

POTENTIAL ON THE PERIPHERY

College Access from the Ground Up



OMARI SCOTT SIMMONS

Foreword by Damon T. Hewitt

Paperback

9780813592879, \$37.95

Hardback

9780813592886, \$150.00

eBook

9780813592893, \$37.95

PDF

9780813592916, \$37.95

Date: December 2018

Pages: 208



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DESCRIPTION

Even high-performing students sometimes need assistance to transform their high school achievement into a higher education outcome that matches their potential, especially when those students come from vulnerable backgrounds. Without intervention, many of these students, lost in the transition between secondary school and higher education, would not attend selective colleges that provide greater opportunities. *Potential on the Periphery* profiles the Simmons Memorial Foundation (SMF), a grassroots non-profit organization co-founded by author Omari Scott Simmons, that promotes college access for students in North Carolina and Delaware. Simmons discusses how the organization has helped students secure admission and succeed in college, using this example to contextualize the broader realm of existing education practice, academic theory, and public policy. Using data gleaned from interviews with past student participants in the programs run by the SMF, Simmons illuminates the underlying factors thwarting student achievement, such as inadequate information about college options, limited opportunities for social capital acquisition, financial pressures, self-doubt, and political weakness. Simmons then identifies policy solutions and pragmatic strategies that college access organizations can adopt to address these factors.

AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

OMARI SCOTT SIMMONS is the Howard L. Oleck Professor of Business Law and the director of the Business Law Program at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is the co-founder and executive director of the Simmons Memorial Foundation.

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