



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**National First-Generation College Celebration to honor
first-generation student and alumni accomplishments on November 8**
*Seventh annual celebration to highlight first-generation corporate leaders
in virtual event on Nov. 2 and Nov. 8*

Washington, DC (October 24, 2023) - On November 8, 2023, the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) and the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation, will lead the national efforts for the seventh annual [First-Generation College Celebration](#).

"The First-Generation College Celebration is not just a day; it's a monumental testament to the unstoppable determination and boundless potential that first-generation students bring to our educational landscape and society," said [COE](#) president Kimberly Jones. "Their journey is a beacon of inspiration, reminding us that the pursuit of knowledge knows no boundaries, and with unwavering support, these students will continue to break barriers and reshape the future."

Launched by COE and the [Center for First-generation Student Success](#) in 2017, the First-Generation College Celebration has united hundreds of college campuses across the country an often-overlooked population through numerous events, including student rallies, faculty-led panel discussions, artistic performances, and more in recognition of first-generation students, administrators, faculty, and alumni. The First-Generation College Celebration is celebrated each year on November 8 as it marks the anniversary of signing of the 1965 Higher Education Act, which has helped millions of first-generation students persist to degree completion.

At the national level, COE and the Center for First-generation Student Success will co-host a virtual event focusing on career trajectories for first-generation students, featuring a panel of first-generation alumni who have risen to senior leader roles in some of the world's most recognizable companies. Moderated by Dr. Tracy D. Hall, president of Southwest Tennessee Community College, the panel includes:

- **Tinisha Agramonte**, senior vice president and chief diversity officer, The Walt Disney Company;
- **Jessica Cipolla-Tario**, vice president of Global Creative Services for Sony Interactive Entertainment;
- **Marge Jackson**, senior vice president-head of sales for Comcast; and
- **Leticia Silva**, senior vice president of Human Resources for Major League Baseball's Minnesota Twins.

Each panelist will discuss their journey as a first-generation student and how they are working to open doors for future first-generation leaders. This event will broadcast twice, on **Thursday, November 2, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. ET** or **Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. ET**. [Registration](#) is free and open to all.

“The First-Generation College Celebration brings attention to the accomplishments of a population representing one-third of all currently enrolled college students,” said Dr. Sarah E. Whitley, vice president at the Center for First-generation Student Success. “Not only that, but advancing an asset-based national narrative on first-generation student experiences and outcomes is one way to help first-gen students understand the tremendous strengths they bring to our communities, and the potential they have to take control and realize their career goals.”

To learn more about the First-Generation College Celebration, view the [Media Kit](#), or see highlights from past celebrations, visit the National First-Generation College Celebration [page](#). You can also track and view activities and events from across the country on social media by searching for #CelebrateFirstGen.

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is a nonprofit organization, established in 1981, dedicated to furthering the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., the Pacific Islands, and Puerto Rico. Its membership includes more than 1,000 colleges and agencies. Through its numerous membership services, the Council works in conjunction with colleges, universities, and agencies to help low-income students enter college and graduate. Over a million low-income students and students with disabilities each year receive college access and retention services through our member colleges and agencies.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The Center for First-generation Student Success is transforming higher education to drive first-generation student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life. We provide data, training, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities around the country to scale and sustain the important work of serving first-generation students. The Center aims to acknowledge the intersectional experiences of first-generation college students. It offers an outlet for sharing cutting-edge research and current media, opportunities for engagement through online learning, conferences, and events, and access to a bevy of programs and services intended to improve first-generation initiatives across higher education.

ABOUT NASPA

NASPA is a member-centered association supporting a diverse and passionate network of 15,000 professionals and 1,200 institutions across the globe. It is the professional home for the field of student affairs and is dedicated to cultivating student success in collaboration with the missions of its institutional members, a network of colleges and universities representing every sector of higher education.