Boutheina Ben Abdallah Research Proposal

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Most students who have freshly gotten out of high school oftentimes find themselves in a completely different and challenging environment when they first get to college. It’s honestly scary when you think about it, but many will find the right path for themselves right away or learn as they go along. Coming from a point of experience, it is hard retaining all this new information and getting used to multiple responsibilities. Students can also struggle with managing themselves financially, such as learning how to budget, balancing school, work, buying/owning a car, and other expenses.

For my field study, I am going to be researching the welfare of college students; specifically, CCNY students. I will be conducting this using online and in person interviews to help me gain a variety of responses. Everyone goes through life differently, so each person’s experiences I learn about will contribute to my understanding of how college life works. I will be an insider in this field of study, as I am a college student myself and can contribute to the demographic. With this research I hope to observe many unique and intriguing college students, and I wish to know what exactly they define as “the ideal college experience”.

MDRC is one of many organizations dedicated to helping low-income individuals and families with solutions to a wide range of issues they face. MDRC's Aid Like a Paycheck program, partnered with TICAS (The Institute for College Access and Success) is one example. It helps students use financial aid money more effectively during college. By distributing funds bi-weekly, the program enables the student to maintain a healthy balance between school and a job. This balance helps students stay on track and provides peace of mind. By balancing the workload and the learning process, students are less stressed and have more time for studying and homework. This is effective at improving their grades as well as their graduation rates.

MDRC is also part of a 100$ million-dollar fund for a Skills Training program backed by Google. This project was said to expand effective skills training and job placement programs for young Americans. The organization is currently working on meeting the needs of workers and employers, as they stated the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately hit low-wage workers, who have a greater unemployed rate than their higher-wage peers. Companies with strong local demand may be able to reposition workers through training programs that address skills and jobs. The organization’s webpage briefly discusses investing in equitable access to high quality early care and Education, as well as pathways to the post-pandemic workforce. With the global crisis triggering the recession, a greater need exists for high quality programs that allow students to achieve the skills, training, and qualifications they need to excel in the workplace. Studies demonstrate improved academic outcomes and higher earnings when students complete such programs.

I hope to get funding from the MDRC to contribute to my field study research and gain resources to aid me and other college students that are struggling with things such as homework, classes, jobs, and more. I believe that to better the youth and our future, we must start with student life. Coming from an underprivileged background, I wish I had someone to support me as I started my life and had access to resources I need. So, for students like me trying to get by a study on just what we are going through could greatly contribute to the educational field in the future.

The grant given by the MDRC will serve as a means of support to the college student academia. Students can get their own electronic devices to assist in coursework, an area for them to quietly do their work and rest undisturbed and place them in job training programs. There will also be financial advising in areas such as owning an apartment, buying a car or other methods of transportation, as well as teaching valuable things like filing taxes/ applying for financial assistance. Funding will also help in starting an organization to conduct these interviews, and assist the college students.

I believe the welfare of college students is a very important issue because it does not only affect students in the present, but also those in the future. With events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as current politics and constant changes in academic learning, it has been especially hard for students. Any college student today should be able to receive help and guidance on what are the best options that fit them. The future of education is ever changing, so I have no doubts that future college students will also face difficulties in figuring out their own lives.