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A Monthly Insight of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion @MSU Texas

MOSAIC **Connection**



current topics >>>

National First-Generation College Celebration

November 8 is National First-Generation College Celebration to honor the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The Higher Education Act (“HEA”) emerged out of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty. HEA was intended to help level a playing field that had been weighed against Americans from minority and low-income backgrounds. Along with federal grants & loan programs to help students, the legislation made key investments in institutions of higher education. Additionally, HEA ushered in programs, particularly the Federal TRIO programs, necessary for postsecondary access, retention, & completion for low-income, potential first-generation college graduates.

First-Gen Students in College

Challenges and Support for helping First-Gen students in College.

What is first-gen? First-gen are students that parents did not complete a 4-year college or university degree. Many students think they are not first-gen students if their parents attend college but didn’t finish or if their siblings attended college.

Many colleges and universities are beginning to consider students with parents who attended international universities as first-gen as well.

Psychological Challenges
Family conflicts and guilt. First-generation students often experience guilt over leaving their families and possibly their financial responsibilities at home. Many first-gen students feel bad that they have an opportunity other family members did not have, as well as guilt over feeling as though they are rejecting their past and community.

Shame; Imposter Syndrome. First-gen students commonly feel embarrassed, as though they are “imposters” on campus. Without long family traditions of going to college, this is common and understandable. However, this makes it harder for them to feel like they fit in with peers.

Confusion. First-gen students may be less knowledgeable about how to navigate the resources available to them,

including healthcare options, work-study programs, internships, and counseling. Their peers who have family members that have attended college often get guidance from their parents or older siblings about these resources.

Mentors are particularly important, as they serve to support students and help them navigate the system.

Anxiety. The college life experience is filled with excitement and enthusiasm, but it can also be laced with anxiety about academic achievement, social inclusion, and financial worries, such as paying back loans.

Academic Challenges

Not arriving prepared. Some first-gen students may come from less rigorous secondary schools or have lower scores on standardized tests. This can lead to them having less confidence in academics than non-first-gen peers.

Difficulty Navigating the Academic System. The academic system can be overwhelming and complex. First-gen students often have difficulty dealing with bureaucracy. They can also have difficulty finding mentors. Mentors are particularly important, as they serve to support students and help them navigate the system. First-gen students can’t rely on hearing about the college experience of their parents or other family members to help them face these barriers, as other students often do.

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Learn together >>>

Critical Conversations & Upcoming Trainings

Tuesday, November 15

Critical Conversations: DEI Event Planning (virtual) 2pm

Celebrating observances and DEI is a shared responsibility. In this Critical Conversation, we will talk about why celebrating observances is important for campus involvement and building community with students. Participants will leave with a “toolkit” on how to create their own DEI event.

[Click here to register for the conversation.](#)

Want more DEI trainings? Request trainings for your office by emailing Ruby Garrett, ruby.garrett@msutexas.edu.



Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Gender neutral restrooms can be found in buildings on campus. You can find gender neutral restrooms in the following locations

- Clark Student Center (near computer lab)
- Legacy Commons (near MPR)
- Centennial (1st floor family restroom)
- Moffett Library (1st floor)

Want to request a gender-neutral restroom? Or have questions? Email mosaic@msutexas.edu or call 940-397-4500.

Take Action >>>

Cultural Graduations

Unidos Commencement Ceremony

Unidos Commencement Ceremony was created by students, staff, and faculty at Midwestern State University for students graduating with their Bachelor's or Master's Degree. The Latinx community at MSU Texas wanted to create an event to celebrate those who are graduating and also those who come from a LatinX background. Many Latinx backgrounds deal with numerous struggles and don't always get recognized for their accomplishments, big or small. For overcoming and showing triumph we want to show our Latinx students appreciation for their hard work and determination.

This year's ceremony in Saturday, December 3 6pm in Don Flatt.

Black Graduation

Black Graduation Ceremony is a pre-commencement celebration in honor of African, African American, and Black students who have completed an undergraduate or graduate degree from Midwestern State University Texas. Black Graduation provides an opportunity for graduates to be recognized by celebrating their accomplishments and gives significant people in their lives the opportunity to rejoice with them. It is similar to traditional graduation; however, the students will be endowed with a Kente stole by a significant person of their choosing instead of receiving their diploma. The robing of the Kente stole is representative of the Black culture and heritage and serves as an emblem that embraces the value and scholarship among the black community.

This year's ceremony is Friday, December 9 6pm in Don Flatt.

Cont. Challenges and Support for helping First-Gen students in College.

Financial Concerns

Lower Family Income. First-gen students may come from families that have less income than other students. As such, they may need larger loans and scholarships. In addition, they may have to take on jobs during college to meet their financial obligations, which can contribute to greater stress and take time away from their school work. Data show that financial burdens are the primary reason first-gen students leave school.

Social Challenges

Greater Social Isolation. The feelings of insecurity and fear about acceptance may result in isolation among first-gen students. Fewer available financial resources may limit their ability to participate in campus-based social events and remote opportunities, such as spring break, which adds to the feeling of isolation.

Stigma and Discrimination. Racial or ethnic minority groups make up more than a third of first-gen students. As such, they have to overcome racial disparities and discrimination. They may be the targets of prejudice in reference to both their minority status and lower socio-economic status. These experiences can lead to alienation, isolation, marginalization, and loneliness, which can negatively impact their mental health and academic performance.

How to support first-gen students

Confront your own biases. Examine prejudices or ideas you might be holding onto.

Don't make assumptions. Don't assume that someone is or is not a first-generation student based on another aspect of their identity, and don't assume that a first-gen student is or is not economically disadvantaged. Everyone's background is different.

Treat all people with respect. Be open to learning from students about their backgrounds. Don't judge people for having or not having first-gen status. Speak up if you hear someone else being disrespectful.

<https://www.mghclaycenter.org/parenting-concerns/young-adults/first-generation-college-students/>

<https://firstgen.naspa.org/>

Observances

November is Native American Heritage Month -- a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. It's also a great opportunity to learn more about the tribes, and the unique challenges Native people have faces historically and present.

Stop by the MOSAIC Office (CSC 194) hallway to learn more about Native American Heritage tribes.

Read MOSAIC's Land Acknowledgement to honor the Native people that were here before us [here](#).

Want more ways to celebrate Native American Heritage Month?

- Read the [Presidential Proclamation](#) officially recognizing NAHM 2022.
- [Click here to learn about the history and evolution of this national observance.](#)
- [Discover Native American & Indigenous artists.](#)
- Visit <https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/> for virtual events and exhibits sponsored by the Library of Congress, Smithsonian, etc.
- [Explore the histories, arts, and cultures of Indigenous communities in Americas.](#)
- Learn about the [policy issues](#) that matter to Native American, Indigenous and Alaska Native and Native Indian communities.
- Plan a little road trip to explore Native and Indigenous history, culture and traditions.
 - [First Americans Museum](#) (OKC). In one place, visitors experience the collective histories of 39 distinctive First American Nations in Oklahoma today. First Americans Museum shares the cultural diversity, history, and contributions of the First Americans.
 - [Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center](#) (Lawton, OK). Through collections, preservation and education, the Museum seeks to become a recognized resource for information about the Nʉmʉnʉu (Comanche People).
 - [Tales 'N' Trails Museum](#) (Nocona, TX). The Museum houses hundreds of Native American artifacts and European trade goods from the vast collection of Texana of the Joe Benton family. Mr Benton amassed the largest regional collection of Indian artifacts in the U.S., and only a fraction of that collection can be on display at any given time.

Follow MOSAIC on social media @msutx_mosaic for more events.



Bias Incident Report

Have you or anyone you know experienced bias based on their perceived race, gender and/or sexual identity?

MSU does not want you to experience this bias! If you feel you have experienced a bias incident at MSU, please report using the [online reporting form](#).

Contact MOSAIC

Located in the
Clark Student Center,
CSC 194.
940-397-4500
mosaic@msutexas.edu

Stay in touch!



[@msutx_mosaic](#)

*Next Connection
In January!*



MOSAIC
Cross Cultural Center