



First Gen Symposium

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From High School to Higher Education: Elevating the Postsecondary Transition Experience

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Agenda

Introductions

Background

Activity

Q&A Panel

Introduction/Bios

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Quick Facts on First Generation College Students

26%

of undergraduates **had parents with no postsecondary education.**

54%

of undergraduates **had parents who did not have a bachelor's degree.**

This is the definition of first-generation that is used in this fact sheet.

60%

of undergraduates whose parents did not have a bachelor's degree **were also the first sibling in their family to go to college.**

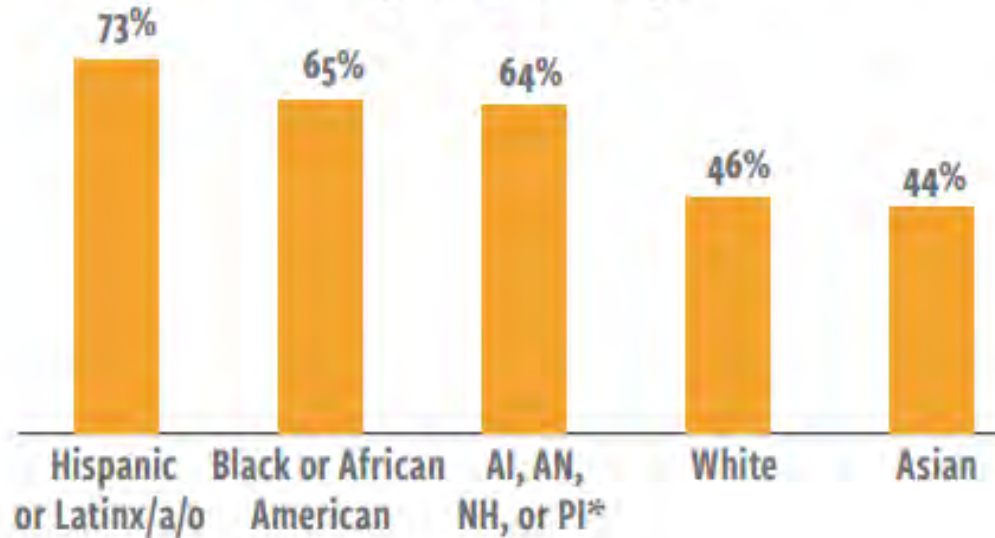
MEDIAN PARENTAL INCOME OF FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT STUDENTS

First-generation students' parents' median income was **\$41,000** in both 2016 and 2020.

Continuing-generation students' parents' income increased from **\$90,000** in 2016 to **\$103,000** in 2020.

Quick Facts on First Generation College Students

**Percentage of Undergraduates who were First-generation,
by Race/ethnicity**



*AI, AN, NH, or PI is American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander

Postsecondary Success Preparation

Role of family and friends

- Knowledge, emotional support, and influence student decision-making

Student aspirations

- “First-generation students have lower expectations about the highest level of education they will receive by as early as the eighth grade.”

Rigorous high school curriculum

- Scaffolding support early on builds postsecondary self-efficacy
- Expose “hidden curriculum”

Postsecondary Success Transition

Awareness and Engagement

- Postsecondary success preparation programs and activities
- **Summer bridge:** Navigation/Orientation activities; College Prep; Social capital

Gap Year

- Delaying enrollment
- Progressive pathway
- Intentional and unintentional

Avoid summer melt

- “Summer melt occurs when a student who intends to go to college does not enroll in the fall semester after senior year”

Barriers and Supports

- Lack of familial support
 - Lack of college readiness
 - Lack of financial stability
 - Limited access to social networks
- TRIO Program (pre-collegiate/collegiate)
 - On campus-employment
 - Peer-Mentoring Programs



Social Capital & Developmental Relationships

Youth achievement is directly linked to the social and experiential gap

- By 6th grade, low-income students spend **6,000 fewer hours** in developmental learning than their middle-class peers.
- Experiential learning is one of the most powerful forms of social emotional learning
- & Exposes youth to new networks and opportunities.

Five Elements of Developmental Relationships

SEARCH INSTITUTE



EXPRESS CARE

Show me that I matter to you.

Be dependable

Be someone I can trust

Listen

Really pay attention when we are together

Believe in me

Make me feel known and valued

Be warm

Show me you enjoy being with me

Encourage

Praise me for my efforts and achievements



CHALLENGE GROWTH

Push me to keep getting better.

Expect my best

Expect me to live up to my potential

Stretch

Push me to go further

Hold me accountable

Insist I take responsibility for my actions

Reflect on failures

Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks



PROVIDE SUPPORT

Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.

Navigate

Guide me through hard situations and systems

Empower

Build my confidence to take charge of my life

Advocate

Stand up for me when I need it

Set boundaries

Put limits in place that keep me on track



SHARE POWER

Treat me with respect and give me a say.

Respect me

Take me seriously and treat me fairly

Include me

Involve me in decisions that affect me

Collaborate

Work with me to solve problems and reach goals

Let me lead

Create opportunities for me to take action and lead



EXPAND POSSIBILITIES

Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.

Inspire

Inspire me to see possibilities for my future

Connect

Introduce me to people who can help me grow

Broaden horizons

Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places

Types of Developmental Relationships

- **Mentors:** An individual who shares knowledge, provides guidance and offers support; these relationships are often focused on the mentee's learning and growth but are best when they are reciprocal.
- **Sponsors:** These powerful individuals focus on developing leaders for more senior roles; they typically create visibility, provide advocacy and offer strategic connections for emerging leaders.
- **Peers:** Someone at your own level
- **Learning Partners:** An experienced individuals/peers who instructs, tutors or trains another.
- **Executive Coaches:** A qualified individual who uses one-on-one interventions with managers and senior leaders to improve their management and leadership performance.

Experience Development Activity

Instructions: Divide into three groups. Each group will have 5 minutes to develop an experience for first generation college students.

Experience Development Criteria

1. **PURPOSE**: The experience must have a purpose of the experience (or the “Why?”)
2. **BARRIER**: Addresses the assigned barrier or obstacle of first gen
3. **ACTIVITY**: Guided, interactive activity
4. **DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIP**: Develops or engages one of the previously discussed developmental relationships (Mentor, Sponsor, Peers, Learning Partners, Executive Coaches)
5. **OUTSIDE**: Outside of classroom or the typical learning environment
 - In Illinois
 - In or outside students’ community

Example Scenario: Nonprofit Organization

Student barrier: Lack of familial support

You work as a Director of Programs for nonprofit aimed at diversifying the workforce by building career readiness skills. What new program will you propose to address the organization's strategic focus on first generation college students.



Example Scenario: Nonprofit Organization

The FAM Program (Facilitating Access and Mentorship)

- 3-year scaffolded community mentorship program
- Peer support > Near peer support > Professional support
- Beginning and End of the year BBQ celebration at a community park:
Invite parents
- Quarterly parent/supporter newsletter

The purpose of the FAM Program is to build social capital and supports through mentorship opportunities and expose first-generation families to accessible tools and career readiness resources.

Scenario 1: Foundation

Student barrier: College readiness and academic preparedness

You have received a \$50,000 grant from the Illinois Statewide Community Trust. You must use the funds to create an experience to address the barriers of first generation college students.



Scenario 2: Corporate Social Responsibility



Student barrier: Lack of financial resources and security

The Corporate Social Responsibility Manager of your organization has tasked your department with creating event to address the barriers of first gen students.

Scenario 3: Campus Community Engagement Office

Barrier: Lack of social networks

You work in the Community Engagement Office on your campus. You have been directed to create a termed, paid fellowship specifically targeted at first generation college juniors and seniors.



Group Shareouts

Panel of First Gen-Facing Professionals

Q & A

Question 1

What is a skill or responsibility you wish you had learned or knew about sooner to support your post-secondary success?

Question 2

What role did mentorship and peer support play in helping you succeed in higher education, and how did those relationships evolve during your journey?

Question 3

How did your outside perspectives on post-secondary options, affect your own and your trajectory?

Feedback & Contact Information

We'd appreciate your feedback!



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