Addressing Misperceptions of Underprepared Students: A Case Study at a Public American University

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Abstract

This study examines faculty/staff perceptions of underprepared students as well as the experiences of these students in the college setting. Understanding that this crucial population has poor retention, we sought to understand who they were and how the faculty/staff felt about them in an effort to better serve them. While most students surveyed believed their professors wanted them to succeed and were interested in their learning, they also offered insight into areas where faculty could further assist their progress. Faculty/staff revealed both positive and negative feelings about underprepared students, often acknowledging feelings of helplessness when working with them. Through data analysis of surveys from both populations, we identified key areas of focus on which to build a professional development model. By bridging gaps in faculty/staff understanding through a faculty networking approach, we are working together to become more student-ready in addressing student needs wherever they fall, thus promoting student success and retention.

Keywords

Underprepared students; Underrepresented minorities; Cultural responsiveness; At-promise; Faculty/staff networking

Introduction

Through the years, educators have been inundated with terms and labels that serve to persuade how they engage. Currently, higher education is challenged with retention, admission and identification. Having a thorough understanding of an ever-changing landscape of who students are and where they come from is paramount to admission and retention.

This also speaks very critically to inclusion and having a diverse workforce. Oftentimes, student populations are judged instead of evaluated. The judgment seems to relate to a lack of diversity in visibility and experiences in those tasked to provide leadership to students. It is important that higher education understands that "gone are the days" of myopic views of who students are and where they come from. Many students come from circumstances that fail to prepare them well for college or a successful future. If and when these students make it to college, it is up to the institutions to bridge the gaps to success.

Public access institutions have programs in place to grant opportunities for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, educational opportunity programs provide support to disadvantaged students through advisement, tutoring, and mentoring. Students in these programs come from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education: low-income families, first-generation college students, and/or minority backgrounds. Since they are academically underprepared,

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these students require one or more courses in reading, writing, and math to prepare them for college-level coursework.

Coming from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, intellectual, and linguistic backgrounds, underprepared students need faculty/staff support inside and outside of the classroom in order to achieve. Although programs currently exist to work with these students, we have noticed a fundamental disconnect that impedes faculty/staff in best meeting student needs. It is crucially important to heal the fractures, as educators sometimes close our classroom and office doors and teach/advise on our own islands. In this study, we have sought to learn about the misperceptions that faculty/staff have about students, while also investigating the experiences of students themselves, in an effort to transform negative perceptions about underprepared students and their learning potential.

Literature Review
From At-Risk to At-Promise

To understand today's challenges, it is important to note the history of how underprepared students have been represented and served in higher education. In the mid-1960s, "at-risk" student programs began to appear on college campuses across the country. These programs were designed to permit a particular level of academic leniency for underprepared black students, who were being admitted into colleges with lower test scores than those of their white counterparts (Ballard, 1973). Ballard's concerns were two-fold, as he questioned the "degree [to which] students [were] expected to achieve" along with factors that "would stop this situation from becoming a segregation epidemic in its own right" (1973, p. 90). These programs were put in place to address the special needs of a particular student

population, provide opportunities for academic development, assist with basic college requirements, and motivate students towards the successful completion of postsecondary education. Some common goals for post-secondary institutions were to increase the retention and graduation rates of students and effectively facilitate the transition from secondary to post-secondary education. Thompson (1983) asserted, "As long as educational opportunity programs continue to be maintained, it is reasonable to expect research to be conducted on program effectiveness in achieving high retention and graduation rates for program participants" (p. 3).

While "at-risk" programs have sought to help underprepared and underserved student populations, the language used to define these groups has been, until recently, negative and problematic. Rios (1996) defined "at-risk" students as those who have a higher propensity to drop out of school, those that lack the motivation and skills necessary to perform adequately, those students who have attendance and/or discipline problems, and those with low self-esteem. Chelemer, Knapp, and Means (1991) described them as "disadvantaged, educationally deprived, .and disproportionately poor from ethnic and linguistic minority backgrounds" (p. xi). Additionally, Gordon and Yowell (1994) summed up the definition of "at-risk" students as "a category of persons whose characteristics, conditions of life, situational circumstances, and interactions with each other make it likely that their development and/or education will be less than optimal" (p. 53). Finally, the phrase "at-risk" itself is rooted in medical terminology which implies that there is a challenge or circumstance that could threaten the success of a student (Norris, 2014). While the challenges of underprepared students must be addressed in order to best support them, none of these

definitions acknowledge students' potential, which can be damaging to the perceptions of the faculty/staff who will work with them in higher education.

This sentiment is echoed by Victor Rios, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A first-generation college student who was initially unsuccessful in higher education, Rios described his personal challenges with the negativity of the label, saying that since he "was labeled as a risk, [he] was treated as a risk," creating a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (McKenzie, 2019, para. 12). In his interview with *Inside Higher Ed*, Rios went on to describe his disappointment in how some of his colleagues interact with students and voice the need for the changing of terminology.

Although resilience comes grounded in scholarly psychology work beginning in the early 70's, the terms "at-promise" and "at-resilient" identify a more palatable approach for labeling, with a focus on students' potential rather than deficiencies. Following this shift, Whiting (2006) describes the need to "break the cycle of poor achievement and school apathy" in black males and offers several suggestions for doing so, including mentoring, multicultural counseling, and community outreach (p. 226). Similarly, Chaney et al. (2012) urge colleges to view at-promise students as "resources to be cultivated, not problems to be solved" (p. 1). By making this transition in perspective, colleges can provide better experiences for students and ultimately improve retention.

Teaching with Cultural Responsiveness

Much of the body of research on cultural responsiveness comes from K-12 settings, but the principles can be applied to higher education, as these strategies are not age-specific. Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, and Curran (2004) discuss five pillars of cultural responsive classroom management (CRCM). The

first, "recognition of one's own ethnocentrism and biases," involves exploring such concepts as white privilege to change the perception that different behaviors from other cultural groups are unacceptable (p. 29). Next, "knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds" can involve asking questions and reading articles about different groups' cultural heritage to work towards "developing skills for cross-cultural interaction" (p.30). Thirdly, to gain "awareness of the broader social, economic, and political context," educators should reflect on how, traditionally, educational practices can "privilege select groups while marginalizing others" (p. 31); the authors suggest reflecting on instances of student noncompliance and developing strategies to overcome these struggles, such as through conversation and increased faculty/student interaction. The fourth component of CRCM, "ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies," involves reflection on whether or not treatment to students is equitable as well as appropriate to their cultural norms (for example, when giving praise or critique individually versus in a group setting) (p. 32). The final facet, "commitment to building caring classrooms," focuses on advancing students' motivation and achievement, as students perform better when they feel respected; the authors suggest reading about effective teachers and providing classroom activities to help students develop empathy for each other (p. 33). The authors emphasize the complexity of the topic as a whole and recommend training for educators in CRCM.

Debnam et al. (2015) discuss the lack of quantitative research in the field of cultural responsiveness in teaching, noting instead the "overwhelming reliance on teacher self-report" and "substantial lack of outcome-focused research" (p. 535). Thus, they created a study that surveyed teachers about their attitudes and self-efficacy while also employing the ASSIST

(Assessing School Settings: Interactions of Students and Teachers) observational tool for trained observers to record and rate behaviors of teachers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, teachers self-rated their levels of cultural responsiveness higher than the observers rated them. The researchers found that teachers who utilized cultural responsiveness strategies had higher student engagement, and they also noted low observer ratings of cultural responsiveness in math classes, suggesting that it may be difficult to include the behaviors within that type of instruction. The researchers felt that more work must be done to link specific culturally responsive teacher behaviors to outcomes to inform effective professional development.

Warren (2013) conducted a study focused on one cultural responsiveness strategy: empathy, which can help teachers "directly cater to the social and cultural needs, norms, realities, experiences, and preferences of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students" (p. 176). The study focused on white female teachers and their interactions with black male students. The subjects were chosen by their supervisors and students as examples of success for working across gender, racial, and often socioeconomic lines to create positive student outcomes. Trained observers attended classes to record and code student/teacher interactions. From the results, empathy was shown to "facilitate teachers' instructional flexibility and risk-taking, establish trusting student-teacher relationships, and support teacher's ability to intervene proactively to ensure students meet high academic expectations" (p. 175). She provides evidence of teacher/student interactions to demonstrate these ideals and linked them to student results. Additionally, Warren suggests strategies to build empathy, including "perspective-taking, using students' social and cultural perspectives to guide subsequent interactions with them, and

capitalizing on student feedback to adapt and repeat the process" (p. 178). When educators attempt to utilize empathy in their interactions with students, they advance their cultural responsiveness.

To improve cultural responsiveness in pre-service social studies teachers, Tuncel (2017) conducted an action-research study in which individuals reflected on questions of diversity within their schools, researched different cultures, planned activities to manage cultural differences, discussed ideas with classmates, and reflected on learning. When preparing activities for the study, Tuncel focused on four themes: "realizing differences, respect for differences, tolerance for differences, and creating common values" (p. 1325). In coding data obtained from various steps of the process, Tuncel separated information into cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Results of the study suggest that, in order to become more culturally responsive, pre-service teachers reflect on their own cultural identities while respecting differences.

In their study, Averill, Anderson, and Drake (2015) evaluated a training program where experienced teachers modelled cultural responsiveness strategies and then followed up with "in-the-moment" coaching of student teachers during practiced rehearsals (p. 63). Researchers collected videos of teaching rehearsals and coded culturally responsive teaching attempts as well as coaching strategies. The researchers conclude that reflection and discussion of teaching and coaching strategies led to increased connections between theory and practice.

Advising Underprepared Students

Students who need remediation in classes typically require additional guidance from advisors. When students have multiple supports across campus, they are more likely to be successful (Hollis, 2009). Many universities

have achieved success with a network system; for example, faculty at Murdoch University developed the First Year Advisor Network to help new students achieve success. While the advisor is the central support, students are funneled to appropriate resources. Faculty/staff have been trained to understand the system so that they can best help students (Kemp, Lefroy, & Callan, 2013).

Mandatory meetings between students and advisors have had notable success. Students who are underprepared are in need of strong guidance, but they often fail to seek out faculty support. A study by Vivian (2005) examined the effectiveness of a program that required students to attend short, casual weekly meetings with the advisor and write a brief reflection of how they thought they were performing that week. These meetings encouraged students; seeing their mentor as a "trustworthy guide" (p. 349) while maintaining responsibility for their own progress may have influenced increased success, as the study group had more positive outcomes than the control group.

The present study builds upon the discussed research by exploring perceptions and experiences to inform a professional development model.

Methodology
Instrument

Before we could reach out to faculty/staff to offer support in working with underprepared students, we had to attempt to better understand why students were not succeeding. What were the students' experiences in the classroom, and what were the faculty/staff's perceptions of the students? In the spring semester of 2017 at a four-year, public American university, we developed surveys for both populations: one was for underprepared students about their college experiences (Appendix A), including such topics as levels of comfort and feelings of support, and

the other was for faculty/staff to assess perceptions on cultural competence and the ability to serve underprepared students (Appendix B). Furthermore, we completed, submitted, and received approval from the Institutional Review Board for our research proposal. Both populations were invited to participate in a Qualtrics survey via a link sent to their university e-mail accounts during the Fall 2017 semester.

The student survey was comprised of questions that addressed demographics, self-efficacy, and personal beliefs/experiences. The majority of the questions in this survey required students to respond using a 4-point Likert scale: 1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Disagree; and 4=Strongly disagree. Students responded to the remaining questions by selecting their responses from a pull-down menu and writing responses to open-ended questions. The faculty/staff survey asked questions to identify roles at the university, levels and qualities of interactions with students they believed were classified as underprepared, and perceptions of student readiness/competencies. Questions included selecting answers from a pull-down menu and responding with text to open-ended questions.

Participants/Sample

Seventy-nine students responded to the survey sent to all students served by the educational opportunity program. This included 15 males and 64 females. 25 students identified as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino; 28 white; 26 black or African American; 3 Asian; 3 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and 1 American Indian or Alaska Native. In terms of academic standing, 41 were freshmen, 13 were sophomores, 12 were juniors, and 13 were seniors based on self-identification. Almost half of the respondents (39) reported themselves as first-generation college students, while 38 said they were not and 2 were unsure. 0 students who completed the survey identified as transfer

students. It should be noted that more students than self-selected were classified by the university as first-generation based on institutional data.

The survey included the participation of 221 faculty/staff members. This included 82 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 31 adjunct faculty, 16 administrators, and 92 staff members from various divisions including police, facilities, academic and student affairs. 136 reported that they work/interact directly with students, 27 reported working/interacting indirectly with students, and 7 reported no work/interactions, with the rest failing to respond to that question.

Data Analysis

The data analysis method used for this study was content analysis. Patton (2002) argued that content analysis "refer[s] to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). According to Patton, these core meanings were known as patterns or themes that emerge from the data. Once the themes emerged, it was our responsibility as researchers to "develop some manageable classification or coding scheme… which involved identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data" (Patton, 2002, p. 463).

Open-ended responses for the student and faculty/staff surveys were coded separately by question. We identified recurring themes within each question with open coding. Separately and individually, we read each participant's response to the question and created initial codes. Next, we compared results, adding, condensing, or adapting wording as we felt necessary. Finally, with these revised codes, we reread participants' responses and categorized them appropriately using NVivo 11 statistical qualitative software.

Results and Discussion

Student Surveys

Though students indicated differences in their college experiences through the Likert scale questions, many were very positive overall. Nearly half (40) felt well-prepared for college by their high schools, choosing agree or strongly agree, while the other 37 did not, selecting disagree or strongly disagree. Still, most (61 of 77) did not find the transition difficult. Upon reflection of the role of race in their college experience, students overwhelmingly (75 of 77) responded comfort in working with classmates of different races and usually (72 of 76) felt that they were treated respectfully by professors regardless of race. Only 45 of 77 students responded that professors used teaching materials that included members of their racial background, and some (18 of 77) reported feeling uncomfortable in class due to race.

Our overall findings revealed that most students felt their professors wanted them to succeed and were interested in what they had to contribute to the class discussion. Additionally, students wanted professors to provide clearer directions, give support and encouragement, and connect course material to real life.

Table 1 shows the results for student responses to the following question, "Can you identify any teaching techniques that have helped you succeed? List as many as possible, including any specific examples." The use of the online learning and teaching platform produced the third highest response, falling behind two categories related to learning styles. Students identified study strategies/guides and active learning as approaches that contributed to their success.

Table 2 shows the results for student responses to the following question, "What advice would you give to your professors on how to serve students better?" In addition, students described a number of ways that their instructors could be more helpful to them. For

example, "Always leave room open for discussion and questions. And most importantly, NEVER, and I mean NEVER, read directly from the slides. As a professor or doctor of the discourse, the material should be known inside 'n out, around, and up and down." Another student replied, "To not be mad at us if we don't understand." Still another student stated, "Don't discourage them. Be supportive. Especially if the topic is hard material."

Faculty/Staff Surveys

Open-ended responses to the staff surveys revealed a myriad of feelings and perceptions about at-promise students. In answer to the question, "What do you believe to be characteristics of students served by the Department of Academic Enrichment? Please describe," negative perceptions emerged that these students were underprepared, low-performing, unmotivated, and deficient. However, positive perceptions, including that students were energetic, diligent, eager to learn, and motivated, also were recorded by respondents. **Table 3** indicates popular themes that emerged.

A second question that elicited noteworthy responses from faculty/staff was, "In general, what is your biggest challenge in working/interacting with academically underprepared students?" Responses (see themes in **Table 4**) often indicated frustration with the lack of students preparedness (i.e., "I want to teach the content... but [students] cannot do the basic reading and writing necessary to engage with the material" and "They are behind the eight ball from the beginning"). However, other respondents championed these students and indicated their frustrations *for*, rather than *with*, them (i.e., "I do not consider much to be a challenge, as it is part of why I enjoy working with my students; however, the most challenging aspect has to do

more with how others interact with my students").

In response to the question, "In general, what methods have been successful for you in working/interacting with underprepared students?" responses were information-rich, often focusing on the effect of student/faculty relationships and success. Many respondents offered tips to build connections with students; faculty referenced triumphs in student success after "listening and getting their full story," "trying to understand their background/experiences," and "holding high expectations." However, some neglected to answer the question and responded instead to indicate their feelings about underprepared students (i.e., "I am frustrated as to how these students got into my classes in the first place. They are not of an academic level that would be conducive to succeeding in the first place"). **Table 5** offers common themes of what faculty/staff found to be successful for them.

Limitations

While the faculty/staff population surveyed offered a sweeping view of the perceptions at our university, we were only able to obtain surveys from a relatively small group of underprepared students, as we were unable to gain permission to survey larger populations and could only survey students classified as belonging to the educational opportunity program. While we found the 79 respondents' surveys information-rich, we may have uncovered further insights from additional respondents.

Implications

Having completed survey analysis and uncovered disconnects between student needs and faculty offerings, we have lain the foundation for a faculty/staff networking program to better serve underprepared students and increase retention of this crucial population.

With our survey to faculty/staff, we sent out feelers for interest in furthering the discussion on underprepared students and how we could serve them. Throughout the Fall 2018 semester, we met with faculty and staff across campus, as well as some student leaders, to share what we had learned from the survey and discuss moving forward. From these discussions, we generated a focus for a professional development plan and faculty networking approach.

Globally, similar to American institutions, higher education sectors in countries such as Australia and South Africa are also faced with the challenge of supporting an increasing number of underprepared students (Dell, 2010; Govender, 2013; Steenkamp & Roberts, 2016). While identifying faculty/staff perceptions of these students is crucial, another key factor is to implement a plan to promote the academic success of these underperforming students. Thus, we offer the following guidelines for creating a professional development model:

- Increase awareness of challenges of underprepared students
- Provide cross-campus strategies for working with underprepared students
- Reframe impressions about underprepared students to become more "student-ready"
- Create a central hub to support student success
- Establish points of contact for student resources
- Develop a network of advocates for underprepared students
- Raise visibility of and form connections between different programs supporting underprepared students

In addition to sharing the results of the surveys, our professional development program includes information on underprepared student In addition to sharing the results of the surveys, our professional development program includes

information on underprepared student challenges and cultural competency practices. We will begin our professional development sessions in Fall 2019 and offer trainings through our Teaching and Learning Enhancement Center. Depending on the interest and need, we may develop a webinar. Additionally, we plan to facilitate networking by suggesting trainees to lead book club discussions on relevant literature.

While our focus is on underprepared students, faculty/staff networking can occur around a great variety of topics. We recommend the following steps and discussion questions to create a program where faculty work together to improve their practice:

1. Establish leaders of the initiative: Who is in charge? For what will they be responsible?
2. Develop goals/mission statement: What objectives will be accomplished? How will these be initiated?
3. Gain support from leadership team: Why should administrators support this initiative? What will it accomplish for the campus community? How will it impact retention?
4. Identify/reach out to like-minded individuals: Is there anyone else with similar interests/goals? How can they become involved in this program?
5. Analyze existing programs and resources to avoid duplication: How is this program different from others? What does it contribute to the collective?
6. Research best practices and create/gather resources for sharing: What will the sessions actually entail? What takeaways will participants have? Is there any follow-up for future reflection/action?

7. Conduct faculty & staff training sessions: How long will the sessions be, and how often will they be operated? Where will the sessions be held, and how will faculty/staff sign up to participate? How will advertising occur?

8. Assess and revise program as necessary: What has been effective, and what hasn't been? How can the program grow to include more faculty? How can faculty interact together in a more meaningful way?

Conclusion

While students recognize that most faculty/staff hope for their success, it is clear from our findings that student needs could be better met, not just at our own university but at others. Increased awareness must be brought to the challenges that underprepared students face; through gaining an understanding of the obstacles, staff/faculty can learn to be more empathetic and better prepared to assist in problem-solving. Mulvey (2008) discusses the need for higher education to help underprepared students "become active contributors to American society" by "acknowledge[ing] their potential and accept[ing] responsibility for educating these students" (2008, p. 85).

Many faculty/staff are additionally struggling with issues of cultural responsiveness and require training. Sue (2010) discusses the problematic behavior of microaggressions, which he defines as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their [marginalized] group membership" (p. xvi). Whether intentional or unintentional, these commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and or insults. In their study, Smith, Mao, and Deshpande (2016) describe the detriments of microaggressions as causing students to experience "feelings of stigmatization and alienation" (p. 127). If trained through a model such as the "Address Microaggressions" one recommended by Sigg (2018), faculty/staff may begin to understand, confront, and break their own incidents of racially problematic behavior.

In order to meet students where they are, rather than wish for different students, it is up to faculty/staff to adjust their approaches. Strategies such as clarifying expectations with rubrics and examples, offering feedback that recognizes strengths as well as areas for improvement, holding high expectations, encouraging help-seeking behavior, and offering advice on how to be successful, educators have the power to affect student retention and success (Lohman, 2015).

By increasing the sharing of resources and opportunities, and taking the approach that the retention of underprepared students is a shared responsibility, faculty/staff can best impact students. Though experts in different content areas, educators work with the same students and can learn from each other, especially in identifying high impact next practices for this critical population. These networks can support teaching, advising, wellness, and more. Other institutions that have implemented networking approaches have seen increases in student retention and success (Bickerstaff, Lontz, Cormier, & Xu, 2014; Hollis, 2009; Kemp et al., 2013; Siegel, 2011).

Through faculty/staff networking, we can reframe the impression that our students are at-risk and describe them, instead, as at-promise. By becoming student allies as well as allies to other colleagues, we support student retention, confidence, and inclusion.

Tables

Table 1. Helpful Teaching Techniques.

Themes	Number of responses
Study strategies and guides	13
Active learning	11
Use of online learning and teaching platform	9
Office hours	7
Group work	4
Clear directions	4

Notes: N= 45; Respondents were able to provide answers with multiple codes.

Table 2. Student Advice for Professors.

Themes	Number of responses
Give support, understanding, and/or respect	21
Be flexible	14
Explain more	10
Make learning meaningful	9
Use technology	2

Notes: N= 45; Respondents were able to provide answers with multiple codes.

Table 3. Perceived Characteristics of Program Students.

Themes	Number of responses
Underprepared	77
Challenged	67
Motivated	10
Diverse	9
Rude	2

Notes: N= 109; Respondents were able to provide answers with multiple codes.

Table 4. Challenges Working with Underprepared Students.

Themes	Number of responses
Unprepared or lacking skills	34
Low motivation	20
Trouble accessing resources and	14
Unrealistic expectations	12
Lack of confidence	9
Difficulty creating balance	9

Notes: N= 103; Respondents were able to provide answers with multiple codes.

Table 5. Successful Teaching Strategies.

Themes	Number of responses
Individual support	43
Building trust and respect	25
Connecting to resources	23
Giving strategies	13

Notes: N= 98; Respondents were able to provide answers with multiple codes.

Appendix A: Student Survey

Introduction: The purpose of this survey is to collect information on your thoughts and experiences. This information will be used to educate faculty and staff about your thoughts on different topics to help make positive changes that will affect your educational experience and that of others.

Your responses are anonymous. Please complete as many questions as you can and add additional comments as you like. When you finish the survey, you will be directed to provide your contact information for the chance to win a gift card to the bookstore.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that

·   you voluntarily give your consent to participate.

·   you are at least 18 years old.

·   you are or were affiliated with one of the following programs: Act 101 or EOP

 If any of the above is not true, click on the "disagree" button to exit the survey.

❍ I agree
❍ I disagree

What is your age?

What is your gender?

❍ Male
❍ Female
❍ Transgender
❍ I prefer not to say.

Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino or none of these?

❍ Yes
❍ None of these

Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?

❍ Spanish
❍ Hispanic
❍ Latino

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

❑ White
❑ Black or African American
❑ American Indian or Alaska Native
❑ Asian
❑ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
❑ I prefer not to say

What is your standing?

❍ Freshman
❍ Sophomore
❍ Junior
❍ Senior
❍ Graduate Student

Are you a first-generation college student; that is, are you the first person in your family to go to college?

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Not Sure

Did you participate in the summer program before the start of your freshman year?

❍ Yes
❍ No

Are you a transfer student?

❍ Yes
❍ No

You will now be asked to rate some of your experiences at XXX. Please select from the following for each question:

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

You may enter additional comments on each question as you wish.

1. I feel that my high school prepared me for college.

2. My transition into college was not difficult.

3. My professors use teaching materials (literature, art, media, etc.) that include members of my racial background.

4. I feel comfortable working with classmates whose races are different from mine.

5. My professors treat students respectfully regardless of race.

6. I have never felt uncomfortable in a classroom at Bloomsburg University because of my race.

7. My professors want me to succeed in their classes.

8. My professors believe I am capable of succeeding in their classes.

9. My professors are interested in the contributions I make in the classroom.

10. If I'm struggling in a class, I know how to get help.

11. My academic advisor helped me select appropriate classes to fulfill my requirements.

12. I would like/would have liked additional guidance on how to get into a major.

13. If my professors/advisors were unable to assist me, they have referred me to the appropriate resources or people who could help me.

Open-Ended Questions:

1. Can you identify any teaching techniques that have helped you succeed? List as many as possible, including any specific examples.

2. What advice would you give to your professors on how to serve students better?

Thank you for your responses. Please click the submit button to record your responses and take you to an optional screen to enter information to enter in to the drawing for a BU Bookstore gift card.

Appendix B: Faculty/Staff Survey

Introduction: The purpose of this survey is to collect information about perceptions of and interactions with students served by the Department of Academic Enrichment. Participation is voluntary and responses are anonymous. This information will help us understand attitudes so we can better serve our students.   IRB # 2017-30

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that you give your consent to participate. If you do not give your consent to participate, click on the "disagree" button.

❍ I agree
❍ I do not agree

Condition: I do not agree Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

What is your position at the university?

❍ Faculty: Tenured/ Tenure-track
❍ Faculty: Adjunct
❍ Administration
❍ Staff

Display This Question:
    If Staff Is Selected What is your position at the university?

Indicate the division/unit with which you are primarily affiliated:

❍ Academic Affairs
❍ Facilities
❍ Finance and Business Services
❍ Student Affairs
❍ University Advancement
❍ Other _____
❍ Unsure
❍ Don't care to say

What do you believe to be characteristics of students served by the Department of Academic Enrichment? Please describe.

To what extent do you work/interact with students?

❍ Directly
❍ Indirectly
❍ Not at all

Condition: Not at all Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Do you work/interact with students served by the Department of Academic Enrichment?

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ I am not sure

Explain why you believe that you do or do not work/interact with students served by the Department of Academic Enrichment.

In general, what is your biggest challenge in working/interacting with academically underprepared students?

In general, what methods have been successful for you in working/interacting with academically underprepared students?

Students Served by the Department of Academic Enrichment - Contacts

Thank you for your participation!

Are you interested in information about serving on a cross-campus network to share strategies and provide support to students served by the Department of Academic Enrichment?

❍ Yes
❍ No
Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Please provide your name and contact information so we may contact you with information about this opportunity for university service. This information will not be associated with your survey responses in any way and all responses in the survey will remain anonymous.

Name	Email	Phone Number

Thank you for your participation! We will be in touch with more information soon.

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