

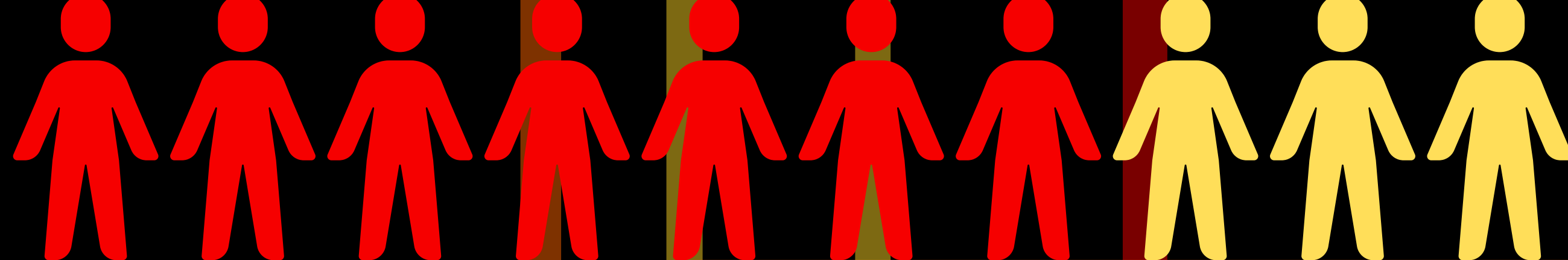
FYRE

Given our own experiences as FYREflies to co-chairs, we pursued tackling the issue of first-generation, low-income student support at Harvard. As FGLI students, we have felt let down by the university and we see as our peers feel the same. This pandemic has made our situation exponentially harder through barriers to financial security and community-building. We have seen the impact FYRE has had on our peers and ourselves, thus we pursued supporting the FGLI community through FYRE. In order to come to the best actionable steps, we included the voices of our community and FYRE's stakeholders through semi-structured interviews and surveys.

QUESTION

What infrastructural changes of FYRE will increase FGLI/UR student support during their transition into Harvard, and what steps need to be taken by student leaders and administrators to actualize these changes?

METHODS



5 Harvard administrator interviews
2 peer university administrator interviews
3 student leader interviews
Survey of first-generation, low-income, underrepresented Harvard undergraduates with 50 complete responses

DATA & FINDINGS

STUDENTS

FGLI/UR COMMUNITY

- Difference in experience between first-generation FYREflies and low-income FYREflies or with students whose parents went to college in a different country
- Forced choice between FCU funding or FIP's international orientation
- OCS is helpful, but students could use some more support and guidance
- Felt lost and "tossed back into the sea" after the program ended
- Harvard's financial aid is substantial but hard to navigate

FYRE LEADERS

- Many people don't enjoy the benefits of FYRE
- Disconnect between FYRE and FYREflies and other FGLI/UR students and organizations (e.g. PRIMUS)
- Inconsistent, changing administrative support
- Lack of transparency from and trust in the university
- Lack of funding and time to fully support FGLI/UR students
 - Does not support students in the long-term

ADMINISTRATORS

HARVARD

- Systematic approach to supporting FGLI/UR students, the resources available to everyone else is available to them
- Need for student trust and understanding
- Need for long-term data for change (e.g. how FYREflies feel a year or two after the program ends)
- The institution moves very slowly and there are many stakeholders at every decision process
- FYRE, as a preorientation, must follow the structure of other preorientations
- Need for affinity-based and multicultural support

PEER UNIVERSITIES

- FGLI/UR Sticker Initiative - any faculty or staff member who relates to the FGLI experience has a sticker to indicate that so FGLI students feel more comfortable approaching them
- Students expressed need for term-time support so it was supplied
 - FYRE family-like biweekly meetings
 - Social events for FGLI/UR students
 - No selection process for the program
- For developed programs, there are higher numbers of student participation and leadership in decision-making for FGLI/UR support
- Depending on the university, need or existence for dedicated offices for FGLI/UR support, since it is a lot for one person (or less than a whole person) to handle

FYRE RESTRUCTURED

Summer Programming

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
FYRE Opening Ceremony	Understanding Financial Aid with the FAO	Office Speed Friending with OCS, SEO, FY Librarians and AEO	10 Tips for Academic Success (ARC)	Shopping Week Prep
Team Leader Introductions and Gallery Walk	Team Leader Financial Panel	Team Leader Harvard Offices & Professional Development Panel	FYRE Academic Afterparty (ARC)	Harvard I Messed Up!
Cross-Family Social	Mental & Emotional Wellbeing with CAMHS	Team Leader Social Panel	Team Leader Academics and Online Learning Panel	FYRE Family Time
FYRE Family Time	Affinity-based Social	FYRE Field Day/Game night	Lecture Rotations and Q&A	Closing Ceremony
	Team Leader Workshop	Team Leader Workshops	Team Leader Workshops	Disco Party with other preorientation cohorts
	FYRE Leader Office Hours	FYRE Leader Office Hours	FYRE Leader Office Hours	
	FYRE Family Time	FYRE Family Time	FYRE Family Time	

Term-Time Programming

- Co-sponsorship of PRIMUS events or collaboration with PRIMUS to encourage FYREflies' participation
- Bi-weekly FYRE family time
- Bi-weekly social and professional development events in partnership with PRIMUS to build upon social connections made during FYRE and connect with the wider FGLI/UR community

RECOMMENDATIONS

HARVARD

- Short-term
 - FGLI/UR Sticker Initiative
 - Office hours, town halls, and focus groups specifically for FGLI/UR students to hear their needs
 - Surveys of FGLI/UR students and FYRE participants to see impact and support beyond the initial 3-5 days
 - Dedicated faculty or staff person for FGLI/UR student support
 - Transparency of what is being done and considered
- Long-term
 - Compensation of FGLI/UR student leaders
 - Consideration and implementation of term-time FYRE-like program
 - Increased student leader input and collaboration
 - FGLI/UR Office for advocacy and support
 - FGLI/UR-specific academic accommodations (e.g. family or work commitments)

FGLI/UR STUDENT LEADERS

- Short-term
 - Alumni outreach for fundraising through en masse smaller donations
 - Creation of more affinity-based spaces and support systems
 - Specifically, spaces for low-income students within FYRE
 - More social spaces integrated within the FYRE program
 - Pilot mid-first-year fall semester reunion
 - Connect with PRIMUS on what term-time collaboration can look like
- Long-term
 - Alumni network and board
 - Collaboration with the university on term-time support, entrusting them with supporting FGLI/UR students properly
 - More frequent and consistent term-time social spaces for FYREflies, including FGLI/UR students who could not participate
 - Continued FYRE mentor-mentee and family relationships, needs financial compensation