

What Matters to Student Success: A Review of the Literature

George Kuh, Indiana University
Jillian Kinzie, Indiana University
Jennifer A. Buckley, Indiana University
Brian Bridges, American Council on Education
John Hayek, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

This report examines the array of social, economic, cultural, and educational factors related to student success in college, broadly defined. After summarizing the major theoretical perspectives on student success, the report synthesizes the research findings related to students' background and pre-college experiences, students' postsecondary activities emphasizing engagement in educationally purposeful activities, postsecondary institution conditions that foster student success, and the desired outcomes of college and post-college as indicators of success. It offers seven propositions about what matters to student success that lead to recommendations to promote student success, and areas where additional research is needed to increase the odds that more students "get ready," "get in," and "get through."