



PRESENTATION HANDOUT



Creating a Sustaining, Retaining, and Graduating
First-Gen Program: Sharing Student Success Stories

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Agenda

Creating a Sustaining, Retaining, and Graduating First-Gen Program

- Welcome and Introductions
- Why First-Gen Programming?
- Building a Sustainable Program
- Identifying Achievable Outcomes
- Key Takeaways
- Wrap-Up



Welcome and Introductions

Welcome

Today's presenters



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Davenport University

Institutional Overview

- 4-year private institution with 8 campuses
 - 8 campuses throughout Michigan
 - 1 global campus
- 5,421 students
 - 79% undergraduate; 21% graduate
- 40% students are first-gen
- 29% students of color
- 16% athletes
- 48% non-traditional





Why First-Gen
Programming?

Jasmine's Story

A Case Study

- Fall 2019
- 18 years old, drives alone 1,200 miles from Colorado to GR Michigan
- Experienced many of the typical struggles of first-gen students
- Fails first class, intro to college success course
- Retakes course in session 2 and gets an A
- Winter 2020 – joins peer mentoring program

Commitment to College

National Data on First-Gen Students

- Strong desire to continue education
96% of First-Gen
96% of Non First-Gen
- Wonder if college is worth the time, money, and effort
32% of First-Gen
27% of Non First-Gen

***14% of First-Gen Plan to Transfer Prior to Completing Degree**



Financial Insecurity

National Data on First-Gen Students

- Have the financial resources to finish college
37% of First-Gen 57% of Non First-Gen
- Have financial problems that are distracting
40% of First-Gen 23% of Non First-Gen
- Pressure to earn extra money will interfere with school
31% of First-Gen 19% of Non First-Gen

Financial Guidance

National Data on First-Gen Students

- Want to discuss getting a loan to help get through school

29% of First-Gen

- Want to discuss getting a scholarship

69% of First-Gen

Academic & Career Planning

National Data on First-Gen Students

- Want help to improve study habits
73% of First-Gen
- Want assistance with selecting an education plan to get a good job
72% of First-Gen
- Want to discuss qualifications needed for certain occupations
69% of First-Gen

Sense of Belonging

National Data on First-Gen Students

- Little interest in large social gatherings
33% of First-Gen
- Hard to relax and have fun with a group of people
21% of First-Gen
- Want to meet an experienced student to seek advice
56% of First-Gen

The background image is a blue-tinted photograph of a university courtyard. In the foreground, there are several large, classical-style arches supported by columns. In the middle ground, there is a large, multi-story building with a central dome and a spire. The courtyard is paved, and there are some trees and bushes. The overall scene is a typical university campus setting.

Why are you interested
in First-Gen programming
at your institution?

A photograph of three students in a study environment. A woman in the center is smiling and looking at a laptop screen. To her left, another woman is looking at her phone. To her right, a man is leaning over, looking at the laptop. The desk has a laptop, a glass of water, a coffee cup, and some papers. The background is slightly blurred, showing a plant and a lamp.

Why First-Gen programming at DU?

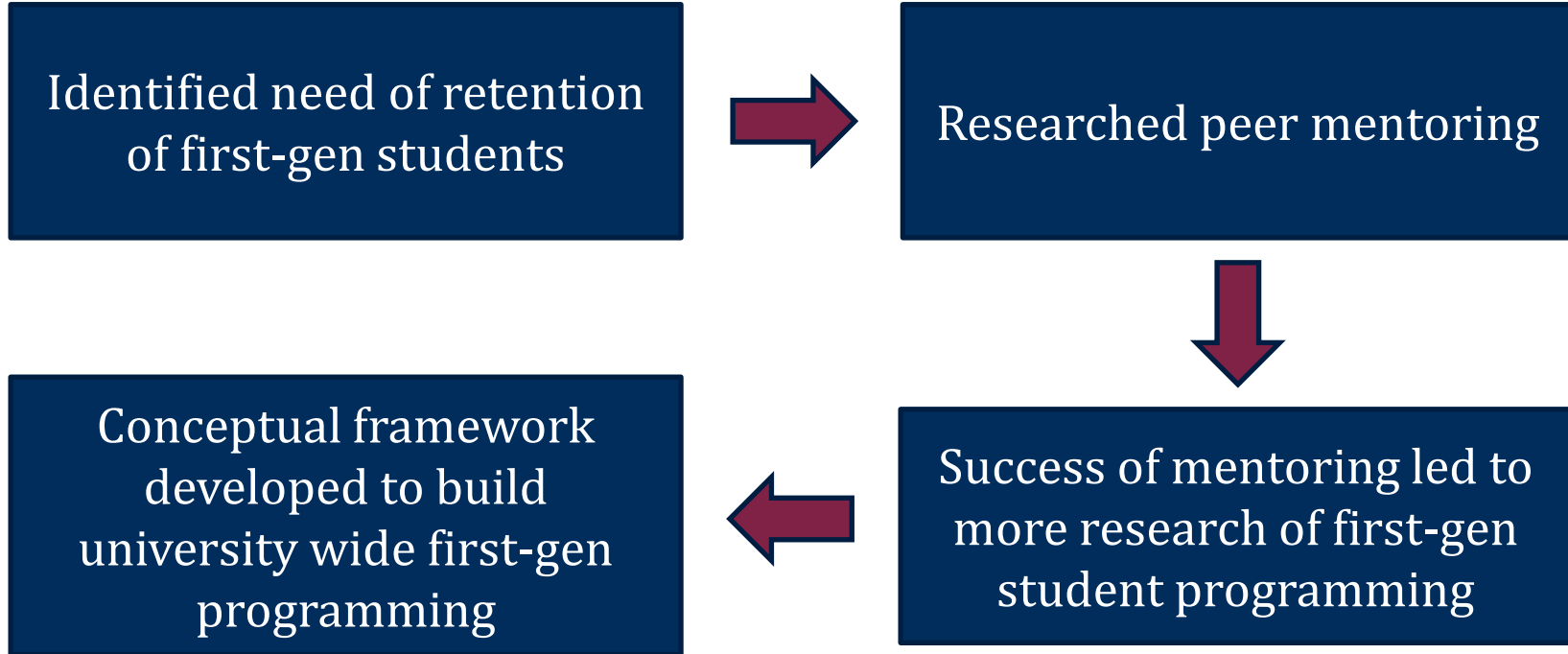
A blue-tinted photograph of three people in a meeting. In the center, a woman with curly hair is smiling and looking down at a document. To her right, a man is looking down at a document. To her left, another man is partially visible, looking towards the center. The text "How it all began..." is overlaid in white on the image.

How it all began...

Initiative addressed the following assumptions:

- **Academic:** lower GPA, fewer credits taken per semester, difficulty choosing major; unaware of available resources, lack of understanding of nuances of college, less likely to engage with faculty, less likely to participate in classroom discussions and ask questions, greater confusion over faculty's expectations and assignments.
- **Emotional:** less confidence, higher amounts of anxiety and isolation, struggle with motivation; not a strong sense of belonging in college and feeling misunderstood and disconnected from families and communities when seeking a degree.
- **Financial:** lower socio-economic backgrounds, lack of understanding of how to apply for aid in college, work to support the family.

Programming based on foundational research





91% of Mentees retained for Fall 2020

Compared to **69% retention** of those who chose not to participate in the program



Building a Sustainable Program

Yareli's Story

A Case Study

- Fall 2020
- First-gen – parents had elementary education
- Nursing student, high achieving
- Took the College Student Inventory (CSI)
- Recognized need to increase a sense of belonging and connecting to others

Davenport University's Comprehensive Plan

Mission: To support and encourage First-Generation students to reach their educational and personal goals.

Goal: First-Generation students will retain and graduate at the same level as the DU average.

To successfully achieve this goal the plan needs to:

- Be inclusive of all appropriate functional areas at the college
- Leverage current services/activities and create a systemic way to direct first-gen students to use them
- Identify gaps in current operations/services and proactively seek ways to bridge the gaps
- Maintain a short-term and long-term vision with activities and interventions that will be updated yearly



Identifying Achievable Outcomes

Davenport University's Comprehensive Plan

Objective 1: Provide support services directed to 1G students (academic, emotional, financial, co-curricular, extra-curricular, etc.)

Objective 2: Offer continuous training to staff and faculty to understand and address first-gen needs

Objective 3: Identify and apply for funding opportunities to support first-gen students directly (through scholarships) and indirectly (by sponsoring support services)

Objective 4: Establish a communication system for first-gen students and parents to achieve engagement and understanding of services and opportunities

Outcomes for First-Gen Students at DU

2020 and 2021

- Peer mentoring data shows significant increases in persistence and retention.

Avg persistence	Avg retention
86%	68%
60%	49%

- First-gen student success course persisted at an equivalent rate as non-first-gen students.

Institutional data: First-Gen Students at DU

Fall 2021

By Percent of Students Requesting Assistance	Mean Priority Scores	% of Students Requesting Assistance
Get help with exam skills	6.57	80%
Get information about clubs and social organizations	6.38	70%
Get information about student activities	6.22	70%
Get help in meeting new friends	6.79	65%
Get help with study habits	6.31	65%
Get advice from an experienced student	6.06	65%
Get help in selecting an academic program	6.34	55%
Get help with writing skills	6.09	55%
Get help in finding a part-time job	6.03	55%
Discuss the qualifications for careers	5.99	55%

Next Steps

2022 and Beyond...

- Current Plan Sampling
 - Student success handbook was developed and is widely used throughout numerous departments.
 - Expanding peer mentoring – 235 total participants university-wide
 - Purchased Graduway system for a mentoring program. Over 1,500 hits and 600 direct messaging between mentors and mentees
 - Developing family resources, including a bi-lingual (Spanish) handout for orientations
 - Monthly workshops with various departments planned for 2022-2023
 - Over 300 faculty and staff trained on first-gen initiative
 - Recognizing First-Gen Champions throughout the university

A blue-tinted photograph of a university courtyard. In the foreground, there are several large, ornate stone arches supported by columns. In the background, a large, domed building with a central spire is visible, surrounded by trees and a green lawn. The overall scene is a classic university campus setting.

How has your institution
addressed challenges?



Key Takeaways

What was the most fulfilling aspect of the peer mentoring program?

“Knowing you aren’t alone and that others in the same situation are rooting for you.”

I believe that my mentor helped me so much throughout my first semester by providing great information for me. She also got me into a different routine so I can get myself a better college lifestyle.”

“The most fulfilling part was the amount of support and motivational advice I received!”

“The most fulfilling aspect was that we were all students and the director is also a woman who strives for our excellence and pushes us to keep fighting for our dreams. The program is so amazing in general :)”

“Being able to talk to someone who has advice for going through my degree.”

“Honestly the fact that both Jake and Jodi helped me so much during one of the toughest parts of my life after getting laid off and struggling with school.”

“Meeting someone who was so much like me and made me feel special and not alone.”

Opportunities for First-Gen Success:

- Meet the needs:
 - Impact retention and graduation rates
 - Support for achieving personal and educational goals
 - Connectedness and belonging
 - *Positively influence future generations*

Key Takeaways

- Recognize the number of first-gen students at your institution
- Understand their unique needs
- Identify stakeholders
- Build a comprehensive plan and clear objectives
- Assess and re-assess data



Wrap-Up

Thank you for joining us today



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