

Exploring Faculty Awareness and Knowledge of Student Support Structures

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College students in the United States are at risk for experiencing mental health issues and other circumstances that impact their overall well-being (Cuijpers et al, 2018; Fernandez et al., 2016). Students who enter postsecondary education immediately after completing high school, often experience a sense of delayed independence which can impact their ability to form or use coping skills during stressful times (Dean & Levine, 2012). Therefore, encouragement and support from university faculty and staff is crucial to fostering students' sense of belonging, which is directly related to their success (Arnsperger & Drivalas, 2016; Strayhorn, 2013) As academic success begins to be viewed from a more holistic approach, well-being plays an integral component in discussions about how institutions help students succeed (Ethan & Seidel, 2013).

In particular, faculty play a critical role in promoting student well-being; their perception of student support needs and structures impacts student learning and the faculty role in the teaching and learning process (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). Students' relationships with faculty are richer than in years past with students perceiving faculty as authority figures and academic experts as well as sources of guidance for non-academic issues (Dean & Levine, 2012). As a result, students may reveal complex personal issues to their faculty members, thus placing faculty on the front line of responding to and supporting the students in their classroom (Ethan & Seidel, 2013). Given that this is not traditionally seen as a role of faculty members: faculty may not receive any dedicated training to prepare them for these student interactions.

This research will include a partnership between the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) and Student Care and Outreach (SCO), a department within the Division of Student Affairs. By understanding faculty awareness and knowledge of student support structures, as well as their role in the utilization of SCO services, faculty will be better equipped to identify student needs across students' academic careers and connect them to SCO more proactively to reduce the likelihood of crisis intervention (Gulliver, Farrer, Bennett, & Griffiths, 2018).