Back in School
Pearson, A. Fiona

Published by Rutgers University Press

Pearson, A. Fiona.
Back in School: How Student Parents Are Transforming College and Family.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/67802.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/67802

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2390193
Each project is a test of patience, perseverance, and trust. First and foremost, this project would not exist if student parents were not willing to voice their struggles, strategies, successes, and frustrations with me. To all the parents who sat down with me and shared your stories, thank you for setting aside precious hours of your day and being willing to be a part of this project. There are some parents, in particular, who inspired me throughout the process of researching and writing this book. Erika Dawson Head, eleven years ago you entered my life and struck me with your determined optimism; your passion for your family and for promoting social justice is incomparable. Leah Glaser, Jacqueline Cobbina-Boivin, Michele Vancour, Tom Bohlke, Rebecca Boncoddo, Talhaht Mannan, and Aimee Pozorski, you have been my ever-steady comrades on campus—we will keep doing what we know is right to improve campus life for parents and their families.

At Central Connecticut State University, I couldn’t have done this without the support of the Department of Sociology, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and our valiant union, the Association of American University Professors. I relied extensively on AAUP Research Grants that supported the key work of interviewing, transcribing, researching, and writing. I am union proud and appreciative and thank current leaders for recognizing that these work–life–family issues are labor issues and for supporting current childcare and paid leave initiatives on our college and university campuses.

Friends and colleagues reviewed some insufferably rough drafts over the years—I thank Wendy Simonds and Mary Erdmans for inspiring me to be courageous and “set loose my inner writer.” John O’Connor, you have the uncanny skill of asking just the right questions and challenging me to think outside my comfort zone, which helped to propel the analysis forward. Long conversations while hiking in Sunol with Michael Doyle helped me sort through ideas as we considered the challenges of teaching and wrestled with my project’s themes and theories. I am also indebted to the close readings and responses provided by a number of anonymous readers and by Lisa Nunn, who steered me in directions that ultimately strengthened this project’s current form while cheering me on.
at every turn. Melanie Daglian was indispensable in helping me to transcribe these interviews at a moment’s notice. And, of course, I couldn’t have completed this project successfully without my editor at Rutgers University Press, Lisa Banning, who seamlessly guided me through the publishing process, and my production editor, John Donohue, an expert in detail and style.

Christine Steiner, I remember strolling with you around the campus of Chabot Community College soon after you had decided to go back to school—now with a bachelor’s degree in political science and over fifty years of public housing experience, your influence is recognized and lauded by city and county leaders across the United States. You inspire others, particularly your two daughters, with your tenacity, energy, and strength—thank you Mom. Michael Pearson, you have long reassured me with your patience, your endurance, and your devotion to family. Whether rescuing me when stranded in the Central Valley or following my adventures cross country, you have trusted my decisions and supported me at every turn as we journey this thing called life. Thank you, Dad.

Deb Pearson, your perceptive takes on people and their motivations keep my mind in constant motion—and when I am lulled into complacency, you always know the right time to shake up my roots. Seneca and Danielle, you likely didn’t even know it, but your very being has shaped all of my work. Do you know how lucky you are? I know how lucky I am. Scott Ellis, you’re my game partner in every sense of the word—you worked with me as I struggled with ideas early in the morning and late at night. You read every section multiple times, and when I was drowning in history or others’ research, you encouraged me to “go back to the data.” I did. I listened to you in the way that you listened to me, and all of our life adventures are better because of that—thank you my luv.