understanding low income student challenges
top factors of success disparities across all colleges & universities

**ACADEMIC FACTORS**
- student high school profile
- level of math preparation
- classroom design, grading practices
- poor first GPAs can lead to reduced funding and sense of belonging

**SOCIAL FACTORS**
- need to develop sense of belonging
- feelings of isolation
- lack of social capital
- inability to pay for "extras" like internships, student orgs and more

**FINANCIAL FACTORS**
- lack of funding to pay tuition
- food insecurity
- housing insecurity
- unexpected emergencies
When I was a sophomore, a professor held up an extra copy of the textbook and offered to lend it to “anyone poor” for the semester. My mind raced with questions. Do I take it? Do I reveal that I’m “poor” to my peers and my professor? Will I have to prove I’m too broke to buy my own copy?

I desperately needed that textbook. But my body froze and I couldn’t bring myself to raise my hand. Later that day, I spent an hour in the library searching for the textbook and replaying that moment in the classroom. I couldn’t find the book, so I didn’t read it.

excerpts taken from article: “I was a Pell Grant Recipient, It Wasn’t Enough” https://eab.com/insights/blogs/student-success/i-was-a-pell-grant-recipient-it-wasnt-enough/
Low-income students experience physical, emotional, and academic stress due to their poverty. In their book Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much, behavioral economists Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir observe a phenomenon called “tunneling.”

When a person’s financial resources are scarce, their focus starts to look like tunnel vision, paying heightened attention to the most immediate crisis at hand. This leaves scarce mental bandwidth to tend to the other obligations; for a low-income student, that can mean neglecting academic, social, and extracurricular commitments.
For low-income students, time is a scarce resource

Time is a limited commodity for everyone. But when low-income students struggle to juggle work, family, and school responsibilities, they will likely experience “time poverty,” says Lindsey Cruse, a researcher at the Institute of Women’s Policy Research.

For a wealthier student, it may take fifteen minutes to find the text in the campus bookstore, wait in line at the register, and walk out with a new purchase. For me, finding one textbook for a single course could take as long as two weeks—if could track it down at all.

I would first search for a free copy of the textbook online. If I couldn’t find one, I would check to see if the library had an older version. If I was lucky and they had a copy, I could check it out for two hours at a time but the book had to stay in the library. Photocopying chapters could buy me some flexibility, but I had to wait in line at the photocopier to scan each page, every single week, cutting into precious time that could be spent studying.

When I was unlucky, the library didn’t have the textbook. So I had decide if I could pass the class without the book. If I couldn’t, I had to wait until I or my family could afford to buy it. Sometimes, it took weeks to scrounge up enough money.

I repeated this process every single semester for every course I took.

excerpts taken from article: “I was a Pell Grant Recipient, It Wasn't Enough”
https://eab.com/insights/blogs/student-success/i-was-a-pell-grant-recipient-it-wasnt-enough/
new student survey results

belonging & finances

I am coming back to Baylor next semester.

- low income undergrads: 91%
- all undergrads: 93%

I know how my costs for next semester will be covered.

- low income undergrads: 48%
- all undergrads: 67%
new student survey results
homesickness & stress

I think about going home much of the time.

- 21% of low income undergrads
- 19% of all undergrads

My current level of stress is impacting my ability to be successful as a student.

- 30% of low income undergrads
- 28% of all undergrads
Since the beginning of classes, I have eaten less than I felt I should because I did not have enough money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All new students</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low income male</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low income, 1st gen.</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low income female</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low income, black male</td>
<td>32%</td>
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</table>
goal: reduce Pell graduation gap from 15% to 5% by 2027
student outreach
Paul L. Foster Success Center & low income task force

- identified students for outreach based on PROFILE EFC who may struggle financially
- provides opportunities for outreach in navigate system
- working to raise funds for books
- manages the STORE (a student food pantry)
- researches student data to identify trends
- collaborates with campus partners to provide additional student support
- educates campus partners on student needs at the 30K foot level
$18,373
Faculty Senate raised funds for the Store

KEN CARRIVEAU
Associate Librarian
Now Chair of Textbook Action Team

RESEARCH COMMISSIONED
Provost Brickhouse, CBO Brett Dalton, VP Kevin Jackson

RECENT WINS!
Spread the Word! Educate your colleagues.

Consider using free, online materials for your class rather than costly textbooks.

Watch for signs that students are struggling with basic needs.

Know the resources and make referrals.

Get Creative!
Meet the Team

Student Success Initiatives

Michelle Cohenour  
Director

Austin Morell  
Assistant Director

Financial Literacy & McNair Scholars Programs

Steven Fernandez  
Director

Low Income Student Success Team

Jared Brannon: Student Financial Aid  
Jen Carron: Enrollment Management  
Ken Carriveau: Libraries  
Whitney Jones: New Student Programs  
Wes Null: Provost Office  
Christopher Richmann: Academy Teaching & Learning  
Sinda Vanderpool: Paul L. Foster Success Center  
Meaghann Wheelis: Institutional Research  
Lynn Wisely: College of Arts & Sciences  
Brian Raines: College of Arts & Sciences
Imagine what a Baylor Degree can do....