The Role of Faculty-Student Relationships on Student Success

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INTRODUCTION
• Student-faculty contact is the primary factor in effective undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)
• Student-faculty interactions improve academic outcomes, as well as cognitive, personal, and social development (Cuseo, 2018 for a review)
• Quality relationships with faculty reduce social isolation and enhance a sense of community for students (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005)
• Faculty who develop quality connections with students report higher job satisfaction (DeAngelo, Mason, & Winters, 2016)

DEVELOPING QUALITY STUDENT-FACULTY RELATIONSHIPS
• Rakel, et al. (2011) showed providers with greater perceived empathy had patients who recovered faster from illness
• Faculty who can show support, empathy, and be accessible can facilitate student success (DeAngelo, et al., 2016)
• Out-of-class interactions with faculty are critical for development of academic skills, learning, and confidence in undergraduates (Kuh, 1995)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• Do students in CSD report positive relationships with faculty?
• How does perceived empathy from faculty impact student learning and engagement?
• Does the level of student involvement (i.e., multiple activities) impact perceptions of empathy, learning, and engagement?

METHODS
• Survey to UWEC CSD students
• 50 participants, ranging from freshman to post-baccalaureate students
• Ratings of faculty empathy, learning, and engagement
• Data analyzed using stepwise regression analyses

RESULTS
• Overall student perceived faculty empathy was rated positively
• Overall student perceived learning and engagement were rated positively
• The number of categories of experiences a student was involved in was a predictor of perceived faculty empathy (t=3.03, p=0.004)
• Perceived student learning and engagement did not have any significant predictors
• Student perception of empathy was correlated with learning (r=0.63) and engagement ratings (r=0.72)

DISCUSSION
• Higher perceived faculty empathy leads to higher student engagement and learning
• Perceived faculty empathy increases as academic standing increases
• Interactions with faculty in experiences outside of the classroom facilitate connections
• Students who get involved in multiple ways gain the most benefits
• Empathy, learning, engagement, and experiences are all inter-related

IMPLICATIONS
• Faculty can build on/acquire qualities that students perceive as important, such as empathy
• Departments may want to offer varied types of experiences for students to promote learning and engagement
• Student perceptions of faculty empathy may influence university-wide factors such as GPA, degree completion, and pursuit of graduate school

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
• Analysis of qualitative data
• Types of experiences and impact on empathy, learning, and engagement
• Determine other measures of student learning and engagement, as well as connection to faculty

REFERENCES
Podcasts/social media
Advising
Junior observers
BBIG
PEP Talks
Pro Sems
Communication Partners
CSD Ambassadors
Operation Smile
NSSLHA
Clinic
Home Visit Program
Research Partners
Resource room workers

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