A Mini-Lesson on Millennials

Faculty-Administrative Staff Meeting
Sul Ross State University
Alpine, TX

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AGENDA

► Who are they?
► What are their characteristics?
► What are their expectations?
► First-Gen as a Millennial subpopulation
► How can we meet their expectations?
► What happens when these expectations are not met?
Generational Cohorts

Birth Cohorts 20-22 years

GI’s (WWII) 1901-1924
Silent Generation 1925-1942
Baby Boomer 1943-1960
Generation X 1961-1981
Millennials 1982-
So Who Are These Millennial Students?
General Characteristics of Millennials

- Treated as special
- Confident and optimistic about future
- Extensive use/knowledge of technology
- Team-oriented and cooperative
- Pressured by and accepting of authority
- Sheltered
- Talented achievers
- Life has always been scheduled

Coomes and DeBard, 2004
Howe and Strauss, 2000
Influences on Millennials

- Increased diversity of society
- Active parental support and protection
- Increased options for involvement
- Significant growth in technology
- Emphasis on attending college
- Increased commercialism
Millennial Students are Information-Age Oriented!!

- Computers are not technology
- Spend more hours on-line than watching TV
- Doing is more important than knowing
- Multitasking is a way of life
- Typing is preferred to handwriting
- Staying connected is essential
- Zero tolerance for delays
First-Gen as a Sub-Pop

- 70% of SRSU students are first-generation (vs. 20% nationally)
- Several differences set them apart from “traditional” Millennials
  - Parents don’t know the college routine
  - May not have a pro-college home life
  - Most work to help pay for tuition
  - Higher Ed is a foreign language
  - Prefer MySpace over Facebook
  - Most do not have a home computer
- Despite differences, first-geners share most expectations of millennials
What do Millennials expect?

► Teamwork
► Technology
► Genius faculty
► Attention from authority figures
► Active and interactive classes and programs
► Visuals in the classroom
► Multiple focal points
► Supervision and structure
► Yes answers to “Will it be on the test?”
Tips

► Recognize that there are differences in generations. You can’t “force” your generation on a student.

► First year students are frequently in a survival mode. Help them be successful in their first year by listening, coaching and challenging them as appropriate.

► Seek student feedback and listen. Students appreciate opportunities to share opinions and ideas so they’re invested in the institution.

► Parents appreciate you listening and sharing consistent, accurate communication. Don’t hide behind FERPA – you can explain a process, procedure or format without releasing personal information about a student.

► People matter. Student satisfaction and retention is directly related to the connections students make with faculty and staff. More connections = improved retention.

► Listen to their perspectives.
You can **ignore** this breaking Millennial wave, by treating today’s collegians as you did the last generation. You can **resist** it, by pursuing decades-old agendas. You can ride it, by **adapting** as fast as you can to new needs as they arise. Or you can lead this new youth wave, by **preparing** for Millennials before they arrive in full force.

- Howe and Strauss, 2003, p. 5
Credit Where Credit Is Due


