INvolving the families OF community college students

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THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN COLLEGE ACCESS

- Family support and early educational plans predict students 1) developing and maintaining college aspirations, 2) sustaining motivation and academic achievements, and 3) actual college enrollment.

- Family members must have opportunities to gain college knowledge and understand their role.

- Consistent communication among students, parents, school (and postsecondary) personnel predicts increased enrollment in college.
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- College students report that parents and family members are a significant source of support during college.

- Colleges and universities are increasingly providing different types of services for parents:
  - Focus on middle-class parents, assumption that parents know about college but need to learn ‘how to let go’
  - Primarily at 4-year institutions, especially private institutions

- Including students’ families will extend the base of support for student access, persistence and achievement.
COMMUNITY COLLEGE PATHWAY

- Nearly half of all undergraduates attend community colleges
- Point of entry for high proportions of first-generation college goers and students of color--
  - 47% of all African American students
  - 55% of all Latino students
  - 57% of all Native American students
- Community colleges provide postsecondary opportunities to a broad population, however, access does not always lead to success
  - Less than half of those students seeking an AA/AS degree or higher achieve this within 6 years of enrollment
SERVING FAMILIES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

How can including students’ families extend the base of support for student access, persistence and achievement?

- Focus on families of first-generation and underrepresented students

Families of first-generation students have different needs for information about how to help their student navigate the system

Community college issues

- Assessment/developmental courses
- Choosing to complete a certificate, degree, and/or transfer
- Balancing work and school
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE OF FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS?

HOW CAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAPITALIZE ON FAMILIAL SUPPORT?

WHAT ARE THE INFORMATIONAL NEEDS OF PARENTS?
  - Parents who did not have the opportunity to go to college?
  - Recent immigrant and undocumented families?

WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION?

WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE FAMILY OUTREACH STRATEGIES?

HOW CAN FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BE INSTITUTIONALIZED?
Pilot Program at North Central Community College District

- Designing orientations for parents/guardians that did not have the opportunity to go to college
  - English and Spanish
  - Rural campuses
  - Family v. parent involvement

- Recruiting parents for interviews

- Designing research agenda
WORKSHOP CONTENT AND DELIVERY

- Overview of NCTC system and opportunities
- AA/AS degree and core courses
- Transfer Requirements
- Paying for college
- Differences between high school and college
- NCTC resources
- Tips for Parents
SPANISH LANGUAGE WORKSHOPS

- Build rapport
- Adapt content to community specific needs
  - Address family needs for student to work while in college
  - Address family concerns about transfer opportunities- leaving home to go to the university
  - Address student needs for study- reducing family demands
- Workshops can be adapted to different cultural and community needs
**Next Steps Research and Practice**

- **Pilot study within NCTC District:**
  - Survey of community college students
  - Interviews with parents/guardians
  - Continued development of family orientation workshops and materials
  - Family outreach training for staff and community
  - Evaluation of process