

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Achiever Scholarship

This memo discusses the Gates Achiever scholarship indicators. In 2001, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation initiated a major school reform and scholarship program in 16 traditionally low performing and high poverty high schools in Washington State. (You can read more about the Achiever Scholarship program on the Gates Foundation and the College Success Foundation websites.) Although the funding for the program came from the Gates foundation, the scholarship program was managed by the College Success Foundation (formerly the Washington Education Foundation). This memo briefly discusses the Achiever scholarship program, the survey questions and administrative data used to denote Achiever scholarship applicants and recipients, frequency distributions for each of the measures, and possible explanations for the slight discrepancy in the students' self-report of scholarship application and receipt and the administrative records.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Achiever Scholarship

As noted above, in 2001, the Gates foundation announced a major educational reform initiative, in which the foundation would offer 500 college scholarships (scholarship value is up to \$9,700 annually for up to 5 years of college) annually for 10 years to middle to low income students in 16 traditionally low performing and high poverty high schools in Washington State. The students selected to be Achiever Scholars not only received financial assistance, they also received mentoring while in high school and college and additional help with the college selection and application process. The scholarship program was unique in that the program was not targeted at only high performing students; in fact all students with a GPA of 2.7 or higher were eligible to apply. Moreover non-cognitive skills (e.g, positive self concept, realistic self appraisal, community service, and leadership potential) were one of the main selection criteria, as the program wanted to provide scholarships to talented and motivated middle to low income students that were unable to display their potential through the traditional means (GPA or standardized tests). The Gates educational initiative also called for structural reforms of the participating high schools. Specifically, the goal was for the schools to divide themselves into small learning communities (also called learning academies or a 'schools within a school' model). Also the program intended that the curriculum in the Achiever schools be reformatted to include more rigorous courses to better prepare the students for college.

In the context of the UWBHS project the Gates educational initiative is noteworthy in that three of the five original high schools selected to participate in the UWBHS sample (schools surveyed in 2000 and 2002) were also selected as Gates Achiever high schools. Further, of the four public high schools added in 2003 (and surveyed from 2003 to 2005), two were Gates Achiever high schools. In total five of the nine public high schools in the UWBHS sample are Gates Achiever high schools. To recap the UWBHS sampled nine public high schools in three school districts and in school district one, which was surveyed in 2000 and 2002 to 2005, three of the five schools are Achiever high schools. In both districts two and three, which were surveyed from 2003 to 2005, one of the two high schools is an Achiever high school.

Questions on Application to and Receipt of the Achiever Scholarship Program:

Note that these questions are only included in the 2002 to 2005 versions of the survey, as the program was implemented in 2001.

30_a) Did you apply for a Gates Foundation Achiever Scholarship?

(CIRCLE ONLY ONE)

- Yes.....1
- No2
- Have not heard of it.....3
- Don't know4

Skip to
Page 10

30_b) Were you selected to receive a Gates Foundation Achiever Scholarship?

(CIRCLE ONLY ONE)

- Yes.....1
- No2
- Don't know3

Application to and Receipt of the Achiever Scholarship Program from the College Success Foundation:

In addition to these questions, we received information from the College Success Foundation about who applied for or received scholarships. The information from the CSF was included in the UWBHS data file. The application variable (similar to Q30A above) is named gatesapp and the receipt variable (similar to Q30b above) is gatesrec.

Frequency Distributions for the Application to & Receipt of the Achiever Scholarship Indicators

From the Senior Survey (2002 to 2005):

S030_A Did you apply for a Gates Foundation Achiever Scholarship?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 Yes	1280	13.3	15.6	15.6
	2.00 No	5330	55.2	64.8	80.3
	3.00 Have not heard of it	1495	15.5	18.2	98.5
	4.00 Don't know	125	1.3	1.5	100.0
	Total	8230	85.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1422	14.7		
Total		9652	100.0		

S030_B Selected for a Gates Foundation Achiever Scholarship?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 Yes	732	7.6	25.9	25.9
	2.00 No	1902	19.7	67.2	93.0
	3.00 Don't know	197	2.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	2831	29.3	100.0	
Missing	System	6821	70.7		
Total		9652	100.0		

From the WEF:

gatesapp Applied for Gates Scholarship, source = WEF

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	6404	66.3	84.4	84.4
	1.00	1187	12.3	15.6	100.0
	Total	7591	78.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2061	21.4		
Total		9652	100.0		

gatesrec Received Gates Scholarship, source = WEF

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	8931	92.5	92.5	92.5
	1.00	721	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	9652	100.0	100.0	

Senior Survey and CSF Data Discrepancies:

There are some discrepancies between the responses noted in the Senior Survey and the CSF data. These discrepancies could be due to any of the following three reasons:

1. Students might misunderstand the question and answer about scholarships in general.
2. Students may not have wanted to note applying for the scholarship if they did not receive it.
3. The files from CSF included the name, the school and the year. Nicknames, changes names, and variations of first and last names may have resulted in failed matches.

There were 1,280 students who noted applying for a Gates Scholarship in the Senior Survey. 138 of the 1,280 students did not appear in the CSF file, meaning that they did not apply (or we could not match the record).

Frequency of Students (by year) who reported that they applied for a Gates Foundation Scholarship but were not included in the CSF data file.

	Frequency
2002	29
2003	38
2004	26
2005	45
Total	138

1,187 of the Senior Survey respondents were present in the CSF Applicant Files, indicating that these students had applied for the scholarship (per CSF administrative files). Of these 1187 students, 28 students did not report on Senior Survey Q30A that they had applied for scholarships. Two of these 28 students received a scholarship.

There were 732 senior survey respondents that noted on Q30B that they received a Gates Scholarship. An analysis of the CSF records confirmed the scholarship for 701 of these students, while it was not confirmed for 31 students. However, 5 of these 31 respondents were reported by CSF to have had applied, but they did not receive a scholarship.