Academic Excellence Symposium

Dr. Carol Tonge-Mack, University of Cincinnati, facilitated “A Conversation on Affluence and Poverty in the 21st Century” as part of DSC’s 9th annual Academic Excellence Symposium on March 3. Faculty and staff discussed several themes, including the growing financial and academic success gaps between upper and lower class students, expanding the focus of serving students beyond those officially designated as “homeless,” and the challenges facing first-generation college students and those from generational poverty, as well as strategies to help both.

In addition, five student panelists shared their experiences with financial and food insecurity to homelessness to child care to navigating the financial aid system and college culture on campus. (See “Student Panel Notes” below.)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/06/03/guilt-is-one-of-the-biggest-struggles-first-generation-college-students-face/?utm_term=.1baceadcde55


Mental Health Counseling on Campus

One of the issues raised by the student panel during “A Conversation on Affluence and Poverty” during the Academic Excellence Symposium was a greater need for more mental health counseling on campus.

http://www.acct.org/news/half-community-college-students-confront-mental-health-conditions

Child Care

In addition to mental health counseling, the student panel also expressed a need for (access to) more child care / child care assistance.


Textbooks

“According to the National Association of College Stores, the average price of a new textbook increased from $57 in 2007 to $82 in 2014. The gap between new and used book prices has increased over time, with the latter rising from
$49 to $59 over these years” (https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-estimated-undergraduate-budgets-2016-17).

Two students in the audience for “A Conversation on Affluence and Poverty in the 21st Century” suggested that DSC students should, perhaps, coordinate with SGA to begin a book-swap / donation program in which students who complete a class can exchange or donate their books to those in the next term.


Mentor Training

The Mentoring Committee has been preparing for the upcoming mentor meeting on March 29, which plans to feature best practices and student testimonials.


Faculty guide

In preparation for the March 29 training, Beth Hoodiman has created a references guide of campus departments and area agencies and organizations that mentors can use to direct students in need. (See attached.)

Faculty Portal and Student of Concern Report

Marek Juracek continues to offer his support for the creation of a new link in the faculty portal (Service Record #46,135). While the plan to include the Student of Concern Report, such as the one used at UCF’s Student Care Services office (http://scs.sdes.ucf.edu/concern ), has been delayed until April, when The Center for Women and Men will hold an informative session on services offered, other sources, such as Beth Hoodiman’s reference guide, as well as sites and articles that may assist faculty, are being collected to upload later.

New Resource Database

Cheryl Kohen, DSC Emerging Technologies Librarian, has agreed to help create and maintain a database of articles, resources, and other information on student poverty, hunger, and homelessness that faculty, staff, and students can access. So far, approximately 200 texts have been selected for inclusion.
Pierson Family Literacy Program

Launched last year by Food Brings Hope in conjunction with The Barbara Bush Foundation and with the assistance of Quanta Honors College student volunteers, the program serves the needs of the economically-depressed west Volusia area of Pierson and its largely migrant population. Based on last month’s test data, participants have made significant gains in reading and writing comprehension since they first entered. And, the program now boasts a 67% success rate, which exceeds state standards.

https://youtu.be/GyEgfVcQWvY

Sara Goldrick-Rab to Speak at FSU

Sara Goldrick-Rab, whose book Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream was featured in last week’s “A Conversation on Equity and Inclusion,” will speak on the student financial aid crisis at Florida State University March 27.

https://calendar.fsu.edu/event/fsu_college_of_education_special_lecture_series_paying_the_price_college_costs_financial_aid_and_the_betrayal_of_the_american_dream_with_sara_goldrick-rab#.WMKkjjvyuUk

http://saragoldrickrab.com/books/


Student Panel Notes

The following observations / challenges / suggestions were given by the five DSC student panelists at The Academic Excellence Symposium, March 3, 2017

- Financial barriers going to college; overwhelming financial aid issues
- Filling out the appropriate paperwork
- Returning to school after many years
- Life skills needed in high school
- Difficult to ask for help; there’s a stigma to seeking assistance
- Childcare cost is prohibitive; as well as dental care
- Stereotypes of poverty
- Talking to students about issues they face definitely helps
- Access to technology (computer) and the internet
- More state/city funding needed for resources
- Balance between work, food, and transportation
- Maintaining good grades can be a challenge with all these issues especially with mental health
• Work schedule is unpredictable and can affect grades
• Degree for free will help
• Faculty can be more empathetic; don’t assume school is the priority. Sometimes students are ashamed of their status
• Disconnect between the services offered and what students know; awareness is key
• Life skills class needed in college as well as how to be successful in college
• Being civil to students; professors often make them feel they’re part of a lower status
• Not everything is academic
• Academic support Center and mentorship are great; these are assets to DSC