



FIRST GENERATION STUDENT CAREER AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

*A Transformative and Life Changing Career and Leadership
Experience for First Generation Students.*



CIRCLE OF CHANGE

 coclc  Circle of Change Leadership Conference  Circle of Change Leadership Conference

www.firstgencareerconference.com

What is the First-Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience?

The First-Generation Student Career Leadership Experience is a national career conference that has been designed to empower First-Generation Students with career awareness, readiness, and professional-leadership development skills necessary for success in college and beyond.

Over three-days, hundreds of First-Generation Students from colleges and universities nationwide will:

- Network with peers and professionals.
- Hear from dynamic keynote speakers.
- Participate in transformational workshops focused on career and leadership development.
- Learn from accomplished first-generation professionals representing top-tier organizations.
- Engage in cultural excursions and experiential activities.

The 5th Annual First-Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience will take place April 17-19, 2026 at the Florida International University Biscayne Bay campus in Miami, Florida.



First Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience Learning Outcomes:

The **foundational framework of the First-Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience is built on seven foundational learning outcomes** that guide all the educational sessions:

Career Exploration – Engage in career exploration activities and apply the S.H.A.P.E. framework to identify personal strengths, clarify career paths, and recognize unique value for internships and careers.

Relationship Building, Communication, and Networking - Develop interpersonal, networking, and communication skills to build social capital and manage professional connections.

Career Development - Enhance career readiness through resume writing, interviewing, negotiation, job searching, LinkedIn optimization, and understanding workplace dynamics.

Professional and Leadership Development – Gain insights into leadership styles, professional etiquette, and skills essential for thriving in a career and leadership roles.

Resiliency – Build a growth mindset and resilience to navigate challenges, overcome obstacles, and achieve career success.

Self-Care and Professional Wellness – Learn strategies for maintaining mental, physical, and emotional wellness through self-care practices and boundary-setting.

Socially Responsible Leadership – Embrace ethical leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement to positively impact communities and careers.



Advisor Testimonials



"The COC Leadership Conference made an incredible impact on our students! Conference speakers and session facilitators were thought-provoking, skilled and provided practical strategies and resources for all attendees. Since our initial partnership with Dr. Fredenburg and his team, our students have enthusiastically shared their COC experiences with others and continue to excel on campus."

—DR. TYSON BEALE, DEAN OF STUDENTS



"Circle of Change gave an opportunity for our first-gen students to see and hear from leaders who looked like them and had shared experiences as them. COCLC inspired our students that anything is possible and that they have the power within themselves, now, to achieve great things for themselves and for their community to advance positive change."

—DR. TRACY PASQUA DEA, SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM STUDENT SERVICES



"Working at a California Community College, I see first-hand the powerful and life-changing difference Circle of Change makes in the lives of my students...especially first-generation college students. These students return empowered, self-confident, and with a plan of action to achieve their career goals. COC is a difference-maker!"

—DR. MARK HARTLEY, DEAN OF STUDENT LIFE



"Circle of Change has impacted thousands of first-generation students around the world, and within my years in higher education at CSUSB, CSULA, SJSU, CSUF, and USC, the students come back transformed and with a new mindset focused on making an impact in their communities."

—DAMAREA PARKER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

First Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience Demographics:

In 2025, we had approximately 375 First Generation Students from 45 different colleges and universities from across the country. The conference demographics of the students that attended our program are provided below.



YEAR IN SCHOOL

- 20% Freshmen
- 35% Sophomore
- 25% Junior
- 20% Senior



CULTURAL BACKGROUND

- 35% Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
- 30% Black/African American
- 15% White
- 10% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 10% Bi-Racial



GENDER

- 65% Female
- 35% Male



FIRST GENERATION

- 90% First Generation Students
- 10% Traditional Students



TOP 5 MAJORS

- 23% Health Care (Doctor, Wellness, Nurse, Biology, Healthcare Executive)
- 19% Business (Marketing, Sales, Accounting, Entrepreneur, Business Management)
- 12% Tech/STEM (Engineering, Web Design, Coding)
- 12% Social Impact, Community Engagement, Education
- 10% Entertainment, Film, and Television

Alumni Success Stories Of Students Leaders Who Attended First Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience



As a Traffic and News Anchor in the Bay Area, Reyna attributes much of her success to the skills and connections she gained at the conference, where she was recognized as a Catalyst for Change. The experience helped her pave the way to a flourishing career in journalism.

- Reyna Harvey, (U.C. Riverside, Class of 2017) Student Alumni



Tristan Henriquez is a first-generation student alumnus who attended the Circle of Change Leadership Experience in 2019 and serves as a product strategy associate at Netflix.

When Tristan attended the Circle of Change Leadership Experience, he not only gained incredible wisdom from the speakers and panelists, but he leveraged the information and connections that he was able to foster at the conference to position himself for opportunities at Google, Viacom, YouTube, and Netflix.

- Tristan Henriquez, (University of North Texas, Class of 2019)



Sparsh Saxena is a student alumnus who attended the Circle of Change Leadership Experience in 2018 and serves as a product manager at Microsoft.

When Sparsh attended the Circle of Change Leadership Experience, he not only took full advantage of all the educational opportunities and resources that were available to him at the conference, but he used the motivation, empowerment, and inspiration gleaned from the conference to attain an incredible career at Microsoft.

- Sparsh Saxena, Penn State University (Penn State University, Class of 2018)



With newfound confidence and actionable strategies from the conference, Lakysa broke into the competitive entertainment industry, now leading as a Digital Creative at Lionsgate.

- Lakysa Bloem, California State University of Long Beach, Class of 2018)



Saeed drew on the lessons learned during the conference to complete his degree at UCLA and gain acceptance to Harvard Law School, where he now serves as a Student Admissions Fellow.

- Saeed Ahmad, (Norco College, Class of 2018)



Jazmin's journey into her role as Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Manager at Highwire was bolstered by the recognition and skills she honed at the conference, leading to her continued professional success.

- Jazmin Eusebio, (San Jose State University, Class of 2018)

Conference Framework and Highlights

The First Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience has been able to positively impact the lives of college students all across the country because we have created a transformational conference framework that consists of an electrifying experience, dynamic keynote speakers, powerful leadership and career development empowerment sessions, incredible panel sessions with top-tier professionals from various areas of expertise, and opportunities to develop a professional brand that will help them position themselves for career success in college and beyond.

Provided below is a description of these different components of our conference framework that is used to guide all of our national conferences.



Electrifying Experience

Immerse yourself in an energetic atmosphere with a live DJ, engaging emcees, interactive activities, exciting prizes, and a space designed to inspire and transform.



Dynamic Keynote Speakers

Be captivated by speakers who share compelling stories of resilience, leadership, and career success, leaving you motivated to achieve your goals.



Leadership and Career Empowerment Sessions

Dive into tailored workshops that provide practical career and leadership strategies to prepare you for life after graduation.



Transformational Panel Sessions With Top Tier Professionals

Gain valuable insights from a diverse lineup of industry leaders spanning tech, entertainment, healthcare, education, and more. Our industry-focused career and leadership panel sessions not only feature some of the most successful professionals from various areas of expertise, but these organizational leaders provide First- Generation Students with the wisdom, knowledge, resources, and opportunities to learn, grow, network, and use the information that has been received to position themselves for career success in college and beyond.



Professional Branding Opportunities

Elevate your career readiness with professional headshots, structured networking, and expert branding advice to help you stand out in today's competitive job market.



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FIRST DAY OF CONFERENCE

OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Learning Outcome: Career Exploration | Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development | Resiliency

The day kicks off with an electrifying keynote session designed to inspire and motivate. Our dynamic opening speaker will connect with First-Generation Students through stories, strategies, and real-life insights that illuminate the path to career and leadership success. This session isn't just about listening—it's about igniting action. Students will walk away empowered with actionable strategies to overcome challenges and embrace their unique potential.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT EMPOWERMENT SESSIONS

Learning Outcome: Career Exploration | Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development | Relationship Building | Self-Care and Professional Wellness

Next, students dive into practical, solution-driven sessions led by four engaging speakers who bring a wealth of knowledge from various professional fields. These empowerment sessions are tailored specifically to meet the unique needs of First-Generation Students, offering career strategies they can implement immediately. From college to career, these insights will serve as a roadmap for success.



ONE COLLEGE NATION

Learning Outcomes: Relationship Building | Professional and Leadership Development | Career Development

One College Nation is an interactive session where students engage in networking activities that foster meaningful relationships. Beyond networking, this session equips participants with the skills to become culturally competent, empathetic leaders who can create a sense of belonging within their campus communities. Students will leave feeling connected, empowered, and ready to lead.



FIRE-SIDE CAREER CHAT EMPOWERMENT SESSIONS

Career Exploration | Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development | Relationship Building | Self-Care and Professional Wellness

The Fire-Side Career Development Chat will consist of intimate interviews with highly successful first-generation professionals about specific career experiences within specific areas of expertise.

Through real-life stories and advice, students gain a deeper understanding of the unwritten rules of professional success and actionable guidance tailored to their fields of interest.



CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Learning Outcome: Professional and Leadership Development | Resiliency

As the first day concludes, attendees gather for a transformative closing keynote. This session combines reflection with inspiration, encouraging students to embrace resilience as they prepare for their professional journeys. To cap it all off, students receive prizes, awards, and a free copy of The First-Generation Student Career Playbook, sending them into the evening energized and equipped for what's next.



MIAMI CULTURAL EXCURSION

After a day of learning and connection, attendees are encouraged to explore the vibrant culture of Miami. From world-class restaurants to stunning beaches and rich cultural experiences, South Florida offers something for everyone. Each participant will receive a curated guide to ensure they make the most of their time in this dynamic city.



SECOND DAY OF CONFERENCE

OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Learning Outcome: Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development | Resiliency

Day two begins with an energizing keynote that focuses on resilience and overcoming the unique challenges faced by First-Generation Students. Through engaging stories and actionable strategies, the speaker provides a roadmap for thriving as a young professional in any industry. Attendees will leave feeling motivated and ready to tackle whatever comes their way.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT PANEL SESSIONS

Learning Outcome: Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development | Relationship Building | Self-Care and Professional Wellness

Expertise takes center stage during these panel sessions, where accomplished professionals from diverse industries—entertainment, tech, healthcare, education, and more—share insights tailored to students' aspirations. This is an opportunity for attendees to gain insider perspectives, career tips, and actionable advice directly from leaders who've walked similar paths.



STYLE-SHOP: THE ULTIMATE DRESS FOR SUCCESS INTENSIVE

Learning Outcome: Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development

Does your style reflect your potential? In this hands-on workshop, students learn how professional attire can enhance confidence and create a lasting impression, without compromising individuality. Fashion experts provide tips and tools to help students define their style and make smart wardrobe investments

You'll learn the importance of dressing for the occasion and get styling tips from "styleshop" experts who are there to answer your questions. Participants will not only see the transformation but also understand the role of attire in confidence, presentation, and professional success.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT PANEL SESSIONS

Learning Outcome: Career Exploration | Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development | Relationship Building | Self-Care and Professional Wellness

Step into a room buzzing with energy as leading professionals from industries like entertainment, tech, healthcare, and education take the stage. These panels aren't just presentations—they're gateways to real-world insights. Each speaker brings unique career stories and hard-earned advice, offering First-Generation Students an inside look into their professional journeys. Attendees will walk away with practical tools, new perspectives, and a deeper understanding of how to navigate and thrive in their chosen fields.



SCHOLARSHIP & AWARDS CEREMONY

The final session of the day will consist of a high-energy, engaging, and interactive induction and scholarship awards ceremony where the Circle of Change Leadership team will not only be giving away specific awards and scholarships to students within the audience, but we will be inducting the first cohort of members of the First-Generation Student Career & Leadership Society!



THIRD DAY OF CONFERENCE

BEACH DAY

The final day of the conference will take place at the beach in South Florida. This causal experience will provide conference participants with the opportunity to network with other students at the conference, engage in the exciting activities that are available at the beach, and have a fun experience on the last day of the conference.

During this time, we will rent a small area right on the beach where our conference DJ will be playing various songs throughout the day. Participants will be able to enjoy the beach, visit different stores/restaurants, ride bicycles, or engage in other fun activities that are offered at the beach.





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**Florida International University
Biscayne Bay Campus | Miami, FL**

APRIL 17-19, 2026



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