Session Goals

- Refresh our understanding of first generation students

- Introduce Hope Theory as a model to promote success

- Take away a few next actions for Student Affairs departments

A Brief Activity... Elevator Demonstration

How do you ride an elevator? How did you learn to do so?

Factors Affecting Access

Higher education research leads us to understand access may be the first hurdle encountered by first gen students. Oft cited challenges include the following.

- Lower levels of academic preparation.

- Lower educational aspirations.

- Less encouragement and support to attend college, particularly from parents.

- Less knowledge about the college application process.

- Fewer resources to pay for college.

About First Gen Students

- 47% choose to go to college after high school, nationally.

- 56% choose a two-year institution or less (Berkner & Chavez, 1997).

- More likely to leave (29 vs 13%) and much less likely to earn a degree (47 vs 78%)

Only 26 percent of first-generation students who graduated from high school and enrolled in college earned a bachelor's degree within eight years compared to 68 percent of students whose parents went to college (Chen, 2005).

First Gen Demographics (Texas)

- 57% female
- 59% minority
- mean income $45,000
- 34% first gen US
- 24 % non-native English speakers
- 31% married

- 35% have children
- 62% financially independent
- average age 28
- 9% have earned a GED

First Gen Enrollment (Texas)

- 49% delay entry into postsecondary education

- average distance 80 miles

- 94% live off-campus

- 49% need remediation

- 49% attend part-time

- 40% work full-time while enrolled

- 83% receive no financial help from family

In their own words…

"My college education is important to me of course, because I want to have a successful job that will help support me when I want to be on my own, or start my own family. Since neither one of my parents graduated from college, I think it is important for me to hold this goal up for myself and never stop until I reach and exceed it." ~Priddy Scholar, MSU Texas

Factors Affecting Success (U.S.)

Academic and Social Integration

- Navigating the "bureaucratic aspects of academic life"
- Lower self-efficacy
- Less prepared and lower performance
- Less engaged academically and socially
- More likely to live/work off-campus

Cultural Adaptation

- Feelings of isolation and alienation
- See campus environment as "less supportive and less concerned"
- More likely to report experiencing discrimination
- Cultural discontinuity

In their own words...

"I did not expect to attend as many things on campus, especially thinking that I was going to be living at home, I thought I would not be spending much extra time at school.
Thanks to the program I have spent hours doing just that, and I have made many friendships and memories because of it!" ~Priddy Scholar, MSU Texas

Hope Theory

"Hope can be defined as the ability to clearly and consistently articulate goals (goals thinking), develop step-by-step plans to reach those goals (pathways thinking), and persevere in spite of obstacles (agency thinking) (Lopez, et al., 2009)." Bender & Lake, FYE Presentation

EAST

Hope Theory

Goals Thinking. This is the technique of consistently focusing on goals for the future; and **approaching any opportunity with a growth mindset** – the recognition that, even in failure, there is an opportunity to learn.

"I never lose. I either win or I learn."
~ Conor McGregor

Hope Theory

Pathways Thinking. This skill involves **identifying routes toward your goals**; in higher education, this involves being fully engaged in curricular and co-curricular learning. High impact practices, such as undergraduate research and leadership roles, will help develop marketable skills for the next step – whether it's employment or graduate school.

Hope Theory

Agency Thinking. This critical element is the final key to your success. Many may identify their goal and understand what needs to do be done to reach it, but the **ability to initiate and SUSTAIN the actions necessary** is the grit required to reach your finish line.

Hope Theory

A vision without a task is only a dream.
A task without a vision is drudgery.
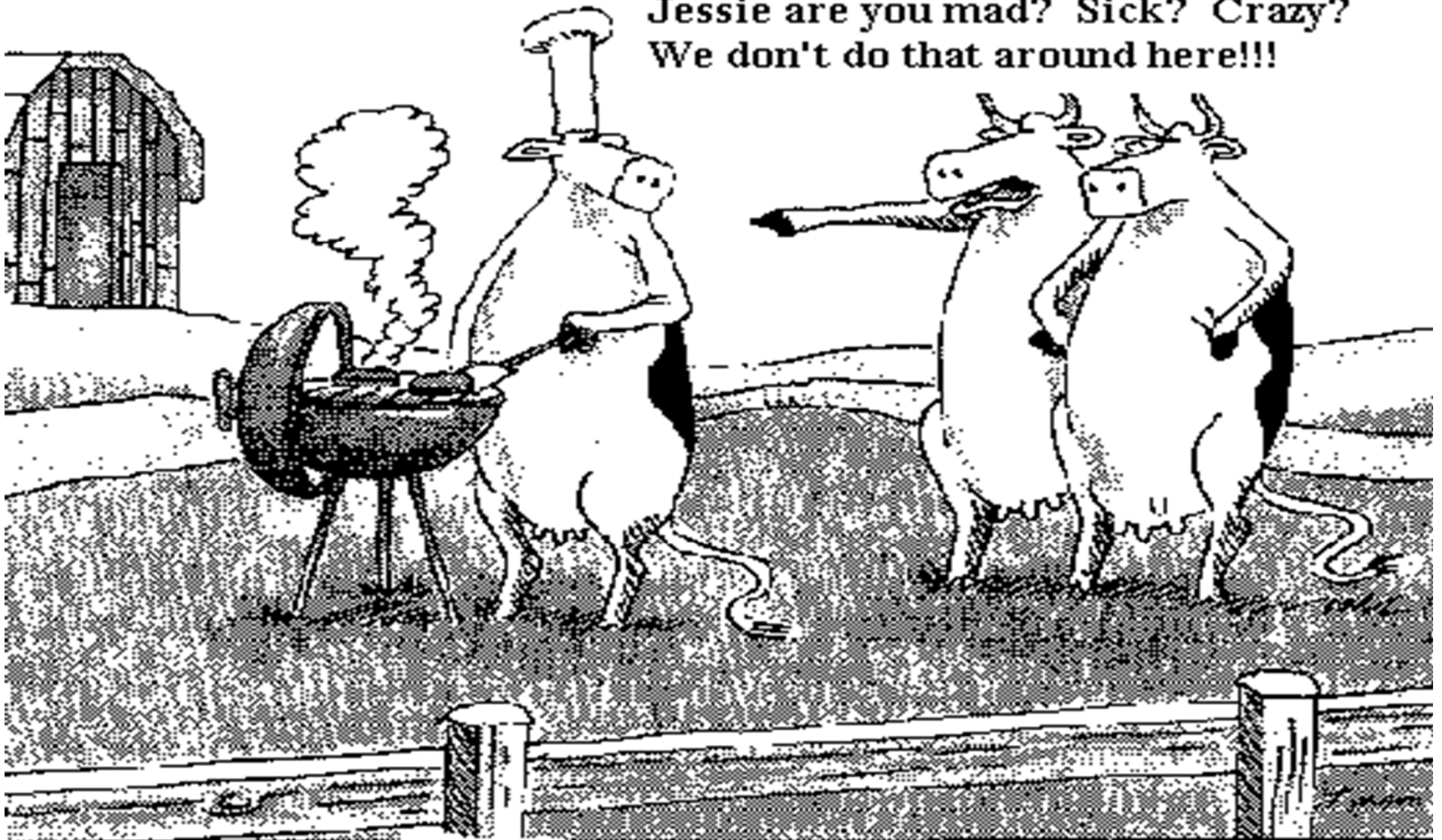*A vision with a task...*

is the HOPE of the world!

~ Author unknown
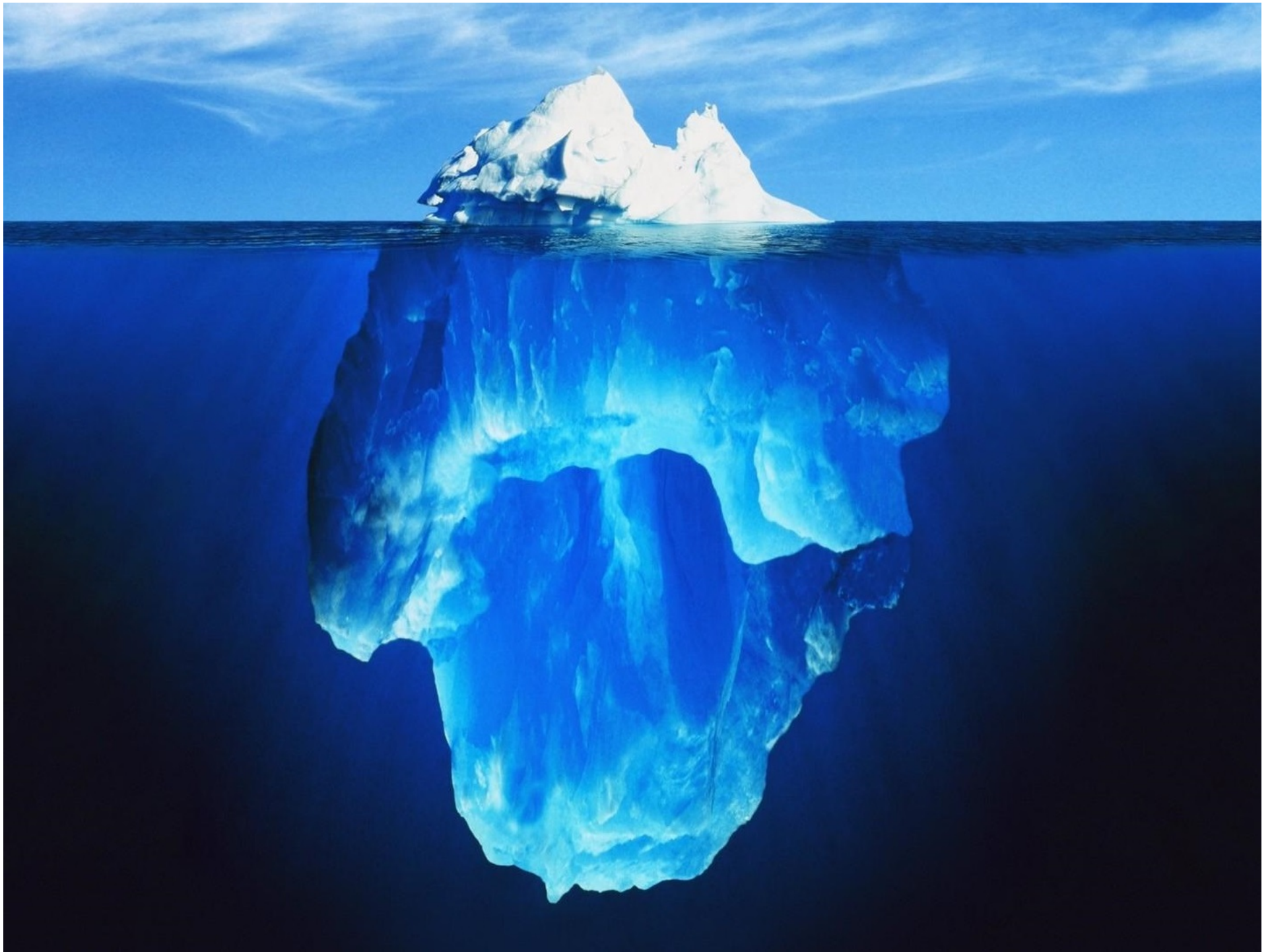
A Role for Student Affairs

A Role for Student Affairs

Examine your department and services.

- Do students understand what we offer? And, why it's beneficial?

- Are we intrusive enough with our services?

- Assess with this population in mind.

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Characteristics of First Generation Students

- Tend to be from **lower income** families or represent an **ethnic minority**

- Report lower perceived **family support** for college-going

- Earn lower first semester **GPA** once in college

- While in college have problems with **time management**, **study skills** and **understanding assignments**

- Tend to have **lower self-efficacy** about their college experience

- Often do not understand the steps necessary to **prepare** for higher education, including how to **finance** a college education

- If first-generation students **leave** college altogether, usually for reasons **other** than academic

A Role for Student Affairs

- Contribute to the Mustangs Insight Newsletter.
- Join the First Generation Network.
- Know the resources and be a *referral agent*.

Where Do You Go?

Tutoring & Academic Support Program	Career Management Center	Counseling Center
Disability Support Services	Student Transition Services	Student Support Services

A Role for Student Affairs

"I see myself in 10 years with my BSN, doing what I love the most, and being able to help people. I see myself faced with new challenges every day and being able to overcome them, working with great people who also love what they are doing and being able to help someone that is in need... I know that by attending Midwestern State University, this will do great things for me and my future." ~Priddy Scholar, MSU Texas

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A Role for Student Affairs

- Understand the challenges and opportunities.

- Know the resources and be a *referral agent*.

- Contribute to the Mustangs Insight Newsletter.

- Join the First Generation Network.

- Examine your department and services.

  - Do students understand what we offer? And, why it's beneficial?

  - Are we intrusive enough with our services?

  - Assess with this population in mind.

- Help point the way from HOPE to SUCCESS!

Questions & Discussion