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Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Completing the Steps to College Entry

Amaury Nora, Ed.D. • March 2010

Topic: Helping Students Navigate the Path to College
Practice: Assist With College Entry

Highlights

- Dr. Amaury Nora discusses the importance of helping low-income and first-generation college goers in completing the college application process.
- Schools can provide support by helping students prepare for college entrance examinations, offering guidance in the college selection process, facilitating visits to college campuses, and supporting the completion of the application.
- If schools do not have enough guidance counselors and resources to help students in the college application process, they can consider recruiting volunteers from the community.

About the Interviewee

Dr. Amaury Nora is professor of higher education and associate dean for research in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His research has focused on theoretical perspectives related to student persistence, the role of college for diverse student populations across different types of institutions, and the development of

retention models that integrate economic theories and psychosocial perspectives within college persistence frameworks. The extent of Dr. Nora's inquiries has contributed to traditional as well as nontraditional lines of research on college student persistence. He has served on the editorial boards of *Research in Higher Education*, *The Review of Higher Education*, *The Journal of Higher Education*, *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, and *The Journal of College Student Retention: Research and Theory* and is currently the editor of *The Review of Higher Education*, the journal for the Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Full Transcript

Hi, my name is Amaury Nora. I am professor of higher education at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

The key areas where students need support in completing the college application process involve, one, is preparing for the entrance exams. The idea of laying out the application form for them and studying and preparing for them, knowing, in fact, how, and what needs to be sort of focused on during those exams. Part of that also is in terms of reference letters and making sure that the reference letters are from people who really help to make the case, as well as in the statement that students sometimes are asked to turn in. Statements that will identify the types of activities that students were engaged in both in the school as well as with the community.

The second step is choosing which college to apply to. One of the things that's really, really important is to be sure that students consider all of the things that are available to them: the services that are there, the type of culture, climate that they find on these campuses. And so, in terms of providing support, it's knowing and being able to find out information—key information—on those different campuses that the student is considering.

The third key area is, of course, visiting the colleges as well. It's going past just the signs that you see in terms of a website, that it's actually going and talking to people at these institutions and really getting a sense of the culture that you will find both in the department that the students are interested in applying to as well as some of the social organizations and some other key aspects of institutions.

The final step is completing the application process, and that's really, really important. The research indicates that when the support from counselors or teachers or whoever is there, and it follows through the whole process, that students are much, much more likely to go ahead and complete that whole application process and actually end up enrolled in college.

Some of the strategies that high schools can use to overcome the lack of counselors on the campus could involve, for one, setting up internships with different universities that are nearby those high schools. For example setting up an opportunity for students in educational counseling departments, and social work departments, and psychology departments where they can actually do their internships on the high school

campus and make sure that they are geared towards completing the steps that are necessary for the students to complete and to go to college.

I believe that the most important factor that schools need to keep in mind in implementing all of these practices, and providing the steps that are necessary for students to complete the college entry process, is really focusing on the commitment on the part of teachers, on the part of the students, on parents, on administrators, and even the community. The whole purpose of engaging in this practice is really to enhance the level of engagement that students are expected to have in order to go ahead and apply and go through all of the forms and all of the steps that are necessary to enroll in college. That engagement has to also be on the part of the parents, on the part of teachers, and on the part of the community as well. It's when that collective effort just comes all together and there is full engagement on all parties that students will be more successful in completing that college entry process.