

**College Attendance and the Texas Top 10 Percent Law:
Permanent Contagion or Transitory Promise?**

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Abstract: This paper addresses whether, for whom and how knowledge of the Texas top 10% law influences college intentions and enrollment behavior at two- versus four-year institutions. Analyses are based on the Texas Educational Opportunity Survey, a representative sample of 13,803 Texas high school seniors as of spring, 2002, of whom a random sample were re-interviewed a year later. We find that knowledge of the top 10% law not only predicts college intentions, but appears to focus students' preferences on four-year institutions. Students who reported knowing a lot about the top 10% law were 4.6 times as likely as their counterparts who did not know about the law to indicate they planned to attend a four-year institution relative to not attending, other things equal. Compared with white students, blacks and Hispanics are less likely, and Asian origin students are more likely, to report themselves as college bound. However, once family background is taken into account, blacks are more likely than whites to report plans to enroll in a four-year institution. Using the merged wave 1 and 2 file, we find further confirmation that knowledge of the top 10% law was related to enrollment behavior, as students who reported knowing a lot about H.B.588 were about 5.5 times as likely to enroll in a four-year institution, and 1.8 times as likely to enroll in a 2-year institution compared with their statistical counterparts who did not know about the law. The conclusion makes several policy recommendations based on further analysis of the factors that promote college-going behavior, and especially lessons from the experience with the top 10% policy.

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Introduction

In higher education the baby boom echo presents as rising demand for slots at selective institutions partly because a higher proportion of baby boom parents are college graduates compared to prior cohorts (Kazis, 2002), and partly because the returns to education rose after 1973 (Levy, 1999; Danziger and Gottschalk, 1996). Nationally, post-secondary school enrollment rose 14.3 percent during the 1980s, from roughly 12.1 to 13.8 million students, and an additional 10.8 percent during the 1990s (Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac: A15). However, two-year and four-year institutions participated unequally in this expansion. Enrollment at public four-year institutions grew 3.5 percent during the 1990s, whereas enrollment at public two-year institutions rose four times faster, or 14 percent. As tuition skyrocketed, community colleges provided an interim solution to financial challenges of college attendance by enabling growing numbers of low to moderate-income students to pursue post-secondary education.

These national trends in higher education enrollment are mirrored in Texas, which faces formidable challenges to meet growing demands for higher education owing to above average demographic growth. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board projects that post-secondary enrollment will grow 13 percent between 2002 and 2010,

and almost 17 percent by 2015 (THECB, 2003: Table 1A). Public two-year colleges will account for the lion's share of anticipated growth. THECB forecasts that the student population of public two-year colleges will grow 17 percent between 2002 and 2010, compared with 10 percent for four-year public universities. Flexible admission criteria, relatively low costs, and convenient locations make community colleges attractive to many students, but particularly those from under-represented groups, first generation college goers, and low income students (Kazis, 2002; Fry, 2002; Carnevale, 1999). However, as numerous analysts point out, students who enroll in community colleges are less likely to complete baccalaureate degrees (Fry, 2002; Kazis, 2002; Velez, 1985).

Texas is an interesting case to study choice of two- versus four-year institutions because the temporary ban on affirmative action between 1996 and 2004 opened a window of opportunity for high achieving students throughout the state to attend a public four-year university of their choice. Specifically, in response to the 1996 *Hopwood* decision that judicially banned race-sensitive admissions practices, the Texas legislature passed H.B.588, known as the top 10% law. This bill, which went into effect in 1998, guarantees automatic admission to any public university of choice to all seniors who graduate in the top decile of their class. As important, H.B. 588 was buttressed by aggressive outreach initiatives to economically disadvantaged public high schools with low college-going traditions. The Longhorn Opportunity Scholars (LOS) and Century Scholars (CS) programs were implemented, respectively, by administrators at the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M to enable top decile graduates from LOS and CS high schools to attend their institutions by providing scholarship support.

Assessments of H.B.588 based on institutional enrollment data suggest that its primary impact was in achieving greater geographic diversity (Montejano, 2001), although modest improvements in ethno-racial diversity also followed (Tienda, et al., 2003). However, institutional data can not address whether and how the college decision making behavior of high-achieving minority and low-income students was affected by the automatic admission provision because these data do not reveal alternatives considered.¹ Accordingly, in this paper we examine whether and which rank-eligible students forego the opportunity to attend four-year institutions and opt for either a two-year alternative or nonenrollment. We hypothesize that minority students who graduate in the top decile of their class will be more likely to enroll in four-year institutions if they know about the top 10 percent law. This expectation presumes that both the enactment of H.B.588 and the massive publicity that followed ignited college aspirations for high performing students whose plans for post-secondary education were not crystallized. Although Lloyd, Leicht, and Sullivan (2003) show a positive association between college intentions and knowledge of H.B.588, they do not differentiate between two- and four-year institutions. This distinction is important because H.B.588 is unlikely related to community college intentions because most have open admissions policies that are unaffected by the Top 10% law. Furthermore, their cross-sectional analysis does not consider actual enrollment behavior.

In what follows we set the context by summarizing changes in the ethno-racial composition of Texas' college-eligible population and actual enrollment trends in two-

¹ Of course, automatic admission does not guarantee enrollment because rank-eligible students must apply, pay application fees, take college board exams, which also require registration fees, and, upon admission, pay the necessary deposits to hold their spot. Furthermore, admitted students must to pay tuition, board and student fees in order to matriculate.

and four-year institutions based on published administrative data. Subsequently, we analyze a unique survey designed to assess the impact of the new admissions regime on a representative sample of Texas high school seniors as of spring, 2002, to determine whether and how knowledge of the top 10% law influenced their college-going behavior. Our primary interest is in identifying and comparing rank-eligible students who aspired to attend a four-year institution but were unable to do so with those who were successful in actualizing their goal. The final section discusses the policy implications in light of the difficult budget climate that has resulted in drastic budget cuts for higher education and the impending changes to the Texas top 10 % law in the aftermath of the recent *Grutter* and *Gratz* Supreme Court rulings.²

Trends in High School Graduation and College Enrollment

During the 1990s Texas witnessed a 36 percent increase in the number of high school graduates, which spurred the demand for college opportunities (Table 1). Equally striking is the changing ethno-racial composition of graduates even as the numbers swelled. Whereas just over one-fourth of all 1992 Texas high school graduates was Hispanic, by 2001 this share rose to nearly one in three. Concomitantly, the white share of high school graduates fell from 57 to 51 percent of the total. The black and Asian shares of high school graduates also inched up. These trends mirror the changing demography of the state, which reveals even greater diversification of the college-age population compared with the subpopulation that actually completes high school (Tienda, et al., 2003).

Table 1 About Here

² *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 123 S. Ct. 2325 (2003); *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 123 S. Ct. 2411 (2003)

Paralleling the growing demand for college is a larger supply of opportunities to pursue post-secondary education. However, the growth of college “slots” did not keep pace with the potential demand. Between 1991 and 2001 enrollment in Texas post-secondary institutions rose about 16 percent, from about 885 thousand to just over a million. This implies that the college enrollment growth rate is less than half (43%) the growth rate of high school graduates. Thus, the guarantee of automatic admission coupled with uneven expansion of public, private, two- and four-year institutions heighten competition for admission to the most selective institutions.

Table 2 shows that public institutions currently account for about 90 percent of all post-secondary enrollment in Texas. In 1991, public universities enrolled a larger share of students than public two-year colleges, but this situation changed after 1995. Specifically, during the 1990s, the share of total enrollment at Texas public community and technical colleges rose from 44 to 47 percent, while the enrollment share of public, four-year institutions fell four percentage points, from 46 to 42 percent. Enrollment at private institutions inched up during the decade, due mostly to increases at four-year universities rather than two-year colleges.

Table 2 About Here

The guarantees of the Texas top 10% law acquire even greater importance against the backdrop of a rapidly growing college-eligible population. H.B.588 intensified competition for access to selective four-year public institutions by acknowledging that high achieving students from *all* high schools are eligible for automatic admission to their preferred public college or university. Outreach recruitment activities conducted by the public flagships to encourage students from high schools that lacked strong college-going

traditions further augmented competition for access to four-year public institutions. This suggests that students' awareness of the law will increase their likelihood of applying to and attending a four-year institution, but whether black, white, Hispanic and Asian students were equally responsive is an empirical question, to which we now turn.

College Planning in post-Affirmative Action Texas

The Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project (THEOP) is a multi-year study designed to assess the direct and indirect consequences of judicially banning affirmative action and implementing a percent plan to govern college admissions at Texas public post-secondary institutions. The centerpiece of the study is a baseline survey of a statistically representative sample of sophomores (n=19,976) and seniors (n=13,803) enrolled in Texas high schools during spring of 2002. A random sample of the senior cohort is being followed over time to learn about college choice and experiences, and random subsamples of the sophomore cohort will be re-interviewed in spring, 2004, when the majority will be seniors. For the present analysis, we use the senior baseline survey and a "beta" file of the first follow-up interviews.³

The baseline interview, which was conducted in-school using a pencil and paper instrument (PAPI),⁴ high school students were queried about course taking and grades, knowledge and perceptions of the top 10% law, college plans and preferences, when they first thought about going to college, knowledge of their class rank, and whether they had applied to any college or university. Respondents could list up to five college

³ The senior W2 survey will include 6000 respondents, of which 4200 were available for analysis at the time of this writing. The final sample will be used for a revised analysis.

⁴ A handful of schools did not grant permission for in class administration of the survey, but permitted a mail option. Responses have been weighted to account for the stratified, sampling design and the differential response rates according to data collection method.

preferences, to which IPEDS codes were subsequently assigned in order to classify institutions according to type (i.e., public/private and two- versus four-year) and the selectivity of their admissions. Characteristics of respondents' high schools were appended to individual records to situate students across a range of educational contexts. The senior follow-up interview, conducted a year after high school graduation, ascertained whether respondents had ever enrolled in a post-secondary institution, reasons for their college choice, and future plans, among other topics.⁵

To assess whether and how knowledge of the top 10% plan influenced enrollment by institutional type, we first examine race and ethnic differences in self-reported college plans according to student class rank. A multinomial regression analysis predicting college plans (4-year or 2-year colleges versus no college plans) establishes the relative importance of family background, school characteristics and class rank on students' college plans. Finally, using the first follow-up survey, we examine the congruence of college plans and enrollment behavior by ascertaining who actually enrolled in two- versus four- year colleges, and the correlates of matriculation by institutional type.

We show that students who reported knowing a lot about the top 10% plan were significantly more likely to attend four-year institutions compared with community colleges, even after taking into account differences in the timing of their college disposition, class rank and family SES. Although we can not say with certainty that this positive association demonstrates that knowledge of H.B.588 is responsible for higher

⁵ The survey instruments are available at <http://www.texastop10.princeton.edu>.

enrollment probabilities at four-year institutions among those most knowledgeable, use of a control for the timing of college orientation strengthens this inference.⁶

College Intentions

Table 3 reports the college intentions of seniors according to their self-reported class rank,⁷ post-high school plans and, if college bound, whether they applied to their preferred institutions. Appendix A describes the construction of these measures in more detail. Among all seniors, 87 percent of Asians reported they were college bound, compared with about three-fourths of blacks and whites, but only 62 percent of Hispanics. Variation in college plans according to class rank reveals considerably smaller race and ethnic disparities in college plans among top decile seniors, among whom 89 percent or more reported college intentions. However, race and ethnic disparities widen among seniors ranked below the second decile of their class, among whom approximately four in five Asians ranked were college bound compared with only three in five Hispanics.

Table 3 About Here

A more concrete indicator of college plans involves application, which at selective colleges and universities is time bound. Less selective institutions offer either rolling or “open” admissions. Among students who expressed a preference for one or more colleges, five to six percent of whites, blacks and Hispanics, but only two percent of Asians applied only to two-year colleges by spring of their senior year. By comparison, nearly 60 percent of Asian students who expressed concrete college preferences had

⁶ In future analyses we will examine this inference further by using an instrumental approach to modeling knowledge of H.B.588.

⁷ Students who did not know their class rank were asked to estimate their rank. The reported rank distribution is based on the pooled responses. Multivariate analyses include a flag indicating whether the class rank was known or estimated.

applied to one or more four-year institutions by spring, 2003, but only 30 percent of college-bound Hispanics, and 40 to 46 percent of black and white students, respectively, had formally applied. Top decile graduates of all ethnicities were more likely to set their sights on the four-year institutions, but the Hispanic share of top 10% graduates seeking admission to four-year institutions was only 71 percent compared to 80 and 88 percent for whites and Asians, respectively. Blacks were more similar to whites in that 79 percent of top decile seniors reported having applied to four-year institutions.

Because respondents were permitted to list up to top five college preferences, we were able to ascertain whether students applied to *both* two and four-year institutions. Overall, only 10 percent of students reported applying both to two- and four-year institutions, but Hispanics were more likely than either whites, blacks or Asians to do so. Moreover, among top decile graduates, nearly 8 percent of Hispanics and 9 percent of white students applied both to two- and four-year colleges, but only 2 and 4 percent of blacks and Asians did so. Lower ranked black, Hispanic and Asian students were more likely than their higher ranked counterparts to apply both to two- and four-year institutions. Among seniors ranked at or below the third decile of their class, black and Hispanic students were twice as likely as Asians to hedge their admissions bets by applying to both two- and four-year colleges.

In general, these tabulations conform with expectations based on national data inasmuch as Hispanics exhibit the lowest levels of college intentions, Asians the highest, with white and black students between these extremes. Although actual trends show that community colleges enroll more than half of Texas college students, reported intentions of college bound students indicate that the vast majority actually prefer four-year

institutions. That Hispanics are more likely than white, black and Asian students to consider community colleges at every class rank may reflect their “back-up” function, but variable dispositions toward community colleges may also reflect group differences in first generation college goers, knowledge about the provisions of H.B.588, and/or in the salience of cost and distance in making college choices.

To address these questions we estimated several multinomial logistic regressions of the form,

$$\Pr(\text{college intentions})_i = \Lambda(SA_i\beta + FB_i\theta + HS_i\lambda + \mu_i) \quad (1)$$

college intentions depicts four alternatives based on respondents first college preference:⁸ *no college plans*; *2-year college*; *4-year college*; and *college-bound*. SA_i is a vector of student attributes (i.e., race/ethnicity, class rank, college dispositions, if passed algebra, and knowledge of the top 10% law); FB_i is a vector of family background characteristics (i.e., parental education and indicator of home ownership); HS_i is a vector of high school characteristics (including feeder high school status, if attended a Longhorn/Century school, and the total high school dropout rate); Λ is the cumulative density function for a standard logistic random variable; and μ_i is an error term.

Subsequently we restrict the sample to college-bound students to evaluate preferences for two- versus four-year institutions. Model (2) assumes the form

$$\Pr(\text{college preference})_i = \Lambda(SA_i\beta + FB_i\theta + HS_i\lambda + CF_i\pi + \varepsilon_i) \quad (2)$$

where the dependent variable, *college preference*, indicates three alternatives: *college-bound*, *unspecified preference* (baseline comparison group), *2-year college* and *4-year college*; CF_i is a vector of choice factors (i.e., cost, athletic reputation, distance to home,

⁸ As noted in Appendix A, the college-bound represent students who indicated they planned to attend a two- or four-year institution after high school graduation, but did not specify their preferences.

academic reputation, ethnic similarity on campus, and school size); the vectors SA_i , FB_i , and HS_i represent student attributes, family background, and high school characteristics, as previously defined; and ε_i is an error term.

Table 4 reports relative risk ratios (RRR) derived from the multinomial logistic analysis. The first model, which only considers student attributes, largely reaffirms race and ethnic differences in college intentions. Asians are 37 percent more likely than whites to state a preference for a four-year institution and only .9 times as likely to prefer a two-year college compared to not attending college. Both Hispanics and blacks are less likely than whites to indicate preferences for two-year colleges relative to no college plans, but blacks are as likely as whites to report intentions to attend a four-year college. Also, Asians are over twice as likely as whites to report themselves as college bound with no institutional preference relative to having no college plans. The magnitude of these relationships changes slightly across specifications that consider family SES and school characteristics, but the pattern remains the same with two notable exceptions: once family background and high school characteristics are taken into account, blacks are significantly *more* likely than whites to express a preference for a four-year institution relative to not attending college, and Hispanics are as likely as whites to do so. This suggests that socioeconomic differences are largely responsible for the underrepresentation of Hispanics at four-year institutions.

Table 4 About Here

Knowledge of the top 10% law appears to have influenced students' college plans by focusing their preferences on four-year institutions.⁹ Although knowledge about H.B.588 was unrelated to preferences for a two-year college relative to having no college plans, students who reported knowing a lot about the top 10% law were 4.6 times as likely as their counterparts who did not know about the law to indicate they planned to attend a four-year institution relative to not attending, other things (including class rank) equal. Seniors who knew a lot about the law were just as likely as their counterparts who knew nothing about the law to indicate they were college bound compared with students who had no college plans. However knowledge of the H.B.588 does not distinguish between students planning to attend a two-year institution from those with no college plans.

Class rank operates as expected inasmuch as top decile seniors were 1.6 times as likely to indicate they were either college bound and 3.6 times as likely to report plans to attend a four-year institution relative to not attending college compared with students ranked at or below the third decile of the class distribution. Seniors ranked in the second decile were about 30 percent more likely than their lower-ranked classmates to express a preference for a two-year college relative to nonattendance. Compared with their lower ranked classmates, second decile seniors were about 2.5 times as likely to express a preference for four-year colleges relative to nonattendance, and they were 1.5 times as likely to report college intentions albeit with no institutional type preference relative to nonattendance. These results, which reveal the greater attractiveness of community

⁹ Of course, it is possible that students who intended to attend four-year institutions were more likely to know about the law. To consider these possible pre-existing conditions, we control for the timing of students' college dispositions.

colleges to students ranked at or below the second decile, are robust to alternative specifications that consider family background and/or high school characteristics.

Seniors' post-secondary preferences also are shaped by the timing of their dispositions toward post-secondary schooling. When asked, "When did you first think about going to college?" over half of the respondents said they began thinking about college during elementary school or that they always planned on attending college; this group serves as the reference for the estimation. Thus, compared with students who always planned to attend college, seniors who did not begin thinking about post-secondary schooling until middle school were only .5 to .7 times as likely to report college intentions after graduation. However, the relative odds of intending to pursue post-secondary schooling were even lower for students who did not begin thinking about post-secondary schooling until high school. In comparison to students who always planned to pursue post-secondary education, seniors whose college plans began in high school were only about .4 times as likely to report that they intended to enroll in a four-year institution and about .6 times as likely to plan attendance at a two-year institution. These results also are very robust across specifications that include controls for family background and high school characteristics.

The influence of family background and high school characteristics on college intentions conforms with prior studies in two key respects. First, parental education is positively associated with preferences for four-year institutions relative to no college intentions. For example, seniors with college-educated parents are 2 to 2.4 times as likely as their classmates whose parents only completed high school to prefer a four-year institution relative to not attending college. Although parents' educational attainment

does not discriminate between students who opt for a two-year college compared with those who do not have college intentions, it does differentiate between college bound seniors with no clear institutional type preferences and those with no college plans. To illustrate, seniors with college-educated parents were over two times as likely as their counterparts with high school-educated parents to report four-year college intentions relative to having no plans. Moreover, students whose parents had graduated from college were 2.2 times as likely as their counterparts with high school-educated parents to report college intentions, despite having no clear preference for a two- or four-year institution.

Second, there are clear differences in college intentions among students hailing from “feeder” and “Longhorn/Century” high schools versus others. Seniors from “feeder” high schools—namely, those with strong traditions of sending students to UT and A&M—were 1.6 times as likely as students from the non-feeder, non-Longhorn/Century schools to express a preference for a four-year institution relative to having no plans. However, students from schools designated to receive Longhorn and Century Scholarships were less likely than those from the reference category schools to state college intentions of any kind relative to having no college plans. This confirms that Longhorn and Century schools, in addition to being economically disadvantaged, have low traditions of sending students to the public flagship institutions. Although designation as a Longhorn or Century school increases the odds of attendance for top 10% seniors, the average propensity of students from these schools to attend college remains low.

In summary, these results indicate, first, that knowledge of the top 10% law was unrelated to seniors' two-year college intentions, but it is positively associated with intentions to enroll in a four-year institution relative to nonattendance. Second, students planning to attend two-year colleges are more likely to hail from the second decile of their graduating class. Third, black and Hispanic students are significantly *less* likely than white students to report plans to attend a two-year college compared with no college intentions. Finally, seniors ranked in the second decile are more likely than lower ranked students to prefer both two and four-year colleges relative to no intentions, but this finding does not clarify what factors shape preferences for two- versus four-year institutions.

To address this question we restrict the sample to students who indicated they planned to attend college upon high school graduation and estimate model (2). For these analyses, reported in Table 5, the college bound subpopulation that did not express a clear institutional preference serves as the reference category. Because this restriction essentially eliminates the lowest segments of the SES and class rank distribution, the effects of these variables on choice of college type are weaker compared to those reported in Table 4. Nevertheless, results are generally consistent, with one noteworthy exception. Among the college bound, Hispanic students are more likely than whites to express a preference for four-year institutions relative to no preference, but black, Asian and white students are equally likely to do so. This reflects a positive selection bias from restricting the sample to college bound students because larger shares of Hispanics are excluded from the risk set (Table 3) when students with no plans are dropped. All three minority

groups are less likely than whites to prefer a two-year institution relative to having an unspecified preference.

Table 5 About Here

Significantly, even among the college bound, knowledge of the top 10% law greatly increased seniors' preferences for four-year institutions compared with having no clear preferences, by a factor of 3.3 to 2.1, respectively, for those who knew a lot or some versus having no knowledge of the law. College-bound students ranked in the top two deciles of their class were, respectively, 1.8 and 1.5 times as likely as lower ranked students to prefer a four-year college over a community college. Top ranked students were only .6 times as likely as college-bound students with no clear institutional preference to desire a four-year institution compared with seniors ranked at or below the third decile, but there were no differences between the second and lower deciles in this respect. Timing of college dispositions among the college bound is unrelated to preferences for a two-year institution except that seniors who did not begin thinking about college until high school were significantly less likely than their counterparts who always planned post-secondary schooling to prefer a four rather than a two-year college.

Among the factors that college bound students considered in making their college choices, cost is the most salient factor among those who identified a two-year institution as their top choice, but not those opting for a four-year institution. Specifically, college-bound seniors who reported that cost was a consideration in their college preference were 2.4 times as likely as those with unspecified preference to name a community college as their first preference, but students whose first preference was a four-year institution were no more likely than seniors with an unspecified institutional preference to report that cost

influenced their preference. Academic reputation and school size both increase the odds that college-bound students listed a four-year rather than a two-year institution as their top choice compared with students who did not report specific preferences, but the opposite relationship obtains for athletic reputation and ethnic composition of the student body. The latter considerations were less salient for students with concrete institution preferences relative to college bound seniors whose preferences were less well crystallized.

Surprisingly, distance to home—often identified as a correlate of community college attendance—did not discriminate between seniors whose first preference was a community college compared with students with no preference. Although the point estimate is positive and slightly larger than unity, it did not attain statistical significance. By comparison, compared to college-bound seniors lacking concrete preferences, those who selecting four-year institutions were significantly less likely to claim distance from home as an important consideration.

Taken together, the results reported in Tables 4 and 5 indicate that, independent of family background and characteristics of the high schools attended, ethnicity, class rank, knowledge of the top 10% law and the timing of college orientation are strong influences on Texas public school seniors' institutional preferences. Declared preferences may not materialize for many reasons, including: failure to apply; non-admittance by the preferred institution; interfering personal or family circumstances; and financial difficulties, among other factors. Whether seniors' reported college intentions actually materialized is the subject of the next section, which uses information from the first follow-up survey to

ascertain who enrolls in community colleges and the correspondence between plans and practice.

College Intentions and Attendance¹⁰

Table 6 displays the cross-classification of institutional type preferences and actual enrollment for the total sample and class rank strata. The marginal distribution shows that half of the sample preferred to attend a four-year institution, 10 percent identified both two- and four-year institutions among their preferences, whereas a mere 5 percent expressed a clear preference for a two-year college. Just over one in five respondents indicated they had no college plans. A year later, one-third of the 2002 senior cohort had enrolled in a community college, 46 percent in a 4-year institution, and 21 percent did not attend any post-secondary institution. The latter includes respondents who were serving in the military.

Table 6 About Here

College attendance differs according to their class rank. Among students who graduated in the top decile of their high school class, the vast majority—over 80 percent—enrolled in a four-year institution, compared with 64 percent of second decile graduates and only 30 percent of students ranked at or below the 30th percentile of their high school class. By contrast, the share of students who attended community colleges one year after high school graduation varied inversely with class rank: whereas 12 percent of top 10% graduates enrolled in community colleges, 26 and 41 percent of

¹⁰ These analyses are based on a beta sample of the second wave round of interviews. Wave 2 is based on a random sample of seniors from the baseline survey from which a target of 6,000 interviews is sought. The beta sample delivered in July includes approximately 4,200 respondents who have been merged to their baseline interviews. Although results based on the final longitudinal sample will differ somewhat, we do not anticipate major differences in the key findings.

students ranked in the second and third or lower deciles, respectively, attended two-year institutions.

Using the “logic” of a mobility table, where the row cells represent “outflows” from preferences to actual experiences, reveals whether and how students actualized their college plans. To simplify exposition, we define five scenarios that map reported preferences against actual matriculation one year later. These include:

Fulfillment: two- or four-year preference and enrollment

Backup: unspecified preference, enrolled two-year

Scale back: four-year preference, two-year enrollment

Understated intentions: two-year or no preference, four-year enrollment

Dreams deferred: two or four-year preference, no enrollment

For the entire sample, approximately three in four students who expressed a preference for a two- or four-year institution actually *fulfilled* their college intentions. That half of college-bound students who did not indicate clear preferences during spring of their senior year and three-fourths of those who identified both two- and four-year institutions among their preferences actually enrolled in community colleges illustrates their important *back-up* function. Two-year institutions also serve as a *back-up* for students who, during their final semester in high school, reported no college plans. This share—about 25 percent—is relatively similar across class rank strata. Statewide, about 17 percent of community college enrollees consist of students who *scaled back* their expressed preferences for a four-year college. The *understated intentions* scenario involving four-year institutions is typically rare, as only four percent of seniors who intended to enroll in a community college actually attended a four-year institution, whereas 11 percent of seniors who reported no college plans enrolled in a four-year

institution after leaving high school. A more common scenario involves deferring enrollment. About one-fourth of seniors who planned to attend a two-year institution deferred their college plans, as did seven percent of students intending enrollment at four year institutions.

Of course, these actualization scenarios differ according to class rank. Importantly, the shares who *fulfilled* their four-year intentions declines from 94 to 80 to 63 percent among top, second and third or lower decile ranks, respectively. There are also some striking similarities across class rank strata. For example, the shares classified under the *back-up* scenario are roughly similar among top decile graduates and the total sample, but comparatively few top decile graduates indicated no college plans. One notable difference is that among top 10% graduates who did not specify an institutional type preference when interviewed in 2002, 63 percent actually enrolled in a four-year institution (compared with 29 percent for the sample as a whole)—possibly signaling *understated intentions*. Among second decile students, the *back-up* role of community colleges is greater than among top 10% graduates.

To explore whether knowledge of the top 10% law influenced enrollment behavior, we merged the baseline and wave 2 files and estimated a multinomial logistic regression predicting *actual* enrollment in a two or a four-year institution versus nonenrollment. Table 7 reports RRR for three sets of estimates. The first set, which only considers students' attributes, reveals essentially no race differences in the odds of enrolling in a two- or four-year institution compared with nonenrollment. However, Hispanics are only .6 and .5 times as likely as whites, respectively, to enroll in community colleges or four-year institutions versus nonenrollment. Once group

differences in family background are taken into account, enrollment differences between Hispanics and whites disappear, but black students are about 1.6 times as likely as whites to enroll in a four-year institution relative to nonenrollment.

Table 7 About Here

Knowledge of the top 10% law is strongly related to the actual likelihood of post-secondary enrollment. Specifically, students who reported knowing a lot about H.B.588 were about 5.5 times as likely to enroll in a four-year institution, and 1.8 times as likely to enroll in a 2-year institution as their statistical counterparts who did not know about the provisions of the top 10% law relative to nonenrollment. Moreover, those who knew some or a little about the law also were more likely to enroll in post-secondary institutions compared with their statistical counterparts who were unaware of the top 10% law, on the order of 1.4 and 2.1 times for two- and four-year colleges, respectively.

Compared to its influence on college intentions, class rank is a more powerful determinant of actual college enrollment. Top 10% graduates are 7 to 8 times as likely as students who graduate at or below the third decile of their senior class to attend a four-year post-secondary institution than to not attend college. No comparable influence of top decile rank obtains for community college enrollment, but second decile graduates are about 1.5 times as likely lower ranked students to attend a two-year college relative to nonenrollment. Furthermore, seniors who graduated in the second decile of their senior class were nearly 4 times as likely as lower ranked graduates to attend a four-year institution relative to nonenrollment.

In light of the results reported in Tables 4 and 5, it is not surprising that the students who began thinking about college late in their schooling career were less likely

to enroll in either a two or four year institution. In particular, not thinking about college until secondary school is associated with a significantly lower odds of enrollment in either a two- or a four-year college relative to nonenrollment compared with students who reported they always thought about college. These findings reinforce the importance of exposing all students to the idea of college very early in their school trajectory—preferably elementary school.

Family background effects on college attendance are similar to those observed for college intentions, albeit more pronounced. Students whose parents were college-educated were more likely than those with high school-educated parents to attend college themselves, but the odds of enrollment in four-year institutions relative to nonenrollment were higher than the odds of enrollment in community colleges. Moreover, students living in rented homes were only half as likely to attend a post-secondary institution after high school compared with their counterparts whose families owned their homes. High school characteristics did not influence the likelihood of community college enrollment with one exception, namely that students from feeder high schools were nearly two and a half times as likely as their statistical counterparts who attended neither feeder schools nor Longhorn/Century schools to enroll in a four-year institution relative to nonenrollment.

Table 8 provides some insight into the factors that students considered important in their decisions to enroll in two-year compared to four-year institutions. The “risk set” for this analysis are students who actually enrolled, and the analysis compares community college enrollees with those who attended four-year institutions. Consistent with Table 7, these results indicate that among enrolled students, blacks were more likely

than whites to enroll in a four- versus a two-year institution, but Asians and Hispanics were as likely as whites to enroll in a community college relative to a four-year college or university. Furthermore, the highest achieving students, as designated by their class rank, were only .2 times as likely as students ranked at or below the third decile to enroll in a community college, while those ranked in the second decile were only .4 times as likely as lower ranked students to do so.

Table 8 About Here

Both cost and distance greatly increased the odds of enrollment in a community college versus a four-year institution. Specifically, seniors who reported that cost and distance were important considerations for their college choice were, respectively, 1.7 and 1.5 times as likely as students who did not consider these factors to enroll in a community college rather than a four-year institution. Students who reported that availability of financial aid, academic reputation, and school size were important considerations in their college choice were less likely to enroll in a community college than a four-year institution compared with their statistical counterparts who did not consider these factors in their decisions. These findings basically reaffirm those reported by other studies (Velez, 1985), but they do not indicate whether demographic groups differ in the relative salience of these factors in their decisions. In fact, auxiliary tabulations revealed that black students are more likely than whites to consider cost and the ethnic composition of institutions in selecting a two-year over a four-year college, and marginally distance ($p=.06$). However, compared with white students, Hispanics were more likely to emphasize academic reputation and distance selecting a two-year over a four-year college.

Conclusions

Our findings showing that higher ranked students are more likely to prefer and enroll in four-year as compared to two-year post-secondary institutions are neither novel or surprising. However, in light of the admission regime in place since 1998 that grants automatic admission to all students who graduate in the top decile of their senior class, it is noteworthy that knowledge of the provisions of the law significantly influenced college intentions and the likelihood of actual enrollment in a four-year institution. Not only are these effects robust across alternative specifications, but knowledge of H.B.588 also influences the likelihood of enrollment at two-year colleges even though the policy was targeted at the selective public institutions. It would appear that the policy and its associated publicity has enhanced the likelihood that high school graduates will aspire to pursue post-secondary education. However, it is also conceivable that college bound seniors were more likely to know about the law, hence the causal order is ambiguous.

The question is whether students' college intentions and propensities to enroll were lower before H.B.588. Although we can not address this question directly with our survey data because our senior entered high school once the law was in effect, administrative data from the public flagships indicates that the top 10% law *was* effective in equalizing higher education opportunity by permitting students from a greater number of Texas high schools to enroll in the most selective public universities (Tienda, et al., 2003). *Whether the positive effects of H.B. 588 on college going behavior in Texas will persist if the law is repealed is an empirical question we can not address; based on our results showing that knowledge of the law is significantly related to college-enrollment, it is an important consideration in developing a response to recent calls to repeal the*

***top 10% law (see Flores, 2003).* Rather, a policy that continues to recognize high achievement while broadening educational opportunity throughout the state can be maintained by allowing the UT and A&M systems to assign students to institutions.**

Although top 10% graduates are more likely to attend a four-year compared with a two-year institution, not all top ranked graduates ultimately enroll in their preferred institution. Using the first follow-up interviews, we show that top decile students who applied both to two- and four-year colleges were more likely to attend community colleges than four-year institutions. However, college bound top 10% graduates who expressed no clear institutional preferences during their senior year were more likely to enroll in a four-year than a two-year institution. That cost figures prominently in the decisions of students to enroll in community colleges underscores the ***need for policy makers to make college affordable for high achieving students from low-income families who desire to attend either two- or four-year public institutions.*** This is particularly important since it has become clear that the carrying capacity of the public flagships has reached its limit. However, if the policy goal is to promote completion of baccalaureate degrees—and it makes good economic sense to do so--***it is imperative that policy makers, in tandem with university administrators, focus also on strengthening the transition from two- to four-year institutions,*** particularly for blacks and Hispanics who will be the earners from whose salaries the pensions of today's lawmakers will be based.¹¹

¹¹ Dowling estimated that the 6-year BA graduation rate of Texas students who begin their post-secondary training in community and technical colleges and transfer to four-year institutions is 45 percent, but the transfer rates are extremely low, 16 and 37 percent for technical and academic program participants, respectively. See also Fry, 2002.

If one of the major impacts of H.B.588 was to level the playing field governing access to publicly funded higher education, then repealing the law might undermine the incipient college going traditions among high schools that historically have sent very few of their students to Texas' public four-year institutions. In light of mounting criticism about the value of the top 10% plan since the Supreme Court upheld the use of narrowly tailored, race-sensitive admissions, the relevant policy question is whether the benefits of the plan have been fully realized. If the goal is to encourage higher rates of college attendance from a broader base of the college-eligible population, then it is conceivable that the possible impact of the law has not been fully realized for several reasons, of which we elaborate on three.

First, the large race and ethnic differences in college intentions and enrollment indicate a need to cultivate college aspirations and preparation early among blacks and Hispanics, but particularly the latter. For example, survey results indicate that respectively 68 to 71 percent of white and Asian students reported they always thought about going to college compared with 61 and 53 percent of blacks and Hispanics, respectively. Over one-in four Hispanic students claimed that they began thinking about college during high school, compared with 15-16 percent of white and Asian students and 18 percent of blacks. Initiating college plans during high school forecloses many options to compete successfully for access to the most competitive post-secondary institutions.

Raising college enrollment and graduation rates of the burgeoning Hispanic population must be a policy priority in light of the changing demographic composition of the State.

Second, that students from the Longhorn Opportunity and Century Scholars schools are no more likely to express college dispositions or to enroll in a post-secondary institution upon leaving high school than students from non-feeder schools is instructive from a different angle. Part of the problem is that there are many more schools and entire districts that can benefit from establishing the rich institutional ties with a public college or university than the two public flagships could possibly manage. Their exemplary leadership in formulating the Longhorn Opportunity and Century scholarship programs should be expanded. This is all the more important because our results show that the timing of students' orientation toward college is crucial in determining the likelihood of enrollment.

Students whose college plans have not begun prior to high school are significantly less likely to enroll compared with those who begin thinking about college during elementary and/or middle school at the latest. This insight highlights an important opportunity for policy initiatives, namely, *developing incentives for school districts with weak college traditions to improve their college-going rates*. What form these incentives should take is not obvious, but just as schools are rewarded for improvements on all forms of performance measures, efforts to establish links with local colleges and, if feasible, universities could foster college dispositions of students. *Variants of percent plans and scholarship programs (like the LOS and CS programs) that are tailored to specific high schools and are buttressed with financial support represent a possible strategy to further the goal of equalizing higher educational opportunity in Texas*.

A third priority policy issue concerns the funding of post-secondary education, both in terms of students' ability to pay and in terms of fiscal outlays to expand the

State's investment in public institutions. Historically Texas has prided itself on its tradition of providing excellent, public post-secondary education at an affordable cost. Whether by design or default, public higher education has become a private good because demographic pressures have taxed the carrying capacity of the public education system to accommodate growing demand for college. That students from financially strapped families can not afford to participate in the growing college entrance exam preparation industry puts them at a disadvantage relative to their affluent peers, who in addition, benefit from instruction at highly competitive high schools. The Texas top 10% law was a step toward re-democratizing access to public higher education by emphasizing that all high achieving students should have equal access to the flagship institutions. However, for many academically accomplished students, financial considerations limit their ability to matriculate in 4-year institutions, despite their admissibility. Therefore, ***a top policy priority is the funding of public higher education both through scholarship and loan programs for economically disadvantaged students, particularly those from under-represented minority groups, and a deliberate expansion of post-secondary institutions in locations with highest population growth.***

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Appendix A

Operationalization of College Intentions and Enrollment

The outcome variable in the analysis used for Tables 4 and 5, *College Plans/Intentions by Institutional Type*, is constructed from two baseline survey questions which asked seniors: “What do you expect will be your primary activity after you leave high school?” (Q41) and “Please think about the colleges/universities that you are likely to attend, and order them by your preference. For each, enter the name and the state, and then answer questions “a through f” for each college/university. You can list up to five colleges/universities by their order of preference” (Q50). For the first question students’ selected among the following options:

1. taking courses at a two- or four-year college;
2. taking vocational or technical courses at any kind of school;
3. participating in an apprenticeship or training program;
4. a full time job;
5. active duty in the armed forces;
6. homemaker;
7. taking a break from school;
8. other;
9. don’t know.

Although students could indicate up to five colleges/universities, we use only their first preference for the multivariate analyses because estimates based on the pooled distribution of all five preferences and the first preference were very similar. This is because most students did not specify five alternatives, but also because relatively few applied both to four and two-year institutions. Therefore, to avoid biases introduced with multiple observations for the same individuals, we only use first preferences for the multivariate analyses.

Question 41 taps students’ college *intentions*, whereas question Q50 reveals institutional preferences. Using both items we construct a four category measure of student intentions.

- *No College Plans*: This category includes students who respond to question Q41 as their primary activity after high school not expecting to attend a two- or four-year college.
- *2-Year College*: This category includes students who respond to question Q41 as their primary activity after high school expecting to attend a two- or four-year college and indicated in question Q50 a two-year institution.
- *4-Year College*: This category includes students who respond to question Q41 as their primary activity after high school expecting to attend a two- or four-year college and indicated in question Q50 a four-year institution.

- *College Bound*: This category includes students who respond to question Q41 as their primary activity after high school expecting to attend a two- or four-year college, however, failed to report in question Q50 a type of institution.

The tabulations reported in Table 6 are constructed from a merged baseline and wave 2 file. *College preferences* variable follows the same methodology described for Tables 4 and 5 except that, but using all expressed preferences, we derive a fifth category to identify students whose preferences include both two- and four-year institutions. Actual institutional enrollment is based on a wave 2 question asked of seniors: “Since September 2002, have you attended a vocational, technical, or trade school, or taken courses from a university or college for academic credit?” and “What is the name, city and state of the institution you attended or are attending?” Using NCES IPEDS codes, we identify institutional types and derive a three-category variable denoting no college enrollment; 2-year college, and 4-year college.

**Table 1: Changing Ethnic and Racial Composition of Texas High School Graduates,
1991-92 to 2000-01 cohorts (percent)**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
African-American	12.5	11.8	11.8	12	12.1	12.6	12.8	12.6	12.9	13.1
Hispanic	27.5	28.3	29.3	29.2	29.1	29.8	30.6	31	32.1	32.3
White	57.2	56.8	55.6	55.5	55.4	54.4	53.1	53	51.5	50.9
Asian and Others	2.8	3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6
Total Graduates ('000)	158.2	161.4	163.2	169.1	171.8	181.8	197.2	203.4	212.9	215.3

Table 2: Higher Education Enrollment Trends by Type of Institution, 1991-2001
(percent)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996*	1997*	1998*	1999	2000	2001*
Total Public Institutions	90.2	90.1	90	89.8	89.4	89.3	89.1	88.8	88.9	88.9	89.1
Public Universities	46	45.2	45	44.8	44.3	43.8	43.3	43.3	43	42.7	42.2
Public Community Colleges	43.3	44	44.2	44.1	44.3	44.6	44.9	44.6	45	45.2	45.9
Public Technical Colleges	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1	1
Total Private Institutions	9.8	9.9	10.1	10.2	10.6	10.7	10.8	11.2	11.1	11.2	10.9
Private Universities	9.7	9.8	10	10.1	10.5	10.6	10.7	11.1	11	11.1	10.8
Private 2-Year Colleges	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100	100	100.1	100	100	100	99.9	100	100	100.1	100
Total Enrollments, '000	885.3	908	905.9	907.2	905.2	913.3	920.9	925.8	947.2	970.7	1,023.40

Sources: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, May 2003 and June 2003. *Texas Public Universities' Data and Performance Report*;

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Note: Totals exclude public and independent health-related institutions. THCEB enrollment allocations among institution types differ for 1991-95 and 1996-2001, but the discrepancies are less than 0.3% per year. Total enrollment for these years was consistent over time.

**Table 3. Variation in College Intentions and Application
by Race, Ethnicity and Class Rank (in percent)**

	Class Rank			Total	Group %
	10 %	11-20%	30-100%		
Post High School College Plans^a					
<i>White</i>	94	90	77	5,321	77
<i>Black</i>	90	89	70	1,499	72
<i>Hispanic</i>	89	81	62	4,285	62
<i>Asian Pacific Islander</i>	98	86	81	603	87
	--	--	--	11,755	--
Applied to Preferred Institutions^b					
% Applied to 2-year only					
<i>White</i>	2	4	8	4,978	6
<i>Black</i>	4	1	5	1,389	5
<i>Hispanic</i>	2	7	8	3,948	6
<i>Asian Pacific Islander</i>	0	0	6	568	2
	--	--	--	10,883	--
% Applied to 4-year only					
<i>White</i>	80	62	44	4,978	46
<i>Black</i>	79	73	35	1,389	40
<i>Hispanic</i>	71	49	28	3,948	30
<i>Asian Pacific Islander</i>	88	69	37	568	60
	--	--	--	10,883	--
% Applied to 2- and 4-year					
<i>White</i>	9	6	7	4,978	6
<i>Black</i>	2	6	10	1,389	8
<i>Hispanic</i>	8	12	13	3,948	10
<i>Asian Pacific Islander</i>	4	6	6	568	5
	--	--	--	10,883	--

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors (Baseline).

^a“What do you expect will be your primary activity in the fall after you leave high school?”

^b“Please think about the college/universities that you are likely to attend, and order them by your preference.”

Table 4. Multinomial Logistic Regressions of College Intentions by Institutional Type (Relative Risk Ratios)^a

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	2-Year College	4-Year College	College Bound	2-Year College	4-Year College	College Bound	2-Year College	4-Year College	College Bound
Student Attributes:									
Race/Ethnicity (white is reference)									
Black	0.531**	0.966	1.107	0.580**	1.168	1.304*	0.635**	1.303**	1.452**
Hispanic	0.564**	0.603**	0.719**	0.594**	0.848*	0.875	0.648**	0.928	0.967
Asian	0.863	1.374*	2.037**	0.945	1.698**	2.261**	0.994	1.764**	2.327**
Class Rank (30-100% is reference)									
Top 10%	1.159	3.585**	1.607**	1.187	3.590**	1.614**	1.23	3.772**	1.680**
2 nd decile, 11-20%	1.347**	2.505**	1.543**	1.312*	2.421**	1.496**	1.335**	2.509**	1.539**
Dummy for estimated class rank	0.763**	0.576**	1.226**	0.776**	0.591**	1.229**	0.775**	0.594**	1.229**
Timing of College Orientation (always is reference)^b									
During middle school	0.720**	0.505**	0.649**	0.714**	0.547**	0.675**	0.718**	0.551**	0.682**
During high school	0.566**	0.327**	0.542**	0.567**	0.362**	0.575**	0.572**	0.365**	0.583**
Academic									
If passed algebra	0.999	1.006**	1.005**	0.998	1.005**	1.004**	0.998	1.003*	1.003
Knowledge of the law (know none is reference)									
If know a lot	1	4.643**	1.102	0.972	4.036**	1.03	0.967	3.866**	1.002
If know a little/some	0.909	1.928**	0.843*	0.916	1.864**	0.837*	0.909	1.841**	0.830*
Family Background:									
Parental Education (high school grad is reference)									
Less than high school	--	--	--	0.962	0.704**	0.997	0.994	0.724**	1.035
Some college	--	--	--	1.15	1.482**	1.573**	1.138	1.449**	1.543**
College	--	--	--	1.021	2.137**	1.874**	1.009	2.026**	1.793**
College plus	--	--	--	0.892	2.415**	2.272**	0.889	2.311**	2.197**
Economic Status (own home is reference)									
If family rents home	--	--	--	0.794*	0.727**	0.703**	0.807*	0.739**	0.715**
High School Characteristics:									
High School Type (other school is reference)									
Feeder high school	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.653	1.580**	1.284
Longhorn/Century school	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.765**	0.803**	0.710**
Total high school dropout rate	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.918*	0.941*	0.969
Observations	10394	10394	10394	10219	10219	10219	10219	10219	10219

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors (Baseline).

Notes: "No College Intentions/Plans" is the comparison group in the multinomial logistic regressions.

"College Bound" are students who report intentions to attend a 2-year or 4-year institution but failed to report an institutional preference or who had not applied by Spring of senior year.

^aModels contains dummy variable controls for missing data on parental education.

^bThe survey asked: "When did you first think about going to college?." ** p = 0.01. * p = 0.05.

Table 5. Multinomial Logistic Regressions of 2 vs. 4 year College Preferences
(Relative Risk Ratios)^a

	2-Year College	4-Year College
<i>Student Attributes:</i>		
Race/Ethnicity (white is reference)		
Black	0.552**	1.098
Hispanic	0.687**	1.231*
Asian	0.452**	1.044
Class Rank (30-100% is reference)		
Top 10%	0.642**	1.785**
2 nd decile, 11-20%	0.834	1.490**
Dummy for estimated class rank	0.615**	0.509**
Timing of College Orientation (always is reference)^b		
During middle school	1.096	0.861
During high school	1.002	0.685**
Academic		
If passed algebra	0.995*	0.999
Knowledge of the law (know none is reference)		
If know, a lot	1.059	3.327**
If know, a little/some	1.112	2.109**
<i>Family Background:</i>		
Parental Education (high school grad is reference)		
Less than high school	0.986	0.734**
Some college	0.742**	0.888
College	0.594**	1.051
College plus	0.432**	0.999
Economic Status (own home is reference)		
If family rents home	1.044	1.087
<i>High School Characteristics:</i>		
High School Type (other school is reference)		
Feeder high school	0.496**	1.031
Longhorn/Century school	1.082	1.216
Total high school dropout rate	0.958	0.982
<i>Important Factors in College Choice:</i>		
Cost	2.234**	1.046
Athletic reputation	0.539**	0.658**
Distance to home	1.098	0.432**
Academic reputation	1.237	1.992**
Ethnic similarity	0.618**	0.692**
School size	0.936	1.379**
Observations	7657	7657

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors (Baseline).

Notes: "College Bound" is the comparison group in the multinomial logistic regressions. ^aModel contains dummy variables for missing data on parental education. ^bThe survey asked: "When did you first think about going to

college?."

** $p \leq 0.01$.* $p \leq 0.05$.**Table 6. Actualization of College Plans by Class Rank (in percent)**

College Plans	No College	Attendance		N	Col %
		2-Year	4-Year		
Total Sample					
<i>No Plans</i>	62	27	11	837	22
<i>2-Year Only</i>	24	72	4	201	5
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	14	74	12	361	10
<i>4-Year Only</i>	7	17	76	1887	50
<i>College Bound^a</i>	21	50	29	783	13
Average Share	22	33	46	3769	
Rank: Top 10%					
<i>No Plans</i>	32	22	46	42	6
<i>2-Year Only</i>	28	72	0	9	1
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	2	74	24	40	6
<i>4-Year Only</i>	3	3	94	565	81
<i>College Bound^a</i>	5	32	63	42	6
Average Share	5	12	84	698	
Rank: 2nd Decile, 11 to 20%					
<i>No Plans</i>	62	26	12	71	10
<i>2-Year Only</i>	47	44	9	26	4
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	15	67	18	64	9
<i>4-Year Only</i>	4	16	80	474	67
<i>College Bound^a</i>	9	43	48	69	10
Average Share	10	26	64	704	
Rank: 30 to 100%					
<i>No Plans</i>	63	29	8	687	30
<i>2-Year Only</i>	17	82	1	163	7
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	15	77	8	251	11
<i>4-Year Only</i>	10	27	63	831	36
<i>College Bound^a</i>	25	54	21	361	16
Average Share	29	41	30	2293	

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors (Baseline and Wave 2).
^aStudent reports intentions to attend a 2 or 4 year institution but failed to report an institutional preference or to apply by Spring of senior year.

Table 6a. Actualization of College Plans by Race (in percent)

College Plans	Attendance			N	Col %
	No College	2-Year	4-Year		
White					
<i>No Plans</i>	65	26	9	214	15
<i>2-Year Only</i>	26	70	4	105	7
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	7	81	12	115	8
<i>4-Year Only</i>	5	18	77	857	60
<i>College Bound^a</i>	18	53	29	150	10
Average Share	14	32	54	1441	
Black					
<i>No Plans</i>	58	30	12	118	18
<i>2-Year Only</i>	18	79	3	22	3
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	21	67	12	75	12
<i>4-Year Only</i>	9	15	76	336	51
<i>College Bound^a</i>	23	48	29	102	16
Average Share	19	34	47	653	
Hispanic					
<i>No Plans</i>	63	29	8	420	33
<i>2-Year Only</i>	29	67	4	57	5
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	16	71	13	146	12
<i>4-Year Only</i>	11	19	70	454	36
<i>College Bound^a</i>	25	52	23	179	14
Average Share	31	36	33	1256	
Asian					
<i>No Plans</i>	44	34	22	28	11
<i>2-Year Only</i>	13	75	12	6	2
<i>2- & 4-Year</i>	9	89	2	18	7
<i>4-Year Only</i>	3	12	85	171	66
<i>College Bound^a</i>	19	24	57	35	14
Average Share	14	23	64	258	

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors (Baseline and Wave 2).

^aStudent reports intentions to attend a 2 or 4 year institution but failed to report an institutional preference or to apply by Spring of senior year.

Table 7. Multinomial Logistic Regressions of Actual College Enrollment by Institutional Type
(Relative Risk Ratios)^a

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	2-Year College	4-Year College	2-Year College	4-Year College	2-Year College	4-Year College
<i>Student Attributes:</i>						
Race/Ethnicity (white is reference)						
Black	0.883	1.108	1.084	1.542*	1.109	1.651*
Hispanic	0.654*	0.490*	0.831	0.824	0.857	0.859
Asian	0.682	0.76	0.745	0.948	0.764	0.948
Class Rank (30-100% is reference)						
Top 10%	1.318	7.371*	1.346	7.406*	1.352	7.918*
2 nd decile, 11-20%	1.474*	3.594*	1.535*	3.757*	1.557*	3.915*
Dummy for estimated class rank	0.397	0.569**	0.942	0.577**	0.936	0.595*
Timing of College Orientation (always is reference) ^b						
During middle school	0.733	0.565*	0.757*	0.634*	0.761	0.637*
During high school	0.547*	0.379*	0.577*	0.441*	0.574*	0.436*
Academic						
If passed algebra	1.008*	1.009*	1.008*	1.008*	1.008*	1.006*
Knowledge of the law (know none is reference)						
If know, a lot	2.604*	6.690*	1.890*	5.809*	1.844*	5.478*
If know, a little/some	1.465*	2.208*	1.424*	2.118*	1.402*	2.054*
<i>Family Background:</i>						
Parental Education (high school grad is reference)						
Less than high school	--	--	0.884	0.545*	0.892	0.551*
Some college	--	--	1.452*	1.516*	1.436*	1.489*
College	--	--	2.354*	3.633*	2.347*	3.496*
College plus	--	--	1.984*	3.277*	2.005*	3.136*
Economic Status (own home is reference)						
If family rents home	--	--	0.546*	0.506*	0.554*	0.513*
<i>High School Characteristics:</i>						
High School Type (other school is reference)						
Feeder high school	--	--	--	--	0.952	2.401*
Longhorn/Century school	--	--	--	--	1.087	1.197
Total high school dropout rate	--	--	--	--	0.885*	0.925
Observations	3586	3586	3523	3523	3523	3523

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors Follow-Up (Wave 2).

Notes: "No College" is the comparison group in the multinomial logistic regressions.

^aModels contains dummy variable controls for missing data on parental education.

^bThe survey asked: "When did you first think about going to college?"

** p = 0.01. * p = 0.05.

Table 8.
Logistic Regressions of Actual College Enrollment by Institutional Type (Odds Ratios)^a

	2-Year College
<i>Student Attributes:</i>	
Race/Ethnicity (white is reference)	
Black	0.746*
Hispanic	1.022
Asian	0.749
Class Rank (30-100% is reference)	
Top 10%	0.180**
2 nd decile, 11-20%	0.395**
Dummy for estimated class rank	1.461**
Timing of College Orientation (always is reference)^b	
During middle school	1.169
During high school	1.339*
Academic	
If passed algebra	1.002
Knowledge of the law (know none is reference)	
If know, a lot	0.365**
If know, a little/some	0.702**
<i>Family Background:</i>	
Parental Education (high school grad is reference)	
Less than high school	1.809**
Some college	0.966
College	0.670**
College plus	0.678*
Economic Status (own home is reference)	
If family rents home	1.152
<i>High School Characteristics:</i>	
Feeder high school	0.408**
Longhorn/Century school	1.020
Total high school dropout rate	0.961
<i>Important Factors in Choosing College Choice:</i>	
Cost	1.738**
Financial aid	0.725**
Athletic reputation	1.071
Distance to home	1.514**
Academic reputation	0.497**
Ethnic similarity	1.067
School size	0.556**
Observations	2794

Source: Texas Educational Opportunity Study, Survey of High School Seniors Follow-Up (Wave 2).

Notes: "4-Year College" is the comparison group in the logistic regressions. ^aModel contains dummy variables for missing data on parental education. ^bThe survey asked: "When did you first think about going to college?"

** $p \leq 0.01$.
* $p \leq 0.05$.

