Against the Odds

Formal Essay#3: Documented Argument

Please read carefully the information below from the Community College Research Center

Of first-time college students who enrolled in a community college in 2003–04, 34 percent earned a credential from a two- or four-year institution within six years. Another twenty percent had not yet received a credential but were currently enrolled somewhere. (Radford, Berkner, Wheless, & Shepherd, 2010).

According to a recent study by the National Student Clearinghouse, 15 percent of students who started at two-year institutions in 2006 completed a degree at a four-year institution within six years (Shapiro et al., 2012).

In a sample of over 150,000 students in community colleges in the Completion by Design initiative (funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), 13 percent of college-ready students earn a bachelor's degree in five years; this figure is 2.5 percent for students who are referred to developmental education (Sung-Woo Cho, CCRC Research Associate, personal communication, 2012).*

Source: Community College Research Center, Columbia University

Pre-Writing Discussion (Discussed in Class)

1. You are a community college student, what are your initial reactions to this information?

2. What questions do you have about the information?

3. What does this information mean?

4. How does knowing this information make you feel?

5. How does knowing this information affect the way you think about your life?
6. What is meant by a thesis statement? Fully explain your answer.

**Formal Essay 2: The Documented Argument**

According to this information, your success as a community college student is statistically unlikely. In other words, we could say that the mathematical odds of your success are very much against you. This essay assignment asks you to write a documented argument that will persuade the reader that you will overcome these statistical realities and succeed in accomplishing your stated academic goal(s). The purpose of the essay is for you to write a documented argument that convinces the audience, that, despite these success rates, you will earn your desired college credential within 6 or 4 years depending on the goal.

Think carefully how you might construct this academic argument. Of course, you will need to research information. You may want to begin with pages 84-110 of your textbook which discusses how to construct written arguments. Remember, that in academic writing you must demonstrate knowledge and, in this case, persuade a thoughtful and skeptical jury. As always, we will talk in class about various persuasive writing strategies, but reading the basics in your textbook is essential to doing well on this assignment.

The ‘documented’ part of the documented argument means that you will need to use sources to help establish credibility with the audience and make a reasonable argument. You may use any credible sources of information you choose to help construct your argument. The only source requirement for this assignment is that you include one primary source of information, an interview, as a part of you work on this assignment.

**Formal Essay 3: The Documented Argument in due on Friday 6/20/14.**