FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Center for First-generation Student Success Names Sam Goessling as First Chief Growth Officer

Veteran advancement and development executive will lead capital campaign to support Center’s new multi-year growth plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Center for First-generation Student Success® today announced the hiring of Sam Goessling, Ph.D., as its first Chief Growth Officer. Created in a partnership between NASPA and The Suder Foundation in 2017, the Center provides data, tools, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities to drive transformational change for first-gen students. Dr. Goessling joins the Center from IDEA Public Schools where he served for more than 15 years, most recently as chief advancement officer.

In his new role, Dr. Goessling will be responsible for developing and executing a multi-year growth strategy for the Center to raise new funds, reach scale and serve more first-gen college students around the country. To date, through its First Scholars® model the Center has partnered with 270+ higher education institutions serving 1.5M+ undergraduate students, including 500K+ first-gen students.

Over the next five years, the Center will grow the First Scholars Network to partner with 750 colleges and universities that collectively serve nearly 2M first-gen students and additionally impact 6.4M of all students. The goal is to advance first-gen graduation rates by 10-15 percent at participating institutions.

“This is an exciting moment for the Center, as they prepare to grow their reach and impact in support of first-gen students around the country,” said Dr. Goessling. “Ensuring the success of first-gen college students today is critical for all future generations, and I am eager to share with philanthropists, academic leaders, and others the Center’s vision and plans to unlock transformative opportunities for more students.”

A graduate of the University of Richmond, Dr. Goessling worked as an elementary school teacher and later as a middle and high school principal. He received a Masters degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2008 and a Ph.D. in education and policy planning from the University of Texas at Austin in 2018.
“We are thrilled to welcome an executive of Sam’s caliber and experience to lead our advancement efforts as our first growth officer,” said Dr. Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA. “Sam is a gifted fundraiser with a deep passion for serving the interests of students. I look forward to working closely with Sam to chart the Center’s future.”

In June, The Suder Foundation announced a new $10M commitment to the Center to seed the new growth plan, bringing the Foundation’s total investment in the Center to $17.5M. The Foundation invested $7.5M to establish the Center and fund the first five years of operations, as well as to scale the development of the First Scholars® Network model.

The First Scholars® model takes a holistic approach that elevates self, success, and significance for first-generation students by providing comprehensive, asset-based support and assistance to advance academic, personal, and professional outcomes. Importantly, the model also builds frameworks for institutions to scale and sustain systemic support and infrastructure for first-gen and all students.

To learn more about the Center’s 5-year strategic growth plan, visit: [https://firstgen.naspa.org](https://firstgen.naspa.org).

About The Center for First-generation Student Success
The Center for First-generation Student Success®, created in a partnership between NASPA and The Suder Foundation, exists to transform higher education to drive first-gen student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life. The Center provides data, tools, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities around the country to scale and sustain the essential work of serving first-generation students.

About The Suder Foundation
Since 2008, Eric and Deborah Suder have been working to transform higher education by serving the unique needs of first-generation college students. In 2009, the Suders launched a family foundation and created the First Scholars® Program, a holistic network of resources and support to dramatically improve graduation rates and unlock the success of FirstGen students across education, career, and life. Driven by a desire to reach more students and create lasting institutional change, in 2017 The Suder Foundation partnered with NASPA in a joint venture to establish The Center for First-generation Student Success and scale First Scholars nationally.

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