



2ND ANNUAL FIRST-GENERATION SYMPOSIUM

NAVIGATING TWO WORLDS:
CELEBRATING & SUPPORTING
FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019

HOSTED BY ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S FIRST-GENERATION TASK FORCE

2ND ANNUAL FIRST-GENERATION SYMPOSIUM

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019

8:00 AM - REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

Enyon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

8:45 AM - WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Enyon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

The official symposium welcome will be delivered by Penny McPherson-Myers and Amy Ruymann, co- chairs of Rowan University's First-Generation Task Force. Dr. McPherson- Myers currently serves the university as the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Ms. Ruymann currently serves the university as Associate Director for University Advising Services.

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

9:00 AM TO 9:50 AM - FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT PANEL

Enyon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

Panel participants include a mix of current first-gen students.

10:00 AM TO 10:45 AM - KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Enyon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis currently serves as New Jersey's Secretary of Higher Education. Dr. Smith Ellis is responsible for policy development and coordination of higher education activities for the state.

11:00 AM TO 12:00 PM - BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Various locations in the Chamberlain Student Center, please see the following pages

12:15 PM - CLOSING REMARKS

Enyon Ballroom, Chamberlain Student Center

SPECIAL THANK YOU

Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis
Office of the President, Rowan University
Division of Student Affairs
Office of Career Advancement
First-Generation Task Force
Gourmet Dining Panelists

DR. ZAKIYA SMITH ELLIS

NEW JERSEY SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Zakiya Smith Ellis currently serves as New Jersey's Secretary of Higher Education, where she is responsible for policy development and coordination of higher education activities for the state.

Smith Ellis previously led work at Lumina Foundation, the nation's largest foundation focused solely on higher education, to advance federal policy to increase attainment and to develop new postsecondary finance models, focusing on issues of affordability.

Prior to her work in philanthropy, Zakiya served as a Senior Advisor for Education at the White House Domestic Policy Council, where she was tasked with developing, informing, and promoting President Obama's higher education policy.

She also served in the Obama administration as a senior adviser at the U. S. Department of Education, where she developed programmatic, policy and budget solutions to respond to pressing challenges in college access, affordability, and completion.

Before transitioning to work as a political appointee, Dr. Ellis served as Director of Government Relations for the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, where she authored reports on the efficacy of financial advising in college access programs, on community college transfer and articulation, and on the ability of low- and moderate-income families to afford college more broadly.

Zakiya has been featured on C-SPAN and Fox Business News, profiled in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* and was twice named to *Forbes Magazine 30 Under 30*. She recently completed a three-year term as an appointed member on the board of directors for the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC).

Dr. Ellis holds a bachelor's degree in political science and secondary education from Vanderbilt



University, a master's degree in education policy and management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania.

FIRST GENERATION SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS IN UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING

DR. HARRIET HARTMAN, PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

ROOM 129, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

We have baseline data collected from a sample of all Rowan engineering students in 2015-6, and have analyzed the differences between first-generation engineering students (FGES) and non-first-generation engineering students (Non-FGES) with respect to (a) their perceptions of “otherness” in a variety of situations in engineering at Rowan (FGES do not perceive themselves as “other” in most situations); (b) their background in engineering-related subjects and extra-curricular activities in high school (FGES background differs from Non-FGES); (c) their satisfaction with various aspects of the engineering program at Rowan (there are few differences); (d) their self-confidence as engineers (there are some differences); and (e) their commitment to and belief in a future career in engineering (FGES are strongly committed to, and believe they have, a future in engineering).

EDUCATING THE WHOLE FAMILY: BEST PRACTICES FOR ADVISING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

MS. MICHELLE APLEGATE, STUDENT SERVICES GENERALIST, ROWAN COLLEGE

AT BURLINGTON COUNTY

MR. NICOLAS LATORRE, NJ STARS COORDINATOR, ROWAN COLLEGE AT BURLINGTON COUNTY

ROOM 144B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Being a first-generation student can feel like a very solitary experience. This secluded feeling can be exasperated if the student’s network of support does not feel supportive to them. In many instances family and friends, whom a first generation student may rely on for support, may actually be causing additional stress due to their own unfamiliarity with the college experience. We as advisors must create an environment that incorporates education for the whole family in order for the student to gain the autonomy needed to pursue their passions and be successful. This discussion-based session will incorporate real world examples and best practices. We will cover how to educate both students and family members on higher education as a whole, improve familial communication, and encourage family advocacy for their student.

FIRST GENERATION SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE MEN NAVIGATING BEYOND THE VEIL

**DR. JONATHAN L. JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND HEALTH
EDUCATION, STOCKTON UNIVERSITY**

BALLROOM B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

African descendants used their knowledge and ingenuity for hundreds of years to adapt to a predominantly Eurocentric society in the United States. This session presents the counter-narratives of undergraduate men of color who used “code switching” as a strategic tool to navigate the social norms, customs, and relationships at a large predominately white university. It is critical for university educators and practitioners to create, sustain, and serve as socializing agents as well as to prepare men of color to engage and thrive in their new communities. This session is also affirming for first generation college students who currently seek to share their voices with faculty and staff as well as to further develop their cultural capital among their peers in the face of cultural isolation beyond predominate White communities.

THRIVING, NOT SURVIVING

**MS. CORINNE WERNER, PREDOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERN, COUNSELING
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, WELLNESS CENTER, ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

ROOM 221 A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Struggle, hardship, turmoil. These are a few words that come to mind when thinking about barriers to success that first-generation college students face. How can we help turn these three adjectives into more positive predictors? This educational workshop focuses on evidenced-based practices for supporting first-gen students, specifically focusing on two effective programs for at-risk scholars. Together, we will investigate the workings of the University of California’s (UC) Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (SAPEP) program and Colorado State University’s (CSU) Key Communities (Key) program. SAPEP’s programs work holistically with educational institutions, community organizations, and the business sector to improve academic achievement among at-risk groups. The educational interventions span from Pre-K through post-graduate study to support scholars in achieving their goals. The Key program also helps first-generation students, but is focused solely on the university level. This approach implements specialized learning communities for first-year university students. Key emphasizes the importance of the campus community, learning in and outside of the classroom, and providing regular feedback to students. Both services present thought-provoking material that can be utilized on campuses across the country. This elicits realistic hope that we can help students transition from struggle, hardship, and turmoil to strength, prosperity, and success.

FIRST GENERATION SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

ATTENDING TO THE SOCIO-EMOTIONAL NEED OF FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

DR. KARA IEVA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COUNSELING IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS/ED. SERVICES AND LEADERSHIP, AND DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICES FOR THE STEAM ACADEMY PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAM, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

BALLROOM A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

First generation college students are matriculating to a four-year institution at more rates than previously. In fact, first generation college students make up approximately 40% of the college population. Although they are enrolling, it is not an easy feat in light of the many financial, emotional, and academic obstacles set against them. In other words, the first-generation students have already overcome great barriers, and show great tenacity and perseverance. Despite these positive characteristics, there are many socio-emotional struggles that students still face stepping into college classes that lead to discrepancies in academic achievement and overall college experience of first-generation students as compared to continuing-generation students.

This presentation will focus on the interfacing of two worlds including code switching from college student to family member, lack of social capital, using concrete case examples and the socioemotional toll that has on these students. The presentation will conclude with actions that can be carried out by First Generation College Students themselves, as well as professors and staff who interact with them to address their socio-emotional needs, leading to the successes first generation students on campus.

BATTLING IMPOSTOR SYNDROME: YOU PERSEVERED! LUCK HAS NO PLACE HERE

MR. JULIUS GRAYSON, AND DR. LESLEY MATEO, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS/COUNSELORS, ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION, ENGAGEMENT AND DETERMINATION (ASCEND), ROWAN UNIVERSITY CAMDEN

ROOM 144A, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

The pressure to succeed and set yourself apart from the rest may seem overwhelming! If you identify as an underrepresented minority (URM) in higher education, the pressure intensifies when you are unable to see yourself, relate and/or identify with your college instructors or campus. Research suggests that identifying as an URM and not having visible representation of yourself in the classroom or on campus can lead to something known as Impostor Phenomenon (IP) also known as Impostor Syndrome. IP is the belief that achievement and success occur not because of performance or ability but rather because of luck. IP negatively impacts students' college experiences especially their self-esteem, academic honesty, mental health and overall academic success and retention (Parkman, 2016). Research also suggests that first generation students experience IP at higher levels and more often than other students (Martinez et.al, 2009, Terezini et. al, 1996). During this session, we will define IP and its predictors, share testimonials and discuss how grit and other strategies for success assisted students and professionals in overcoming impostor phenomenon.

FIRST GENERATION SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

A TALE OF TWO WORLDS: DISCOVERING THE REALITY OF DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS!

**MR. ISRAEL LAGUER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/COUNSELOR, ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH
COLLABORATION, ENGAGEMENT AND DETERMINATION (ASCEND), ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

ROOM 221B, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Social, Emotional & Religious challenges often plague first-generation college students. As such, the world they once knew clashes with newly discovered cultures, systems, beliefs and norms. This workshop will provide a safe space to dialogue about the realities and challenges of living out and reconciling two realities. Participants will learn more about the concept of Dual Consciousness and learn strategies and best practices on how to support students in, what could be, a shocking and traumatizing transition through rediscovery. The idea behind using the term “dual consciousness” stems from pioneer sociologist, W.E.B. DuBois. He is credited with coining the socio-cultural construct to originally refer to an inward “twoness” or having to live out two different experiences based on circumstances. DuBois used this concept in his 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk* when referring to the lived African American experience. While this was the original use of the term, many philosophers and scholars have since utilized it to also refer to the necessary “twoness,” or two ideologies existing in one person due to the complexities of who they are in a place where it is they cannot be themselves in their full authenticity. Often times, students who do not find spaces, places and people within the university where they are supported and celebrated could develop impostor syndrome.

COORDINATING RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY TO BOLSTER SUCCESS AMONG UNDERSERVED COLLEGE STUDENTS

**MS. AMANDA CIAVARELLA, DIGITAL STRATEGIST, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT,
ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

ROOM 221C, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Based on a 5-year study at Montgomery County Community College (PA), during which academic support and mentorship programming was developed for student-athletes, four key pillars of support were identified as contributory to increases in completion rates, success rates and GPA among students from underserved populations (including, but not limited to, students who identify as being first generation, minority, LGBTQ, disabled, poverty-stricken, underprepared, non-traditional, international or displaced). Students participating in all four pillar programs performed 321% better than average; participation in three of the four programs resulted in a 96% better performance; and those participating in two or less of the programs significantly underperformed against the cohort’s average. The study produced a model of academic and social support structures that 1) can increase success among underserved student-athletes, 2) is applicable to a number of underserved populations, and 3) can be replicated across academic institutions by leveraging and coordinating the efforts of currently-existing programs.



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