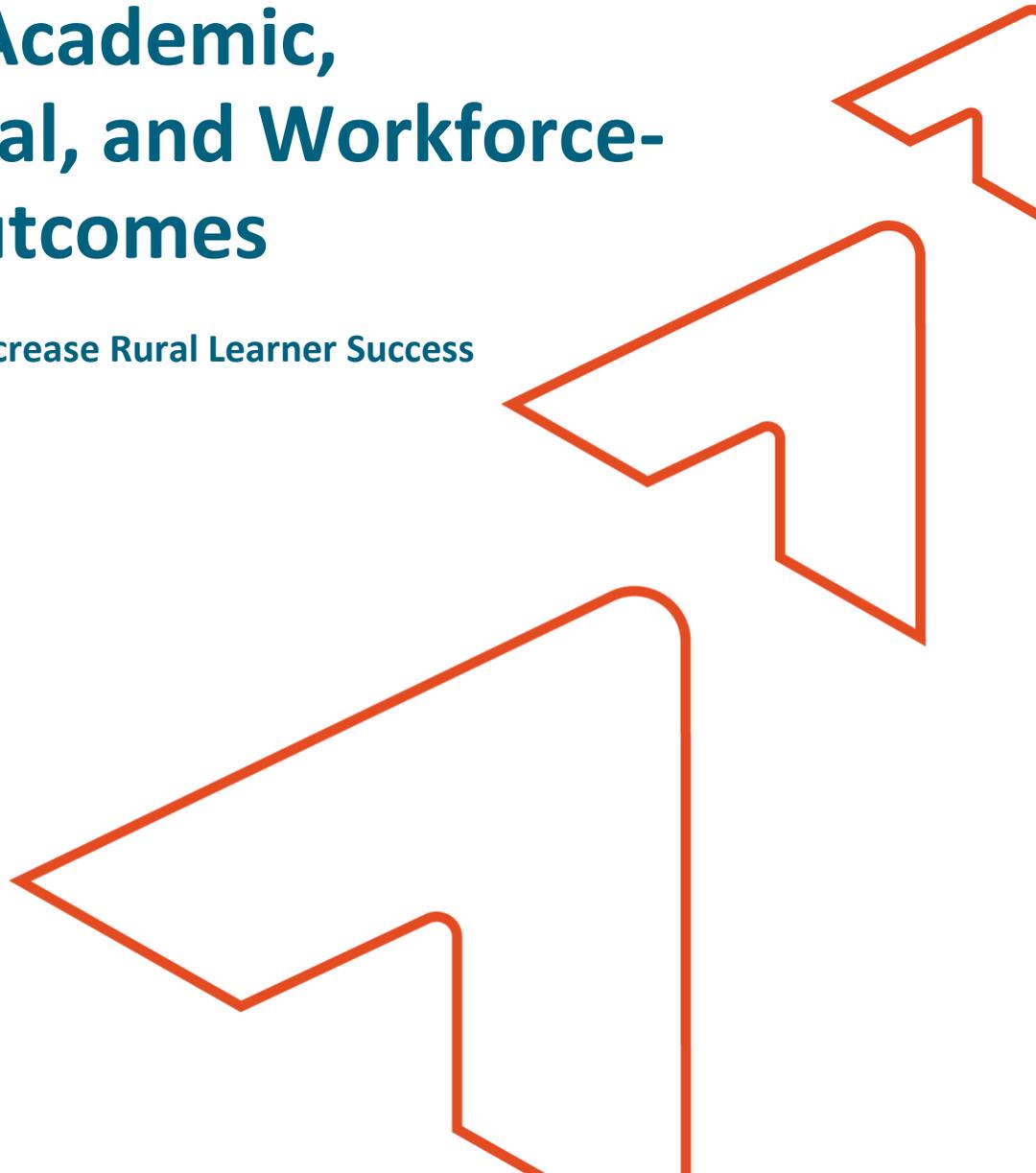


Project Profile

The Effect of Institutional Programs and Practices on Low-Income Rural College Students' Academic, Psychosocial, and Workforce-Related Outcomes

Building Evidence to Increase Rural Learner Success



The Effect of Institutional Programs and Practices on Low-income Rural College Students' Academic, Psychosocial, and Workforce-Related Outcomes

Organization

University of Idaho | Coeur d'Alene, ID

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Geographic Focus

National

Population Focus

This project focuses on college students from rural communities of upbringing with low-income backgrounds and college students who are enrolled at two- or four-year rural-serving colleges and universities across the U.S.

Project Overview

This project examines the programs and practices that improve rural college students' outcomes in higher education and facilitate rural college students' successful transitions to the workforce. Priority is placed on the experiences and viewpoints of rural college students who have been marginalized, systemically excluded, or underserved. Attention will be paid to the intersectional nature of students' identities.

As a first-generation, low-income, and working-class student from a rural and isolated community, I experienced many challenges when I attended an urban university. Yet my early experiences helping out on the family farm and navigating rural life also provided me with sources of strength and resolve. As a result of those experiences, I am keenly aware of the systemic barriers that marginalized and disenfranchised students encounter in colleges and universities. Consequently, I have dedicated my career to supporting students who are marginalized and disenfranchised in higher education, helping students to discover their unique strengths and assets, and dismantling systems of oppression in higher education. In this project, my goal is to highlight the systemic barriers that rural students encounter in higher education while also drawing attention to the strengths of rural education, rural communities, and rural students.

– Krista Soria

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of institutional programs and practices on low-income rural college students' academic outcomes (e.g., retention and degree completion)?
2. What are the effects of institutional programs and practices on low-income rural college students' psychosocial outcomes (e.g., sense of belonging, psychological well-being, and perceptions of campus climate)?
3. What are the effects of institutional programs and practices on low-income rural college students' workforce-related outcomes (e.g., career decision-making efficacy, employment status, and preparedness)?

Research Methodology

This research will collect longitudinal student data from multiple rural institutions, with the intention to create a data hub — the Assessing Rural Education Assets and Strengths (AREAS) Consortium — about rural college students. A survey will ask questions about the academic achievements, psychological well-being, and career-related success of rural students. The project will analyze the data and compare sources to broaden understanding of the experiences and outcomes of rural college students.

Research Significance

The AREAS Consortium will provide institutional reports; host webinars and online meetings; and feature research/policy briefs, infographics, a data dashboard, and other related content. All stakeholders will have access to the data, descriptive reports, and insights. The availability of this content can help stakeholders on decision making and policy advocacy and can answer research questions.

Grant Period of Performance

March 2023 to February 2026