

Students with Promise and Prowess: Rethinking the Identity of HBCUs in the 21st Century

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Introduction

- Nearly 29 years at public HBCU, Fayetteville State University
- Social justice mission (historic)
- National imperative to increase educational attainment (current and future)
- Focus on students with prowess/promise forces us to think about who we are in the light of our historic mission and the current and future imperative


Introduction

- My observation (non-scientific and non-empirical) – students fall somewhere on a continuum

Prowess

Promise

Neither

- 
- At one extreme – students who will be successful, regardless of how ineffective we are (instruction, support, advisement, services, and student life). These are the students most institutions strive to enroll. (prowess)
 - At the other extreme – student who will not be successful, regardless of how effective we are - usually linked to motivation, maturity, as well as academic preparation.
 - Between these two extremes are the students who, with the right combination of support and direction, will earn a degree, improve the quality of their lives, and contribute to society. (promise)

Overview

- The 20th-century model of higher education
 - Has served to perpetuate socio-economic inequities in America.
 - Is out of touch with the demographic and economic realities of the 21st century.
 - Continues to place African-American, Hispanic, Native-American, low-income students AT RISK.
 - Places the future well-being of America AT RISK.
- A new model of higher education is emerging.
- Consider the role of FSU (HBCU's) in this context.
- Fayetteville State University's efforts to respond to this new educational environment

Increase baccalaureate degrees

- *“By 2020 America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.”*

President Barack Obama, February 24, 2009, Joint session of Congress

- The president’s goal reflects the recognition that increasing the number of college-educated citizens is vital to America’s future.

Increasing baccalaureate degrees

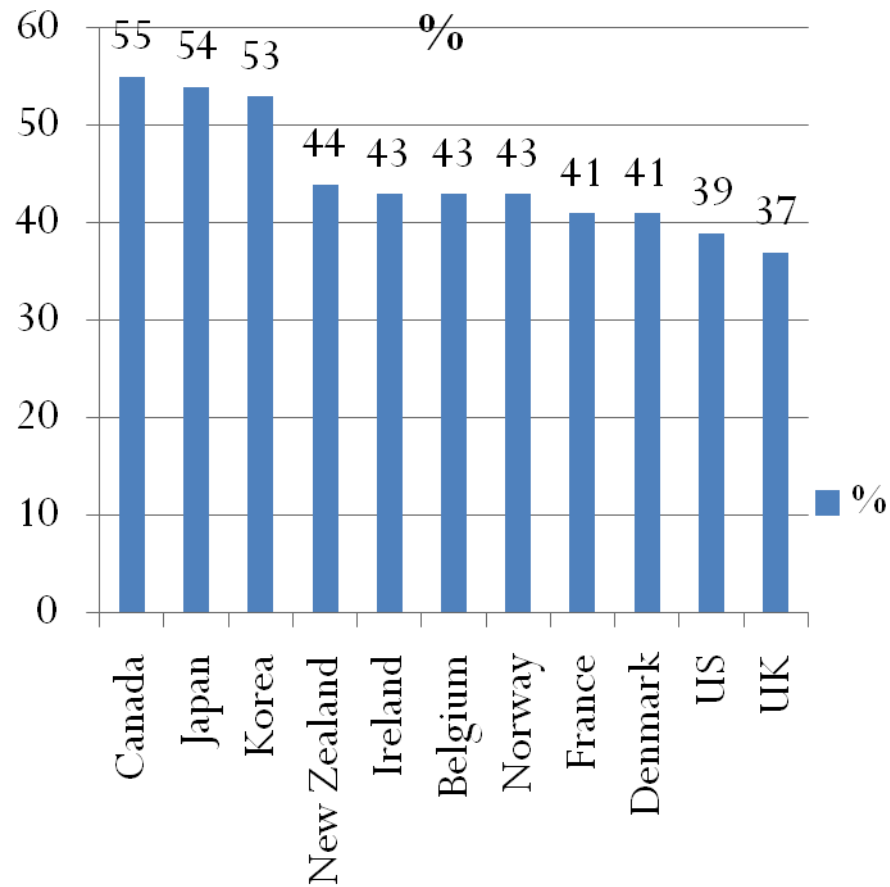
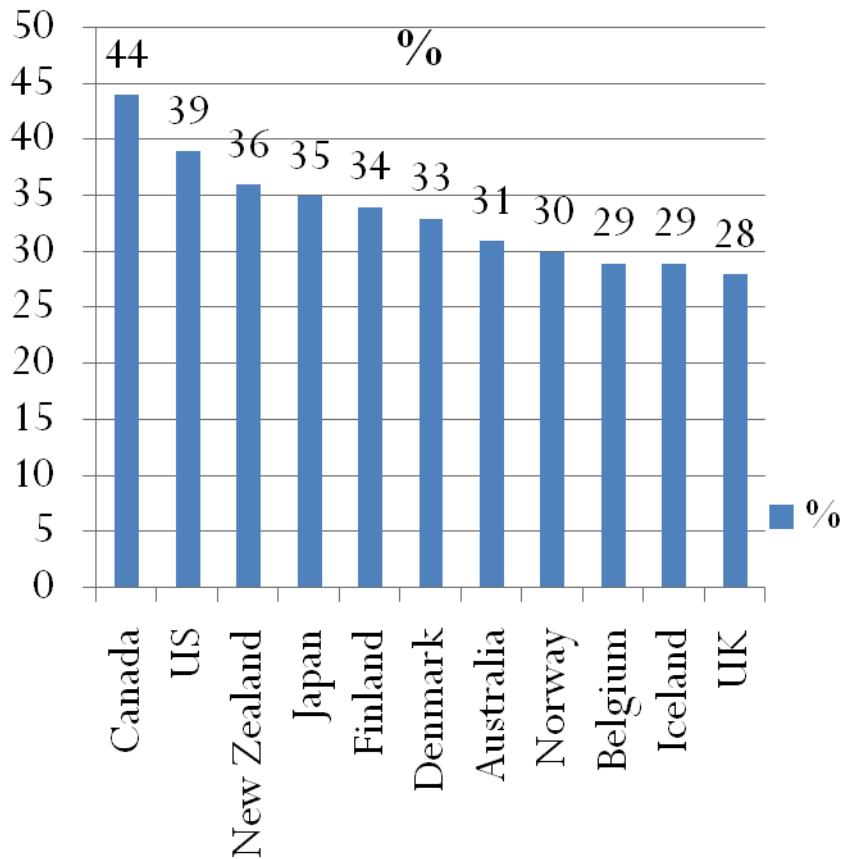
- “In the coming decades, four-fifths of high school graduates will need some form of postsecondary education to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to address the complex social, economic, and political issues they will face.” *Student Success in College, 2005, p. 8.*
- Widening income gap between high skill and low skill occupations
- “In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it s pre-requisite.” President Barack Obama
- Just as the transition from agrarian society to industrial society was made possible by mandating high school for all, in the 21st-century, knowledge-based global economy, our goal must be every man and woman on a college campus.

Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat.*

% with Associate Degree or higher

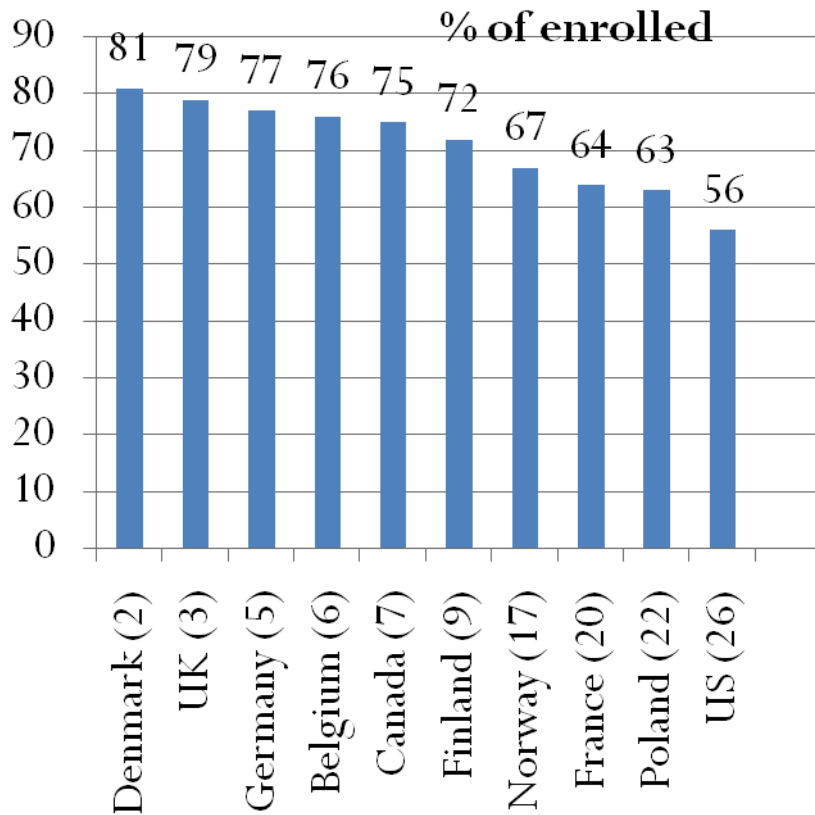
Adults, 35 - 64

Adults, 25 - 34

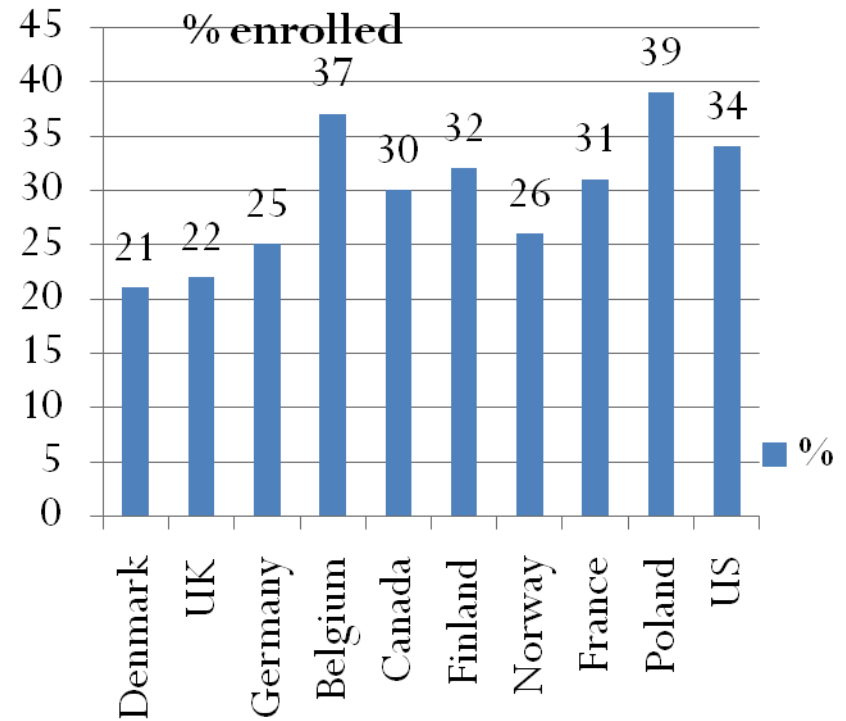


Completion rates; College Enrollment

Bachelor Degree Completion Rates*



College Enrollment, 18 – 24 year olds**

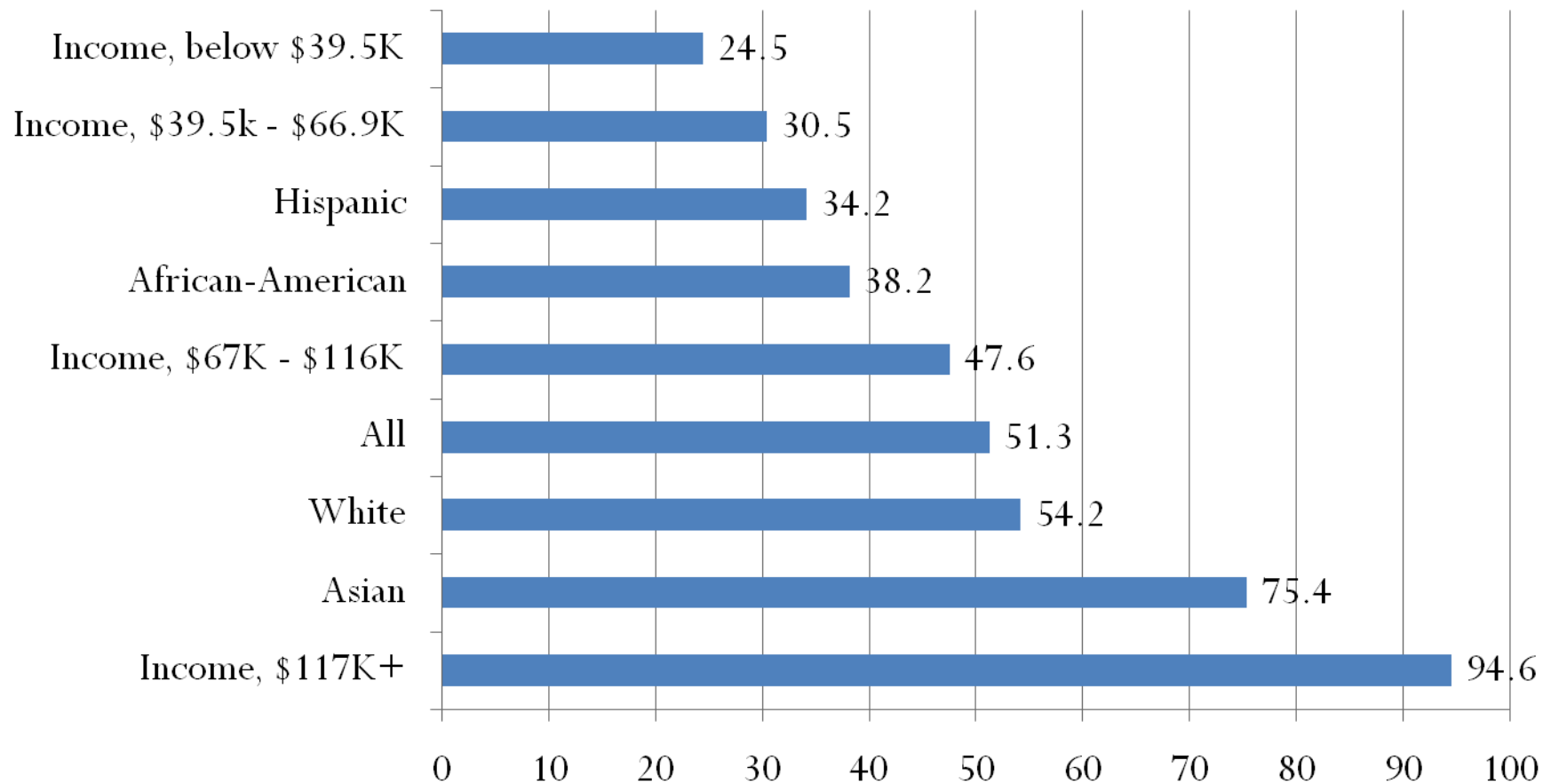


**Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY*, March 2009:

** *Measuring Up 2008*: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

U.S. Degree Completion

% Enrolled who Complete



The “best institutions” and Pell Grants

- From 1992-93 – 2008-09 - Pell Grant recipients (low income students) increased in the U.S. by 38%
- At the 245 “best institutions” (private and public, *US News..*)
 - 7.3% increased Pell recipients by 38% or more
 - 35.1% increased Pell recipients, less than 38%
 - 57.6% decreased Pell recipients
- FSU – Over same time period – 92% increase

Area	% college degree +	% in poverty	Median income	% employ Manufac	% At-risk pop
Cumberland I	27.4	30	\$46,000	5.7	44.5
Cumberland II	17.9	24.4	\$43,150	8.2	42.2
Hoke, Moore	20.2	24.4	\$43,150	18	40.8
Sampson	12.7	26.7	\$38,120	18.4	52.1
Robeson	11.8	52.2	\$32,900	21.7	74
Bladen	15	42.7	\$34,000	16	40.5
Harnett, Lee	15.9	20.7	\$44,000	19.4	38.9
NC	26.5	21	\$49,360	15	34.2
US	28.6	18.5	\$57,167	12	31.1

Source: www.educationalneedsindex.com

Higher Education: Old and New

20th Century Model

“Excellence” and “Quality” based on Reputation

Resources (Facilities, faculty, endowment, library holdings, etc.)

Student characteristics when admitted (HS GPA, Class rank, Avg. SATs)

Exclusiveness – How many are denied admission? How many do we “weed out?”

Traditional college-aged students (18 – 24 years of age)

21st Century Model

“Excellence” and “Quality” based on continuous improvement

Impact on student learning (How effectively do we use resources?)

Learning outcomes (value-added)

Inclusiveness – How many do we help achieve success?

Diverse audiences (race, age, life experiences, aspirations)

FSU and the “new model”

- We seek to be a leader in developing the new model – we have not defined ourselves in terms of resources or the characteristics of students we admit; ”
- What we know (collectively) about student success can become instructive for all institutions.
- At the same time, we must improve retention and graduation rates
 - The UNC system has imposed aggressive targets for retention and graduation rates on all institutions.
 - The system has said it is moving away from an enrollment-driven funding formula to one based on retention.

FSU and the “new model”

- At FSU we must change the way we do business; over the past five years, even as we have received, increased funding, one-year retention rates have remained stagnant; four-year graduation rates have declined.
- FSU strategic plan states that we will “be university of choice for students in NC and the nation...”
- We are seeking to attract students with prowess and promise.
- Can we do so without betraying our historic mission?
- Our message: we will challenge students academically and hold them to high expectations of academic performance and behavior, though we will provide support to help students meet these challenges and expectations. (Perhaps we have emphasized support without challenge?)

PWIs and HBCUs in NC

- Researchers reviewed data from UNC system, grouped African-American students according to “propensity to attend a HBCU”;
- Generally, the more likely a group was to attend an HBCU, the lower their graduation rates, but for each group there was little difference in the graduation rates.
 - Propensity = 9% - 38% @ 72% graduation rate at each
 - Propensity = 79% - 84% @ 59% at PWi; @ 45% at HBCU
 - Propensity = 84% - 94% @ 40% at HBCU: @ 31% at PBI
 - Bowen, Chingos, McPherson, *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities*, 2009 (pp. 205-206)

Impact of Selectivity

- “We find... that controlling for students’ high school GPAs, SAT/ACT scores, and demographic characteristics fails to remove anything like all of the pronounced differences in graduation rates related to institutional selectivity.”
- “Students from all backgrounds, including black students, are generally well-advised to enroll at one of the most challenging universities that will accept them.”
- Even if we are not selective, we can be challenging.
- Factors associated with selectivity – Peer effect, Expectations, Access to excellent resources, Financial aid and student work opportunities, Unobservable selection effects (ambition, drive)
 - Bowen, Chingos, McPherson, *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America’s Public Universities*, 2009 (pp. 233, 228)

FSU Approach: Pre-College Outreach

- TRIO Programs; GEAR UP
- CHEER Program – Summer Bridge for conditional admits – participants continue to progress more effectively than their non-CHEER counterparts.
- Early College High School
 - Outperform their counterparts on EoG testing
 - 65 graduates; 42 went to college (31 at FSU); with 48 – 60 credits
- Summer Program for high school students in STEM disciplines

FSU Approach

- Admissions standards and procedures – We are no longer going to be an institution of last choice
 - Increasing admission standards
 - Limit last-minute admits (We know that students admitted after August 2007 had 56% one year retention rate vs. 73% for those admitted before July 1.)
- We must align admission of students who need significant support with our ability to provide the required support – otherwise we risk enrolling students for the purpose of driving our budgets.

FSU Approach

- Raise expectations for academic performance; revision of progression standards, withdrawal policies and appeal procedures
 - Result of Foundations of Excellence self study – based on analysis of earned to attempted hours; (*Toolbox Revisited*, 2006)
 - Concern about increasing student debt
 - Earlier standard: 1.5 GPA = good standing for freshmen; 2.0 required at 60 hours
 - Current standard: 2.0 required of all students
 - Class withdrawals limited to 5
 - Suspension appeal more stringent
 - Must set expectation on 4-year graduation

FSU Approach

- Challenge students to higher standards
- Must also challenge ourselves to more effective advisement, academic support, and student services
- Extension Grade – incentives for student participation
- Challenge faculty to more effective course design, instructional strategies, academic support, and assessment methods (Faculty Development Seminar)

FSU Approach

- High Impact Educational Practices – Research on Engagement
 - Freshman Seminar
 - Learning Communities
 - International experiences – Global Scholars
 - Service Learning
 - Senior Capstone Courses
- Fayetteville State University is a place where students will have access to these high impact practices

FSU Approach

- Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)
 - Assesses critical thinking, analytical reasoning, writing, and decision making
 - Infusing development of skills throughout the curriculum through intensive faculty development
 - Use the data to improve student learning but also to prove that we are making a difference

FSU Approach

- Tell our story more effectively
 - Celebrate and publicize faculty and student achievements more effectively using all forms of communication
 - Recognize limits of publicity, advertising

FSU Approach

- Develop alternative methods for measuring retention
 - Traditional cohort model based on students admitted as full-time first time students – gives limited view of institutional success
 - “Annual retention snapshot” – Monitor all students and subgroups who are enrolled in one fall semester to determine how many graduate and how many re-enroll in the following year, to include transfers, Pell recipients, males, students with loans, etc.
 - Challenge other institutions to provide the same kind of snapshot.

FSU Approach

- Monitor improvements in consistently “troubling data” on National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)
 - Student responses on individual items are often higher than responses at students from other institutions
 - Yet, on comprehensive questions, i.e., evaluation of overall experiences, willingness to choose institution again – responses are consistently below those of students at peer institutions.
- If our efforts over the next several years are effective, this disparity should diminish.

- Questions??
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