HERC SUMMARY

The Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC) is a center for partner-driven educational research in Houston, Texas. In contrast to other research centers, HERC utilizes a partner-practice model with several school districts in the Houston area, including HISD, Alief, Cy-Fair, and Spring. This model generates jointly-designed research questions that necessitate long-term partnership to address serious issues. 

HERC employs undergraduate students who wish to learn more about social scientific research, education policy, and the partnership research model. Undergraduates are paired with a researcher and provide them assistance while gaining valuable experience in the field. This presentation highlights research that I am conducting under a postdoctoral fellow and a research analyst. Many thanks to Irina Chukhray, Dr. Brian Holzman, and Dr. Ruth Lopez-Turley for allowing me to participate in this project.

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EMERGE Overview

HISD recently implemented a college access program called “EMERGE” that will prepare high-achieving, but low-income, students for elite universities throughout the country.

HERC researchers Irina Chukhray and Brian Holzman are working with the district to assess the effectiveness of EMERGE. To test this, we are conducting interviews with students in the EMERGE cohort (personalized assistance treatment), with students who are not in EMERGE but who receive college information packets (information-only treatment), and with students who are not in EMERVE and who do not receive information packets (control group).

I am helping the researchers on the qualitative part of the project. The project is in its beginning stages, hence the lack of results, and will take several years to conduct to its conclusion.

EMERGE Research Questions

1. What (when, how, why) motivates students to consider (selective) college?
2. What experiences are involved in students’ (selective) college search and choice process?
3. What considerations are involved in students’ (selective) college search and choice process?
4. How do students conceptualize a “good fit” college?

EMERGE Methods

We are conducting one-on-one, qualitative interviews with students that are designed to elicit six areas of information.

Predisposition
• How was the student thinking about college choice before the interview?

College Search Process
• How is a student currently thinking about college choices?

College Choice
• What factors drives the student to select certain colleges over others?

Financial Considerations
• How is the student thinking about financial aid and financing college?

Strategy
• How is the student making himself/herself competitive.

Confidence
• How does a student feel about the college search process relative to other students?

References
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.