

Equal Opportunity/Diversity Ends Policy - Understanding the Current Situation

Gaps for Low Income Students

Gap I - the Fall to Fall retention rate for low income students is significantly lower (12-13% on average) than that of non-low income students.

Gap II - Average first term GPA is 2.53 for low income students; 2.81 for non-low income.

Gap III - Average graduation rate after 4 years was 10.45% for low income students and 21.1% for non-low income students.

Underlying Factors - relevant to Gaps I, II & III

Academically underprepared as illustrated by CSI results for low income students:

- 84 percent were predicted to have high proneness to dropping out.
- 91 percent were predicted to have academic difficulty.
- Only 44 percent rated themselves above the 50th percentile on openness to help from the college.
- Only 30 percent had low intellectual interests, or interest in reading or discussing new topics.
- Only 38 percent rated themselves with good study habits.
- Only 28 percent felt confident in their ability to express themselves verbally or in writing.
- Only 31 percent felt confident in their ability to learn math and science.
- Only 34 percent had a strong desire to complete college.
- 41 percent expressed stress over finances.
- 13 percent expressed they felt they would have academic difficulty.
- 9 percent felt they were not supported by their families emotionally.
- 22 percent expressed interest in receiving personal counseling.
- 19 percent were unsure of their major or career choice.

Insufficient educational planning

- Little experience planning for college and establishing academic goals
- Unclear or unrealistic career goals

Generational poverty factors:

- Unfamiliar with the hidden rules of college
- Differing values (higher education built on middle class values and assumptions)
- Financial literacy factors: stress over finances, PELL and loan management issues, lack of knowledge about financial aid
- Delicate balance of fragile supports; many potential setbacks
- Day to day survival mindset; may not have experience with setting long term goals
- Language barriers and improper use of language

Digital literacy factors

- Limited prior exposure to classroom technology

- Lack of access to technology at home

Unfamiliarity with the college environment

- Limited exposure to college-going culture within the family
- Poor understanding of financial aid and registration procedures
- Lack of understanding of academic expectations
- Limited awareness of academic support systems

Gaps for African American Students

Gap I - AtD cohort data indicate that fall to fall retention rates for African American students are significantly lower than for Caucasian students.

Gap II - AtD cohort data indicate that the average graduation rate after 4 years was 8.5% for African American students and 21.1% for Caucasian students.

Underlying Factors - relevant to Gaps I & II

(Based on NC State African American student focus group results - *Factors in italics were identified as being unique to this group*)

- balancing school, work, and family
- lack of available courses/scheduling
- teachers covering a lot of material too quickly, and in a very short time period
- lacking adequate preparation for college-level work
- instructors “not getting down to students’ level”
- some instructors being “non-supportive/non-effective”
- loss of knowledge for older students
- adjusting to the process of returning to school
- *lack of access to computers*
- *lack of money/financial aid*
- *instructors lacking cultural awareness*

Gaps for Male Students

Gap I - AtD cohort data indicate that fall to fall retention rates for male students are significantly lower than for female students.

Gap II - AtD cohort data indicate that the average graduation rate after 4 years was 13% for male students and 17.85% for female students.

Underlying Factors - relevant to Gaps I & II

(based on NC State male student focus group results)

Factors in italics were identified as being unique to this group

- balancing school, work, and family

- lack of available courses/scheduling
- teachers covering a lot of material too quickly, and in a very short time period
- lacking adequate preparation for college-level work
- instructors “not getting down to students’ level”
- some instructors being “non-supportive/non-effective”
- loss of knowledge for older students
- adjusting to the process of returning to school
- *coping with an ineffective advising system*
- *pride*
- *lack of desire for learning among younger male students.*

Gap for Learning Disabilities

Gap I - We lack information on students with learning disabilities

Underlying Factors

- students’ reluctance to self-disclose
- this hasn’t been a college-wide focus or priority