

BIOGRAPHY

Chandra Taylor Smith, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research, Council for Opportunity in Education
Director, The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education

Chandra Taylor Smith, Ph.D., is the vice president for research for the Council for Opportunity in Education and director of The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (The Pell Institute). She oversees The Pell Institute's progressive mission to conduct and disseminate research and policy analysis to encourage policymakers, educators, and the public to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for low-income, first-generation, and disabled college students.

Prior to her current position, Taylor Smith was the deputy director of the postsecondary education and student development department and district director for AVID at Chicago Public Schools. She also served as the first executive director of College Summit Chicago, which was the first regional office of the Washington D.C.-based national nonprofit.

Taylor Smith is an educator at heart and has lectured or served on the faculties of Fisk University, Harvard University, North Park University, Tennessee State University, University of Vermont, and Vanderbilt University. She holds a B.A. and Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University and a M.Div. from Harvard University.

Texas Senate Higher Education Committee (SHEC)
Interim Hearing
Austin, Texas
Thursday June 3, 2010

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To support the SHEC's charge to review community college service areas to ensure that student needs are being met in the most effective and efficient manner with particular focus on services to facilitate a seamless transfer from two-year to four-year institutions:

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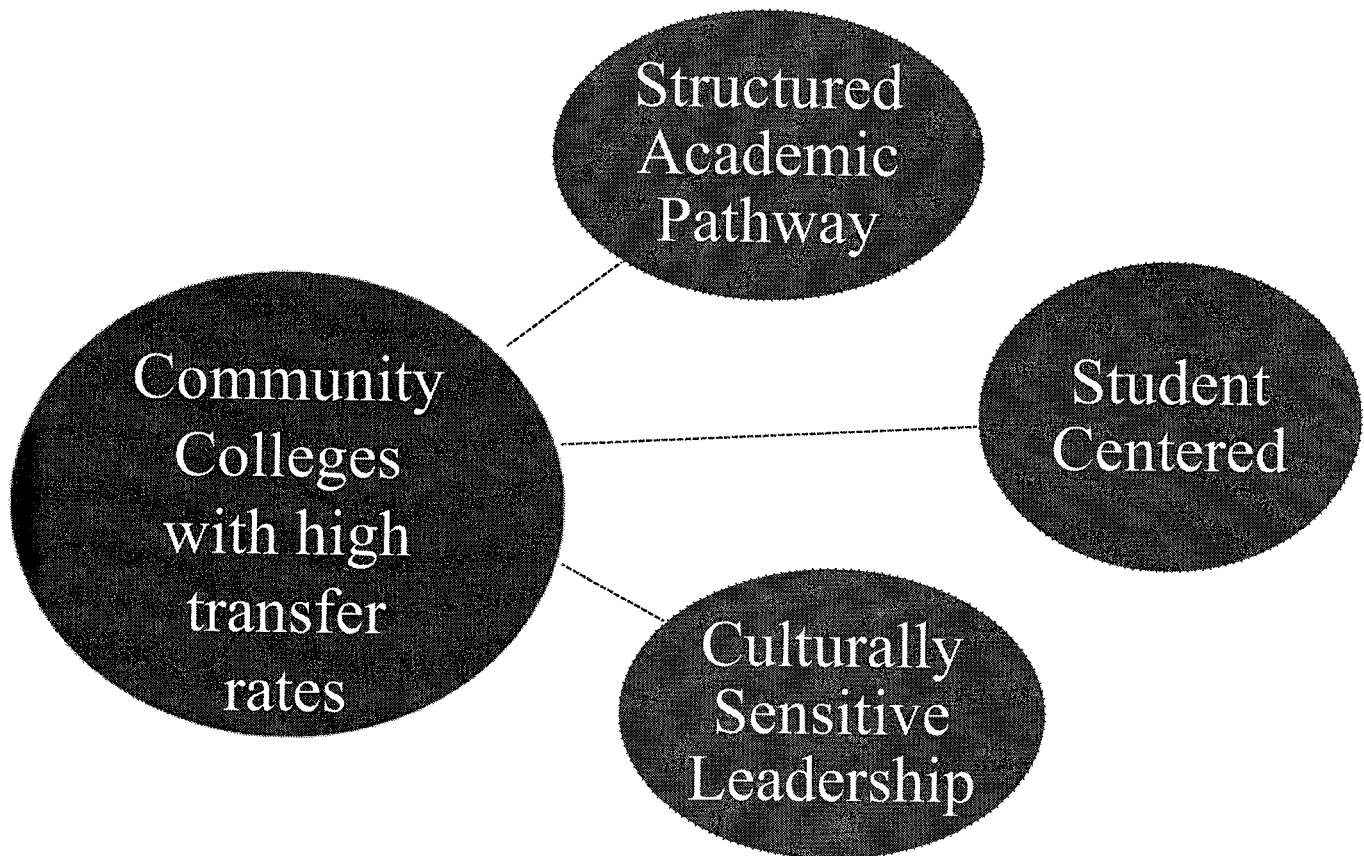
The Pell Institute presents the summary of the findings from its recent study entitled: *Bridging the Gaps to Success: Promising Practices for Promoting Transfer Among Low-Income and First- Generation Students, An In-Depth Study of Six Exemplary Community Colleges in Texas*

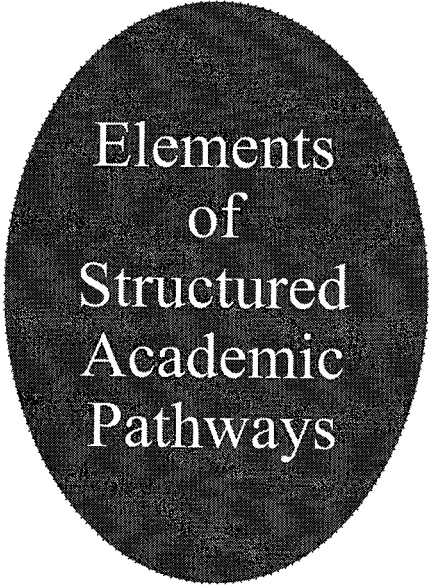
The Pell Institute

The six community colleges visited in Texas with higher than expected transfer rates based on student and institutional characteristics:

- Northeast Texas Community College, Mount Pleasant
- Southwest Texas Community College, Uvalde
- The Victoria College, Victoria
- Laredo Community College, Athens
- Trinity Valley Community College, Athens
- Tarrant County Community College – Southeast Campus, Arlington

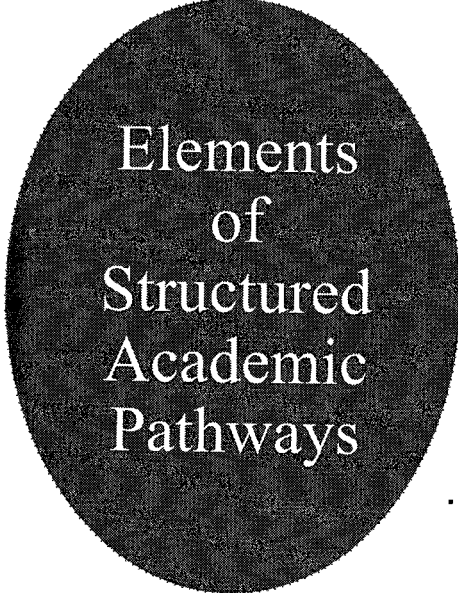
Three Common Campus Characteristics





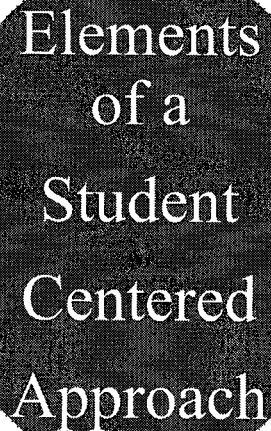
Elements
of
Structured
Academic
Pathways

- **Subject-Specific Institutional Articulation Agreements** - in some cases, BA attainment without leaving campus
- **Campus exposure through Dual Enrollment**
– increases comfort with navigating services (i.e. financial aid, advising)



Elements
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Structured
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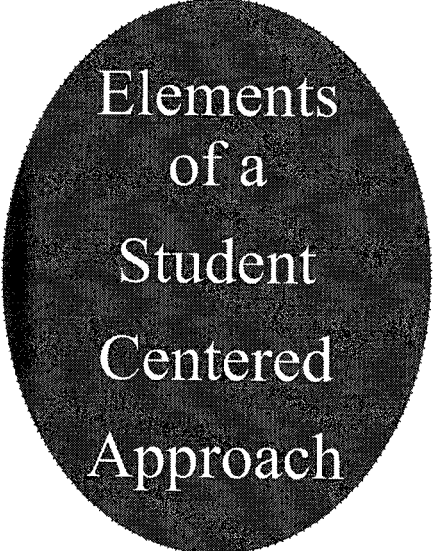
- **Developmental Coursework Initiatives** -integration of skills into coursework, module-based learning, required & targeted academic support
- **Active Learning** –emphasis on teaching students how to learn, rather than simply exam preparation



Elements
of a
Student
Centered
Approach

- **Specialized Advising** –including, dedicated transfer centers and coordinators, early alert programs, financial aid auditing, and TRIO services


- **Flexible Scheduling** - evenings, online and sometimes on weekends, to meet students work and life demands



Elements
of a
Student
Centered
Approach

- **Learning Communities** – cohort-based models of structured curricula and social activities around academic interests

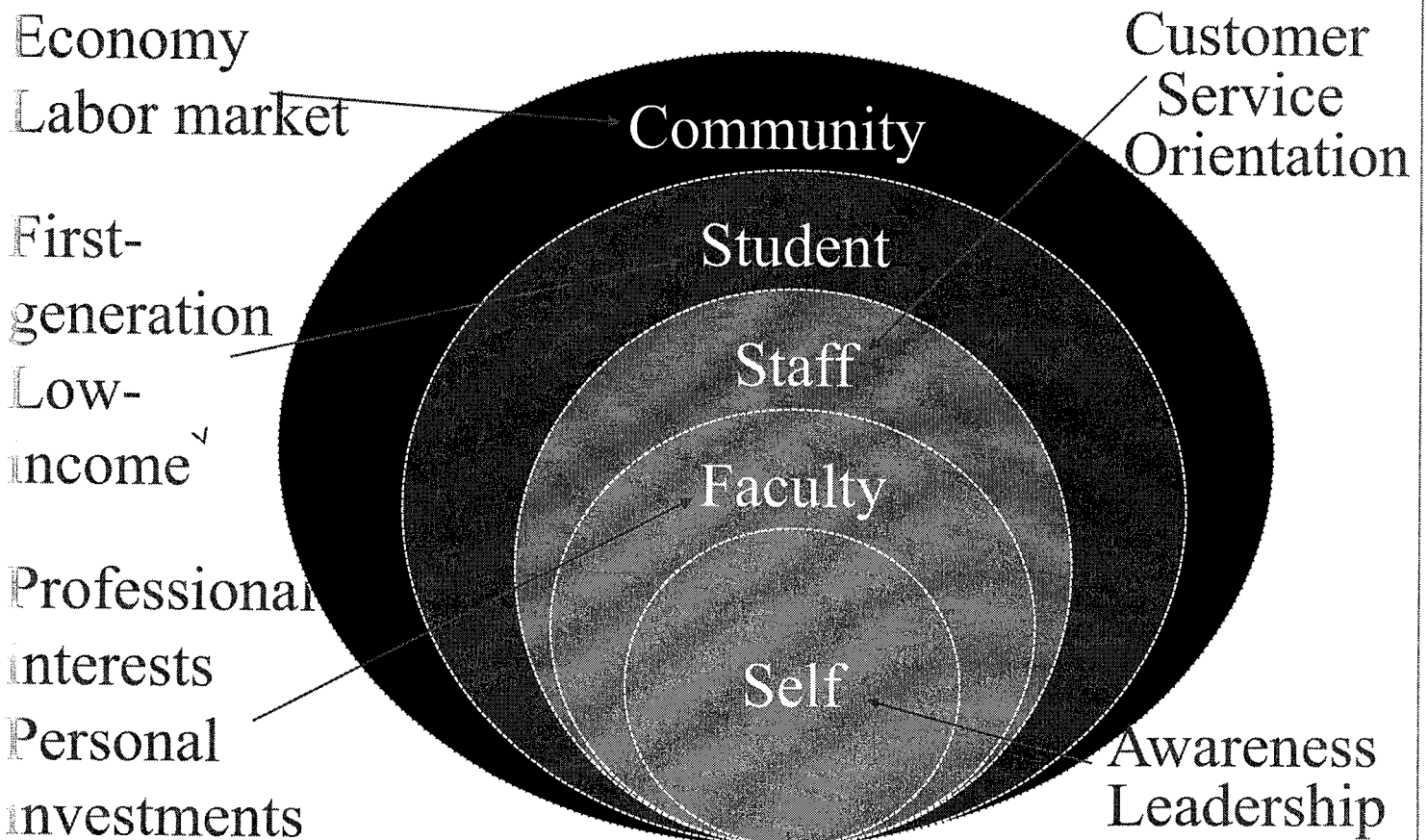
- **Engaging Student Activities** –campuses often set aside extra time and require minimum GPA for involvement



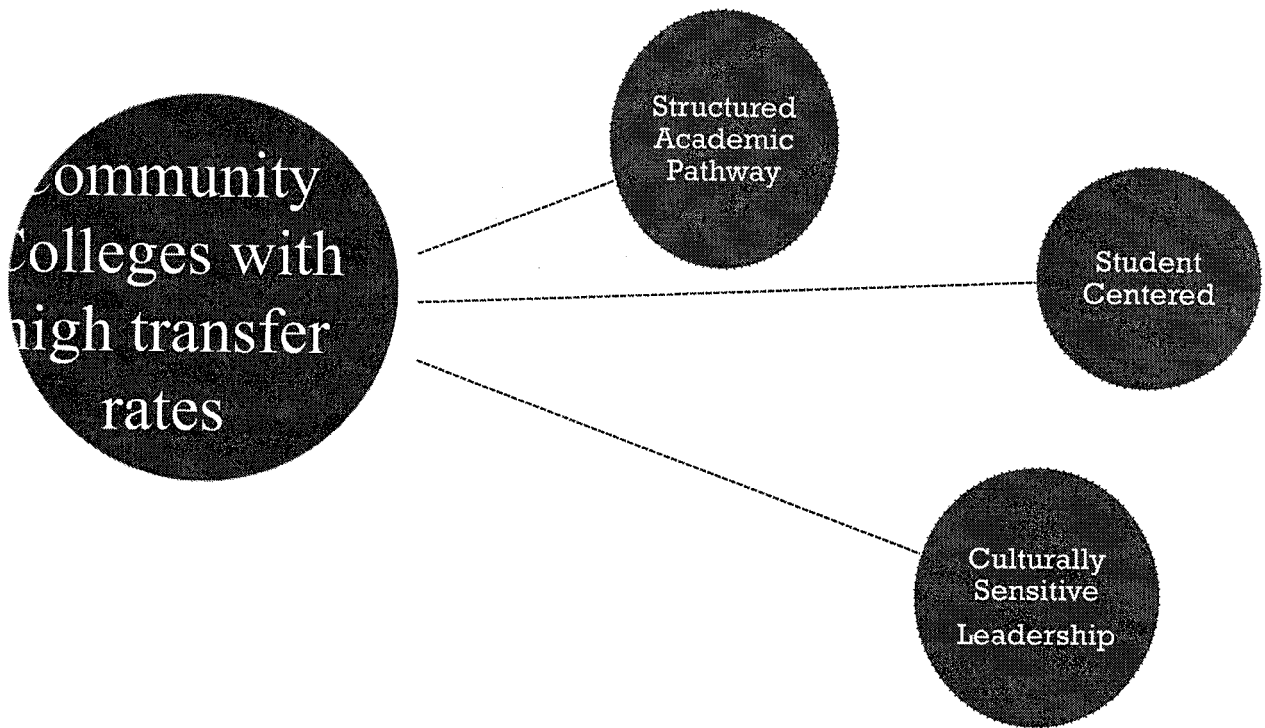
Elements
of
Culturally
Sensitive
Leadership

- **Staff and Faculty Role Modeling**
– long-time staff and faculty relate to students; deliberate strategies to mirror student body demographics
- **Strategic Planning** – paying closer attention to data i.e. engagement indicators, addressing deficiencies through campus-wide plans
- **Outreach** – prioritize communicating program offerings and ease of transfer, particular emphasis on parent communications and partnerships with community organizations

Culturally-sensitive leadership have comprehensive views of the interconnected dynamics in the culture



Successful Transfer Cultures are Influenced by the Way the Three Common Campus Characteristics are Configured



Recommendations

- **Collaborative Campus Programming** – system-wide academic and social support to make students transfer-ready
- **Administrative Offices as Support and Service Centers** – students should feel that the administration is there to support the transfer process, and information about transfer is easily accessible
- **Data-Driven Decision Making** – identify specific student challenges in the transfer process to plan what kind of support is needed at various stages in the academic pathway