



THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Public Policy Center

Poverty in American Higher Education: How Material Hardship Affects College Success and Degree Attainment



Monday, October 31, 2016

1:30 - 3:00 pm

W113 Seashore Hall

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College enrollment is increasingly common, but attainment gaps by race and income are large and persistent. Over the past several decades, college prices have risen dramatically, the real incomes of most American families have been flat or falling, and the purchasing power of need-based financial aid has declined. To make up for substantial amounts of unmet financial need, students often work and take out loans. Additionally, some students report struggling to obtain adequate food or shelter while pursuing their college goals. Using data from a sample of undergraduates from low-income families in Wisconsin, I examine how experiences of material hardship early in college affect later college success and degree attainment. Students who report challenges with housing insecurity during their first year of college are significantly less likely to be enrolled or graduate from college four years later than otherwise observably similar peers. These results suggest that efforts to improve college completion should be broadened to include consideration of students' material well-being.

This talk is part of the **Inequality Seminar** which is a seminar and speaker series that provides a forum on campus for faculty and graduate students who are interested in inequality broadly defined. It is an opportunity for faculty and graduate students to present their research and to hear about other inequality-related work from researchers on the off-campus. These talks are free and open to the public. For more information about the Inequality Seminar, contact Professor Sarah Bruch at sarah-bruch@uiowa.edu.

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