

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

A WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS OF
FUTURE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in Counseling, School Counseling

By

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ABSTRACT

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First-generation college students are entering institutions of higher education, but many are not graduating with a bachelor's degree. Their parents, unaware of the expectations that college requires of students, may not know how to best support their student. The purpose of this graduate project is to create a workshop to be facilitated by a professional high school counselor to be presented to future first-generation college students in high school and parents to discuss some of the difficulties these students may face and how families can prepare to tackle those challenges. Future first-generation college students and their parents will learn about the factors that have made first-generation college students successful and learn ways to apply it to their own situation to prepare for college.

Chapter 1: Introduction

During their senior year of high school, future first-generation college students (“FGCS”) may be maneuvering the higher education entrance process alone. First-generation college students are students whose parents do not have a bachelor’s degree (Pascarella, et al., 2004). They are the first in their family to enroll and graduate from a four-year institution. First-generation college students may receive help from school counselors, teachers, and other school staff, but FGCS still tend to be at a disadvantage compared to students whose parents have a college degree. First-generation college students’ parents do not have the first-hand experience to share with them and aid this process. First-generation college students have lower degree completion rates than students whose parents have a bachelor’s degree because they need to adjust to a university that their peers might already have knowledge about (DeAngelo, et al., 2011). First-generation college students then face another challenge after enrolling in an institution of higher education, because they have to meet professor expectations, work responsibilities, and adjust to a new social environment that their parents, again, do not have experience in.

School counselors work to have parents as partners in learning and collaborate with them to ensure student success (ASCA, 2004), but parents of first-generation college students often remain uninformed about what their student will face once starting college. High schools may do an excellent job at providing first-generation college students and parents with the resources needed to enter higher education such as components of a college application and financial aid applications. Knowing about the admissions process is useful when students are trying to enter higher education but is

not enough to ensure students graduate college. Families play a pivotal part in their student's education, and educators need to ensure that parents have the proper tools to provide support when their students are in college.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that first-generation college students and parents do not know how to tackle some of the specific challenges first-generation college students face in addition to the more common challenges other college students face. Parents often do not fully understand the highs and lows of higher education and what they can do to support their students during challenging times. Not knowing about what their students may face can affect their future first-generation college student's success in college because once FGCS graduate high school, they are often left to figure out college expectations and requirements on their own. First-generation college students graduate high school wanting to make their families proud by being the first to attend and graduate from college and there are success stories of first-generation college students demonstrating that it is not impossible. High schools should not only graduate students, but have them prepared for postsecondary education as well (ASCA, 2014). Even though students can reach out to former teachers and school counselors, the people who are the most accessible to them once in college are usually their immediate family. There are a few workshops designed by school counselors to address the college admissions process, finding the right college, and financial aid, but professional school counselors should also address the challenges and successes of first-generation college students with students and their families. A program is needed to address parents of future first-generation college students in understanding the transition to higher education.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this graduate project is to create a workshop to be facilitated by a professional high school counselor to be presented to future first-generation college students in high school and parents to discuss some of the difficulties students may face and how they can prepare to tackle those challenges. Future first-generation college students and their parents will learn about the factors that have made first-generation college students successful and be able to apply these lessons to their own situation to prepare for college. Through this workshop, parents of future first-generation college students can be better prepared to support their student through the hurdles of higher education.

Terminology

First-Generation College Student - generally referring to students whose parents do not have a college education.

Continuing-Generation College Student - generally referring to students whose parents have a college education.

Parental Involvement (Family Involvement) - parental participation in the education of their students. Parents include biological parents and guardians.

Bridge to Remainder of Graduate Project

To better understand the important role that parents of first-generation college students can have during their student's college transition, it is necessary to review the relevant studies and research regarding first-generation college students and the challenges and successes they encounter. The next chapter reviews late adolescent

development and studies regarding first-generation college students and their families. Chapter two also reviews research conducted with first-generation college students, families of first-generation college students, parental involvement, and college preparation workshops given to families by professional school counselors. Chapter three presents the development of the graduate project workshop, the intended audience, and workshop implementation factors. Chapter four concludes with a discussion, evaluation, and summary of the graduate project. Lastly, the appendix includes the project workshop presenter's guide, PowerPoint presentation, workshop handout, and post-workshop survey.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Development of Late Adolescents

Individuals reach middle to late adolescence around 15-19 years of age. High school students typically range from 14-18 years of age and experience physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth while facing the increasing demands of their academic work. Then, the college transition takes place usually at 18-19 years of age, and it is another time of growth. This section will explore how peers, family members, and life experiences can shape the cognitive growth of high school students, affecting how high school students think, behave, and perceive the world around them.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive theorist, Jean Piaget stated, “children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world” (Berk & Heward, 2013, p. 21). At this age group, high school students are faced with life tasks of planning their future educational and career goals that can predict their ultimate career endeavors. As mid- to late adolescent teens learn to identify their own unique interests, hobbies, and talents, they also experience an expansion of cognitive development.

Eccles and Zarrett (2006) state that at this stage in development, late adolescents are able to further understand the social and cultural settings in which they live. Also, universities provide late adolescents a place of independence to practice self-governance and freedom to choose and create their own lifestyle (Eccles and Zarrett, 2006). In higher education, youth are able to self-explore, create new ideas, benefit from new opportunities, and try out various lifestyles. According to Eccles and Zarett, (2006, p.

18) universities are also “social institutions that have become increasingly tailored to provide a sort of semi-autonomy to assist the transition into young adulthood.” When it comes to the role that family relationships play during this developmental stage, Eccles and Zarrett state that there is a positive correlation to youth’s well being. The emotional and achievement-related support that families provide to their student leads to their positive development (Eccles & Zarrett, 2006). They also state the areas that are critical for healthy development, such as students engaging in prosocial institutions (i.e. schools and community organizations). They state, “community programs have the potential to provide a safe setting for youth to explore themselves, their interests, and their abilities in a wide range of activities and among a diversity of people” (Eccles & Zarrett, 2006, p. 24).

Psychosocial Development

According to the ecological systems theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner, a child’s development takes place within a system of relationships affected by multiple levels of their neighboring environment (Berk & Heward, 2013). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems discuss the influence that a child’s systems have on their development. The impact of parent involvement on student outcomes can be explained by Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological systems theory, which looks at multiple layers of influence on a child’s development. The student is surrounded by five layers of systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem, the first layer, is where the individual immediately lives and consists of “activities and interaction patterns in the child’s immediate surroundings,” (Berk & Heward, 2013, p. 23). The next closest layer, the mesosystem, is the child’s relationship with family, school,

neighborhood, or childcare environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasizes the importance of the child's contact with individuals from their immediate sphere of influence. In particular, his work has discussed how a child's family is not the only setting where development occurs but one of several including a child's school (Bronfenbrenner, U., Scarr, Sandra, 1986). Conversely, a student's academic progress is not only dependent on what happens at their school, but it is also reliant on parent involvement in school life (Berk & Heward, 2013). This is where a professional school counselor can play a role in bringing the microsystem and mesosystem together for the benefit of the student.

The next layer of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is the exosystem, which is made up of larger social systems that interact with the student's microsystem and mesosystem environments. Examples of this would be the parent's workplace and social networks that can provide flexible work schedules, financial assistance, or advice (Berk & Heward, 2013). The fourth layer is the student's macrosystem, which consists of cultural values, laws, customs and resources (Berk & Heward, 2013). The last system is the chronosystem, which consists of the environmental transitions, and events that occur in a student's life. Scales et al. (2015) state that positive connections to educational institutions play an essential role in development just as positive, supportive relationships do. They also state that the developmental relationships with educators and other adults could empower students of color, working-class, and lower-income students, by not only caring for them, but also helping them "stretch, expand, and become more savvy and powerful in the workings of the world" (Scales et al., 2015, p. 156). According to Berk and Heward (2013, p. 23), the child and their environment "form a network of

interdependent effects” where the family, school, and student can have a positive relationship.

First-Generation College Students

First-generation college students are students who are the first in their family to attend college and whose parents do not have higher education experience (Pascarella, et al., 2004). First-generation college students are more likely to have difficulties in accessing information important in making college decisions, such as which college to attend and what academic choices to make, than students whose parents have a college degree (Pascarella, et al., 2004). This lack of information, in turn, affects FGCS’ degree attainment.

A study conducted by DeAngelo, et al. (2011) found that only 27.4% of first-generation college students obtained a degree in four years in comparison to 42.1% of continuing-generation college students. The study was comprised of data from the 2004 CIRP Freshman Survey and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC); being able to merge the two data sets, they were able to examine the retention and degree attainment of 210,056 first-time, full-time students at 356 four-year non-profit colleges. After six years, the study found that 50.2% of first-generation college students completed their degree, almost a double increase from the four-year mark. This study looked at the six-year graduation rates at various institutions such as public universities, public four-year colleges, private universities, and Catholic four-year colleges. The study revealed that all institutions struggle in graduating first-generation college students.

Characteristics of First-Generation College Students

Pascarella, et al. (2004) analyzed a study comprised of 2,416 first-generation college students and other continuing-generation college students at 18 different four-year colleges/universities that included retention and graduation rates. The longitudinal study followed students participating in the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL) over the course of three years to gather data on college student experiences and outcomes. The data was gathered through surveys on student background and an assessment on academic proficiency. What was found was that FGCS completed fewer credit hours at the end of four years and worked more hours at jobs than students whose parents had a bachelor's degree. First-generation college students' extensive work hours led to negative implications including having lower grades. Student's work responsibilities led to "low levels of extracurricular involvement, athletic participation, and volunteer work" than students whose parents had postsecondary education (Pascarella, et al., 2004, p. 265). The study's findings indicated the positive effects of being involved in extracurricular activities and having non class-related interactions with their peers but FGCS's work responsibilities prevented them from being as involved as their peers. The authors stated that FGCS are "significantly handicapped in terms of the kinds of experiences they have during college" (Pascarella, et al., 2004, p. 252). The first-generation college students who were involved in extracurricular activities gained stronger benefits from them such as critical thinking skills and degree plans. What also had a positive effect on FGCS was the involvement in academic/classroom activities that included studying and writing papers. The authors came to the conclusion that

universities need to be able to not only provide places for FGCS to be involved but also provide them the opportunity to be involved (Pascarella, et al., 2004).

Another factor contributing to first-generation college students' academic achievement is knowing, or not knowing, college expectations. Collier and Morgan (2008) conducted a qualitative study where they had 63 Portland State University students in two focus groups: first-generation college students and students with at least one college graduate parent. They also gathered input from 15 professors who taught undergraduate classes in either the business or the liberal arts and sciences departments to see what they thought about their own expectations and assignments. The researchers created a parallel set of interview questions for the faculty and student groups. Their goal was to hear both groups' expectations of what students should be able to do in their first- and second-year classes. Using parallel sets of discussion questions let them compare how faculty members' expectations matched students' expectation as well as see how first-generation college students' responses matched the responses of students whose parents have a college degree. The questions covered three areas: (1) the basic priorities for students' schoolwork, (2) how students were supposed to know about these expectations, and (3) the problems students encountered by not knowing about these expectations and how students could solve those problems (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Through this qualitative study, researchers found that first-generation college students wanted more explicit details from their professors regarding expectations and assignments. One student in particular stated,

“Some teachers expect you to read every word in the book and to be able to pick out all the important information yourself, and some are only expecting you to skim through some of the books and aren't going to ask any specific dates, or specific

information. And if you don't know which to plan for, you can't manage your time as well" (Collier & Morgan, 2008, p. 437)

Not only did FGCS want more detailed expectations, but FGCS also shared that they had difficulties in managing their time. FGCS stated they were advised to consider their time commitments carefully but regardless they continued to overcommit. A solution professors had in regards to these problems is that students should communicate to professors about the problems they encounter. This is something students often do not do, according to the professors, but they said students should make an initiative of building a rapport with them and taking advantage of their office hours (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Collier and Morgan (2008) noted that students whose parents with bachelor degrees were more familiar with higher education and dealing with professors because their parents were able to prepare them throughout their schooling. Knowing the role and expectations college students should have in the classroom empowers students to achieve their goals such as getting a higher grade in a class or graduating on time (Collier & Morgan, 2008). If FGCS have more work responsibilities, relative to their non-FGCS, and have difficulties learning professor expectations, it can negatively affect their academic achievement and in turn their graduation rates.

Another challenge facing first-generation college students is *imposter syndrome*. Imposter syndrome is an internal feeling of intellectual phoniness that is often experienced by high performing students (Clance & Imes, 1978; Ewing et al., 1996). First-generation college students have shown to experience higher levels of imposter syndrome (Petee, B., Montgomery, L., & Weekes, J., 2015). Stebleton et al., (2012) conducted a study to determine first-generation college students' self-perceived academic obstacles to achievement. Their study used the Student Experience in the

Research University (SERU) survey that all enrolled undergraduates are able to participate in. The survey was offered to 145,150 students across six public universities in the spring of 2009 but only 12,161 students completed the survey. Their study indicated that in particular for FGCS, imposter syndrome leaves FGCS never “feeling confident, grounded, or socially connected to their academic experiences on campus” (Stebleton, et al., 2012, p. 15). Due to imposter syndrome, FGCS can be disengaged from their academics, have constant feelings of not fitting in, and demonstrate an unhealthy pressure to succeed (Ross et al., 2001). Stebleton et al., (2012) suggested that university learning centers should focus on helping first-generation college students feel like they belong on campus and help build their confidence and self-efficacy. They suggested this could be done by celebrating FGCS achievements and involving their families as the student crosses important milestones such as moving from their first year to second year (Stebleton, et al., 2012).

Successes of First-Generation College Students

Demetriou, et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study that interviewed students who felt like imposters at their own university. These students mentioned feeling like their university’s admissions office made a mistake and that at any moment they will realize they made a mistake and revoke their admissions. Students felt overwhelmed by college expectations like they were not qualified to be there and now had to play the role of the college student (Demetriou, et al., 2017). Imposter syndrome and doubting one’s abilities can be a contributing factor as to why FGCS struggle to complete their diploma in four years, or at all.

In the same 2017 qualitative study, Demetriou, et al. looked at successful first-generation college students who they defined to be within one semester of completing their four-year undergraduate degree. The study was comprised of 16 first-generation college students who were financial aid eligible, were traditional-age college students, and were graduating within four years of starting their undergraduate degree. These students had to learn how to be in the role of the college student by learning to put in time and effort at the college level, which differs from high school. What was found through the study was that students who were actively engaged in their classes, participated in research, travelled abroad, and participated in student organizations had more academic opportunities and closer connection to the university, which in turn led to their college success. These activities were comprised of curricular activities and cocurricular activities. Curricular activities included engaging in coursework, participating in faculty-mentored research, and studying abroad. Examples of engaging in coursework were students who participated in class, completed course assignments, worked on group projects, completed research projects, communicated with peers, and worked with professors and teaching assistants. One thing that was noted from the study is that successful students did not simply go to class and go home to do homework; but actively engaged outside of the classroom, which led to further academic opportunities. An example that was given was of a student sharing with her academic advisor that she enjoyed learning another language and her advisor recommended her take a linguistics course. The student ended up enjoying the course and turned that into her major (Demetriou, et al., 2017).

In the same 2017 study, when discussing cocurricular activities, Demetriou, et al. (2017, p. 26) identified these activities as “social and learning experiences that complement the formal undergraduate curriculum.” The activities included participating in religious and/or ethnic/cultural organizations, community service, and joining a small community. According to Demetriou, et al. (2017), students who participated in student organizations said it made the university feel smaller. For those who participated in religious or ethnic/cultural organizations said it not only allowed them to have “fun” experiences, but also allowed them to explore their cultural identities. Participation through these activities also allowed students to find peer mentors that probably would not have found otherwise. For example, a student said that through community service she was able to appreciate other cultures and confirm that social work was the field for her. Aside from the small communities already mentioned, Demetriou, et al. (2017) also discussed housing communities. One of the students in the study said the people she met through her housing all became close and she became best friends with some of them. Of the 16 students included in the study, eleven worked part time and most of them found working beneficial. One student, Makayla, said working took time away from participating in other extracurricular activities but regardless, she was able to “gain many favorable things from her work experience” (Demetriou, et al., 2017, p. 28). Furthermore, all of these students had to go through processes for successful growth that include: (a) forming attachments to people and places, (b) developing academic skills, (c) setting goals, (d) coping with change and challenges, (e) finding purpose and meaning in learning, (f) developing autonomy, and (g) forming and solidifying social and occupational identities. Through these activities and processes, students said they felt

part of the collegiate community more and had a sense of belonging, something some of them had struggled with during their first year (Demetriou, et al., 2017).

Hebert, et al. (2018) also studied first-generation college students and what contributed to their college success. Their study took place at a state university in the Southeast and included ten first-generation college students with a university grade point average of 3.5 or higher and of low family income status. The researchers' goal was to understand the psychological and social factors that contributed to the success of first-generation college students in college. The researcher's method was a phenomenological interview to understand the students' own perspectives and experiences. What they found was that FGCS benefitted from "emotionally supportive K-12 educators and sustained family pride" (Hebert, et al., 2018, p. 99). The students' families wanted their student to attend college, no questions asked, but did not have the knowledge to support their student through the admissions process. This is when the students relied on their counselors and teachers. These students were describing teachers and counselors who encouraged them to apply to more rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement and honors classes, or more rigorous high schools in their state. These students' K-12 educators also provided emotional support when the students felt they had no one else to turn to and talk about personal issues, such as parents divorcing or family members dying. Once in college, FGCS who participated in academic enrichment programs such as the Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP) and the Ronald E. McNair Scholars program experienced support from peers with similar backgrounds (Hebert, et al., 2018). This allowed the students to not only receive training, but to have relationships with mentors that led to their resilience and success in college. Oftentimes while participating in these

programs, students' families did not know what their child was pursuing but remained supportive nonetheless (Hebert, et al., 2018).

Parent-student relationships were another factor studied that contributed to first-generation college students' success. In 2014, Wang's study focused on the communication that occurred outside colleges and the impact that family messages can have on students. The study included 30 students from a large Midwestern public university and used in-depth interviews to get interpretations of parental memorable messages. Wang (2014) determined themes in her interviews based on recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness. The themes she derived included "memorable messages about (a) remembering family, (b) focusing on family, (c) counting on family, (d) not worrying about family, and (e) setting a good example" with at least one of the themes present in all 30 interviews (Wang, 2014, p. 276). The study also led to the conclusion that strong parent-student relationships positively affect the transition and college prospects of first-generation college students. After failing a college exam, a student recalled an exchange she had with her family and the author stated,

"After she expressed frustration with her performance, her parents expressed support by sharing stories about their high school experiences that mirrored hers. This FGC student was relieved that her parents were not disappointed in her and that they would continue to support her no matter how she performed in college. This gave her confidence she would always be her parents' daughter no matter what happened in college and helped her realize that she could count on her family to stick by her side through everything she went through." (Wang, 2014, p. 279)

Other messages that students received were to not worry about the family and focus on their studies instead. Also, families told their students that it was their responsibility to show others that they can succeed regardless of the obstacles and hurdles they have had to overcome (Wang, 2014). These memorable messages gave students the confidence to

continue working and set a good example for those who came after them (Wang, 2014). The memorable messages students shared demonstrated the positive impact that their families, with no college experience, can have that help students towards college success. Through her interviews, Wang (2014, p. 282) established that the memorable messages families provided to students reaffirmed that FGCS could “depend on family relationships during college and that these family relationships would help them manage the challenges that were embedded in the transition from high school to college.”

Parents of First-Generation College Students

Parents of first-generation college students are limited in the college experience knowledge they can offer their student because they do not have a bachelor’s degree. Rondini (2016) examined how families of FGCS viewed the achievements of their children and reconciled their own experiences. The author conducted 30 interviews, 16 interviews with first-generation college students and 14 interviews with their parents between 2008 and 2010. The FGCS were undergraduates at a small, private northeastern university and the researcher traveled to interview the parents. Throughout the interviews, parents stated that they wanted their children to surpass the parent’s academic and occupational achievements so the children would not struggle as much as they had. Some of the families that were interviewed said that their students’ achievements attained “redemption for what they considered their own shortcomings” (Rondini, 2016, p. 104). One mother in particular, said that she accomplished being a good mother when her son received his full-tuition scholarship and another mother said that her accomplishments as a mother equaled her children’s educational attainment. The parents would talk about teaching their students to not make the same mistakes the parents had

made and instill in them the importance of higher education (Rondini, 2016). Family involvement in K-12 schools is vital and even more so when their students attend college. Parent involvement looks different in secondary schools than it does in postsecondary education, but their child benefits in both settings.

Parent Involvement

School counselors have a duty to send their students off into the postsecondary world with the tools that will make them successful. The results will not be perfect. Therefore, there must be a second line of defense, which can be the parents. Parents must be used as collaborators with schools to create a partnership that will have a more significant effect than if schools just acted alone. Parents can continue being a strong support system for students through parental involvement even if they do not have the college experience. However, parental involvement can have a different meaning to parents than it does to the school (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Secondary schools may wish that families were more involved in the school setting but parents may think that they are supportive enough. What parents may see as support, the school may not consider because it is not directly shown at school. Schools would like to see more direct involvement such as parents volunteering or attending school events frequently. When schools do not see this, they may assume that parents do not want to be involved (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

On the contrary, an ethnographic case study done with seven parents from a large, Los Angeles high school with varying education levels showed that parents support their students in various ways that may not be as obvious to schools (Auerbach, S., 2006). The study included two in-depth parents interviews. Some of those interviews were held in

Spanish to accommodate parents and were done with the assistance of a bilingual community liaison. The author discussed the ways in which the parents supported their students at home. As stated in the interviews, some parents motivated their students by stressing the value of education and hard work to encourage them to pursue college. The support they gave to their students was through emotional and moral support. As one parent said, he and his wife instilled the importance of an education by reiterating to their daughter that she needed to study and get good grades in order to attend a university (Auerbach, S., 2006). They stated that their form of support came in the way of verbal encouragement and narratives. Other ways that parents were more concretely involved in their student's schooling was by attending parent meetings at school or clearing the student of some home responsibilities so the student could focus on their homework (Auerbach, S., 2006). In this study, parents referred more to supporting their students' schooling rather than being directly involved in their schooling with the ultimate goal of having them attend an institution of higher education.

Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) reported on a study to see the effects of parents' self-efficacy at their child's K-12 school when the schools gave parents an opportunity to learn about the education system through the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). The study was done through presurveys and post-surveys, recorded interviews, and observations throughout the PIQE program. The presurvey included a questionnaire to know what parents believed was their role in their child's education as well as to know about their perceptions about teacher-parent communication. In the study, the parents participated in the PIQE, which encompassed eight learning sessions throughout the course of a year with the goal teaching parents the importance of parent involvement in

their child's education. The topics of each session consisted of: home-school collaboration; the home, motivation, and self-esteem; communication and discipline; academic standards; how the school system functions; and the road to university (Chrispeels and Rivero, 2001). After the eighth session, parents were given a post-survey. Results demonstrated shifts in parent-child-school interactions. These shifts included:

(a) more parent-initiated communication; (b) more positive support and interaction with their children; (c) more engagement in teaching activities at home, such as reading and homework help; and (d) more advocacy for their child to see records and press for an understanding about academic progress (Chrispeels and Rivero, 2001, p. 161)

This study demonstrates the positive interactions that can occur when parents are empowered and knowledgeable about the school system.

The content of parental involvement looks different at the postsecondary level than at the secondary level. Although the student may no longer live with their parents, it does not mean their parents are not and cannot be involved. Palbusa and Gauvain (2017) conducted a study to investigate parent-student communication about college during students' first-year in college. The sample included 344 first-year students, 201 of whom were first-generation college students from a public university in Southern California. First-year students were given an online survey with 25 questions about their communication experiences that measured three aspects of parent-child communication: the frequency, perceived helpfulness, and quality of their interactions with parents. The parent-child conversations would also measure the emotional support and instrumental support that parents provided to their students. Palbusa and Gauvain (2017) defined emotional support as "concern about the child's feelings about college" and instrumental support as "parent's availability as a resource about college". The results showed that

continuing-generation college students found their parent-child conversations more helpful and of higher quality than those of first-generation college students and their parents. The higher quality of these conversations also correlated to higher GPAs for these students in their first year of college (Palbusa and Gauvain, 2017). The study indicated that students whose parents had a college degree found their conversations to provide more instrumental support; on the other hand, first-generation college students found more emotional support from their parent conversations. Although students may not be living with their parents while they are in college, it does not mean that their parents are not involved. Their parents are involved but at different levels and frequencies.

Parents play a different role once students are in higher education. Holahan et al. 1994 studied the role that parents have in student's transition to college. In 1988, the researchers conducted an initial 30-minute survey to 241 college freshmen at the beginning of their fall semester. Questions, on a Likert scale, measured the support the students received from their parents and whether that support contributed to a successful transition to college. A second survey was conducted two years later in 1990 and 175 students from the initial survey completed the survey. Some of the items in the survey were "Is she (mother) critical or disapproving of you?" or "There are times when I've felt unhappy or down" (Holahan et al., 1994, p. 217). The students who expressed having a supportive relationship with their parents during the college transition had stronger peer relationships than those students who did not have a strong parent relationship during transition (Holahan et al., 1994). Thus, the authors came to the conclusion that social support from both parents played an important role in the transition to college for the

student. Even though parents were not physically with the student, they remained involved during their transition to college the first two years.

Obstacles to Parent Involvement in Student Higher Education

The biggest obstacle parents of first-generation college students have in getting involved in postsecondary education is that they have little to no knowledge of how to help their students (Palbusa and Gauvain, 2017).

Hamilton et al., (2018) conducted a study to see what role parents have in creating college experiences for their children. They analyzed a longitudinal data set of interviews with 41 families and their daughters who lived in the same residence hall floor in 2004. The daughters attended a large, public university in the Midwest and the student interviews were done yearly to confirm graduation and employment status. Student interviews included topics such as students' access to parental resources and college social experiences. Parent interviews were done once between 2008 and 2009 either at parents' homes, workplaces, or communities. These interviews covered a range of topics such as academic expectations and college social involvement. The authors separated parents into two groups: affluent and less affluent. In the study, affluent parents were of upper-class and upper-middle class and had two college-educated parents. Less affluent parents were lower-middle class and working-class families who did not have bachelor's degrees. Based on the interviews, affluent parents were able to provide their child with more academic and career guidance as well as encourage engagement in social and extracurricular activities. For example, affluent parents knew about honors programs at the university that offered students benefits such as small classes and career placement services that less affluent parents did not know about. Therefore, the affluent parents'

daughters were more likely to benefit from programs like this simply because their parents knew about them and knew how to get into them. Affluent families also knew more about the social scene in college and were able to provide guidance about college parties and sororities to their children. On the other hand, less affluent families felt like outsiders in the college life (Hamilton et al., 2018). These parents expressed wanting to help their daughters in college but did not know how. They felt unsuitable to offer academic or career advice, expected the university to offer comprehensive academic and career counseling programs, and were not aware of support programs available at their student's university. One of the students from less affluent parents had to change her major due to not knowing what the major required and it prolonged her graduation past the four years. The authors stated that if her parents had known what the major entailed earlier on, the student could have chosen a major that worked for her earlier (Hamilton et al., 2018). The researchers also stated that less affluent parents also knew less about the college social scene and therefore, did not know that the university has a program for low-income students that help the students achieve academic success and social engagement. Of the less affluent students interviewed, only a fifth of them were part of that program even though many more could have qualified for it had they known about it (Hamilton et al., 2018). The less affluent parents in the study wanted to provide assistance to their students while the student was in college but they did not have the knowledge or resources to be able to do so.

The Professional School Counselor

A transition from high school to college brings many challenges to first-generation college students. Professional school counselors in high schools strive to send

their students prepared for postsecondary life. Through meetings with students, parents, and stakeholders such as educators and community members, school counselors seek to meet the needs of their students in order for them to lead successful lives. According to the American School Counselor Association, professional high school counselors are “educators uniquely trained in child and adolescent development, learning strategies, self-management and social skills who understand and promote success for today’s diverse students” (ASCA, 2017, p. 1).

The professional school counselor is an individual who possesses at least a Master’s degree in School Counseling or similar area and meets their states’ credential requirement (ASCA, 2017). Professional school counselors have the knowledge and skills to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that will address the social/emotional, academic, and college/career development of students. The American School Counselor Association created a national model that school counselors have a responsibility of following and implementing at their school sites. According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2004), professional school counselors serve as student advocates who are qualified to meet the needs of students’ academic, personal/social, and college and career related goals through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling curriculum that focuses on students’ overall achievement.

Parent Workshops by Professional School Counselors

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (2012) has defined college preparation to be preparation for college attendance provided by school counselors to high school students intending to fulfill college admission requirements and

pursue a college education. Many professional school counselors deliver parent workshops that may cover college topics such as college admissions requirements and financial aid. It is imperative to know what professional school counselors are often doing to prepare parents and students for college. At the 2010 American School Counselor Association Conference, Melinda Gibbons presented on the needs of first-generation college students. She provided information on students who are FGCS and what challenges they may face such as having more difficulty understanding college expectations, less likely to be involved in college life, and feeling less prepared for college (Gibbons, 2010). In her presentation, Gibbons said that in order to help FGCS, school counselors must involve parents and provide them with concrete information about financial aid, college admissions, and community connections. Lastly, Gibbons provided information on ways to help FGCS such as by informing FGCS about the barriers FGCS may face early on and exploring their values with them so FGCS are aware of what their values are and the role they may have in college.

Holcomb-McCoy (2010) described an exploratory study regarding school counselors' beliefs, attitudes, and activities on parental involvement. The study includes data from the College Preparation Questionnaire funded by the College Board that took place at five high schools in Northeastern United States. The research included questions such as: "How often do high school counselors involve parents in the college preparation process? What are high school counselors' beliefs about their role in assisting parents to gain 'college knowledge'?" and "How much time do school counselors spend conferencing with parents about college admissions?" (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010, p. 117). The high school reported that less than 40% of their parents completed or attended

college meaning that more than half of their student population are prospective FGCS. The questionnaire had 120 Likert scale items that 22 school counselors responded to. Of the 22 school counselors that responded, 23% said they planned and held a meeting for parents of eleventh graders to cover college topics such as college application process and financial aid more than once a year and 68% said they only had a meeting like this once a year (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). School counselors were also asked how often they set up parent conferences to discuss and review college preparation and 45% of counselors said they did the parent conferences more than once a year and 32% of surveyed counselors did the parent conferences once a year (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). Thirteen school counselors agreed that school counselors should create college admissions workshops for parents even if not all of them did the workshops more than once a year. Based on the results, Holcomb-McCoy identified a need for school counselors to “actively include all parents in the college admissions process” especially when serving a school with a high population of first-generation college students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010, p. 121).

Fann et al. (2009) carried out an action research project that would increase parent participation in their student’s college planning and preparation process. The project was a collaboration between the University of California, Los Angeles and 24 local schools (2 high schools, 4 middle schools, and 18 elementary schools). Throughout the project, the authors wanted to see what parents needed to learn in order to help their student prepare for college and chose to deliver their project at one of the partner middle schools over a one-month period. The research questions the authors wanted to cover included, “What specific information is needed by parents of first-generation college-going middle school

students as they prepare for their children to go to college?” and “What methods are successful for involving parents in the college planning and choice process? How can information be disseminated in such a way that parents feel welcome and informed?” (Fann et al., 2009, p. 380). Over the one-month period, four evening workshops were delivered to a total of 24 parents in English and Spanish. At every workshop, the parents received notes and handouts to accompany the topic of the night. Each workshop covered different topics starting with an overview of the college choice process and suggestions to parents on how to be active participants in their student’s college-planning process on the first evening. The second evening covered step-by-step instructions for parents to help their student prepare for and apply to college. The third evening covered financial aid with a particular emphasis on demystifying fears of not being able to afford college. On the fourth and final evening, there was a review of all topics discussed emphasizing the strategies parents could use to support their student’s college planning and preparation process (Fann et al., 2009). In order to learn of the project’s effectiveness, the authors planned and executed workshop evaluations and follow-up interviews in English and Spanish. After every workshop, parents were asked to complete a short evaluation form that was also used to do the follow-up interviews. The interviews were conducted via phone and asked parents about their needs to help their student through the college application process and any questions or comments they might have had about the workshops including content, marketing, or delivery. Through the interviews, the authors were able to confirm that the workshops were useful in delivering college-related information to parents. The parents also stated that they wanted more information about financial aid, information on the different university and

college systems, college application process, college admission requirements, and college admissions tests. An important aspect the authors also wanted to address was how to sustain parental involvement and the workshops appeared to have been an excellent way of doing so. The authors noted that parents continued to use materials given at the workshops and were going on college campus visits with their student demonstrating to them that the workshops were successful in encouraging parental involvement in their student's college preparation process (Fann et al., 2009).

Militello et al. (2009) conducted a study to identify successful school counseling practices at 18 high schools. These 18 schools are award-winning or honorable mention schools and are large schools of over 2000 students. The purpose of this qualitative investigation was to identify characteristics of exemplary school counseling programs that address the achievement gap in college readiness. The researchers created a questionnaire to obtain data from various high school counselors from exemplary high schools in California, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and North Carolina. In their results, they found that professional school counselors and successful school counseling programs implement parent academic and financial outreach programs. The school counseling programs they viewed took into consideration parents' work schedules and potential multiple languages. The counseling programs in the study consisted of presentations that parents needed to support their students' college aspirations. The parent presentations focused on the topics of "the benefits of attending college, financing college, application mechanics, and financial aid application mechanics" (Militello et al., 2009, p. 15). The professional school counselors at these high schools effectively involved their parents in their student's college preparation

process by taking into consideration factors that limited parental involvement as well as covering college topics that were important to parents.

Summary of Literature Review

To summarize the literature review presented in this chapter, first-generation college students face challenges that continuing-generation college students do not face. Professional school counselors have delivered workshops for students and parents to prepare them for areas such as college admissions and financial aid but need to go beyond that. Programs are needed to address the challenges that FGCS may face and how to overcome those challenges. These challenges include not knowing college expectations, work obligations, time management, and imposter syndrome (Demetriou, et al., 2017). The literature reviewed describes strategies to alleviate some of these challenges by encouraging students to get involved in academic coursework, social organizations, and small communities while in college (Demetriou, et al., 2017; Hebert, et al., 2018). The literature reviewed finds that parents of first-generation college students need to know how to support their students when they attend college so FGCS have parents as an additional form of support when entering an unfamiliar area. It is vital for professional educators to expand their college preparation programs to support the college transition of first-generation college students and parents.

Chapter 3: Development of Project

Introduction

The majority of literature involving first-generation college students discusses the challenges as well as the successes of first-generation college students (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Demetriou, et al., 2017; Hebert, et al., 2018; Pascarella, et al., 2004; Wang, 2014). After reviewing existing literature, it became evident that there is a need to involve and educate parents of FGCS about the challenges the students may face and strategies to combat these challenges. The workshops that may already be provided to FGCS students and parents before the end of high school are typically related to the college admissions process and financial aid. School counselors may also deliver assistance on finding the correct college match and submitting needed documentation. While such programs and efforts are helpful, there is also a need to communicate to first-generation college students and their parents what they may experience in higher education.

Development of Project

As discussed in the workshop presented in the appendix of this graduate project, students and parents must first know who first-generation college students are and why it is important to talk about first-generation college students. The first and second slides in the PowerPoint presentation introduce the topic of first-generation college students and the objectives the workshop will cover. The third slide includes a video that does a succinct job of defining first-generation college students for parents. The video is from the American Youth Policy Forum, whose mission is to assist traditionally underserved

youth by working with policymakers. Then, the fourth slide provides additional insight as to what type of student qualifies as a first generation college student in order to provide insight to parents that a FGCS can also be someone whose parents attended a community college. The fifth slide covers current trends with FGCS to show families the low number of first-generation college students graduating college in four or six years. This information was gathered from the study conducted by DeAngelo, et al. (2011). The sixth slide introduces some of the challenges that may be more pertinent to first-generation college students so families can be aware of what their student may encounter during their first year in college. It is important to address not only the challenges, but also what has led to the success of these students. This is why the PowerPoint presentation then transitions to discuss the strategies that have been helpful to other FGCS succeed and how students in the audience can begin incorporating these strategies into their life. These strategies include academic interests, social interests, and family emotional support (Demetriou, et al., 2017; Hebert, et al., 2018; Wang, 2014). Slides eight and nine are designed to have families explore their student's academic interests and learn about how their first-generation college student can be involved academically to aid their success in college. Similarly, slides ten through twelve are designed to explore students' social interests to demonstrate that there could be a variety of student organizations and clubs that match student interests and the benefits of joining those organizations. If the student likes to travel or is interested in traveling, study abroad programs are also talked about in this section so families can learn about how beneficial studying abroad can be to a student's personal development. Lastly, slides thirteen through fifteen cover the final component of how FGCS can be successful, which is

through family support. These slides are designed to have families share with their student the goals they have for them to show FGCS that their families can also be motivation when they are faced with challenges in college. These slides were adapted from the Auerbach (2006) and Wang (2014) studies that focused on the effect verbal encouragement from families has on student achievement. In slide fourteen, families are also shown how words of encouragement from family members can be beneficial to FGCS during challenging times. Finally, slide fifteen offers suggestions on ways families can be involved at their student's college institution to celebrate the student's achievements while continuing to motivate the student throughout college. This slide was adapted from a study Stebleton, et al. (2012) conducted and recommendations they gave to university learning centers.

The workshop includes a handout that has each strategy that can help first-generation college students succeed that is covered in the workshop presentation. This handout is meant for parents and students to write down notes that they can take home with them and hopefully the students can take to college with them to remind them of strategies that can aid their success as first-generation college students.

The graduate project workshop also includes a workshop presenter's guide in the Appendix, which has been created to provide the school counselor with the tools necessary to execute a productive workshop for parents of first-generation college students. The presenter's guide can be modified depending on the presenter's time constraints and other specifics of their school site.

Intended Audience

“Supporting Our First-Generation College Students: A Workshop for Parents” is to be presented to primarily parents and families of high school students. The workshop is intended mainly for families who will have a student entering a 4-year institution and who will be the first in their family to attend and graduate from a 4-year institution. Families of all ethnic cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and diverse family structures can participate in. It is highly recommended that students attend the workshop with their parents, as there will be workshop components that include both parent and student. The workshop can be easily adapted for additional family members to attend, since other adults living in the home, such as grandparents or aunts/uncles may play a significant role in the family structure of a student’s life.

Personal Qualifications

The graduate project is designed to be presented by a professional school counselor who has a Pupil Personnel Services Credential and a Master’s Degree in Counseling. It is recommended for the professional school counselor to have some knowledge on the challenges that first-generation college students may face as well as have worked with some of these students during their time in high school so they can share personal anecdotes if available. The presenter also needs to be comfortable with leading classroom discussions to be able to engage the audience and have them participate when questions are asked. Furthermore, the professional school counselor will need to provide a translator for parents and families who speak in a language other than English, if necessary.

Materials and Environment

The workshop presenter's guide includes the following items: a sample PowerPoint presentation, a workshop evaluation, and a sample handout to be used during the presentation by student and parent. Suggested items for the PowerPoint presentation that are not included in the presenter's guide include: a computer or laptop, Internet access for the YouTube video, a computer screen projector, and a large white screen or wall. Large writing surfaces, such as tablets or desks, and writing utensils are suggested for the audience to complete the written portion of the activities. A copy machine is suggested to make sufficient copies of the handouts provided in the workshop presenter's guide and of the PowerPoint presentation in case families want to take a copy home. It is recommended for the presentation to take place in a noise-free area, with no thoroughfare, with lighting control, and large enough to comfortably accommodate the audience, such as a classroom, auditorium, library, or indoor cafeteria. Also, audio speakers and cords are recommended to connect to the computer or laptop. The workshop may take place outside of school hours to accommodate student and parent/guardian availability.

Workshop Outline

The "Supporting Our First-Generation College Students: A Workshop for Parents" includes a PowerPoint presentation, family engagement activities, and a post-survey. The workshop presentation includes the definition for first-generation college students with a video, current trends in first-generation college students, the different areas that benefit first-generation college students, and how parents can support students in each area. Depending on the audience and their prior knowledge, the presenter may

choose to not do the video and save some time. The workshop also includes family engagement activities for the student and accompanying family member. These activities are meant for them to discuss how each area of growth for FGCS can be applied to them and how they can use them once they are college.

Lastly, the workshop includes a post-survey for parents and students to provide feedback on the workshop. Families and students can rate the presentation, presenter, and submit comments on what they would like to see differently in the future. Before leaving the workshop, families will have the opportunity to take home a paper copy of the presentation if they would like to.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Summary

This graduate project presented a review of literature that demonstrated the need for a workshop for parents of future first-generation college students. This workshop was designed to be facilitated by a professional school counselor to inform future first-generation college student students and parents about the challenges FGCS may face and what strategies can lead to their success. In chapter two, the literature review examined the development of late adolescents. First-generation college students, their challenges, and their successes were also examined and the parental involvement that is seen in K-12 schools and then later in postsecondary education. Literature about the professional school counselor and the programs they have delivered to parents and students to prepare them for college was also reviewed. Chapter three provided a description of the development of the workshop designed as part of the graduate project, the intended audience, the personal qualifications, the suggested environment and materials, and the outline of the workshop. A single workshop on supporting first-generation college students was developed for students and parents of future first-generation college students. The workshop was designed to be presented by a professional school counselor. The “Supporting First-Generation College Students: A Workshop for Parents of Future First-Generation College Students” was created to supplement any already existing programs given to this population.

Evaluative Summary

Three professional school counselors were asked to provide feedback on the proposed graduate project's effectiveness if it were to be utilized and presented to parents at a high school. All three evaluators are employed full-time as high school counselors in the Los Angeles Unified School District located in Los Angeles, California (LAUSD) and working with high school students. The school counselors on average have about ten years of experience in school counseling at the high school level. All three evaluators were asked in-person and via cover letter for their participation in reviewing this graduate project.

Upon receiving the school counselors' confirmation to be an evaluator, the three professional educators were provided with the Appendix ("Supporting First-Generation College Students: A Workshop for Parents of Future First-Generation College Students"), a cover letter describing the evaluation survey, and an evaluation survey of the workshop. The evaluation survey included nine statements about the workshop and used a Likert scale to rate each statement with the following responses: strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, and not applicable. The evaluative statements include: 1) This workshop is helpful for 12th grade (future first-generation college students) students and their parents; 2) This workshop could easily be implemented at my school; 3) The length of the workshop (approx. 60 min.) is appropriate for parents; 4) The PowerPoint presentation is well outlined and easy to follow; 5) The handout and workshop evaluation are useful and appropriate; 6) The materials needed to conduct all the sessions are useful; 7) I would feel comfortable facilitating this workshop; 8) I would use this workshop at my school site; and 9) I would

recommend this workshop to other counselors. The evaluation also included an open-ended section for evaluators to provide additional comments or suggestions that would assist in improving the workshop.

Discussion of Evaluative Summary

After the three school counselor evaluators completed the evaluation, their responses were examined and analyzed. The professional school counselors circled a number, on a scale of one to five that best represented their thoughts on the graduate project workshop. The rating scale for questions one to nine was as follows: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree, and N/A=not applicable. All three evaluators responded with “strongly agree” to the first question about the workshop being helpful to 12th grade students and their families. Two evaluators responded “strongly agreed” to the second question about the workshop being able to be easily implemented at their school; and the third evaluator “agreed”. For questions three to six, the three evaluators said they “strongly agreed” to the PowerPoint presentation, handout, and materials being easy to follow, appropriate, and useful. All three evaluators also “strongly agreed” to them being comfortable facilitating, using, and recommending the workshop.

The last question asked the evaluators for comments that would help in improving the parent workshop. One of the three evaluators said, “This workshop is well thought out and puts students/families at ease when conquering the first generation college student transition.” The second evaluator said, “I think students and parents would appreciate if you provided some strategies that link directly to the challenges you presented at the beginning. It may also be beneficial if you had a handout for the

audience with tips for college.” Lastly, the third evaluator said, “Overall great presentation. Really provides an insight as to what the challenges of the first year of college would be. Would like to see the Spanish version of the presentation.”

Recommendations and Conclusion

A recommendation for future work would be to expand the workshop by creating additional workshop sessions based on the topics covered. By doing so, the professional school counselor can further dive into the specific challenges that first-generation college students face as well as focus more on the areas that help first-generation college students be successful. The workshop evaluation tool could help the school counselor gather suggestions and make the workshop cater to more of their audience.

The comments from the evaluators were helpful in seeing the effects that this graduate project could have on first-generation college students and their families. Most of the evaluators answered with “strongly agree” to all nine questions and this was an indicator that the parent workshop has pertinent information to assist FGCS and their family’s transition to college. One of the evaluators suggested providing a handout to families with tips for college, and although the workshop can be modified, it was not modified to include another handout since professional school counselors would have copies of the presentation available to parents. A separate handout with tips for college could be implemented as an additional resource from the school’s counseling department if needed. Overall, the evaluations from the professional school counselors were helpful in determining if the graduate project workshop would be helpful to first-generation college students and their families.

If the workshop were to be elongated, then it would be recommended to start at an earlier grade level such as second semester of tenth grade. Showing tenth grade students the importance of getting involved could also promote high school students' involvement in extracurricular activities. It could show parents the importance of getting their student involved in high school extracurricular activities and motivate their student towards doing so at the secondary level too.

For researchers in education, a recommendation would be to study the effects of this workshop on first-generation college students and parents who received this workshop in comparison to those who did not. It would be important to note if parents who received the workshop are talking to their first-generation college students about this when the time comes and the effect it has on their academics. A longitudinal study would compare the graduation rates of first-generation college students who received this workshop with their parents with those who do not and gather information on the effectiveness of the workshop.

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Appendix

**Supporting First-Generation College Students:
A Workshop for Parents of Future First-
Generation College Students**

By Natalie Santiago

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Workshop Presenter's Guide

Welcome Professional School Counselor!

The purpose of this workshop presenter's guide is to provide professional school counselors with the tools to provide an effective workshop on how to support first-generation college students in higher education.

Overview

The "Supporting First-Generation College Students" workshop is designed to be presented to high school students and their families during the first semester of senior year by you, a professional school counselor. The workshop is designed as an hour and a half long presentation intended to be done in one day to supplement other college preparation programs such as college admissions presentations and financial aid workshops. It is not often that future first-generation college students and their families get to learn about the challenges the students may face in college and strategies to overcome those challenges so this workshop is intended for that purpose.

In this single workshop presentation, you will teach future first-generation college students and their families about the challenges they may face in college such as not knowing college expectations, barriers to extracurricular involvement, and possible social concerns such as imposter syndrome. You will also present in this workshop about how to alleviate some of those challenges, such as having the student explore academic interests and social interests.

Research indicates the positive effect that family's emotional support has on first-generation college students; and, it will be important to inform families of this in this workshop. You will lead activities and discussions to engage students and their families

in learning about and creating strategies that will prepare their children for college and college degree completion.

This workshop presenter's guide provides you with a sample of materials that you may use to conduct this workshop, and resources that may supplement the presentation.

Materials

List of items provided in this workshop presenter's guide to facilitate this workshop:

- Sample PowerPoint Presentation
- Handout: Supporting First-Generation College Students
- Workshop Evaluation

List of suggested items that are not provided in this guide to facilitate this workshop that you should arrange:

- A sizable room that will comfortably accommodate your audience, such as a classroom, auditorium, library, or indoor cafeteria (suggestions for location include a noise-free area, no thoroughfare, and with lighting control)
- A computer or laptop with sound capabilities and internet access
- Audio speakers and cords to connect to the computer or laptop
- Internet access
- A computer screen projector
- Cords necessary to connect the computer/laptop to the screen projector
- A large white screen (or wall)
- Writing utensils to complete handouts for activities
- Copy machine to make duplicates of handouts for the audience

Modifications

This workshop is designed for parent(s) to attend with their student. The presentation can be easily adapted in the event that additional family members attend. It is important to consider that other adults living in the home, such as grandparents or aunts/uncles may play a significant role in the student's life.

The creator of this workshop strongly encourages professional school counselors to modify the resources provided in this workshop presenter's guide to fit the needs of your students and their families. Please keep in mind that the instructions and presenter's notes provided throughout this guide are suggestions, rather than strict guidelines, for facilitation of this workshop.

Procedures

Prior to conducting "Supporting First-Generation College Students: A Workshop for Parents of Future First-Generation College Students", please review the materials provided and the materials suggested to facilitate the workshop. Ensure the availability of the materials you deem necessary in conducting this workshop.

This workshop presenter's guide provides a sample PowerPoint presentation to be used throughout the presentation. You will need to review the presentation and the presenter's notes that accompany it. The notes are intended to assist the presenter with suggestions in presenting information in each slide. The notes also include comments on when to facilitate the activities embedded in the workshop and questions that can aid in the facilitation. You can choose to adapt the sample PowerPoint presentation, or you can develop your own presentation using the sample PowerPoint presentation as a guiding resource. The video on the third slide is also optional; depending on how much prior

knowledge your audience has on first-generation college students, you can choose to disregard the video or keep it.

Once you have gathered the materials and equipment necessary to conduct the workshop, schedule a date and time for the workshop that best fits your audience's availability. Ensure that the workshop fits your and any other presenter's schedule and that it does not conflict with an existing school event. For effective family engagement, it is best to announce the workshop event through multiple sources, such as printed flyers, school newsletters, and automated school phone calls.

Now, you are ready to conduct "Supporting First-Generation College Students: A Workshop for Parents of Future First-Generation College Students" at your site! Hopefully you will enjoy conducting this workshop and will want to do it again. An evaluation is also provided for you to receive feedback from your audience that will hopefully assist you in improving the next presentation. At the end of the day, you know your students and families the best, so you will be their best resource.

Supporting First-Generation College Students

Presenter's Notes:

Introduce yourself and your role at the school. Thank everyone for attending.

Introduce this workshop and its purpose: to know how to support their student once they are transitioning from high school to college.

Workshop Objectives

- Define first-generation college students and be able to understand some of the specific challenges first-generation college students face in college
- Identify and utilize strategies that may lead to first-generation college students greater chance at college success

Presenter's Notes:

State the objectives of today's presentation.

Who Are First-Generation College Students?



Presenter's Notes:

Introduce video, "First in My Family: Supporting First-Generation College Students." The video is an introduction of who first-generation students are and explores their challenges, sources of support, and what they believe is needed in higher education.

Length of video: 4 minutes and 50 seconds

After video has finished, you can ask "According to the video, what are some challenges that first-generation college students may face?" Once you get a couple of answers, you can say that you will be exploring other challenges in future slides.

References:

AmYouthPolicyForum. (2016, December 08). First in My Family: Supporting First-Generation College Students. Retrieved April 06, 2018, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAvitIDqB3w>

First-Generation College Students

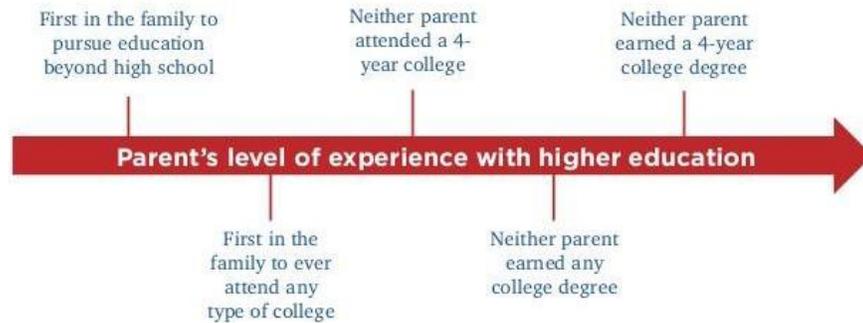


Image retrieved from
<https://image.slidesharecdn.com/2016ndlc-combined-final-160807021514/95/2016-ndlc-first-generation-students-2-638.jpg?cb=1470536139>

Presenter's Notes:

Ask, "Who is considered a first-generation college student?"; "Who in here is a first-generation college student?" Ask for a raise of hands.

References:

Image from
<https://image.slidesharecdn.com/2016ndlc-combined-final-160807021514/95/2016-ndlc-first-generation-students-2-638.jpg?cb=1470536139>

Current Trends with First Generation College Students

- Only 27.4% of first-generation college students obtained a degree in four years
- After six years, the study found that only 50.2% of first-generation college students completed their degree



Image retrieved from
<http://wvpublic.org/post/first-generation-appalachian-college-students-only-tough-survive>

Presenter's Notes:

Here are some of the statistics regarding first-generation college students.

There is definitely work to be done to increase these numbers.

Ask the audience: What do you think of these numbers? What do you believe is attributing to low numbers?

Reference:

Image retrieved from

<http://wvpublic.org/post/first-generation-appalachian-college-students-only-tough-survive>

The Challenges First-Generation College Students May Face

College Expectations

- Disadvantage in knowledge beneficial in the classroom



Time Management

- Limitations to involvement and work obligations



Imposter Syndrome

- Feelings of inadequacy and phoniness



Presenter's Notes:

Introduce some of the challenges first-generation students experience.

- College expectations: being able to read a syllabus or knowing how much professors expect you to read for class
- Time management: First-generation college students extensive work hours led to negative implications including having lower grades. FCGS's work responsibilities prevented them from being as involved as their peers.
- Imposter syndrome: Imposter syndrome is "an internal feeling of intellectual phoniness that is often experienced by high achievers".

References:

Images from

<http://mainstreetmix.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Goldfish-Jump-Out-Of-Bowl-2-expectations.jpg>.

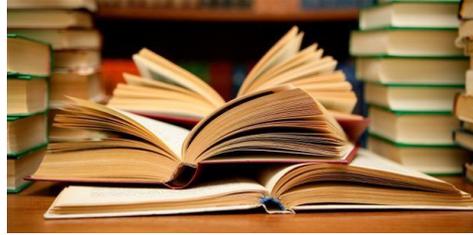
<http://www.youmustbetrippin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/496800929.jpg>

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.ohi/17232_imposter_syndromeef.png

What Has Helped First-Generation College Students Succeed?

Presenter's Notes:

You can say: We have discussed some of the challenges first-generation college students may face but there are success stories. Let's discuss the things that have helped first-generation college students succeed. Along with this, you all will be applying each topic to yourselves so you leave today knowing what to expect when you and your student get to college.



What Are Your Academic Interests?

Presenter's Notes:

Before getting into detail of what has helped first-generation college students, give parents a minute or two to talk to their student and reaffirm what their potential college major will be. If students do not have a major and are undecided, you can tell them to write down the academic subject that best interests them at the time. Encourage them to write down their major/favorite class subject on the handout along with their academic interests such as certain classes or learning about certain subjects. (approximately 2 minutes)

Then tell the student to share with their parent why they chose that major/academic subject, what got them interested in that subject? (approximately 2 minutes)

Then ask for 2-3 volunteers who would like to share their major/academic subject and why it was chosen? (approximately 4 minutes)

References:

Image from

<https://www.onlineuniversities.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/research-sm.jpeg>

Academic Involvement in College

Includes:

- Engaging in unfamiliar classes can further academic opportunities
- Participating in class
- Communicating with peers
- Working on group projects
- Working with teaching assistants and instructors

Benefits:

- Finding a new major
- Finding research opportunities
- Faculty mentors
- Higher grades

Presenter's Notes:

Provide families and parents with examples of being academically involved such as taking a class on an interesting topic that could lead to a college major. For example, a student who likes learning new languages could take a linguistics course that may turn into a major for this particular student.



What Are Your Social (“Fun”) Interests?

Presenter’s Notes:

Tell parents and students to talk to each other about the student’s interests outside of school. This can include anything from video games to community service to traveling. Encourage them to write down their ideas on the handout and then have two volunteers share out. (approximately 2 minutes)

Then ask for 2-3 volunteers to share with the audience what those outside interests were. (approximately 4 minutes)

Then you can transition into saying that a lot of the interests that students have now can be found on a college campus through organizations or clubs.

References:

Image from

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_e2QbgH3ePiw/TSMjUzWuYhI/AAAAAAAAAVE/EqVCMPnkQFA/s1600/socializing.jpg

College Social Organizations

Includes:

- Ethnic/cultural
- Religious
- Greek Life
- Community Service
- Small Communities
 - Major departments
 - Housing communities

Student Benefits:

- Make new friends
- Peer mentors
- Networking
- College won't be as intimidating
- "Home away from home"

Presenter's Notes:

In college, students will come across a variety of student organizations meant to connect to their interests. This is a great opportunity for them to continue their involvement with a particular organization or explore new ones that may interest them.

Define:

- Ethnic/culture: organizations are based on a particular ethnicity or culture
- Greek life: Greek organizations characterized by a ritual, badge and strong ties to friendship and moral principles.
- Community service: while a lot of the aforementioned organizations often do community service, there are groups on campus solely dedicated to community service
- Small communities: some dorms or apartments near campus can have housing communities to bring their residents closer together through a common theme or set of activities.

References:

<https://www.unlv.edu/sed/greek-definitions>

Study Abroad

Includes:

- Working
- Studying
- Travelling

Look for the Study Abroad office at your campus to see the locations!

Student Benefits:

- Brings student out of their comfort zone
- Exudes Confidence
- Independence
- Exposure to cultures
- New relationships

Presenter's Notes:

Some colleges provide students the opportunity to study in another country either for a summer, semester, or academic year. These classes can meet major or department requirements. Normally, the only additional cost would be travel expenses because the class(es) would cost the same as if they were on campus.

There may also be opportunities for doing internships abroad and be able to work outside of your school/hometown.

Studying abroad is a great asset no matter what your major is (but can definitely be more beneficial for some majors).



Presenter's Notes:

Ask parents and students to individually write down the goals they have for the student. For parents, what do they want their child to accomplish by going to college? For the student, what do they wish to accomplish by going to college? (approximately 5 minutes)

Ask for 2-3 volunteers to share amongst parents or students. Thank them for sharing. (approximately 5 minutes)

Acknowledge that this might be the first time students are hearing their parents' goals regarding the student and appreciate them sharing out.

Transition into saying that even though the high school can have their doors open to alumni, it is the family who will be closest to the student during their transition to college.

References:

Image from

<http://stpats.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/FFSN-graphic-hi-res-938x254.jpg>

Families to Students: Words of Encouragement

Include memorable messages about:

- remembering family
- focusing on family
- counting on family
- not worrying about family
- setting a good example

Benefit:

Strong parent-student relationships positively affect the transition and college prospects of first-generation college students from high school to college

Presenter's Notes:

Research has indicated that family's words of encouragement can keep students motivated during challenging times. No matter parents' level of education, knowing that their parents/family supported them is enough for many students.

Family Support (continued)

Engagement in Student's College Institution:

- Taking college tours to familiarize with college departments and offices
- Attending parent events such as open house
- Attending college ceremonies celebrating student's achievements



Presenter's Notes:

The amount of parental involvement is different in college. There won't be as many opportunities for parents to get involved and that is ok. This is a time for students to grow and become independent. This does not mean that there won't be opportunities for parents to learn about their child's new school.

References:

Image from

https://amhsnewspaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/17DAY2rl_00782-1.jpg

Summary

- First-generation College Students
 - Challenges
 - Successes
- Academic Interests
- Social Interests
- Family Support

Presenter's Notes:

Announce that you are nearing the end of the presentation.

These were the topics we covered; does anyone have any questions or comments?



Questions and/or Comments?

Presenter's Notes:

Open the floor to any questions, comments, or feedback that parents and students may have about the challenges first-generation college students may face or the strategies that can help these students succeed.



**Together, we
can do it! Thank
you!**

Presenter's Notes:

Thank everyone for coming and provide the option to ask questions individually either after the presentation or at a later time. Ask them to fill out survey to improve the presentation for next time.

Supporting First-Generation College Students

First-Generation College Students & Potential Challenges

Who are first-generation college students?

What are some of the challenges first-generation college students may face?

Academic Interests

Student's College Major and/or Academic Interests (i.e., favorite classes, topics to explore):

Ways to Get Involved:

Social ("Fun") Interests

Student's Interests Outside of School:

Potential Clubs/Organizations in College Related to Interests:

Effects of Getting Involved:

Family Support

Student Goals:

**“Supporting First-Generation College Students”
Workshop Evaluation**

Presenter(s): _____

Date of Presentation: _____

- I am...**
- a parent/an adult family member
 - a student
 - other: _____

Please rate the following statements:

1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree N/A=Not applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 2. This workshop lived up to my expectations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 3. The workshop is useful to me and my student. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 5. The workshop activities stimulated my learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 6. The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 7. The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 8. The pace of this workshop was appropriate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 9. The presenter was well prepared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 10. The presenter was helpful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 11. I accomplished the objectives of this workshop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 12. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

13. How would you improve this workshop? (Check all that apply.)

Provide better information before the workshop.

Clarify the workshop objectives.

Reduce the content covered in the workshop.

Increase the content covered in the workshop.

Update the content covered in the workshop.

Make workshop activities more stimulating.

Improve workshop organization.

Slow down the pace of the workshop.

Speed up the pace of the workshop.

Allot more time for the workshop.

Shorten the time for the workshop.

Add more videos to the workshop.

14. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?

16. What is least valuable about this workshop?

17. What is most valuable about this workshop?