

First-Year Experience Initiatives for Minority Groups in College and University: Promoting Inclusion and Success

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Abstract : The first year of college or university can be particularly challenging for students from minority groups, who often face unique obstacles related to their cultural background, socioeconomic status, or underrepresented identities. Recognizing the importance of fostering inclusivity and supporting the success of these students, educational institutions in Quebec, Canada, have implemented a range of initiatives tailored to address their specific needs. This presentation provides an overview of four key first-year experience measures for minority groups, focusing on mentorship programs, student-lead cultural centers, walk-in support offices, and diversity training, all aimed at promoting inclusion and enhancing the academic journey and overall well-being of these students. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with individuals working in connection with the measures of interest. A qualitative content analysis allowed for the characterization of facilitating factors of the support measures identified. Hence, all four measures have proven to be instrumental in supporting the transition and success of first-year students from minority groups. These initiatives provide safe spaces where students can connect with their cultural heritage, engage in dialogue, and celebrate diversity. In conclusion, first-year experience initiatives for minority groups in college and university play a pivotal role in fostering inclusivity and supporting the success of students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Keywords : diversity, first year, minority groups, inclusion, support measures, higher education

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