



REVIEW UA DATA AND DISCUSS



WORKING WITH FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

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TERMS

First-Generation College Students (FGC):

Students whose parents do not hold a college degree

Continuing Generation College Students (CG):

Students who have one or more parent with a college degree

BARRIERS FACING FGC STUDENTS

Significantly different from CG peers

Lower enrollment in high-level math or AP courses

Lower ACT scores



High risks for attrition

Financial need

Academic difficulties

Feelings of disconnect from CG peers

Less engaged

BARRIERS FACING FGC STUDENTS

- Share 1+ underrepresented identities (low-income or race)
 - Intersectionality requires extra care
- About **33%** of all students enrolled in 4-year colleges in 2011-2012 were FGC
- **65%** FGC students either graduated or remained enrolled after 6 years
- **83%** CG students either graduated or remained enrolled after 6 years (Cataldi, Bennett, & Chen, 2018)

HEALTH IMPACTS

- Little empirical research on first-generation college students' physical health
- FGC students need counseling and psychological services at a significantly higher rate than CG students but do not seek services (Stebbleton, Soria, & Huesman, 2014)
 - Depression
 - Anxiety





**WHAT DID THE
LITERATURE SAY?**

MOTIVATION AND EXISTING SUPPORT NETWORKS

- Motivated by sense of degree attainment related to life goals
- Some students have stronger external support networks
 - Family/cultural capital
 - Kinship bonds on campus can replace or supplement familial support



**FOSTERING A SENSE
OF BELONGING**

FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING

- Contributes to academic resilience and mental wellness → persistence towards graduation
- Institutional factors
- A sense of belonging can mitigate isolation associated with FGC barriers

(Azmitia, Sumabat-Estrada, Cheong, & Covarrubias, 2018; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017)



LIVING ON CAMPUS

- FGC students who live on campus experience the greatest total effects of learning outcomes (Pike & Kuh, 2005)
- Living-learning programs ease transition



LIVING ON CAMPUS

- Residential community for FGC students
 - Comprehensive academic and social programming
- Positive learning and academic performance in common courses

Hall & O'Neal (2016)



ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

- STEM learning community
- High percentage of FGC students
- Mentoring component
- Positive, significant differences in course grades, first-year GPAs, and first-year retention
- Positive difference in sense of belonging
- Remedial courses alone may not benefit FGC students




Xu, Solanki, McPartlan, & Sato (2018)

FGC STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED IN 4 YEARS OR LESS

- Typically in-state, White, females, with a 25 < ACT score, and took 1 < AP exam
- Barriers they faced were largely tied to being FGCs
- Faculty mentors contribute to motivation and success
- Interest in major
- Initiative and planning

(Hui, 2017)





**HOW CAN YOU
CREATE A SENSE OF
BELONGING FOR
FIRST-GENERATION
STUDENTS?**

EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMING

- Difficult in practice
- Benefits are greater for FGC students than CG students (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Pelco, Ball, & Lockeman, 2014)
- Skills Learning Support Program (Wibrowski, Matthews, & Kitsantas, 2017)
 - FGC student program aimed at overcoming known barriers
 - Positive changes in motivation, learning strategies, resource management strategies and higher GPAs
 - Effects diminished each semester, not associated with graduation rates

EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMING



- Difference-education intervention program for FGC students
- Junior and senior students discussed social-class background → college experience

Stephens, Hamedani, and Destin (2014)

EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMING

- Closed the achievement gap for first-year GPAs
- More likely to utilize campus academic resources
- Less stress and anxiety, increased adjustment and engagement
- Safe, supportive environment

Stephens et al. (2014)





Questions?