FINDING VALUE IN STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND VOICE

presented by
Danie de Klerk and Fezile Mdluli

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- Massification of higher education:
  - Diverse student populations
  - Underprepared
  - First generation
  - Socio-economic challenges
- Response:
  - Student success/support initiatives
- Teaching Development Grant (TDG)
- Road to Success Programme (RSP)
- Collaboration with Institutional Research Unit

SUCCESS TUTORING

- Initial premise:
  - Ensure requisite capacity to provide holistic support to all students
  - Allow for peer-on-peer engagement
- RSP Core Team realised value of:
  - Student voice
  - Student experience
- Now plays an integral role in RSP:
  - Conceptualisation, development, implementation, and improvement

SUCCESS TUTORING

- Recruitment and attributes
  - Application and interview process
  - What do we look for?
- Training
  - Two day training
  - Day 1: RSP in-house training
  - Day 2: Student in Distress training
  - Objectives

SUCCESS TUTORING

- Growth and development
  - Regular Core Team engagement
  - Developmental workshops
  - Team building
- Evaluation and contribution
  - Tutor reflections
  - RSP symposia
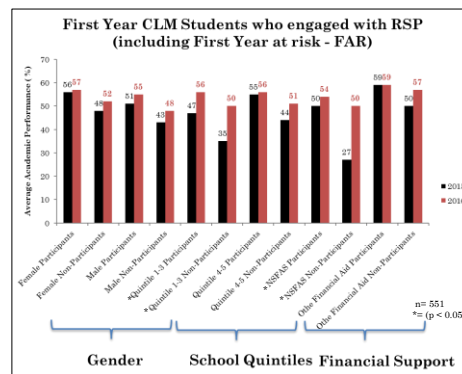- RSP has collected student engagement data since 2015

BIOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

- Comprehensive school and student background questionnaire
- Understand how students' background affects their success at university
  - Home background
    - Finances, language, location, background of family members, etc.
  - School background
    - Language, availability and use of facilities, transportation, etc.

RSP DATA

- ○ RSP attendance data
  - • Student numbers of those who attended activities
  - • Those who signed up but never attended used as control (non-participants)
- ○ Biographic questionnaire / university student data
  - • Student number linked to ascertain:
    - · Gender
    - · School quintile
    - · Financial support
    - · Student marks

First Year CLM Students who engaged with RSP (including First Year at risk - FAR)

n= 551
*= (p < 0.05)

Gender   School Quintiles   Financial Support

CONCLUSIONS

- ○ Continue efforts of linking data, to explore other variables of interest
- ○ Recruit appropriate candidates
  - • Senior students
  - • Diverse academic and personal backgrounds
- ○ Remuneration
- ○ Cohort size
- ○ Accommodate the student voice
- ○ Benefits to tutors
  - • Growth and development
  - • Support and guidance