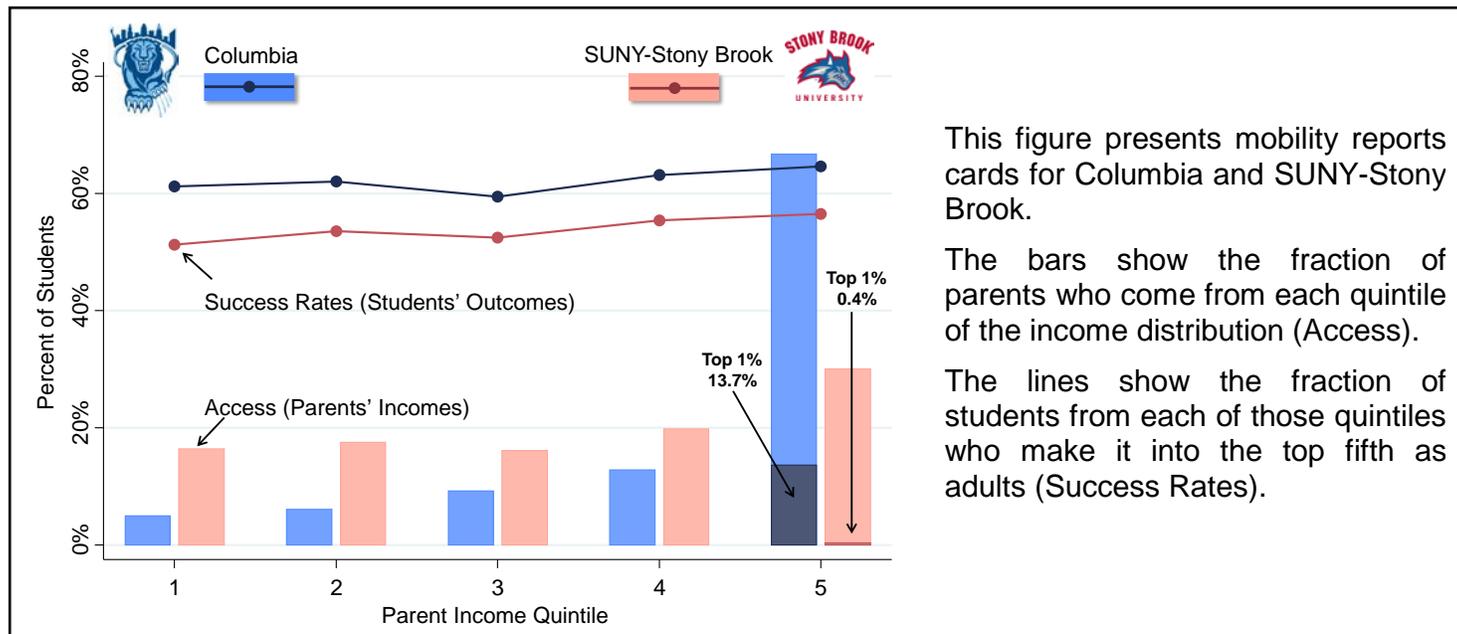


The Equality of Opportunity Project

MOBILITY REPORT CARDS: THE ROLE OF COLLEGES IN INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY

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We analyze the role of colleges in upward income mobility by constructing [publicly available mobility report cards](#) – estimates of students' earnings in their early thirties and their parents' incomes – for each college in America. We use de-identified data from the federal government covering all college students from 1999–2013, building on the Department of Education's College Scorecard.



This figure presents mobility reports cards for Columbia and SUNY-Stony Brook.

The bars show the fraction of parents who come from each quintile of the income distribution (Access).

The lines show the fraction of students from each of those quintiles who make it into the top fifth as adults (Success Rates).

We use these mobility report cards to document four results:

Result 1 [Access]: The fraction of low-income students varies substantially across colleges

- Ivy League colleges have more students from the top 1% than the bottom 50% of the income distribution
- Income segregation of students across colleges is comparable to that across neighborhoods in the average American city

Result 2 [Outcomes]: At any given college, students from low- and high-income families have very similar earnings outcomes

- There is little evidence that low-income students are “mismatched” at selective colleges

Result 3 [Mobility Rates]: Mobility rates -- the fraction of students who come from families in the bottom income quintile and end up with earnings in the top quintile – vary substantially across colleges

- Colleges with the highest bottom-to-top-fifth mobility rates include California State–Los Angeles, SUNY–Stony Brook, the City University of New York (CUNY), and the University of Texas–El Paso
- Colleges that channel the most students from the bottom fifth to the top 1% are typically highly selective institutions, such as UC-Berkeley, MIT, and Harvard

Result 4 [Trends]: Access for low-income families has fallen at high-mobility-rate colleges since 2000

- The fraction of students from the bottom quintiles at elite private colleges increased only slightly, less than the increase in the share of students receiving Pell grants.

To learn more, visit the [Equality of Opportunity Project](#) for the full paper, college-level data, and more.