

Chapter 1

Economic Models and Policy Analysis in Higher Education: A Diagrammatic Exposition

Michael B. Paulsen and Robert K. Toutkoushian

Abstract

This chapter uses diagrams and narration to illustrate how economists utilize models of decision making behavior to analyze higher education policies. Models of the behavior of decision-makers consider their goals and the constraints they face in pursuing those goals. Many higher education policies influence the constraints—on income, information or time—that decision-makers face, and economics provides analytical frameworks that are particularly useful for understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of such policies. The chapter details how human capital theory—the most widely-used theoretical framework in economics of education—and a model of the market for investment in higher education are applied to analyze higher education policies regarding student access. The presentation is intended as an introduction to economic models and higher education policy analysis for scholars, administrators, and policymakers who are not trained in economics, but would like to understand how economics can be used to analyze higher education policy.

Chapter 2

Rankings and Classifications in Higher Education: A European Perspective

Marijk van der Wende

Abstract

As the number of students has grown, the number of higher education institutions, and the diversity of their mission has grown too. It has become difficult to consider them as a homogeneous group. Prioritization of activities and choice of mission have become a central concern. At the same time, globalization leads to increasing competitive pressures on institutions, in particular related to their position on global university rankings, for which their research performance is almost exclusively the measure. Key questions related to these two trends are: How do rankings affect diversity? What is their impact on institutional behavior and strategy? What is their relationship with classifications? It will be argued that in order to avoid an adverse effect on diversity, rankings should only be used within defined groups of comparable institutions (classifications) and that the development of indicators to measure performance areas other than research, such as teaching, needs to be advanced.

Chapter 3

Institutional Transformation and the Advancement of Women Faculty: The Case of Academic Science and Engineering

Mary Frank Fox

Abstract

The participation, status, advancement of women faculty in science and engineering are pressing social concerns for reasons of human resources for, and social equity within, these fields. This chapter 1) presents a rationale for scientific fields as a critical research site for understanding gender and status, and higher education in the United States; 2) summarizes perspectives on women's stalled advancement and the implications for solutions, including institutional transformation; 3) examines the meaning of institutional transformation as a concept in the study of higher education, and in an organized initiative

of the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation awards and awardees; and 4) considers the prospects for, and limits upon, institutional transformation as a strategy for the advancement of women in academic science and engineering.

Chapter 4

The State, the Market and the Institutional Estate: Revisiting Contemporary Authority Relations in Higher Education

Brian Pusser

Abstract

This paper examines a contemporary case of postsecondary restructuring using the central elements of Burton Clark's "triangle of coordination," a prevalent model of authority relations in higher education. The paper reviews research and scholarship on authority relations and on the three main elements of Clark's triangle, the State, the market and the academic oligarchy. The paper presents data from a case of postsecondary restructuring in Virginia and the factors shaping that case in the period 1995-2005. The analysis of the case suggests that the State, the market and the institutional estate remain quite influential in contemporary contests over postsecondary authority, with the State more influential than some previous research would suggest. The paper concludes that authority relations can be more fully understood by building on Clark's triangle through attention to the contemporary complexity of the dynamic relationship between the State, the market and the institutional estate.

Chapter 5

Interests, Information, and Incentives in Higher Education: Principal-Agent Theory and Its Potential Applications to the Study of Higher Education Governance

Jason E. Lane and Jussi A. Kivisto

Abstract

In recent years, a handful of scholars have begun to focus on the role of individual and organizational interests, information flows, and incentives in higher education administration and governance, particularly in the realm of public institutions. These scholars ground their work on assumptions derived from the principal-agent framework, a theoretical perspective that views relationships from a contractual paradigm wherein a principal actor or organization contracts with an agent to carry out certain functions. The framework allows for analysis of how structures impact the agent's willingness and/or ability to fulfill the contracted obligations. This chapter explores the economic and political assumptions of the principal-agent framework and introduces scholars to its utility for understanding how governance and policy making operates in the postsecondary setting. Further, the chapter provides insights as to how the principal-agent framework can help reframe and extend current practical and scholarly conceptions of postsecondary governance and policy decisions.

Chapter 6

Toward a Theory of Faculty Professional Choices in Teaching That Foster College Student Success

John M. Braxton

Abstract

This chapter posits a theory of faculty professional choices in teaching that enhance Course-level learning by college students. The formulations of this theory spring from Extensions of role theory and

expectancy motivation theory to the case of faculty teaching role performance. The formulations of this theory also emerge from literature-based aspects of teaching that enhance student course learning and potential sources of influence on such teaching. This chapter describes such aspects of teaching as pedagogical practices, course assessment activities, the tenets of good teaching practices, engagement in the scholarship of teaching and adherence to norms that proscribe inappropriate teaching behaviors. This chapter also discusses the types of influence that student peer groups, organizational influences and state-level policies and practices may wield on faculty professional choices in their teaching. Recommendations for testing this theory's seven hypotheses are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 7

Financial Aid and Student Dropout in Higher Education: A Heterogeneous Research Approach

Rong Chen

Abstract

This article draws on theoretical and empirical literature to develop a longitudinal research approach for investigating the possible variations in aid effects on dropout risks. It considers that the student body is heterogeneous and thus may respond to financial aid differently according to their socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. It further identifies key elements in assessing the longitudinal impact of various types of financial aid, and provides an alternative approach for understanding how aid policies could affect dropout risk gaps in higher education.

Chapter 8

Theorizing Research Policy: A Framework for Higher Education

Amy Scott Metcalfe

Abstract

This work endeavors to provide a framework for the study of research policy from the perspective of the field of higher education, which considers institutional policies, as well as state, federal, and international policies. It requires contextualizing the study of research policy with an historical overview of the rise of academic research in the United States and its connections to the field of science policy studies. In addition, it is necessary to define the scope of research policy, which is done here through a typology that organizes the various strands of research policy into the thematic categories mission, support, management, and translation. Finally, to address this broad conceptualization of research policy, the macro-level theory of political economy is described, but with important reconceptualizations recommended for the inclusion of meso-level and micro-level intersections between politics and the economy.

Chapter 9

Studying the Effectiveness of Programs and Initiatives in Higher Education Using the Regression-Discontinuity Design

Sally A. Lesik

Abstract

This chapter describes how the regression-discontinuity design can be used to in practice to evaluate programs and initiatives in higher education by emulating a true random experiment. The details of establishing a cause-and-effect relationship along with the general theory behind the regression-design

are presented in addition to issues such as correct model specification, sample size considerations, including additional control variables, modeling selection bias, and addressing various threats to validity. The regression-discontinuity design is then illustrated in detail by presenting an evaluating of whether developmental educational programs have a causal impact on five-year graduation rates.

Chapter 10

From Creation to Cultural Resistance and Expansion: Research on American Indian Higher Education

Roger Geertz González

Abstract

The current literature on American Indian access and persistence indicates that historical forces still play a key role in whether American Indians graduate from college or not. Historically, education for American Indians in the U.S. was used for Christianization, assimilation, and cultural termination. Nevertheless, some American Indian tribes promoted college education, either at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's) or tribally controlled, to their members beginning in the mid-1800s. On the heels of the civil rights movement, most American Indian tribes pushed for culturally appropriate higher education for their individual tribal members. Beginning in the late 1960s, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU's) were established to provide American Indian college students with culturally relevant support centered around each student's tribal culture, family, language, and learning needs. Today, PWI's are beginning to partner with TCU's to further the college education access to American Indians by incorporating distant and other technologies.

Chapter 11

Using Holland's Theory to Study Patterns of College Student Success: The Impact of Major Fields on Students

Kenneth A. Feldman, John C. Smart, and Corinna A. Ethington

Abstract

In examining how academic environments (major fields) within colleges and universities are an absolutely essential component in efforts to understand and promote student success in postsecondary education, we use Holland's person-environment fit theory to track and explain two alternative patterns of student success. The first pattern, based on the congruence assumption of the theory, is when students' initial strengths (that is, their initially prominent characteristics) are enhanced; the second pattern, based on the socialization assumption of the theory, is when students' repertoires of competencies, interests and preferred activities are broadened. After illustrating these two patterns of student success with longitudinal data, we consider some important practical, programmatic and policy implications of our findings as well as compare Holland's theory with other contemporary efforts to understand student success. Throughout, the important sociological underpinnings of Holland's theory, often ignored or de-emphasized in research on the theory, are explored.



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