AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS UTILIZING AN INITIAL COLLEGE CHOICE-PERSISTENCE NEXUS MODEL

Kathryn Schmidtke Felts

Dr. Barbara K. Townsend, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Research on transfer student success is important to institutions interested in retaining transfer students and well as transfer students interested in attaining a baccalaureate. This study on transfer student success is grounded in a student-centered initial college choice-persistence nexus model that asserts there is a nexus between the factors that determine whether a student initially enters higher education through a community college or four-year institution and the factors that affect persistence to a baccalaureate. Utilizing two-group path analysis, this study found that transfer GPA, transfer hours, completion of college algebra, completion of freshmen English, and first-semester GPA had a positive effect on baccalaureate attainment for community college transfer students to a Midwestern, public research university. In contrast, only first-semester GPA and transfer hours had a positive effect on baccalaureate attainment for four-year transfer students to the same institution. Additionally, it was found that the effects of entering academic history on first-semester GPA and degree attainment differed for community college and four-year transfer students. This difference is attributed to the nexus of factors that affect initial college choice and persistence.