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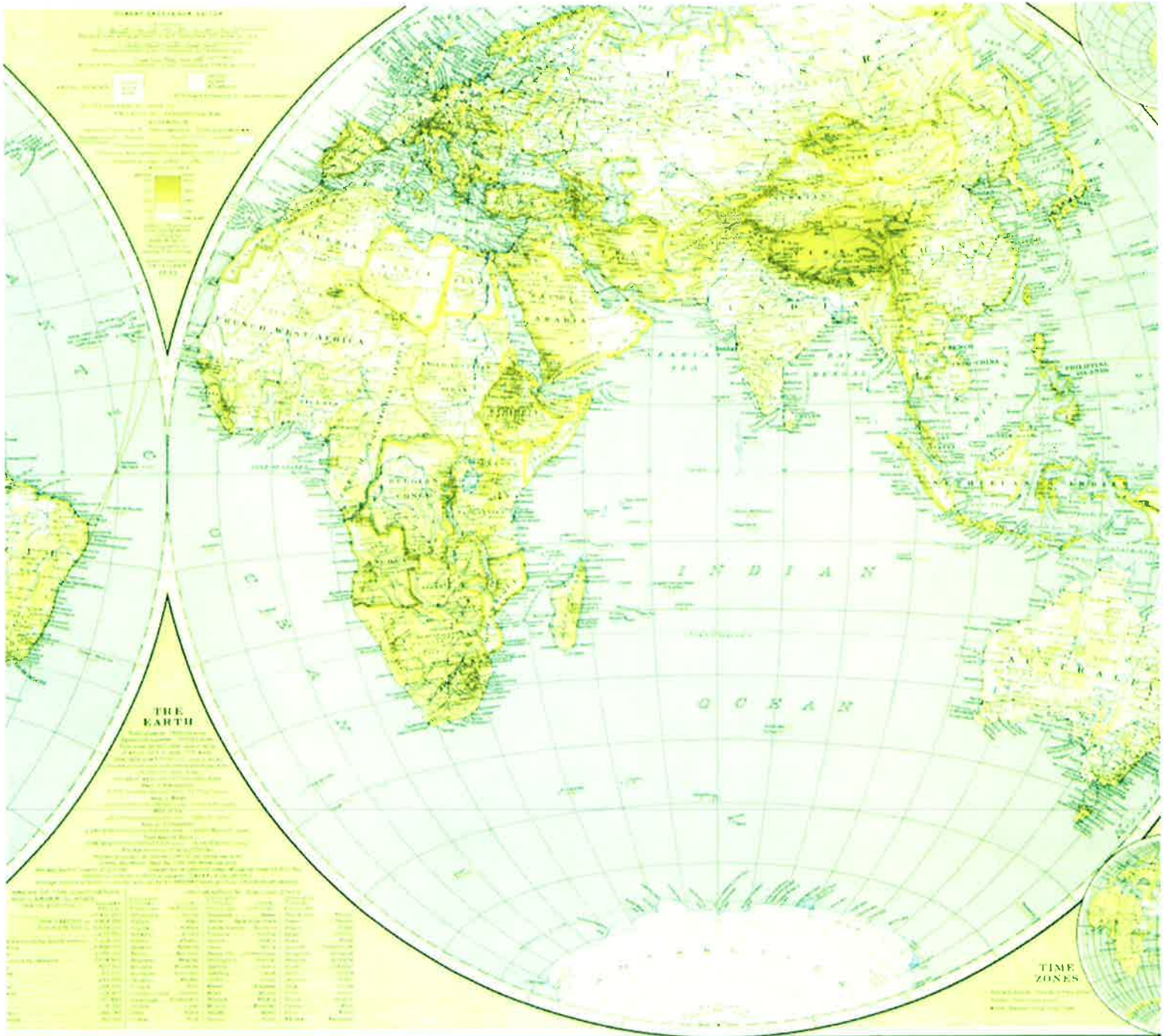
Terence Hicks

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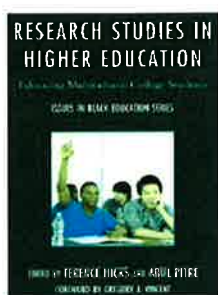
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Research Studies in Higher Education: Educating Multicultural College Students

Hicks, T. & Pitre, A. (eds.) (2012). *Research Studies in Higher Education: Educating Multicultural College Students*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc.

Reviewed by Cory Hamilton and Raul A. Leon, Eastern Michigan University (USA)



Research Studies in Higher Education: Educating Multicultural College Students is a collection of nine studies that examine the experiences of under-represented students enrolled in colleges and universities across the US. Presenting both quantitative and qualitative findings, this book enhances our understanding of current topics such as equity, access, achievement, and retention, focusing on the experiences of students. For international students and scholars, this book offers an insight into significant hurdles faced by many multicultural and non-traditional students and recommendations presented to improve college retention and academic success. This book

examines the effectiveness of programs and policies intended to assist students of color, first-generation college students, low-income students, undecided students, and non-traditional students.

The first section of the book includes four chapters that examine the experience of African American and Latino students through a qualitative approach. In chapter 1, Vega and Moore provide an assessment of the lived experience of first-generation African-American and Latino college students with elementary and secondary education. The study identifies critical barriers to college access and retention, including a lack of access to knowledge regarding navigating their education, poor educational instruction prior to college, and a lack of familial, peer, and institutional support. The study recommends that secondary school teachers and counselors build a high-expectation atmosphere while providing students and parents specific knowledge about college access.

Chapter 2 proposes a model for cultivating college predisposition. Larde interviewed first-generation African-American college students and identified three key areas that lead to a desire for and successful matriculation into higher education. These factors were self-determination, academic success, and resourcefulness. The author highlights the importance of supportive staff, self-determination based learning, and access to specific information for parents and students about the college application process.

In Chapter 3, Wood and Hilton interviewed African-American male students and examined the topic of academic success in the context of community colleges. In the final chapter of section one, Brown evaluates the perceived influence of racialized discrimination,

self-efficacy, and institutional support on the academic success of African American male students at a predominantly White institution.

In the first of three chapters on first-generation college students, Andriano employed a quantitative approach to determine if student engagement affected the likelihood of first-generation students participating in study abroad programs. The study claims that participation in study abroad programs results in academic and psycho-social benefits, and benefits for career clarification and preparation.

In Chapter 6, Rondini focuses on low-income students recognizing their limitations as they adjust to a new environment among students of privilege at an elite university. The study brings light to the importance of peer transition groups and outreach materials that can guide low-income students dealing with self-doubt and familial disconnection through a successful transition into college.

Lastly, Chapter 7 presents Davenport's qualitative study investigating the relationship between involvement and persistence for African American and Hispanic first-generation college students. The most relevant discovery in this study was that identification within a minority group seemed to have more of an impact on persistence than that of first-generation status.

The final section of the book begins with a study that highlights the factors that impact the academic achievement (GPA) of undecided college students. Through a statistical analysis of 852 students, Brown determined that undecided students who had not declared a specific major (NSMs) and undecided students enrolled in a specific major (SMs) showed no significant difference between degree aspirations and self-perception of abilities. Brown's results suggest that faculty and staff address scheduling options for first year undecided students as they may impact their academic achievement.

In the final chapter, Harpe and Kaniuka share their findings of retention and persistence of 1,000 traditional and non-traditional students amongst a group of community colleges. Harpe and Kaniuka found that while age was not correlated to increased retention through the first year at the community college level, first semester grade point average, application submission dates, enrollment and ethnicity, proved to be significant factors impacting the persistence of students. The researchers recommend staff and faculty prioritize academic support for first year students to promote higher first semester GPAs and to conduct exit interviews to understand individual reasons for student departures.

By combining studies that present both qualitative and quantitative findings and examining a broad span of institutional settings (community colleges, public and private institutions), Terrene Hicks and Abul Pitre provide a collection of research that successfully conveys the issues that a significant population of under-represented students face when transitioning to college. While the book is not specifically focused on international students, international students deal with many of the same issues while transitioning to colleges in the U.S. The recommendations in this book challenge individuals and institutions to truly understand the status of emerging populations in higher education and offer tangible solutions for those working with international students to offer effective academic, personal and social support.

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