Advising Needs of First Generation Students: 
NACADA Leaders Share their Experiences

Panelists:
John Paul (JP) Regalado
NACADA President
Executive Director of Academic Advising
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
John.Regalado@tamucc.edu

David Spight
NACADA Vice President and President-Elect
Assistant Dean, School of Undergraduate Studies
The University of Texas at Austin
dspight@austin.utexas.edu

Dana Zahorik
NACADA Vice President-Elect
Counselor
Fox Valley Technical College
zahorik@fvtc.edu

Charlie Nutt
Executive Director
NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising
Kansas State University
cnutt@k-state.edu

Overview
In September 2014, US First Lady Michelle Obama wrote a blog post encouraging her readers to view "A Walk in My Shoes: First Generation College Students," a documentary video by Kansas State University's College of Education. This powerful film delves deeply into the lives of five current students and three successful alumni who consider topics such as family concerns, financial issues, language barriers, socialization, learning disabilities, and navigating the college experience. Ms. Obama says, "Neither of my parents graduated from college, so when I got to campus as a freshman, I'll admit I was a little overwhelmed... I didn't know how to pick the right classes or find the right buildings." She shares that if it weren't for the resources and the friends and the mentors that she found on her campus, "I honestly don't know how I would have made it through college."

Current NACADA President John Paul (JP) Regalado, President-Elect David Spight, Vice-President-Elect Dana Zahorik, and Executive Director Charlie Nutt all understand from personal experience exactly what the First Lady - and the students in the K-State documentary - are talking about, for all four were themselves First Generation Students. Sponsored by the NACADA First Generation College Student Advising Interest Group, JP, David, Dana, and Charlie come to the Webinar platform to discuss their experiences - what challenges they faced, what inspired them, what helped them overcome. Plan to join us for an inspiring hour as our top NACADA Leaders share what it has meant to them to be First Gen Students and what we can do as academic advisors to help First Gen students achieve academic success.

Pre-Webcast Activity Suggestions
Registrants are encouraged view the "A Walk in My Shoes" documentary prior to the webinar. A trailer of the documentary is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-nosalDTac and the DVD may be purchased from the NACADA Store at http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Product-Details/ID/V05.aspx. All sales proceeds from this video will fund academic advising scholarships.
Post-Webcast Activity Suggestions

Registrants who have not yet done so are encouraged to view the "A Walk in My Shoes" documentary. A link for 30-day viewing access will be provided to live event registrants in a post-event email.


Information discussed by Louis Macias

April 24, 2015, NACADA Webinar, Academic Advising and Social Justice: Privilege, Diversity, and Student Success

First-generation students:

- Lower academic aspirations (Pike & Kuh, 2005)
- Less academically/socially prepared for college (Lindholm, 2006; Mehta et al., 2011)
- Greater difficulty adjusting to college (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007)
- Less likely to persist and graduate (Terenzini et al., 1996)
- Disadvantaged in terms of social/cultural capital (Higher Education Research Institute, 2007)
- More likely to come from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Higher Education Research Institute, 2007)
- Often are academically outperformed by their continuing-generation peers (Pascarella et al., 2004)


Ideas for Supporting First-Gen Students


AND

Preadmissions

- Establish a regular presence in high schools
- Enlist current first-gen students and graduates in creating targeted recruiting messages
- Create a landing page for first-generation students
- Offer free fly-in campus visits
- Identify and reach out to eager prospects

Incoming/Admissions

- Eliminate information barriers
- Offer a summer, “bridge” program
- Make that bridge a “boot camp” experience
- Involve high schools in the admissions process
- Offer aid to those who need it most
- Ensure appropriate first-year placement
- Offer alternatives to remediation
- Fundraise for scholarships
- Encourage development of friendships
- List Important Dates (repeat often)
- Assist student with developing a contact list
- Use appropriate technology to assist students

Ongoing Support

- Create a first-gen living – learning community
- Establish and support first-gen student organizations
- Enlist peer and faculty mentors
- Create, and reward, leadership opportunities
- Make study abroad accessible
- Use data consistently to monitor the need for interventions
- Create “neighborhoods” on campus
- Offer micro grants to prevent dropout
- Reach students without marginalizing them

Help Students Persist

- Utilize the assistance of federal programs when available

Exiting College

- Focus on the entire student life-cycle

The Big Picture

- Learn from- and work with- other institutions
- 1st generation need more attention than other students

Additional References


FOX VALLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE: FACTORS AFFECTING COLLEGE SUCCESS

Think about possible distractions, barriers, or concerns as you begin your college experience. Review the statements below and mark “X” for those that apply now or could possibly be a factor in the future.

☐ I am concerned about my study habits
☐ I have anxiety about taking tests
☐ The thought of starting school causes me stress
☐ I have struggled with school in the past and may need additional help to succeed
☐ I have attempted post-secondary education in the past and have been unsuccessful
☐ I have earned or am currently working on my GED/HSED
☐ I am a single parent
☐ I have recently been laid off from my job
☐ I am uncomfortable asking for help
☐ I have difficulty making friends
☐ I am unsure of my career direction and/or program choice
☐ I have problems at home or within my family that bother me a lot of the time
☐ Physical or mental health problems may interfere with my studying and school attendance
☐ I have concerns about
  o finances
  o childcare
  o transportation
☐ Other concerns or questions:
  _______________________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________________

If you would like to discuss any of the above concerns or your test scores, please go to Counseling and Advising Services (E121) after you have completed your ACCUPLACER test.
Advising Needs of First Generation Students: NACADA Leaders Share their Experiences

John Paul (JP) Regalado, NACADA President
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

David Spight, NACADA Vice President and President-Elect
University of Texas at Austin

Dana Zahorik, NACADA Vice President-Elect
Fox Valley Technical College

Charlie Nutt, NACADA Executive Director

30% of today’s Higher Ed students are the first in their family to attend college


24% of today’s Higher Ed students are both First-Gen and low income

Only 11% of low-income First-Gen students graduate within six years


Less than 25% of First-Gen students complete a bachelor’s degree (compared to 68% of their non-first-gen peers)


First-Generation students:

- Lower academic aspirations
- Less academically/socially prepared for college
- Greater difficulty adjusting to college
- Less likely to persist and graduate
- Disadvantaged in terms of social/cultural capital
- More likely to come from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- Academically outperformed by their continuing-generation peers

Discussed by Louis Macias in the April 24, 2015, NACADA Webinar, Academic Advising and Social Justice: Privilege, Diversity, and Student Success
Charlie’s Story

Ideas for Supporting First-Gen Students

Pre-Admissions

Pre-Admissions

Establish a regular presence in high schools

Pre-Admissions

Enlist current first-gen students and graduates in creating targeted recruiting messages


Pre-Admissions

Create a landing page for first-generation students

http://admissions.unl.edu/admissions/first-gen.aspx


Ideas for Supporting First-Gen Students

Incoming / Admissions
Incoming / Admissions
Assist them in Navigating the Admissions Process


Factors for Success from FVTC


Incoming / Admissions
Provide Important Information in Various Formats and Repeat Often
Incoming / Admissions

Build Bridges When Possible


Incoming / Admissions

Finding Balance in First Year Placement


Incoming / Admissions

Identify External and Internal Support Systems

Ideas for Supporting First-Gen Students

Ongoing Support

Create a first-gen living-learning community


Ongoing Support

Establish and support first-gen student organizations

Ongoing Support

Enlist peer and faculty mentors

Ongoing Support

Reach students without marginalizing them

The Big Picture

• Learn from – and work with – other institutions
• 1st generation students need more attention than other students
Advising Needs of First Generation Students

Panelists:
John Paul (JP) Regalado, Executive Director of Academic Advising, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
David Spight, Assistant Dean, University of Texas at Austin
Dana Zahorik, Counselor, Fox Valley Technical College
Charlie Nutt, Executive Director, NACADA

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising
Copyright 2015 ~ All Rights Reserved
All recordings of NACADA materials are copyrighted by the National Academic Advising Association. See http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/copyright.aspx for NACADA's complete Copyright statement.