Always First | Enduring Lessons from First-Generation College Attendees

SACAC 2018 | New Orleans
Welcome!

3-minute video used with permission from Rick Clark, Director of Admission at Georgia Tech

@FirstGen_GT
Hello & Welcome

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First-Gen Overview

First-Gen Lessons as a First-Year Counselor

A Few Tools for Recruitment & Retention

Final Thoughts / Q&A
First-Gen Overview

Competing definitions (*NYT, 11/03/17*)

31% of Common Application Submitters

Equal percentages applying to private/public institutions (*WaPo, 10/20/17*)

6-year grad rate: 70%/57% (NAICU 2011)

“If you can see it, you can be it.” | How?

Inherent Intersectionality with All FGS

Double-Consciousness & Double-Standards
Recruiting First-Gen Students

Percentage Distribution of US 5- to 17-Year Olds by First-Generation Status and Race/Ethnicity (2011)

(The Condition of Education 2012, NCES)
Recruiting First-Gen Students

College Enrollment Percentages
Based on Parents’ Educational Attainment
Recruiting First-Gen Students

"I would like to go to college in my home state."

- 51.7% of First-Gen Students
- 41.9% of Continuing-Gen Students

"I would like to go to college close to home."

- 24.8% of First-Gen Students
- 14.9% of Continuing-Gen Students
Considerations in Evaluating First-Gen Students

Algebra 1 or Algebra 2 in 8th Grade

Advanced Math* in High School

Math Course Selection

*Advanced Math includes Pre-Calc, Calc, Trig, and Stats
Improving Retention: Belonging and Inclusion

Prematriculation: How prepared are you to find a group that you feel part of [institution] during your first year?
- First-gen: 66%
- Continuing gen: 72%

Senior survey: I feel like a real part of [institution]
- First-gen: 61%
- Continuing gen: 73%

Other groups with comparable responses:
- BGLTQ: 64% / 64%
- African-American: 63% / 63%
- Low-income: 65% / 65%

Six-year bachelor’s degree attainment rates for low-income and first-generation students
Some Retention Issues/Solutions

● **Financial**
  ○ Complexities of Financial Aid
  ○ More likely to work full-time
    ■ More likely to contribute financially to family

● **Social**
  ○ Less likely to get involved
  ○ Lack of “social capital”
  ○ Staying on nearly empty campuses on breaks

● **Academic**
  ○ Less likely to ask for help

● **Financial Aid Assistance**
  ○ Work-Study
  ○ Scholarship opportunities
  ○ Seminars
  ○ College Bound/Student Support Services

● **Other Financial Programs**
  ○ Fee Waivers
  ○ Food Pantry

● **Social Capital growth**
  ○ Multiple Mentors: Peer, Faculty & Staff, Career

● **Academic**
  ○ Tutoring, outside of regular hours
Family & Societal Pressure / Other FGS Issues

“All or Nothing”
• Failure can mean fewer opportunities for siblings

Reluctance to ask for help
• Or know where to seek help

Imposter Syndrome
• Not “college material”
• Pervasive throughout college and career

Becoming an outlier and not the norm
• “See, you succeeded despite your background. So anyone can…”

“Under a microscope”
• Up on a pedestal
• Deflecting ostracism
• Education as family betrayal
Nudges & Final Thoughts

- If applicant’s birthdate precedes year of parental degree — consider First-Gen
- Include First-Gen in recruitment fly-ins; let counselors know about it
- While national-picture numbers are fewer, independent schools do include FGS who are already familiar with trade-offs
- Consider on-campus visibility (physical, electronic)
- Internal Look at the Pipeline (high school, post-secondary)
  - Are First-Gens equally or more likely to innovate other campus “firsts”?  
  - Are First-Gens equally or more likely to take advantage of the whole curriculum?
Some Resources & Examples

**Carolina Firsts** – 20% of UNC-Chapel Hill undergraduates are FGS

**Fisher Fellows (and more)** – 1-in-6 are FGS at Univ. of Southern California

**Business schools** enrolling most FGS by percentage | Google Poets & Quants BSchool First Gen

“‘I Won’t Give Up’: How First-Generation Students See College” ([NYT, 05/30/17](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/30/education/first-generation-students-college.html))

1vyG - annual conference (now in its fourth year) organized by and for first-gen students in the Ivy League | [penn1vyG.com](http://penn1vyG.com)

A few National Organizations | Great information, scholarship links
- I’m First! | [imfirst.org](http://imfirst.org)
- First Generation Foundation | [www.firstgenerationfoundation.org](http://www.firstgenerationfoundation.org)
Q&A + Lunchtime!

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Thank you for attending!