Aligning to Extend Resource Capacities and Enhance Students’ Acquisition of Social and Cultural Capital

The University Library and the Community Involvement Program (CIP)

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First-Gen College Students (FGCS): National Context

- Majority from backgrounds historically underrepresented in higher education
- Often students of color (Latino/a, African American or Southeast Asian) and/or low-income
- Will likely constitute a larger portion of higher education enrollments in coming years
University of the Pacific @ College.Scorecard.gov:

- First-generation @Pacific: 34%
- Socio-Economic Diversity: 37%
Changing Demographics

• “80 % of the growth in new student enrollments in the next decade will come from low-income students and students of color”

--Dr. Laura Schreiner, Azusa Pacific – The Thriving Project
A key advantage will be the ability to help diverse learners recognize and capitalize on the talents they bring to the learning environment

--Dr. Laura Schreiner, Azusa Pacific – The Thriving Project
First-Gen – Risk Factors

- **Lack of social capital** (networks of support, especially family support)
- Confidence Issues / imposter syndrome / “outsider” status
- Multiple commitments (related to work outside of school and/or family)
- **Lack of cultural capital** (knowledge about how college systems work)
These challenges can be mitigated by programming that assists first-gen students with acquiring social and cultural capital that will help them survive – and thrive – in academe.
Key Beliefs:

1. I belong in this academic community.
2. My ability and competence grow with my effort.
3. I can succeed at this.
4. This work has value for me.
Community Involvement Program (CIP):

- Comprehensive, need-based scholarship program for first-generation college students from the Stockton community who have demonstrated community awareness and service, along with the potential for responsible leadership.

- Provides financial access to college along with wide range of support services

- Cohort model / strong community building / leading by example
Assessment in Action:

• Previous CIP assessment data showed the Library as underutilized.

• Scholarly literature: known correlation between academic library use and higher GPAs and retention rates
CIP Discovers Pacific:

• Additional component added in 2017 to CIP’s New Student Retreat.

• Purpose: familiarizing students with essential campus resources while building their self-efficacy

• Students discover these resources as a group via campus-based “brain-teaser,” challenge activities, armed with a campus map, each other, and their intellectual curiosity.
97% of students stated that they were very likely to utilize the library as a result of their CIP Discovers Pacific journey.

94% of students stated they felt more comfortable about navigating Pacific’s campus as a result of CIP Discovers Pacific.

87% of students stated they were very likely to take advantage of library resources (study rooms, computers, laptops, etc.).
“When I visited the library during the CIP retreat, it was a smaller group and I got more out of it. I was able to connect more. I felt like I mattered but at orientation I just felt like another number; it was difficult to connect.”
“Even though I heard some of the same information at orientation, it was more memorable connecting with Michelle. She was so informative and inviting - I feel more comfortable going now.”
“I felt like Michelle really wanted me to use the library, she knows so much about it and wanted us to feel welcome.”
“I never expected the librarian to be so welcoming and real”
Deci and Ryan – Intrinsic Motivation (Psychology – Univ. of Rochester)

3 key human needs:
- competence
- autonomy
- relatedness (personal connection)

“intrinsic motivation can be sustained only when we feel that those needs are being satisfied”
“The CIP Discovers Pacific-Library component was reported by students as a positive experience. Most importantly, they retained the information and answered related questions correctly at the retreat site, in addition to being excited about ‘finding’ this essential resource and articulating that they are comfortable utilizing the library.”
“Connection of students to a key resource is essential in student retention/support. The learning outcomes were met in this activity, and the connection with the librarian (Michelle) as a personable resource is an additional positive outcome.

Recommendation is to continue this activity with future cohorts.”