PROJECT PLAN: COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS AND PATHWAYS TO DEGREE ATTAINMENT

ABSTRACT

This project seeks to better understand the relationship between community college attendance and future academic attainment and job success. In particular, the project focuses on state-level differences in outcomes for students who began at a community college.

1 INTRODUCTION

Using successive waves of the Survey of College Graduates, analyze how students who attended a community college fare post-graduation. There is evidence of a community college penalty for degree attainment and this project seeks to analyze whether students who attend a community college in the course of their academic career and attain a baccalaureate degree face a career or wage penalty compared to their peers who attain a baccalaureate degree but never attended a community college full-time.

2 BASELINE OR INITIAL ANALYSIS

Step 1. Create a repeated cross-section using the many waves of the Survey of College Graduates provided.
Step 2. Explore initial patterns between full-time community college attendance and various outcomes like choice of occupation, industry of occupation, wage, unemployment, etc.
Step 3. If possible, focus on different reasons students include community colleges in their academic trajectory, paying particular attention to students who began their first full-time semester at a community college.

3 FINAL ANALYSIS

Step 1. Formalize the analysis with a regression model to detail the relationship between full-time community college enrollment and later career outcomes.
Step 2. Explore possible quasi-experimental identification strategies to find causal estimates of the impact of community college enrollment on these outcomes.
Step 3. Build a predictive model for the determinants of career paths and examine where community college enrollment fits into this broader picture.

4 FINAL GOALS & EVALUATION

A slide deck and technical report that details how the analysis was conducted. These should also address any findings the analysis produced. The deliverable should also include the code that created the dataset and conducted the statistical analysis and predictive modeling (preferably in RStudio or Stata).

5 DATA & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The data is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and collected by the United States Census Bureau. The data is stored in text files and can be read by generic file-reading processing commands

in Stata, R, and other statistical software packages. Data dictionaries accompany each wave of the survey and should be used to understand the fields included in the data.