



Missouri researchers to discuss college access and completion for historically underserved students

Legislators, staff, and other interested persons are invited to join [MOST Policy Initiative](#) for an interactive, virtual briefing on a re-emerging issue: College Access and Completion for Historically Underserved Students. The briefing takes place via Zoom on Wednesday, February 10th at 7:30 am.

To register, visit <https://mostpolicyinitiative.org/college-access-briefing/>.

The briefing will be facilitated by [Dr. Brittany Whitley](#), Education and Workforce Policy Fellow and Dr. Rachel Owen, Director of [MOST Policy Initiative](#). Dr. Whitley will lead a panel that includes Missouri researchers (bios below) currently studying some of the barriers and opportunities in higher education access for historically underserved populations.

“Higher education is an important determinant of future earnings potential and has significant implications for workforce development more generally,” Dr. Whitley said. She cited a recent report on equity in Missouri higher education that suggests, despite some improvements over time, there are still “significant limitations to college access and completion for students of color and low-income students.”

This briefing is part of the SciTech Briefing series, hosted by Missouri Science & Technology (MOST) Policy Initiative. MOST Policy Initiative, Inc., a nonprofit organization aimed to improve the health, sustainability, and economic growth of Missouri communities by providing objective, non-partisan information to Missouri's decision-makers. For more information, visit <http://mostpolicyinitiative.org/>.

[Michael Steven Williams](#), PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education in the University of Missouri-Columbia Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department. His research centers inclusion, diversity and equity to understand interpersonal relationships (socialization, mentoring and belonging among students, administrators and faculty at higher education institutions) and institutional accountability.

[Oded Gurantz](#), PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is also 2020 National Academy of Education Postdoctoral Fellow. His research combines economics and education policy to understand what programs and policies reduce educational disparities between historically underserved students and their peers.

[Bradley Curs](#), PhD, is an Associate Professor of Higher Education Policy in the University of Missouri-Columbia Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department. He also serves as the Director for the Missouri Statewide Cooperative EdD. His research uses an economics approach to study equity and access to education, especially as it relates to financial aid programs and other higher education costs.