Students First: Improving First-Generation Student Retention and Performance in Higher Education
2005 – 2008

Executive Summary and Evaluation Plan Results

Project Director: Dr. Peter J. Collier
Portland State University

Project Manager: Collin Fellows
Portland State University

Evaluator: Dr. Barbara Holland

Consultants: Dr. Amy Driscoll
Dr. David Morgan

Students First : Improving First-Generation Student Retention and Performance in Higher Education

Project Director: Dr. Peter J. Collier   Project Manager: Collin Fellows
Portland State University   Portland State University
Report of Program Activities: 2005 -- 2008

Executive summary

The Students First Mentoring Project (SFMP) is a pilot program designed to improve low-income, first-generation[1] student retention and performance at Portland State University. This project is sponsored by the US Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) program. Based on analysis of data from the 2005-2006, 2006 -2007, and 2007-2008 Prior Learning Survey, administered in Portland State University Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) courses, approximately 48% of freshmen in each year's cohort were first-generation students. While there is only incomplete information on the percentage of first generation students among PSU transfer students, nationally 53% of all incoming community college students are first generation. Because each year, approximately two thirds of all incoming students are transfer students, it is reasonable to suggest that at least 50% of PSU undergraduates are first generation students. There is a clear need for a program to assist those students in making a smooth adjustment to PSU, particularly during their first year at the university. SFMP is such a program.

In 2005-2006, the first year of service, 65 students – 51 freshmen and 14 transfer students – participated in the Students First Mentoring Program.   For 2006-2007, the program increased the number of students served by more than 50%. 104 students – 68 freshmen and 36 transfer students – participated in the 2006-2007 program. 84 students were enrolled in the 2007-2008 SFMP -- 46 freshmen and 38 recent community college transfer students.

In SFMP, new-to-campus, low-income (federal Pell grant eligible), first-generation freshmen and recent community college transfer students participate in a yearlong mentoring program intended to increase their relative level of "college student expertise." SFMP proposes that this relatively higher level of expertise should then result in first generation students' first-year academic performance and persistence rates approaching those of students from more educated families, e.g. "All PSU Freshmen." Underlying this intervention is the process of *expertise development mentoring.*

Expertise development mentoring provides new students with useful information about "what to do in order to succeed at the university," insights into the culture of higher education, and tips on how to become "more expert" students. This form of mentoring provides information to students about the range of support services that are available on campus, provides scripts for how to use specific campus resources appropriately as well as strategies for key campus interactions – e.g. how to get a question answered in a large lecture class. The Students First intervention is designed

---

[1] **The U.S. Department of Education's TRIO program defines *first generation* status as students for whom neither parent graduated from a four-year university in the U.S. by the time the child was 16 years old**

to move first-generation students along the continuum of college student role expertise. SFMP provides new students with a socialization setting for learning an appropriate version of the college student role and using it successfully.

SFMP mentoring activities take a variety of forms from on-line to one-on-one interactions with program staff. A consistent theme across the range of mentoring activities is that first generation students will make an easier adjustment to the university if they are provided with opportunities to utilize the expertise of already successful, first-generation PSU students.

After three years of providing service to low-income, first generation students at Portland State University we can provide evidence that, during the program year:

• Participating in SFMP positively impacts low-income, first generation freshmen's relative level of "college student expertise."

Additional research, involving the analysis of longitudinal focus group data, was conducted to examine the expertise development of SFMP students over the time they were in the program. Particular attention was paid to three areas explicitly emphasized in SFMP: knowledge of adjustment issues, awareness of campus resources, and articulation of strategies for addressing adjustment issues. Over the time they were in SFMP, students' discussions of adjustment issues, campus resources, and strategies for success became more nuanced and specific as they progressed from novices' context-free rules to the experience-based maxims that are associated with a higher level of expertise.

• Participating in SFMP positively impacts low-income, first generation freshmen's educational outcomes (retention, yearly average gpa, yearly average number of credits earned).

For all three cohorts of new-to-campus PSU freshmen, SFMP participation resulted in higher yearly retention rates, average gpa, and average number of credits completed successfully than students from the All Freshmen group. In regards to a comparison with the Comparison Freshmen group, all three cohorts of SFMP participants earned higher yearly average gpa, and average yearly number credits completed successfully, and both the 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 cohorts demonstrated higher yearly retention rates. While the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 cohorts of EOP students demonstrated higher retention scores, the SFMP freshmen's average gpa and credits earned rates continued to be consistently higher than the EOP freshmen's rate across all three years.

• The positive effects of SFMP participation for low-income, first generation freshmen persist beyond the program year.

Though not part of the original project as proposed, additional research was conducted to examine the persistence of any effects. The positive effects of SFMP participation were found to continue beyond the program year. For the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 cohorts of SFMP freshmen, their superior performance in regards to yearly retention rates, average gpa, and average

number of credits completed successfully, compared to the All Freshmen and Comparison Freshmen groups persisted through the year following SFMP participation, with one exception. The 2006-2007 All freshmen group earned ".07" credit more for the follow up year than SFMP students from the same cohort. Both cohorts of SFMP students continued to demonstrate higher yearly average gpa, and yearly average number of credits completed successfully than EOP students in the year following SFMP participation.

• Participating in SFMP positively impacts low-income, first generation transfer student retention and academic success.

While SFMP only started providing specialized services for transfer students during 2006-2007 and it was only in 2007-2008 that a range of support resources for transfer students comparable to those provided for freshmen were in place, similar positive effects have been demonstrated for transfer students. It should be noted that the relatively low number of transfer students in the initial SFMP cohort and the absence of fully-developed transfer student-focused program materials until the middle of the 2006-2007 program year makes it harder to interpret the SFMP data with the same certainty as can be done regarding the program's effects on freshmen. It is clear SFMP participation strongly impacts transfer students' academic performance – gpa and yearly average number of credits completed, while the pattern of retention data across the three program years is not as clear, though the retention rates for all groups of transfer students in this study are relatively high. Interestingly, the 2007-2008 SFMP cohort – the only one to experience the full range of SFMP services targeted specifically at transfer students – demonstrated both higher retention rates and higher yearly gpa than all three comparison groups.

• On-line delivery of mentoring support proved to be as effective as a combination of on-line and in-person mentoring support in promoting relatively greater retention and academic performance rates for SFMP students.

A comparison of on-line delivery of mentoring services to online plus in-person delivery found little difference in the relative effectiveness of either delivery system – both work well to improve retention and performance for both freshmen and transfer students. In regards to the type of mentoring services provided by SFMP, what is being delivered is more important than how it is delivered.

• The participating students were highly satisfied with the mentoring services they receive from SFMP.

All three cohorts of SFMP students were highly satisfied with the mentoring services they received in the program. SFMP participants would highly recommend the program to a "student from a similar background who is about to start at PSU."

• The success of SFMP has led to its institutionalization at Portland State university.

One consequence of the SFMP intervention has been an increased awareness of the relatively high percentage of first generation students at PSU (over 50% total undergraduate population). The success of SFMP has led to its institutionalization, in an expanded form, the *University Studies' Student First Success System (SFSS),* as part of PSU's General Education curriculum. SFSS incorporates the expertise-development mentoring and many of the resources developed for SFMP into an on-line support mechanism that is available for ALL incoming PSU students.

Summary of Evaluation Plan Results

In this section, each of the four objectives (IA, IB, II, III) of the Students First Mentoring Program evaluation plan will be presented, along with the criteria for realizing this objective and the data that establishes whether or not the SFMP intervention met each of the four objectives or not. NOTE: the original evaluation plan was modified, after a discussion with the program officer, at several times over the duration of this project. Those modified areas will be discussed in this summary.

for Objective IA
Project area:

1. Resource Websites

a. Did the program generate a website that provided comprehensive access to student services at PSU?
Data source: existence of resource website
Data collection: observation
Data analysis: comparison of resource website with current PSU website
Data interpretation: **meets evaluation criteria:** equal or greater # student services links at project site compared to the PSU site. There are 45 Student resource Links at the PSU website (some with sub-pages), while there are 55 Student resource Links at the SFMP website, each with 4 sub-pages.

b. How often and how extensively did program students use the website?
Data source: problems with data tracking aspect of website resulted in never getting accurate usage data. The original plan called for the "capture" of student website usage by "following a trail of breadcrumbs" from webpage to webpage. The first version of the SFMP website, used in the first year of SFMP service (2005-2006) was plagued by technical problems and no breadcrumb data was collected. The code supporting the site – not the site content – was redone in 2006-2007 to correct problems from the previous year. The breadcrumb-tracking feature was tested in Spring 2006-2007 and was finally in place for the beginning of the 2007-2008 cohort. However preliminary examinations of the breadcrumb data captured on-line were disappointing as usage data was missing for some known users, which called in the question the utility of the breadcrumb tracking system.
Data collection: NA
Data analysis: NA
Data interpretation: We can, however, provide additional usage data from exit interviews. As part of a program exit interview, students were asked "which parts of SFMP were most helpful for you?" For the 2005-2006 cohort, 62% of the on-line mentoring only (OLM) and 66% of the on-line plus in-person mentoring (OLMP) students mentioned the website resources For the 2006-2007 SFMP cohort, 60% of the on-line mentoring only (OLM) and 68% of the on-line plus in-person mentoring (OLMP) students mentioned the website resources. For the 2007-2008 SFMP cohort, 67% of the OLM and 72% of the OLMP students mentioned the website resources. While this

is not the same as page-by-page usage data, it does suggest the SFMP students found the website resources very important to their success.

c. Did students and mentor-advisors rate the website positively?
Data source: student satisfaction surveys
Data collection: anonymous on-line survey at the end of each program year
Data analysis: average score higher than "4" on 7-point Likert scale
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion; all 3 cohorts of students rated the site favorably (05-06: 5.4, 06-07: 6.0, 07-08: 6.1)

2. Peer-mentoring Videos

a. Were adjustment issue videos with successful PSU first generation students made available via the website?
Data source: Existence of at least 5 adjustment issue videos at website
Data collection: direct observation
Data analysis: count by evaluator
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion; **existence of 12 adjustment issue videos:** 1. The importance of understanding faculty expectations, 2. The importance of understanding the syllabus, 3. Communication with professors, 4. Time-management issues, 5. The value and effective use of campus support resources, 6. The University is different from a community college in several important ways: It's Bigger - MUCH Bigger, 7. The University is different from a community college in several important ways: You Must Use Campus Resources to Succeed, 8. The University is different from a community college in several important ways: It is Important to Understand Professors' Expectations, 9. The University is different from a community college in several important ways: The Work is Harder. 10. Building Relationships with Professors. 11. Building Relationships with Advisors, 12. Building Relationships with Other Students

b. How often did both mentor-advisors and students make use of these videos?
Data source: **log-in records and tracking software embedded in website.**
Data collection:
Data analysis:
Data interpretation:
Problems with tracking software led to problems collecting complete video usage for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. Still data on video usage for two different program years is available.
From 2005-2006
1) analysis based on data collected from November 4, 2005 to June 15, 2006 – after the period at the beginning of the school year when the videos were most likely to be watched.
2) it is possible that every instance of a SFMP student viewing a video may not have been captured due to irregularities within the system

45% (Thirty-two of seventy-one) SFMP participants visited the peer mentoring library and these students viewed a total of 60 videos. with four students watching all 5 videos. There was not a clear pattern in regards to which videos students watched.

Video title	Understanding syllabus	Understanding Professors' expectations	Communicating with professors	Time management	Using Campus Resources
count	12	12	12	14	10

2007-2008
Even with "new" data collection system, it is still possible that every instance of a SFMP student viewing a video may not have been captured due to irregularities within the system (see discussion of problems with counting website usage)

23% (18 of 79) SFMP students visited the peer mentoring video library and watched a total of 130 videos. Five students watched five or more videos.

Video title	Understanding syllabus	Understanding Professors' expectations	Communicating with professors	Time management	Using Campus Resources
count	6	7	30	14	8

Video title	Bigger much bigger	Work is harder	Importance of Understanding Professors' expectations	Must use campus resources	Relation-ship w/profs	Relation-ship w/advisor	Relation-ship w/students
count	10	27	7	10	9	1	1

c. Did students and mentor-advisors rate the videos positively?
Data source: student satisfaction surveys
Data collection: anonymous on-line survey end of each program year
Data analysis: average score higher than "4" on 7-point Likert scale
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion; all 3 cohorts of students rated the videos favorably (05-06: 5.3, 06-07: 5.2, 07-08: 5.6)

3. Graduate Student Mentor-Advisors
a. Were the graduate student mentor-advisors adequately trained?
Mentors were provided with a 5-day, approximately forty hour training prior to beginning to work with students during Fall 2005. In addition, mentors received on-going training associated with specific tasks at different times – e.g. prior to orienting new students,

prior to conducting assessment focus groups – in addition to on-going staff development training as part of the weekly staff meetings.

(1) Data source: mentor training satisfaction survey
Data collection: anonymous mentor training satisfaction survey at three points: immediately after training, at end of 1st term, at end of program year
Data analysis: average score higher than "4" on 7-point Likert scale
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion; all 3 cohorts of mentors rated the training favorably (05-06: 5.75 w/ no score below 5.4, 06-07: mean 5.85 in fall to 6.2 in Spring; 07-08: mean 6.2 in Fall to 6.5 in Spring)

 (2) Data source: mentor training curriculum documents
Data collection:
Data analysis: review by external evaluator
Data interpretation: met evaluation criterion; curriculum deemed appropriate; similar to others designed for similar programs in literature

b. Were the graduate student mentor-advisors accessible to program students?
Data source: mentor advisor job description documents
Data collection: provided by project
Data analysis: review by external evaluator
Data interpretation: met evaluation criterion; accessibility deemed appropriate as matches levels in grant proposal. Based on mentor job description documents, mentors worked 12 to 15 hours a week, of which up to 8 to 11 hours were dedicated for contact with mentees. In addition, each mentor had a regularly scheduled 2-hour block of "drop-in" coverage, where he or she was available to any student from the program (not just their own mentees) who might have an immediate issue and was not able to reach that student's personal mentor. Mentors also monitored student comments and questions posted on the "ask SFMP" section of the website, rotating responsibility every 24 hours. Though the on-line question forum was not part of the original SFMP proposal, it proved to be a useful avenue for SFMP students, particularly those in the on-line mentoring only (OLM) group.

c. How often did program students contact mentor-advisors?
Data source: mentor-mentee meeting log forms
Data collection: review by staff
Data analysis: frequencies
(1) in-person contact deemed appropriate if matches levels in grant proposal (minimum 2 X term+ assessment focus group)
(2) telephone / e-mail contact deemed appropriate if matches levels in grant proposal (minimum once a week)
Data interpretation: met evaluation criterion; accessibility deemed appropriate as matches levels in grant proposal. Mentors met in person with each OLMP student at least twice a term, in addition to student participation in discussion groups and social activities. While most (90+%) of mentees actually showed up for their scheduled bi-term face-to-face meetings with their mentors, there were some students who did not show

up for scheduled meetings and at least one requested telephone and email contact only due to scheduling conflicts. A review of mentor session logs showed that all students were contacted each week by their respective mentors. Students in both the OLM and OLMP groups also received a targeted email contact each week, with attached tip sheets on specific adjustment issues, via the program ListServs.

d. Did the students rate the mentor-advisors positively?
Data source: student satisfaction surveys
Data collection: anonymous on-line survey end of each program year
Data analysis: average score higher than "4" on 7-point Likert scale
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion; all 3 cohorts of students rated the mentors favorably (05-06: 6.0 06-07: 6.2 07-08: 6.5)

4. Discussion Groups

a. Did the program create discussion groups among the program students
Data source: discussion group participant sign-in logs for each mentor section
Data collection: collected at each discussion group
Data analysis: document review by evaluator
Data interpretation: **exceeded evaluation criterion**. Proposal called for 1 discussion group for every 10.6 participating students in 2005-2006 (5 groups/term X 3 terms for a total of 15 groups/year for 160 students), and 1 discussion group for every 13.3 participating students in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 (5 groups/term X 3 terms for a total of 15 groups for 200 students). Actual results: 2005-6: 1 discussion group for every 5.9 participating students / 11 groups/year for 65 participating students; 2006-7: 1 discussion group for every 6.9 participating students / 15 groups/year for 104 participating students; 2007-8: 1 discussion group for every 6.6 participating students / 12 groups/year for 79 participating students

b. What was the attendance rate at the discussion groups?
The initial evaluation goal of 50% participation was never reached in any of the three cohort years. It is clear from student comments – they almost all mentioned wanting to participate but many had trouble fitting focus group times into their already busy schedules – that we over-estimated the availability of the students in the proposed mentoring program, Interestingly, Fall term focus groups consistently had the highest participate rates for all three cohorts
Data source: discussion group participant sign-in logs for each mentor section
Data collection: collected at each discussion group
Data analysis: comparison of sign-in log "counts" with actual # of program participants
Data interpretation: **Did not meet evaluation criteria**. Attendance rate = "satisfactory" if actual discussion group participation is 50% of total # of program participants.
 2005-6: Fall satisfactory 50% rate = 31.5 students/ actual 44.4% or 28 students; Winter satisfactory 50% rate = 29 students/ actual 40% or 23 students; Spring satisfactory 50% rate = 29 students/ actual 24.1% or 14 students.

2006-7: Fall satisfactory 50% rate = 43.5 students/ actual 35.6% or 31 students; Winter satisfactory 50% rate = 44.5 students/ actual 21.3% or 19 students; Spring satisfactory 50% rate = 40 students/ actual 27.5% or 22 students.
2007-8: Fall satisfactory 50% rate = 38.5 students/ actual 22.8% or 18 students; Winter satisfactory 50% rate = 37.5 students/ actual 29.3% or 22 students; Spring satisfactory 50% rate = 35.1 students/ actual 14.7% or 11 students.

c. Did the students rate the discussion groups positively?
Data source: student satisfaction surveys
Data collection: anonymous on-line survey end of each program year
Data analysis: average score higher than "4" on 7-point Likert scale
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion: all 3 cohorts of students rated the discussion groups favorably (05-06: 6.5 06-07: 6.7 07-08: 6.3)

 (for Objective IB)
NOTE: In the initial SFMP proposal, "program success in terms of promoting first year retention and academic success" was only to be considered in terms of relatively higher performance compared to a statistical control group and EOP students. After beginning the project, it became clear that to really understand what was happening with the SFMP intervention, "All PSU Students" needed to be included as an additional comparison group. While the relative performance among the three groups of first generation students is important, in the end what is more important is whether the mentored students performed anywhere near the level of all PSU students (either "All freshmen" or "All transfer students" (who had transferred in the year preceding the SFMP program year).

Expected Relationships
Based on the literature, we would expect the group "all students" – whether they be freshmen or transfer students – to out-perform the SFMP, and EOP group students. In regards to the two mentoring programs, while EOP has a proven track record of success as a mentoring program, because of the more stringent income requirement and the fact that to be accepted in EOP students must have additional learning issues, we can only offer some tentative suggestions in regards to expected relationships. Because their program continues to support students as long as they are enrolled at PSU, EOP students may demonstrate higher retention rates, however the SFMP students may be more likely to demonstrate higher gpa and credits earned rates.
        The Comparison group consists of first-generation students who are Pell-grant eligible and who either due to lack of information or choice are not participating in either of the two mentoring programs – EOP and SFMP. NOTE: As part of recruitment, SFMP tried to contact all PSU students who qualified for the program. Still, the difference for why comparison group students did not participate in a mentoring program is important in regards to predicting "expected relationships." If these students did not know about the benefits of the different mentoring programs, than they would not be expected to perform up to the level of all PSU freshmen or the students in the two mentoring programs. If, however, comparison group students have chosen not to participate, the expected relationships are not as clear. If they chose not to participate because they

could not see the value of mentoring, then they are likely to demonstrate poorer performance than the other three groups.   If, however, the choice not to participate is based on some other experiential factor – e.g. transferable work experience, age – then they may out-perform the mentored students in some situations.

Transfer students
While initially proposed as a freshmen-only intervention, SFMP was expanded, after a discussion with the program officer, to also serve transfer students starting in the middle of 2005-2006. However the development of a complimentary set of student support resources for transfer students proceeded in a series of steps. Starting in 2006-2007, an additional set of transfer-focus trip sheets, labeled "second tier resources" on the project website, were introduced. Through a transfer-student only ListServ, these were sent out along with a weekly email to transfer students in the OLM and OLMP groups. Starting in 2007-2008, an additional set of 7 transfer-student focused, peer-mentoring videos were added to the resource website.

comparison of modes of delivering mentoring services
Overall, for all three cohorts of SFMP students, both methods of delivering mentoring services – on-line only (OLM) and on-line plus in-person (OLMP) – produced comparable positive results in regards to yearly retention rates, average gpa, and average numbers completed successfully during the SFMP program-year. In the detailed results section, tables #25-39 and #55-69 show separate comparison data for freshmen and transfer students for each measure.

1. Did program students show higher retention rates than control groups during each year?
Data source: Banner data from PSU Data Warehouse
Data collection: collected at the end of each term by means of Hummingbird Bi-Query
Data analysis: tables produced by project staff
Data interpretation: *freshmen:* 05-06. 06-07 & 07-08 cohorts met evaluation criterion compared to "All freshmen": 05-06 & 07-08 cohorts met evaluation criterion compared to "comparison freshmen": 05-06 cohort met evaluation criterion compared to "EOP freshmen". ***See tables #7-10***
transfer: 07-08 cohort met evaluation criterion compared to ALL THREE COMPARISON GROUPS ("All freshmen," "comparison freshmen," and "EOP freshmen".) Both 05-06 & 06-7 cohorts had lowest retention rate of the four groups
See tables #40-42

2. Did program students successfully complete more academic units than control groups?
Data source: Banner data from PSU Data Warehouse
Data collection: collected at the end of each term by means of Hummingbird Bi-Query
Data analysis: tables produced by project staff

Data interpretation: *freshmen:* 05-06. 06-07 & 07-08 cohorts met evaluation criterion compared to ALL THREE COMPARISON GROUPS ("All freshmen," "comparison freshmen," and "EOP freshmen".)
See tables #20-22
transfer: 05-06 cohort met evaluation criterion compared to "comparison freshmen," and "EOP freshmen". Both 06-07 & 07-08 cohorts had lowest yearly credits earned rate of the four groups
See tables #50-52

3. Did program students earn higher grade point averages than control groups?
Data source: Banner data from PSU Data Warehouse
Data collection: collected at the end of each term by means of Hummingbird Bi-Query
Data analysis: tables produced by project staff
Data interpretation: *freshmen:* 05-06. 06-07 & 07-08 cohorts met evaluation criterion compared to ALL THREE COMPARISON GROUPS ("All freshmen," "comparison freshmen," and "EOP freshmen".)
See tables #15-17
transfer: 05-06. 06-07 & 07-08 cohorts met evaluation criterion compared to ALL THREE COMPARISON GROUPS ("All freshmen," "comparison freshmen," and "EOP freshmen".) *See tables #45-47*

4. Did the program students rate the Students First program positively?
Data source: student satisfaction surveys
Data collection: anonymous on-line survey end of each program year
Data analysis: average score higher than "4" on 7-point Likert scale
Data interpretation: exceeded evaluation criterion: all 3 cohorts of students rated SFMP favorably (05-06: 6.2 06-07: 6.0 07-08: 6.5)

(for Objective II)
1. Did the program results get presented at national meetings?
Exceeded evaluation criteria; 11 presentations at National Meetings and two publications in refereed volumes of conference proceedings (2008 HICE Proceedings, and Proceedings of the 4th Annual National Symposium on Student Retention).

"Expertise-development mentoring: A case study of an intervention to improve first-generation college freshmen's academic performance and retention," September 2008. Co-author: Fellows, Collin. Paper presented at the 4th Annual National Symposium on Student Retention, Little Rock, Arkansas.

"Expertise-development mentoring: An intervention to improve first-generation college freshmen's academic performance and retention," August 2008. Co-author: Fellows,

Collin. Paper presented at the 103rd Annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, Boston, Massachusetts.

 "Improving first-generation college freshmen's performance, progress and persistence: The Students First Mentoring Program," June, 2008. Co-author: Fellows, Collin. Paper presented at the 2008 Hawaii International Conference on Education, University of Hawaii-West, Oahu, Hawaii

"Improving First-Generation Student Retention: What We Know Works and How Service Learning Can Help" April 2008. Co-author: Fellows, Collin. Paper presented at the 11th Annual Continuums of Service Conference, Portland, Oregon.

"The Toolkit Revisited: Role Mastery & Cultural Capital" April 2008. Co-author: Morgan, David. Paper presented at the 79th Annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association Convention, Portland, Oregon.

"Students First: Evaluating a Program for Improving First-Generation Student Retention & Performance in Higher Education" April, 2008. Co-authors: Morgan, David, Fellows, Collin. Paper presented at the 79th Annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association Convention, Portland, Oregon.

 "Mentoring as 'Imported' Cultural Capital: A Program to Facilitate 1st-generation Students' Transition to the University" August, 2007. Co-authors: Morgan, David, Fellows, Collin. Paper presented at the 102nd Annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, New York, New York.

"Students First: Improving First Generation Students' Performance and Retention in Higher Education," Keynote address Minnesota Campus Compact State-wide Retention Summit, June, 2007, St. Paul, Minnesota.

 "Learning How to Navigate college: Mentoring as a tool for student success," June 2007. Workshop at Minnesota Campus Compact State-wide Retention Summit, June, 2007, St. Paul, Minnesota

"The "Nuts and Bolts" of developing mentor training programs and the multimedia delivery of mentoring resources." June 2007. Workshop at Minnesota Campus Compact State-wide Retention Summit, June, 2007, St. Paul, Minnesota

 "The Students First Mentoring Project: A Role-theory-based Intervention to Improve Low-income, First Generation Student Retention," August, 2006. Co-author: Morgan, David. Paper presented: 101st Annual meetings of the American Sociological Association Convention, Montreal, Canada.

2. (Changed Spring 2007) Did the program establish a dissemination website where program results were available for review?

Met evaluation criteria. Dissemination / "SFMP friends site"
(http://friends.studentsfirst.pdx.edu/index.html) established Fall 2007

3. Did the members of the advisory committee give a positive assessment for both the national meeting & the program as a whole?
 (NA after Spring 2007 change in dissemination)

 (for Objective III)

1.Did the Students First program receive continued support from PSU after the completion of the grant?
 Yes; Exceeded evaluation criteria. SFMP received short-range support from PSU to continue to provide services through the 2008-2009 academic year after the grant was completed. However it was the institutionalization of the program as the *University Studies' Student First Success System (SFSS),* a on-line support mechanism for PSU's General Education curriculum that reflects the magnitude of PSU's commitment to this project. In addition for 2008-2009, PSU's Office of Academic Affairs has provided a grant of $170,000 and PSU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences a grant of $47,000 for the continued development of SFSS.

2. Did the Students First program become part of proposed integrated learning center at PSU?
No, but **exceeded evaluation criteria** as the high level of success of the SFMP program led to it's institutionalization in an expanded form as the *University Studies' Student First Success System (SFSS),* an on-line support mechanism for PSU's General Education curriculum

3. Did the Students First program promote a commitment from the university to monitor the academic performance and continuation of low-income first generation students?
 Yes; **Exceeded evaluation criteria**. NOTE: while the SFMP research brought campus attention to these issues, several other forces also independently contributed to the major changes in this area in regards to how PSU monitors and provides support for students. 1) Starting from an SFMP analysis of 2004 University Studies' Incoming student Prior study data that identified a previously unutilized source of "parent educational level" data, PSU's incoming new freshman student cohorts were shown to have much higher percentages of first-generation students than previously imagined (e.g. 48% in 2005-2006 and 2006-20007, 47% in 2007-2008). 2) University Studies, PSU's general education curriculum, now uses that "parent educational level" data from the Incoming student Prior study to identify first generation students, monitor their academic indicators starting in the middle of the Fall term, send them weekly targeted emails about potential adjustment issues, and connect them to specific on-line support resources. NOTE: the last two elements are taken directly from the SFMP intervention.
3. There has been a change in how student retention is figured at PSU.   Under the old Oregon University System (OUS) formula, a student was considered retained if she was

registered for classes during the fourth week of Fall term in year one, and registered for classes during the fourth week of Fall term in year two. Supported by SFMP data that showed the considerable term-to-term fluctuation in retention rates, PSU now reports two retention rates – the one that the OUS system requires, and a term by term rate that is more useful for PSU faculty and student affairs professionals.