



FIRST GENERATION STUDENT CAREER AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

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



CIRCLE OF CHANGE

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www.firstgencareerconference.com

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

The First-Generation Student Career & Leadership Experience is national conference specifically designed to provide First Generation Students with the career and leadership development skills that will enable them to position themselves for career and leadership 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, workshop presenters, and panelist.
- Participate in transformational workshops focused on career and leadership development.
- Learn from accomplished first-generation professionals representing top-tier organizations.
- Engage in career site visits, excursions, and experiential activities.

The 2027 First-Generation Student Career and Leadership Experience will take place April 16-18, 2027, 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 2026, we had approximately 375 First Generation Students from 50 different colleges and universities from across the country attend the First-Generation Student Career & Leadership Experience.

The conference demographics of the students that attended our program are provided below



YEAR IN SCHOOL

- 20% Freshmen
- 30% Sophomore
- 30% 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% Healthcare (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 first generation students from all across the country for the past five years 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 first generation students 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 first generation student career and leadership experience:



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

The morning keynote speaker will deliver an inspiring, engaging, and interactive presentation designed to empower first-generation students with the mindset, strategies, and practical tools needed to position themselves for career and leadership success in college and beyond.

Through a dynamic and transformational presentation, students will gain valuable insights, actionable strategies, and practical solutions to overcome common career and leadership development challenges, maximize their potential, and confidently navigate their journey towards attaining career success after graduation.



CAREER NETWORKING EXPERIENCE

Learning Outcome: Relationship Building | Communication Networking | Professional and Leadership Development

This dynamic and interactive career networking experience will be led by an engaging facilitator who will empower first-generation students to strengthen their relationship-building and networking skills, establish meaningful connections with fellow students from across the country, and begin building a supportive community of emerging leaders and future professionals.

Through engaging activities and intentional networking opportunities, participants will develop valuable connections, expand their professional networks, and discover the power of networking and building relationships that can contribute to their long-term career and leadership success.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT EMPOWERMENT SESSION

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

The Career Development Empowerment Session will feature three dynamic and inspiring speakers who will equip first-generation students with powerful career development strategies, practical insights, and actionable tools to position themselves for career success in college and beyond.

Each speaker will share valuable career development lessons and proven strategies specifically designed to address the unique needs, challenges, and opportunities facing first-generation college students.

Through this engaging and empowering experience, participants will walk away with practical strategies they can immediately implement to strengthen their career readiness, maximize their professional potential, and take intentional steps toward achieving their long-term career and leadership goals.



FIRE-SIDE CAREER CHAT EMPOWERMENT SESSIONS

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

The Fireside Career Development Chats will feature engaging, intimate, and insightful conversations with three highly successful first-generation professionals who have achieved career success across a variety of industries and professional fields.

Through these interactive conversations, first-generation students will gain valuable career advice, firsthand insights, and practical strategies associated with pursuing career success within their area of expertise.

More importantly, these discussions will provide students with an inside look at the unwritten rules of professional success, helping them better understand the expectations, relationships, behaviors, and strategies that can make a significant difference in their ability to thrive, advance, and succeed within their chosen career fields.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & TEAM BUILDING SESSION

Learning Outcome: Professional and Leadership Development | Relationship Building | Communication | Career Development

This dynamic, engaging, and interactive leadership development experience will feature an exciting team-building activity designed to strengthen the leadership, communication, collaboration, and teamwork skills of first-generation students.

Through this hands-on experience, participants will have the opportunity to connect with fellow first-generation students from colleges and universities across the country, build meaningful relationships, and develop essential leadership competencies that will empower them to work effectively with others, navigate team dynamics, and achieve greater success in college, their future careers, and beyond.



SECOND DAY OF CONFERENCE

OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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

The morning keynote presentation will deliver an inspiring, engaging, and interactive experience designed to empower first-generation students with the mindset, resilience, confidence, and practical strategies needed to overcome challenges, navigate adversity, and thrive as emerging professionals within their chosen career fields.

Through this dynamic and transformational presentation, students will gain valuable insights, actionable tools, and proven strategies for developing a resilient mindset, overcoming professional obstacles, adapting to change, and maintaining confidence when faced with setbacks and uncertainty.

More importantly, this powerful keynote experience will equip first-generation students with the mental and emotional tools needed to successfully navigate the transition from college to their professional careers, embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and develop the resilience necessary to achieve long-term career and leadership success.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT PANEL SESSIONS

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

The Career Leadership Development Panel will feature three to four highly accomplished professionals and industry leaders who will share valuable career insights, firsthand experiences, and practical strategies to help first-generation students successfully navigate their professional journeys and position themselves for long-term career and leadership success.

Through these engaging and interactive panel discussions, students will gain an inside look at various industries, learn about career opportunities and professional expectations, and discover the essential skills, competencies, relationships, and strategies needed to thrive within their chosen career fields.

Featured professional areas of expertise will include entertainment, sports and entertainment, technology and STEM, civic engagement, human resources, business, nonprofit leadership, entrepreneurship, healthcare, education, and other exciting career fields.



STYLE-SHOP: THE ULTIMATE DRESS FOR SUCCESS INTENSIVE

Learning Outcome: Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development

Do you wish you could find your own style and not waste your money trying to keep up with social media fashion trends? Do you believe that your appearance doesn't affect your success? Well, think again! This hands-on "styleshop" will help first generation students discover the undeniable impact of dressing professionally and presenting themselves effectively in the professional world, while still being their unique, wonderful self!

First Generation Students will learn the importance of dressing for the occasion and get styling tips from "styleshop" experts who are there to answer their 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

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FIRST GENERATION STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Learning Outcome: Career Development | Professional and Leadership Development

The First-Generation Student Leadership Presentations will provide a unique and empowering opportunity for selected first-generation college students to serve as featured workshop presenters and share valuable lessons, personal experiences, and practical strategies that have enabled them to thrive and succeed within their campus communities.

Through these dynamic, engaging, and student-led career and leadership development workshops, participants will gain firsthand insights into the challenges, opportunities, and experiences of fellow first-generation students who have successfully navigated their collegiate journeys as student leaders.



FIRST GENERATION STUDENT CAREER & LEADERSHIP SOCIETY INDUCTION, SCHOLARSHIP & AWARDS CEREMONY

The final session of the day will feature an exciting, high-energy, and inspirational Induction & Scholarship Awards Ceremony designed to celebrate the achievements, leadership potential, and future success of first-generation college students.

During this dynamic and interactive celebration, the Circle of Change Leadership Team will recognize outstanding students, present special awards, and award financial scholarships to selected attendees.

One of the most memorable highlights of this powerful closing experience will be the official induction of the second cohort of members into the First-Generation Student Career & Leadership Society, marking an exciting milestone in their journey toward professional growth, leadership development, and lifelong career success.



THIRD DAY OF CONFERENCE

BEACH DAY

The final day of the First-Generation Student Career & Leadership Experience will feature an exciting, relaxing, and unforgettable beach experience along the beautiful coastline of South Florida!

This fun-filled and casual closing experience will provide first-generation students with a unique opportunity to strengthen the meaningful relationships established throughout the conference, network with fellow students from colleges and universities across the country, and celebrate an incredible weekend of career development, leadership growth, and personal empowerment.

To make this experience even more memorable, the Circle of Change Leadership Team will reserve a designated gathering area directly on the beach, where our conference DJ will create an exciting atmosphere with music and entertainment throughout the day.

Participants will have the freedom to enjoy the beautiful beach, explore nearby shops and restaurants, ride bicycles, participate in recreational activities, or simply relax and connect with their new friends.

This special closing experience will provide students with an opportunity to celebrate their shared journeys as first-generation college students, build lasting friendships, and create unforgettable memories that extend far beyond the conference.





2027 FIRST GENERATION STUDENT CAREER AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

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

APRIL 16-18, 2027



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