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**COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION, CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT
SUCCESS ANNOUNCE 4TH ANNUAL FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE CELEBRATION FOR
NOVEMBER 8TH**

1965 Act made way for low-income, first-generation students to break chain of poverty, become first in their families to earn college degree

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 8, 2020) – Stemming from the continued success, the [Council for Opportunity for Education \(COE\)](#), in partnership with the [Center for First-generation Student Success](#), an initiative of [NASPA](#) and The Suder Foundation, is pleased to announce the continuation of the [First-Generation College Celebration](#) on November 8, 2020. This date marks the 55th anniversary of the signing of the [1965 Higher Education Act](#) (HEA), which has helped millions of first-generation, low-income/under-resources students persist to degree completion.

On November 8, college campuses around the nation are asked to hold celebration including rallies, panel discussions, listening sessions, and more in recognition of their first-generation students. Across social platforms, institutions can use **#CelebrateFirstGen** to share their events and join in conversations with colleagues and students. With the 2020 national celebration falling on a Sunday, this presents an excellent opportunity to consider partnerships with *Parents and Family Offices*, and engage in a weeklong celebration beginning with a kick-off event on Sunday and carrying through Veterans Day; another collaboration opportunity -- *Student Veterans Services*.

"Academic disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic place the futures of many first-generation students in a precarious state," said Maureen Hoyler, president of the Council for Opportunity in Education. "However, in 2020, resilient campuses and communities are overcoming challenges and finding renewed strength each day. Now more than ever it's critical we use this celebration to recommit to supporting, nurturing and encouraging the outstanding potential that exists within so many first-generation students."

In the months leading to November 8, both COE and the Center will release resources for planning celebrations and share success stories from campuses who participated in previous years. In addition to celebrating first-generation students, this event is intended to bring campus and community awareness to the prevalence of first-generation students currently enrolled in higher education and the outstanding contributions these students are making to society. Institutions are encouraged to also recognize first-generation faculty and staff as well as those who serve as outstanding advocates for the first-generation community.

"We continue to be astounded by the thoughtful, creative, and empowering celebrations we are seeing from institutions across the country. National First-Generation College Celebration Day begins and extends important conversations regarding the contributions of first-generation students while providing an asset-based environment where students can foster a sense of belonging and thrive." said Sarah E. Whitley, Ph.D., senior director, Center for First-generation Student Success.

To share plans for your 2020 celebration, email kimberly.jones@coenet.org, complete this [short form](#) or tag @COETalk and @FirstgenCenter and use #CelebrateFirstGen across social media platforms.

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.

The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation, serves as the premier source of evidence-based practice, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community while advancing innovation and advocacy for the success of first-generation college students.