PREDICTORS OF THRIVING AMONG FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS OF COLOR

Laurie A. Schreiner, PhD
Andrea Kitomary, M.Ed.
Troy L. Seppelt, M.A.

Azusa Pacific University
Azusa Pacific University
Gustavus Adolphus College

2010 Annual Conference on the First Year Experience
Overview of Agenda

- Review
  - Student Success
  - Students of Color
  - Campus Involvement among students of color

- Thriving- Why care?

- Explanation of the Thriving Quotient

- Research Question and Findings

- Implications for practice- Advising and FYE
Opening Brainstorm
Student Success

- Outcomes measures
  - GPA
  - Intent to re-enroll or re-enrollment
  - Graduation

- Characteristics
  - Pre-College
  - Involvement theory (Astin)
  - Academic and social integration (Tinto)
  - Engagement (Kuh)
Students of Color – Research Review

- Student Success and Retention
  - Positive perceptions of the campus environment
    (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999)

- Sense of Community/ Sense of Belonging
  (Hurtado & Carter, 1997)

- Validation (Rendon, 1994)

- Family support (Morley, 2003)
Campus Involvement – Research Review

• Campus activities and academic performance
  • Religious involvement (Barnes; Brown)
  • Minority-based organizations (Barajas & Pierce)

• Community organizations (Baker)
  • Meaningful faculty-student interaction (Kuh and others)
  • Living and learning communities (Johnson)
What is missing?

• Individual assessment of internal attitudes and beliefs

• Examines the psychological processes of why students do what they do (Bean and Eaton)
Why is Thriving important?

- Attitudes affect student behaviors
- Surviving college is not the same as thriving on the journey through college
- Beliefs and attitudes are changeable
Conceptual Framework

FLOURISHING = Emotional Vitality + Positive Functioning

- Rising to meet life’s challenges
- Involved in healthy relationships
- High levels of emotional well-being
- Engaged and productive in the learning process
- Looking beyond oneself to the greater good of others

From Flourishing to Thriving

- Goes beyond psychological well-being inherent in flourishing
- More holistic construct that adds
  - Engaged learning and academic success
  - Sense of community and citizenship
College Student Thriving

Thriving

Academics

Interpersonal

Intrapersonal
The Thriving Quotient

Engaged Learning
Academic Determination
Social Connectedness
Diverse Citizenship
Positive Perspective

(Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, Pothoven, 2009)
Engaged Learning

- Meaningful Processing
  I can usually find ways of applying what I’m learning in class to something else in my life.

- Focused Attention
  I do not often find my mind wandering during class.

- Active Participation
  I ask my professors questions during class if I do not understand something.

“I’m energized by learning”
Academic Determination

- Goal realization (Hope)
- Effort regulation
- Self-regulated learning
- Environmental mastery

“My success is up to me; I hang in there and keep going.”
Diverse Citizenship

- Appreciation and exploration of differences
  Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship.

- Socially responsible leadership
  I value opportunities that allow me to contribute to my community.

“I can make a difference – and want to do so!”
Social Connectedness

“I have friends who listen to me.”
Positive Perspective

- **Optimistic outlook**
  
  When things are uncertain for me, I usually expect the best.

- **Subjective well-being**
  
  I am satisfied with my life.

“Life is good.”
What activities, practices, or involvements are predictive of thriving in students of color?
Who did we ask?

- Sample – 6,031 traditional aged students
  - First-year through senior year
  - First-generation – 20.9%
  - Female – 70.3%
  - Students of color – 29.5%

- Twenty-seven 4-year institutions of moderate to high selectivity - eighteen private, nine public

- Asked Thriving Quotient, activity/involvement questions, and satisfaction
The “pathway to thriving” is different for each racial group as it relates to activities and involvement.

Spirituality and a sense of community are significant predictors of thriving regardless of race.
### Different Pathways to Thriving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Female)</td>
<td>(Female) .18*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Female) .06***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05***</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Choice</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.15***</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td>0.13***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.15***</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td>0.13***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>0.24***</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
<td>0.27***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>0.40***</td>
<td>0.57***</td>
<td>0.40***</td>
<td>0.46***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Differential Effects of Campus Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*** (neg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living on campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Differential Contribution of Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Arrangements</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change after</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlling for other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Different paths to Thriving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Community</td>
<td>Positive Community</td>
<td>Positive Community</td>
<td>HS Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>1(^{st}) choice of college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Satisfaction</td>
<td>Learning Satisfaction</td>
<td>Learning Satisfaction</td>
<td>Campus Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Living Satisfaction</td>
<td>Health Satisfaction</td>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advising Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Living Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Issues for Students of Color

- Importance of **campus climate and sense of belonging** for all students
  - What messages of welcome and mattering do we send?

- Importance of involvement in campus activities
  - Campus involvement and living on campus contribute to thriving for **only Anglo students** - why?
Issues for Students of Color

- Faculty interaction
  - **African-American students are interacting more but benefitting less**—how can we help faculty mentor African-American students more effectively?

- **Spirituality is important for all students**, but especially contributes to thriving in African-Americans and Hispanics
  - How do we help students of color develop spiritually – especially in secular environments or in PWIs?
Recommendations for the First Year

• Create diverse living-learning communities with significant, rewarding faculty interaction
• Add spirituality into the FYE curriculum in discussions of wellness, coping, and stress
• Invite diverse representation on campus activities boards and in design of orientation activities
• Talent development approach to the first year
  • Campus ethos
  • Faculty development workshops
  • Advisor training
Academic advising is the only structured service on campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution.
...academic advising is the very core of successful institutional efforts to educate and retain students.... Quite simply, good advising should not be left to chance.

--Tinto, 1999
Questions?

For more information:

Dr. Laurie Schreiner  
Azusa Pacific University  
lschreiner@apu.edu

Troy L. Seppelt  
tseppelt@gac.edu

Andrea Kitomary  
andrea_kitomary@yahoo.com