



First-Generation Initiatives



59.7% of students identify as First-Generation

As part of the Classroom to Career Hub, First-Generation Initiatives exists help first-generation students build a strong sense of community, navigate campus resources, and access the tools that will help them find success throughout their journey as students at MSU Denver, and as future leaders making an impact on Colorado’s culture and economy.



17.8%

Military Veterans who also identify as first-gen.



64.3%

Year 1 to Year 2 Retention Rate first-gen students.



69.2%

Students of Color who also identify as first-gen. (49.7% are Hispanic/Latine)



100%

First-Gen Students are represented across all 128 undergraduate majors.

Defining First-Generation Student Success:

Going beyond the federal definition, MSU Denver defines a first-generation student as an individual whose parents or legal guardians did not earn a bachelors degree in the United States.

By adding “in the United States” we are intentional in including students whose parents received a four-year degree from another country. Recognizing that navigating a college degree in this country may differ gratefully from their parents experience, and that these students may require similar community-building and resource navigation supports as those included in the federal definition.

This expanded definition allows us to:

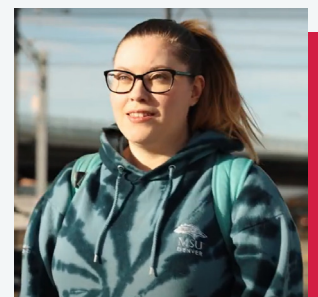
- **Cast a Wider Net** – More students are able to access our navigation support and resource connections through this broader definition.
- **Track Engagement Efforts** – We will begin to track our engagement with students who are now included through our new definition.
- **Include “Unknown” Students** – Many students mistakenly skip the “first-generation” question, or select “NO” on their Admissions application, and/or the FAFSA or CASFA applications.

Student Experiences and Expectations:

My hope for our university is that every MSU Denver faculty and staff member sees first-generation students as more than just a number.

I hope they work to truly serve the students who make up over half of our school’s population, understanding the unique struggles we face while helping to destigmatize the shame we may feel while navigating campus offices and policies.

— Alyson Doty, MSU Denver Student



Changemakers Wanted

Our Journey:

2016 – President Steve Jordan launches initiative to Increase First-Gen retention and graduation rates.

2017 – President Janine Davidson affirms our commitment and hosts campus-wide awareness program.

2019 – MSU Denver creates a position under CMEI to support first-gen students on our campus.

2021 – Dr. Cynthia Baron submits successful application to join NASPA First-Scholars Network.

2022 – MSU Denver's First-Scholars Steering Committee is created with cross campus representation.

2023 – MSU Denver is named a First-Scholars Network Leader by NASPA partners.

2024 – First-Generation Initiatives moved under the Classroom to Career Hub (C2Hub).

Fall 2024 – Goals to engage and uplift faculty/staff to better serve first-gen students are created.

A Highlight of Best Practices:

Shift to an asset-based Lens in referring to the skills, experience, and knowledge our first-generation students bring to our campus.

Share the identities you carry. Students will see you as more than just a faculty or staff member.

Include opportunities for collaborative work. This evidence-based High Impact Practice allows students to build community while learning from each other.

Give examples of strong and weak work. They don't know what your expectations are, and you may be their first-ever professor.

Ask for input and feedback from your students throughout the course. Express an approach of "We're in this together."

Provide intentional referrals to offices and resources on-campus. Share that these resources are 'FREE' for students.

Advocate for first-generation students in your circle of influence. Help your colleagues better understand our students.

Explain the 'hidden curriculum' of higher education. When possible, go further by sharing insights into specific industries, especially for students preparing to launch into the working world.

Join our Community of Champions:

The Roadrunner community is key to supporting the success of our first-generation students.

Helping first-generation students find success is a campus-wide effort. With your support, we can help more first-gen students engage with the MSU Denver community and achieve their goals.

Looking for ways to get involved? Here's how:

- Provide referrals to our office for first-generation students.
- Add your name to our online faculty/staff advocates directory.
- Attend an upcoming faculty/staff best practices training.
- Make a gift to help us grow our efforts and increase our impact.
- **Follow the QR Code to connect with us and join our community of champions.**



Contact Us:

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