



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Center for First-generation Student Success announces new class to the First Scholars Network**

*Seventy-six new institutions selected based on demonstrated commitment to improving experiences and advancing success for first-generation college students*

**WASHINGTON, DC (June 2, 2023)** - The [Center for First-generation Student Success](#), an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation, today announced the selection of seventy-six (76) institutions of higher education to the new class of the First Scholars Network. These colleges and universities were chosen based upon their demonstrated commitment to improving experiences and advancing success for first-generation college students.

“The Center is pleased to welcome our newest class into the First Scholars Network,” said Dr. Sarah E. Whitley, vice president with the Center for First-generation Student Success. “Through the application process, it was evident that these higher education institutions are not only taking steps to serve first-generation students, but are prepared to make a long-term commitment and employ strategies that foster an environment of success for this important population.”

Powered by the Center for First-generation Student Success, the First Scholars Network is a four-phase approach that allows institutions of higher education to advance student success through establishing communities of practice, gaining knowledge of resources, and establishing peer networks. More than 350 institutions of higher education have entered the Network, representing 49 states and the District of Columbia. The Center recently announced a commitment to serving over 700 institutions through the Network in the next five years.

“The Center is delighted to welcome community colleges from The College System of Tennessee, a collection of 13 institutions all across the state, as part of the First Scholars Network,” said Dr. Stephanie Bannister, assistant vice president at the Center for First-generation Student Success. “This is the first time we’ve admitted a statewide system into the Network, and we hope it becomes a template for other states to follow in the future.”

Institutions must apply to join the First Scholars Network as a First Scholars Network Member. During the first year of active engagement in the First Scholars Network, Network Member institutions commit to building a foundational understanding of first-generation student success through participating in monthly workshops, networking and professional development opportunities, sharing knowledge and resources, and contributing to a peer community. An institution may advance to the next phase, First-gen Forward, upon successful completion of the Network Member requirements.

First Scholars is the third phase of the First Scholars Network and serves as the Center’s customized approach to intentional institutional transformation in an effort to advance student success. The ultimate goal for Network Member institutions is to progress through the phases and achieve First Scholars Champion Campus status.

All new Network Members participated in the First Scholars Network Virtual Kickoff on June 2, 2023. A full listing of the new 2023-24 First Scholars Network Members is below.

“Being named as a First Scholars Network Member is an exciting opportunity for these institutions to join a dedicated community of professionals prepared to share evidence-based practices and resources, troubleshoot challenges, generate knowledge, and continue to advance the success of first-generation students across the country,” said Dr. Kevin Kruger, president and CEO of NASPA. “We are excited to see a groundswell of activity from the Class of 2023 Network Members, and anticipate seeing each of them working hard to move the needle forward on first-generation student success.”

The Center recognized the following institutions in the 2023-24 class of the First Scholars Network (institutions listed alphabetically):

- Adams State University
- Alverno College
- Assumption University
- Avila University
- Baldwin Wallace University
- Bemidji State University
- Berklee College of Music
- Calvin University
- Central Michigan University
- Chattanooga State Community College \*
- Cleveland State Community College \*
- Columbia State Community College \*
- Delgado Community College
- Dyersburg State Community College \*
- Franciscan University of Steubenville
- Hamilton College
- Indiana University Kokomo
- Iowa State University
- Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo
- Jackson State Community College \*
- Jackson State University
- Jacksonville State University
- Lawrence University
- Lewis-Clark State College
- Longwood University
- Massachusetts College of Art and Design
- Montana State University
- Montclair State University
- Motlow State Community College \*

- Nashville State Community College \*
- New York Institute of Technology
- Northeast State Community College \*
- Northwest Technical College
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Pellissippi State Community College \*
- Queens University of Charlotte
- Radford University
- Ramapo College of New Jersey
- Rhode Island College
- Roane State Community College \*
- Roosevelt University
- Saint Mary's College
- Sam Houston State University
- Southeast Technical College
- Southern Connecticut State University
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
- South New Hampshire University
- Southwest Tennessee Community College \*
- St. Petersburg College
- Temple University
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
- The College of New Jersey
- The Universities at Shady Grove
- The University of Oklahoma
- The University of Texas-Arlington
- Towson University
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Central Arkansas
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs
- University of Delaware
- University of Houston-Clear Lake
- University of Minnesota-Rochester
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- University of North Texas at Dallas
- University of Sioux Falls
- University of South Carolina Upstate
- University of the Incarnate Word
- University of Wisconsin-Superior
- Utah Tech University
- Virginia State University
- Volunteer State Community College \*
- Walters State Community College \*
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Western Carolina University
- Western Kentucky University

*\* indicates schools from The College System of Tennessee*

To learn more about the First Scholars Network and the Center for First-generation Student Success, visit [firstgen.naspa.org](http://firstgen.naspa.org).

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## **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS**

The Center is transforming higher education to drive first-generation student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life. We provide data, training, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities around the country to scale and sustain the important work of serving first-generation students. 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.

### **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 first-generation 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 reimagine First Scholars for scalable impact.