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**First Generation Students:
Opportunities to Encourage
Student Success**

Smart Sessions



**How does your institution
identify first-generation
students?**

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“ While nearly 60% of students whose parents attended college graduated within five years, less than 45% of first-generation students graduated in the same time frame ”

Source: <http://learnforwardblog.orgsync.com/the-journey-of-first-generation-college-students/>

Today's Objectives

1. Define first-generation students
2. Examine barriers
3. Identify ways for students to be successful
4. Explore ways to reach out

Who are First-Generation Students?



What Does it Mean to be a First-Generation Student?

First person in the immediate family to attend college

Highest degree attained by either parent was a high school diploma or equivalent or less

Can come from low-, middle- or higher-income families



Source: collegeboard.org

First-Generation Students

Demographically, low-income, first-generation students are more likely than their most advantaged peers to:

- Be older
- Be female
- Have a disability
- Come from minority backgrounds
- Be non-native English speakers and born outside of the U.S.

- Have dependent children and be single parents
- Have earned a high school equivalency diploma
- Be financially independent from their parents

Source: files.eric.ed.gov

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First-Generation Students

Low-income, first-generation college students are also more likely than their most advantaged peers to:

- Delay entry into postsecondary education after high school
- Attend college closer to home

- Live off-campus
- Attend part-time
- Work full-time while enrolled

Source: files.eric.ed.gov

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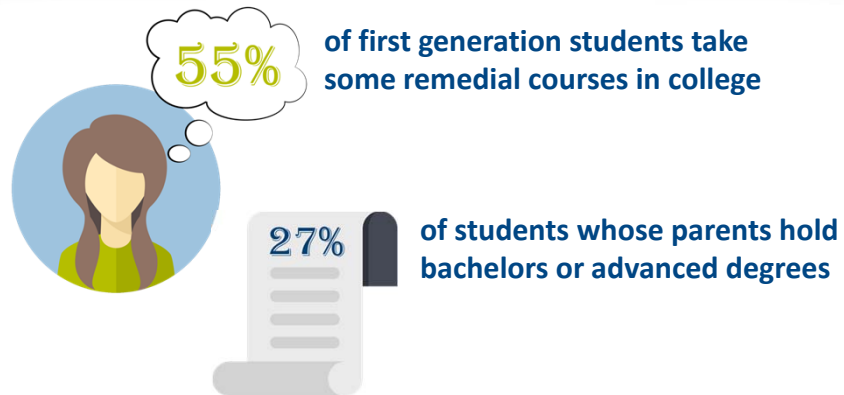
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What are the Barriers and Ways to Overcome Them?



What is the greatest challenge for first-generation students?

Did You Know...

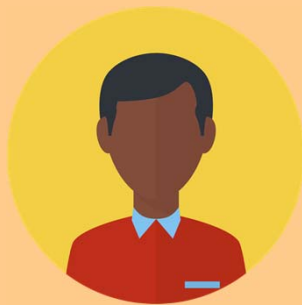


Source: collegeboard.org

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One Student's Perspective



"My biggest challenge was the lack of insight my parents had on the college experience as a whole—and the task of picking a major.

Also, I was very unaware of the burden my student loans would have on my future."

— James

Source: theguardian.com

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One Student's Perspective



“The biggest struggle was the looming fear of failure based on the notion that if I were to fail, I wouldn’t have anyone else in my family to rely on.”

– Reaz

Source: theguardian.com

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Barriers to Success

- May not know where to find help with admissions applications and financial aid forms
- They’re less likely to live on campus
- Many are less engaged with faculty
- May lack study skills



Source: ihcp.org

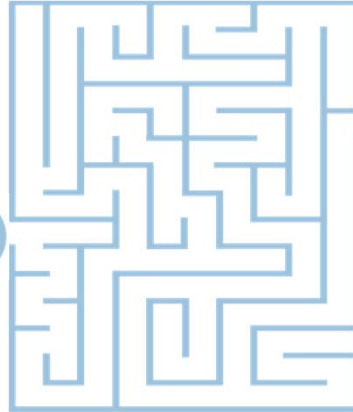
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Barriers to Success

- Few realize the resources available
- Pressure of others' expectations of them
- Understanding available choices
- Balancing freedom and flexibility



Barriers to Success

Some may only have a one year plan for paying for college

- One-year, non-renewable scholarship(s)
- May not meet the GPA cut-off
- Initial family/friends support gone



Barriers to Success

- Many don't know what they don't know
 - Can lead to poor choices
- Parents may be unable to assist
- They may be under-prepared for college life
- Many lack important life skills
- College and university bureaucracy can be intimidating



Ways to Overcome Barriers

Proactive
mentorship
and tutoring

Help students
develop goals
and self-
evaluations

Provide course
associated with
life skills

Regularly
communicate
with students
and parents
about the value
of the education
they're receiving

Guide Them to Available Resources

- Financial aid
- Time management
- Campus involvement
- Study strategies
- Diversity and multiculturalism
- Course selection
- Career exploration
- Studying abroad
- Residential life
- Stress management



How Can You Reach Out to Students?



What initiatives does your institution have in place to assist first-generation students?

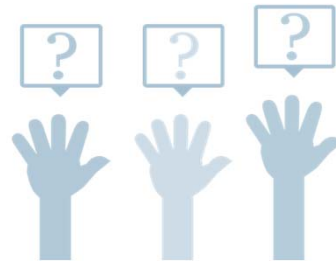
Develop a Multi-Pronged Approach

- Identify them and reach out early
- Suggest they take advantage of career assessment tools
- Encourage strong relationships with their academic advisor
- Involve the family



Develop a Multi-Pronged Approach

- Reassure students that it's okay to ask questions if they don't understand something
- Provide peer mentors who were also first-generation students
- Visit high schools and explain:
 - Admissions process
 - Financial aid
 - How to choose a major
 - Services available



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Develop a Multi-Pronged Approach

- Implement a system that monitors first-generation students
- Check academic standing mid-term
 - Provide supplemental financial wellness counseling



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Develop a Multi-Pronged Approach

Identifying existing or new opportunities for staff to work collaboratively with faculty and others in supporting first-generation students

Determine required benchmarks for success

Have “safety nets” to prevent them from falling between the cracks

Wrap-Up



Conclusion

Offer a student-centric approach

Be a student advocate

Look ahead and look in the rearview mirror

Avoid making assumptions

Provide a pathway to success

Encourage engagement



Resources

- imfirst.org
- llep.org
- collegetrack.org
- collegeboard.org
- firstgenerationstudent.com
- firstgenerationfilm.com/filmmakers.php

Thanks for Attending

Please tell us what you think
by completing the online evaluation