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Outreach to Student Support Services at the University of Alabama: Engaging While Including

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OUTREACH TO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES at The University of Alabama: Engaging While Including

Student Support Services Overview:

- Aims to increase retention & graduation rates of marginalized students
- Designed to identify & provide services for students from "disadvantaged" backgrounds
- Receives funding through US Department of Education's Federal TRIO Programs
- Support students through academic tutoring, course selection advisement, financial aid information, and transfer student resources

By the numbers:

- 91% average retention rate
- 94% students in good academic standing
- 72% graduate in 6 years or less

Demographics of Students:

University of Alabama SSS Program serves over 200 students per year

Students must be:

- First-generation college studaents
- Students with limited family income
- Registered for accommodations with University's Office of Disability Services
- Have at least one academic need (low GPA or test scores), failing grades, or majoring in an under represented, highly-demand-ing major

By the numbers:

- 65% female
- 74% low income & first-generation
- 62% Black or African American

PRESENTERS:

JENNIFER PATE, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA ERICA ENGLAND, WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Our Partnership with SSS:

- A comprehensive personable outreach program designed to engage with students on multiple levels, while recognizing pressures & needs of individuals in the program
- The intention was to build a close relationship with the students, and interact with them in a familiar space to reduce library anxiety
- After the relationship has been built with the librarian, students more likely to visit the library & utilize library services offered

Best Practices:

Libguide:

- Created specifically for SSS students
- Information designed to help familiarize students with the Library, including location & hours, online resources, accessibility information, and news & events

Weekly Outreach:

- Provide students with one-on-one research consultations, reference & citation help, and general information inquiries
- Arranged during high traffic periods for visibility & ease of interaction within the SSS building

Instruction:

- Built to engage the students with our collections & resources
- Designed for students to learn research skills, website navigation, and other library services offered

Website Presence:

- Useful information: library homepage, link to libguide, Ask-a-Librarian FAQ page
- Librarian contact information & research consultation request link

Open House

- Held at the beginning of every semester to introduce ourselves to new students & reconnect with current students
- Food & drinks provided by SSS; the Libraries provides swag to give away