

## Book Review

# Outcomes Based Funding and Race in Higher Education: Can Equity be Bought?

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*Outcomes Based Funding and Race in Higher Education: Can Equity be Bought?*

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In higher education in the United States, public schools receive state funding based on student outcome, rather than only on student enrollment. Student outcomes and performance, such as graduation rates, are related with the funding. Thus, the value of education, the effectiveness of instructors, and the ability of existing leaders to manage college budgets efficiently and effectively are becoming more and more important in colleges and universities (Jones et al., 2017).

POBF (Performance and outcomes-based funding) policies in the United States were first introduced to encourage higher education institutions to focus on issues that governments and voters felt were important (Dougherty et al., 2015). POBF is allocated based on institution's outcomes on student metrics such as diversity, retention, course completion, and graduation (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). For example, the state of Virginia measures increases in the enrollment of in-state undergraduate students from underrepresented population, including low-income, first-generation, and racial and ethnic minority students (Jones et al., 2017).

The aim of this book is to examine the implications of POBF for racial equity in higher education in the United States. This book discusses how states have addressed equity in their POBF policy, the possibilities and limitations, and also provides recommendations and strategies for using POBF to help create and advance racial equality in higher education. The book is organized in a logical way with eight chapters, which cover two main topics.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The book comprehensively introduces the evolution and characteristics of POBF involved in the impact of POBF on racial equity, factors of funding formulas and the effects of POBF measures on four-year MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions) in Ohio and Tennessee. The book also gives an example in Florida to understand whether the performance-based funding system is an extension of the legal segregation of HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Furthermore, the book proposes a critical policy framework to examine the sociopolitical climate of three states with rapidly increasing population of color-Texas, California, and Maryland. In addition, the book explores higher education leaders' and academic researchers' insights with POBF to see if the policies have helped or inhibited equity. Finally, the book proposes a framework for using higher education funding and policy to advance equity issue and also how POBF is changing the purposes and goals of higher education (Jones, et al., 2017). The methods used vary in each chapter across the whole book, such as comparative analysis, review and evaluation of documents, or semi-structured interviews.

As you can see from the content of these eight chapters, it seems that comprehensive information is provided in this book, which serves a variety of purposes. More specifically, it not only provides a detailed overview of the relationship between POBF and equity in higher education, but also helps readers understand the difference of POBF policies and its impacts in different states. It takes the readers on a tour beginning with the impact of POBF and racial equity to higher education funding policy. The targeted audience is not specified in the book, but such a complete discussion should be of interest to state policymakers, higher education scholars and academic researchers.

Everything can be improved. This book is certainly no exception. One improvement is related to the content of the book. Since the United States is a vast area, the education systems and policies are different across states. Every state has control over what is taught in its schools and over the requirements that a student must meet, and it is also responsible for the funding of schooling. Thus, it would be more comprehensive if the authors provide readers the opportunities to learn more about the situations of different states.

Moreover, the issues of this book may attract to worldwide readers including Australia, Asia or European countries. It is suggested if the book issues could be more related to the global readers' interests. And it would meet readers' needs if the book offers very different experiences, perspectives and perceptions to race issues than that of only in the United States.

This book viewpoint is predominantly from funding policymakers and higher education institutions. Providing additional information about students' perspectives would be useful. For example, there is a need to know students' thoughts with higher education funding for racial equity and diversity, since students' personal point of view which may be shaped by life experiences, values, their current state of mind, the assumptions they bring into a situation, and a whole lot of other things. Furthermore, there is also a need to know students' equitable experience about the quality of learning, classroom, and campus, particular focusing on low-income students and students of color.

Through POBF, public colleges and university receive state funding through formulas that no longer rely solely on student enrollment, but are instead based on student outcome (Jones, et al., 2017). In addition to retention or graduation rates, we think employment rate is an important indicator for measuring student outcomes. We know the general situation is that employment rate was higher for people with higher levels of educational attainment than for those with lower levels of educational attainment. Thus, we recommend that higher education funding formula may take employment rate or even employment development for consideration in these researches.

In the section of literature review, Chapter 7, we would suggest the order of three subjects be changed. The paragraph of why racial diversity is so important to higher education may be presented in the beginning; the paragraph of state policymaking and racial diversity in higher education may be presented in the second part; the paragraph of POBF, accountability and values in the final part. In this chapter, there is a paragraph which gives a detailed overview about why racial diversity is so important in higher education. In this paragraph, the authors point out the advantages of racial

diversity including students' comfort with and ability to interact with different groups as well their critical thinking skills, world views and issues (Jones et al., 2017). It would be useful for the readers if the authors explain the importance of racial diversity and equity in the beginning of the book.

Even though there are several suggestions for improvements in this book, there is certainly a work that makes an important contribution to educational policy for racial equity in higher education. We recommend a careful reading of POBF policy in different state context from this book. This devotion to those topics shines through in this book and it is definitely worth reading.

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