The Many Roles of the Parenting Student: How to Help Parenting Students Reach Their Academic Goals

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What percentage of college students in the United States have dependent children?
What percentage of parenting students left college without earning a degree after 6 years?
What and Why?

- Wanted to expand offerings to parenting students beyond current LIFE learning community
- NASPA conference in February 2018
- Dean of Students, now VPSA, charged Center for Adult and Veteran Students to form a Taskforce to evaluate the following:
  - What is currently being done for the population?
  - What are other colleges doing?
  - What do the students need?
  - What can KSU do better?

Brought the idea of the Family Friendly Campus Toolkit to KSU
Forming the Taskforce

- Gathered representatives from across campus
  - Faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students
  - Various departments and divisions represented
  - Everyone on the taskforces was a known supporter of LIFE and/or our non-traditional student population

- Broke into 4 working groups
  - Profile of Existing Resources
  - External Benchmarking
  - Survey
  - Data collection and compilation
Using the Toolkit

- Toolkit was our guide through the process
- [https://www.endicott.edu/family-friendly-campus-toolkit](https://www.endicott.edu/family-friendly-campus-toolkit)

- Used Profile of Existing Resources to determine what we are currently doing (or not doing)

- Used the Toolkit Student Survey
  - KSU student survey was modified to suit our needs
  - Open-ended questions designed to gather detailed information directly from the stakeholders

- The Toolkit was essential in guiding our process. We adapted it to our needs but relied on the organization of ideas and thoughts to move us through the process.
Development of the 5 Year Strategic Plan

- Profile of Existing Resources complete
- Student survey complete and data tabulated
- External Benchmarking complete
- Other data collection (SFA) complete and tabulated
- What’s next?
  - Tasked by VPSA to develop a 5 year strategic plan
  - Each working group summarized results and reported to co-chairs
  - Group brainstormed ideas and projected timelines – item achievable in year 2? Year 3? Year 4? Year 5?
KSU Parenting Student Task Force: 5 Year Strategic Plan

- Broke the plan into Years 1-5, with Year 1 being the completion of the Toolkit and data collection
- Four consistent objectives through the years guide our work
  1. Enhance co-curricular parenting and pregnant student retention and engagement efforts.
  2. Collaborate internally and externally to create an infrastructure to identify, track, support and assess KSU pregnant and parenting students.
Four consistent objectives through the years guide our work (con’t)

3. Intentionally cultivate a culture of care that incorporates the diverse human element of our pregnant and parenting students.

4. Adapt the Kent State of Wellness strategic plan to support the holistic health and well-being of our pregnant and parenting students.
Early “wins” despite COVID-19

- Coding parenting students within Banner
- Increased programming and support efforts for all parenting students, not just LIFE program students
- Parenting student video resource library
- Scholarship sheet
- Development of a parenting student resource website
Which reason was NOT in the top 3 reasons parenting students gave for withdrawing from college before earning their degree?
Parenting Student Resource website
Kent State University

https://www.kent.edu/cavs/parenting-student-resources
Looking ahead: Years 4-5 of the Strategic Plan

- Discussions of a POC within each advising team to serve as a “parenting student resource” or develop training modules
- Talking about child care on campus – drop in, center or stipends
- Application for CCAMPIS grant 2021
- Family Friendly Study Hours in the Library
- Continue discussions about Family Leave Policy for students
- Continue discussions about family housing….again….  
- Family Friendly Events on Campus and how to identify them
Lessons Learned: Advice to Give

- Find a champion (or more) on campus to support the work and help get through or around bureaucratic obstacles
- Fill your taskforce with supportive people on campus who can bring different perspectives and critical minds to the table
- Be willing to see things that your campus is not doing. Be honest with yourselves and see deficits as growth opportunities.
- Gain some early wins. Then, go after the big ticket items.
- Be patient. Change moves slowly in higher education. Stay the course.
Becoming a Parenting-Student Advocate

If you are interested in serving as a point of contact for your college and learning about the resources and services that can help Kent State’s Parenting Students achieve their academic goals, please email:

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Takeaways for Advising

- Awareness
- Support
- Understanding
Audience Q&A Session

start presenting to display the audience questions on this slide.