First Generation Faculty Initiative

Fall 2015 Update

Colorado State University First Generation Website

Coming October 2015, the First Generation Website for the campus community. This website features the history of the first generation initiatives, stories and resources at Colorado State University. This new site is a resource to guide faculty and staff in assisting first generation learners at CSU. The webpage is designed to guide users through university programs for assistance and where to garner support for first generation learners. Mid October the site can be viewed at https://www.colostate.edu/first generation

First Generation Awards 30th Anniversary Celebration

The year 2015 marked the 30th Anniversary of the First Generation Award (FGA) at Colorado State University. Beginning in 1979 the first generation concept was first envisioned by members from the Association of Special Programs in Region Eight (ASPIRE). By 1980, federal legislation incorporated the term first generation student usage in the Higher Education ACT. Three short years later in 1983 the first generation student experience was discussed by the minority task force which included the Office of Admission, advocacy offices (currently cultural centers), and TRiO programs. By the end of 1983 the First Generation Award was established by the State Board of Agriculture at Colorado State University, Fort Lewis College, and the University of Southern Colorado. Over the past 30 years the award has ben refined, and has expanded to include awardees in each of the eight colleges at CSU.

On April 28, 2015 the campus celebrated the momentous First Generation Award 30th anniversary. Connie Jaime-Lujan, first generation alumni award recipient, Assistant Director for University Access and Success and Co-coordinator for the Community for Excellence (C4E) and Isiah Wafford, computer science major, 2015 FGA recipient were the key note speakers at the welcome. Connie’s remarks recognized the influence of several inspirational people who assisted her in navigating the college process. She, in turn, has empowered others in the same way. The student speaker, Isiah shared that one of his greatest challenges, as a first generation student, was making the right connections and finding resources to be successful. Being a first generation award recipient, the program assisted him in making the right connections with the computer science department and other campus resources.

At the closing reception, Gene Petrone’s, previous State Board of Agriculture member, was recognized as a key influencer in creating the first generation award. In his conversation with Barb Musslewhite, Director Opportunity Scholar Programs, Center for Advising and Student Achievement he was moved by the impact that the first generation award has made on countless lives over the years. The personal story of first generation alumna, non-traditional student and single mother Valerie Gallego’s higher education journey, sharing her daughter Berna’s letter of joining her mother at college deeply touched the audience. Their story spoke of the importance of education in broadening and enriching their lives. Other’s who spoke expressed the impact the FGA has had in influencing them, their families and our community over the past 30 years. In addition, numerous comments was received from FGA alumni and others on the SOURCE’s Facebook video (http://source.colostate.edu/csu-birthplace-of-first-generation-scholarships/) highlighting the award.

In the last X year, first generation faculty are actively engaged in connecting and interacting with first generation students. Introducing themselves as first generation in classes, on their syllabi, using as a complimentary close in emails and other correspondence, as well as hosting luncheons and events for students. Currently, there are many FGA alumni now working in the educational pipeline with TRiO, Strive PREP and programs in community colleges and universities, scholarship programs, and teaching in schools. Over a dozen FGA alumni currently work at CSU, serving as a guides and sharing resource for students who want further information and assistance. The FGA has helped launch conversations around campus with faculty and allies to help them learn about the experience of educational pioneers and to help create a more inclusive environment for all students.
First Generation Research Group

As a land grant institution, Colorado State University is committed to educational access for first generation students in college (neither parent has a bachelor’s degree). The First Generation Research Group seeks to provide a research basis for CSU programs and strategies aimed at promoting entry, persistence, learning, and graduation for first generation students. The topics of the research vary widely, from the numbers and success rates of students to the information and predispositions that are associated with graduation success to the college and university environments and programs that produce positive student success outcomes. The members identify and collect research data to be shared with the group, prompting discussion of implications for institutional or program strategy. Some of the research insights identified by the group have been shared with campus audiences, including a session presented as a part of the 30th Year Celebration of the First Generation Award, a meeting of the Proactive Advising Coalition, and a session at the Fall Forum. Staff and faculty who are actively collecting or conducting research on first generation students and institutional strategies for serving first generation students are welcome to join the group, and can express their interest by contacting Paul Thayer at paul.thayer@colostate.edu.

Education Abroad: Make it Happen!

First Generation Faculty Initiative Upcoming Meeting

Education Abroad is a great experience for all students, broadening their educational experience and enhancing the pursuit of their career. Studies show that students who participate in an Education Abroad experience graduate sooner than those who do not undertake an international experience. About 18% of the CSU graduating class will have studied abroad for credit and about 25% will have had an international experience. However, of these students who undertake international opportunities, only 15% are Pell eligible, 17% are First Generation, and 36% are male students. Students can gain benefits like learning another language, resiliency, cultural competency, patience, self-confidence, and learning critical skills needed to succeed in a global society and economy. Join the First Generation Faculty Initiative meeting to gather information on financial resources and funding opportunities, next steps, and support services on November 4, 2015 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the LSC North Ballroom. A panel of students who have had an international experience will share what they did, how they benefited, and give you information on how you can influence students to make it happen! Mark your calendars to attend!

College of Health & Human Sciences

First Generation Website

Dale DeVoe, assistant dean for academic programs in the College of Health & Human Sciences, created the First Generation webpage spring 2014 as a resource for faculty, staff and students. The college values building a first generation community amongst and between faculty, staff and students. Recognizing the increasing numbers of the first generation population the college is committed to building a sense of community and raising awareness of their unique experiences. The CHHS was the first to recognize first generations students at commencement and on their website. Spring 2014 the Colleges of Agriculture, Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences also recognized graduating students at graduation.

Cluster Hire in the School of Education

The College of Education’s cluster hire focuses on the contribution of four new faculty’s members to diversity, equity and inclusion through their research, teaching and outreach. The four new faculty members are: Vincent Basile and Daniel Birmingham, assistant professors in STEM education; Jessica Gonzalez, assistant professor in counseling and career development; and Susana Muñoz, assistant professor in higher education leadership. In The Source article, George Kamberelis, director of the School of Education, addressing the cluster hire states “The primary benefit of a such an approach is to raise the stature of research and teaching in many different sub-disciplines of education, while also cultivating a shared commitment to having diversity, equity and inclusion be a core value of everything we do in the School of Education.”

Vincent Basile’s experience as a first generation student as being, “At first it meant shame until I understood what it was that I was accomplishing. Now it means pride – pride not only in my success, but also pride in who I am and where I come from.” Susana Muñoz, reflection is “I also relate my first generation experiences to Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderland theory (1998), which states that Chicanas often have to straddle two worlds but often feel like they are part of none of those worlds. While I know straddling two cultures (or multiple cultures) can feel isolating and minimizing, I found my sense of familia, and “wholeness” among my fellow Chicanas/Latinas, who provided hermanidad and community.”