

Purdue University Calumet

Academic Advisor Training



Welcome to Purdue University Calumet advisor training.

My name is _____ and I will be your facilitator for this training.



First Generation College Students

Part I

In this presentation, we will cover the topic of First Generation College students. This training will be separated into three, one-hour sessions.

Topics covered

- Who are first-generation college students?
- Preconceived perceptions
- Time management
- Financial literacy
- *Discussion*



What will we cover in this session?

- First, we will find out exactly who are first-generation college students are.
- We will learn that there are often preconceived perceptions of how college is from the student and their parents.
- Thereafter, we will speak about the important topics of Time Management and Financial Literacy.
- We will then take a moment to have a discussion about first-generation students.

Who are first-generation college students?

- Definition
- Know your target audience on a global level and individual level
- Unique Characteristics
 - No knowledge of what “college” really is
- Characteristics are often unique to each student
 - Background
 - Ethnicity



As noted by Pelco, Ball, and Lockerman (2014) students in today’s colleges exhibit greater diversity than previous students in college.

Who are first generation first-generation college students?

Pelco et. al. define first-generation students as “students who are first-generation college students whose parents have not attended college or earned a bachelor’s degree” (2014). The definition of a first-generation student generally includes students whose parents attended some college, but did not graduate (Hong & Kircher, 2010).

It is particularly important to focus first-generation students as they are at a very high risk for leaving higher education before finishing their degree (2014). A parent can often be actively involved in a first-generation student’s success, or not at all. It is noted by the Education Advisory Board (EAB) that most first-generation students have little to no support from their parents in reference to college (2012). Since these students and parents are not as familiar with college and the application process, this can often discourage the student from applying at all (Hong & Kircher, 2010).

With that in mind, it is best to know these individuals on a global, as well as individual

level.

What is meant by this statement?

We all know first-generation students are brand new to college, but depending on certain factors, these students can be even more unique. Davis (2010) noted a critical characteristic of first-generation students is that they are unfamiliar with the culture of higher education.

What are some things that are unique to each student? The Education Advisory Board stated “first generation college students have come to college undecided about a major in greater proportion than did students with parents with a college degree (2012, p. 12). In addition, a report done in 2011 by Complete College America (CCA), noted a majority of college students are commuting, working, and juggling multiple responsibilities (p. 6). As noted by Director of Student Success and Transition, Linda Atkinson, this can often include their background, such as their family or career. Ethnicity can play a big role with first-generation students as well. In reference to PUC, additional characteristics, such as a family, head of household, or a commuter status can have an effect on a first-generation student.

Preconceived perceptions



- What they THINK college is versus what college REALLY is
- Preconceptions can put into several categories:
 - What the student thinks
 - What the parent thinks
 - What the student and parent think collectively

Something to consider with all students, but especially first-generation students are preconceived perceptions. These preconceptions are often in the line of: What they THINK college is versus what college REALLY is.

Pelco et. al. noted first-generation students generally appear to be underprepared for college both academically and psychologically (2014).

Let's take a moment and think where these preconceptions often stem from. Preconceptions often involve:

- **What the student thinks**
 - We need to often think: What does the student solely want? Advisors often are tasked at helping them understand what they want by establishing a common ground between their dream and their reality and how the two can work together.
 - Some examples include:
 - College schedules are like high school, i.e., predetermined, and books are distributed in class.
 - Students have little control over their schedules.

- A student's commitment to their job over college. Students may consider their social status from work more important than college. In addition, they may often have the mindset that a job provides money now and the payoff of college is hard to conceive.
- **What the parent thinks**
 - We do need to take into consideration: What does the parent want? Is this the same dream/reality as the student? Often, a student's family can have heavy influence on how successful they are in school.
 - Some examples include:
 - Lack of support for college
 - Skepticism about value of college
 - Message that "job is first priority"
 - Message that "family is first priority"
- **What the student and parent think (jointly)**
 - Often a student can be following a parent's dream, especially if there is a parent who is strongly involved in their child's future. While a parent is encouraged to be part of their child's future, advisors will need to remember that not all parents will necessarily have the same views as their child. Does the student want their dream or their parents dream?

According to the Education Advisory Board (EAB), it is recommended to involve the parent in their child's college transition (2010); however, keep in mind this should stay limited as it is the student who is attending the institution, not the parent. The anxiety of a child going to college can often be a huge weight on a parents shoulders to the point where they try to make every decision for them, versus letting the student speak their mind. When talking with the student and their parents about the child's future, keep in mind the decision will need to be the students in the end, not the parents. Sometimes it is best to talk with the student alone and find out what they really want. Encourage the student to follow what they are comfortable with and what they want to do.

Time Management & Financial Literacy

- Understand where they are coming from
- Emphasize the value of an education
 - An education lasts a lifetime, but a job can only be short-term.
- Present them with a customized degree map to show the time of completion for their degree.
 - Inform the student about the importance of “15 to finish.”
- Work with students to develop a schedule for their personal, professional, and college life.

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Per your advising session today you still need to:

- Apply to Purdue University Calumet
- Complete the FAFSA _____
- Accept the admissions offer via email link
- Create ID/Password via email link
- Take ALEKS for math placement via myPUC
- Send transcripts to PUC from _____
___ High School ___ College ___ AP scores
- Register for & attend new student orientation
- Meet with advisor _____
- Register for classes online via myPUC
- Complete Respect Boundaries via Blackboard
- Take Add/Drop card to LAWS 130
- Other: _____

This list is not all-inclusive. It is a suggested guide.

"Next Steps" per your advising session today:

Check LAWS on

- Admissions - check admissions status
- Registration - submit card
- Financial Aid - check status/loans/books
- Student Accounts - tuition/fees

Sign by

- Testing Center - LAWS _____
- Bookstore - SUL
- PUC ID Card office - SUL
- Professor for signature _____

Be Successful

- Use SASi Tutoring/SL/Writing Lab
- Register early for next semester
- Access your PUC email/check Blackboard
- See advisor regularly to stay on track
- Check DegreeWorks for progress

Other: _____

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This list is not all-inclusive. It is a suggested guide.

Time Management and Financial Literacy are crucial topics for every student to learn. According to Hong & Kircher (2010), students need to learn study skills, which includes time management.

How can you approach a first-generation student with this information? Let's take a moment to cover some things that may help you with your dialogue.

Advisor Bill Baginski reminds you to remember to understand where the student is coming from. Do they have a family to take care of? Do they have a job that restricts their schedule? It is important to find out things like this before you ask the student to prioritize things.

Keep in mind, as humans, we all communicate and interpret the messages we communicate differently. Make sure your message is clear.

Baginski also notes "Before you speak to them about prioritization, throw in a quick punchline about the value of their education. Provide a cost-benefit analysis example of college vs. job. Most of the time, a student make be focused on their job because that is "where the money is coming from" to support themselves. That is true; however, since you

already will have an education, you know the value of an education over a temporary job.”

Director of Student Success, Linda Atkinson, notes that you can help the student understand their priorities by showing them a customized degree map for their course of study. The degree map will serve as a checklist for the student to let them know what courses they need to take and when they need to take them. Be sure to emphasize the fact that this customized degree map, as well as good skills of time management and financial literacy, will save the student time and money in the long-run.

Atkinson also notes to stress the importance of informing the student of the “15 to finish” strategy. What is “15 to finish”? Basically, it means that students should take at least 15 credit hours per academic semester in order to finish within the four-year time frame. Please note, originally, the minimum amount was 12. With the concept of the customized degree map in mind, you can inform them of the 15 to finish plan with ease.

If, for some reason a course is not offered appropriately in the time frame according to a student's degree map, they can be offered an equivalent course, or will be able to take the course for free. Basically, this is just a guarantee to the student that they will have all courses offered to them in their semester.

You should also work with students to develop daily/weekly/semester schedules

- Have students gather syllabi to create master schedule for the semester
- Use a journal to develop a truer, deeper sense of time use

Another though includes providing the student with a checklist of items that will need to be completed to be successful and make the college transition much easier. On-screen you see there is a checklist from the Center for Learning and Academic Success. It is suggested to either use this checklist, or your own to ensure student success.

Time Management & Financial Literacy



- Stress the importance of prioritizing things in reference to their “work and school balance”
 - What are the student’s current priorities?
 - How can they change their priorities to include their schoolwork?
 - Recommend using financial aid to complete school faster.
- “The acquisition of financial knowledge and the skills necessary to manage and take control of financial resources is a foundation for building a solid and stable future for the individuals and families within American society” (NEFE, 2002).

Advisor Anna Kent noted that prioritization is something that is important in our everyday lives, including our education. Think about it: Where would you be if had not prioritized things in school? Can you express that to our first-generation students?

Kent noted It’s often best to ask the student: “What is your priority in life? Tell me your current priorities.” Make sure they know it is important to have that “work and school balance.”

Advisor Susan Van Til states: “As an advisor/mentor, you will need to work with your students to help them keep their education at the top of their priority list. Some things you can ask are:

- How much time can you devote each week for school?
- Are you able to tailor your time to fit with your major and graduation requirements?”

Advisor Lisa Dittrich stated that it is also important talk with the student about their employment. Are they currently working? Does their current job fit in their discipline? We all know that we must work to make a living and “pay the bills”; however, emphasize to your students that financial aid (student loans and grants) are available. It is more cost-effective for the student to borrow student loans and take more classes per semester than

taking less classes and working more hours at their job.

With the diverse population of students, we need to realize the complex culture of the first-generation group and how they manage their finances. As noted by the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) (2002) “the acquisition of financial knowledge and the skills necessary to manage and take control of financial resources is a foundation for building a solid and stable future for the individuals and families within American society.”

Time Management & Financial Literacy

- Offer suggestions, such as:
 - Monitor credit card debt
 - Keep a log of your finances
 - Take out only what you “need” versus “want” if you are borrowing loans (student loans)
- Suggest a personal financial management course
- Suggest employment within their discipline (Major-related area)
- Refer to student to campus support services, such as counseling.



Moving on to a some information about financial literacy, Hong & Kircher (2010) noted that financial barriers are one of the major reasons why first generation students do not graduate from college.

When speaking with your first-generation student, offer these suggestions from the PUC advisors. Examples include:

- Monitor credit card debt
- Keep a log of your finances
- Take out only what you “need” versus “want” if you are borrowing loans (student loans)

It is also recommended to inform the student of the variety of finance options available. Most students may be familiar with just student loans; however, they may be eligible for other scholarships or grants (EAB, 2010). You can also offer to suggest a personal financial management course that the student can have added to their course plan (towards an elective or general education requirement).

Advisor Barbara Osmon noted that if a student has a strong desire to work, you can often suggest the student to find a job within their discipline as an experiential learning

initiative. If the student cannot find a job that fits their discipline and schedule, there may be job opportunities for on-campus employment.

In addition, you can always refer the student to campus support services, such as counseling, if the student needs additional assistance with college, time management, and financial literacy (Atkinson & Hecht, 2015).

Discussion

We know that roughly 70% of our PUC students are first generation. We also know that PUC does not only serve what could be called a “traditional” student population.

What is unique about our PUC students?



Let's pause for a moment for a quick discussion.

We just finished talking about preconceived perceptions and how the student and parent can often have different views on what college is like and their (students) dream.

We know that roughly 70% of our PUC students are first generation. We also know that PUC does not only serve what could be called a “traditional” student population.

What is unique about our PUC students?

Take a moment to construct your answer. Feel free to continue on with the presentation after you have formulated your response.

The presentation continues when you advance to the next slide

Review of Part I

- Who are first-generation college students?
- Preconceived perceptions
- Time management
- Financial literacy
- *Discussion*



What did we cover in this session?

- We began by defining who first-generation students are.
- We then covered some preconceived perceptions of how college is from the student and their parents.
- We then spoke about two important topics, which were Time Management and Financial Literacy.
- Finally, we took a quick moment to have a discussion about first-generation students.

Continue to Part II

Please continue this training to Part II when you are ready.



Please continue this training to Part II when you are ready.

It is advised to review this material again if you do not understand some of the content.

You can always reach out to your peers for assistance or the CLAS.

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