

- Financial challenges 20.6%
- Balancing family expectations and college demands 16.9%
- Work schedule conflicting with

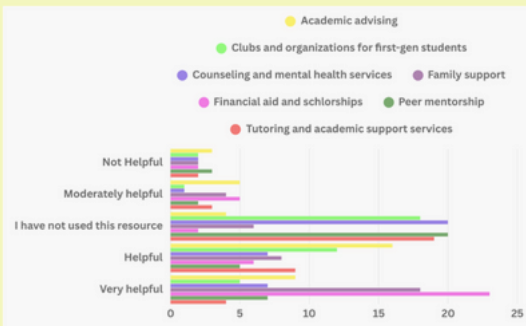


Academic support programs with excerpts taken from the LSUS official website

- Academic Coaching
- Peer leaders guide students in the areas of time management, study skills, and

FIRST- GENERATION STUDENT GUIDE TO LSUS

HAVE BEEN MOST HELPFUL TO YOU DURING YOUR COLLEGE JOURNEY? N=39



FINANCIAL AID
AND
SCHOLARSHIPS

The two least
resources

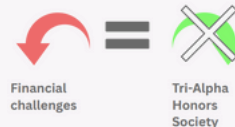


COUNSELING
AND MENTAL
HEALTH
SERVICES

One reason could be that first-generation students are unaware of these groups when they start school. This is a major problem because first-generation students could benefit from the First-Gen Leaders group and the Tri-Alpha Honors Society.

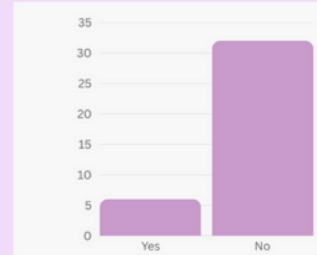
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS TO KNOW ABOUT THESE GROUPS?

In the "What challenges say about resource use" section, The First-Gen Leaders group and the Tri-Alpha Honors Society could be great extra resources to combat the top 4 challenges.



Alpha Honors Society. The First-Gen Leaders dedicated to "empowering and supporting first-generation students on their journey towards academic success." First-Gen Leaders organizes social events, workshops, and partnered with the Student Success Center, for first-generation student networking and college preparation.

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH ANY FIRST-GENERATION SPECIFIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS? N=38



According to the poll data, only 5 out of 38 students are familiar with first-generation specific support programs. This conclusion that could be drawn from this data is that resources are not focused on the demographic of first-generation college students.

EXISTING EARLY ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

LSUS students have the option to take a first-year student course and attend a new student orientation to learn about campus navigation and college skills. The only problem with these resources is that the first-year student class is costly, and the new student orientation happens in little to no time before the LSUS scholarship deadline.



EARLY ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

An alternative solution could be to provide first-generation college students with a guidebook or connect them with a peer mentor right away. This way, they could learn about how to apply for important resources like financial aid and scholarships and connect with peer mentors early on in their academic careers.

Financial challenges + University guidebooks = Timely financial assistance

SOLUTIONS

First-generation college students at LSUS struggle to navigate financial and the least socially. To combat the global rate statistic, students may need to utilize resources that provide in-person interaction.

PEER MENTORSHIP

Students at LSUS do not utilize this resource, which could combat financial struggles. Peer mentors are knowledgeable about campus opportunities like work-study openings, first-generation honors societies, and financial aid contacts. Although it may seem like a purely social experience, it is helpful for



HIGH SCHOOL EARLY OUTREACH

One reason first-generation college students do not utilize this resource is that they are unaware of them. Early high school outreach could combat this issue. If prospective students identify as first-generation college students receive a university resource pamphlet, they could be more knowledgeable about helpful resources.

Thank You!

LSUS gets greater and greater every year because of people who support solutions and positive change.

LIMITATIONS

PEER MENTORSHIP

Although LSUS students on campus could benefit from peer mentorship, it relies on students' motivation to participate in the resource. Without motivation, peer mentorship is not a viable solution.

HIGH SCHOOL EARLY OUTREACH

Although high school early outreach could be a good solution for first-generation college students, it could be costly. LSUS already recruits students of all demographics, which requires its own costs. Adding an entire guide for first-generation college students could help students who decide to attend LSUS, but it would be costly if most of the students do not.

EARLY ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Early enrollment information guidebooks could be a good solution on the university's end, but they would go to enrolled first-generation college students. For solution, the university budget is the largest limitation.

WORKS CITED

- Anchoredin, "1st Gen Leaders." Lsus.edu, 2025, anchoredin.lsus.edu/feedtype=club&id=35511&tab=about. Accessed 12 Apr. 2025.
- "Fact Sheets." Firstgenforward.org, 2024, www.firstgenforward.org/ourinsights/factsheets.
- Louisiana State University Shreveport. "Academic Success." Lsus.edu, 2025, www.lsus.edu/student-life/academic-success. Accessed 12 Apr. 2025.

LSUS FIRST-GENERATION SURVEY

Universities can confuse any student, but the difference between first-generation college students and continuing generation college students is that there is often no accessible university guidance outside of the university.

Imagine your first experience navigating financial aid, admissions, and university housing. Most, if not all, students will consult their parents about these expensive decisions, with advice ranging from their parents' personal experiences.

The problem that first-generation college students often face is that it is not just their first time starting university, but also their parents', so it is hard to find out where to start.

According to data collected from the academic year of 2011-12, First Gen Forward says, "Six years after starting college, 24% of first-generation students and 59% of continuing-generation students had earned a bachelor's degree" (Firstgenforward.org).

Why do first-generation college students have significantly lower graduation rates? This solutions-focused story will explore why this is and what resources can help combat this statistic from research gathered by Louisiana State University Shreveport (LSUS) students.

As a fellow first-generation student and student-reporter at LSUS, I made it my goal to learn as much as I can about the experience of first-gen students. During my outreach efforts, I circulated a survey of the 44 responses by first-generation students in the First Gen Leaders and the Tri-Alpha Honors Society at LSUS. The survey report is shown in short form through the first-generation guide flyer.

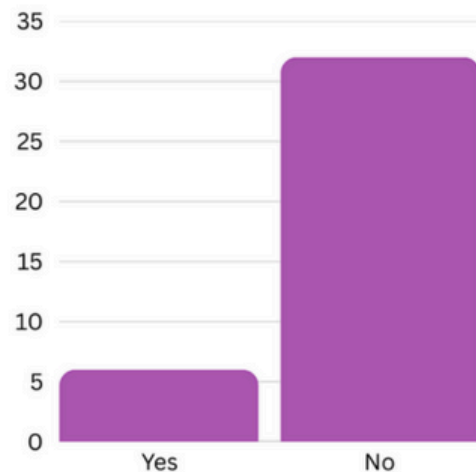
The survey's first question asks if the user would like to participate in the survey, and then if the user is a first-generation college student. If the user had selected no for either of these options, the survey would end.

The next question asked on a scale of 0 to 10 how confident the student felt in their ability to succeed academically in college. Out of 39 responses to the question, the minimum response was 3, the maximum was 10, and the mean was 8.85.

Although the mean for this response is pretty high, it is Important to note that when the students were asked if they were familiar with any first-generation college student-specific support programs, out of 38 responses, **only 5 out of 38** students were familiar with first-generation-specific support programs.

Students could be unaware of these groups when they start school. LSUS on campus students could hear about these groups through student organization fairs or if they meet the requirements for the Tri-Alpha Honors Society, but if the student attends LSUS online, does not attend events, or does not meet the requirements to join Tri-Alpha, they could miss out on both of these opportunities This is a major problem because first-generation students could benefit from the First-Gen Leaders group and the Tri-Alpha Honors Society as both of these groups could help to bring up their confidence and point them towards resources that could help them through their academic journeys.

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH ANY FIRST-GENERATION-SPECIFIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS? N=38



What Resources Are Offered at LSUS?

Some of the resources that first-generation college students and continuing generation students can utilize are listed below:

STUDENT RESOURCES OFFERED AT LSUS

Academic support programs with excerpts taken from the LSUS official website

- Academic Coaching
 - Peer leaders guide students in the areas of time management, procrastination, study skills, and so on.
- Tutoring
 - By appointment online and in-person tutoring sessions.
- Writing Consultations
 - Trained student writing consultants help students through different avenues of the writing process.
- Guided Study Groups
 - Trained student leaders lead guided study groups using collaborative learning techniques and active learning strategies.
- Peer Mentorship
 - Peer mentors assist students in college transition, model positive student engagement, and help navigate campus services.
- Rising Pilots
 - LSUS's Transition Support Program provides a support network, resources, and peer mentors for students who may face challenges transitioning to college life.
- SOAR (Academic Recovery)
 - SOAR is a resource to help students at risk of academic probation. Students in this program connect with PACE Leaders who help students develop skills for academic success.

To learn more about these resources, scan the QR code.



What's The Solution?

One question on the survey said, "First-generation college students have a lower graduation rate than students whose parents attended college. Why do you think that is, and what resources could help first-generation students succeed?" This question inspired the surveyed students to share their stories and what has helped them the most through their journey.

One student said, "I think because students whose parents haven't attended college think it is acceptable if they don't because their parents did. 3 Because you don't have that built-in knowledge and people you trust to help guide you, because they have not experienced it themselves. My family could not help me with questions, with finances, with my stresses, because they could not comprehend them. Peer support has been the most helpful (both from other first-gen students and students who were not first-gen). Additionally, I became a student advisor my senior year of college and learned so much that would have helped me if I had known it in the beginning. Later, I became a graduate advisor before I went to grad school, and I am so fortunate for that because that also helped me a ton. Specialized programming and support systems would be amazing, frankly, before you even start classes, from the time you are admitted."

The idea presented by the student is exactly what the data seems to show. Although first-generation students at LSUS have supportive organizations, without getting involved before starting college, first-generation students can get lost in the mist. One solution to this problem is creating a first-generation student guidebook.

Early enrollment information guidebooks could also be costly on the university's end, but they would go straight to enrolled first-generation college students. For this solution, the university budget is the largest limitation.

With early enrolment guides, first-generation students could be met where they are. With knowledge of the different avenues that can help first-generation students through college, they could have greater confidence in their academic success.

Peer Mentorship through LSUS and online could help students gain confidence, learn ways to get involved on campus, and most importantly, have a person they can lean on for college advice

High school early outreach could help the students before they set foot in the university. Distributing guidebooks to incoming first-generation students will not only help them get plugged into clubs and organizations, but could also help them with registration, financial aid, and the university housing process.

With these solutions in mind, LSUS first-generation students can have an easier transition into college life. For more information about LSUS's first-generation student resources, pick up a copy of my solutions-focused flyer in the Almagest room on the third floor of Bronson Hall.

EARLY ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Early enrollment information guidebooks could also be costly on the university's end, but they would go straight to enrolled first-generation college students. For this solution, the university budget is the largest limitation.

PEER MENTORSHIP

Although LSUS students on campus could benefit from peer mentorship, it relies on students' motivation to partake in the resource. Without motivation, peer mentorship is not a viable solution.

HIGH SCHOOL EARLY OUTREACH

Although high school early outreach could be a great solution for first-generation college students, it could be costly. LSUS already recruits students of all demographics, which requires its own costs. Adding an entire guide for first-generation college students could help students who decide to attend LSUS, but it will be costly if most of the students do not.