Today's Discussion

1. Social stratification in higher education
2. How can we better support first-generation (FG) students on our campuses?
3. What factors are important to FG students when deciding on a major?
4. What effective educational practices are FG students more or less likely to engage in?
5. Does institutional context matter?

One-Minute Self-Assessment

1. How do you define first-generation status?
2. What are some common struggles or shared experiences of FG students at your institution?
3. In what ways do educational choices of FG students differ from their peers?

College Knowledge: Fill in the blank

2, 4, 6, _, _, 12
1, 3, 5, _, _, _, 17, 19
1, _, _, _, _, 23

College Knowledge: College Graduate

To graduate you need to:
Supporting Diverse Groups of First Generation Students

Collaborative Knowledge: Some College Experience

To graduate you need to:

Collaborative Knowledge: No College Experience

To graduate you need to:

Overview of the Literature

Sources of Capital

• Sources of capital
  ▪ Cultural capital
  ▪ Economic capital
  ▪ Social capital

• Socially advantaged students use these sources of capital to make informed decision about college (e.g., Lucas, 2006)

• Series of rational choices (e.g., Raftery & Hout, 1993)

Common Decisions of Socially Disadvantaged Students

• Before College
  ▪ Where should I go to college?
    ▪ More likely to attend less selective and prestigious institutions
    ▪ Less likely to enroll in a four-year college or university

• During College
  ▪ What should I major in?
    ▪ More likely to select a major close to the market
    ▪ Less likely to major in arts and science fields
  ▪ How should I spend my time outside of class?
    ▪ Less likely to interact with faculty
    ▪ Differences in engagement patterns

• After College
  ▪ Less likely to attend graduate school
  ▪ Overall, lower career earnings

Many of these differences existed even after controlling for academic ability and other student characteristics
SES and First-Generation Status

- No universal measure of SES
- Parental education is only one component of SES
  - Education
  - Occupation
  - Income

Defining First-Generation Status

- Highest level of education
  - High school
  - Some college experience but not a bachelor's degree
- Parents or guardian
  - Father
  - Mother
  - Both

As a scholar-practitioners, we must keep a watchful eye while reading the literature and conducting our own research.

2012 NSSE Results

Case Study Activity

- Select an institutional type
  - Research-intensive university
  - Master’s level
  - Baccalaureate college
- Plan orientation for FG students
  - To prepare, attend assessment meeting discussing recent NSSE results
  - Define eligibility requirement
  - Select three most important campus members to speak at the event

What is NSSE?

Assessing Student Engagement:
- What students do –
  - What matters most is what students do, not who they are.
- What institutions do –
  - Using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things

Survey Content: Benchmarks

- Level of Academic Challenge
  - Time, effort, and coursework emphasis on intellectually challenging and creative work
- Active and Collaborative Learning
  - Active involvement in learning and working with others
- Student-Faculty Interaction
  - Interacting with faculty as mentors and instructors in and out of the classroom
- Enriching Educational Experiences
  - Complementary learning activities in and out of the classroom that augment the curriculum
- Supportive Campus Environment
  - Perceptions of support for academic and nonacademic success

Supporting Diverse Groups of First Generation Students
Who Participated in 2012?

- 577 4-year colleges and universities
- First-year and senior students
- Over 320,000 respondents

Major Choice:
What factors are important to FG students?

Our Sample

- Extra Item Set
  - Factors Affecting Choice of Major
- Sub-set of students at 42 US institutions
  - FY = 9,720
  - SR = 11,557

Factors Affecting Major Choice

To what extent do the following influence your choice of academic major? Response options: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little

- Academic interest or passion for topic
- Fit for my talents and strengths
- Parental or family influence
- Encouragement from a faculty member or advisor
- Ability to find a job
- Career mobility or advancement
- Potential salary or earnings
- Having influence over people or managing others
- Preparation for graduate or professional school
- Reputation of the major at your institution

Parental education
- 23% no college experience
- 26% some college experience but no bachelor’s, degree
- 52% earned bachelor’s or graduate degree

Other socio-demographics
- 56% women
- 60% 23 or younger
- 68% White (non-Hispanic)
- 35% live on campus
- 13% online learners

Factors Affecting Major Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>FG (no-college)</th>
<th>FG (some-college)</th>
<th>Non-first-gen (NFG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academic interest or passion for topic</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fit for my talents and strengths</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Potential salary or earnings</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Career mobility or advancement</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ability to find a job</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Preparation for graduate or professional school</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Having influence over people or managing others</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<td>8. Reputation of major at your institution</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Parental or family influence</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Encouragement from a faculty member or advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Does institutional context matter?

Proportion of NSSE Respondents by Parental Education and Institution Type

Research Universities
- Non-significant findings by parental education

Master’s-Level Institutions
- FG students were more likely to report economic factors affected their decision
- Both groups of FG students had similar results
- For NFGs, major choice were more likely influenced by:
  - Parents and other family members
  - Concern for individual fit of talents and strengths
Does institutional context matter?

- Baccalaureate College
  - FG students whose parents had some college experience and NFG similarly responded to all the items
  - FG students whose parents had no college experience held particular concerns with:
    - Ability to find a job
    - Potential salary or earnings
    - Career mobility or advancement
  - They were also more likely to received encouragement from a faculty member or advisor

Student Engagement:
Are FG students more or less likely to engage in effective educational practices?

Curricular and Co-curricular Involvement

High-Impact Practices Items
Response options: Have not decided, Do not plan to do, Plan to do, Done
  - Learning community
  - Volunteer experiences
  - Research with faculty
  - Internships
  - Study abroad
  - Culminating senior experience

High-Impact Practices

% of SRs who have done this activity at Research Univ

% of SRs who have done this activity at Master’s Inst.
High-Impact Practices

% of SRs who have done this activity at Bachelor's Inst.

Student Engagement: Benchmarks

FY Benchmark Scores

Student Engagement: Benchmarks

SR Benchmark Scores

Student Engagement

Do these differences persist even when controlling for other factors:
- Controls included gender, enrollment, race or ethnicity, age, first-generation, self-reported grades, transfer, living on campus, major, working, international, distance education, Carnegie classification, and institutional control.

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<th>Active and Collaborative Learning</th>
<th>Student-Faculty Interaction</th>
<th>Enriching Educational Experiences</th>
<th>Supportive Campus Environment</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction</th>
<th>Campus Environment: Quality of Campus Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-year</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
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* = p<.05, ** = p<.001 and standardized β<.2, +++ = p<.001 and standardized β>.2, -- = p>.05 and standardized β<.2. Cells were left blank if the findings were not significant at p<.001.

Case Study Activity

- What type of institution did you select?
- How did you define eligibility requirements for your FG-focused campus orientation?
- Who did you select to speak at the event and why?
Self-Assessment: Revisited

1. Would you redefine your working definition of first-generation status? If so, how?

2. In what ways could other sources of capital help explain common struggles or shared experiences of first-generation students at your institution?

3. What recommendations would you make to programs serving first-generation students on your campus? (e.g., recruitment, assessment, services)

Thank you!

Amy: akribera@indiana.edu
Heather: hahaeger@indiana.edu
Theresa: tihitchco@usi.edu
nsse.iub.edu