagues acknowledge that there is still much we need to know, and dedicate much of their final chapter to outlining directions for future research. They have provided an absorbing and well-crafted guide for the next generation of research on community colleges, occupational colleges, and student success, without losing sight of the needs of those who actually plan and deliver the instruction in these important institutions.

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