FIRST GENERATION FACULTY INITIATIVE UPDATE

Our mission is to identify and engage faculty who are first generation college graduates in supporting the retention of first generation students at Colorado State University.

Welcome Back!

The past academic year was filled with meaningful First Generation Faculty Initiative endeavors. This update highlights our faculty, our receptions, and our students’ experiences.

Save the Date

Paul Thayer Retirement Celebration!

Friday, May 6 3:30-5PM
Cherokee Park Ballroom, LSC

Register:
advancing.colostate.edu/
ThayerCelebration2016

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First Generation Awards Banquet:

Each year the First Generation Awards (FGA) Recognition Celebration highlights several FGA scholars who speak of their personal journey of challenge and triumph to achieve a college degree. Their stories describe the first generation challenge of navigating unchartered waters, and are profoundly inspirational to fellow FGA Scholars and the CSU faculty and staff who support the students and program. Most of the audience is reduced to tears, typically led by Barb Musslewhite, who had been a mentor and champion of the First Generation Award for over 25 years.

This year’s celebration was particularly special, as President Tony Frank lauded the tireless work of Paul Thayer and Barb Musslewhite in support of first generation students. These efforts were documented in a State of Colorado Proclamation from Governor John Hickenlooper. Some highlights:

-Board of Governors established First Generation Scholarship Awards in 1983; awards began in 1984-85 academic year
-CSU was the first university in the country to create such an award, which has become a national model
-CSU has awarded more than 2,242 First Generation Award Scholarships with 1,378 graduating since 1984
-Recognizing the importance of role modeling and mentoring, the First Generation Faculty Initiative was created in 2007 to better connect first generation students and first generation faculty
-March 1 proclaimed by Governor Hickenlooper, forever after, as FIRST GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS DAY

The evening wrapped up with a tribute to Barb, who is retiring this Spring, with the announcement of the First Generation Alumni Scholarship renamed after Barb Musslewhite.
First Generation Faculty Initiative Feature: Ian Orme

University Distinguished Professor Ian Orme grew up in Buckinghamshire, England – just 30 miles outside of London. When reflecting on college as a possibility early in life, Ian states that London might as well been 300 miles away. Growing up as a first generation student, Ian did not set out to become a world-renowned tuberculosis researcher or Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, but that is exactly what he has become—and more!

Ian has always excelled at sports, including track and rugby. But it was soccer that allowed him to travel outside of his hometown and see what the world had in store for him. Ian tried out for London’s premiere team for nearly three month’s but did not make the final cut. Without any other prospects, Ian found work at a children’s hospital as a janitor and soon after moved up to an assignment as junior lab technician. Here, he found his niche and continued to work in the hospital while enrolling in night school to be a medical technician. A mentor at the hospital encouraged him to go to the University of London - Chelsea College. With hard work and dedication Ian became the first person to receive a three-year Honour’s degree.

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Education Abroad: Making It Happen!

The First Generation Faculty Initiative (FGFI) hosted its inaugural Education Abroad informational session for first generation students and the CSU Community on Wednesday, November 4th. Over 100 students, staff and faculty gathered to gain information and awareness on education abroad and Semester at Sea opportunities. Also in attendance were representatives from Student Financial Services, the Registrar’s Office, Office of International Programs and the Larimer County Passport Office, who were available throughout the evening to provide specific information and address student questions. A panel consisting of CSU students, faculty and staff shared their insights regarding their educational abroad experiences. The panel was followed by interactive round table discussions led by FGFI committee members who engaged in meaningful conversations about education abroad experiences, opportunities, potential obstacles and how to overcome barriers.

What is the importance of encouraging First Generation students to participate in Education Abroad? Studies show students engaged in academic activities considered as high impact have significantly higher success rates than students who do not participate in such experiences. This is particularly true for first generation, low income, and diverse students. Yet, only about 18% of CSU students study abroad, and of these students, only 17% are First Generation.

The FGFI, in continued collaboration with the Office of International Programs, plans to host additional informational and motivational sessions. In a “Get Your Passport Tonight” program planned for the Fall of 2016, students can apply and take their passport photos on location. The acquisition of a passport is a critical step in the Education Abroad process, and providing concrete steps to accomplish this task creates real momentum in “Making It Happen!” The FGFI looks forward to increasing global awareness and overall success of First Generation students at Colorado State University.
First Generation Faculty Initiative Lunches

The First Generation Faculty Initiative (FGFI) Committee is excited to host a series of lunches during the Spring 2016 semester. The goal of the lunches is to share food and stories, build community, and discuss strategies for student support. Lunch guests are first generation faculty interested in learning about ways to support first generation students in the classroom and departments.

Agenda
✦ Overview of the FGFI: a little history and purpose
✦ Sharing stories: personal stories about our paths to and through college, the challenges, support, detours and triumphs
✦ Some data- sample of information from handout on first generation students at CSU:
  • More than 1 in 4 students is first generation
  • Average graduation gap for first generation students is 9.5 percentage points
  • Higher levels of self-authorship, resilience, and desire to contribute to society can be harnessed for positive impact in the collegiate learning environment; Pizzicato (2003)
✦ Discussion of ideas to engage first generation students, and take away ideas: For example, ‘commencement remarks regarding first generation students’

A big thank you to Dining Services for their generous donation of meals allowing for these conversations to take place on February 25 at the Durrell Center, and April 19 and 22 at Academic Village dining center.

HERE’S TO A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE 2015-16 ACADEMIC YEAR!