

as being in an environment where there are few students or faculty of color, or where the curriculum marginalizes the experiences of students of color, are enough to trigger a stereotype threat that undermines performance.

Steele offers practices educators can use to help counteract these messages. For instance, self-affirmation exercises in the classroom, particularly for students of color, can be enough to counter negative messages that trigger stereotype threat. Some other practices include emphasizing incremental views of intelligence (i.e., intelligence as an expandable as opposed to fixed characteristic) and facilitating faculty-to-student or student-to-student mentoring and cross-racial interactions. Steele's insights are so helpful that I was disappointed when he relegated some other important discussions to footnotes, such as when he outlines how findings about the effects of stereotype threat call into question past research that suggests families, not schools, are responsible for the achievement gap.

In the later chapters of the book, Steele focuses on how identity threats influence interracial interactions more broadly. He explains how our actions, conscious or not, contribute to persistent racial segregation as, understandably, each of us may retreat to the safety of a more homogeneous environment that does not trigger the risk of a stereotype threat. But Steele's outlook is hopeful: the factors that contribute to our living segregated lives also have the potential to help us bridge our differences. We are all affected by identity threats, and awareness of this commonality should help us empathize with the experience of others.

Overall, Steele provides strong evidence demonstrating how situational cues affect student performance, and educators can benefit from the practical implications of his research in their efforts to remedy racial inequities in education. While the importance of addressing structural factors should not be overlooked, simple institutional practices can counter the otherwise powerful cues that trigger stereotype threat for students of color. The findings presented in this book unearth the powerful and prevalent ways in which group identity affects us all and demonstrate the need to acknowledge this fact: we need to be "identity conscious" if we are going to improve race relations across our society.

L.M.G.

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE: COMPLETING COLLEGE AT AMERICA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

by William G. Bowen, Matthew M. Chingos, and Michael S. McPherson
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 389 pp. \$27.95.

Until recently, issues of access have dominated postsecondary education discourse in America; most scholars, policy makers, and practitioners have been concerned with who *goes* to college. In their new book, William Bowen, Mat-

thew Chingos, and Michael McPherson move beyond access to the crucial economic issue of who *finishes* college. *Crossing the Finish Line* is a trenchant and revealing look at the success of America's public universities in graduating all students. The authors focus on public colleges and universities and specifically on flagships, primarily because of their stated missions to serve as engines of social mobility. Using a data set of twenty-one flagship institutions and four public state systems, the authors are able to answer heretofore confounding questions about who is graduating from college, when they are doing it, where this is happening, and possible reasons why some students graduate while others do not.

Many of the authors' findings challenge conventional beliefs about who succeeds in college and why. They find that four-year and six-year graduation rates are lower for students who attend less selective institutions or who are from modest backgrounds or traditionally underrepresented racial or ethnic groups. Their finding that almost half of all withdrawals at public universities happen after the second year of college challenges widely held beliefs that most withdrawals happen earlier and that efforts to improve persistence should thus be frontloaded. In addition, a lack of differences in choice of major by socioeconomic status or race and ethnicity is a surprising null effect; it rebuts the myth that low-income students and students of color avoid more challenging courses of study.

Of all the insights offered in *Crossing the Finish Line*, one of the most compelling and policy-relevant is that of the "undermatch." The authors demonstrate that about 40 percent of "highly qualified" students enroll in institutions that are less selective than the more competitive schools they would be qualified to attend. Undermatched students are less likely to graduate, and this phenomenon holds true for black males and Hispanic students, providing strong countervailing evidence to the charge that students of color are done an educational disservice by affirmative action. Another significant contribution of this book is its revelation that the SAT and ACT have little predictive validity for whether or not a student graduates from college or when they leave. With the unique features of their data set, Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson are able to demonstrate that high school GPA is a much stronger predictor of college performance and that the SAT and ACT are largely proxies for high school quality.

In addition to the somewhat unsurprising findings that greater availability of financial aid is related to student success and that more selective institutions generally have higher graduation rates, the authors bring to light a troubling paradox for policy makers regarding transfer students. Students who begin at a two-year institution are less likely to graduate overall, but students who do transfer are more likely to graduate than similar students who started at a four-year institution.

The book strikes a difficult and often tedious balance between making the research accessible and demonstrating its soundness. Despite the best efforts

of Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, many researchers might be inconvenienced by having to go to the Princeton University Press Web site to access some appendixes. Also, the authors' discussion of propensity scores, standardized regression coefficients, and fixed effects might be overly technical for the intended audience. Though the book could have paid more attention to self-selection when discussing the effects of institutional selectivity on graduation rates and provided more background on the extent to which large state subsidies to flagship universities benefit wealthier students, the authors provide an insightful overview of various initiatives, such as POSSE and the Meyerhoff Scholars Program, that have been successful at supporting students of color. These types of efforts are important in ensuring that all students "cross the finish line." The authors point to the graduation rates of middle- and high-income white students as low-hanging fruit in efforts to improve America's overall college completion rates, but improving the graduation rates of these students alone will not suffice. Our deep-seated, if often unfulfilled, sense of equality of opportunity implores—and our changing demographics dictate—that we must improve the college completion rates of all students, especially those from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, in order to ensure a fruitful economy and harmonious society for future generations of Americans.

K.P.A.

EXAMINING EFFECTIVE TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY APPROACH

by Sara Ray Stoelinga and Melinda M. Mangin

New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2010. 208 pp. \$29.95.

As part of instructional reform efforts to improve human capital in schools, teachers increasingly assume leadership positions that move them outside traditional classroom instruction and into coordinating, facilitating, or coaching roles. In *Examining Effective Teacher Leadership*, Stoelinga and Mangin argue that discussions about such teacher leadership roles lack clear definitions, a common language, and consistent applications of research-based frameworks. In response, they present a series of cases about elementary school teachers in formal leadership roles, demonstrating the complex and context-specific work of teacher leadership while providing the field with the needed definitions, language, and frameworks to further the discussion.

In this collection, the teaching cases present in-depth scenarios around central protagonists who face decisions for which there are multiple viable solutions. Stoelinga and Mangin's cases honor the interactions between individuals, schools, and the greater social contexts in education, and they highlight the "lived experiences of real instructional teacher leaders from diverse settings" (p. 2). The target audiences for this book are practitioners—school-based administrators or teacher leaders looking for a structure to guide staff meeting conversations—and postsecondary educators working with students