

Ways to Dismantle Systemic Barriers for Access in Higher Education

Systemic Barriers	Action Steps
<p>Grants/Scholarships</p> <p>Many minority students are unaware of departmental, school or university scholarships that are available for students. This results in missed opportunity, increasing debt, and more demand for them work part-time/full time jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share tuition waiver opportunities across campus ✓ Invite minorities to serve on research project for stipends or supplemental tuition support ✓ Share university-wide scholarship opportunities with minorities ✓ Inform students about work study jobs
<p>Financial Aid</p> <p>Financial aid programs generally communicate to new students that a full-time course load is 12 credits per semester or 24-semester credits per year. However, the average 4-year degree program requires a 15 credit per semester course load</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Train local volunteers to assist families with FAFSA applications ✓ To graduate within four years, advise students to add 1 additional course above the recommended financial aid requirement ✓ To prevent increasing the wealth gap recommend students to not accept all loans if they do need the funds ✓ Waive fees for experiential courses
<p>Social Engagement</p> <p>Extracurricular activities, social networks and having a support group are linked to sense of belonging, academic achievement and retention. However, minority students often face campus barriers with gaining access to these opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make sure sports activity fees are affordable ✓ Ensure that minorities have equal access to information on how to prepare for acceptance ✓ Share summer and supplemental programs to increase their preparation for the team ✓ Hire more diverse leadership e.g., African American coaches, campus-leaders, etc...
<p>Professional Development Opportunities</p> <p>Minority students often face financial barriers to engage in conferences, fellowships, and study abroad opportunities. Although financial aid may supplement some costs, the remaining costs often exceeds what is affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide opportunities to fund study abroad trips ✓ Cover registration fees to allow students to attend conferences ✓ Use departmental scholarships to fund cohorts to attend conferences
<p>Campus and Class Climate</p> <p>Minority students have often reported that they do not have a strong sense of belonging on college campuses. They often feel they are underprepared to engage in discussions and may lack college readiness. It is important to create a safe space for students to engage and build rapport with their peers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Openly communicate your methods and expectations for evaluation ✓ Encourage team learning and cooperative interdependence to foster strong relationships between students from different backgrounds ✓ Have a growth mindset and believe that all students can succeed. and accept that students' abilities can be developed by identifying challenges, applying the right strategies, and persisting through difficulties.
<p>College Readiness</p> <p>Minority students and first-generation college students are far less likely to be ready for college due to environmental and cultural differences that may impact their access to resources. Often lack of school resources, inadequate courses, experienced teachers, and school counselors contribute substantially to this reality. First generation college students do not have access to parents who have successfully navigated college before them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create and support a first-generation Transitional Support System to provide critical information for students' transition into college ✓ Check in with your students to see about their progress in your courses ✓ Don't assume all students have previous experience with software and required tools required for the course ✓ Eliminate textbook costs by reserving your required textbooks in an online course reserve or using alternative course literature ✓ Universities can incentivize faculty to eliminate textbooks

Access to Competitive Majors

African Americans and Hispanics are overrepresented in four of the six lowest-paying fields. This may be linked to poor academic advising. Students often do not consider the return on investment when accumulating student loan debt to fund their major selections.

- ✓ Recruit minorities into majors for them to become leaders - not just workers
- ✓ Provide extra academic support for high-potential minority students who are at risk of not completing their degrees in competitive majors
- ✓ Once accepted into the major connect students to mentorship programs

References

9 ways colleges should support underrepresented students. (2016, May 18). The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/facts/9-ways-colleges-support-underrepresented-students/>

Addressing Barriers Confronting First-Generation College Students from Hispanic Families. (n.d.). University of California, Los Angeles.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/firstgen.pdf>

Bryant, R. T.-A.-F. (2015). *College Preparation for African American Students: Gaps in the High School Educational Experience.* CLASP.

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/College-readiness2-2.pdf>

Dwyer, K. (n.d.). *Low-income students face systemic barriers to college access* | *The Ithacan*. Retrieved July 21, 2020, from

<https://theithacan.org/news/low-income-students-face-systemic-barriers-to-college-access/>

How to provide minorities with a richer college experience. (2016, December 26). *The Edvocate*. <https://www.theedadvocate.org/how-to-provide-minorities-with-a-richer-college-experience/>

Markowitz, T. (n.d.). *The barriers to success and upward mobility for first generation students and how to fix the problem.* Forbes. Retrieved July 21, 2020, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/troymarkowitz/2017/08/08/the-barriers-to-success-and-upward-mobility-for-first-generation-students-and-how-to-fix-the-problem/>

Willis, M. (n.d.). African American College Students, Extracurricular Activities and Motivation. *USCS McNair Scholars Journal*, 12. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ca15/17ee5bf2ba7e27cfe5c87e7a6e06b3ae9993.pdf>