

Journal of First-generation Student Success

Submission Guidelines

The [*Journal of First-generation Student Success*](#) seeks to publish practice articles that are grounded in research and literature and, reciprocally, research articles that speak to practice. The editors seek to review manuscripts and publish articles that are innovative, imaginative, and forward thinking regarding the experiences and outcomes of first-generation college students and the approaches institutions of higher education are employing to serve, matriculate, and complete this population. Through the deep intersectionality of the first-generation identity, the large presence of first-generation students at institutions, and the necessary engagement of both the academic and student services areas for success, this journal offers many opportunities for cross disciplinary collaboration.

While traditional scholarship will be encouraged and accepted, articles that prioritize innovative solutions and advanced thought that disputes deficit-based conversations and propel an asset-based, evidence-driven national narrative, are welcome. Especially encouraged are manuscripts that blend conventional and unconventional scholarly approaches that challenge the traditional paradigm of research methods, analyses, and presentation of data. The journal will consider scholarship that disrupts the traditional first-generation success dialogue, prioritizes the removal of systemic higher education and institutional barriers to success, and encourages topics that encourage cross-community and cross-institutional collaborations for sustained change.

The Journal of First-generation Student Success will feature the following areas of interest:

First-generation Identity and Intersectionality: Manuscripts submitted for review in this area may include qualitative and quantitative manuscripts that consider advanced thought through the lenses of theory, research, and/or practice. The manuscripts should be methodologically sound with a clearly defined section detailing how the research relates to approaches institutions are using to define the first-generation identity, how students are exploring



their own identity within the college context, how intersectionality with other identities and systems of oppression shape both the student experience, and how institutions use identity to choose how to serve first-generation students. Priority will be given to submissions where findings can be used in the practice of administrators at all levels, faculty, and students. The manuscripts should provide deep insight into the complexities of the first-generation identity, advance a new narrative which differs from ones where intersectional identities are conflated, and illuminates how student identity development shapes college-going decision-making, experiences, and outcomes. Literature reviews and essays that connect current issues with practice, propose creative models for advancing first-generation student outcomes, or discuss innovative uses of theory are welcome.

Innovative & Evidence-based Practice: Manuscripts submitted for review in this area may include qualitative and quantitative manuscripts that clearly provide a theory-research-practice connection. The manuscripts should be methodologically sound with a clearly defined practice section in which the author(s) share how the research presents innovative approaches to practice that result in strengthened first-generation identity development, scales offerings to larger numbers of students, and chronicles how specific practices tailored to the first-generation identity result in the persistence, completion, or specific academic or co-curricular success outcomes. Evidence of innovation must go beyond simple measures of satisfaction and, instead, illuminate effectiveness and usefulness. Manuscripts should clearly present how the findings can be used in the practice of administrators, faculty, and students. The manuscripts should clearly consider first-generation college students, with care given to the intersection of other identities, as well as the role institutional characteristics (e.g., size, type, geography, selectivity, mission) in advancing practice. Literature reviews and essays that connect current issues with practice, propose creative models for advancing first-generation student outcomes, or discuss innovative uses of theory will be accepted.

Demonstrated Advances in Student Outcomes: Manuscripts submitted for review in this area of emphasis should present theory originating or



supported research with demonstrated evidence of effective practices that advance first-generation student outcomes. While definitions of success vary, understanding needs, developing processes, and advancing outcomes in the areas of belonging, academic performance, co-curricular engagement, help-seeking behaviors, time to degree, internship and career placement, persistence, and completion will take priority. The manuscripts should be methodologically sound with a clearly defined section detailing how the research may be translated to other settings and replicated. Manuscripts should detail how identities that intersect with first-generation, the institutional context, and specific academic disciplines or co-curricular experiences shaped that advancement of outcomes. Connections to and implications for how these practices, and resulting improved outcomes, shape institutional needs assessments, priorities, policies, and procedures. We encourage manuscripts with innovation, creativity, and bold thought that challenge readers beyond the current typical offerings for advancing first-generation efforts.

Audience

The NASPA membership represents a broad constituency of entry-level, intermediate-level, and senior-level professionals who are practitioners, scholars, policy makers, faculty, and executive leaders, among others. These educators have responsibility for a wide variety of institutional responsibilities. JFGSS seeks to publish articles that speak to student affairs educators across this broad range of levels and experiences. While the Co-Editors recognize that published articles must be relevant and useful to practitioners, JFGSS also serves faculty, researchers, scholars, and academic leaders. Not all articles will speak to all constituencies all the time. But the Co-Editors are committed to publishing an array of articles that, at some point, will speak to all educators who work in both the academic and student affairs areas of higher education.

Types of Manuscripts

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Theoretical Manuscripts are papers in which the "authors draw on existing research literature to advance theory" (American Psychological Association, 2010, p. 10) in relation to first-generation student success. Similar in structure and form to review manuscripts (see below), theoretical manuscripts are different in that they rarely present data or findings. Theoretical manuscripts may be a review and critiques of existing theories or research findings; extension of existing literature; theoretical critique of practice; or innovative and forward-thinking expositions of current or future state(s) of student affairs and higher education as applicable to first-generation students.

Review Manuscripts "are critical evaluations of material that has already been published" (APA, 2001, p. 9). These manuscripts can be meta-analyses of qualitative or quantitative research, policy analysis, or compilations of existing theories or models in first-generation student success practice. Review manuscripts often include a) issue being considered, b) summary of previous research and literature, c) identification of relationships, "contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies" (p. 7), and d) implications for practice, policy, and next steps. Review manuscripts speak to practice with a first-generation student focus.

Empirical Research Articles are "reports of original research" (APA, 2010, p. 10). The standard form for empirical research articles is introduction, method, results, and discussion but authors may adapt that form to fit the parameters of their research method. Empirical research manuscripts submitted to JFGSS can include both qualitative and quantitative, ethnography, grounded theory, mixed method, narrative inquiry, and critical inquiry. They must stress the link between research and practice. Several ways authors can achieve this is by addressing the underlying issues or problem related to practice centering on first-generation students that inspired the research; reveal the methodology (i.e., name and describe the



specific methodology used) and discuss its relevance to the first-generation student success field; and/or offer a full discussion of results, implications, and conclusions that relates to practice in student affairs and higher education with a first-generation student lens. Empirical articles include case studies, methodological and theory driven research.

Notes from the Field provides an opportunity for practitioners and emerging scholars to share their insights from the context in which they work, and to reflect critically on their own practice in an academic space where their voices may be considered underrepresented. Notes include shorter, practitioner-focused articles (5,000 words maximum), discussion papers, reflections on personal experience in the field, presentation of new data, theoretical models or concepts, or reflections on trending developments that have implications for the first-generation student experience. As with our articles, 'Notes from the Field' are peer-reviewed and need to meet the same writing and referencing standards as articles.

**See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2019), 7th edition, for further discussion of these manuscript types.*

The Editorial Review Process and Criteria

Manuscripts under review by JFGSS should not be under consideration by other journals.

This publication will use a closed review process; this language reflects a shift to employ inclusive language rather and move away from the industry term "blind review." Any identification of authorship must be removed prior to submitting the manuscript. To assure closed review, *all* identifiers must be removed: names on the cover page, identification embedded in the electronic document properties, references to institutional affiliations, and citations that identify some or all of the authors. The cover page must include only the title of the manuscript. Manuscripts with obvious and/or subtle identifiers will be returned to the author for redaction prior to beginning the review process.

Review criteria: Manuscripts will be reviewed by up to three JFGSS Editorial Board members. The criteria all relate to the higher education field, with an emphasis on first-generation topics and success, and include:



- Exceptional, creative, and relevant application to the wide range of thinking, practices, and perspectives in higher education;
- Thorough and sound discussion of the practice, theory, issue, policy, and/or topic;
- Inclusion of far reaching, relevant, and insightful implications and breakthroughs that go beyond the relevance of the institution(s) under study;
- Regarding research manuscript should include:
 - accurate and appropriate description of the methodology,
 - method aligned with and suitable for the focus of the study
 - findings clearly and skillfully communicated
 - implications for practice and/or theory clearly communicated, and
 - quality measures obviously indicated and discussed;
- Evidence of high-quality, readable, and rigorous writing (e.g., coherent, cohesive, cogent);
- Presence of practice implications in theoretical or research-based manuscripts and theoretical implications in practice-based manuscripts;
- Rigorous treatment of the ways the theory, research, and/or practice under discussion can make a difference in the field;
- Presence of a timely, significant, and appropriate topic;
- Evidence of a profound and meaningful level of analysis (theoretical or practical) addressing the concerns, interests, and needs of higher education professionals;
- Apparent contribution to current knowledge, literature, scholarship, theory, and practice; and
- Research, theory, or practice findings connected to larger areas of concern (e.g., policy, decision making, leadership, identity development, innovative practice).

Technical Requirements

- Manuscripts must be submitted in .doc or .docx format.
- **Length:** No more than 5000 words (Notes from the Field), 8000 words (all other article types) maximum, inclusive cover page, tables, figure captions, references, appendices, and all materials. The length of manuscripts is



limited to 8000 words because the editors are committed to increasing the accessibility of the journal to a wide range of authors. The number of words and pages the Journal can publish are limited by a number of factors related to cost and publication limits. Longer articles decrease the accessibility of the journal to as wide a range of authors as possible.

- **Format:** American Psychological Association Style, 7th Edition.
- **Spacing and Fonts:** Double-spaced, including references, block quotes, tables, and figures, consistently applied throughout the manuscript. Standard 12-point font throughout.
- **Abstract:** 100 words or less
- **Qualitative Manuscripts:** Positionality statement which locate authors within systems of equity and inclusion.
- **Figures:** All figures, tables, and charts must be submitted as a PDF document or EPS or uncompressed Tiff (600 dpi) file in black and white or grey tones.
- **Language:** English or with translations to English included. Writing free of prejudiced, biased or disrespectful language.
- **Voice:** Active voice and research findings reported in past tense.
- **Professional Preparation:** Manuscripts exceeding the length limits or requiring additional proofreading, formatting, and/or reference checks will be returned to the author(s) for further editing.
- **Submission:** All manuscripts must be submitted through http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/naspa_jfgss

Editorial Review Process

1. Upon receipt, the Editorial Assistant will briefly review the manuscript to ensure that it meets the above minimum requirements.
2. A unique number will be assigned to the manuscript to enable the closed review process. Editorial Board members are also assigned a number to assure the integrity of the closed review process.
3. Manuscript submission and revising, communication, and the review process are conducted online through the *JFGSS* website. When the manuscript is received, an automatically generated acknowledgement email is sent to the first author. It is the first author's responsibility to forward these communications to other authors.



4. The manuscript is assigned for review based on areas of professional and research expertise. The first review is expected to be completed in four weeks but may take longer.
5. Editorial board members complete their reviews online. Upon completion, these reviews are available through the *JFGSS* website for authors to access.
6. At the completion of the review, each reviewer makes one of the following recommendations: Not to Accept, Major Revisions Required, Accept Pending Minor Revisions, or Accept. The Co-Editors and/or appropriate Associate Editor examine the reviews and render a final decision. The first author is sent an email outlining that decision with links to a decision letter from the co-Editors and instructions on how to access the reviews.
 - *Not to Accept/Not Accepted After Initial Review:* The manuscript does not meet one or more of the criteria in regard to the scope and direction for publication in *JFGSS*.
 - *Major Revisions Required:* The manuscript has potential for publication, but must be revised before publication can be considered. The author is to address the editorial comments and make appropriate changes within one month. Authors will submit a revised draft for a second round of editorial review. The second review is expected to be completed in 6 weeks but may take longer. The resubmission and second review does not guarantee acceptance. A third revision is often required.
 - *Accept Pending Minor Revisions:* The manuscript is considered worthy of publication pending the successful completion of minor revisions. Authors are requested to make the revisions and return the revised manuscript within one month. The Editorial Assistant and Executive Editor review the final manuscript submitted to ensure that the suggestions have been appropriately addressed.
 - *Accept:* The manuscript is considered appropriate and timely for *JFGSS*. An email is sent to the author confirming its acceptance.



7. After a revision from the author is accepted, the final manuscript is forwarded to a Copy Editor who edits the manuscript. The Copy Editor will contact the author, when necessary, about changes.
8. The Co-Editors work with the authors and publisher to compile the issue.

JFGSS is available online three times each calendar year, and is included with NASPA membership.

Exceptions to any of the above instructions should be discussed with the [Co-Editors](#) prior to submission. Questions about the submission and review process can be directed to the [Editorial Assistant](#).

