Thriving in a New Culture:
Student Support Systems in Universities

Teresa Graham Brett
Associate Dean of Students for Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement
Cultural Assumptions in Universities

Individuation and separation from family
Assimilation and taking on of values and culture of university
Assumption of college student role as most important role
Assumption of insider with relatively short transition period
Possession of college cultural capital
How support services can impact

Understand unique family relationships

Create space to discuss issues of students’ whole lives (family, work, culture, acclimation)

Offer mentoring programs so that students see themselves in others who are part of the university
How support services can impact

Create greater sense of community and belonging

Foster professional identity

Foster identity as knowers, holders of knowledge and constructors of knowledge
How support services can impact

Conversion of cultural and family capital
Promote meaning-making
Connect to families
Building bridges between:
  Current academic work and future success
  Inner and outer faculties as learners
  Home and university world
Examples of support services

Cultural and Resource Centers

- African American Student Affairs
- Asian Pacific American Student Affairs
- Guerrero Student Center
- LGBTQ Affairs
- Native American Student Affairs
- Women’s Resource Center
Examples of Support Services

Academic and Transition Services
  New Start Summer Program
  Faculty Staff Mentor Program
  Learning Communities
  Wildcat Academy
  PASS Academic Recovery Program
Academic Unit Support Programs

College-based support (for example STEM focused support services)

College-based advising and mentoring

College or discipline-based student organizations (SHPE, NSBE, AISES, SASE, SACNAS, SWE)

Pipeline programs to graduate school
Student Involvement and Organizations

Culturally-based student organizations

Co-curricular programs such as internships, 100% Engagement efforts

Leadership

Service

Study Abroad and Alternative Breaks