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# Reflections on a Decade of Changes in Homeschooling and the Homeschooled Into Higher Education

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This article reviews selected research on successes of homeschooled students over the past decade. The article raises several methods issues, especially related to sampling issues and recent changes in some state laws. In addition the article reviews research collected from college admission officers' on their perceptions and attitudes relate to homeschooled students. The comparative results of the studies reported in this review, combined with the data collected from college admission officers provides evidence that homeschooling is an effective alternative path to college for the children of many families.

## BACKGROUND

More than a decade ago, Paul Jones, an admissions officer at a college in Colorado, approached his professor with the belief that homeschooled students were performing superior to non-homeschooled students at his institution. His professor, Gene Gloeckner—a former public school teacher and professor in a teacher education program—believed that homeschooled students were not performing as well as public educated students. At that time there was little empirical data supporting either view.

This article reviews some of the findings from two exploratory studies from 2004 and compares the data with findings and trends today. The 2004 publications highlighted two major items of interest to the authors. In one study we were interested in academic comparisons between homeschooled and non-homeschooled students who were then in college (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004a). As an emerging interest, we also collected data on the perceptions and attitudes of college admission officers' on homeschooled students (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004b).

## SHORT HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Parents who choose to educate their children at home are not new to American society. During the Colonial Period American families, from the wealthy to the poor, educated their children at

home (Hill, 2000; Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore, 1992). During the past three decades, the number of families choosing to exercise their legal option to educate their children at home, rather than enroll them in public schools, has grown throughout the United States (Mayberry, Knowles, Ray, & Marlow, 1995; National Center for Educational Statistics, Institute of Education Science, 2011; Osborn, 2000; Ray, 2000). According to the Institute of Education Sciences the estimated number of homeschooled students in 2007 was 1.5 million. In 1999 the estimated percentage of homeschooled children between the ages of 5 and 17 was 1.7%. The percentage had increased to 2.9% in 2007 (National Center for Educational Statistics, Institute of Education Science, 2011). Ray (2011) estimated that there were 2.04 million homeschool students in 2010.

During this period of growth, while homeschool advocates have challenged state policy officials and school boards to rethink compulsory regulations, these same advocates have left many colleges and universities relatively alone. Because of this, college admission officers across the United States have been trying to grapple with how to address a growing population of newly graduated, homeschooled students knocking at their doors (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004b).

Admission officers know little about the general performance of homeschooled graduates in college, but this fact has not stopped colleges and universities from developing admissions policies (accommodating or unaccommodating) for the homeschool population. Much of the existing research on academic performance centers on K-12 homeschooled students and many of these studies show that homeschooled children outperform their public school peers on nationally standardized exams, including the ACT, SAT, COMPASS, and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, and at nearly all grade levels (Bagwell, 2010; Frost, 1987; Rakestraw, 1987; Ray, 1990; Wartes, 1990).

Other signs of success for homeschooled students have been documented in various and unique ways. For example, in the 2007 Scripps National Spelling Bee, five of the 15 finalists, as well as the winner, were homeschooled students. Although homeschoolers only make up about 2% of American students, they make up about 10% of contestants (CBS Minneapolis, 2012). In 2007, six state winners of the National Geographic competition were homeschooled, including the winner of the 2007 competition, Caitlin Snarling. Snarling, a 14-year-old, was only the second girl to win the competition in the history of the event and the first girl in 17 years (Venkataranman, 2007). Homeschooled students have even found success in college sports, as Collin Klein, a runner-up to the 2012 Heisman Trophy, was homeschooled (Robinett, 2013). Each of these examples demonstrates how frustrated parents often turn to homeschooling for gifted and talented students (Grant, 2007; Ray, 2007) as well as those with special needs (Hensley, 2009).

### SAMPLING ISSUES THEN AND NOW

We quickly learned lessons related to issues in sampling when comparing homeschooled students to traditionally schooled students. The samples for our first study were obtained from a state database from 1998 to 2000. At that time the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) had implemented a coding system for homeschooled students. This identification system was just being implemented, and colleges and universities from the state were trying to comply with the recording requirement. However, the search during that time identified only 55 first-year, degree-seeking, homeschooled graduates who enrolled in Colorado 4-year public college or

universities from 1998 to 2000. Once the homeschool sample was identified, we pulled a random sample of 53 traditional high school graduates (public, private, parochial, etc.) who met the same criteria of the homeschool sample and matched the homeschool institutions ( $n = 53$ ). For example, if Colorado State University (CSU) had four homeschool students, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education provided us with four students from CSU that were not homeschooled.

In 2013 there is no longer a tracking system for homeschooled students at CSU. CSU's admission page provides 18 of the most frequently asked questions related to homeschool. Number 18 asks, How many homeschooled students attend Colorado State University? The CSU website response:

We do not track the number of homeschooled applicants, the number of admitted homeschoolers, or the number of homeschooled students who enroll. Based on the personal attention we give homeschooled applicants, we are confident that Colorado State's diverse student body includes many individuals with solid home-based college-preparatory backgrounds. We hope you will make your own contribution in the near future. (Colorado State University, n.d.)

Although this change in procedure may help with potential negative labeling of homeschooled students, it also makes it more difficult to obtain valid samples when comparing homeschooled students with traditional schooled students. Recent studies have relied upon self-reporting of homeschooling non-homeschool comparisons (Martin-Chang, Gould, & Meuse, 2011), whereas other studies indicate that coding homeschooling is a part of the admission process and comparisons are still possible through state data (Bagwell, 2010).

## COMPARING ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

In this section, we make comparisons between several new studies related to student achievement on standardized tests and college performance as measured by grade point average (GPA) and other important college or university measures. Table 1 indicates that, over time, studies reviewed have gone from not showing a significant difference to showing significant differences on some standardized tests. The issue of identifying homeschooled students is problematic, and sample sizes for homeschooled students have proven to be relatively small. Effect sizes are reported as described by Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, and Barrett (2013). This is important due to the small samples sizes reported in each study. Effect sizes give a bit more confidence in the significant results. *Typical* implies that the results are *typical of studies in the social sciences* with similar statistical values,  $p$  values, and number of participants. *Larger than typical* can be thought of as a finding stronger than many studies of a similar nature. It may be of interest to note that none of the studies reported higher standardized test scores for traditional education samples over homeschooled samples.

Table 2 reports study findings related to key outcome variables often of interest to college and universities administrators. The most common measure is, of course, GPA. Again, perhaps the key item to note is that several of the studies indicated no significant differences between outcome measures for homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. None of the studies reported outcome measures that were higher for traditionally educated students over homeschooled

TABLE 1  
Comparisons of Several Findings Comparing Performance on Standardized Tests Between Homeschooled Students and Traditional Students Over Time

Author	Publication Date	Summary of Finding	Effect Size
Jones & Gloeckner	2004	No significant differences in ACT composite, English, Math, Reading, or Science	
Bagwell	2010	Homeschooled scored significantly higher on COMPASS writing, pre-algebra, and writing	Large <sup>a</sup> or larger than typical
Bagwell	2010	No significant differences on college algebra and algebra	
Martin–Chang	2011	Structured homeschooled out performed traditional schooling on most all levels of the Woodcock–Johnson Test of Achievement	Medium or typical to larger than typical etas .24 to .36
Snyder	2011	Homeschooled students scored significantly higher on SAT & ACT than traditionally schooled students	Medium or typical $d = .44$ ACT $d = .68$ SAT

<sup>a</sup>Effect sizes and standard deviations were not reported; this is an estimate based upon means and  $p$  values.

students. The results of these comparisons also match results found by Cogan (2010). Cogan's study included comparisons between home, public, Catholic, and private schools. Homeschooled students scored higher on every academic measure (ACT, 1-year and 4-year GPAs, graduation rates, and several measures of retention rates).

TABLE 2  
Comparisons for Several Studies between Homeschooled and Traditionally Schooled Students on Key College Outcome Measures

Author	Publication Date	Summary of Finding	Effect Size
Jones & Gloeckner	2004	No significant differences between GPA at end of 1st year	
Jones & Gloeckner	2004	No significant differences between retention rates	
Jones & Gloeckner	2004	No significant difference between credit hours earned at the end of the 1st year	
Bagwell	2010	Homeschooled students had significantly higher first-semester GPAs, higher science, math and English GPAs.	Large <sup>a</sup> or larger than typical
Snyder	2011	Homeschooled students had significantly higher overall GPAs	Medium or typical
Snyder	2011	No significant difference between major or core GPA	

Note. GPA = grade point average.

<sup>a</sup>Effect sizes and standard deviation not reported; estimate based upon mean differences and reported  $p$  value of  $< .0001$ .

## LIMITATIONS

This is not intended to be a synthesis of the literature on outcome measures or standardized tests between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. Rather, the selected comparison articles featured in the aforementioned analyses came from keyword searches in a variety of scholarly databases. For the purposes of this article, we selected articles with quantitative analysis. Even within some of the studies reported here, there were qualitative or mixed-methods findings. These are of value and important for answering some research questions, but for this article, the focus was on studies that featured measureable differences. Each article also reported other differences, usually related to demographics. The focus of this article does not address demographic differences, but readers may want to do a further review of the articles in the tables if interested in gender, religious, income, and class (freshman through senior) differences. Additional studies similar to the ones reported in this article are needed, but as researchers we also need to find ways of obtaining larger sample sizes, especially for those who have been homeschooled.

## PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS

Although the recent growth of homeschooling in America may not be an overall threat to public education in the United States today, some school districts are reporting that they are experiencing declines in enrollment, which ultimately means a revenue loss in their school districts (Hetzner, 2000; Vater, 2001). Conversely, researchers estimate that the homeschool population is growing at a rate of 7% to 15% annually. In specific regions of the country, such as Los Angeles and Chicago, the home-educated population is now expected to be the size of the public school population (Hill, 2000). This portion of the article reports on data from Jones (2002) and modifications made in Jones and Gloeckner (2004a) and reviews selected admissions policies across the country today.

Once compulsory attendance became law, the home-education population not only was reduced but was illegal in many states. Families homeschooling their children in the United States resurfaced as a viable alternative during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Knowles, Muchmore, & Spaulding, 1994). The many families that elected to homeschool their children during this period were either dissatisfied with public education or influenced by the writings of John Holt (1969), an influential critic of public education.

Today, homeschooling is legal in all 50 states. However, in spite of what homeschool families might see as a legal victory, college and university admission officers across the United States continue to grapple with how to address a growing population of the newly graduated homeschooled student that is knocking at the door of admission.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of college admission personnel toward the homeschooled graduate and, more specifically, to gain an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of admission personnel by examining their college admissions policies for homeschool applicants. The study was guided by the following research questions: What are the college admission policies for homeschool applicants? What are the attitudes and perceptions of admission personnel toward the home-schooled graduate population?

## METHODS

### Subjects

Fifty-five admission officers participated in this study. The admission officers represented institutions belonging to the Hawaii Association for College Admission Counseling, the Pacific Northwest Association for College Admission Counseling, Rocky Mountain Association for College Admission Counseling, and the Western Association for College Admission Counseling. We only surveyed admission officers who were members of 4-year institutions from these regional associations. We sent electronic surveys to all accredited 4-year institutional members in the Western and Rocky Mountain regions of the United States.

### Data Collection and Instruments

Jenkins's (1998) survey instrument served as a model for the present survey. From this model, we developed a modified three-part questionnaire to gather data on the homeschool admissions policies of 4-year colleges and universities in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. We selected these institutions because they represented the entire Western and Rocky Mountain regions of the United States.

Section 1 of the survey focused on Institutional Characteristics, which included institution type (state supported, private, or church affiliated), size, campus setting, and the Carnegie classification type. Section 2, Home School Admission Policies, requested information on the institution's admission policies for homeschool graduates. Section 3, Attitudes and Perceptions, requested information from admission officers on their perceptions and attitudes toward homeschool graduates.

### Data Analyses

The survey contained a total of 15 items. The survey instrument used rating scales, categorical scales, and rank-ordered scales. We analyzed the collected data using descriptive statistics. To answer the second research question, we summated the data from Questions 10 to 14, which helped us understand the perceptions and attitudes of admission officers toward whether officers expect graduates of homeschooling to find success in college.

### Findings

A 15-item, three-part questionnaire was e-mailed to admissions personnel at 159 four-year colleges and universities in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. Fifty-five responses were electronically received, for a 35% return rate.

TABLE 3  
Survey Respondents by College Type

Institutional Type	<i>n</i>	%
Church affiliated	5	9.1
Private institution	19	34.5
State institution	31	56.4
Total	55	100.0

### Section 1: Home School Admission Survey

In Section 1 of the survey, state-supported colleges or universities made up nearly 57% of the institutions responding to the questionnaire. Thirty-five percent of the admissions officers reported that they worked for private institutions and 9% worked for church-affiliated institutions. Thus, private colleges made up 44% of the sample (see Table 3).

Doctoral/research universities (extensive at 27.3%), master's colleges and universities (at 25.5%), and liberal arts baccalaureate colleges (at 20%) represented the three most common Carnegie types to respond to the questionnaire. The selected sample represented 36.4% doctoral/research intensive and extensive institutions compared to 27.3% in the actual sample, 41.1% were classified as master's-level institutions, and 22.8% as baccalaureate-level institutions. The remaining 8.8% were coded as theological, business, or engineering institutions (see Table 4).

### Campus Size

The distribution of questionnaires returned by campus size is shown in Table 5. The largest respondent group (27.3%) represented institutions with enrollments lower than 2,000 students. The second largest respondent group (23.6%) came from institutions with enrollments between 10,000 and 19,999 students. This was followed closely by institutions with enrollments between 2,000 and 4,999 (at 21.8%). The lowest reported number was for institutions between the enrollment size of 5,000 and 9,999 at 12.7%.

TABLE 4  
Survey Respondents by Carnegie Classifications

Carnegie Classification	<i>n</i>	%
Baccalaureate colleges—General	2	3.6
Baccalaureate colleges—Liberal arts	11	20.0
Baccalaureate/Associates colleges	2	3.6
Master's colleges and universities I	14	25.5
Master's colleges and universities II	2	3.6
Doctoral/Research universities—extensive	15	27.3
Doctoral/Research universities—intensive	5	9.1
Unknown	4	7.3
Total	55	100.0



TABLE 5  
Survey Respondents by Campus Size

Institution Size	<i>n</i>	%
Fewer than 2,000	15	27.3
2,000 to 4,999	12	21.8
5,000 to 9,999	7	12.7
10,000 to 19,999	13	23.6
20,000 or more	8	14.5
Total	55	100.0

### Campus Setting

Finally, respondents were asked to classify their institutions by campus setting. The distribution of respondents by campus setting is shown in Table 6. Nearly half (43.6%) of the responding institutions indicated that they were located in a suburban setting. Urban setting represented the second largest response (29.1%) followed by rural setting at nearly the same percentage (27.3%).

### Section 2: Admissions Policy

In Section 2 of the Home School Admissions Survey, we asked admission officers a series of questions regarding their homeschool admission policy. In the first question, we asked admission officers, "Does your institution have an official Home School Admissions Policy?"

Forty-one (or 74.5%) of the admission officers indicated that they had an official homeschool admission policy. The remaining 13 (23.6%) institutions indicated that they did not have an official homeschool admission policy. For those institutions that had an official homeschool admission policy, we asked the admission officers to indicate what types of documents were required for homeschool graduates. In addition, we asked admission officers who responded that they had an official admission homeschool policy to rank each required document by the level of importance for consideration of admission. Admission officers ranked these documents from 1 (*most important*) to 8 (*least important*). Table 7 shows the results of their responses.

The admission officers (43) said ACT or SAT test scores were the number one document required for admission to their institution and rated ACT or SAT test scores as the most important ( $M = 1.81$ ) for consideration for admission. Although 40 admission officers indicated that letters

TABLE 6  
Survey Respondents by Campus Setting

Campus Setting	<i>n</i>	%
Rural	15	27.3
Suburban	24	43.6
Urban	16	29.1
Total	55	100.0

TABLE 7  
Documents Required for Consideration for Admissions for Homeschool Graduates

Required Documents	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
ACT or SAT test scores	43	1.81	1.91
Essay	39	3.67	2.52
GED	37	3.95	2.68
Letters of recommendation	40	4.13	2.52
SAT II (Subject Tests)	35	4.46	2.92
Personal interview	37	4.49	2.65
Portfolio	33	4.64	2.86

*Note.* Mean rank with 1 being most important, 8 being least important.

of recommendation were required for homeschool admission, letters of recommendation ranked fourth for level of importance for consideration for admission among institutions. A total of 39 admission officers required an essay for homeschool admission and also ranked the essay second as most important for consideration for admission. Thirty-seven admission officers required a GED test scores and personal interview for homeschool admission; however, a personal interview was near the bottom for consideration of admission and a GED test score was ranked only third in terms of importance for consideration for admission of homeschool graduates. Thirty-three officers required a portfolio for admission, but these individuals ranked the portfolio as the least important among the grouping of documents.

Nearly one third (29%) of the admission officers also indicated other documents were required for admission of homeschool graduates. Other documents required for admission from homeschool graduates included a homeschool transcript, a GED if homeschool transcripts were not available, and transcripts from an approved school (accredited). Also, one admission officer stated that students must meet statewide eligibility test requirements for consideration. One institution indicated that they “would not consider a homeschool applicant unless the homeschool applicant had taken courses in a community college or four-year university.” Another institution stated that they would “only consider a homeschool applicant if the homeschool graduate had taken community college work to validate essential course work.” Finally, one institution reported that homeschool applicants must demonstrate second-language proficiency for consideration for admission, perhaps because this is required for traditionally-schooled applicants.

We asked those institutions that did not accept homeschooled applicants why that was the case. Only four schools responded to this question. One admission officer reported that he or she did “not believe that students [homeschooled] are prepared for college.” Two admission officers indicated that the lack of (high school) accreditation prohibited the acceptance of homeschool applicants. The fourth admission officer reported that their state policy prohibited them from accepting a homeschool applicant; perhaps this is due to the institution’s misinterpretation of the policy, given no other institution reported such a policy.

We also asked admission officers to define their institution’s selectivity (less selective, open admission, selective, most selective). Nearly half (27) indicated that they worked for institutions categorized as selective. Eleven admission personnel reported that their institution was highly selective, and 11 also reported that their institution was less selective. Five institutions reported that their institutions were considered open admission.

TABLE 8  
Number of Homeschool Applications Received Per Year

Applications Received	Frequency	%
Less than 10	24	43.6
10–29	22	40.0
30–49	6	10.9
No response	3	5.5
Total	55	100.0

We asked admission officers to approximate the number of applications received from homeschool students during the most recent academic year. Table 8 shows the number of admission applications received from homeschool graduates. Nearly 95% of the institutions indicated that they had received applications from homeschooled graduates. A total of 24 institutions indicated that they had received less than 10 applications from homeschooled graduates; however, 22 reported that they received between 10 and 29 applications from homeschool applicants. Only six schools, or nearly 11% of the survey respondents, reported receiving between 30 and 49 applications from homeschooled high school graduates.

### Section 3: Attitudes and Perceptions

This section of the survey examined the perceptions and attitudes of admission officers toward the homeschooled population. For this section of the study, we asked admission officers several questions about their expectations for the success of homeschooled graduates as compared to traditional high school graduates.

The first question of the survey asked admission officers to respond to how they expected the overall success of homeschooled applicants to compare to traditional high school graduates during their 1st year of college. Approximately 56% of the admission officers expected homeschool graduates to be as successful as traditional high school graduates, and nearly 22% expected them to be more successful. Only two admission officers expected homeschooled graduates to be less successful than traditional high school graduates. Ten (18%) admission officers did not have an opinion on the expected overall success rate of homeschooled graduates.

The next question asked admission officers to compare their expectations for the 1st-year GPA of homeschool applicants to their expectations for traditional K-12 schooled applicants in the 1st year. More than half (52.7%) of the admission officers expected homeschool graduates to earn a 1st-year GPA similar to that earned by traditional high school graduates. Although nearly one fourth (23.6%) expected homeschool graduates to outperform traditional high school graduates.

All admission officers at church affiliated schools expected homeschooled graduates to earn a similar 1st-year GPA as traditional high school graduates. Private and state institution admission officers expected different results, with only 50% of private admission officers and 51.6% of state institution admission officers expecting homeschooled applicants and traditional high school graduates to earn a similar GPA. A total of 27.8% of the admission officers at private institutions

and 25.8% of the admission officers at state institutions expected homeschooled graduates to be more successful in their 1st-year GPA.

The third question in this section asked admission personnel to rate how they expected the 1st-year retention rate of homeschooled graduates to compare to traditional high school graduates. Responses to this question revealed that 25 (or 45.5%) of the admission officers expected homeschooled graduates to have about the same 1st-year retention rate as traditional high school graduates. Twenty percent expected a higher 1st-year retention rate among homeschool graduates, and seven (or 12.7%) of the admission officers expected traditional high school graduates to be retained at a lower rate than homeschool graduates. A total of 16.4% of the admission officers did not have an opinion about potential differences between the expected 1st-year retention rates of the two groups.

In the next question, we asked admission officers how they expected homeschool graduates to compare with traditional high school graduates in the number of credit hours earned in their 1st year of college. In this response, the majority (65.5%) of the admission officers expected homeschooled graduates to earn about the same number of credits as traditional high school graduates in their 1st year of college. Only one admission officer expected homeschooled graduates to earn fewer credits in their 1st year than traditional high school graduates, whereas 20% of admission officers expected homeschooled graduates to earn more credits in their 1st year than traditional K-12 school graduates.

The fifth question in this section asked admission officers how they expected homeschooled graduates to cope socially in their 1st year of college compared to traditional high school graduates. This question revealed that 43.6% of the admission officers expected homeschooled graduates to do about the same as traditional high school graduates in their 1st year of college. However, 19 admission officers (or almost 35%) expected homeschooled graduates not to cope socially as well as traditional high school graduates (see Table 9).

The final question in this section asked admission officers if they would encourage homeschool applicants to attend a community/junior college before attending a 4-year college or university. This question allowed admission officers to provide their opinion on whether they would prefer graduates of homeschools to start at the 4-year level or seek admission to a community college first. The majority (72.7%) of admission officers stated that they would not encourage graduates of homeschools to seek enrollment at a community college before enrolling at a 4-year school.

TABLE 9  
Expected First-Year Socially Coping of Homeschool Graduates Compared to Traditional High School Graduates

Social Coping	Frequency	%
Not as well	19	34.5
About the same	24	43.6
Better	1	1.82
No opinion	9	16.4
Missing	2	3.64
Total	55	100.0

Only 16.4% answered “yes” to this question and would have encouraged homeschooled graduates to seek enrollment at a community college before entering their colleges or universities.

## DISCUSSION OF ADMISSION OFFICIALS RESPONSES

Nearly three fourths of the colleges and universities had an official homeschool admission policy. This is a dramatic change from Barnebey’s (1986) study, which found that more than 90% of surveyed institutions did not have an official homeschool admission policy. A similar study by Jenkins (1998) found that only 47% of the surveyed community college admission officers used an official admission policy for homeschooled graduates.

Our analysis found that the ACT or SAT test was admission officers’ most preferred admission item, followed by an essay or GED test score. Similar results were found in Jenkins’s and Barnebey’s studies, although 97% of the admission officers in Barnebey’s study stated that high school grades were a standard requirement. Jenkins’s study also revealed that no community college admission officers reported that they would require an essay for admission.

Our final research question asked about the attitudes and perceptions of admission personnel toward the homeschooled graduate population. Overall, more than half (55%) of the admission officers surveyed expected homeschooled graduates to perform about the same as traditional high school graduates (overall success rate, 1st-year GPA, retention rate, credit hours earned, and social coping), 18% expected homeschooled graduates would be more successful, and nearly 12% expected homeschooled graduate would be less successful. Jenkins’s (1998) study found that not as many community college admission officers expected homeschool students to be as successful (36%) as traditional high school graduates; however, in Jenkins’s study, 27% of the admission officers expected homeschooled students to be more successful than traditional high school graduates, and only 5.7% expected homeschooled students to be less successful than traditional high school graduates. Barnebey’s (1986) study found that nearly 46% of the admission officers that accepted homeschooled applicants expected them to be as successful, whereas only 4.5% of admission officers expected them to be more successful. In Barnebey’s study, 50% of admission officers expected homeschooled students to be less successful.

Our study revealed that only 16.4% of the admission officers would encourage homeschooled students to attend a community college or junior college prior to attending a 4-year institution. This is a drastic change from Barnebey’s study, in which 65.5% of the admission officers stated that they would encourage homeschooled applicants to attend a junior/community college before applying to a 4-year institution.

Overall, the attitudes and perceptions of admission officers proved favorable toward the expected success of the homeschooled graduate. More than 78% of the admission officers anticipated that homeschooled graduates would be as successful or more successful than traditional graduates in the 1st year of college. Although most colleges and universities in this study indicated that they had an official homeschool admission policy, doctoral (85%), state (80%), and church-affiliated institutions (80%) with enrollments between 10,000 and 19,999 (92%) seemed more favorable to the homeschool applicants.

This study revealed that nearly 11% of the surveyed institutions received between 30 and 49 applications each year from homeschooled applicants, 40% received between 10 and 29 applications, and nearly 44% received less than 10 applications each year. In contrast, Barnebey

(1986) found that 92% of the colleges and universities, and Davis (2000) found that only one college predicted increases in applications from homeschooled applicants. This may indicate that either colleges or universities are not coding students properly or homeschooled graduates are opting to take the GED test instead of fighting the institutions' admission policies. In our study, 33 institutions indicated they require homeschooled graduates to submit a portfolio for admission, 37 required a personal interview and GED, 35 required the SAT II subject tests, and 40 institutions required homeschooled students to submit letters of recommendation. This may indicate that admission officers are requiring homeschooled graduates to jump through more admission "hoops" than traditional high school graduates. Because of this, homeschooled graduates may opt for fewer "hoops" by applying to and attending community college prior to applying to the 4-year college or university.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals the tremendous shift, in recent years, in admission officers' attitudes toward and perceptions of the homeschooled graduate. More than 78% of surveyed admission officers indicated that they expect homeschool graduates to perform, overall, as well or better in their 1st year of college than traditional high school graduates.

Meanwhile, three fourths of the admissions officers revealed that they have admission policies in place for homeschool applicants. Colleges and universities, however, should still reevaluate their policies to ensure the removal of unnecessary barriers. If schools do not require certain admission criteria of other applicants, they must reassess the fairness of a policy required *only* of homeschool applicants. Schools that are unwilling to make their policies more homeschool-friendly will see homeschool graduates gravitate elsewhere and miss admitting a large and often highly successful percentage of the student population.

With the comparative results of the studies reported in this review, along with the positive reflection of college admissions officers on the potential of homeschooled students, it is clear that colleges and universities view students choosing their own homes as classrooms as viable candidates for admission. Just as in traditional schooling, however, there are excellent and poor examples of homeschooling experience. Because of this, the process of evaluating homeschooled students for college admission should be the same regardless of how the students acquire their knowledge.

## AUTHOR BIOS

Gene W. Gloeckner is a Professor in the School of Education at Colorado State University. He is Chair of the Research Methods program and teaches quantitative and mixed methods design classes. He has had more than 40 doctoral advisees graduate from CSU. He obtained his B.S. and Ph.D. from The Ohio State University and his master's degree from Colorado State University. This is his 25<sup>th</sup> year at Colorado State University and he previously worked at Montana State University, Illinois State University, and Ohio State.

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Dr. Jones brings nearly 27 years of experience in higher education with twenty years of enrollment management experience at four different institutions in the State of Colorado, Georgia, Maryland and Utah. He has also served in several diverse leadership roles throughout his career, including interim President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President and Chief of Staff, and Assistant to the President. Dr. Jones holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education and Human Resource Studies from Colorado State University and a bachelor's and master's degree from Utah State University.

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