Out of Reach

Economic Realities of Poor and Working Class Students in Higher Education

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The Message about College
America’s Economic Reality
Conversations About Class

Think/Pair/Share

• How do we discuss socioeconomic class as a society?

• How is socioeconomic class discussed at the University of Minnesota?

• What impressions do you have of the needs of low-income students?
Accessing the Academy: Pre College

• Pre-College extracurricular activities: enrichment programs, access to the arts, after school programs
• Pre-College Programs: (PSEO, POSSE, Upward Bound, AVID, Talent Search)
“Take a $20,000 scholarship—the full tuition for a needy student at some schools. Break it into four scholarships of $5,000 each for wealthier students who would probably go elsewhere without the discounts but will pay the outstanding tuition if they can be lured to your school. Over four years the school will reap an extra $240,000, which can be used to buy more rich students—or gifted students who will improve the school's profile and thus its desirability and revenue.”

-“The Best Class Money Can Buy” by Matthew Quirk (The Atlantic, 2005)
Accessing the Academy: Perception

Think/Pair/Share

• What expectations do students generally have about quality of life in college and/or the college experience?

• Are expectations about quality of life in college and/or the college experiences accessible to every student?
Accessing the Academy: Obstacles

• Behind in the Race/Late to the Dance

• Lack of recruitment or institutional commitment to recruiting low income students

• First-generation lack of education about college expenses

• Navigating Financial Aid as first-gen students

• Challenge of proving financial independence
Accessing the Academy: Culture Shock

- Imposter Syndrome
- Learning Entitlement
- Stigmatization of Poverty
- Social Isolation
- Lack of financial literacy
- Not having the luxury of apathy
Accessing the Academy: Reality

Think/Pair/Share

• What set of expectations does the university have of students who are going to be successful? What does a ‘successful’ student need to partake in at the U?

• How do these expectations enhance student experience?
Reality Check: How Poverty Affects Low-Income Students

- Among top-performing high school students who hail from the bottom half of the income distribution, fewer than half go on to receive post-secondary degrees. Most low-income students end up attending community colleges even if they’re qualified for 4-year institutions. (NPR, 2014)

- Just 8% of students in the bottom fourth income bracket applied to a selective school and just 34% of high-achieving students in this group attended one of the country’s most selective universities. (Forbes, 2013)

- An increasing number of undergraduate students nationally are using food stamps. (Washington Post, 2012 & Minnesota Daily, 2013)

- Student homelessness has hit a record-high. Almost 60,000 students admitted to being homeless on the FAFSA in 2013. This number is believed to be an under-estimate since many families don’t realize that they fit into that category or don’t want to admit to it. (CNN Money, 2013)
Reality Check: Institutional Response (Or Lack Thereof)

• Annually, approximately 21 percent of undergraduate freshmen at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities (more than 1,100) are Pell grant recipients. The first-year retention rate of low-income students at the U falls about 5% behind the retention rate of all other students. (UM News, 2014)

• A recent analysis by ProPublica shows that from 1996 through 2012, public colleges and universities gave fewer and smaller grants to students with the lowest family incomes. (Chronicle, 2013)

• Federal data shows that more colleges have done away with need-blind admissions & have reinstated early decision programs, which disadvantage low-income students who cannot commit to a college before knowing the financial offer. (CBS News, 2013 & Chronicle, 2013)

• According to New America Foundation, the poorest students increasingly are not the ones getting financial aid. Instead, colleges are using their resources to give students merit-based scholarships without taking family finances into account. (Businessweek, 2013)
Accessing the U of M: Kaler’s Plan

- **Financial literacy:** An enhanced financial literacy program specifically designed to meet the needs of low-income students and their families.

- **Summer seminar:** Incentives for low-income students who are also part of the Presidents Emerging Scholars Program (PES) to participate in a summer bridge program prior to their first college semester.

- **Enhanced advising:** The development of better tracking tools for advisers to more closely monitor academic progress during the critical first year.

- **Peer tutoring in key courses:** Further leveraging U resources to provide peer tutoring support for students in key, foundational courses such as math, economics, chemistry and writing, and providing specialized training for peer tutors.
Accessing the Academy: Survival Guide

• What types of resources would you suggest to a student?
  o Housing/Shelter
  o Food Banks
  o Clothing
  o Financial Literacy Resources/Scholarships
  o Health/Mental Health
  o Immigration/Legal Aid

• How do we broach the subject of providing resources?

• What are your cues to ask students about their needs?
Thank You

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If you have further questions or would like more resources, please put your x500 on the sign in sheet