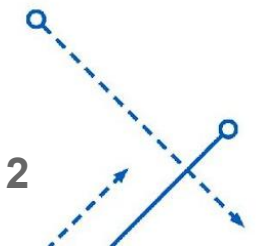


# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS: ADVISING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS TO BE CAREER READY

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# Agenda for today:

- Information about first-generation college students:
  - Definitions
  - Numbers
  - Characteristics
  - Barriers
- The college experience and career readiness.
- Advising strategies for first-generation college students to be career ready.

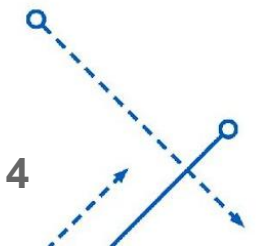


# First-generation College Students

## First-generation college student defined

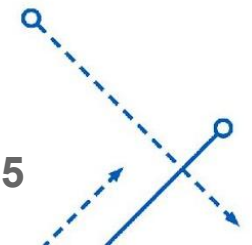
- Multiple definitions are used to define this population.
- The definition choice has implications for college administrators.
- Two frequent definitions:
  - 1) students whose parents never received a bachelor's degree
  - 2) students whose parents never persisted beyond a high school diploma

(Ward, Siegel & Davenport, 2012)



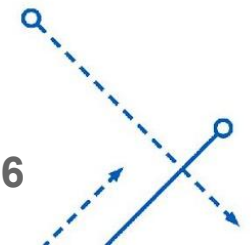
## The Numbers....

- “First-generation students represent a significant and growing portion of higher education enrollments, between **22 percent** and **47 percent**, depending on how they are defined”  
(Choy, 2001)



## Demographics....

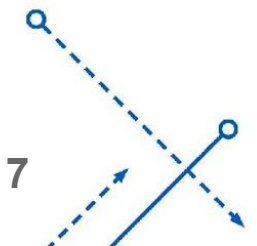
- First-generation students are more likely than continuing generation peers to be from an underrepresented minority group.
- First-generation students are more likely to be from low socioeconomic groups (SES).



## First-generation students are more likely to:

- work while in college
- work more hours
- live at home (commute)
- support financial dependents
- report less family support

(Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak & Terenziani, 2004; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Gibbons & Borders, 2010)

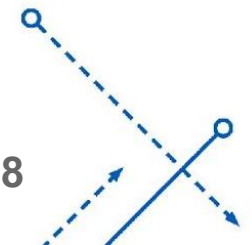


## So why is this important?

The academic, social, and financial disadvantages of first generation students lead to:

- worse performance
- lower retention rates
- lower completion rates

(D'Amico & Dika, 2013; Ishitani, 2016; Pascarella et al., 2004)

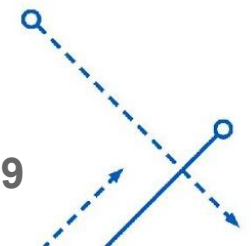




## Common barriers for first-generation students

- Less academically prepared than continuing generation peers.
- Lack positive self esteem or self efficacy.
- Lower educational aspirations.
- Less likely to engage in college extracurricular activities.
- Feel less sense of belonging/imposter syndrome.

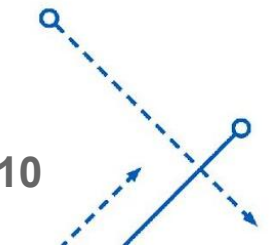
(Maietta, 2016)



## First-generation employment patterns

First-generation students graduate at lower rates and remain unemployed and underemployed longer than their continuing generation peers.

(Kriefer Cohen & Turner Johnson, 2018)



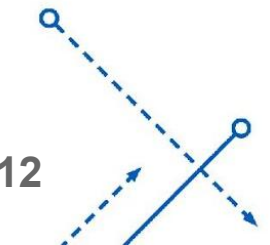
The background of the slide is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this background is a complex, abstract pattern of white lines. These lines include straight lines, dashed lines, and curved lines. Many of these lines have small white circles at their endpoints, and some have arrowheads pointing in various directions. The pattern is dense and occupies the right half of the slide, creating a sense of movement and interconnectedness.

# The College Experience and Career Readiness

## What makes a college experience great?

- In 2014, Gallup and Purdue University began measuring the impact of the experiences students have in college on their later lives that showed there are six key collegiate experiences (“The Big Six”) that are critical to being engaged at work.
- College graduates that **all the big six** of these collegiate experiences, **65%** were engaged at work.
- College graduates that **did not have any of the big six** experiences, **only 25%** were engaged at work.

(Gallup, 2017)



## “The Big Six Experiences”

1. Had at least one professor who made you excited about learning.
2. Had professors who cared about you as a person.
3. Had a mentor who encouraged you to pursue your goals and dreams.
4. Worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete.
5. Had an internship or job that allowed you to apply what you were learning in the classroom.
6. Were extremely active in extracurricular activities and organizations

## What is career readiness?

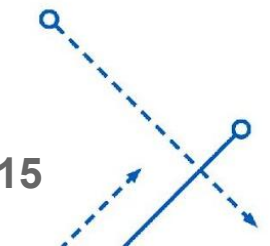
*“Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workforce”*

(NACE, 2020)

## NACE Career Competencies (continued)

- In 2015, the NACE career competencies were developed (revised in 2017).
- The definition of career readiness and the career competencies were developed to close the gap on skills needed between higher education and obtaining a job.

(Peck, 2017)



## The NACE Career Competencies:

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Oral/Written Communications
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Digital Technology
- Leadership
- Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Career Management
- Global/Intercultural Fluency



# Advising Strategies for First-generation Students

## Institutional changes to support first-generation student career development

- Recognize first-generation students are underrepresented and underprepared.
- Desire to support this group of students.
- Allocate appropriate resources.
- Be intentional.
- Continuously improve their strategy for support.

(Maietta, 2016)

## First-generation student advising tips:

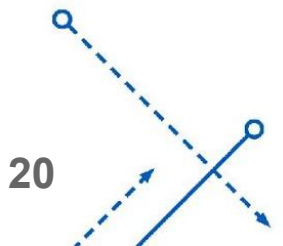
- “Advise students in ways that allow them to understand the wide range of services available to them such as **academic**, **experiential**, and **career options** (including those that they have little exposure or that they may not have been encouraged to pursue)”
- “Any intervention by an adviser or teacher that gets first generation students to expand their horizons.... Is a good thing” (Ward, 2012).

(Ward, Siegel and Davenport, 2012).

## First-generation career exploration and planning tips:

- students face a number of career exploration challenges that may not be readily recognizable.
- students benefit from counselors linking career planning into other aspects of campus life.
- normalize career self-management.

(Peck, 2017)



## First-generation campus engagement strategies:

- Early connection with other first generation students their freshman year.
- Early connection with successful first-generation upperclassmen.
- High expectations combined with support.
- Intentional strategies to make involvement on campus important.

(Peck, 2017)

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