Strategies to Build Academic Confidence

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Research on Building Academic Confidence

- In a 2006 study, Bermo, et. al identified three crucial steps to support first-gen students: (1) Raising aspirations for college, (2) Navigating the college admissions process, (3) Easing the initial transition to college.

- In a 2014 study, Ford & Vignare noted key challenges students face with respect to coursework, including: lack of knowledge regarding academia and academic culture, rusty study habits, and difficulties balancing school and life.

- In 2020, Moneva, J. & Tribunalo, S., found a significant relationship between level of confidence and performance tasks: students with high levels of self-confidence can easily accomplish tasks in school and are not afraid to participate in activities, but those with low self-confidence showed low performance tasks and were hesitant to participate in activities.

- In an article discussing retention theories for first-gen students, Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice (2007) lay out the cultural, social, and academic transitions first-gen students undergo, as well as the role of faculty in building self-confidence.

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<th><strong>Four Models</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Warrior-Scholar Project</strong></td>
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<td>● Hosts college prep boot camps for enlisted vets in partnership with top colleges and universities.</td>
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<td>● Verified data shows connection between increased confidence gained during courses and degree persistence rates (90%+).</td>
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<td>● Participants noted how WSP helped them “feel more confident participating in lectures and interacting with peers,” and others noted how WSP gave them confidence to apply to top-tier schools, apply themselves in the classroom, take risks that felt uncomfortable.</td>
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<td><strong>Syracuse University</strong></td>
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<td>● Office of Vet and Military Affairs Support helps vets acclimate through Peer Advisors for Vet Education (PAVE), WSP, resource fair, student vet organization, and campus events.</td>
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<td>● Cuse-First-Pre-Welcome Program supports first-gen students (19% of Syracuse students) with tailored support: navigating resources (e.g., location of the financial aid and student services offices) and understanding terminology (e.g., what MWF means), and gives students a sense of community and a glimpse of what campus and student life will be like.</td>
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<td><strong>Columbia University Center for Vet Transition and Integration</strong></td>
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<td>● Launched to have a direct and lasting impact on the issue of veteran transition and upward mobility by creating best-in-class programming veterans need as they transition from active service to college and the workforce.</td>
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<td>● CVTI curriculum participants report several key indicators of persistence: lower rates of academic distress, lower rates of academic probation, increased performance coming out of probationary status, and critically, earlier outreach to support.</td>
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<td><strong>Texas A&amp;M</strong></td>
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<td>● The #FirstGenVets Leadership Scholars learning community is a yearlong program that supports students academically, physically, mentally, and interpersonally.</td>
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<td>● Participants gain skills and resources to be successful veterans and first-generation college students.</td>
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<td>● Focus on optimizing students’ opportunity for academic success, leadership development, and career preparation.</td>
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<td>● Outcomes: professional guidance and development; community and support networks; academic success; leadership skills.</td>
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Other Considerations

- Access = Admission + Support + Resources
  - It’s insufficient just to admit students to college or university
- Taking a broader view of “benefits”
  - Benefits are more than just the funds to pay for college – they also include the support programs that help ensure success once on campus
- Institutions are not on their own
  - IHLs should leverage support offered by nonprofits such as WSP, CVTI, and IVMF to ensure students succeed
  - There is value in IHLs themselves gaining confidence in their ability to fully serve student veterans
- When serving these populations:
  - Know your research
  - Know what first-gen students are up against
  - Take steps to make them feel like they belong