



Raising Awareness

Engagement in awareness endeavors can be directed at a number of campus stakeholders such as leadership, administrators, or students and student groups. Many awareness campaigns are student-driven to highlight a number of societal issues such as homelessness, climate change or #BlackLivesMatter and take the form of public events like food drives, marches, or speakers. Many of these activities are considered grassroots efforts because they are initiated organically by individuals.

Raising awareness about first-generation students on campus can take many forms. Higher education professionals may

- **Survey** faculty and staff to determine if they are willing to share their first-generation identity. If so, provide buttons, stickers, or other items to display in their office to let first-gen students know they share a common experience.
- **Invite** interested faculty and staff to an informal meeting to identify those who may be drawn to greater engagement, such as meeting as a learning community, offering to mentor first-generation students, or through other ideas that may arise at the meeting.
- **Curate** a directory of first-generation faculty and staff who are interested in meeting with students to provide guidance or troubleshoot issues. Including a list of available times and office locations and posting it on first-generation program websites can assist first-generation students in locating faculty or staff they may feel more comfortable speaking with when seeking advice.
- **Participate** in the [First-generation College Celebration](#) on November 8 each year. This national awareness campaign is celebrated by higher education institutions across the country and takes on many forms such as invited speakers, panel discussions, hosted lunch and learn events, kicked off of mentoring or other programs, information booths with first-gen swag distribution, videos featuring first-generation students on websites, and more. Activities have ranged from single events on November 8 to week-long celebrations with a variety of experiences targeting first-generation students, faculty and staff, and family members or others in students' support networks.

- **Work** with student organizations to create campaigns showcasing the talents of first-generation students through special events such as
 - Art exhibits
 - Talent shows
 - Research poster sessions
 - Speaker or dialogue series

These activities highlight first-generation students from an asset-based perspective and can encourage campus communities to better understand the support that can help this growing student population thrive.