

UNDERSTANDING

FIRST-GEN STUDENTS





WHAT IS A FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT?

Students who represent the first in their family to attend college (Harlow & Bowman, 2016).

Students whose parents have no college education (Bui & Rush, 2016).

Students whose neither parents or guardians completed a baccalaureate degree (Longwell-Grice, 2016).





THE FACTS



01.

Nationally, 89% of low-income first-generation students leave college within six years without a degree.

02.

More than a quarter leave after their first year... four times the dropout rate of higher-income second-generation students

MORE ABOUT FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

Fact #1

First-Gen students comprise 34% of the population at colleges and universities nationwide. Are more likely to be racial/ethnic minorities, be low-income, and have dependent children. Enroll in and graduate from college at significantly lower rates than their second- and third-generation peers.



Fact #3

47% of second- and third-of first-generation students attempt college after high school.



Fact #2

85% of second- and third-generation students attempt college after high school.

Fact #4

First-generation students graduate at a significantly lower rate, even when demographics, motivation, academic preparation, academic progress, grade point average, and income are accounted for!

Fact #5

68% of first-generation students graduate with a bachelor's degree within 8 years.



Fact #6

26% of first-generation students graduate with a bachelor's degree within 8 years.



BARRIERS

1

Less likely to identify college as necessary to achieving goals.

Parents lack “college knowledge” related to navigating the college environment.

2

Only 50% identify their parents as supportive of their decision to attend college.

“[Live] simultaneously in two vastly different worlds while being fully accepted in neither”.

3

Less informed about financial aid – forms, processes, etc.

More likely to have additional financial obligations and fewer resources to pay for college.

4

Nature of and time allotted to work differ from that of second-generation students.

More likely to meet employment obligations than academic obligations.



SUPPORT

01. First-generation students feel an enhanced sense of belonging and are more likely to be successful when colleges and universities are purposeful and proactive in their actions.

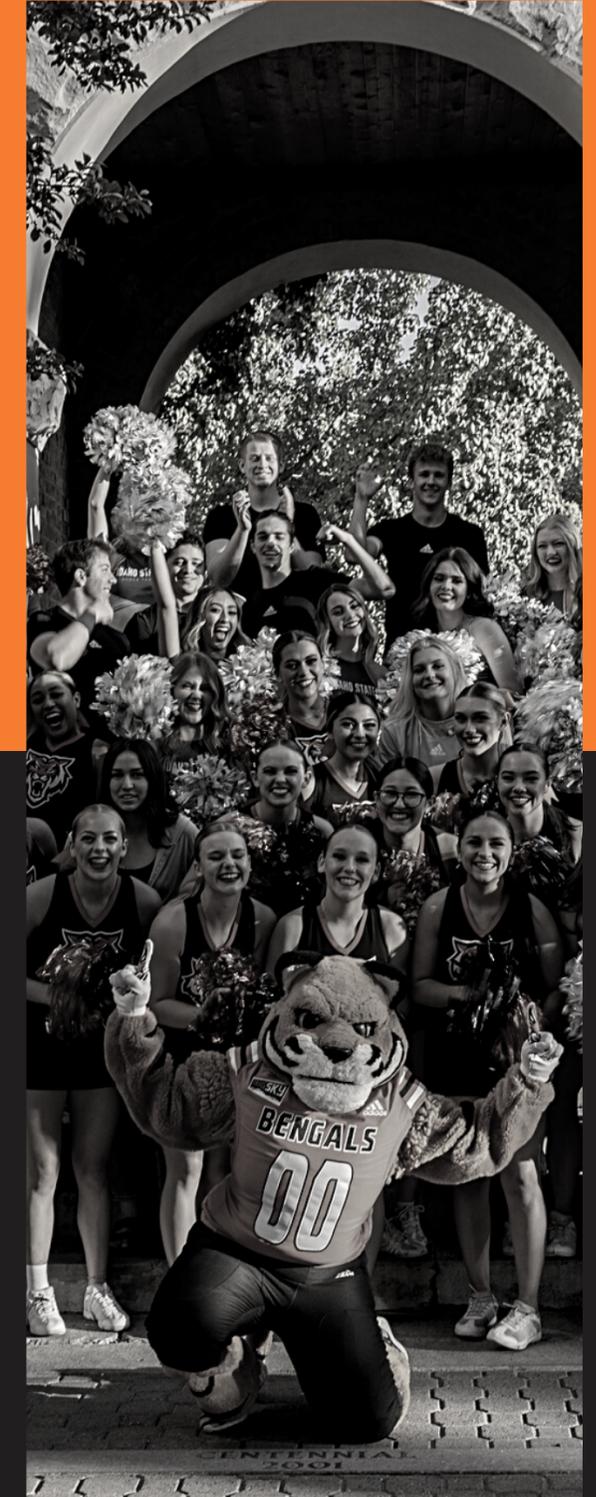
There must be institutional support structures in place in order for students to succeed in higher education.

02. Students will be more successful and feel more connected when:

- They are connected to resources and helpful programs early in their high school career.
- Need-based scholarships are available and accessible.
- Student organizations are established and active on campus.
- There are easily identifiable supportive faculty and mentors.
- Academic support services are in place and easy to navigate (Means & Pyne, 2017).

03. Colleges and Universities can:

- Establish a regular presence on high school campuses.
- Set up college visits. First gen students benefit from personal experience of the visit.
- Advertise summer Bridge programs.
- Promote local TRIO programs.
- Offer a first-gen living learning community.
- Encourage students to form clubs and organizations geared for first-gen students.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I'm First! Free College and Career Mentoring

<https://imfirst.org/>

Reach Higher

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/reach-higher>

Go College! Now

<http://www.gocollegenow.org/for-educators/>

First-Generation College Students, You Got This!

https://www.youtube.com/watchv=YtAn7RwsxUc&ab_channel=LaurenValdez

A Walk in my Shoes: First Generation College Students Full Documentary

<https://youtu.be/hQA5ahGFy5A>



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