Block 1

Lubbock Room

Championing First Gen Students' Success by Teaching Them How to Learn
Kamau Siwatu - Professor of Educational Psychology

It is not uncommon for high school and college instructors to expect students to enter their classrooms knowing how to learn and aware of their role in the learning process. The reality is, however, that most students do not know how to learn and have not been explicitly taught how. First Gen students, like many others, who do not possess the skills and strategies to learn effectively and efficiently will experience academic difficulty in high school and college when the material becomes more challenging. To champion First Gen students’ success, educators must intentionally teach students how to learn. In this session, the presenter will draw from research on how students learn to identify specific strategies that educators can use to teach students how to learn. By the end of this presentation, participants will (1) deepen their knowledge of how students learn, (2) develop or broaden their knowledge of strategies for teaching students how to learn, and (3) develop an appreciation and value for teaching academic subjects while also providing instruction on how to learn those subjects.

Mesa Room

Reimagining Our Impact on First-Gen Students: Incorporating Student Perspectives into Wrap-Around Care and Beyond
Laura Flores - Assistant Director, First Gen Programs

Moderator: Laura Flores

Panelists: Bishal Das, Ashley Hartin, Robert Huddleston, and Laura Jimenez

Through a panel-based discussion, students will provide attendees with a unique perspective into their experiences as First-Generation in College students, successes and challenges encountered along the way, as well as impactful conversations and interactions with faculty and staff that enhanced those experiences.
**Playa Room**

**I'm First: I'm More Than a #**

Lola Coppage - Executive Director, LEARN, inc.
Lee Ann Clark - Assistant Director, LEARN Educational Opportunity Center

Please join us as we examine effective approaches to recruiting and retaining first-generation students and adults to and through higher education. Topics of discussion will include the need for closing these gaps, both from college access and business perspectives, strategies for recruiting and engaging under-resourced students and adults, and the roles that college access and higher education professionals play in moving the goal line beyond access and college completion and toward gainful employment, sustainable wages, and meaningful work. This session will explore what the research reveals as well as practical application of proven strategies. We invite practitioners and students to share thoughts and best practices in this interactive seminar. Workshop participants will be equipped with tools that deliver a better understanding of how to recruit and retain first-generation students in higher education and prepare them for successful entry into a career field that will provide them with meaningful opportunities.

**Block 2**

**Lubbock Room**

**How Educators can Support Student Agency**

Betty Krohn - Postsecondary and Early College Support

This faculty/staff/instructor session will explore actions to grow student self-confidence and communication skills that will drive success for students to develop student agency. The focus will include what can be done in the classroom setting, how to support students to access students services, and how to get students to go to tutoring centers and form collaborative study groups.

1. Define Student Agency as it relates to rigorous academic preparedness, opportunity knowledge and student success.
2. Identify specific ways that educators can insist on rigor, break down barriers, align the work, and advocate for students.
Mesa Room
The Impacts of STEM Undergraduate Research on First-Gen College Students
Jessica Spott - Director of STEM Center of Outreach, Research & Education

First-Generation college students can have their lives altered by the experiences they have in college. For those students who are underrepresented in STEM, oftentimes undergraduate research is bridge which opens many doors post-graduation. These interactions often come with scholarship or funding, mentorship and exposure to careers or fields that are new to the student. This session will discuss the personal and professional implications of undergraduate research on the students, their families and the institution as a whole. This session will be comprised of a decade of personal experiences and stories of running various undergraduate research programs on Texas Tech's campus. Layering additional identities, such as marginalized, minoritized or underrepresented students, First-Gen faculty, can also change the experiences and opportunities open to these students. The stories and experiences which will be shared will also be layered with research and support pointing to best practices of how to design, implement and facilitate an undergraduate research program. Understand the benefit of undergraduate research on first-generation college students; gain best practices on recruiting, funding and facilitating undergraduate research for these and other underrepresented students.

Playa Room
Understanding the Complex Relationship Between First-Gen Students and College Writing
Jennifer Marciniak - Director of the Graduate Writing Center at Texas Tech University

This discussion will highlight how to talk to first-generation college students about the expectations of first-year writing and research. This presentation will also include techniques for explaining writing conventions that students are expected to practice during their first year at college or university. Attendees will
1. Discuss how to model specific genres of writing
2. Practice talking about writing in a language accessible to first-generation college students
3. Learn how to effectively respond to student writing through use of positive language.
Skilling Up! Equipping First-Gen Students to Tell Their Story
Ashley Penner - Associate Director, University Career Center

While many undergraduate students are encouraged to participate in campus life, they often struggle to demonstrate the value these experiences add to a potential employer. Presented by two career counselors, this session will focus on equipping attendees with the tools and information they need to help first-generation students demonstrate their career readiness through their written documents and interviewing and networking skills. “Attendees will be equipped with practical strategies to help first generation students develop job search skills and identify the skills and competencies they develop. Attendees will walk away with knowledge of specific competencies employers are seeking in students.

First-Gen Scholars Program: What I Wish I Knew About College
Maggie Gilchrest - Director, LSAMP Scholars Program

This panel presentation will provide agency and voice from current First-Gen students thriving within the university and address what they wish they had known coming into college. Their insights will be valuable to K-12 educators in terms of updating and providing messaging and information for First-Gen students prior to their college enrollment, as well as be beneficial for current university student professionals looking to assess and review their current practices of engaging, facilitating resources, and providing agency to current First-Gen students.

Per the literature, First-Gen students who attempt to develop social, cultural, and navigational capital while also making sense of their social identities in the college setting is a difficult meaning-making process (Inkelas et al., 2007; Nguyen & Nguyen 2018). It is important to help First-Gen students understand what they need to be successful while they address and making meaning of their first-gen identities in context within their other identities, including their racial, gender, and socioeconomic status identities.

Rather than discussing the ideas to address the First-Gen intersectionality experience on what could be improved within the secondary and post-
secondary education from student affairs professionals, this panel will allow for first-person agency from First-Gen LSAMP Scholars who have and are experiencing college as current First-Gen students. As a result of this panel presentation attendees will receive the following:

1. First-hand knowledge of what current First-Gen students wish they had known prior to coming to college.
2. How current First-Gen students are able to thrive, despite the norms associated with first-gen achievement in college (per the literature).
3. The opportunity to ask questions from current First-Gen students regarding their programs/high school's specific concerns.

A First-Gen professional, the LSAMP Director, will moderate the session. We will also provide a “Top 3” handout with space for notetaking, which will discuss each panel member’s “Top 3” things they wish they had known and/or ideas for ways high schools can improve their information dissemination and messaging for First-Gen students thinking about college.

**Playa Room**

**Support First-Gen Student Success in Large Introductory Courses, from Course Design to Classroom Delivery**  
**John Nelson - Assistant Professor of Early American History**

In this presentation, I will explore some of the ways that I have adjusted my large survey lecture courses to support First-Gen students, ensure retention, and increase learning in the classroom. Part of my role in the history department at Texas Tech requires me to teach large introductory survey courses (200-300 students) to incoming students—many who are there because it is a required course. This challenging teaching environment has led me to tweak my approach to pedagogy to increase student buy-in. Some of these ways have proven especially vital to enhancing my abilities to support First-Gen students. I will outline some of the ways that from the starting stages of syllabus creation, instructors can adjust language and illuminate sections to better reflect the diversity of experiences students bring with them to campus. Clarifying terms and concepts for navigating the class is key in this early phase of course development. I will also share a set of assignments designed for a more universal pedagogy—assignments that highlight skills acquisition over content. These encourage students to invest in the course. These types of assignments would be applicable in a broad range of classes across disciplines. Finally, I will discuss some of the ways that I have readjusted course requirements and expected formats in the wake of the pandemic and suggest some of the ways these
adjustments can help First Gen students find success in large lecture courses and get the support they may need. Instructors and Advisors will hear from one faculty member's perspective on ways to: 1) Increase student success thru syllabus redesign 2) Increase student buy-in through skills-assessment assignments, rather than content assignments 3) Apply adjustments to classroom management that ensure more instructor support for First Gen students, even in large survey courses.

**Block 4**

*Lubbock Room*

**First to Go: Preparing First-Gen High Schoolers for College Success**

**Shruti Nelson - College Counselor, Collegewise**

While supporting first-generations students is becoming a more widely discussed topic, the experiences of these students in the high school setting is often overlooked and under researched. However, preparing first-gen students for college, and facilitating ways for them to explore their options after high school, is incredibly important for their success, both personal and academic, in college. This session will dive into strategies to support your first-gen students as they prepare to apply to college—from deciding what high school courses to take, to standardized test preparation, to college research. Attendees will learn, and engage in discussion about, tangible tools and resources that they can share with their first-gen students to guide them through their college search process, as well as ways to build their college-focused skills, such as advocacy and time management. The presenter is currently a College Counselor, but has worked at several institutions in previous roles, therefore the session will be delivered using both college access and college success frameworks. The presenter will present their experiences, as well as use the expertise in the room, to brainstorm a toolkit for attendees to use with their students.

"Attendees will: -Gain an understanding of what their first-gen students should consider when building their college list, how to make it a robust list, and collectively build a toolkit that they can share with their students -Reflect on ways to incorporate skills for college success into their relationship with their students -Learn how navigating the college application process looks different for first-gen students, compared to their continuing generation students."
**Mesa Room**

**Dream Ally Training**

**Brandon Cruz - Director, First Generation Transition and Mentorship Programs**

The Dream Ally Training seeks to support, education, and empower the university community at Texas Tech to work with and serve Dreamer Red Raiders. Staff and faculty work daily with students from across all walks of life and this training seeks to broaden their skill set in serving undocumented and DACA-mented students in a culturally relevant and data informed way. Staff and Faculty will get a foundational introduction to the history of immigration in the US and its impact on Higher Education and will be provided best practices on serving students in and outside of the classroom.

**Playa Room**

**College Admissions for First-Gen Transfer Students**

**Danay Phelps - Associate Director for Transfer Advising**

This presentation will discuss the application and admissions process as it pertains to a First-Generation Students and the stakeholders assisting them through the process of applying to college, completing their FAFSA, and making sure to compare award packages from each school they apply to. We will also be discussing the process of encouraging students to never be afraid to reach out to admissions offices for guidance and support.

**Block 5**

**Lubbock Room**

**Change Your Habits, Change Your Life**

**Lindsay Harper**

Ultimately, our lives are the sum of our choices. And research shows roughly 40% of our choices are based on our habits. Understanding the way our brains work when it comes to our daily routines and choices reveals the path of our lives. Attendees will learn about the Habit Loop, how to use it to break bad habits and create healthier ones, and how the process benefits students as well as higher education professionals alike. Based on the groundbreaking research in the New York Times bestseller, The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg, this session will not
only provide the foundational understanding of how our brains develop habits, you'll also gain practical, down-to-earth techniques for applying this practice in your life as soon as you walk out the door. Attendees will: Investigate the Habit Loop and its relation to decision making Examine the importance of metacognition in the process of habit forming Discuss the application of the Habit Loop to many topics such as anxiety, health/wellness, and underserved populations develop an action plan for building a new, healthy habit going forward.

**Mesa Room**

**Examining Factors that Relate to Success in First-Year Students**

**Mary Hershberger - Assistant Professor of Practice**

Success in the first year of college is due in part to how well students can adjust to the demands of school and integrate into collegiate life. This may prove especially challenging for students who don’t have a college-graduated parent. Factors such as self-efficacy, resilience, social support, and stress may contribute to students’ feelings of belonging and to their academic performance, yet most research does not take into account change across the first year. This study examined relationships among social cognitive factors, belonging, and GPA in first-generation and continuing-generation first year students. Findings showed that for only the first-generation students, factors measured in fall related more strongly to feelings of belonging in the spring semester. Spring GPA showed significant effects only in the first-generation group, including with self-efficacy, stress, and belonging. These results demonstrate differentiation between first- and continuing-generation students when considering influences on success in the first year of college. We also see that factors deemed most prominent may change from fall to spring semesters as students gain experience at school, and that agents important for feeling belonging at school may differ from those for GPA. College personnel may benefit from greater understanding of changes in both first-generation and continuing-generation students over their first year of school to improve academic success and increase retention. The session will transition from sharing the study to an open discussion regarding best ways to apply current research to improving the experience of first-generation students in their first year of college. To better understand how to guide student success in the first year of college. Participants will be able to discuss and apply ideas from research to programs at TTU with a goal of improving the first-year student experience.
This presentation will discuss the application and admissions process as it pertains to a First-Generation Students and the stakeholders assisting them through the process of applying to college, completing their FAFSA, and making sure to compare award packages from each school they apply to. We will also be discussing the process of encouraging students to never be afraid to reach out to admissions offices for guidance and support.