

Not a Family Tradition

First-generation College Student Success

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Abstract

The first-generation college student (FGS) experience is unique. They face many different hurdles that their non-FGS peers do not. As our economy remains weak and those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to attend institutions at record numbers, retaining and graduating these students will continue to be important. With increased knowledge, higher education professionals can support these students in their journey through academia. FGS not only encounter a number of issues as they begin their journey in higher education, they continue to encounter issues throughout their time in academia (throughout their time in undergrad as well as continuing on to master's level work). Literature continues to support the idea that more needs to be done to support these students through their entire journey.

Results & Data

Findings suggest that despite any supplemental and financial support they may receive, FGS still experienced a multitude of factors that may inhibit their likelihood of earning a college degree. Even by removing or limiting identifiable factors, there is no guarantee the likelihood that FGS will attain a college degree. FGS experience a vast web of other barriers in their higher education journeys that cannot always be pin-pointed or removed.



Research Objectives

This study provides insight into some of the risk factors plaguing FGS as well as how they affect their success, gives a voice to an otherwise marginalized population, and supplies beneficial information to higher education professionals. This study poses the question what risk factors affect FGS success? The goal of this study is to understand what risk factors affect FGS success the most and to pose some ways in which higher education professionals can support them in overcoming their obstacles.

Materials & Methods

The study employed multiple methods for collecting, analyzing, and verifying data. To collect data, a focus group of 4 was held to gather insight from the members of the demographic who are willing to participate in the study. Prior to the focus group, a demographic questionnaire was filled out and a consent form was signed. The focus group was audio recorded and lasted about 60 minutes. The researcher led the focus group. The researcher transcribed the content recorded from the focus group. After transcribing, the researcher engaged in a coding process to understand the data that was collected. Data was assessed and the researcher looked for patterns in responses from students. Data was sent to the members who chose to participate to ensure that what the researcher captured is correct.

References

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