



Low SES Students and the Presence of Social Workers on College Campuses



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Research Question

How does the presence of social workers on college campuses impact low-SES undergraduate student graduation rates?

Introduction

- In 2018, 14% of college students who graduate with a Bachelor's Degree were from low-income families²
- Fifty-one percent of students that come from low-income families enroll in higher education but only 25% are persisting until graduation as opposed to 90% of students from high income families who graduate¹
- To address the needs and barriers of college students from low-income families, this study proposes research into the use of social workers in higher education institutions.
- There is not only a gap in graduation rates among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds but also a gap in research on how social workers can be utilized on college campuses.



Literature Review

Institutional Transparency

- College quality: lower the quality of a college, the less resources it offers to its students
- The less resources a college offers the more of a negative impact it has on the holistic success

SES and Academic Success

- Students with a low SES background who attended a four-year college worked more, studied less, were less involved, and reported lower GPAs than their high SES background peers¹⁴
- Number of barriers that low SES students face, likely have a relation to negative low SES student academic outcomes, such as higher dropout rates, lower GPA, and taking fewer classes⁶

Role of Social Workers

- Three main functions: consultancy, resource management, and education³
- Social workers have potential to support, connect, and educate those who may encounter barriers, lack of knowledge or opportunity, or other factors while attending college¹²

Social Work In Higher Education

- Student Affairs recognizes growing need for preventative and proactive services for student crises and barriers
- Stay The Course Program - Only recently has a study come out comparing social work services among campuses for low-income students⁴



Method

Participants

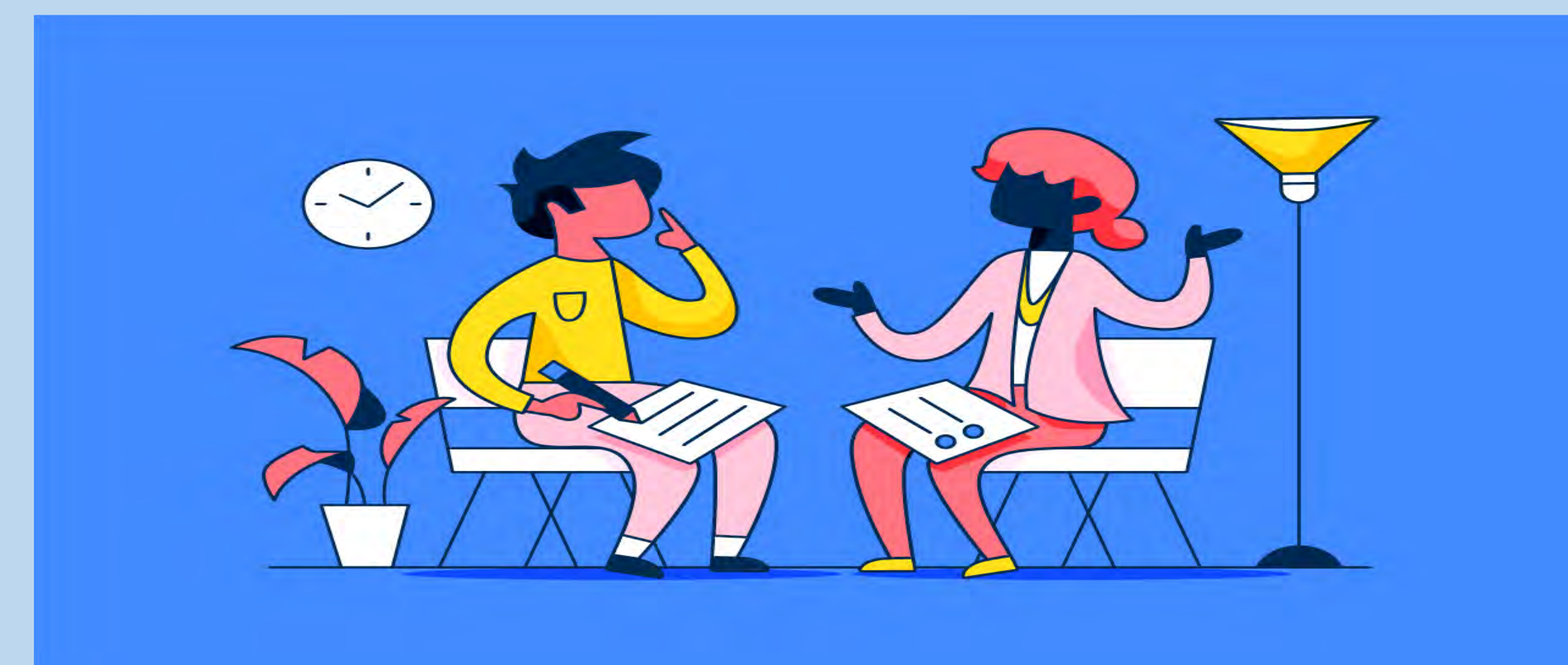
- Low SES undergraduate students from colleges in Colorado that have social workers already on their campuses
- Population gained via institutional financial aid offices for students with an EFC of zero on their FAFSA

Sampling

- Low SES undergraduate students working with and without a social worker on campus are randomly selected from a university provided list
- Participants will complete survey regarding demographics and personal needs
- The two groups will be compared in order to measure effectiveness of social workers on campus

Instrumentation

- Initial demographic application on first appointment and utilization of institutional records to track retention
- Short scaling survey each semester to measure satisfaction with social work services
- MANOVA will be used to compare retention rates per semester



Analysis & Expected Response

The expected response from this study is informed by our literature review. We hope to see a positive correlation between support received for low SES students and their graduation rate. If colleges and universities want to better retain their low-income students, then implementing programming that utilizes social workers on campuses could potentially connect their students to the resources they need and positively improve their graduation and retention rates.