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Policy Development for Federal Pre-College Outreach Programs (or what happens when your research is used in unintended ways)

EdD Speaker Series

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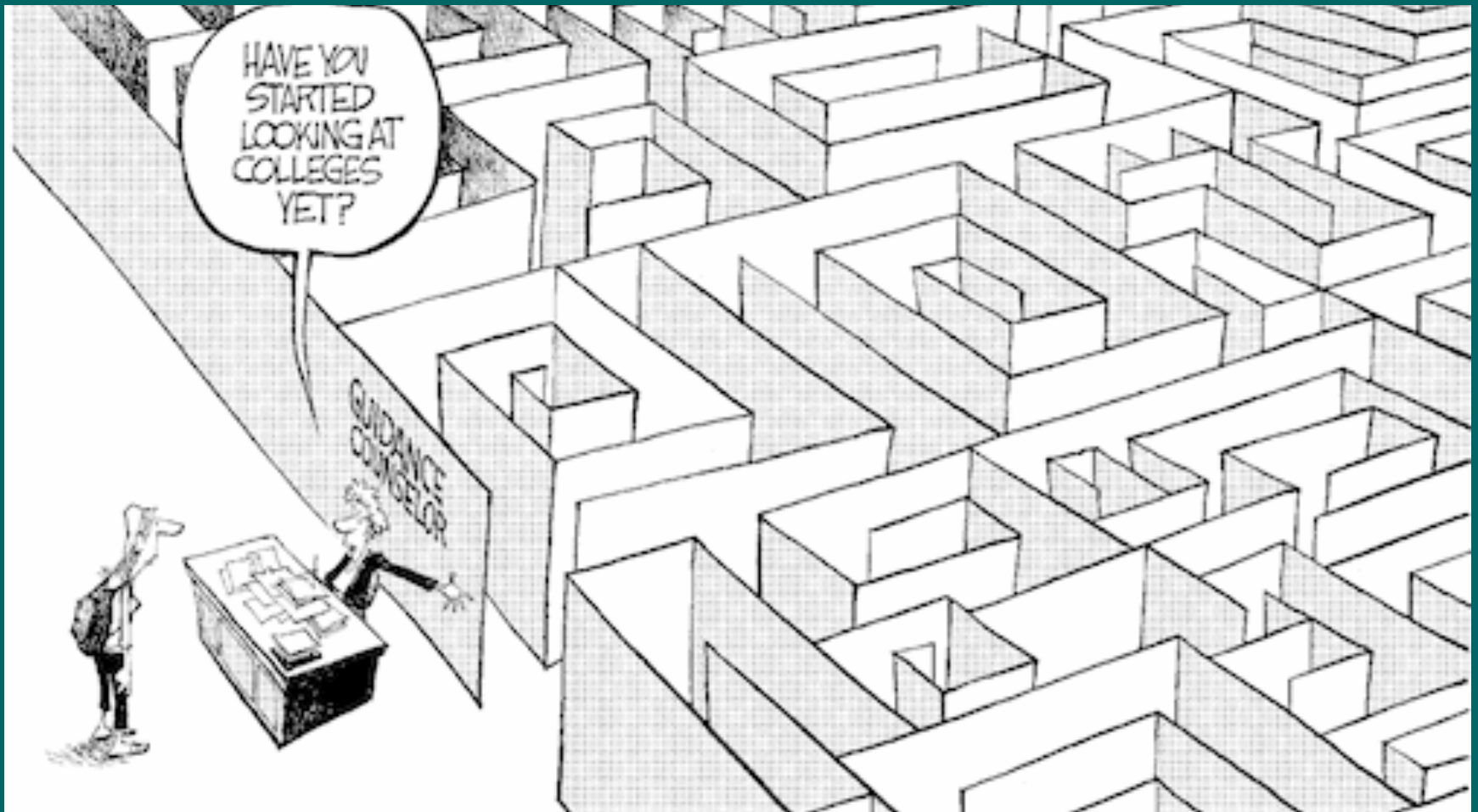
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Structure of Today's Discussion

- Future of Children journal and upcoming presentation
- Federal pre-college outreach programs
- Embargoed Princeton/Brookings proposal
- My response to the proposal
- Your reactions and suggestions

Preparing for Postsecondary Education



Our Chapter (Venezia and Jaeger)

- Context for high school to postsecondary transitions (understanding the problem)
- Current measures of college readiness (SAT, ACT...)
- College fit with regard to underserved students
- Interventions (federal programs, Middle and Early College High Schools and dual enrollment, state level reforms such as default curricula and EAP)
- Evidence on effectiveness of interventions
- Systems Reform: Common Core State Standards

Context: Inequitable Postsecondary Readiness Opportunities

- Over the last 30 years, the percentage of 10th graders who aspire to earn a BA has risen from 41% to over 80%, with the largest increase coming from low income students. Aspirations do not vary by race/ethnicity.
- A greater proportion of Asian and White Students have access to college counseling in high school than do Black, Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native students. 60% of Asian and over 50% of White high school freshmen attend schools in which counselors report that the primary goal of school guidance is to help students prepare for college. 44% of Black, 41% of Latino, and 29% of American Indian/Alaska Native freshmen attend such schools.

Inequitable Postsecondary Readiness Opportunities, Continued

- A greater proportion of students in low poverty schools graduate from high school with a diploma and attend 4-year institutions. In 2007-8, ~91% of 12th graders in low poverty schools graduated with a diploma compared with 68% in high poverty schools. 52% of high school graduates from low poverty schools attended a 4-year postsecondary institution, compared with 28% from high poverty schools.
- There are disparities on achievement test by income as well. In 2009, 21% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch were proficient or advanced in reading and 10% were proficient or advanced in math. Students whose families had too much money to qualify: 44% were proficient or advanced in reading and 32% were in math.

Strategies/Areas of Focus to Level the Playing Field

- Academic Supports
- Mentoring
- Socio/emotional/behavior/psychological supports
- Metacognitive (habits of mind) supports
- “College knowledge” supports
- Financial aid information
- Parental supports and information
- Peer supports

Current Federal Role re: Pre-College Outreach

- Started in 1965
- Served approximately 2 million students
- TRIO (Upward Bound, Talent Search, Upward Bound Math-Science, Student Support Services)
- GEAR UP
- Cost approximately \$1 billion per year all together
- Serve less than 7% of eligible students
- Concerns about evaluation (number and rigor)
- Doing more with less (cuts to social programs, efficiencies)

Princeton/Brookings Response & Proposal

- “Little evidence of success, so programs should be reformed”
- One rigorous study, several studies that did not use random assignment
- Eliminate current programs
- Consolidate programs into one new program
- Focus on academic readiness
- New program would require strong evidence base
- New program would require rigorous evaluation

My response: positive

- Timely
- Focused on cost and quality
- New demands on high schools require new focus on postsecondary readiness (it's appropriate to re-think the mission, depth, and breadth of pre-college outreach programs)

My response: concerns and questions

- Is the rationale supporting the proposal sufficient to overhaul the programs?
- Do we know enough about what works to create a new large program
- Which student populations should be targeted?
- The focus should be broader than academic preparation.
- What are the desired outcomes? Perhaps consider a series of connected programs that offer connected age appropriate supports over many years (readiness continuum).
- How should the outcomes be measured?
- How will the new program be integrated into existing structures (schools, communities)?
- Given the lack of rigorous evidence about what works, a new effort must allow for experimentation and “revision.”
- Students need a systemic/comprehensive approach.
- Do not make the program(s) more vulnerable to being cut.

Your response

Questions, thoughts, suggestions, concerns?

If you think of something later, feel free to email me at:
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