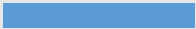




Advising First Generation Students: One College's Story



Sustaining First-Generation Students: Missouri State's Campus-wide Commitment

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First Generation Student Awareness

In 2014, MSU President, Clif Smart, expressed concern for first generation student (FGS) success at MSU. At that time, MSU began reporting and sharing first generation student data.

Good data are crucial - to understand first generation student success.

Need data to determine:

- **Demographics – Who** are your First Gen Students?
 - Show differences between FGS and NFGS peers
 - Identify characteristics that may affect student success
- **Success rates – What** are your FGS retention and graduation rates
- **Impact – How** effectively programs & interventions are working

MSU Data - Revelations

1. Preparation: *FGS and NFGS arrive with similar academic qualifications*

2016 MSU Data	First Gen Students	Non-First Gen Students
ACT (average)	23.33 (43.7% above a 24)	24.36 (53.9% above 24)
High School GPA	3.60	3.67
Class Rank – top 20%	85%	84.9%

2. Demographics -- *similar except in 3 important ways**

Fall 2016 First-Time New in College Data (3126 total students)	First Generation (1,109 students)	Non-First Generation (1,829 students)
% First-time New Students	35.47%	58.51%
Age – 18-21	96.6%	98.2%
Enrollment Status - Full-time	98.6%	99.0%
Pell Eligible	50.3%	20.4%
Ethnicity / Underrepresented	19.7%	11.7%
Live Off Campus	17.7%	11.4%

Success Data

3. Retention – Fall to Fall, First-Time New Students

Retention	University	First-Gen Students	Non-First Gen Students	% Difference FGS vs NFGS
2015-2016	79.11%	72.16%	82.77%	-10.6%
2014 - 2015	78.27%	72.10%	81.07%	- 9%
2013 – 2014	75.31%	68.27%	80.96%	12.7%

4. Six-Year Graduation Rates - First-Time or Transfer, Full-time Fall Cohort

6-Year Grad Rate	University	First-Gen Students	Non-First Gen Students	% Difference FGS vs NFGS
2010 Cohort (2010-16)	54.93%	47.89%	60.51%	- 12.6%
2009 Cohort (2009-15)	52.36%	44.15%	60.08%	- 15.9%
2008 Cohort (2008-14)	54.74%	46.49%	60.93%	-14.4%



Data Driven Conclusions:

MSU's first generation students **arrive academically prepared**, but **experience significantly lower retention and graduation rates**.

Therefore, our first-gen students **must need other resources to succeed at higher rates:**

- **Information** – *social capital relevant to college experience*
- **Proactive Contact** – via advisors, RA's, student peers
- **Increased Engagement** -- on campus (jobs/student organizations, etc.)
- **Additional Resources** – access to financial & student support services



One Option: Proactive Advising

OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE 1ST GEN STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL CAPITAL, RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

1. **Proactive Advising provides intentional contact** with new students to address issues or problems early and recommend appropriate interventions
2. **Builds relationships early** - akin to a professional mentor
 - **Advisors initiate contact at critical times** throughout the semester
 - Start of term, midterms, registration, finals, declaring a major, approaching graduation
 - **Demonstrates active concern** – not “hand-holding,” but a willingness **to help students get connected** early with services that improve academic skills & increase success.
 - **Approach improves retention/graduation rates** - especially among high achieving and at-risk students



COAL Proactive Advising Initiative

2017 - College of Arts & Letters commits to this advising pilot

GOALS:

Increase retention/graduation rates, close success gap, & help new FGS feel more connected and cared for by college faculty and institution.

Immediate Training Objectives:

1. **Provide data** - so advisors understand why first-gen majors need a different advising approach to increase student success
2. **Identify on-campus resources** - programs & individuals available to support first generation students
3. **Recognize and apply relevant advising models & practices** – differentiate between Prescriptive/Developmental/Proactive advising methods



Steps in Launching Advising Initiative

1. **Identify need for & goals** of proactive advising program – gather data/formulate action plan
2. **Identify allies:**
 - a) Provost
 - b) Dean
 - c) Department Heads
3. **Identify faculty advisors** – secure their participation
4. **Identify Students** -- new first-gen & underrepresented COAL majors
5. **Assign students** to proactive advisors
 - a) 120 majors assigned to 9 proactive advisors across 7 departments
6. **Develop & deliver proactive advisor training – develop assessment plan**



Proactive Advising - Workshop Structure

Workshop 1: *(2 hours each session)*

- **Data Analysis** – retention/graduation data (campus & college) by demographics
- **Advising Models** – comparing various approaches with Proactive Advising process
- **Case Studies** – two successful campus programs using Proactive Advising (*Athletics/TRIO*)
- **Academic/Psychological Calendars** – planning sessions & communication strategies



Psychological / Emotional Calendar

TOUCH POINTS WHEN PROACTIVE ADVISORS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Fall 2017 (dates with emotional impact)

- **August 21- Sept 15 - First four weeks** of the semester are when many new students decide to stay at or leave
- September 15 - Family Visit Day – may increase homesickness, sense of isolation or loneliness & social anxiety
- Sept 18- 29 – Anxiety grows leading up to midterms – academic stress & self-doubt
- **October 1 – FAFSA application process begins** – financial worries front and center
- October 12-13 - Fall Holiday – may increase disillusionment with college, add family anxiety, question abilities
- **Oct 19 – Midterm grades – negative outcomes** can lead to academic doubts, fear about being fit for college
- November 22 – 26 – Thanksgiving – homesickness, academic pressure, mental and health issues can appear
- **Nov 20-28 – Spring Registration** – doubts about academics, staying at college, finances for spring, depression
- **Dec 9-14 – Finals** – extreme academic & financial pressure, time management issues, pre-holiday blues, living issues



Proactive Advising - Workshop Structure

Workshop 2:

- **Campus Resources** – student success resources & people who can help advisors
- **Case Study** – Dealing proactively with an advisee who is struggling academically

Workshop 3:

- **Progress Report** – contact with advisees, best methods found to contact with advisees?
- **Mentoring Mindset** – proactive advising as professional mentoring
- **Milestones** – planning **high impact experiences across four years** with advisees



Proactive Advising: Group Discussion & Strategy Session



**Sustaining First-Generation Students: Missouri State's Campus-wide
Commitment**

October 6, 2017



Group Discussion: Current Situation at Your Home Campus

1. What are your institution's first-generation student characteristics & success rates?
 - Data access?
 - How to use data to create a persuasive argument for proactive advising
2. What benefits might arise from a proactive advising approach?
 - Who are natural allies to assist?
3. Barriers/challenges to gaining support for this effort?



Planning -- Issues to Consider

If you decide to move forward with a proactive advising initiative, you may want to consider:

- Current advising model – who advises students now?
- How many students can you advise proactively?
- Who will develop and deliver training?
- What will your outcomes or goals be? How will outcomes be documented?
- Action plan / communication strategy – how to gain advocates for this advising initiative as part of your campus's first-generation success initiatives?



Session Wrap

ACTIONABLE ITEMS

1. Review: Top three ideas or issues discussed in each group
2. Big Takeaways: Ideas or steps you can bring back to your home campus



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**Thanks for attending MSU's inaugural
Sustaining First Generation Students conference!**