First-Generation College Students & Campus Resources

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First Generation College Students & Campus Resources

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Introduction

Main Background Facts
• Most first-generation college students come from low-income families
• In addition, they are also commonly distressed by the amount of school work they are receiving
• Parents may be less understanding because they are unfamiliar with college (Means & Pyne, 2017, Demetriou et al., 2017, Petty, 2014).
• Trying to attend college under these circumstances provides additional challenges for first-generation students.
• The Persistence and Success Program (PSP) is a on campus program for first year first generation college students.
• These things have been instrumental in shaping the way we wanted to work with and hopefully help this specific population.

Research Questions
• Research Question 1
  • Do campus resources, such as the counseling center and career center correlate with how well first-generation students feel they belong on Valparaiso University’s campus?
• Research Question 2
  • Do campus resources, such as the counseling center and career center correlate with how well first-generation students do academically?

Methods

Demographics
• 170 responses out of 742 recipients
• Gender
  • 70% Female
• Race
  • 71% White
  • 24% Latina
  • 5.8% African American
  • 5.3% Asian American/ Asian or Pacific Islander
• Age
  • 95.3% Traditional Students (18-24)
  • 4.7% Non-Traditional (25+)
• On-Campus vs. Commuter
  • 55.8% On-Campus Students
  • 44.2% Commuter

Campus Resources & Community
• Significant positive correlation
  • .326 p < .001

Campus Resources & Academic Preparedness
• Not a significant correlation
  • .149 p > .05

Independent campus resources were not correlated with academic preparedness

Campus Community & Commuters
• Significant negative correlation
  • -.386 p < .001

Results

What is your year in school?

Survey – 5 Sections
• Demographics
  • Multiple Choice Questions
    • Gender
    • Race
    • Year in School
• Campus Resources
  • Scaled Questions
    • Never, Once, Once a Semester, Once a Month, Twice a Month, Once a Week
    • Academic Advisor
    • Writing Center
• Campus Community/ Feelings of Belonging
  • Scaled Questions:
    • Strongly Agree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree,
    • Not Applicable

Not Applicable
• "I have been keeping up with my academic work”
• "I expect to receive a bachelors degree from Valparaiso University”

Note: If your parent(s) and/or guardian(s) attended college but do not have a bachelor’s degree (i.e., did not graduate or have an associates degree), you are considered to be first-generation.

Limitations
• Answers are biased toward the middle
• Replaced all “Not Applicable” answers to “Neutral”
• 70% of responses were from females
• Not represented of first-generation college student population campus
• Cannot infer causation
• Cannot show that the use of campus resources came before campus community
• Do not know if campus resources are helping students
• For example, even if a student goes to the Academic Success Center, we do not know if the student was helped
• Self-Identified First-Generation College Student
• There may be some students on the list that do not know identify as first-gen students but took the survey anyways

Conclusions

Use of Research
• Use data to implement new ideas into the Persistence and Success Program (PSP)
• Guest speakers from certain campus resources to describe the importance of that resource
• See use of campus resources and how we can get students to use more on campus
• Advertising the use of the resource on campus
• See which campus resources are used more often and make sure to give information to new first-generation students coming to campus
• Find ways to mitigate the challenges provided in the research
• Discuss with Provost office on how to combat these challenges

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References