

FIRST2GO

Welcome to MSU Texas! As a first generation student, you have taken the brave first step on a path that will lead you to be the first in your family to graduate from college. Being the first demonstrates you are motivated and ambitious, you have had support from family and mentors, and have used the resources available to achieve your goals for yourself. You need the same fortitude and inspiration for success in college. Here' ten things to consider as you plan your transition to MSU Texas.

It's OKAY to ASK. No, really, it's OKAY to ASK! **Write down your questions and concerns, and ask someone.** MSU Texas is a student-centered campus, and we are ready and willing to meet you where you are. **When you're the first in your family to go to college, you are a pioneer, BUT you are not alone.** In fact, about half of MSU students are also first gen. **Asking when you don't know or when you need help is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of WISDOM!** Not sure where to start? FIRST2GO@msutexas.edu can point you in the right direction!



Keep up with your to-do lists. Before you're admitted, don't forget to have *transcripts* and *test scores* sent to MSU Texas; and, pay the *application fee*. While you're at it, make sure you complete the *FAFSA*. **After you're accepted to MSU, find out your TSI status and plan to participate in early orientation, advising and registration in the summer.** After orientation, mark your calendar for *Mustangs Roundup* and *Move-in Day*, so you don't miss out on any of the excitement or the opportunities to learn your way around campus.



Pick ONE MSU Texas opportunity! Identify one non-academic, activity/group/club that you will join on campus. Why? **Studies show that students who are actively engaged in campus life are more satisfied with their college experience, make better grades and usually graduate on time.** Something that can make you happier and more successful at MSU Texas? That's why!

Connect. Identify one person at MSU Texas who you will rely on as a support in your first year. This might be an advisor, professor, coach, dean, counselor or residential life staff. College can be tough. **Start with a plan for who you'll reach out to when you need help, advice or just someone to talk with.**



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10 First Gen Tips for the Transition to College

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Stay grounded. Identify one individual at home who you will rely on as a support in your first year. Maybe a parent, sibling, pastor, counselor, coach or friend. Between “adulting” and the busy day-to-day life of a college student, it can be easy to feel disconnected from friends and family. **Make a plan for regularly connecting to someone back home that will remind you of your WHY on the days you might have trouble remembering.**



Know your strengths. Learning styles differ. Academic backgrounds differ. Our personal histories and experiences differ. But... **You have exactly what you need to be successful in college. The key is to identify those things you're good at and to use them to power your success.**

Be mindful. Take note of three things you need to feel happy. These are your go-to activities or touchpoints when the stress of student life gets intense. Pack the items you need with your clothes, bedding and microwave. That way you'll be ready to restore your energy and spirits when the going gets tough.

Start with Goals Thinking. Really picture what it is you want to accomplish while in college. Develop a vision of how you plan to use the skills and knowledge you gain here at MSU Texas as you level up to grad school or start your career. **Be clear about what success looks like for you!**

Tap into your resources. Sometimes we don't know what we don't know. **FIRST2GO is here to help.** After you enroll... Join the FIRST2GO Network, a community of first generation students and MSU faculty/staff who were first gen themselves. **Through the FIRST2GO Network, Student Success Series and other programs, FIRST2GO is here for you!** With your goals, you choose your destination. With our activities, we help you know the how, when and even why of the steps it takes to get there.

Make up your mind to be GRITTY! Ultimately, to be successful, you have to be committed to getting up every day and making progress on the goals you set for yourself. Many may identify their goal and understand what needs to be done to reach it. But... **The ability to initiate and SUSTAIN the actions necessary is the grit required to reach your finish line.**



Sources: "A Syllabus For College Transition" by Brennan Barnard (forbes.com); "Using Hope Theory..." by Bender & Lake (FYE Presentation); "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals" BY Angela L. Duckworth and Christopher Peterson (angeladuckworth.com/research/); "What Student Engagement Data Tell Us about College Readiness" by George D. Kuh (nsse.indiana.edu)

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What is FIRST2GO? FIRST2GO offers a slate of network-based, data-informed programming and services for MSU students whose parents have not achieved a four-year college degree. Our efforts include programming and advising for first generation students, advocacy focused on retention and success, shared knowledge rooted in data and research and collaboration across campus.

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