



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Suder Foundation Makes New \$10M Investment  
to Drive Transformational Change for First-Generation Students**

*Investment in Center for First-generation Student Success builds on existing financial commitment,  
seeds new growth phase to expand impact*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The Suder Foundation today announced a new \$10 million investment that will drive transformational change for first-generation students at higher education institutions across the nation. The gift will go to the Center for First-generation Student Success®, building upon the Foundation’s existing financial commitment and seeding a five-year growth phase for the Center to raise additional funds, reach scale and serve more first-gen college students around the country.

Created in a partnership between NASPA and The Suder Foundation in 2017, the Center provides data, tools, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities to drive transformational change for first-gen students.

“We believe in the lifelong potential of first-gen college students, and we believe in the power of higher education institutions to help create transformational change to better serve their needs,” said Eric Suder, founder and chair of The Suder Foundation. “This investment reaffirms our commitment to the vision and leadership of the Center and NASPA to significantly expand their impact to benefit more first-generation students.”

The new \$10M commitment raises The Suder Foundation’s total investment in the Center to \$17.5M. The Foundation invested \$7.5M to establish the Center and fund the first five years of operations, as well as to scale the development of the First Scholars® Network model.

The First Scholars® model takes a holistic approach that elevates self, success, and significance for first-generation students by providing comprehensive, asset-based support and assistance to advance academic, personal, and professional outcomes. Importantly, the model also builds frameworks for institutions to scale and sustain systemic support and infrastructure for first-gen and all students. To date, through First Scholars the Center has partnered with 270+ higher education institutions serving 1.5M+ undergraduate students, including 500K+ first-gen students.

Over the next five years, the Center will grow the First Scholars Network to partner with 750 colleges and universities that collectively serve nearly 2M first-gen students and additionally impact 6.4M of all students. The goal is to advance first-gen graduation rates by 10-15 percent at participating institutions.

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“The Center’s work has never been more urgent or needed. Today, nearly five million undergraduate students identify as first-gen, and that population will continue to grow rapidly in the years ahead,” said Deborah Suder, co-founder of The Suder Foundation. “Addressing first-gen success has intergenerational impact, as college completion is a key predictor of education, workforce and life success for graduates and their families.”

The Foundation’s announcement was made during the 2022 NASPA First-generation Student Success Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, which also served as a celebration to mark the Center’s fifth anniversary.

“As we reflect on the successful impact of the Center’s first five years, we are deeply grateful to Eric and Deb Suder for their continued partnership and generosity,” said Dr. Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA. “The Center has helped drive transformational change across higher education for first-generation students, and we’re excited to play an even larger role in the coming years.”

The Suder Foundation’s new investment will support the Center across four strategic priorities:

- **Grow the First Scholars Network** by codifying the delivery model, evolving data collection and analysis efforts, and leading continuous improvement efforts across the First Scholars initiative.
- **Influence the broader field** by developing and promoting original research; acting as a catalyst, thought leader, and convener for first-gen issues; and building engaged communities that foster and celebrate first-gen success.
- **Build internal capacity** by adding key staff positions, developing internal systems to support growth, and increasing fundraising capacity to sustain the work over time.
- **Transition to a long-term governance** model that enable the Center to thrive for decades to come.

To learn more about the Center’s 5-year strategic growth plan, visit: <https://firstgen.naspa.org>

### **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 FirstGen 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 scale First Scholars nationally.

### **About The Center for First-generation Student Success**

The Center for First-generation Student Success®, created in a partnership between NASPA and The Suder Foundation, exists to transform higher education to drive first-gen student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life. The Center provides data, tools, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities around the country to scale and sustain the essential work of serving first-generation students.

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