

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Bill Barker (NASPA)

bbarker@naspa.org

(202) 719-1188



Center for First-generation Student Success announce release of new book on first-generation professionals in higher education

Washington, DC (January 6, 2022) - The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation, has announced the release of [*First-generation Professionals in Higher Education: Strategies for the World of Work*](#), a new book that investigates the complexities related to the transition from college or professional school to the work world of higher education, as well as the advancement from mid- to senior-level leadership, and how first-generation professionals navigate these transitions.

“The narrative of first-generation students is just beginning to emerge as a story of resilience and persistence framed in strength and asset-based language. Professionals identifying as first-generation college students have always known this, but the story has often been told using deficit language,” said Dr. Mary Blanchard Wallace, assistant vice president for student experience at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the book’s primary author. “Each contributor in this book share the first-generation professional identity, and I am so proud of the narratives we were able to capture and elevate.”

Framing their ten chapters in the asset-based lens of cultural capital, the fifteen contributors to the book approach topics of navigating the field of higher education as first-generation professionals through personal experience as well as evidence-based approaches and strategies.

Organized in three sections—Professional Identity, Purposeful Interaction, and Career Path—the book examines concepts such as imposter syndrome, politics, financial literacy, resilience, networking, mentoring, career progression, and more. Each chapter includes activities, exercises, and questions for reflection, offering readers an opportunity to discern strategies for their own professional development.

“As we continue to grapple with the experiences of first-generation college students, the professional identity of first-generation leaders, scholars, and practitioners emerges for necessary consideration. It is because of *First-generation Professionals in Higher Education: Strategies for the World of Work* that we can further contextualize lived experiences and better support the field,” said Dr. Sarah E. Whitley, assistant vice president with the [Center for](#)

[First-generation Student Success](#), NASPA. “The Center is grateful for the leadership of Dr. Mary Blanchard Wallace and the contributions from many influential first-generation leaders for creating a first-of-its-kind, expert resource.”

First-generation Professionals in Higher Education: Strategies for the World of Work adds to a growing list of evidence-based research, reporting, and resources from the Center for First-generation Student Success. Among the recent publications:

- [First-generation Student Success: A landscape analysis of programs and services at four-year institutions](#)
- [First-generation students in community and technical colleges: A national exploration of institutional support practices](#)
- [National Data Fact Sheets on First-generation College Students](#)
- [National Data Facts Sheets on First-generation College Graduate and Career Preparation](#)
- [Journal of First-generation Student Success](#)
- [An Annotated Bibliography on First-generation College Students: Research from 2008-2019](#)

###

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The Center is the premier source of evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community to advance the success of first-generation students. Based in Washington, DC, 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 conversations, 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.