

Aiming for Alignment: Faculty and Student Perspectives on Effectively Teaching First-Generation Students

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Abstract. First-generation college students comprise a sizable number of the student population in colleges and universities across the nation. As faculty are tasked with teaching and supporting these students in their courses, it is important to consider the alignment of faculty perspectives and the needs of first-generation students. This study explored the perspectives of 176 post-baccalaureate students and 54 faculty at a large, urban Hispanic-serving university in California, with nearly 77% of the campus population consisting of first-generation students and 65% of Latinx students. Data collection consisted of surveys completed by faculty as well as first-generation and non-first-generation students. Although first-generation and non-first-generation students did not differ significantly in their ratings of faculty's teaching practices, the means were lower for more items among the first-generation students. Findings also indicate that greater alignment is needed between how faculty teach and what first-generation students need to succeed, most notably in the lower ratings of faculty teaching by students versus faculty themselves and the differing themes emerging from qualitative analyses of participants' responses.

Keywords: first-generation college students; faculty practices; student perspectives

Nationwide, higher education faculty and leaders are tasked with teaching and ensuring the success of significant numbers of first-generation college students. First-generation refers to students who are the first in their family to attend college, with neither parent having obtained education levels beyond high school. In 2017, nearly 18% of those enrolled at four-year universities were first-generation students (Stolzenberg et al., 2019). Many first-generation students tend to be members of racially or ethnically underrepresented groups (Hutchens et al., 2011). In 2016, Hispanic students (from here on, referred to as Latinx) comprised 18% of all students in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States, with 39% of students between the ages of 18 to 24 being of Latinx backgrounds (Snyder et al., 2019). It is increasingly important to consider the needs and experiences of first-generation Latinx students along with the perspectives of faculty who teach these students.

While first-generation students are not a monolithic group—e.g., varying in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status—research points to several themes in the characteristics and needs of first-generation students. These students may experience more academic struggles; work more hours in college; have fewer financial resources; have lower grades and rates of college graduation; and may experience more conflict between the demands of school and community/family

priorities (Hutchens et al., 2011; Soria & Stebleton, 2012; Stephens et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2012). These students often have less parental support and less information about higher education (Sy et al., 2011). First-generation students may be less academically engaged, less likely to interact with professors, and contribute less frequently to class discussions (Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Furthermore, these students tend to rely on themselves and often believe that they should be figuring out course expectations on their own rather than reaching out for support (Yee, 2016).

Wang and Castañeda-Sound (2008) found that first-generation students scored lower on measures of self-esteem and self-efficacy than non-first-generation peers, particularly those of ethnic minority backgrounds. First-generation students may also lack the social and cultural capital that are needed to succeed in the university, including navigating the explicit and implicit norms and expectations of higher education (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Stephens et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2012). Like other first-generation students, Latinx students—who are part of the nation’s largest underrepresented group at 18.3% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018)—have intrinsic motivation and an internal drive to attend college (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014; Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). However, conflicts between college and family expectations can negatively affect their well-being and achievement (Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2015). This challenge of family obligations or families not understanding the demands of college can negatively impact these students’ choices and progress, particularly for Latinas experiencing cultural gender role expectations (Leyva, 2011; Mitchall & Jaegar, 2018). Further, Valencia (2002) writes that families are expected to show care according to white, middle-class standards; however, many first-generation families face structural barriers that do not allow them to show care in this manner. These identities living separately from each other creates a unique perspective and experience for female students who identify as Latinx (Crenshaw, 1991). Banda (2020) found that even small overtures from faculty that demonstrate interest in students could be very important for feelings of belonging among Latinx female students, who may feel alienated in their departments.

Faculty attention plays a critical role in the academic experiences of first-generation students. For example, of students who were satisfied to very satisfied at college overall, 86.1% reported close interactions with at least one faculty member who had taken an interest in their success (Couch, 2019). Faculty often have differing viewpoints about first-generation students: one view is that these students are underprepared and difficult to reach and the other view is that faculty can meet these students where they are and play a significant role in bolstering their academic skills (Schademan & Thompson, 2016). The perspective that faculty adopt appears to have a great impact on how first-generation students view their potential and belonging as well as their academic persistence and learning (Irlbeck et al., 2014; Kim & Sax, 2009; Watt et al., 2013; Wirt & Jaegar, 2014). While first-generation students may be reluctant to seek out interactions with their professors, researchers have found that positive relationships with faculty lead to more persistence in college. For example, Demetriou et al. (2017) found that the following promoted first-generation students’ success: active engagement in

coursework; participating in faculty-mentored research; and involvement with campus organizations that emphasize close interactions with faculty.

Through these relationships, professors can help first-generation students navigate the hidden norms and expectations of the university (Longwell-Grice et al., 2016). Watt et al. (2013) found that relationships with faculty were more important to first-generation students than even the teaching strategies used in classes. Increasing first-generation students' sense of belonging is also positively associated with their engagement in their courses and progress toward graduation (Hausmann et al., 2007). Establishing meaningful connections with students, reducing feelings of alienation, and mentoring students can help first-generation students succeed in college (Jehangir, 2010; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Faculty can support first-generation students by having high expectations for them, being clear and transparent in their instruction, actively encouraging students to participate in classes, and helping them navigate norms and rules of campus (Demetriou et al., 2017; Kim & Sax, 2009; Longwell-Grice et al., 2016; Macias, 2013; Tello & Lonn, 2017). Banks-Santilli (2014) described supportive faculty advisors as those who ensure that students clearly understand the syllabus, give verbal reminders, and encourage students to make individual appointments with them. In addition, Hutchen et al. (2022) found that first-generation graduate students felt they needed faculty to understand that many are working full time or have additional commitments outside of the university, making it difficult to take advantage of resources offered.

Means and Pyne (2017) found that faculty were one of the most important factors for these students' sense of belonging on campus. First-generation students benefited when faculty recognized and filled any gaps in prior knowledge; used multiple modalities during instruction (visual, auditory, kinesthetic); provided visuals and lecture notes; developed students' self-efficacy skills; engaged in outreach, relationship building, and one-on-one conversations with students; provided feedback; and were approachable in their demeanor. These actions can mitigate the feelings of disconnectedness or invisibility that first-generation students can feel on college campuses. According to Kim and Sax (2009), "more contact between students and faculty, both inside and outside the classroom, enhances college students' development and learning outcomes" (p. 438), even increasing the chances of these students remaining in college by up to 13% for each meeting between faculty and students (Swecker et al., 2013).

Exploring faculty and first-generation student perspectives, Collier and Morgan (2008) found that faculty felt they provided clear and explicit standards and assignments and were concerned about students meeting their expectations in terms of managing course workload, prioritizing academics, following directions, and communicating with faculty about their needs. Winkelmes et al. (2016) identified why students were completing an assignment, how students would complete the assignment, and how the assignments would be graded as connected to both student success in the course and linked this to success in future courses. Students wanted faculty to be explicit in their expectations, provide detailed explanations of syllabi, and understand that they had both a different set of

demands on their time outside of courses as well as fewer resources. The way that professors spoke to the class influenced whether first-generation students approached faculty for questions or clarification. Macias (2013) advocates for a strength-based approach to supporting first-generation students, focusing on what they can do and having high expectations rather than focusing on deficits.

Several factors can influence success in college for first-generation Latinx students, including feelings of cultural incongruence (a lack of cultural fit between the student's values and the culture of the university) as well as institutional or interpersonal microaggressions occurring on campus (Tello & Lonn, 2017). These factors emphasize the importance of creating safe, welcoming spaces on campus and promoting the social capital and feelings of cultural belonging for these students. Values of Latinx culture include interdependence, harmonious personal interactions, and personalized communication styles, which comprise the funds of knowledge (or the lived experiences and backgrounds) that first-generation Latinx students bring with them to higher education (Castillo-Montoya, 2017). Faculty can promote the success of these students by validating, making space for, and modifying their instruction to include these funds of knowledge. Faculty can facilitate equity-based learning through having high expectations and showing confidence in students' ability to succeed; co-constructing knowledge with their students; and developing students' understanding of the ways in which social factors can affect their lived experiences (Castillo-Montoya, 2017; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). Using culturally responsive pedagogy or engaging with the cultural backgrounds of students has been shown to improve student outcomes (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Museus & Quaye, 2009) and can be particularly important for first-generation, Latinx students. In addition, Montero-Hernandez and Drouin (2021) found that faculty and universities should lean into the strengths and skills first-generation graduate students bring with them to the classroom.

Since developing faculty's skills in teaching first-generation students can improve students' learning outcomes (Verschelden, 2017), it is important to consider the alignment of faculty perspectives with the needs identified by first-generation students as critical for their academic success. The alignment, or misalignment, of these perspectives and needs can yield lessons for increasing the academic retention and success of potentially vulnerable students. To this end, the present study examined the perspectives of faculty and both first-generation and non-first-generation students, more than half of whom were of Latinx backgrounds, about effective teaching to support student needs.

Methods

Participants

The participants were 176 students and 54 professors at a comprehensive, urban Hispanic-serving university in California, with first-generation students comprising nearly 77% and Latinx students 65% of the campus student population. The students consisted of 93 first-generation students and 83 non-first-generation students; 134 were females, 38 were males, and four individuals identified as non-

binary. More than half (57%) were of Latinx backgrounds; 16% were white; 16% were Asian American; and 7% were black/African American. Sixty-four percent of the students were ages 34 and under. Ten percent were in undergraduate programs, while 90% were enrolled in master's degree programs or post-baccalaureate credentials/certificates.

Of the 54 faculty, 22 were males, 31 were females, and one identified as non-binary. Seven were assistant professors, 7 were associate professors, 16 were full professors, and 24 were lecturers. Forty-three percent were white, 35% were Latinx/Hispanic, 2% were black/African American, 15% were Asian American, and 5% identified as other or declined to state their ethnicity. All faculty, except for one, taught post-undergraduate students.

Measures

The measures consisted of two surveys developed by the first author that were based on teaching practices described in prior research as benefiting first-generation students (the practices are described in Appendix A, which contains survey items). The students completed a 23-item survey, consisting of 20 Likert-type questions rated on a 5-point scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and three open-ended questions about students' needs. For the survey items, Cronbach's alpha was .96, indicating strong or excellent reliability. The faculty survey consisted of 23 questions, three of which were open-ended questions and 20 were Likert-type questions rated on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questions asked faculty about their current teaching practices and students' needs. Cronbach's alpha was .94 for this survey.

Procedures

Approval to conduct this research was obtained by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university in which the first author serves as a faculty member and the second author is a doctoral student. The study was supported by a small internal project grant awarded to the first author. The first author created the research surveys in Qualtrics and sent an invitation with an anonymous survey link via faculty and student email lists.

The quantitative data from the surveys was analyzed with SPSS data analysis software. The qualitative data in this study was coded using the constant comparative method used to develop a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as well as procedures recommended for sound analysis in qualitative research (Brantlinger et al., 2005) to ensure validity of this study.

First, both the open-ended responses to the student and faculty surveys were separately coded using initial codes. Every sentence or thematically organized cluster of phrases that contained a complete thought was assigned a code. For the student survey, both authors independently coded 100% of the data, generating a total of 63 initial codes, with 95% agreement. For the faculty survey, both authors also independently coded 100% of the data, creating a total of 45 codes, with 89%

initial agreement. After further discussion, the authors reached full agreement on all the initial codes.

In the next step of data analysis, each author independently analyzed the initial codes for emerging themes for each survey. For the student survey, the 63 initial codes were collapsed into six central themes. For the faculty survey, the 45 initial codes were synthesized into six themes. Both authors generated themes for all the data, regularly discussing the process of data coding to increase the credibility of the qualitative analysis. The system of codes and themes was formed and finalized based on these discussions, both during initial coding and when the central themes were identified, thus ensuring coding validity and interrater reliability.

Results

For both first-generation and non-first-generation students, the means of the 20 survey items were all above 3.50, and in most cases, reflected students' agreement with the statements related to faculty effectiveness in supporting their academic success. There were no significant differences between students who are first-generation versus non-first-generation students on the survey items, except for "my professors make an active effort to learn my name and get to know me" (first-generation $M = 3.94$, $SD = .91$; non-first-generation $M = 4.22$, $SD = .81$; $t(174) = -2.16$, $p < .05$). However, the means for 16 out of 20 survey items were lower for students who were first-generation students. For the 20 items on the survey, non-first-generation students agreed (means of above 4.00) with 16 of the statements regarding faculty's teaching practices; first-generation students agreed with only 10 of the survey items. For example, the means for first-generation students were lower for the following items: "My professors value my cultural background, knowledge, and experiences in their courses" and "my professors encourage my sense of belonging and value my presence in their courses." The highest mean scores for first-generation students were on the items such as "my professors make sure that I understand the purpose, tasks, and grading criteria of all course assignments" and "my professors make an active effort to encourage my participation in their courses." For non-first-generation students, the highest means were for items including "my professors are available and accessible if I have questions or need support" and "my professors make an active effort to learn my name and to get to know me." The lowest survey means for both groups of students was "my professors ask me for my feedback on how I am learning and what supports I need to succeed in their courses."

The means for the faculty survey items were all above 4.00, indicating that the professors agreed that they implemented these teaching practices in their courses. The three most frequently reported teaching practices were making an active effort to encourage students' participation in their courses; encouraging students' sense of belonging and valuing their presence in courses; and actively offering support, advising, and mentorship to help their students succeed in courses (means ranging from 4.67 to 4.76). Although the faculty agreed that they did engage in these teaching practices, the three behaviors with the lowest means for faculty were being confident in their ability to effectively teach first-generation students; asking

students for feedback on how they are learning and what they need to succeed in their courses; and giving students timely, high-quality feedback on their assignments (means ranging from 4.11 to 4.30).

Across all items related to faculty's teaching practices, the means for all the students (as well as the sample of only first-generation students) were significantly lower than those of the faculty (all with p values of $< .01$), indicating that students were less likely to rate their faculty as implementing these teaching behaviors. The most significant discrepancies between the ratings of faculty and those of the first-generation students were found in the following survey items: actively working to minimize students' feelings of alienation in courses, with first-generation student $M = 3.63 (.98)$, faculty $M = 4.49 (.61)$; being understanding of any personal challenges students experience that can influence academic success in courses, with first-generation $M = 3.77 (1.05)$, faculty $M = 4.51 (.61)$; encouraging students' sense of belonging and valuing their presence in courses, with first-generation $M = 3.95 (.84)$, faculty $M = 4.66 (.48)$; and actively offering support, advising, and mentorship to help students succeed in courses, with first-generation $M = 3.95 (.98)$, faculty $M = 4.66 (.48)$.

For the themes emerging from the student survey data, the students' greatest needs were the following: effective teaching, understanding, advising, communication, and no needs.

Effective Teaching

Students described a variety of examples of how professors could further support their learning in coursework, including clarity in assignments, timely and clear feedback, checking for understanding, awareness of the amount of coursework, and use of real-world scenarios in class. Some students asked that professors review assignments at least one week before due dates to ensure student understanding. Several students also responded that assignments should be meaningful and relevant to their current or future jobs. Both first-generation and non-first-generation students also expressed the need for more timely feedback for their assignments. This was particularly relevant for the first-generation students who asked for a guide or examples of the level and type of work needed to successfully complete assignments. The amount of reading given in courses was also a concern. Students wanted professors to dive more deeply into readings during class time to ensure understanding. In addition, first-generation students were particularly interested in having professors check in with them about their understanding of course content. Several students explained that they were able to learn more when professors shared stories instead of lecturing and requested that professors use more visuals and real-world examples instead of reading from PowerPoint slides during class.

Understanding

The students in this study stated that they needed their professors to understand who they were and where they were coming from to fully support their learning. For

example, the students wanted professors to understand their outside responsibilities while also expressing empathy, showing flexibility, and being culturally sensitive by getting to know the students and their backgrounds. Attending classes full time and working full-time jobs affected the students' ability to complete and even understand coursework because they were dividing their time between both commitments. For students, this flexibility showed an understanding of what students were going through and what their needs were. Students were grateful when professors offered options to attend classes or office hours through virtual means (e.g., Skype or Zoom). The students wanted their professors to get to know them beyond only name recognition. One first-generation student said, "Find out at least 1-2 passions or interests, create opportunities for students to connect outside of class based on shared interests, goals, and course related matters."

Advising

For many students, some of their needs were outside of the classroom, but they believed that faculty could support and guide them in accessing college and campus services. Specifically, students wanted clear information about program and graduation requirements, unified online portals, career and job placement guidance, and support for identifying and understanding campus-wide resources. Several students wanted roadmaps for coursework, as they had taken unnecessary courses or had taken courses out of sequence. They asked for specific contact people for information and for professors to be knowledgeable about all aspects of their programs. Students wanted faculty mentorship programs, hoping that professors would talk about job placement and career paths after graduation.

Communication

Students reported needing clear, transparent, and timely communication from faculty through both electronic means and face-to-face interactions. Students appreciated when professors sent reminders of due dates and assignment requirements because students are very busy and often work full time. Professors who made themselves available to clarify expectations were important to many students. For some students, effective communication was also a means to get to know one another and feel less intimidated by professors.

Overall, the faculty indicated that first-generation students' greatest needs were the following: academic support; advising and mentoring; social and emotional support; and time management.

Academic Support

According to faculty, the greatest need of first-generation students was the need for academic support. These areas in need of support included content knowledge, writing and grammar, analytic thinking, reading, language, and study skills. Faculty expressed concern that students did not have enough background knowledge to be

successful in classes, but several professors stated that it was their responsibility to reteach as needed.

Advising and Mentoring

Faculty noted that first-generation students need support to understand, navigate, and use campus systems and resources, including financial aid advice and detailed roadmaps for completing their programs. Furthermore, faculty stated that these students need role models in and outside of the university and feedback to improve performance and understanding. Faculty emphasized that first-generation students need guidance to understand the unwritten rules of higher education and to know that their struggles are normal.

Social and Emotional Support

Faculty stated that first-generation students need to feel welcome and safe both on campus and in their classes, including a sense of belonging and a belief in themselves. Cultural sensitivity to their specific needs would serve as an additional support. Some professors commented on first-generation students needing to feel that it is acceptable for them to surpass their family members and peers in their educational levels.

Time Management

How first-generation students manage their time in meeting all their obligations and responsibilities was mentioned by the faculty in this study. Faculty were aware that first-generation students often have financial and family obligations outside of their coursework that create obstacles to completion of course assignments and requirements. Faculty stated that having so many obligations prevented students from focusing in any one area to the detriment of other aspects of their lives.

Discussion

Given that first-generation students of Latinx backgrounds comprise a sizable amount of the student population in colleges and universities across the nation (Snyder et al., 2019; Stolzenberg et al., 2019), faculty are tasked with effectively teaching and supporting these students in their courses. This study of 176 students and 54 faculty at a large, urban Hispanic-serving university in California examined the alignment of faculty and student perspectives. The findings of this study expand understanding of the needs of first-generation students and how faculty can more effectively teach these students.

First-Generation and Non-First-Generation Students' Perceptions of Teaching Behaviors

Since the means for all student survey items were 3.50 or greater, it is encouraging that both first-generation and non-first-generation students in this study tended to agree that their faculty's teaching behaviors were supportive of their learning. For

example, both groups of students agreed that their faculty clearly communicated the expectations and requirements for their courses, made an active effort to encourage their participation in courses, were available and accessible if the students had questions or needed support, and had high expectations of them—all of which are aligned with prior research about faculty teaching behaviors that support first-generation students (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Demetriou et al., 2017; Kim & Sax, 2009; Longwell-Grice et al., 2016; Macias, 2013; Tello & Lonn, 2017). Given that first-generation students have been shown to be more satisfied with college when they had close interactions with faculty (Couch, 2019), it is also encouraging that the participants agreed that they had a positive relationship with at least one professor.

Overall, first-generation and non-first-generation students did not differ much in their ratings of faculty's teaching. However, it is important to acknowledge the significant difference between the two groups regarding faculty making an active effort to learn their names and get to know them. Given that research has shown that rapport and connectedness with professors promotes students' learning and motivation (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Legg & Wilson, 2009), it is imperative that professors of first-generation students actively attempt to learn about these students in their courses. The lower mean ratings by first-generation students on 16 out of the 20 survey items should be considered. First-generation students had lower means on other social and emotional aspects of teaching, such as faculty actively working to minimize any feelings of alienation that students might feel in their courses, encouraging students' sense of belonging and valuing their presence in courses, and being understanding of any personal challenges that students experience that can influence their academic success in courses.

Because feelings of belonging and connection are positively correlated with first-generation Latinx students' engagement in courses and progress toward graduation (Castillo-Montoya, 2017; Hausmann et al., 2007; Means & Pyne, 2017; Tello & Lonn, 2017), it is important for professors to consider how they can enhance students' sense of belonging and show that they value their presence. Since the findings related to the differences between first-generation and non-first-generation students were largely not significant, recommendations can provide guidance but should be implemented with an eye to the needs of the specific set of students in a class. The question that produced the lowest means for all students focused on faculty asking students for feedback on how they are learning and what supports they need to succeed in the courses.

Faculty's Perceptions of Teaching Behaviors

This study found that faculty agreed or strongly agreed, more so than students in this study did, that they used effective teaching behaviors as reflected in the means of 4.00 and above on the faculty survey items. For example, faculty rated themselves highest in making an active effort to encourage students' participation in their courses, encouraging students' sense of belonging and valuing their presence in courses, and offering their support, advising, and mentorship to help their students succeed in courses. However, across all items related to faculty's

teaching practices, the means for all students, and particularly for the first-generation Latinx students, were significantly lower than those of faculty. For example, the greatest discrepancies between faculty and students' perceptions were related to faculty actively working to minimize students' feelings of alienation, being understanding of any personal challenges students experience that can influence academic success in courses, encouraging students' sense of belonging and valuing their presence in courses, and actively offering support, advising, and mentorship to help students succeed in courses. The faculty did seem to realize that they could be more effective at teaching first-generation students and rated themselves lower in asking students for their feedback on how they are learning in their classes. However, these findings may still indicate that faculty perceptions about their teaching practices may not be entirely accurate or match their students' perceptions or may reflect deficit thinking, thus emphasizing the importance of two-way communication and feedback for faculty to develop a greater understanding of students and their needs.

Student and Faculty Perceptions of First-Generation Student Needs

These findings showed that there were differences between what faculty reported as students' needs versus what students, particularly first-generation Latinx students, described as their greatest needs. Faculty described students' top needs as that of academic support (e.g., study skills or writing support) and also mentioned time management as a need, neither of which were mentioned by students, who instead identified advising and effective teaching as their most important needs. Both faculty and students agreed on the first-generation students' needs for advising and social/emotional support or understanding. Faculty's description of first-generation students' lack of knowledge and skills could indicate a focus on deficit thinking in relation to these students; thus, faculty should be encouraged to focus on student strengths and a growth-based approach toward teaching. Faculty should be examining their own beliefs about first-generation students for ingrained biases that could impact their perceptions of students (Gorski, 2018; Gutierrez Keeton, 2022). This highlights the importance of faculty meeting students where they are and helping them develop the skills to move forward (Montero-Hernandez & Drouin, 2021; Schademan & Thompson, 2016). Although first-generation students may need to build prerequisite skills, it is imperative that faculty become more effective, responsive teachers committed to increasing the learning outcomes of all students and leaning into the strengths students bring with them.

Practices to Increase Student Learning and Success

The students' responses, which confirm earlier research findings, revealed several practices that faculty can adopt to increase students' learning and success. For example, it is beneficial for faculty to be clear and transparent in their expectations and assignments and give timely feedback to their students on their work. Providing samples of assignments, reviewing course readings, checking for understanding frequently, and providing more in-class practice is helpful for these students. Other practices that benefit first-generation students include assigning a

realistic amount of course readings and assignments, being flexible with deadlines, offering different options for office hours, promptly responding to emails, and providing roadmaps and advising about program requirements. Further, student responses show a clear need for effective teaching while faculty responses reveal a lack of knowledge about effective teaching practices to reach first-generation students. Institutions have a responsibility to provide faculty with ways to develop a growth mindset approach to learning, especially among first-generation Latinx students, along with effective teaching practices. For example, Aguilara et al. (2020) offered a reimagining of a first-year writing course as a model in which the course was tailored specifically to the strengths and needs of first-generation students, including but not limited to analyzing the cost of books, using Universal Design for Learning to frame the course, and using new and different media throughout the course. Targeting professional development in this area may increase effective teaching and therefore student success.

Limitations

It is important to consider the limitations of this study. First, the sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Also, student participants had already received their bachelor's degrees and therefore were not able to speak to the needs of current first-generation undergraduate students, which is a weakness. However, these students remain first-generation students even as they navigate higher levels of education. Another limitation of this study is that faculty were not specifically asked about undergraduate versus graduate students. This research also consisted of the survey method for data collection. Observations of faculty teaching and interviews with faculty and students could have strengthened the findings. Further research using other methods of data collection and with a higher number of participants will further validate these findings.

Conclusion

This study is one of few exploring the perspectives of faculty, along with that of both first-generation and non-first-generation students, and including a significant number of first-generation, Latinx students. Given the high numbers of first-generation students across the nation and efforts to increase retention and graduation rates of this population, this study contributes toward better understanding of first-generation students' needs and faculty teaching practices. Greater alignment and consistency between faculty and student perspectives can further promote the academic success of these students in higher education.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Appendix A

Student and Faculty Survey Means

Student Survey Items	Student Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means
My professors make an active effort to learn my name and get to know me.	4.07	I make an active effort to learn my students' names and get to know them.	4.43	I need to improve in my ability to learn my students' names and get to know them.	3.02
My professors value my cultural background, knowledge, and experiences in their courses.	4.02	I show that I value my students' cultural background, knowledge, and experiences in my courses.	4.49	I need to improve in my ability to show that I value my students' cultural background, knowledge, and experiences in my courses.	3.11
My professors encourage my sense of belonging and value my presence in their courses.	4.05	I encourage my students' sense of belonging and value their presence in my courses.	4.67	I need to improve in my ability to encourage my students' sense of belonging and value their presence in my courses.	3.11

Student Survey Items	Student Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means
My professors make an active effort to learn my name and get to know me.	4.07	I make an active effort to learn my students' names and get to know them.	4.43	I need to improve in my ability to learn my students' names and get to know them.	3.02
My professors make an active effort to encourage my participation in their courses.	4.17	I make an active effort to encourage my students' participation in my courses.	4.76	I need to improve in my ability to make an active effort to encourage my students' participation in my courses.	3.02
My professors help me learn about and handle the requirements, norms, and expectations of the university.	4.01	I help my students learn about and handle the requirements, norms, and expectations of the university.	4.35	I need to improve in my ability to help my students learn about and handle the requirements, norms, and expectations of the university.	3.17
My professors actively work to minimize any feelings of alienation I might experience in their courses.	3.73	I actively work to minimize any feelings of alienation students might experience in my courses.	4.50	I need to improve in my ability to minimize any feelings of alienation students might experience in my courses.	3.20

Student Survey Items	Student Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means
My professors make an active effort to learn my name and get to know me.	4.07	I make an active effort to learn my students' names and get to know them.	4.43	I need to improve in my ability to learn my students' names and get to know them.	3.02
My professors actively check for my understanding of their course content.	3.95	I actively check for my students' understanding of my course content.	4.43	I need to improve in my ability to actively check for my students' understanding of my course content.	3.17
My professors provide me with clear, easy-to-understand, and student-friendly instruction.	4.00	I provide my students with clear, easy-to-understand, and student-friendly instruction.	4.56	I need to improve in my ability to provide my students with clear, easy-to-understand, and student-friendly instruction.	2.96
My professors make sure their classrooms are a safe and welcoming space for discussion.	4.14	I make sure my classroom is a safe and welcoming space for discussion.	4.61	I need to improve my ability in making sure my classroom is a safe and welcoming space for discussion.	2.92

Student Survey Items	Student Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means
My professors make an active effort to learn my name and get to know me.	4.07	I make an active effort to learn my students' names and get to know them.	4.43	I need to improve in my ability to learn my students' names and get to know them.	3.02
My professors actively offer their support, advising, and mentorship to help me succeed in their courses.	4.04	I actively offer my support, advising, and mentorship to help my students succeed in my courses.	4.67	I need to improve in my ability to offer my support, advising, and mentorship to help my students succeed in my courses.	2.77
My professors clearly communicate their expectations and requirements for their courses.	4.23	I clearly communicate with students my expectations and requirements for my courses.	4.61	I need to improve in my ability to clearly communicate with students my expectations and requirements for my courses.	2.89
My professors are available and accessible if I have questions or need support.	4.17	I am available and accessible if my students have questions or need support.	4.66	I need to improve in my ability to be available and accessible if my students have questions or need support.	2.66

Student Survey Items	Student Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means	Faculty Survey Items	Faculty Means
My professors make an active effort to learn my name and get to know me.	4.07	I make an active effort to learn my students' names and get to know them.	4.43	I need to improve in my ability to learn my students' names and get to know them.	3.02
My professors are understanding of any personal challenges I experience that can influence my academic success in their courses.	3.85	I am understanding of any personal challenges that my students experience that can influence their academic success in my courses.	4.52	I need to improve in my ability to understand any personal challenges that my students experience that can influence their academic success in my courses.	2.85
