ADVISING: FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

Presented by Dr. Rachelle Darabi, Don Simpson, and Sarah Gray
April 1st, 2014
DEFINITION OF FIRST GENERATION

- The application for admission (excluding the international application) includes the optional question “Did either of your parents receive a bachelor’s degree?” Students are classified as first-generation students if they answered no and not first-generation students if they answered yes. Of our 15,947 fall 2013 degree-seeking undergraduates, 11,657 (73.1%) answered the optional question.
The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) asks students to indicate the highest level of educational attainment for each parent from the following choices: middle school/junior high, high school, college or beyond (note: completion of a degree is not specified) or other/unknown. For our analysis, students who do not indicate “college or beyond” for either parent were classified as FGS. 12,025 (75.4%) of our fall 2013 degree-seeking undergraduates filed a FAFSA.

We also participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) during fall 2012. Our participation allowed us to compare our students with students at benchmark institutions. One of the survey questions is “Did either of your parents receive a bachelor’s degree?”
FIRST GENERATION PERCENTAGES

Percentage of our students who are first generation: From the first two sources above, the percentages of our fall 2013 degree-seeking undergraduates who identified themselves as first generation are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Fall 2013 census headcount OLAP cube</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>FAFSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All degree-seeking undergraduates</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-time new in college</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentages of our students who responded to the NSSE and indicated that they were first generation are shown below along with data for comparison groups. Our percentages are generally lower than those for the comparison groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Office of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Public institutions in the plains region (22 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs) (156 institutions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSU</td>
<td>Plains Public*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who are first generation</td>
<td>35.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SELECTED DIFFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FGS</th>
<th>NFGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FAFSA filers who were Pell eligible(^1)</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage who are age 25 or older(^2)</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage taking predominantly online, evening, or off-campus courses(^2)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage from underrepresented groups(^2)</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ACT-tested students whose scores place them in developmental math(^3)</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average grade point average of first-time freshmen at the end of their first year (based on students who returned for the spring)(^3)</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Source: FAFSA data  
2Fall 2013 census headcount OLAP cube  
3Office of Institutional Research
RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

First-year retention rates of FGS for the past two freshman classes have been about 10 percent lower than for NFGS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Retention Rates of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen*</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Generation Students</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-First Generation Students</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six-year graduation rates of FGS were about 14 percent lower than for NFGS for fall 2006 and fall 2007 freshmen (the last two cohorts for which data are available).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Composite</th>
<th>FGS (N = 961)</th>
<th>NFGS (N = 1,315)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 18**</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>-13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;28</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ACT</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DID YOU KNOW?

- 42% of our students self reported being a first generation student in 2013. That percentage was higher for transfers than for new freshmen.

- 32% of students who submitted a FAFSA reported that neither parent had an education at the “college or beyond” level. *Because a student may indicate “college or beyond” for a parent who attended college but did not receive a bachelor’s degree, the lower value here is expected.*

- When compared with students who are not first-generation, our first-generation students are:
  - 50% more likely to be Pell eligible
  - More likely to be older or from underrepresented groups
  - More likely to have test scores that place them in developmental math.
NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE)

2012 NSSE Administration at MSU

- The web version of the NSSE was administered, and email invitations were sent to all eligible students.

- Altogether, 324 first-year students and 752 seniors responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 17%. The first-year and senior samples closely resembled the MSU population in both demographics and academic performance.

- 41% of the students who took the NSSE in 2012 were First Generation students.
PATTERNS AND TRENDS - FIRST YEAR, FIRST GENERATION REPORTED

- Communicating with instructors by email *more*
- Discussing ideas from classes *more* with others outside of class—family, student, co-workers
- Working *more* for pay off-campus
- Spending many *more* hours providing care for live-in dependents
- That MSU has contributed *quite a bit* in terms of acquiring a broad general education
PATTERNS AND TRENDS - FIRST YEAR, FIRST GENERATION REPORTED

- do slightly less work with faculty members outside of class
- lower quality of relationships with other students
- report less satisfaction with advising
- evaluated their overall experience at Missouri State University lower than non-first generation students

**Research shows that students define “faculty” as any caring, adult they interact with on campus.**
PATTERNS AND TRENDS - SENIOR, FIRST GENERATION REPORTED

- preparing *more* drafts of papers or assignments before turning them in

- MSU has contributed to *improved* speaking skills

- MSU has contributed to *greater* technology and computing knowledge

- MSU has contributed to *more* effectively working with others

- Spending many *more* hours providing care for live-in dependents
PATTERNS AND TRENDS- SENIOR, FIRST GENERATION REPORTED

- working significantly less with faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, student life, etc.)
- completing less community service or volunteer work
- participating much less in co-curricular activities
- doing fewer relaxing activities (watching tv, parties, etc.)
BEGINNING COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (BCSSE):

- Willingness to persist in the face of academic adversity
- Self-perception of academic preparation for college
- Expected academic difficulty during the first year of college
- Valuation of the institutions challenges and supportive environment
- Engagement in educationally relevant behavior in high school
- Commitment to the institution

Administering BCSSE to 2014 SOAR Students

- Individualized Reports
- Facilitate Meaningful Conversations
According to BCSSE 40% of first generation students reported that they expected to spend 16-25 hour a week preparing for class during their first year in college.

NSSE results show that the same cohort of students reported actually studying much less.

According to BCSSE 78% of first generation students reported that they expected to ask questions and contribute to class discussion often or very often.

According to NSSE, first generation students are doing this less often than they thought they would.
1. Identify, actively recruit, and continually track first-generation students.
   • Recently through Enrollment Management, IR & Assessment (NSSE/BSSE data)

2. Bring them to the campus early.
   • Jump START (Summer Transition and Academic Readiness Training) – An opportunity for students who are graduating from high school in the spring and do not meet traditional freshman admission criteria based on GPA, class rank, or test scores, to begin their college experience at MSU
3. Focus on the distinctive features of first-generation students.
   • We are working on training for GEP 101, First-Year Foundations, and faculty and academic advisors on first-generation issues.

4. Develop a variety of programs that meet students’ continuing needs.
   • Yes, offerings include face-to-face, blended, evening, second block, and online courses
5. Use mentors.
   • SOAR Leaders and GEP 101 Peer Leaders serve as mentors to all students.

6. Institutionalize a commitment to first-generation students.
   • Yes, through TRiO. Jump Start and other programming that supports first gens and all students.
7. Build community, promote engagement, and make it fun.

- Co-curricular activities are promoted to all first-year students at SOAR, Welcome Weekend, and in GEP 101.

8. Involve families (but keep expectations realistic).

- Partners in Education (PIE) - helps address the needs of students in their freshman year by creating a partnership of students, their families, and Student Development and Public Affairs staff. These professional staff open communication lines and provide support services to improve the academic success of students.

- Parent/Family Association

- Family Weekend
9. Acknowledge, and ease when possible, financial pressures.
   - Trio
   - New Graduate School Scholarship – Targeted to First Generation Students

10. Keep track of your successes and failures: What works and what doesn’t?
    - MSU Programs for Student Success
      - Academic Advising
      - Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing) Tutoring
      - First-Year Seminar (GEP 101) Real Life
      - Learning Communities (Curricular and Living Learning)
      - PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) – MSU’s supplemented instruction
      - Service-Learning through CASL (Citizenship and Service-Learning)
      - Student orientation, Advisement, and Orientation (SOAR)
      - Study Away
      - TRiO - Programs that serve participants who are motivated to prepare for, enter, and complete postsecondary education.
ANY QUESTIONS?