



PITTSBURGH -- Students who are the first in their families to attend college face a set of disadvantages in terms of college enrollment, persistence and graduation -- a vexing problem, to be sure, since virtually nothing can be done retroactively to change their demographic realities. But are there attributes that commonly flow from being a first-generation college student that colleges *can* address? That possibility formed the basis of a session Monday at the Council of Independent Colleges' annual chief academic officers' institute here, where academic and student affairs administrators from dozens of mostly small private colleges discussed the concept of "cultural capital" and the extent to which their institutions can (and should) seek to build it in students.

The term, as framed by John M. Braxton (a professor of education at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College) and based on the sociological concept crafted by Pierre Bourdieu, refers in this context to the extent to which incoming college students were involved in cultural activities such as reading books beyond schoolwork, attending concerts and plays, and visiting museums during their high school years. As is true with many traits, the degree of cultural capital that students have correlates with the educational level of their parents and the level of the students' own high school academic achievement.

Read more: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/11/05/can-colleges-build-students-cultural-capital-and-should-they#ixzz2joesmJgW>

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