CUBSFIRST
SUPPORTING FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE APPLICANTS IN JESUIT SECONDARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

JESUIT PRINCIPAL’S COHORT GATHERING
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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

• How is your school effectively identifying first-generation students and offering a formal support network?

• What do first-generation students perceive as barriers to their educational experiences at your school?

• What are the best ways the school structure can support a seamless educational pipeline and the transition to higher education?

• Why should we care?

• What does a first-generation student look like?
THE FIRST COHORT OF COLLEGE CONNECTIONS CLASS 2015

LHS College Connections 2015
I AM FIRST-GENERATION

I am first-generation
We are one of a kind all across the nation
Not just statistics in a system
Breaking all kinds of barriers is my mission
Overcoming all sorts of challenges
It’s a big burden, but still I manage
I don’t worry because my loved ones give me courage
Keep striving to reach my dream
I know I will with all the knowledge Loyola feeds
That’s why in the end I know I will succeed
-Xavier Luna, Incoming  Freshman Class of 2018
AGENDA

• Introduction to the Research on First-Generation Student Population
  • Definition
  • Identifying the students
  • Stakeholder buy-in
  • Culturally competent counseling

• Program highlights Loyola High School Los Angeles

• Take aways

• Q&A
THREE IMPORTANT STEPS FOR FIRST-GEN STUDENTS
WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

• Raising Aspirations for College
  • Connect college to career interests: Career Day, FG Guest Speakers, school-based FG mentors.
  • College visits or college rep speakers, Financial Aid Information
  • Engage the parents/legal guardians
  • Encourage students to take AP/Honors courses

• Navigating the College Selection-Application-Admissions Process
  • Frequent College Counseling Office. Thoroughly walk through with students applications, personal
    statements, financial aid. Engage the parents/legal guardians.
  • Exposure to broad range of schools and value of fit

• Facilitating Initial Transition to College
WHO ARE FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

• Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Work: a culture of appreciation not a culture of deficit
• First-Generation are disproportionately
  • Students of color
  • Non-native English speakers
  • Immigrants or children of immigrants
  • From single parent households
  • Financially independent of parents, in foster care, homeless or intermittently homeless
  • Receiving significant financial aid at Jesuit high schools
DEFINING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

- Higher Education Act of 1965 definition:
  - (A) An individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree OR
  - (B) In the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from one parent, an individual whose only parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree in the US.

- US Department of Education
  - Student whose parent never enrolled in postsecondary education; no degree after high school

- Our definition at Loyola High School
  - Neither parent/legal guardian has earned a four-year degree in the US
LOYOLA HIGH SCHOOL OF LOS ANGELES

- Demographics: 1241 students: 26.35% Latino, 5.96% African American, 13.86% Asian American, 49.87% Western European, 17.1% FG
- 223 or 17.9% identify as FG: 50% Latino, 7.6% African American, 20.6% Asian American, 19.3% Western European, 2.6% Other
- Location: Loyola is a tuition based Jesuit institution founded in 1865 located in downtown Los Angeles
- 117 faculty and administrative staff
- Honors Courses: 11
- AP Courses: 33
• Identifying First-Generation Students

• How we went about the process (action-research project—interviews/focus groups with small sample of seniors in 2014)

• Materializes as the College Connections Summer Course for rising freshman students; The First-Generation Student Association; School leadership support; Support for standardized test prep; support for college tours; university partnerships

• Destigmatization of First-Generation status

• Guest Speakers for FGSA, Career Day
WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE AT LOYOLA HIGH SCHOOL OF LOS ANGELES

• If you build it they will come
• College Connections Summer Class/ University Partnerships/ Student Association
• Parent Engagement
  • Banquet, Thanksgiving Mass, Financial Aid Evening, FAFSA night, Freshman Parent Welcome events
• Engage FG Alum: Participate in Summer College Connections, Speak at FGSA meetings, Career Day, and receptions
• Use Social Media/School Newspaper/School Magazine
• Campus Stakeholder Buy-In
  • Identify
    • Student population and multiple identities they inhabit. FG students are not uni-dimensional
    • Through the lived experience of the students identify where the gaps are for them
    • How intentional service aligns with the Jesuit mission
  • Engage allies and champions
LOYOLA HIGH SCHOOL OF LOS ANGELES
NEXT STEPS

• Create reliable tracking of FG alums
  • Contact alums regarding college persistence, barriers, and facilitators
  • Survey alums to discern their college experiences which will inform communication with university partners, and Loyola program support
  • Create a senior workshop—College Bridge Workshop
  • Track attrition of FG students and reasons
  • More effectively engage and involve FG parents
TAKEAWAY

• We are really talking about continuity of care and alignment of practice with Jesuit values
• Who are the allies at your school?
• Identify student population/ conduct research on student experiences
• Look at existing programmatic support—if there is none develop it…
• Assess their academic performance and target support in needed areas