Parent and Family Engagement:
Supporting Parents and Families of First-Gen Students

Araceli Gonzalez, UCLA
Cynthia L. Alvarez, Ph.D., UCLA
Karina M. Viaud, Ed.D., UCSD
“Parents Just Don’t Understand”: Bringing Parents and Families of First-Gen Students Into the Fold

Cynthia L. Alvarez, Ph.D., UCLA
First·Gen
/fərst·jen/

Adj
1. parents just don’t understand
2. a trailblazer; a pioneer
I remember struggling so much during my 1st year of college and having my mom go through all of that with me. There were many times that I called her crying and telling her how I wanted to go home. So she would take the bus all the way from South Central to UCLA (2-3 hr bus ride each way) just to see me and have lunch with me.

First-Gen Student, UCLA ‘09
College = Unknown World

What I don’t understand is, **why don’t they provide a normal schedule of classes so the kids can finish much quicker?** I mean, one hour? You take longer getting there than the time you spend in class. Do they give a full-day schedule at the university level?

I liked [Rochester], but it is too far from here. It is all the way across the country, and it’s not like you can just jump in your car, get going, and you’re there. I tell my daughter, ‘Honey, let’s try to find one here. God forbid something happen to you and we won’t be there.’ San Francisco is about seven, eight hours, and you are there. But when you talk about New York or anywhere in that vicinity, we are now talking about a good amount of time and a lot of money. So, we’d like something nearby.

Parents of FirstGen Student
I went to school in Mexicali. I didn’t finish college there but I did stay a couple of years. Now that I have my kids, they have to go too. I told them, “There is no choice. There is no other option.” I told [my son] I’d do everything in my power to get him to college so that he’d have his opportunity to go to college.

Parent of First-Gen Student
This is a bit of an adventure for us. Not just for [our daughter], but for us too because we are with her, she tells us things and we learn from her. I mean, you go to places you never imagine going. I went to New York with her. What the heck did I know about New York? But there I was. So it was an awesome feeling because you know you aren’t there for vacation. [You get to there] and you can only imagine what college is like, how they live. It just never crosses your mind that you’ll be in places like those.

Parent of FirstGen Student
Parents: Supporters & Journey Companions
What must the UC do?

Build trust.

Scaffold.

Collaborate.
First-Generation Strong: Upholding Our Commitment to First-Generation College Students

Karina M. Viaud
My first-generation story

**Background**
- Arnold and Gislene; no 4-college degree
- Montréal, Canada
- Native French speaker
- Middle of 5 siblings (4 out 5 have a college degree)
- Role modeled college-going for my sister, Jennifer and Stanley
- Tested out of language and math

**Transition**
- Freedom and decision-making
- Long distance relationship
- Struggled academically - academic probation
- Joined FG academic support program - Dori AuCoin
- Determined to do better - my home town is not the best
- My parents did not know about my struggles; don’t disappoint
- Summer courses, finished in 4.5 years

**Experience**
- Orientation Leader
- Campus jobs: Student Health Center, Associated Students
- Student Conduct
- Lead Program
- Homecoming Queen - Bridgewater State University, Fall 1998
My parents’ role in my education

Daddy
- Advocate
- Language
- Curious - Information gatherer
- Pre-college programs
- Parent orientation
- Move-In
- Campus visits
- Aware of my involvement/accomplishments

Mommy
- Protect
- Moved to U.S./ESL at 43 y.o.
- Haitian/Canadian culture over American culture
- Hard worker - single mom
- Living on-campus vs. living at home
- First/only college visit - graduation

Doctor of Education, Graduation Day (2014)

First-generation students at UC

UC San Diego Price Center  #FirstgenCon2018
“In their own words” Parents of first-generation students (Bruner, AHEPPP, 2017)

- Parents of FG versus Parent Programs Professionals - Understanding parent involvement?
  - Parents of FG expected students to go to college “You’re going to college.”
  - Family background and social factors influence definition “I wanted to go to college.”
  - History of educational involvement “I’ve always been involved.”
  - Parents play an important role “very high impact”
  - Parents engaged in student success “being informed and engaged”
  - Parents of FG practice involvement differently “not as assertive”

- Parents of FG - Types of involvement provided
  - Provide emotional support “reach for the stars”
  - Parents function as part of academic support system “He will often have me read papers.”

- Parent Programs Professionals reactions to types of involvement provided by Parents of FG
  - Favorable response to emotional support “We want our kids to succeed.”
  - Surprised by academic support “Academic support, this is really eye-opening.”

- Parents of FG versus Parent Prog. Prof. Connections/Disconnections
  - Student is primary connection to institution “The only thing that attaches me to inst. is my daughter.”
  - Desire targeted outreach and information “Just a check up” (Reed, 2017)
  - Institutions are faced with limited resources “I think it would be logistically overwhelming.”
  - Lacking investment from leadership “That needs to start at the top.”
Parents of FG at UC San Diego

- **Acknowledge** parents of FG students (parent orientation; announcements)
- **Listen** to what FG students are telling you about their parents and **leverage** their parents as advice-producers
- **Understand** parents of FG-student relationships (push-pull and advocacy, desire to connect w/university, cultural understanding/assets)
- **Be curious** (2017-2018 year, 1/3 of UC San Diego students list their parents’ email address)
- **Ask ‘why’ questions**
  - 2015-2016 academic year; 1s time FG was included in program data (Family Weekend, Siblings Day, Ambassador program)
- **Track progress** FG status
  - Family Weekend Fee Waiver Application (2017)
    - 81 students and 223 family members participated in Family Weekend
    - 102% increase for students and 104% increase for families
    - Family Weekend surveyed fee-waiver families and non-fee waiver families
      - How coming to Family Weekend supports their student college experience is similarly expressed by both family-types
Parent and Family Engagement: The Transfer Perspective

Araceli Gonzalez, UCLA
CCCP Parent & Family Engagement

- The Center for Community College Partnerships (CCCP) works to increase the academic preparation and competitiveness for community college transfer students, particularly those who are first generation, low-income or underrepresented. CCCP also helps community colleges to develop a transfer sending culture, and the University to develop a transfer receiving culture.

- In its commitment to social justice and diversity, UCLA CCCP equips students with skills and knowledge of available transfer pathways to empower them to become self-advocates and leaders in their communities.
Our students

2018 East Los Angeles College Student Success Scorecard

Established in 1945 as part of the Los Angeles Community College District, East Los Angeles College serves students in the Los Angeles suburb of Monterey Park, and is the largest campus in its district. The college has an international, multicultural student body that complements the communities comprising its primary service area. The college offers both academic transfer courses which prepare students for admission to four-year colleges and universities and occupational programs which prepare students for careers in two years or less.

### Student Information (2016-2017)

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<th>Gender</th>
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### Other Information (2016-2017)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full-Time Equivalent Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credit Sections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Credit Section Size</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of First-Generation</td>
<td>71.7%*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Counseling Ratio</td>
<td>5,155:1</td>
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</table>

### ELAC/CCC Partnership

Center for Community College Partnerships Scholars Program Participants

- **173** TOTAL ELAC CCCP Scholars
- **33%** Male
- **66%** Female
- **79%** Low-Income
- **88%** First-Generation College Students

88% First-Generation College Students

- Parenting Students: 26
- Formerly Foster Youth: 7
- Undocumented: 4
- Veterans: 5

CCC Scholars Projected Transfer Rates
- Spring 2018: 31
- Fall 2018: 54
“How can I increase transfer rates of first-generation Latinx students to UC’s?”

You cannot talk about access, retention and achievement of first-generation college students without bringing the family to the table.
ELAC Parent & Family Transfer Conference - March 24, 2018

ELAC Transfer Center en Colaboración con UCLA Center for Community College Partnerships Presentan

East Los Angeles College
Edificio F5

Registrese en: https://tinyurl.com/ELACTSC

PADRES Y FAMILIARES DE ESTUDIANTES DE ELAC
ESTAN INVITADOS A LA
CONFERENCIA DE EXITO DE TRANSFERENCIA

Sábado, Marzo 24 del 2018

Para más información contacte: Chely Gonzalez
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Teléfono: (424) 281-4158

First-generation students at UC

UC San Diego Price Center  #FirstgenCon2018
Feedback From Participants

- What information did you find most useful?
  - “The profiles of financial aid from different schools, (it) was useful to see a visual of the different costs and aid” – Parent Participant

- “The panel of both students and parents, and being able to ask questions directly to them” – Parent Participant

- “Lo que más disfruté fue aprender mucho de los requisitos” – Parent Participant

- “Darles todo el apoyo posible, económico si es posible y darles animo para seguir adelante” – Parent Participant