

Proactively Meeting the Needs of First-Year, First-Generation Students

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First-Generation Among Us

- How many of us identify as first-generation college students?
- What does that mean to you?
- What anecdotes can you recall to illustrate your experiences as a first-gen student?
- In whom did you find a mentor?
- Through what did you find a sense of belonging?

Session Overview

- Defining “First-Generation”
- First-Gen Statistics
- Needs of First-Gen Students
- Ways to Meet The Needs of First-Gen Students (Theoretical and Practical)
- Questions and Discussion

Defining “First-Generation”

(It's not as easy as you may think!)

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Defining First-Generation

Three Possible Definitions

Parents/Guardians

Never enrolled in post-secondary ed

Have not earned any post-secondary degree

Have not earned a bachelor's degree

Defining First-Generation

OHIO's Definition

- *Parents/Guardians*
 - Have not earned any post-secondary degree

First-Generation Statistics

(National and Institutional)

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National First-Gen Statistics

Percentage of Enrolled Students

- 4.5 million first-generation students enrolled in post-secondary institutions in the U.S. (Engle & Tinto, 2008)
- Approximately 30% of students at U.S. colleges and universities. (Weaver, 2011)

National First-Gen Statistics

College Readiness

Percentage of ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject

Subject	First-Generation 2013	All Students 2013
English	42%	64%
Reading	24%	44%
Math	22%	44%
Science	17%	36%
All Four	9%	26%

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2013 First Generation College Students, ACT
The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2014 National, ACT

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National First-Gen Statistics

Retention/Persistence

- Four times as likely to leave higher education than continuing peers (Engle & Tinto, 2008)

Graduation Rate

- Among students enrolled at 4-year institutions who sought to earn Bachelor's degrees 47% of FGS obtained a degree compared to 78% of students who had at least 1 parent with a Bachelor's degree (Chen & Carroll, 2005)

OHIO First-Gen Statistics

Percentage of Enrolled Students (f-y cohort)

Term	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
% FGS	22.3	23.3	26.2

College Readiness

	FGS ACT Comp	CGS ACT Comp	FGS Avg HS GPA	CGS Avg HS GPA
Fall 2012	23.6	24.3	3.4	3.41
Fall 2013	23.4	24.4	3.42	3.43
Fall 2014	23.5	24.2	3.41	3.45

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OHIO First-Gen Statistics

Socioeconomic Status *(EFC Fall 2014 F-Y Admits)*

EFC	FGS	CGS
0	21.9%	5.6%
1 - 1,000	9.1%	3.4%
1,001 – 3,000	10.7%	5.1%
3,001 – 5,000	8.5%	4.6%
5,001 – 10,000	13.9%	10.6%
10,000 – 15,000	7.5%	10.0%
15,000 +	20.7%	41.2%
No FAFSA	7.7%	19.6%

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OHIO First-Gen Statistics

Academic Probation

Term	FGS Probation	CGS Probation
Fall 2012	19.7%	15.1%
Fall 2013	18.3%	12.6%
Fall 2014	18.2%	10.5%

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OHIO First-Gen Statistics

Retention/Persistence

Year	FGS Retention	CGS Retention
2010-11	73%	82%
2011-12	73%	81%
2012-13	73%	81%
2013-14	76%	82%

Graduation Rate?

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Needs & Characteristics of First-Generation Students

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Characteristics of FGS

More likely to:

- Be women with children
- Belong to minority groups
- Come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds
- Work more than 20 hours per week
- Live off campus
- Enroll in 2 year colleges
- Delay post-secondary enrollment
- Experience interrupted enrollment
- Enroll part time

Characteristics of FGS

- Lower aspirations
- Reasons for degree are more practical
- Lower academic self-efficacy
- Lower academic and social integration
- Less likely to feel like they belong

Characteristics of FGS

Lower levels of cultural capital

“Cultural capital is the value students gain from their parents that supports and assists them as they navigate the college experience...This lack of cultural capital leaves first-generation students without an accurate sense of what they must do to be successful in and out of class and is often a precursor to lower academic achievement and failure to attain a degree.”
(Ward, Siegel, Davenport, 2012)

Characteristics of FGS

Lower levels of cultural capital

- Parents less able to offer support and assistance
- Higher Ed and Institutional Jargon
- More difficulty navigating the processes of college campuses
- Unaware of the level of rigor they will face
- Unfamiliar with expectations of professors
- Don't know or understand the value of out of class involvement
- Cultural capital has a higher impact on FGS than CGS

Ways to Meet the Needs of First-Generation Students

Theoretical and Practical Approaches

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Ways to Meet the Needs of First-Generation Students

- Focus on the first year, structured experience
- Monitor Student Progress
- Provide Additional Support, Focus on Academic Support
- Increase Student Engagement
- Create a Culture of Success
- Active and Intrusive Approach to Advising

Ways to Meet the Needs of First-Generation Students

Theoretical Approaches

- Appreciative Advising
- Proactive Advising
formerly Intrusive Advising

Appreciative Advising

- Jennifer Bloom, 2002 (Bloom, Hutson, and He, 2008)
- Philosophy focusing on enhancing advisor/student interactions. Intentionally integrating the use of positive listening and questioning strategies.
- Through the use of six phases, appreciative advising allows for the cultivation of advisor/student rapport, providing the foundation for meaningful and co-created action plans that support the student in achieving their academic goals. (Bloom, 2008, p.11)



Why is Appreciative Advising a Good Fit for FGS?

Bolsters Self-Efficacy

- Advisors can help students **discover** their strengths through the use of positive open-ended questions.
- By supporting students as they **deliver** their plan the advisor helps the students cultivate her confidence.

Why is Appreciative Advising a Good Fit for FGS?

Increases Students' Aspirations

- Through this model the advisor encourages the student to **dream** big for her future.
- **Don't settle** for a good life, strive for a great one.

Why is Appreciative Advising a Good Fit for FGS?

Cultural Capital/College Knowledge

- As the advisor and student co-design a plan to meet the student's goals, the advisor also provides information about campus resources and tips for academic excellence.

Proactive Advising

- Robert Glennen, 1970s
- Combines advising and counseling
- Provide students with information before they ask for it, while also building relationships with them
- Helping students understand all their options
- Approaching students before negative situations happen

Why is Proactive Advising a Good Fit for FGS?

Cultural Capital/College Knowledge

- Advisors can proactively provide students with information about campus resources, policies, college/campus norms.
- Through proactive outreach and building relationships advisors provide a safe space for FGS to ask questions or seek support.

Why is Proactive Advising a Good Fit for FGS?

Self-Efficacy

- By proactively reaching out to students at the first sign of difficulty, connecting them to resources, and assisting them in building a plan for success, advisors can help students avoid negative situations
- Overcoming challenges successfully will bolster the self-efficacy of students

Why is Proactive Advising a Good Fit for FGS?

Campus Connections and Engagement

- Students who are connected/engaged on campus are more likely to persist/succeed.
- Advisors can provide a connection for FGS who are less likely to seek support.
- Advisors can foster connections between FGS and faculty, staff, peers, resources, programs, involvement opportunities, etc.

Ways to Meet the Needs of First-Generation Students

Practical Approaches at OHIO

- Educate the Campus Community about FGS
- Orientation
- Communication
- At-Risk Monitoring and Intervention
- Tutoring Services
- Midterm Grade Collection and Intervention
- Student Organization

OHIO's Current Strategies

Educate the Campus Community about FGS

- Identify FGS in the Faculty & Advising Center
- Educate staff/faculty about the needs of FGS at departmental meetings
- Share FGS reports about progress and programs with campus community
- FGS Web Presence with info and resources for students, parents, faculty, and staff (in progress)

OHIO's Current Strategies

FGS Checkout Session at Orientation

- FGS Students and Parents invited
- Opportunity to meet our FGS Advisor, ask final questions, discuss campus resources based on student's schedule, meet other FGS and their families
- Roughly 50% of FGS students attended
- 93% of attendees reported the session to be helpful

OHIO's Current Strategies

Weekly Email Communication to FGS

- Messages regarding resources, deadlines, and other pertinent topics sent weekly to first-year FGS and parents
- 97.9% of students who reported reading our messages said they helped them adjust to college life at Ohio University

OHIO's Current Strategies

Weekly Email Communication to FGS

Week	Topic	Open Rate	Survey Rating <small>(% who responded the email content was helpful in our end of term survey)</small>
Week 1	Welcome to OHIO	35%	93%
Week 2	Tutoring	35.2%	98%
Week 3	Study Skills Tutoring	42.9% (sent twice)	99%
Week 4	Campus Involvement	32.8%	97%
Week 5	Utilizing Instructors	40.2% (sent twice)	96%
Week 6	Supplemental Instruction	34.4%	98%
Week 7	Counseling and Psych Services	29.2%	98%
Week 8	Writing Center	27.9%	96%
Week 9	Academic Advising	43.9% (sent twice)	98%
Week 10	Drop Deadline	33.6%	96%
Week 11	Alden Library	26.2%	96%
Week 12	Finances (SFA, jobs)	32.6% (sent twice)	92%
Week 13	First-Generation Experience	33.1%	96%
Week 14	Stress and Self Care for Finals	26.3%	98%

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OHIO's Current Strategies

At-risk monitoring/proactive outreach

- Identify at-risk FGS through MAP-Works
- FGS not in structured support program
- Fall Transition Survey launches Week 2 of Fall Semester. 87.8% completion rate
- Reach out to them by text message as they complete their surveys
- Follow up regarding academic, social, and emotional concerns

OHIO's Current Strategies

At-risk monitoring/proactive outreach

- Texted 299 FGS during Fall 2014
172 (57.5%) responded
- Most common topics included course difficulty, campus involvement, academic resources, time management, homesickness, financial aid
- 77% of students who reported receiving a text said this was a helpful way to be contacted by an advisor

OHIO's Current Strategies

“I feel like texting in today’s (world) is more personal for a college student and does not seem as automated as an email. Also it is more convenient as a student to text sometimes.”

“The texts were just nice, it made me feel like someone in the university actually cared about me. It’s so nice knowing I can go to Ms. Lash for any questions or concerns I may have. Honestly, she basically helped me turn around my semester. Not that my grades were awful, in a way she just helped me get out there more on campus and get involved.”

OHIO's Current Strategies

Free Tutoring for FGS

- FGS not in another program that offers paid tutoring services utilized 110.5 hours of tutoring through our office in Fall 2014
- Beginning Spring 2015 we will be able to offer this service to all undergraduate Athens campus FGS

OHIO's Current Strategies

Midterm Grade Intervention—Fall 2014

- Requested 4,871 FGS grades
- Received 2,576 (52.88%) responses
- Celebrated grades of B or higher by email (1,200 grades)
- Intervened by email, text, and phone regarding grades of C- or lower (446 grades)

OHIO's Current Strategies

In-Person Meetings with FGS

- As a result of our outreach and intervention efforts many students came in to our office to meet with our advisors
- 28% (54/191) of students who responded to our fall survey said they met face to face
- 36% reported coming in as a result of an email, 18% from a text, 28% from referral
- 98% said the meeting was helpful

OHIO's Current Strategies

“She was very nice and helpful, and she attended to all my main problems from personal relationships to goals in college. Great all around help.”

“Advisor was nice and knew exactly what to tell me before I had even walked in.”

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OHIO's Current Strategies

FGS Student Organization

"It feels awesome to have been a part of the group of people who started the org. All of us have gotten so close and I feel as though I've made some really good friends. It feels good to know that I was a part of something new and that we are working to help other First Gen students. I hope that over my four years at Ohio University that we grow into the triple digits when it comes to members. Regardless of how big we get though, I will always be proud to call myself a First Gen Student and I will also always be proud of our group We Are First."

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Programmatic Goals

- First-Generation Seminar Course
- Partnership with Admissions
- Faculty/Staff Mentoring Program
- Leadership Awards
- Scholarships

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How Do We Know That What We're Doing is Effective?

(A work in progress!)

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How Do We Know What We're Doing Is Effective?

Retention Data

Our FGS retention has improved significantly and the gap between FGS and CGS retention is lessening

Year	FGS Retention	CGS Retention	OHIO Retention
2010-11	73%	82%	80%
2011-2012	73%	81%	79%
2012-2013	73%	81%	79%
2013-2014	76%	82%	80%

How Do We Know What We're Doing Is Effective?

Academic Probation Data

Our FGS probation rate has decreased

Year	FGS Probation	CGS Probation	OHIO Probation
Fall 2012	19.7%	15.1%	16.1%
Fall 2013	18.3%	12.6%	14.3%
Fall 2014	18.2%	10.5%	12.8%

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How Do We Know What We're Doing Is Effective?

FGS Testimonial:

“I feel so welcomed to have to have someone in the university who somewhat looks out for me and does anything and everything in her power to benefit me as a student and person. Being able to go out and be myself I was able to make new friendships along the way, it's like you guys all understand how hard and difficult any year in college can be, especially your first semester/year. So thank you mainly Angela Lash for being able to help me with any difficulties I may have came to you about and any new information you have given me.”

How Do We Know What We're Doing Is Effective?

FGS Testimonial:

“The emails were very helpful in providing information that I otherwise would not have known. They helped me to realize that I was not alone in the overwhelming feelings that I had about college. Being a first-generation student it is very important to me that I am successful here and this program made me sure that I can do it.”

How Do We Know What We're Doing Is Effective?

FGS Testimonial:

“When I arrived at the University, I was really lost. The whole experience was new and I didn't really know where to start. I paid a visit to Angela Lash in the Advising Center and by the end of my visit I was a lot more confident in my abilities, and I had found a confidante in Ms. Lash.”



Thank You!

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