



#CelebrateFirstGen

In 2017, the Council for Opportunity in Education and FirstGen Forward (formerly NASPA's Center for First-Generation Student Success) launched the inaugural First-Generation College Celebration, on November 8, the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Each year since, colleges across the country have joined in celebrating the first-generation college students on their campuses on this day. This year, College for West Virginia (CFWV) is once again joining this national effort to celebrate the successes and contributions of first-generation college students, faculty, staff, and alumni here in West Virginia!

From November 3 through November 8, we encourage colleges, universities, college student support programs, and other interested entities to join us in celebrating the success of first-generation college students, faculty, staff, and alumni in any and every way possible. When sharing information about your event or highlighting First-Generation success stories on your campus (or in your program) on social media platforms, be sure to tag [@CFWV](#), [@COEtalk](#) and [@FirstGenForward](#) and use the [#CelebrateFirstGen](#) hashtag!

During the week of November 8th, institutions around the country will be celebrating the presence and experiences of first-generation college students, faculty, and staff on their campuses. Leading up to the event, we invite you to use this guide to assist in planning a celebration of those in your campus community who are the first in their families to attend college.

15 Ways to Celebrate

1. Host a campus event or rally featuring notable first-generation alumni, faculty, staff, and students. Empower first-generation student leaders to get involved in planning, or to emcee the event.
2. Host panel discussions or forums featuring first-generation members of your campus community to discuss their college experiences.
3. Incorporate first-generation faculty experiences into classroom discussions.
4. Orchestrate listening sessions by administration, faculty, and staff about first-generation students' experiences and needs on campus.
5. Conduct interviews with trustees, administrators, and faculty who are first-generation. Consider profiling these individuals in your campus newspaper, websites, or on campus TVs.
6. Distribute first-generation swag to promote your celebration events and continued opportunities.
7. Host a breakfast, luncheon, or snack break for first-generation students to celebrate their success. Invite first-generation leaders, faculty, and staff to attend. Partner with campus offices, bookstores, local eateries, and gas stations to add gift card raffles to your celebration events.
8. Offer résumé and interview workshops to provide tips on how to best frame first-generation status in the hiring process.
9. Designate a campus athletics event as “first-generation” and recognize players, coaches, attendees who are first-generation. Offer a discount to attend.
10. Profile first-generation students and programs on the university and departmental websites and social media.
11. Launch a “Why I’m First” campaign where first-generation students anonymously or openly submit why it was important for them to go to college, to be displayed on campus.
12. Invite prospective first-generation students from local high schools to participate in the celebrations. Develop mentoring relationships between first-generation college students and those in local high schools.
13. Support students in establishing a first-generation student organization on campus. Identify first-generation faculty/staff to serve as advisors.
14. Identify and promote undergraduate research opportunities for first-generation college students.
15. Coordinate letters or emails from your university president to each first-generation student to reinforce their place within your community.

Social Media

All first-generation students, faculty, and staff across West Virginia campuses are invited to show their first-gen pride through social media platforms. The community at-large is also invited to share their support and recognize the experiences of first-generation students and colleagues.

Tags and Hashtags:

@CFWV
@COEtalk
@FirstGenForward
#CelebrateFirstGen (National Celebration Day hashtag)

Suggested posts for departmental, programmatic, or personal social media accounts:

Facebook and Instagram:

- I am proud to be a first-generation student because.... **#CelebrateFirstGen**
- Every day first-generation students, faculty, and staff make great contributions throughout West Virginia. We are proud to join colleges and universities across the country to recognize the National First-Generation College Celebration during the week of November 8! Learn more at by visiting firstgen.naspa.org/. **#CelebrateFirstGen**

X:

- I am proud to be a first-generation student because.... **#CelebrateFirstGen**
- We are proud to participate in the National First-Gen College Celebration during the week of Nov. 8. firstgen.naspa.org/. **#CelebrateFirstGen**

Shareable Social Media:



Ways Community and Business Partners Can Celebrate

1. Employers can promote awareness internally among employees by celebrating first-generation graduates.
2. Visit your alma mater or local area higher education institution to discuss your industry with students.
3. Help out with a college job or career fair.
4. Host educational events at local schools with first-generation colleagues.
5. Partner with local institutions to provide mentoring or tutoring for first-generation students.
6. Host a breakfast, luncheon, or snack break for first-generation students to celebrate their success.
7. Engage local media to cover your events.
8. Issue a public statement, press release or op-ed in support of first-generation student success.
9. Profile your first-generation graduates on social media or your website.
10. Create a Zoom background celebrating First-Gen Week.
11. Offer First-Gen Week swag such as mugs or t-shirts.



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I am proud to be first-gen because...

