



3RD ANNUAL **FIRST-GENERATION** SYMPOSIUM

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE:
FIRST-GENERATION IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020

HOSTED BY ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S FIRST-GENERATION TASK FORCE

SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020

8:00 AM—REGISTRATION

Eynon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

9:00 AM—WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Eynon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

The official symposium welcome will be delivered by co-chairs of Rowan University's First-Generation Task Force, Dr. Penny McPherson-Myers, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Amy Ruymann, Director of University Advising Services, and Ashley Bermudez, a senior Law & Justice major at Rowan University.

The opening remarks will be delivered by Dr. Ali Houshmand, Rowan University President.

9:45 AM TO 10:45 AM—BREAKOUT SESSION #1

The breakout sessions will be held in various locations in the Chamberlain Student Center. Please see the room locations listed on the following pages.

10:55 AM TO 11:55 AM—BREAKOUT SESSION #2

The breakout sessions will be held in various locations in the Chamberlain Student Center. Please see the room locations listed on the following pages.

12:00 PM TO 12:45 PM—LUNCH

Eynon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

1:00 PM TO 2:00 PM—BREAKOUT SESSION #3

The breakout sessions will be held in various locations in the Chamberlain Student Center. Please see the room locations listed on the following pages.

2:15 PM TO 3:15 PM—FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT PANEL

Eynon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

3:15 PM—CLOSING REMARKS & RAFFLE DRAWING

Eynon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center



ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

In 2017 a group of dedicated volunteers created the First-Generation Task Force. The program initiative, Flying First, was developed to enhance academic success for Rowan University's first-generation students while focusing on an increased sense of belonging within our campus community. Through the promotion of diversity, educational opportunities, and intentional support, Flying First assists with the transition to college, provides resources to facilitate success in the classroom, and fosters pride in and positive perceptions of first-generation students through networking and advocacy throughout the university community.



WHO IS A FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT?

The Flying First program defines a first-generation college student as one whose parents have not received a college degree and/or a student who has limited college preparation or resources in their immediate family or support network. So, you are a first-generation college student if...



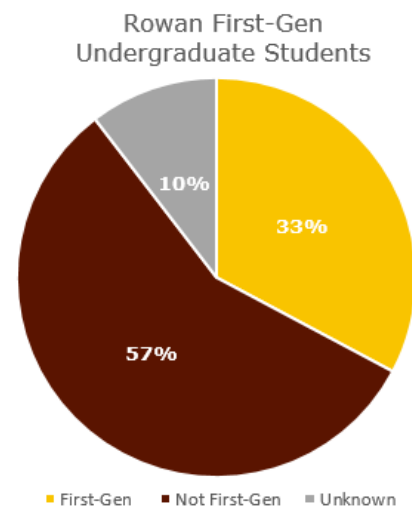
Your parents never attended college or attended some college but did not finish their degree



Your siblings attended college but your parents did not



Your parents graduated college in another country and are unfamiliar with college in the United States



PUT SOME "RESPECK" ON THE RESPECT OF THE FIRST-GEN STUDENT EXPERIENCE

DR. DYRON CORLEY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF TRiO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-CAMDEN

DR. DANA KEMERY, DIRECTOR OF INNOVATIVE COURSE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGICAL INFUSION/ASSOCIATE CLINICAL PROFESSOR, DREXEL UNIVERSITY

ROOM 221A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

First-generation students bring various experiences and understandings to the educational environment that can enrich the overall experience for students, faculty, and staff members. Although this student population has meaningful past experiences to share, they often do not know how to capitalize on those experiences or how the experiences align with ultimate college success. As educators, we often miss the mark focusing on the task of being a "student" versus building on the strengths learners already have within them. It is easy to view and interact with these learners from a deficit mindset, negating the abilities they already have. At Rutgers-Camden, we recreated our onboarding student experience that allowed us to concentrate on learners' strengths rather than perpetuating a deficit mindset. While creating a pre-immersion experience for first-generation students, our focus shifted from skills deficits to reflection on action. Reflective practice supports learners to better understand their abilities and how those abilities align with the new expectations in an educational environment. This process helped learners to begin to develop their college identity which will continue to serve them throughout their college experience. Students created digital storyboards showcasing how they will use their previous experiences to be successful in college.

TWO GENERATIONS OF FIRST-GEN STORIES: WHAT HAS CHANGED AND WHAT HAS NOT

ROSARIA PIPITONE, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CAREER READINESS, OFFICE OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

TOMMY CHOI, STUDENT, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ROOM 144A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Tommy Choi is a Biology major at Rowan University, a Resident Assistant, and an IWS worker at the Office of Career Advancement. Rosaria Pipitone is the Associate Director of Career Readiness at the Office of Career Advancement. Both are bilingual, first-generation students who come from different cultural backgrounds. Together, they share their stories of navigating the education system and the world of work from a first-generation standpoint.

FIGURING OUT COLLEGE (WHEN YOUR FAMILY CAN'T HELP YOU)

STEPHANIE ABRAHAM, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ROOM 127, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

In this presentation, I will talk about my own experiences as a first generation high school graduate and college student. Specifically, I will address the lack of support in high school, difficulty of applying for and finding financial aid, and the problem of "time" during undergraduate preparation. I will offer some advice for first generation students and faculty; however, I will also offer a strong critique of the structure of the United States' university system, which must be changed to offer equal and equitable support for all people who want to attend a university or college.

THE RESILIENCE & SUCCESS OF ADULT COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY PARENTAL INCARCERATION

***SUNOVIA SCUDDER, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, ROWAN UNIVERSITY
ROOM 221B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER***

Given the increased attention in recent decades to the national crisis of mass incarceration, the children of incarcerated parents have also been receiving increasingly more attention. Researchers have found that the children of those who have been incarcerated, are also paying the price of their parent's sentence. With the odds set against them, there are children who are resilient and have "beat the odds." On Rowan University's campus, there is a student group, Youth Empowerment Program, who have been impacted by parental incarceration at some point in their lives. With the disenfranchisement their parents face, they have also faced challenges that made going to college nearly impossible. However, through many social factors like role models, spirituality, and extracurricular activities, this group of students were able to be resilient, pursue higher education, and be successful.

POSITING STRENGTH: SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE & FOCUS ON LOW-INCOME, FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

***RICKY URGO, HALL DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
RICHARD JONES, VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, ROWAN UNIVERSITY
ROOM 221C, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER***

This presentation explores and celebrates the strengths of students who find themselves at the merger of being first generation and low income identities, and the role of having staff members who've either lived the experience or seek to embrace students living this truth. Considering the increase in students with these identities on campus nationally (33% of students on average), it behooves us to shift perspectives away from deficits and celebrate the skill sets that students bring to our campuses. Using Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model, this presentation seeks to highlight the strengths students bring to our campuses and the role of administrators/faculty in supporting these students. Further, the presentation walks through a student's story with capital in various forms like: 1) Allowing space for them to be themselves (authenticity and safety), 2) Providing critical feedback for navigating the institution (linguistic, navigational capital), 3) Access to resources and institutional knowledge (social capital), 4) Recognizing the role or lack thereof familial ties (familial capital), and 5) Forethought, planning, and resiliency (aspirational capital). By the end of the presentation, we hope students and staff alike, gain some insightful knowledge and interrupt how we typically frame first generation and low income student experiences.

PIECING IT TOGETHER: THE PUZZLE OF THE FIRST-GENERATION IDENTITY CRISIS

BAREEQ BARQAWI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH & ADMISSIONS, ROWAN COLLEGE AT BURLINGTON COUNTY

ROOM 144B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

After first enrolling in college, comparatively more first-generation students drop out than their non-first-generation peers before earning a degree. Although first generation students are gaining access to college, the support structures created within these institutions may fall short to address the psychological needs and deep-seated issues they face. How can we better understand these experiences and what can we do to help guide them through these phases? Using the “culture shock” framework, this session will review the four stages of “culture shock” and the way they correlate directly to the first-generation student experience. The four phases to be discussed are: the honeymoon phase, the irritation and frustration phase, the understanding and adjustment phase, and the acceptance “mastery” phase. We will then dive into what contributes to each phase, including how student affairs professionals and faculty can better serve the needs of first-generation students, as well as how we can facilitate the transition through each phase in a smooth and efficient manner. This knowledge will help empower first-generation students to use their unique identity as a strength and a platform for college success.

SUPPORTING MULTIDIMENSIONAL WELL-BEING AMONG FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

ALLISON BAKER, ACADEMIC ADVISOR, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ERIN HANNAH, EARLY INTERVENTION ADVISOR, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ROOM 127, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Using Rowan University's well-being initiative (Rowan Thrive) as a framework example, this session will examine six dimensions of well-being and how institutional faculty/staff can support first-generation student well-being. In a small group format, participants will brainstorm ways first-generation students can encourage their own well-being and how faculty/staff can help foster that framework. The discussion will also include how achieving well-being can vary among first-generation students depending on what other identities the student may hold.

THE FIRST-GENERATION LATINX EXPERIENCE AND HOW FAMILIES HOLD THE KEY TO RETENTION

YASMIN ACOSTA, LAUNCH CATALYST (CAREER COUNSELOR), DREW UNIVERSITY

ROOM 144A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Drew University's new initiative Launch is designed to prepare students/future leaders with the skills necessary to adapt to a changing workforce in the 21st century. Our goal is to help our students create a purpose-driven life plan in line with their interests, skills, and values, and the confidence to put this plan into action. Launch consists of a 1-credit mandatory course for first-year students that includes a self-assessment piece, three guaranteed immersive experiences, professional and identity/intercultural development, mentor relationships with peers, alumni, staff, faculty, and community members and the creation of a career plan e-portfolio. Launch also includes Career and Identity/Affinity communities, and integrative community Launch web spaces that serve as a hub of information on mentors, jobs/internships, classes, events, resources, articles and blogs that offer advice and success stories. One of those communities is strictly focused on First-Generation students to fill in the academic and professional development gaps that traditionally hinder these students. Our purpose is not only to create a community of like-minded peers who can support one another, but as the Coordinator of the community, my goal is to advocate for this population and create the type of programming and events that will not only take away the stigma sometimes perceived by those who are first in their families to go to college, but will educate and empower these students in ways that will help them recognize and achieve their highest potential through fostering a sense of belonging, confidence, resilience, and purpose.

AN OVERLOOKED PIECE OF FIRST-GEN COLLEGE SUCCESS: OVERCOMING PAST TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES

DR. ANGELLE RICHARDSON, LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR, THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY

DR. DYRON CORLEY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF TRiO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-CAMDEN

ROOM 144B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Transitioning to higher education is a challenge for most first-generation students; however, it can be even more challenging for those who have experienced past trauma. Up to 85 percent of young people report being exposed to a traumatic event before entering college. Often, educators who are not trained to recognize trauma responses can miss signs when they appear in their students. This can create distance in the student/educator relationship. This workshop session will help educators recognize signs of and triggers for trauma so that they can better serve the students in their care. Using the principles of the Sandy Blume's Sanctuary Model, participants will explore the impact of an individual's culture, experiences, and traumas on their perception of Safety, Emotion, Loss and Future (S.E.L.F.). The workshop facilitators will further discuss how these perceptions translate into individual behavior, interactions with others, and responses to conflict in life and within the lives of people who have experienced trauma. It is the presenters' hope that educators will gain a deeper understanding of first-generation student's experiences and needs in order to improve relationships and learning in the future.

WHAT ABOUT THE "OTHERS"? ADDRESSING CLASS-BASED MICROAGGRESSION & SUPPORTING FIRST-GEN/LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

HATEF ALAVI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR—PENN FIRST PLUS, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROOM 221A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

First-Generation and/Lower income students are often seen as the "others", which is a terminology that was used by Ronald Takaki to refer to anyone who is not White and comes from low socioeconomic status (Takaki, 2008). Over the past three decades, college enrollment for first-generation students have increased and it continues to rise. However, higher education institutions are still experiencing higher attrition and lower retention and graduation rates in relation to this population (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014). Some contributing factors to this issue are lack of parental support, absence of knowledge on how to navigate the higher education system, financial barriers, lack of access to social capital, and experiencing different types of microaggressive behaviors. As a result of these experiences, FGCSs do not feel a sense of belonging to campus, experience isolation and alienation, which leads to withdrawal from the institution. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss different types of microaggressions, particularly, class-based microaggression, the impact of class-based microaggression on FGLI students, and ways in which institutions can address this issue. Then, I will share how the Office of Penn First Plus in collaboration with other offices is supporting FGLI students at UPenn.

LAS VIAS: CREATING PATHWAYS TO GRADUATION

DR. MAUD FRIED GOODNIGHT, ROWAN COLLEGE OF SOUTH JERSEY—CUMBERLAND CAMPUS

IRIS TORRES, LAS VIAS BILINGUAL STUDENT DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR, ROWAN COLLEGE OF SOUTH JERSEY—CUMBERLAND CAMPUS

ROOM 127, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Rowan College of South Jersey - Cumberland campus (previously Cumberland County College) implemented the Las Vias - Pathways to Graduation program, with required Touch Points to guide students to credential completion over the past 5 years. Graduation rates have increased 19% for Hispanic students, 9% for African American students and 13% for all students. Vías hacia la Graduación, a Title V grant funded program established Academic Pathways, a team of bilingual Student Development Advisors, and an Early Alert system to raise Flags, report Attendance, and Kudos. Hispanic/Latino and African American students, First Generation and Pell recipients demonstrated progress toward graduation. The Las Vias program implemented the Take the Lead Summer Bridge and NASPA-Certified Peer Mentor programs providing additional student engagement. Cumberland's completion and transfer rates have been among the highest in the region. Attendees will learn to produce data informed increased student success employing an interactive audience approach.

IMMIGRATION & THE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

ANA ESTEVEZ, DEPARTMENT OF ADMISSIONS, ROWAN COLLEGE AT BURLINGTON COUNTY

JENNIFER MARTIN, ROWAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

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As daughters of immigrants, Ms. Estevez and Ms. Martin understand what it is like to navigate college from the application process through graduation. Moreover, as higher education professionals, Ms. Estevez and Ms. Martin have worked heavily in advising first-generation college students of immigrant families. The purpose of their presentation is to inform attendees of the unique experience of first-generation college students who are navigating college in a country, and its processes, with which their family members are not overly familiar. Ms. Estevez and Ms. Martin will present research on the pressures of being a first-generation college student and what it is like to juggle their various responsibilities.

SINDROME DEL IMPOSTOR: FEELING LIKE A FRAUD & OVERCOMING THE SYMPTOMS

ERIKA SOLIS, GRADUATE STUDENT, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ROOM 221A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Constantly comparing yourself to others. Questioning your abilities. Feeling like a fraud. These are a few symptoms of imposter syndrome, and it's common in first-generation students. It's a psychological pattern, where someone doubts their achievements and is afraid of being exposed as a 'fraud'. It can shape a student's entire identity in college, leading to stress, anxiety, and depression. This presentation will cover the broader symptoms of imposter syndrome and how it can greatly influence first-generation college students. We'll discuss the long-term effects of it, what students can do to overcome it, and how faculty can support their students.

FLYING FIRST: THE FOSTER EXPERIENCE

HAILEY D'ELIA, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ROOM 221C, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

This discussion aims to address the challenges that foster youth face in pursuing higher education. With little to no family and community support college is more demanding for foster youth. About 50% of foster youth graduate from high school and less than 3% of foster youth graduate from four-year colleges. Additionally, first generation foster youth face their own unique identities and trials in college. This discussion will include a personal perspective of how foster youth are viewed in the education system.

FIRST TO FLY: BUILDING FIRST-GENERATION CAMPUS COMMUNITY FROM THE GROUND UP

CLAUDE TAYLOR, ADVISOR-IN-RESIDENCE FOR ACADEMIC TRANSITION & INCLUSION, MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

JENNA FLEMING, GRADUATE STUDENT, MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

ROOM 144B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

This panel will highlight the development, growth, and evolution of First to Fly: First Generation at Monmouth. Launched in spring 2017, First to Fly provides student-centered initiatives designed to offer academic, social, and personal support for students who identify as first-generation. Co-presenters Claude Taylor and Jenna Fleming will discuss a range of challenges and successes related to raising awareness of first-generation identity and experiences on their campus. The design of these initiatives is to build an inclusive community across students, faculty, and staff stakeholders. Particular attention will be given to defining first-generation identity, the role of mentoring, and promoting campus-wide collaboration.



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**GO.ROWAN.EDU/FLYINGFIRST
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Special Thank You

Office of Career Advancement
Office of the President
Dean of Students Office
Student Center & Campus Activities
University Advising Services
ASCEND Office
Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



This event supports the Rowan Thrive dimensions.