



# **First-Generation College Students- A Panel on Pathways to Success**

**Melony Ohalek, Sallie Mae;  
Alyssa Dobson, Slippery Rock University;  
Kimberly McCurdy, PHEAA;  
Patricia McCarthy, Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

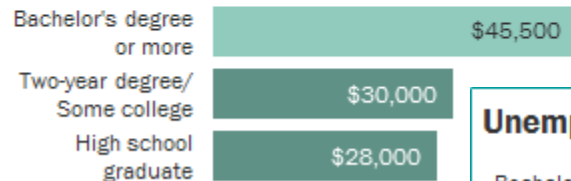
# Agenda

- Value of Higher Education
- What Does it Mean to be First-Generation?
- Challenges
- Success Factors
- Tools and Resources

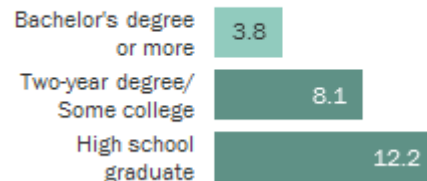
# Why is Higher Education Important?

## Disparity among Millennials Ages 25-32 By Education Level in Terms of Annual Earnings ...

*(median among full-time workers, in 2012 dollars)*



## Unemployment Rate ...



Notes: Median annual earnings are based on earnings and work status during the calendar year prior to interview and limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who worked full time during the previous calendar year and reported positive earnings. "Full time" refers to those who usually worked at least 35 hours a week last year. The unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force (those working or actively seeking work) who are not employed. Poverty is based on the respondent's family income in the calendar year preceding the survey.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Sample

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## And Share Living in Poverty ...



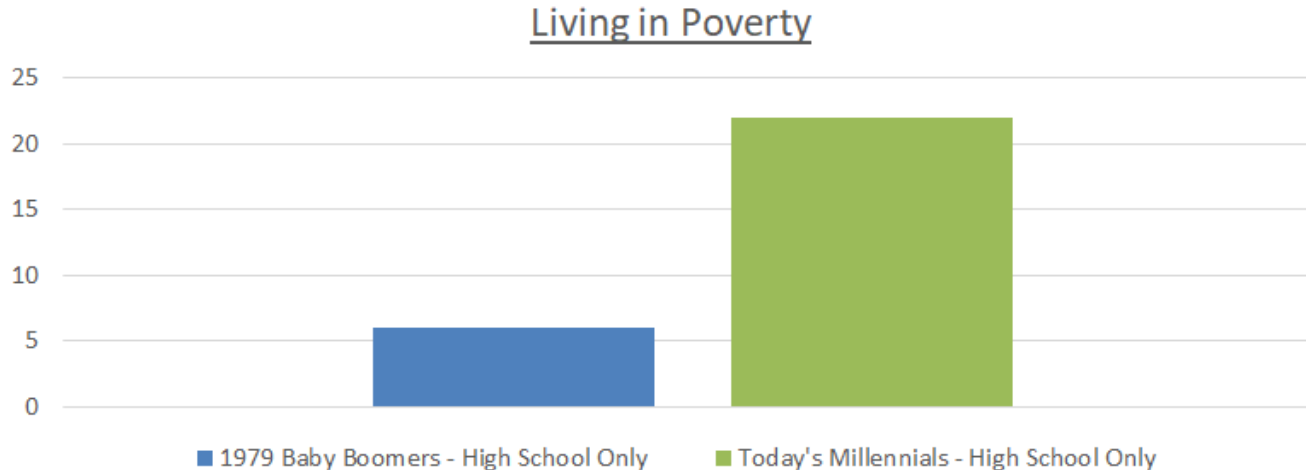
# Why is Higher Education Important?

- Young millennial college graduates are outperforming their peers with less education
- The largest and most striking disparities between college graduates and those with less education surface in the Millennial generation:
  - For example, in 1979 when the first wave of Baby Boomers were the same age that Millennials are today, the typical high school graduate earned about three-quarters (77%) of what a college graduate made
  - Today, Millennials with only a high school diploma earn 62% of what the typical college graduate earns



# Why is Higher Education Important?

- While earnings rose for those with a college degree, earnings fell for high school graduates
  - Among Millennials ages 25 to 32, fully 22% with only a high school diploma are living in poverty, compared with 6% of today's college-educated young adults
  - In contrast, only 7% of Baby Boomers who had only a high school diploma were in poverty in 1979 when they were in their late 20s and early 30s



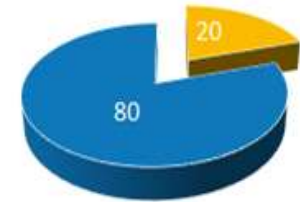
# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FIRST GENERATION?

# Definition/Characteristics of FGS

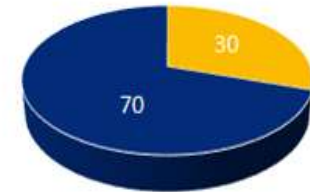
First in Family” or “First-Generation” college students are students whose parents or caregivers have not earned a four-year degree themselves

- About 20% of the 7.3 million undergraduate students attending *four-year* public and private colleges and universities are first-generation students
- This increases to approximately 30% for all schools
- Approximately 50% of all first-generation college students in the United States are from low-income families.
- The first-generation college student is not necessarily specific to minorities or immigrants.

4-year public and private schools



All schools



■ First-Generation

Information gathered 2/2017: <https://qz.com/418695/the-unique-challenges-of-a-first-generation-college-student/>  
<https://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2013/8/presentation-apac-2013-first-generation-college-aspirations-preparedness-challenges.pdf>  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-ricardo-azziz/why-engaging-more-first-g\\_b\\_12417846.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-ricardo-azziz/why-engaging-more-first-g_b_12417846.html); <http://www.firstgenerationfoundation.org/>



# Characteristics

First in Family or First Generation College Students share some of the following characteristics:

- Enroll in college at much lower rates than non-First Gen students:

82% of non-First Gen students enrolled in college immediately after finishing high school vs.

54% of students whose parents had completed high school and

36% of students whose parents had less than a high school diploma

- They question themselves and their worthiness
- Many are ill-prepared academically as they come from low income school districts
- Often require significant academic remediation
- Many come from a situation where no one they know has the experience of successfully completing higher education
- The college-bound culture may not exist at their high school
- They don't understand academic expectations
- Students do not understand the admissions and financial aid processes



# More Characteristics

- Work at least part-time while attending college
- May come from lower socioeconomic status
- May come from ethnic-racial minorities
- May come from under-served high schools that lack resources to help students prepare for college
- May live at home with family or relatives or may choose a college that is close to home
- May choose to attend college part-time
- Are twice as likely to drop out of college before their non-first generation counterparts before their second year in college
- Are less likely to socialize with peers at school or take part in student organizations
- Typically carry financial burdens that outweigh those of their non-first generation peers
- Have significantly lower college completion rates

# Famous FGS

- Viola Davis, Academy Award Nominated Actress
- Colin Powell, 65th US Secretary of State
- Dr. Ben Carson, Neurosurgeon and first physician to successfully separate conjoined twins
- Sonia Sotomayor, Supreme Court Justice
- Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks
- Michelle Obama, 44th First Lady of the United States



# CHALLENGES/ SUCCESS FACTORS

# A Qualitative Exploratory Study of Success Factors for First-Generation College Students, 1980 to the Present

*Participants by Undergraduate Graduation Year, Race, Gender, and Type of Postsecondary Institution*

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Participant	UG Year	Race	Gender	Type of PS
1	1981	White	Male	Svc. Academy
2	1985	White	Female	State College
3	1994	White	Female	Private College
4	1993	White	Male	Private College
5	2001	White	Female	Private College
6	2002	Black	Male	Private College
7	2010	Biracial	Female	State College
8	2011	Black	Female	Private College

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# Research Questions

RQ1: What barriers to college success do first-generation students report overcoming?

RQ2: How do first-generation students report overcoming barriers?

RQ3: Do successful first-generation students differ across four decades in terms of reported barriers and coping strategies?



# Barriers

Literature v. findings of the study.



## Cost of College

8 of 8 participants mentioned funding or affordability issues or accountability for paying for college through work, receipt of financial aid (including scholarships) and by borrowing loans. The cost of the school was expensive, they had difficulties completing paperwork, or didn't understand processes. All participants had a job in college.



## "I felt like a fish out of water."

Feelings of Not Belonging was a theme shared by 6 of 8 participants and related them to a lack of acclimation to campus at the beginning. Feelings included loneliness, depression, and homesickness.



## Lacking School Counseling

4 of 8 mentioned never seeing their counselor, or that the school had very poor counseling services (in their opinion).



## Lacking Preparation

4 of 8 participants mentioned feeling ill-prepared academically and faced challenging curriculum in college.



# Success Factors

Literature v. findings of the study.



## Paying for College

8 of 8 participants mentioned academic or sports scholarships. 8 of 8 participants worked either on or off-campus. Several employed strategies such as taking classes at community college, moving off-campus, getting an RA position and receiving financial aid, including grants and loans.



## Finding Mentors

8 of 8 participants mentioned at least one person who made a difference in their success. Mentors included teachers, counselors, coaches, work study supervisors, recruiters, friends' parents, and family members (including their parents).



## Acclimating to Campus

8 of 8 participants mentioned an immediate affinity toward his or her school and acclimated quickly.



## Majoring in What You Enjoy

5 of 8 participants mentioned changing their major or really enjoying what they chose to study.



## Self-Efficacy Behaviors

8 of 8 participants exhibited self-confidence, determination, drive, and a knowing they could succeed.

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# First-generation Students: 1980s to the Present

Self-efficacy

Resourcefulness

Changing Times

Industry to  
Entrepreneurship

1980s



1990s



2000s



2010s



Technology

Connectivity

Adaptability



# Outcomes and Recommendations

- Self-Efficacy Behaviors are Key!
- Having a Mentor is Key!
- Cost is Relative - in every decade students encountered the barrier of affordability.
- Every situation is slightly different and solutions varied by participant.
  - This suggests individualization of guidance/resources.
- More Studies
  - Need to do the other half of this study - students who started but didn't finish the 4-year degree in 4 years (or so).
  - Conduct an analysis/program review of some of the FGS programs that have already been launched (I'm First, BetterMakeRoom, ReachHigher).
- Schools need to collect FGS information consistently.
- Schools should measure GRIT or Self-Efficacy of students at admission.
- Schools need to provide programming to students' parents.



# TOOLS AND RESOURCES

# Tools and Resources

Slippery Rock University - 42% first generation

Connecting the student to campus:

- FYRST seminars
- ASD - Admitted Student Day
  - Overnight program
- Opportunity Knocks (minority and first gen)
  - Overnight program
- Emergency book funds
- Emergency loans



# Tools and Resources

Slippery Rock University - 42% first generation

Connecting the parents to campus:

- Orientation
  - Opportunity for one on one meetings!
- Parent portal
- Parent weekend
- Free meals each semester in our dining hall (4)
  - For parents with students who have a meal plan



The logo for ITUP (Inter-Tribal University Program) features the letters 'ITUP' in a white, serif font on a red rectangular background with a white wave-like border at the bottom.

PROMISING  
SCHOLARS



## Purpose

The Purpose of the Promising Scholars Program is to identify, recruit and retain academically talented students of color

- Create a program that will foster a community here at IUP where academically talented students of color, many which of whom are first generation college students

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## On Campus Retention Program

### Freshmen Year GPA 2.75

- Study Hall
- Academic Plus Initiative (History 196)
- Mentor & Mentee Program
- Volunteer Program

### Junior Year GPA 3.00

- Mock Interview
- Internship Application

### Sophomore Year GPA 3.00

- Frederick Douglass Institute
  - Debate Team
  - Research
  - Volunteer

### Senior Year GPA 3.00

- Resume
- Job Fairs

- > Freshmen students must complete 80 study hall hours per semester
- > The Academic Plus initiative a history course that all PSP students take together
- > All Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors are required to participate in the mentor/mentee program
- > Student Mock Interviews are in coordination with the Career and Professional Development Center

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# The Numbers

## Retention

	2014-2015 Cohort Seniors	Non PSP Students	2015-2016 Cohort Juniors	Non PSP Students	2016-2017 Cohort Sophomores	Non PSP Students	2017-2018 Cohort Freshmen 1st Semester	Non PSP Students
Retention	64%		80%		78%			
Average GPA	3.29		3.20		3.23			

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# The Numbers

## Graduation

	2011-2012 PSP Cohort	2011-2012 Non PSP Students cohort	2012-2013 PSP Cohort	2012-2013 Non PSP Students cohort	2013-2014 PSP Cohort	2012-2013 Non PSP Students cohort
4yr Graduation Rate	67%		75%		76%	
5yr Graduation Rate						
Retention						
Average GPA	3.13		3.15		3.2	

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SCHOLARS

# Presenter Contact Information

- Ms. Melony Ohalek - [melony.ohalek@salliemae.com](mailto:melony.ohalek@salliemae.com)
- Ms. Alyssa Dobson - [alyssa.dobson@sru.edu](mailto:alyssa.dobson@sru.edu)
- Ms. Kimberly McCurdy - [kmccurdy@pheaa.org](mailto:kmccurdy@pheaa.org)
- Dr. Patti McCarthy - [mccarthy@iup.edu](mailto:mccarthy@iup.edu)