



Building Our Knowledge and Tools to Serve 1stCats



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
First Cats

Agenda

- **Introductions**
 - Land acknowledgement
 - Community agreements
- **Activity scenarios**
- **First Gen Stats by the numbers**
- **First Generation College Student definitions**
 - 1stCATs expanded definition
- **Challenges /barriers**
- **Call to action**

A desert landscape at sunset with saguaro cacti. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. Several tall saguaro cacti are scattered across the foreground and middle ground, their silhouettes softened by the light. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

Land Acknowledgement

"We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service."

Community Agreements

- Take care of your needs
- Be curious and respectful – call people in not out
- Lean into discomfort
- VEGAS rule (confidentiality)
- Ask for what you need, offer what you can
- Assume good intent
- Listen to build
- In community we learn a lot a lot
- Use “I” statements
- Step up, step down, step aside

Activity

- **5 scenarios**


- 1. Sarah's mom works at the University of Arizona (a proud UArizona Alumni). Sarah completed the FAFSA and has a 0 EFC.
- 2. Karina is a commuter college student. Her parents are divorced and she lives with her father who did not graduate from college, but her mother who lives in Michigan graduated from MIT.
- 3. Nicole is a third year at the UA majoring in chemistry. Her parents are immigrants from Peru and both graduated college in their home country.
- 4. Juan was in the foster care system and their biological mother went college.
- 5. Marco's is a freshman in college, his father did not attend college, but his mother attended community college and obtained an AA degree

- **Are you a first-gen college student? Why? Why not?**

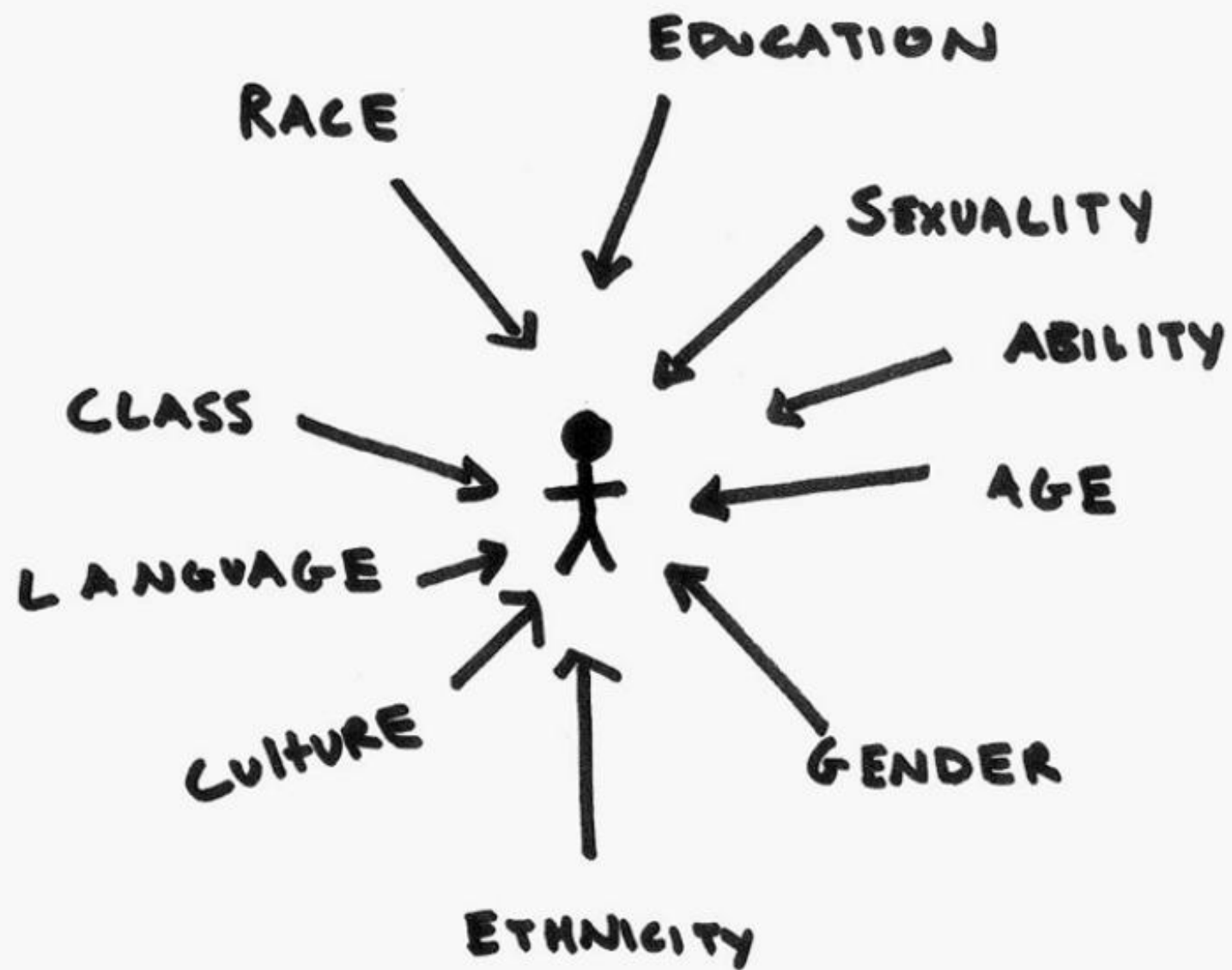
Objectives



- Participants will incorporate best practices with First Generation college students lens
- Participants will identify challenges and barriers of first-generation college students in higher education

A large blue circle with a white text message inside. The text is centered and reads: "In centering the first-generation student experience, we have the opportunity to reach all students." The circle has a dark blue border and a lighter blue fill.

In centering the
first-generation
student experience,
we have the opportunity
to reach all students.





FIRST CATS NUMBERS

31%

First-Generation
Undergraduates

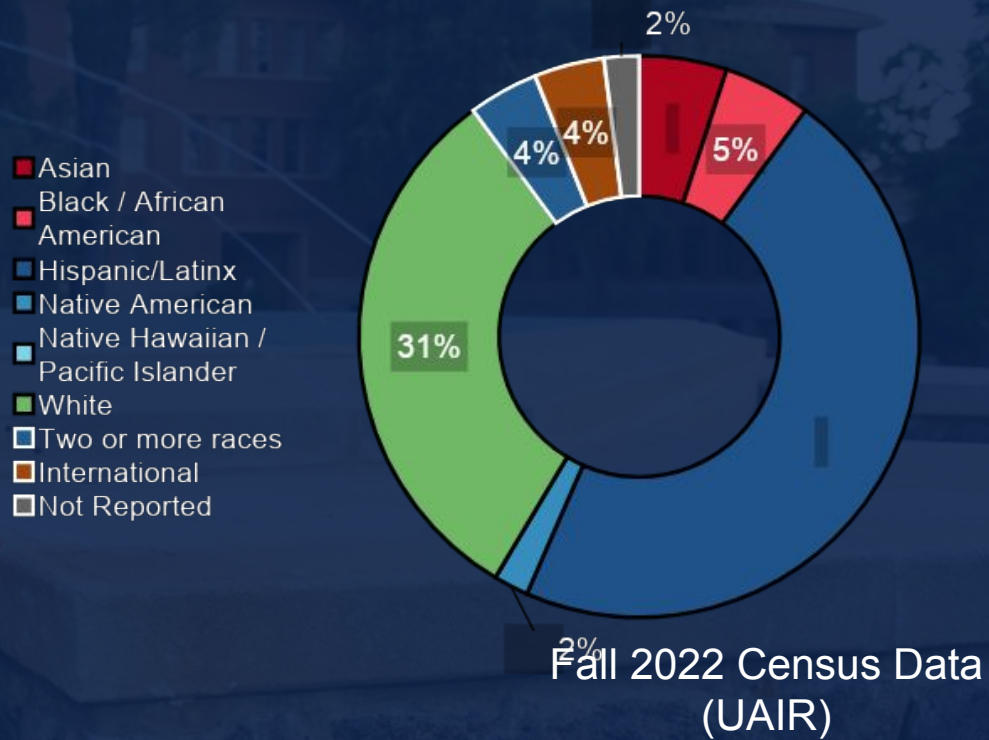
12,528

Fall 2022 Census Data (UAIR) – all undergrads across all
campuses



FIRST CATS NUMBERS

Proportion of First-Gen Students





FIRST CATS NUMBERS

53%

Hispanic/Latinx Students
Who Are First-Generation

Fall 2022 Census Data
(UAIR)



FIRST CATS NUMBERS

58%

Pell Recipients
Who Are First-Generation

Fall 2022 Census Data
(UAIR)



FIRST CATS NUMBERS

41%

of First-Generation Students
who are Pell Grant Recipients

Fall 2022 Census Data
(UAIR)



FIRST CATS NUMBERS

Top 6 Colleges

College of Public Health (44.1%)

College of Education (39.1%)

College of Humanities (41.5%)

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
(36.4%)

College of Pharmacy (36.6%)

College of Applied Sci & Tech (57.0%)

Fall 2022 Census Data
(UAIR)

FIRST CATS STORIES



1st
CATS



BUILDING OUR CAPACITY TO SERVE FIRST CATS



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First Cats

Definition is Important

Multiple definitions in use by institutions and in the literature

- Never attended vs. never graduated
- Parent vs. guardian, foster, adoptive, stepparent
- 2-year vs. 4-year
- Transfer, reverse-transfer status, online classes (?)

Our First Cats Definition

A first-generation college student is defined as a student...

Who comes from a home where neither parent/legal guardian has completed a four-year bachelor's degree

Whose parent with primary custody, or with whom the student lives with most of the time, does not have a bachelor's degree

Whose parent(s)/legal guardian(s) completed a bachelor's degree or equivalent in a country outside of the United States

Who was/is a homeless youth, in the foster care system, or a ward of the state.

Reflection

- Back to our scenarios

25%

of FGCS at 4-year colleges graduate within 4 years

(DeAngelo, Franke, Hurtado, Pryor, & Tran, 2011)

75%

of FGCS at 4-year colleges fail to graduate within 4 years

(DeAngelo, Franke, Hurtado, Pryor, & Tran, 2011)



Challenges Abound

- What are some challenges you think first-gen college students face?

Challenges Abound


- Comparisons are most often made to “continuing-generation” students
- Enroll in college at lower rates (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997; Choy, 2001)
- Persist to the second year at lower rates (Ishitani, 2006; Warburton, Burgarin, & Nuñez, 2001)
 - Register for fewer units, less extracurricular involvement, more work hours (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004)
 - Positively impacted by extracurricular involvement and engagement with other students
- Complete four-year degrees at lower rates (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004)

Barriers to Degree Completion

- Limited familiar knowledge of university system
- Cultural shock
- Microaggressions from university staff who engage with students the most: advisors, instructors, professors
- Limited academic preparation and under resourced K-12 system
- Financial constraints
- Increased risk of experiencing imposter syndrome & stereotype threat
- Assumptions about what students should know

Institutional Support is Changing

Landscape study by the Center for the First-Generation Student Success



Cultural shift from deficit to asset-based approach



Cohort, and Cohort + Networked Approaches



Focus toward understanding intersectional identities (First-gen +)



College-ready vs. Student-ready



MISSION & VALUES

MISSION

- To build a community of students, staff, faculty, and alumni who support the success of first-generation college students.

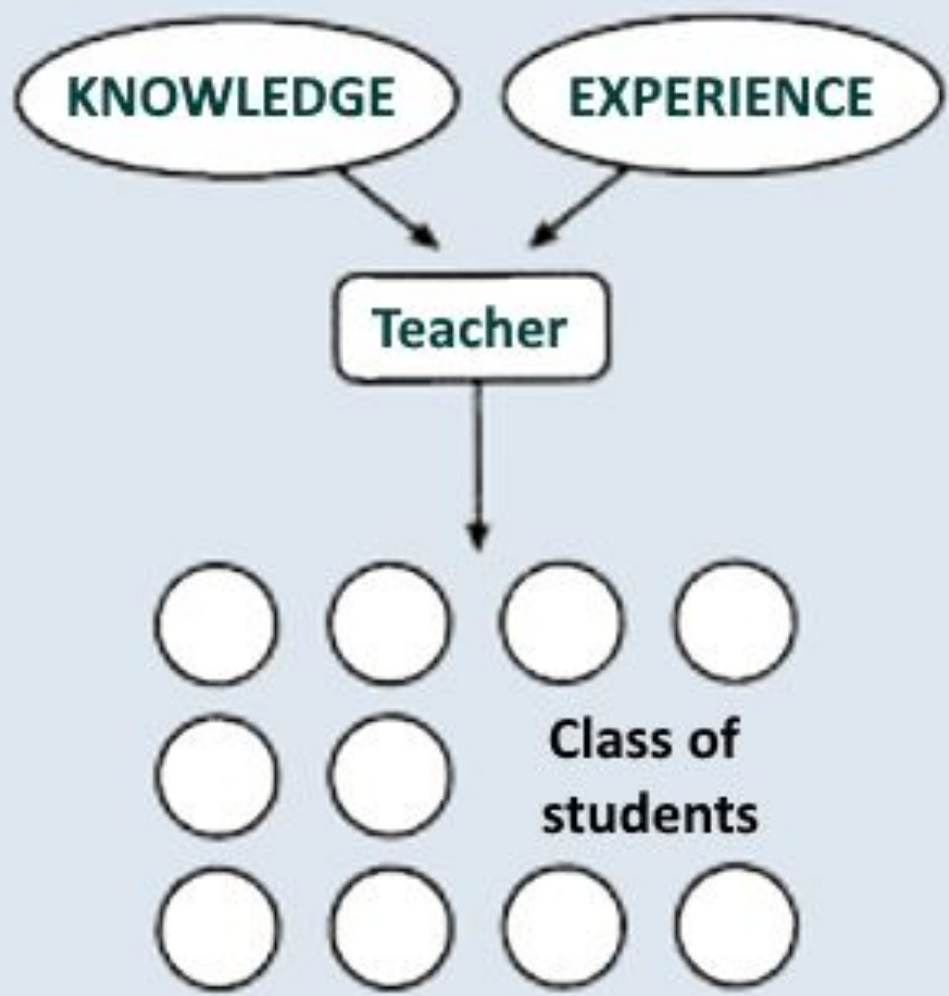
VALUES

- Keep students at the center of our work
- Understand that students have many intersecting identities
- Utilize asset-based approaches

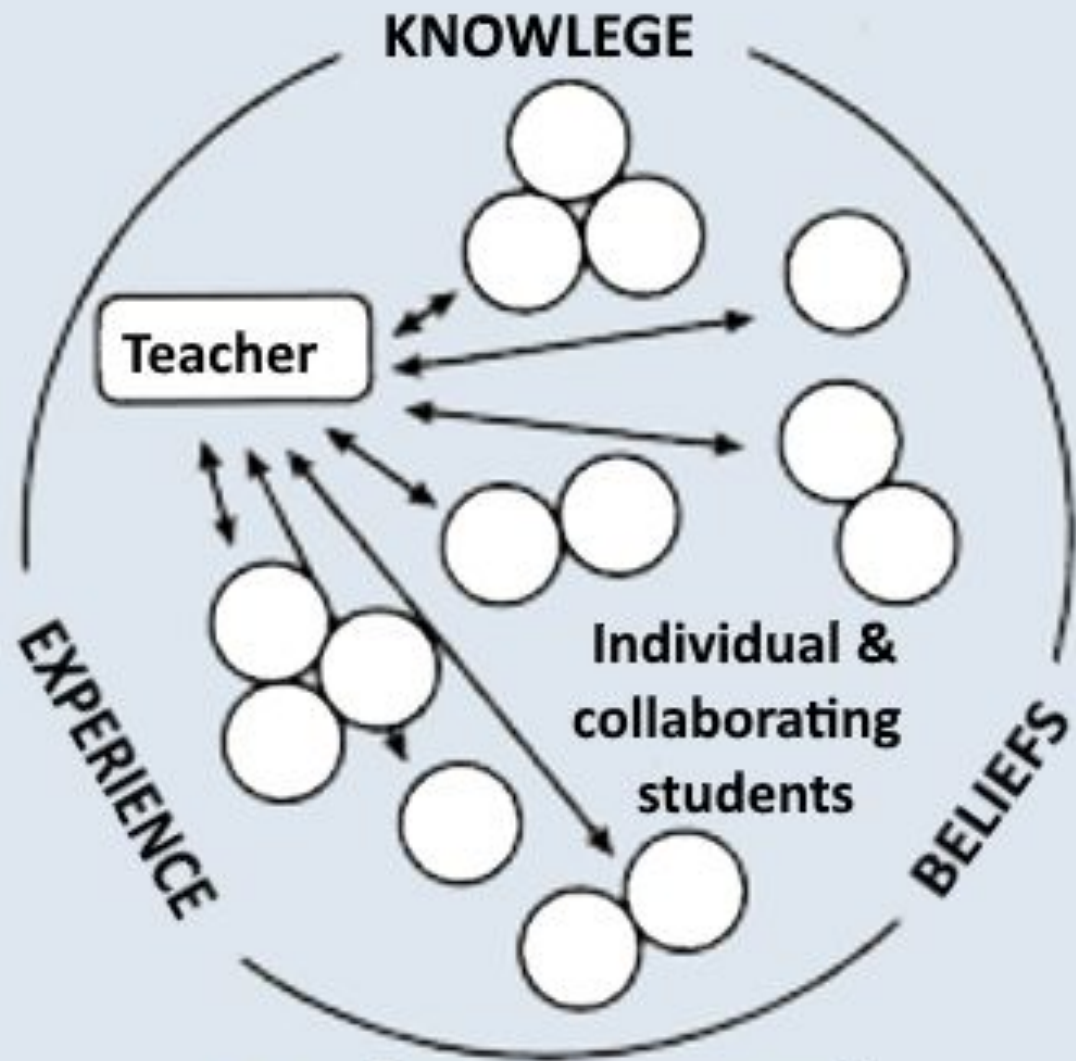


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THE FIRST CATS STUDENT-READY MODEL

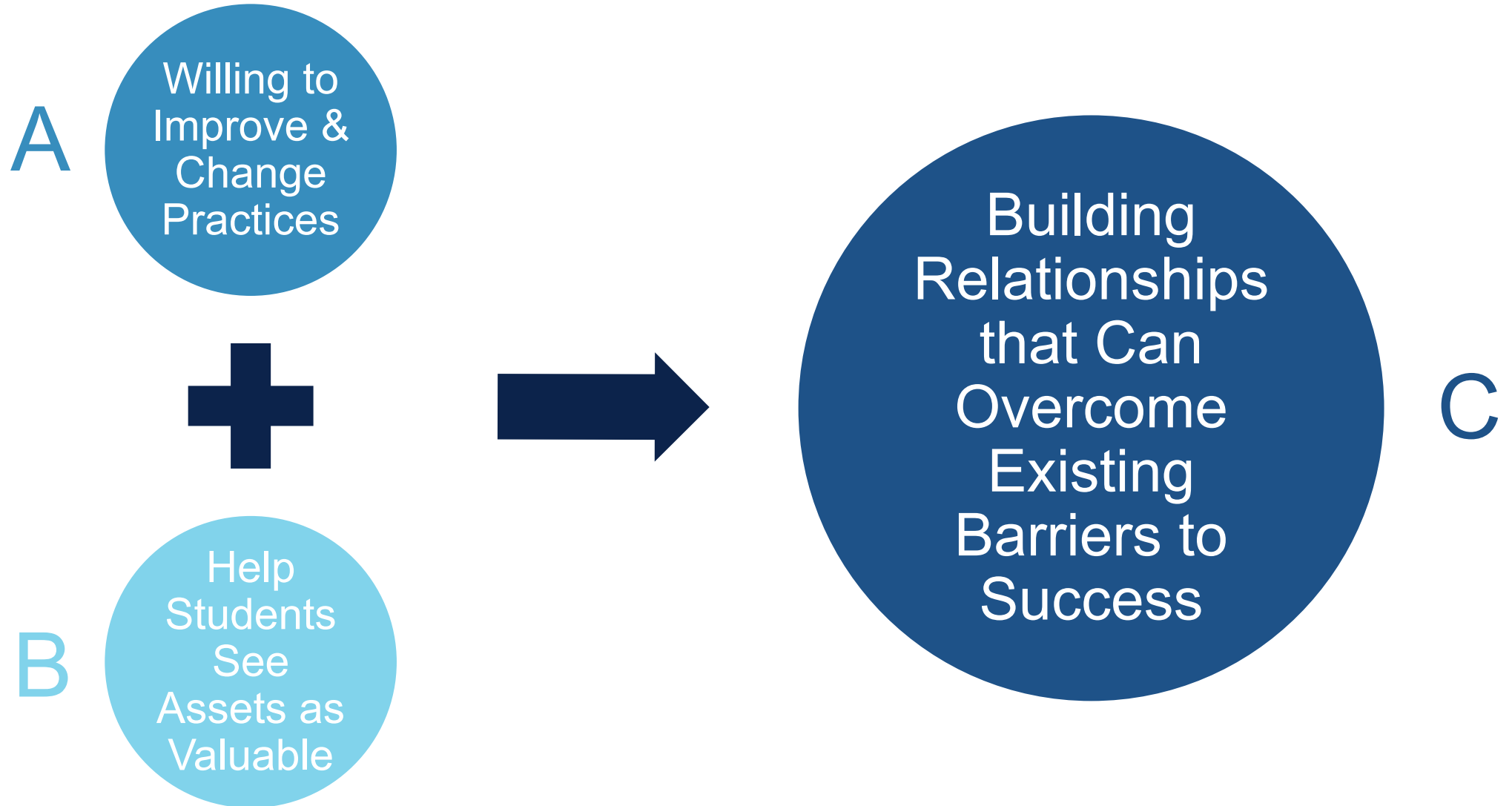


Teacher-centred learning



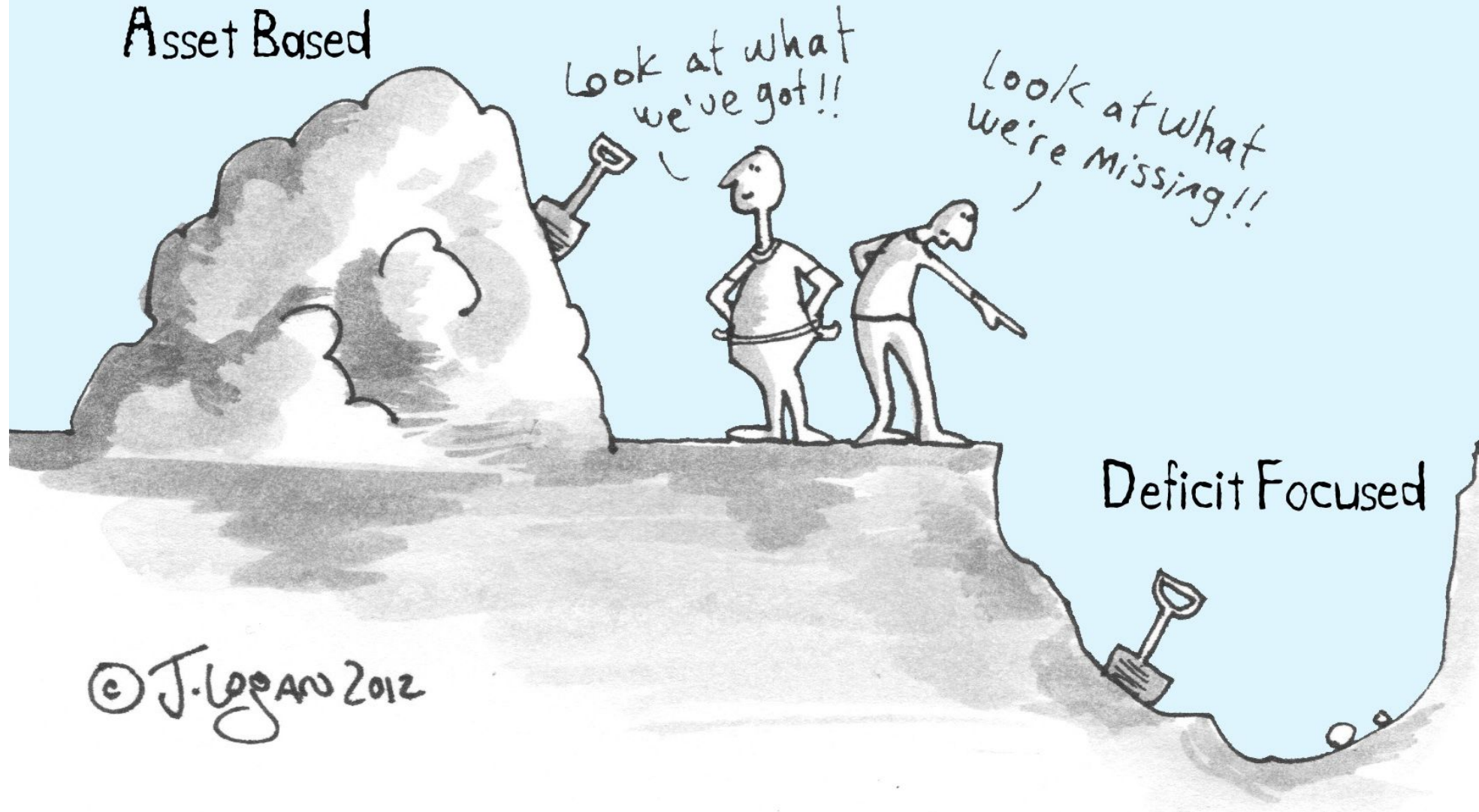
Student-centred learning

STUDENT-READY MODEL



Appreciative Inquiry

Asset Based



© J. Logan 2012

Assets

- Resilient
- Strong Work Ethic
- Perseverance
- Motivation
- Trailblazers
- Desire to Learn
- Family and community orientation

Best Practices

- Orient students to your role as an advisor, faculty member, coordinator, and administrator, and the relationship you are building with your advisee
- Move away from jargon, and move toward explaining people, places, departments and programs
- Engage in high quality interactions that demonstrate your knowledge of the university landscape and its expectations
- Retention vs just admission

Best Practices

- Demonstrate that you care by way of microaffirmations (important messages that students are welcome, visible, and capable of performing well) and consistent interactions
- Write a culture and teaching autobiography or positionality statement
- Share, with pride, that you are FGCS or supporter!
 - "OMG, me too!"

(Choy, 2001; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Demetriou & Mann, 2011; Doubleday, 2013; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Standlee, 2019)

Sense of Belonging Matters

Helpful peer, staff and faculty relationships can facilitate persistence

- Peer/faculty/staff advocacy

FGCS report lower ratings of belonging, greater levels of stress and depression, and lower use of services relative to non-FGCS

Mental Health support

- Basic Needs support
- Help seeking behaviors



Encourage participation in High Impact Practices (HIP) and provide clear understanding of benefits



Develop networked approaches for FGCS community

Make the implicit explicit – reduce use of jargon



Call to Action

- How can you incorporate best practices?
- How can you get your university/ institution have an official First-Generation definition?

First Cats Events

- First Cats Welcome
 - September 14 10am-1pm BASC 110
- National First Gen
 - 11/8
- First Cats Mixer
 - March 2024
- First Cast Wednesday
 - once a month on the second Wednesday for every full month in the academic year



Thrive Center



Thank You

Website:

firstcats.arizona.edu

Citations

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