"I am a First-Generation College Student" at NIU

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Learning Outcomes

- Identifying first-generation faculty and staff
- Understanding first-generation students’ needs
- Creating/highlighting first-generation student support systems
- Connecting first-generation students with faculty/staff and alumni who self-identify as first-generation
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for 2011-2012 academic year:

- 34% of undergraduates were the first in their families to go to college.
- An additional 28% had parents with at least some college experience but not a bachelor’s degree.

At NIU:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2017 Undergraduates</th>
<th>New Freshmen</th>
<th>All Undergraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>13454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compared to peers from college-educated families:

- Less family and social support
- Higher levels of stress
- More likely to come from low SES and minority backgrounds
- Interact with peers less
- More likely to live off-campus
- Work more hours per week
- Access to fewer supportive resources
- Received less academic preparation during high school
- Often enroll in community college, then may go on to a 4-year school
- More likely to drop out of college after the first year
- Cite reasons for attending college as
  - Upward social capitalism
  - Ability to help out their family financially after graduation

Bui 2002; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2013; Mehta et al., 2011; Soria & Stebleton, 2012
Transition to College Depends On:

• Support system
• How much they identify with the collegiate experience
• Amount of additional responsibilities (work and family commitments)
• Expectations about college established prior to matriculation, especially along race and class social identities
  – Who belongs?
  – Who would be successful in higher education?

Collier & Morgan, 2008; Orbe, 2004; Jenkins et al, 2013
Implications for Working with FGCS

- Understanding the importance of familial and cultural norms
- Balancing home, work, and school
- Addressing negative intrapsychic emotions (guilt, fear, sadness, loneliness)
- Connection to support groups
- Helping students bridge the initial gap of arrival/doubt to developing experience/agency
  - connection to financial, academic, and social resources
  - particularly with people and places who feel “safe” on campus due to shared culture/understanding of their experiences
Enhance students sense of belonging:

- Connection to early programs
- Need-based scholarship programs
- Social-identity based student organizations
- Community-building within residence halls
- Supportive faculty and mentors
- Academic support services
- High-impact educational practices (i.e. study abroad, service learning programs)
Identifying first-generation faculty and staff

- Survey to faculty and staff
- Proposal (initial meetings)
- Creating working group
- Evaluation
- Website updates
- Door decorations
Understanding first-generation student needs

- Proposal
- Working Group (guests)
- White paper/fact sheet
- NIU Today articles
- Evaluation
Building/highlighting first-generation student support systems

- Website updates
- Breaking Barriers
- Imposter Syndrome event
- Resource Fair
Connecting first-generation students with faculty/staff and alumni

- NIU Today articles on website
- Website updates
- Breaking Barriers
- Imposter Syndrome event
- Alumni/faculty speaker
- Faculty Social Room
First-Generation Support at NIU

- Breaking Barriers
- I am First Gen!
Are you a first-generation student?
After attending this event I feel more prepared for college at NIU?

- 46.67%
- 9.84%
After attending this event, I feel more confident that I will find support at NIU.
What was most helpful at this event?
Check all that apply. After attending this event, I plan to:
How did you hear about this event?

- Flyer
- Social Media
- Friend
- UNIV 101/201
- NIU Announcements
- Email
- Ground Sign

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14

0 5 10 15 20 25
How can you do this on your campus?

- Break into small groups for discussion
- Report back as a large group
References


References


