

PERSISTENCE IN FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STACY HENSON
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

- How do we define first-generation?
- 34% of an average freshman class are first-generation students (Leightweis, 2014)
- 28% of first-generation students leave college during the first year (Choy, 2001)
- 22% fail to graduate (Lightweis, 2014)

BARRIERS

- Lack of parental knowledge about college and the college process.
- Lack of resources, including financial.
- Lack of academic preparedness.
- High likelihood of taking remedial coursework in college.
- Little exposure to higher education prior to attending.

RURAL STUDENTS

- A rural community is defined as having 2,500 or fewer residents (National Center for Educational Statistics (2003)).
- 20% of all PK-12 schools in the United States are rural (National Center for Educational Statistics (2003))
- 1 in 5 students is from a rural community (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010).
- Only 17% earn a bachelor's degree
- Lack of college preparedness

BARRIERS

- Rural PK-12 schools have access to fewer resources.
 - Fewer teachers
 - Fewer AP and less rigorous coursework
 - Technology barriers
 - Less money per student
- Often one counselor for PK-12, leading to reduced access to information about college and the college process, including the application process, scholarships, and financial aid information.
- Lack of a college going culture.

BARRIERS

- College location is often far from home.
- Enter college with an academic disadvantage.
- Low integration and involvement on campus
 - Feelings of being overwhelmed with the size of the campus and classes.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

- “it takes four students who leave prior to their sophomore year to produce as much tuition revenue as one student who stays for four years” (Leppel, 2002, p. 433).
- Provide assistant to high school counselors about ways to prepare students for college.
- Future Research
 - Looking at the impact of high school advising on retention of rural students.

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