

Together We Can!

Issue

First-generation (“First-Gen”) students form a growing portion of higher education enrollments, generally have lower rates of persistence and graduation than their non-first-gen peers, and come from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education, including:

- Students of color
- Low socioeconomic status (SES)



Definitions

- HERI/UCLA: “students whose parents have had no college or post-secondary experiences”
- TRIO: neither parent has earned a bachelor’s degree

Data

- Campus Institutional Research Office
- College Scorecard (.gov)

Pacific College Scorecard Data

- First-gen @Pacific: 35% (FAFSA, can be disaggregated by parental highest school level)
- Socio-Economic Diversity @Pacific: 40% of students have family income under \$40k & receive an income-based federal Pell Grant

First-Gen Challenges

Often lack key forms of capital:

- Economic (financial stress)
- Academic (dearth of college preparation)
- Social (accessing/developing relationships of support, including with those of higher SES)
- Cultural (knowledge about how college environments generally function)

Also:

- Multiple commitments related to work & family
- Confidence - Imposter Syndrome - Outsider Status

Identify First-Gen Partners

- Federal TRIO programs (Pacific SUCCESS)
- Local college access programs (Pacific’s Community Involvement Program)
- Summer bridge transition programs (Pacific’s Summer Bridge for Student Success)
- Faculty, staff, and administrators doing First-Gen mentoring
- Academic majors and programs with a large number of First-Gen students
- Intercultural Student Success / Multicultural Affairs, Counseling & Psychological Services, Women’s Resource Center

Connect

A Pacific librarian is now directly involved with many of these campus partners, doing outreach, assisting students, teaching, & serving on Pacific’s Educational Equity Advisory Board.

First-Gen mentors are often some of the most “stretched” people on campus, time-wise; however, they are a *constant* for students within their respective programs & majors, so getting buy-in from them is enormously valuable.

Conclusion

The library literature shows a correlation between students’ use of library buildings & resources & higher retention rates & GPAs.

Given this, as well as known risk factors to First-Gen success, putting the library & its resources “out there” as “First-Gen friendly” (early and often) is especially vital.



Academic Libraries & First-Generation Student Success

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