A WALK IN THEIR SHOES: TEACHING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Dr. Amy Hurd, Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Education
Dr. Amelia Noël-Elkins, Director University College
Dr. Tina Thompson, Associate Professor MQM

WHAT IS OUR ENVIRONMENT PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS?

- "...today’s campuses bring together people from groups that have had, and continue to have, profoundly different experiences in society.

- "Identity predicaments...destabilize trust in universities — trust in their fairness, their true conviction about the potential of all students, and their support for the development of all.

- "Do people have a negative view of my group? What do the pictures on the wall tell me? Am I in the right field? Will people believe in my potential? Such questions tend to destabilize trust, and destabilized trust spreads like spilled milk to many corners of campus life."

- "Trust-building is a game played largely on the ground. It’s who shows up, listens, shows interest and optimism about one’s potential, and helps out with a clear path forward that matters, that gets trusted."

WHY ARE CAMPUSES SO TENSE?

By Claude Steele

(A https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/20191126-Steele)

A QUESTION TO CONSIDER

How much do we really think about our students when we design our classes?

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FIRST GEN STUDENTS?

- 1/3 of ISU students are
  - transfer students
  - Pell eligible (EFC of $5,140 or less)
  - from underrepresented groups
  - first-generation (i.e., first-gen)

- 25% first-gen students leave after the first year

- Nationally 11% of low income, first-gen students graduate within 6 years

THE GATEWAY COURSE COMPLETION LINE

The hidden curriculum
- Processes & language associated with higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SYLLABUS Course finder FAFSA
Liberal arts Pattern sequence Semester UCollege

Pre-Conference Workshop | Ohio Undergraduate Education: Inspiring Practices for Student Success Conference
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FIRST-GEN STUDENTS?

- Student use each other (and online technologies) to study.
- Students use things like Quizlet as resources while we look at them as a detriment to learning.
- Less likely to report aspirations to pursue an advanced degree, those who do credit the influence of professors and advisors.

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS EXPERIENCE?

"I've never been a stranger to poverty, it has become a familiar and common thing in my life. I have been restricted of a lot of opportunities due to my financial struggles and I was afraid it would also get in the way of my education as well. With this type of aid, I can stop raking my brain about how or where I was going to get the money from. Every day, I lived in fear and panic and the more I thought about it, the more I would drift apart from my schoolwork. I became terrified for my future and saddened that all my efforts toward life would be for nothing. Now not having that fear, I have been given a chance to prove myself to be greatly educated. This small act of benignity changed my future because I was ready to give up after this semester."

– 2019 Persistence Funds recipient

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS EXPERIENCE?

Nearing the end of my first year at ISU it seemed like I had already hit a dead end with my college career. Not being able to sign up for classes was causing me a lot of stress on top of the stress from finals. I was starting to consider taking a break or even dropping out. Then Mrs. Lawless reached out to me about the award, once we met and she told me that I would be able to sign up for classes – I felt great. I was able to focus on studying for finals, which I rocked, and then I was able to spend the summer saving money for my upcoming semester. This award has helped me stay in the game and even get ahead. I am looking forward to next year and the year after that, but that might not have been possible without the award, so thanks."

– 2019 Persistence Funds recipient

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FIRST-GEN STUDENTS?

They are resilient, courageous, determined.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FIRST-GEN STUDENTS?

- May struggle to communicate with their family about their new culture – code switching
- Feelings of isolation… everyone else knows what to do
- More likely to major in public service-oriented careers

PONDERING THE IMPLICATIONS

What challenges do first generation students experience?
LISTEN, THINK, WRITE
What can faculty do to help our first-generation students succeed?

WHAT CAN FACULTY DO?
• Faculty are THE key to student success
  – Sense of belonging, mentor, faculty relationships
• Consider the cost of textbooks & access codes
  – Required vs suggested; late adds; course packets; reserve copies
  – Stigma of not using a book
• Understand first-gen students
  – Hidden curriculum
  – Nudges – resources, tips after first assignment/exam
  – Lack of food, housing, transportation

WHAT CAN FACULTY DO?
• Critical review of the curriculum & time to degree
  – Bottlenecks, gateway courses
  – DFW rates
  – Unnecessary pre-reqs
• Generate ideas to enhance student belonging
  – Major clubs, leadership ops, social events, service learning

WHAT CAN FACULTY DO?
• Use & update ReggieNet for grades
• Stop telling students… X # will fail this class, don’t care if you pass or fail
• Encourage the use of resources on campus… tutoring, office hours, Health Services, campus rec.
• Add a mini-midterm… a low stakes feel for exams.

WHAT CAN FACULTY DO?
• Providing study guides reduces the gap between those who come from excellent high schools and those who don’t.
• Encourage students to form study groups
• Build in activities to help students get to know each other early in the class

WHAT CAN FACULTY DO?
• Complete early grade reports
• Make retention and student success a faculty wide responsibility.

33
**WHAT’S ON YOUR LIST?**
What can faculty do to help our first-generation students succeed?

**QUESTIONS?**
Amy Hurd – arhurd@ilstu.edu
Amelia Noël-Elkins – anoelel@ilstu.edu
Tina Thompson – kmthomp@ilstu.edu

**REFERENCES**


