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TWENTY-FOUR INSTITUTIONS RECEIVE THE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE CELEBRATION GRANT TO COMMEMORATE ANNIVERSARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

For the third year in a row, campuses nationwide will celebrate first-generation college students on the anniversary of the 1965 Act that made way for low-income students to become the first in their families to earn college degrees

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OCTOBER 1, 2019) – On November 8, college campuses around the nation will hold rallies, panel discussions, listening sessions and more in recognition of their first-generation students. This date marks the 54th anniversary of the signing of the [1965 Higher Education Act](#) (HEA), which has helped millions of low-income students become the first members of their families to earn college degrees. The [Council for Opportunity for Education \(COE\)](#), in partnership with the [Center for First-generation Student Success](#) (“the Center”) an initiative of the [National Association of Student Personnel Administrators](#) (NASPA) and [The Suder Foundation](#), launched the inaugural [First-Generation College Celebration](#) in 2017. Both organizations work with higher education professionals to influence student access and success to and through higher education. This year, COE, the Center, and The Suder Foundation awarded \$10,000 in grant funds to support 24 institutions in enhancing their campus-wide celebrations.

“It’s exciting to see the term ‘first-generation student’ gain almost universal recognition on college campuses today,” said Maureen Hoyler, COE president. “By helping these institutions to expand and enhance their celebrations, we hope to further increase the awareness of first-generation students and their outstanding contributions to their campus communities and our country at-large.”

“November 8 is a significant date for the national narrative on first-generation student experiences and outcomes. We hope that through this celebration, campuses will recognize the systemic barriers in higher education for first-generation students and increase efforts to keep this population thriving,” said Sarah E. Whitley, Senior Director of the Center.

Since the first annual day of recognition, in 2017, colleges and universities have celebrated with countless approaches from speaker events and seminars to online contests and swag, growing **#CelebrateFirstGen** across social media. This year, more than 170 institutions applied for grant funds to supplement their 2019 celebrations. The grant recipients are summarized below:

1. Broward College (Fort Lauderdale, Florida)

Broward College's Inaugural First-Generation "I Can" Campaign will be a college-wide, day-long event to honor and celebrate first-generation students and staff. Local high school students, specifically from the institution's three Upward Bound high schools, will be invited to take part in the celebration. During the celebration, students and staff will have the opportunity to record "I Can" testimonies and share the accomplishments and challenges they have overcome.

2. Georgia Southern University (Savannah, Georgia)

Georgia Southern University's First-Generation College Celebration will be a week-long series of events that highlight and address challenges first-generation college students face and the resources they can utilize for support. The celebration will include professional development activities focused on dismantling barriers often placed in front of first-generation students. Lastly, a First-Generation Resource Fair will bring together more than 50 campus resources that support first-gen students.

3. Marquette University (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)

Marquette University will host a soft launch in September that will highlight a speaking presentation by Saul Flores, a Campus Speak, first-generation presenter. Marquette will also invite two Members of Congress to speak on campus about public policy surrounding first-generation college attendance.

4. McHenry County College (Crystal Lake, Illinois)

McHenry County College plans to use grant funds to provide food, refreshments, and supplies for its First-Generation Celebration Day event. Three \$75 bookstore gift cards will be given away as prizes.

5. North Central Missouri College (Trenton, Missouri)

North Central Missouri College will increase campus awareness by displaying "Why I'm First" posters in highly trafficked locations on campus; there will be a dedicated section within the library featuring first-gen authors; and first-generation, international students will share information about their home country, culture, and common experiences. Additionally, the institution will organize a community service project that celebrates both first-generation college students and TRIO programs.

6. Northwestern State University (Natchitoches, Louisiana)

Over three days, Northwestern State University's TRIO Student Support Services and First-Year Experience programs will host activities to celebrate their first-generation student population. They will host a reception and First-Generation forum with faculty/staff, and a competitive dodgeball tournament between first-generation faculty, staff and students, culminating in a tailgate at the home football game.

7. Purdue University – Fort Wayne (Fort Wayne, Indiana)

Purdue University – Fort Wayne will celebrate First-Generation College Celebration November 4-8, 2019. The week's events will include a first-generation student panel, essay readings from Vols. 1-3 of the student publication, *Every Student Has a Story: Personal Narratives from First-Generation Students*, and a campus-wide celebration recognizing first-generation students, graduates, faculty, and staff advocates.

8. Simpson College (Indianola, Iowa)

Simpson College plans to celebrate the First-Generation College Celebration by creating first-gen student videos, hosting a resource reception with T-shirt distribution and posters, and curating a list of campus resources for first-generation students.

9. South Mountain Community College (Phoenix, Arizona)

South Mountain Community College's library plans to set up a resource table with first-generation materials, along with scholarship information. The Veterans Department is also excited to participate and work with their students on how to effectively reach out to first-generation student veterans.

10. South Seattle College (Seattle, Washington)

South Seattle College's First-Generation College Celebration begin with the launch of a workshop series presented by the Worksource/Career Center to support first-generation students with employment strategies and career discernment. A drop-in, interactive resource fair will include: the campus Food Pantry, Emergency Funds, scholarship programs, TRIO, South Men of Color, workforce funding assistance, Student Life, Center for Equity Inclusion and Diversity, and United Way Benefits Hub.

11. Texas Tech University (Lubbock, Texas)

Texas Tech University's First-Generation College Celebration will be a week-long celebration focused on academics, the First Gen+ identity, and service learning. On November 8, 2019, the celebration will end with a luncheon.

12. The Ohio State University at Mansfield (Mansfield, Ohio)

The Ohio State University at Mansfield will create pins for students, faculty, and staff who are or were first-generation college students. Additionally, they will collaborate with the co-located community college, North Central State College, both campuses have a 50% representation of first-gen students and increase a sense of belonging and community.

13. Tidewater Community College – Norfolk (Norfolk, Virginia)

On November 7, 2019, Tidewater Community College-Norfolk will have their Fitness Coordinator conduct a presentation on healthy living for first-generation students. The college will also distribute two buttons: Proud First-Gen and First-Gen Supporters. At their First-Generation Luncheon, they hope to invite Congressman Bobby Scott to be a guest speaker.

14. Tusculum University (Greenville, Tennessee)

Tusculum University plans to invite its President James Hurley and House Representative Phil Roe to make a “1st Scholar’s Proclamation,” acknowledging their institution’s pride and celebration of first-generation students. Cabinet and board members will be present to pass out donuts and snacks to students. “1st Scholar” stickers will also be given to first-generation staff and faculty.

15. University of Washington Tacoma (Tacoma, Washington)

During their First-Generation College Celebration, the University of Washington Tacoma will unveil the “We Are First-Generation” story campaign. There they will feature the voices of first-generation college students, faculty, staff and alumni from UWT. All stories and photos will be framed and displayed on their campus.

16. University of California – San Francisco (San Francisco, California)

The University of California – San Francisco’s First-Generation Support Services will host a breakfast celebration where first-generation students can celebrate and network with faculty, staff, and peers. Part of their celebration will include a space for first-generation students to send a customized thank you card and photo to their mentor or whoever has supported them to get to where they are today.

17. University of Georgia (Athens, Georgia)

University of Georgia plans to have a roundtable with UGA Undergraduate and Graduate Students. The roundtable will bring together first-generation students for conversation and networking to connect and learn from each other. A UGA social media group, @FirstGenDocs, will host a virtual meeting on Twitter from the event.

18. University of Maine at Farmington (Farmington, Maine)

On November 8, 2019, the University of Maine at Farmington’s celebration begins with a formal proclamation and remarks by the UMF President. The student center will host a Speak-Out on the first-generation experience and a panel discussion on classism. Crafts, button-making, games, and free carnival food will be available during these festivities.

19. University of Michigan – Dearborn (Dearborn, Michigan)

The University of Michigan - Dearborn will host a “Connect with First-Gens and Recharge Your En-Gen” event to educate students about what being a first-generation student means. There will also be sessions promoting self-care, helping students learn about library resources, and a resource fair for students to connect with on-campus departments. Lastly, there will be First-Gen Celebration lunch with games, giveaways, and guest speakers.

20. University of Montevallo (Montevallo, Alabama)

A half-day conference will be the focus of the University of Montevallo's First-Generation College Celebration. The half-day conference will highlight UM faculty and student research on first-generation students and include a discussion on the history of the Higher Education Act, and a panel with first-generation faculty, staff, and students. A lunch will follow to facilitate conversation, and resulting action, to better understand the first-generation experience at the University of Montevallo and ways the university can better support first-generation students, faculty, and staff.

21. University of Nebraska – Lincoln (Lincoln, Nebraska)

The University of Nebraska – Lincoln will host a workshop, "Our Stories Matter," which will help first-generation students understand the power of their individual stories and how they can use these stories to help them achieve success.

22. Virginia Western Community College (Roanoke, Virginia)

Virginia Western Community College plans to encourage their students, faculty, and staff to "Find Their Voice" and share their first-gen stories as well as perform by singing, playing an instrument, or reciting poetry. This year, with the help of the grant, the institution will invite a DJ/karaoke host for the first time to increase students' inspiration and enthusiasm for the event.

23. Western Washington University (Bellingham, Washington)

Western Washington University will host a FYE Professional Boot Camp for faculty and staff on first-generation college students' experiences, research and best practices. A cross-generation dialogue is also planned for the First-Generation College Celebration week.

24. West Virginia University Institute of Technology (Beckley, West Virginia)

West Virginia University Institute of Technology will randomly draw a student's name from the week's sign-in sheets to receive a \$125 textbook scholarship.

To learn more about the First-Generation College Celebration, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/CelebrateFirstGen19>.

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. Through its numerous membership services, the Council works in conjunction with colleges, universities, and agencies that host Federal TRIO Programs that help approximately 828,000 low-income students and students with disabilities each year receive college access and retention services.

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