The Problem

"First-generation students can have a difficult time helping their families understand what they are experiencing in college."

Goals

- Create an environment that helps students realize their autonomy
- Assist students with developing educational plans consistent with their personal goals
- Address the needs of first-generation students' families
### Major Decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What if I don’t really know what I want to study or do?</td>
<td>How much should I be pushing my student to decide?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What if my family doesn’t approve of my major or job choice?</td>
<td>Will my student’s major lead to a job making money?</td>
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<td>What if I change my mind?</td>
<td>What if my student is unable to get a job after they graduate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What if I take the wrong courses or courses I don’t need?</td>
<td>I know my student would be great at a certain career but they’re telling me they want to do something else. What should I do?</td>
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# Academic Rigor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are my classes going to be a lot harder than high school?</td>
<td>How do I help my student when I have never taken a college course?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What if I can’t keep up? What will my family, professors, and classmates think if I fail?</td>
<td>Are there resources available to support my student?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will my professors support me?</td>
<td>How much do I push my student to do well in their courses?</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m afraid I will have to drop out.</td>
<td>What will happen if my student doesn’t pass a class?</td>
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# Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why can’t my parent(s) call the college for me?</td>
<td>Why can I not have access to my student’s grades?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Why don’t professors and advisors reach out to me?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What if I make the wrong decision? I’m used to my parent(s) deciding for me.</td>
<td>What if my student doesn’t need me anymore?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>If my student doesn’t live with me while they are in college, how can I really support them?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Financial Guilt & Pressure

Students

- How is my family supposed to afford all of this?
- How do I explain to my parent(s) that I need to pay for developmental courses that won't provide college credit?
- My family needs my help with the family business and my siblings. What if I can't balance this with school?

Family

- What if I cannot afford my student's education?
- My student is too busy to work and provide for the family.
- I don't want my student to be burdened with student loans.
- What if we do not qualify for enough financial aid?
Case Study 1

Amber is meeting with you for the first time. After a little prodding you finally get her to open up about her interests and can visibly see her light up as she talks about her writing. She loves writing short stories and has even been working on an advertising script for her marketing class. Her major is currently listed as health sciences. When you ask her what led her to pick that major she tells you that her mom wants her to be a nurse because there will always be a need for nurses and they make good money. Amber’s mom is concerned that her passions with writing will not be enough to support Amber and Amber’s two-year-old daughter.

Case Study 2

Ken is a recent high school graduate just beginning his first semester in college. For his first advising session, his uncle joins him while meeting with you. Ken reveals he is really nervous that classes are going to be much harder than high school. His uncle jumps in and tells you that Ken had a tough time passing classes in high school and even needed extra time on tests. He wants to know what would happen if Ken struggles in college.
Case Study 3

Lynn comes back with her parents for her second meeting with you. You planned to talk about Lynn’s need for developmental courses after receiving her test scores but her parents get upset when they hear this. They dominate the conversation and complain that this is the first time they are learning about her requiring developmental classes. They demand that they be notified of important changes to her academics because they pay her tuition.

Case Study 4

Justin comes to you for the first time. His sister, Jasmine, also attends the school. They have just started their freshmen year and are enjoying it, but express concern over the trouble it will cause their family financially. Not only will they be able to put in less hours for the family business, but they also qualify for little financial aid. They barely afforded the first semester but are already nervous about affording the second.
Case Study 5

Ella is an exploratory student. She comes to you to plan courses for the second semester but she is concerned that she still doesn't know what she wants to major in. Her parents are pressuring her to decide because they are paying for her to go to school. Both Ella and her parents are worried that she is taking classes that will not benefit her, such as Intro to Philosophy and American History.

Case Study Activity

In your group, answer the following questions:

• What advising concern(s) are your student and family displaying?
  • Major Decision
  • Academic Rigor
  • Control
  • Financial Guilt and Pressure

• How would you approach the situation? Consider the following:
  • How to encourage student autonomy
  • How to assist development of the student’s personal goals
  • How to address family needs

• How would you plan to follow up?
Encourage Autonomy

- Encourage families to attend parent/family orientations
- Educate on FERPA
- Define roles
- Develop trust through encouraging open communication
Develop Personal Goals

- Normalize experiences
- Dispel misconceptions
- Bolster self-efficacy
- Educate on resources

Address Family Needs

- Recognize family value
- Involve family
  - Advising sessions
  - Remotely
- Develop a family guide/family newsletter

Family Guide
Educates on new student transitions and provides resources on how to support the student

Family Newsletter
Highlight key points during the student experience