**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[INSERT DATE]

**Contact**

[INSERT NAME]

[INSERT INSTITUTION]

[INSERT PHONE NUMBER]

[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]

**[INSERT INSTITUTION]’S 2022 FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES BEGIN ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

Institutions and education agencies nationwide participate in First-Generation College Celebration Day to highlight the achievements of students, educators, and alumni who are the first members of their families to pursue college degrees and to encourage this critical and resilient population to continue thriving.

[INSERT CITY, STATE]—On **Tuesday, November 8**, [INSERT INSTITUTION] is celebrating National First-Generation College Celebration Day with [DESCRIBE YOUR CENTERPIECE ACTIVITY], recognizing the students attending or planning to attend college who will be the first members of their families to each college degrees.

[INSERT QUOTE FROM INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATOR OR PROGRAM DIRECTOR]

[INSERT INSTITUTION] will celebrate First-Generation Day with the following events open to the public and media:

* [LIST YOUR EVENTS, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS HERE]

The first national First-Generation College Celebration Day occurred in 2017 when the nonprofit [Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)](https://coenet.org/first-generation-college-celebration-day/) encouraged institutions nationwide on or around **November 8** to celebrate first-generation college students or graduates.

“First-generation students have repeatedly demonstrated that supporting and encouraging promising students, often low-income, whose parents never went to college, is one of the great investments our country can make,” said COE President **Maureen Hoyler**. “Their success stories are worth celebrating.”

COE selected November 8 to honor the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This landmark legislation emerged as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty. It ushered in programs, particularly the Federal TRIO programs, necessary for postsecondary access, retention, and completion for low-income, potential first-generation college graduates.

Now the nationwide celebration is carried out by scores of institutions nationwide. COE, in partnership with NASPA’s [Center for First-generation Student Success](https://firstgen.naspa.org/engagement/first-generation-college-celebration/first-generation-college-celebration), encourages events such as panel discussions, open houses, and student rallies to celebrate the achievements of first-generation college-goers and also provides approximately $25,000 in grant awards to assist organizations in hosting their local celebrations.

First-generation students who enroll in college do so against the odds and should be commended for their efforts. Research shows that students whose parents do not have a college degree are far less likely to enroll than those whose parents graduated from college, according to the [*Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the U.S.: 2022 Historical Trend Report*](https://coenet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_2022_Historical_Trend_Report.pdf).

The report showed that 93 percent of the children of college graduates enroll in college within eight years of high school graduation, while just 72 percent of students from families in which neither parent holds a college degree enroll within eight years of high school graduation. (Equity Indicator 1h(I))

[INSERT QUOTE FROM FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT OR GRADUATE]

Many well-known and successful Americans across professions and industries were once first-generation students, among them Academy Award-winning actress **Viola Davis**, best-selling author **Sarah Smarsh**, journalist **Wil Haygood**, and Supreme Court Justice **Sonia Sotomayor**. Many of them are alumni of the [Federal TRIO programs](https://coenet.org/coe-and-trio-programs/).

For more information about First-Generation College Celebration Day, [click here](https://coenet.org/first-generation-college-celebration-day/).