FirstGen Forward

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

**2025 NASPA First-generation
Student Success Conference**

June 27 - June 30, 2025
Denver, CO

FirstGen FORWARD

FirstGenForward.org

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Current Funding Partners

Thank you to our funding partners for their commitment to first-generation student success.

Schedule

| Primary Contacts | Cabinet-level Leaders | Institutional Research | All |

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

3:00 - 5:00 PM	**Check-in at Registration Desk**
5:00 - 6:30 PM	**Welcome Social** *Peaks Lounge*

FRIDAY, JUNE 27

7:30 - 8:50 AM	**Breakfast** *Centennial FG*
9:00 - 10:00 AM	**Opening Session** *Centennial AB*
10:10 - 11:00 AM	**From Data to Action: Institutional Insights on Leveraging PDP Dashboards for Success Panel** *Centennial AB*
11:10 - 12:00 PM	**Leading Together: Strengthening Team Dynamics and Collaborative Partnerships for First-generation Success** *Centennial AB*
12:10 - 1:15 PM	**Lunch & Networking** *Centennial FG*

1:25 - 2:15 PM	**Expert Guidance Group Meetings & Continuous Improvement Work Time** *Centennial AB*	**Leading the Way: Empowering Faculty and Staff in First-gen Efforts** *Centennial C*	**Postsecondary Data Partnership: Mechanics of Enrollment Reporting and File Submission** *Mineral A*
2:25 - 3:15 PM	**Utilizing Data from Institutional Research and the PDP for Strategic Decision Making** *Centennial AB*		
3:15 - 3:45 PM	**Snack Break + Networking** *Centennial FG*		
3:45 - 5:00 PM	**Institutional Work Time** *Centennial ABC*		

SATURDAY, JUNE 28

7:30 - 8:50 AM	**Breakfast** *Centennial FG*
9:00 - 9:40 AM	**Continuous Improvement Cycles & ImproveEDU Refresher** *Centennial AB*
9:45 - 10:35 AM	**Institutional Work Time** *Centennial ABC*
10:45 - 11:35 AM	**Network Knowledge: Leveraging Peer Networks to Advance Institutional Success** *Centennial ABC*
11:40 - Noon	**Closing** *Centennial AB*

FirstGen Forward Staff Presenters

Maurice A. Jones, J.D.
Chief Executive Officer

Stephanie J. Bannister, Ph.D.
Vice President,
FirstGen Forward Network

Martina A. Martin, Ed.D.
Assistant Vice President,
Network Success

Qua'Aisa Williams, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President,
Curriculum & Learning Design

Mary Fugate, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President,
Data Analytics

Catherine Johnson, M.Ed.
Data Expert Guide

Wendy Beesley, M.P.A.
Director, Expert Guidance

Ashlee Kocina Young, M.Ed.
Associate Director, Expert Guidance

Jennifer Luken Sutton, Ph.D.
Expert Guide

Blake Nantz
Research & Data Manager

Stephanie Finau, Ph.D.
Director, Workforce
Development & Solutions

Nancy Stalowski, Ed.D.
Director, Diagnostics
& Data Analytics

Opening Session

Kaye Monk-Morgan, Ed.D.

Dr. Kaye Monk-Morgan is the president & CEO of the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC), the center of excellence for civic leadership development and engagement. KLC is a non-profit organization "that fosters civic leadership for stronger, healthier, and more prosperous communities in Kansas and beyond." Kaye leverages 30 years of experience as a higher education administrator in her work helping individuals, systems, and communities see and solve some of their most challenging problems.

An active community servant, Monk-Morgan has served on non-profit and corporate boards at the local, state, regional and national levels, including The Kansas African American Museum, NXTUS, the Ulrich Museum, KC United!, and the Wichita Land Bank. Monk-Morgan is a first-generation college graduate and has earned multiple academic credentials including a Bachelor of Chemistry/Business, a Master of Arts in Public Administration, and Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Most important to Kaye is that she is a mentor, mentee, daughter, sister, auntie, wife, and mother. She is a life-long learner, a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., an aspiring yogi, and a wannabe long-distance runner. She lives in Wichita, KS, with her husband Derek and young adult sons, Payton and Cameron.

Notes

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From Data to Action:
Institutional Insights on Leveraging PDP Dashboards for Success

Panelists

Mandy Bailey, M.Ed.

Postsecondary Data Partnership
Account Manager,
National Student Clearinghouse

Jenny Watts, M.A.
Executive Director, TRIO
Programs & First-Gen Initiatives
and Director, Student
Support Services
Tarleton State University

Jennifer Lukon Sutton, Ph.D.
Expert Guide, FirstGen Forward

Phillip Lloyd Hamilton, M.S.Ed.
Assistant Vice President,
Student Belonging & Support
Florida International University

Moderator:

Mary Fugate, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President,
Data Analytics

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Partnership Mapping

Reflection Questions:

1. Who are your current key collaborators for first-gen work?
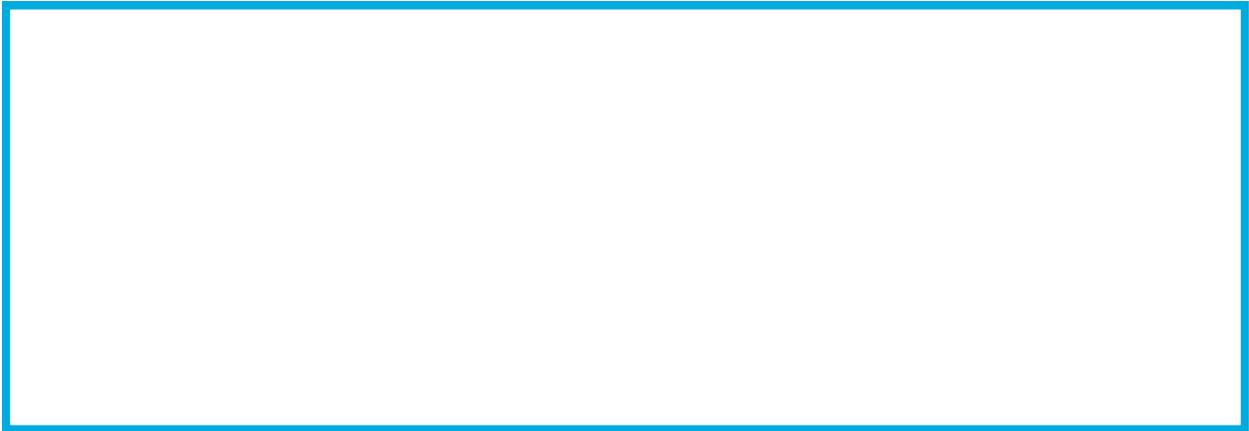
2. What makes these partnerships effective?

3. Who is missing from your collaboration network?

Understanding Your FGF Network Leadership Team Roles

Role	Primary Responsibilities	Current Strengths	Areas to Strengthen
Cabinet-level Leaders			
Primary Contacts			
Institutional Research			
Other Key Roles			

Quick Reflection: What's one immediate step to strengthen role clarity?

First-generation Success Team Roles and Responsibilities

This reference guide outlines common roles within effective first-generation student success teams.

Role	Primary Responsibilities	Key Contributions	Typical Communication Needs
Cabinet-level Leaders	• Strategic direction • Resource allocation • Policy approval • Institutional advocacy	• Executive support • Removing barriers • Cross-divisional authority	• High-level updates • Strategic alignment • Resource impact
Primary Contacts	• Program coordination • Day-to-day implementation • Cross-campus communication • Student engagement	• Ground-level insights • Relationship building • Direct student impact	• Regular operational updates • Implementation challenges • Success stories
Institutional Research	• Data collection • Outcomes assessment • PDP submissions • Trend analysis • Survey administration	• Evidence-based insights • Impact documentation • Continuous improvement	• Data interpretation needs • Research questions • Assessment timelines
Faculty Champions	• Classroom engagement • Curriculum integration • Academic support advocacy • Research opportunities	• Academic expertise • Classroom integration • Faculty perspective	• Academic calendar awareness • Faculty governance processes • Discipline-specific approaches
Student Affairs Leaders	• Support services coordination • Co-curricular programming • Community building • Crisis intervention	• Holistic student development • Support service expertise • Student engagement	• Student trends and needs • Programming opportunities • Support service utilization
Students	• Lived experience perspective • Peer outreach • Program feedback • Event participation	• Authentic student voice • Direct peer connections • Current student perspective	• Accessible language • Recognition of student schedules • Multiple communication channels

Partnership Opportunity Planner

Select one high-potential partnership to develop

Partner/department to engage:

Mutual benefits:

- What we offer:

- What they offer:

- Shared goals:

- First action step:

- By when:

- Person responsible:

Effective Collaboration Models for First-generation Student Success

Model 1: The Hub & Spoke

- **Structure:** Centralized first-gen office (hub) with designated representatives in each academic and service unit (spokes)
- **Communication Flow:** Bi-directional between hub and spokes, with regular collective meetings
- **Often Best For:** Large institutions with distributed services and established first-gen programs
- **Example:** FirstGen University implemented this model by creating a First-generation Student Success Center with designated liaisons in advising, financial aid, academic departments, and student life. Regular monthly meetings ensure coordinated efforts and shared resources.

Model 2: The Working Group

- **Structure:** Cross-functional team with representatives from key departments meeting regularly
- **Communication Flow:** Shared leadership with rotating facilitation
- **Often Best For:** Mid-sized institutions with multiple first-gen initiatives needing coordination
- **Example:** Bannister College formed a First-gen Working Group with members from academic affairs, student success, multicultural affairs, and enrollment management that meets bi-weekly to coordinate programming and share resources.

Model 3: The Embedded Approach

- **Structure:** First-gen considerations integrated into all existing student success structures
- **Communication Flow:** First-gen champions in each unit with a coordinating committee
- **Often Best For:** Institutions seeking to mainstream first-gen support across all operations
- **Example:** PDP Community College trains "First-gen Allies" in every department who ensure first-gen perspectives are considered in all program and policy decisions, with quarterly sync-up meetings.

Model 4: The Faculty-Staff Partnership

- **Structure:** Equal partnership between academic and student affairs
- **Communication Flow:** Co-leadership model with joint planning and implementation
- **Often Best For:** Institutions focusing on academic-social integration for first-gen success
- **Example:** The College of First-gen Zen pairs faculty members with student affairs professionals to co-develop initiatives that bridge classroom learning with co-curricular experiences for first-gen students.

Note: Adapt elements from multiple models to fit specific context and needs.

Action Planning

Identify your key takeaways and next steps

1. One team practice to implement:

2. One partnership to develop:

3. The first three action steps when I return to campus:

1

2

3

Overcoming Barriers to Effective Collaboration

This resource identifies common barriers to cross-functional collaboration for first-generation student success and provides tested solutions from Network institutions.

Barrier	Symptoms	Possible Solutions
Competing Priorities	• Inconsistent meeting attendance • Delayed responses • Last-minute cancellations	• Align with existing priorities and goals • Secure leadership endorsement • Connect to strategic plan • Document and share impact
Resource Constraints	• Resistance to new initiatives • Focus on department needs only • Burnout among collaborators	• Start with low/no-cost partnerships • Share resources across units • Document efficiency gains • Build a case for additional resources
Territorial Concerns	• Reluctance to share information • Credit/recognition disputes • Duplicate competing efforts	• Establish shared goals upfront • Create recognition for all contributors • Focus on student benefit • Document mutual advantages
Communication Breakdowns	• Mixed messages • Information silos • Misunderstandings about intentions	• Create communication protocols • Check for understanding and alignment • Regular check-ins • Document decisions and actions
Leadership Changes	• Stalled initiatives • Shifting priorities • Relationship disruptions	• Document agreements/processes • Distribute leadership roles • Create onboarding for new members • Connect to institutional mission
Cultural Differences	• Mismatched expectations • Different working styles • Terminology confusion	• Build relationships before projects • Create shared glossary of terms • Acknowledge different perspectives • Focus on complementary strengths

Notes

Networking Connections

Use this space to capture contact information for connections you make throughout the Leadership Academy.

Name

Institution

Email

I want to connect because:

Name

Institution

Email

I want to connect because:

Name

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I want to connect because:

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I want to connect because:

Expert Guidance Group Meetings & Continuous Improvement Work Time

Outcome for the Institution Work Time Sessions:

Key steps to achieve the outcome:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Discussion Notes:

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To Do

WHAT	WHO	DUE DATES	NOTES

Leading the Way: Empowering Faculty and Staff in First-gen Efforts

Throughout our session, our conversation will focus on the following goals for understanding. Use this space to capture notes and items for follow-up when you're back on campus.

Situating this Work

Notes:

Items for follow-up when back on campus:

Leading the Way

Notes:

Items for follow-up when back on campus:

Strategic Alignment

Notes:

Items for follow-up when back on campus:

Decision Making

Notes:

Items for follow-up when back on campus:

North Star—What's your strategic opportunity?

Notes:

Items for follow-up when back on campus:

Building Bridges

Notes:

Items for follow-up when back on campus:

Postsecondary Data Partnership: Mechanics of Enrollment Reporting and File

Reflection:

Describe how far along in the data submission process you are.

_____ I have checked to ensure that FirstGen Forward has access to the data

_____ I have accessed and downloaded the Analysis Ready Files

_____ I have updated dashboards!!!!

_____ The data have been certified!!!

_____ The data have been through the error-checking process!!!

_____ The data have been submitted!!

_____ I'm almost done!

_____ I've made some progress

_____ I'm aware of the data submission but haven't

_____ Help! I don't know where to start!

_____ I'm really not sure.

Notes

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STOP: If you have updated dashboards (*with data through Spring 2025 semester*), have accessed and downloaded the Analysis Ready Files, AND have ensured that FirstGen Forward has access to the data, then FirstGen Forward staff can help guide you to an alternative session at Leadership Academy.

What questions and curiosities do you have about the data submission process and error checking?

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Acronyms and Definitions

Key Word	Definition
Analysis-ready File (AR)	The analysis-ready files are Excel files of student-level data displayed in one row per student with 50+ columns of data elements and calculated outcomes. The data is derived from your PDP course and cohort files as well as Clearinghouse enrollment and degree data for a deeper dive into key student outcomes across a range of variables.
Certification	The process by which an institution confirms that the course and cohort files they have uploaded are complete and ready for further processing
Cohort File	The cohort data file contains identifying information for the students who started at your institution during a certain academic year.
Course File	The course file contains course-level information for students within the cohort file and previously submitted cohort files.
Data Quality Checks (DQCs)	Data Quality Checks are run and completed after an institution certifies their cohort and course files. The National Student Clearinghouse has markers to indicate whether data within the files may be inaccurate or missing. Institutions may find their data quality check results within their institution's sFTP portal.
National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)	This is the parent company of the Postsecondary Data Partnership. The NSC already has a relationship with higher education institutions through its completion, transfer, and enrollment data. Institutional registrars or academic records offices should be very familiar with the NSC.
Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP)	The Postsecondary Data Partnership is a transformative tool that makes it simple for higher education institutions to measure, assess, and share student success data with your education organization. The PDP provides FirstGen Forward and FirstGen Forward institutions access to key insights into first-generation college student data trends.
PDP Knowledge Base	The PDP Knowledge Base is a website that contains links, videos, and resources for institutions as they navigate preparing, submitting, and utilizing PDP data dashboards.
PDP Secure Portal	The PDP portal is a website for each institution, functioning as a "home base" for all functions and links associated with the PDP dashboards.

Acronyms and Definitions (Continued)

Key Word	Definition
sFTP (secure File Transfer Protocol)	This is the process by which institutions upload their files securely to the PDP
Update File	Update files are occasionally needed to correct information within originally submitted cohort or course files
User Administrator	The Postsecondary Data Partnership first assigns access to the data dashboards and other downloadable files to one person at each institution. The User Administrator can then assist others on campus to become additional end-users of the data dashboards and other related files.

Steps for PDP Data Submission after Contracts are Finalized

1. PDP account manager introduces client to the PDP Implementation Team who sets up account and schedules kick-off call (that team is your point of contact throughout your initial submission).
2. Data provider develops files by mapping/pulling data from Student Information System (SIS) in consultation with the Clearinghouse and internal teams (to your college/university) as needed.
3. Data provider logs on to specific PDP secure File Transfer Protocol (sFTP) interface and submits data.
4. Data goes through structural and field validations—if files fail either an email will be sent to the data provider and errors logged on the PDP Submission UI for review by provider.
5. Once past structural and field validations, the customer certifies the submission once all files/data are submitted (Financial Aid data, if intending to submit, should be done later).
6. Data goes through Data Quality Checks (DQCs)—if files fail any check an email will be sent to the data provider and errors logged on the PDP Submission UI for review by provider.
7. Once past validations and checks, data is merged into Data Warehouse (DW) and Clearinghouse requests data is aggregated and analysis-ready (AR) files are generated and sent through sFTP.
8. Data provider reviews analysis-ready (AR) files from sFTP (retention period is 30 calendar days) and notifies Clearinghouse of any issues/concerns if needed. Clearinghouse requests for data to be pulled into PDP dashboards.
9. Institutions review and use dashboards; provide more access internally or externally (i.e., to FirstGen Forward, FGF) through their PDP secure portal.
10. Data provider continues to submit data in the future (about 2 times per year) and continues to be supported by their PDP account managers and other teams as needed!

Data Submission Requirements as a FirstGen Forward Network Leader

Successfull data submission to the Postsecondary Data Partnership includes:

- (at least) 3 to 5 years of academic course and cohort data submitted to the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) by August 1, 2025
- Recent academic year data through Spring 2025
- The first-generation student indicator (see below)
- Dashboard sharing with FirstGen Forward
- Annual data submissions due August 1 of each year

For the PDP data submission, FirstGen Forward informs institutions that the first-generation status variable is not optional and is required. This distinction may become problematic as institutions prepare their data files, as the submission guide indicates the variable is not required. This variable is referenced within the Data Submission Guide (PDP Data Submission Guide v2.2, page 20, 22) as shown in the images below:

#	Variable	Variable Type	Format	Required	Description
27	First Gen	Enumerated		No	Indicates whether either of the students parents has completed a certificate or higher credential at a post secondary institution. This field is used to populate the First generation dashboard filter, if this field is populated, you can filter students by first generation status in the dashboards. Valid codes: • N = Neither parent attended college • P = At least one parent attended college but earned no credential or degree • C = At least one parent earned a certificate • A = At least one parent earned an associate's degree. • B = At least one parent earned a bachelor's degree or higher
38	NASPA First-generation	Enumerated	1 Character	No	NASPA's coding for the first-generation status of the student. Does not impact the first-generation filter. Valid codes: • 0 = Student is not considered first-generation • 1 = Neither biological parent earned a four-year college degree • 2 = Neither parent or guardian earned a four-year college degree. • 3 = Neither parent or guardian earned a four-year college degree from an institution in the United States. • 4 = Neither parent or guardian with primary influence on the student at age 16 earned a four-year college degree • 5 = Neither parent completed education beyond an associate/two-year degree • 6 = Neither parent entered any form of higher education

Top 10 Tips for a Successful PDP Data Submission

1. **Track your named data files**
2. **Determine your institution's gateway courses and data definitions**
3. **Remember to visit the PDP Learning Hub on Basecamp**
4. **Take notes on how you determine data location and optional/required elements and their justification**
5. **Utilize the PDP Support Team & the PDP Knowledge Base**
6. **Watch out for challenging course data file variables (academic year/term, course CIP, etc.)**
7. **Keep the PDP out of your spam folder by adding them to your contacts**
8. **Know that course files should "grow" in size over the terms/years**
9. **Set internal data submission deadlines early**
10. **Know how your cohorts are defined**

Contact Information

Postsecondary Data Partnership Support: PDPService@studentclearinghouse.org

Kathleen Boody, Account Manager: boody@studentclearinghouse.org

FirstGen Forward Support: Network@firstgenforward.org

Resources

PDP Data Submission Guide:

SCAN ME

PDP Knowledge Base:

SCAN ME

Utilizing Data from Institutional Research and the PDP for Strategic Decision Making

Understanding Your Current Data Practices

Take a moment to reflect on your current data practices for first-generation student success.

How do you use data in your daily, monthly, and annual decision-making process?

How confident are you in your ability to:

Source data from your institution?

| (LOW) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (HIGH) |

Analyze and interpret data?

| (LOW) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (HIGH) |

Utilize data in your practice and decision-making?

| (LOW) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (HIGH) |

What is your biggest challenge when working with first-generation student data?

Building a Data-informed Culture

Clarity
- Ground your work in your mission, goals, and theory of change
- Articulate your plans and your why
- Commit to inclusion, sharing, and clear expectations
- Intentionality

Capacity
- Build your analytic capacity
- Allocate resources - not just $$, but time and staffing

Culture
- Be curious and ask questions
- Never use data punitively
- Celebrate results

How can you be an agent of building a data-informed culture at your institution?

What key questions or assumptions do you have about first-generation student outcomes?

How do you plan on using the PDP dashboards to support first-generation student success?

PDP Dashboard Overview for First-generation Success

Overview
- Executive Summary
- Enrollment
- Financial Aid (optional)
- Benchmarking

Early Momentum Indicators
- Credit Accumulation Rate
- Credit Completion Ratio
- Term to Term

Outcomes over Time
- Persistence/Retention
- Transfer
- Outcome Measures
- Time to Credential

Critical First-gen Filters:
- First Generation
- Race/Ethnicity
- Pell Status
- Enrollment Type
- Program of Study
- What else?

Data Utilization Planning

Data helps us:

- Tell stories about the first-generation student experience
- Justify budgets for targeted support programs
- Reveal trends that might otherwise go unnoticed
- Improve student outcomes through targeted interventions
- Challenge assumptions about first-generation students
- Measure impact of programmatic efforts
- Identify opportunities for early intervention
- Track progress toward institutional goals

What other benefits exist when data is utilized well?

Top 3 metrics you want to track for first-generation students:

1	2	3

Why these metrics matter for your institution:

One data gap you'd like to address:

Continuous Improvement Cycles & ImproveEDU Refresher

Continuous Improvement Cycle Tools		
Driver Diagram	**Purpose:** Maps SMART goal, barriers, and projects to an overall institution focus area	Visual tool used to systematically organize and display the key drivers or factors that contribute to achieving a specific aim or goal. Helps teams understand the relationships between different components and activities that influence desired outcomes.
Action Plan	**Purpose:** Breaks projects into tasks, timelines, and ownership	Detailed plan outlining the activities or tasks needed to facilitate improvement projects and meet overarching goals.

Driver Diagram Components	
Institution Focus Area	Institution-level objective that supports the overarching aim of closing completion gaps between first-gen and continuing-gen students.
SMART Goal	High-level improvement goal/objective you want to achieve set within the broader Institution Focus Area that is Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Timed.
Metric	Data relevant to the SMART goal, where measurable progress toward the goal is expected to positively impact the metric.
Primary Barrier	Potential challenges or obstacles that hinder progress towards your SMART goal.
Improvement Project	Small-scale, action-oriented efforts designed to initiate progress toward a larger goal by directly addressing a primary barrier

Getting Started with Continuous Improvement Cycle Planning

Guiding Questions

What are our institution's top 3–5 strategic priorities? (e.g., equity, student success, retention, workforce readiness)

Where do we see explicit or implicit connections to first-generation student success?

What outcomes or indicators are emphasized in the strategic plan? (e.g., graduation rates, belonging, post-grad employment—these can help define metrics)

Which areas from the Insights Tool Report feel most urgent or most aligned with our institution's mission and goals?

Who are the decision-makers, data owners, or champions that need to be at the table for this conversation?

First-year Credit Completion Practice: Creating an Action Plan

Background of the Driver Diagram	
Institutional Focus Area	Our institutional focus area is to close achievement gaps between first-gen college students and continuing gen students. Despite some improvements over the past two fall cohorts, there is a clear need for targeted support to enhance retention rates further.
SMART Goals	**By Fall 2028, we aim to:** • Increase first-generation, first-year retention by 2% each year. • Increase first-year credit completion rates. As compared to continuing gen peers who are completing 30 credits per year on average, first-gen, first-year students are completing 22 credits per year on average. • Improve degree completion rates for first-generation students (63%) to more closely align to their continuing generation peers (85%).
Momentum Metrics Identified	• First-year credit completion ratio • First to second year retention • Degree completion

Barrier and Improvement Project	
Barrier	**Improvement Project**
First-gen students are reporting an unclear career path and this is impacting their desire to graduate.	Need to identify data available at the institution that follows first-gen students post graduation/matriculation/stop out. • What recommendations can be made to incorporate career services into the student journey? • When are students withdrawing from the institution?

Continuous Improvement Cycle Action Plan
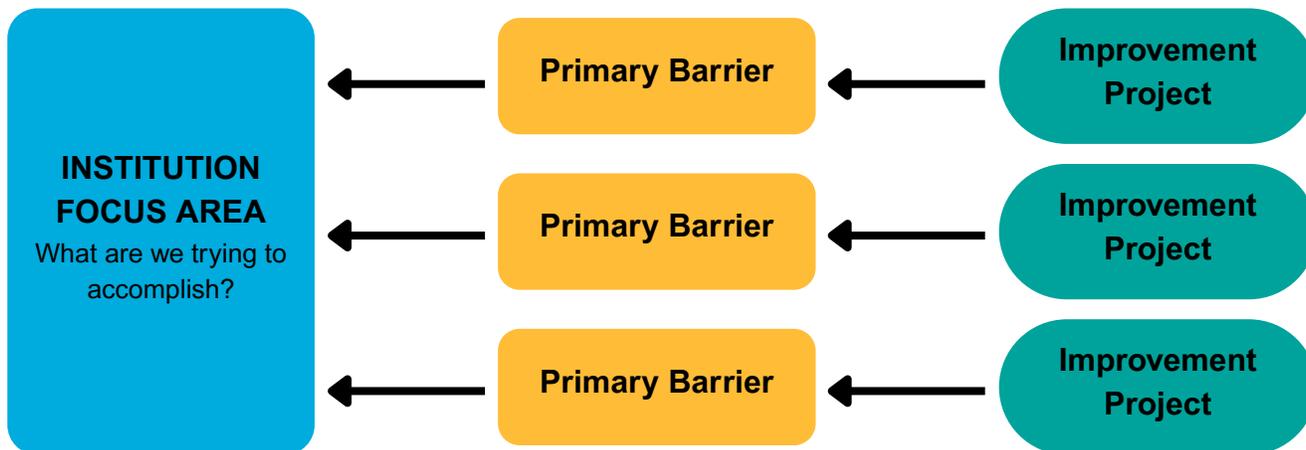
Who needs to be in this workgroup?	

How does this project tie to the SMART Goals?

30 Days

60 Days

90 Days

Driver Diagram-generation Activity

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┌─────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐          ╭──────────────────╮
│                 │ ◄─────── │ Primary Barrier  │ ◄─────── │   Improvement    │
│                 │          └──────────────────┘          │     Project      │
│   INSTITUTION   │                                         ╰──────────────────╯
│   FOCUS AREA    │          ┌──────────────────┐          ╭──────────────────╮
│ What are we     │ ◄─────── │ Primary Barrier  │ ◄─────── │   Improvement    │
│ trying to       │          └──────────────────┘          │     Project      │
│ accomplish?     │                                         ╰──────────────────╯
│                 │          ┌──────────────────┐          ╭──────────────────╮
│                 │ ◄─────── │ Primary Barrier  │ ◄─────── │   Improvement    │
└─────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘          │     Project      │
                                                            ╰──────────────────╯
```

The purpose of this activity is to generate a shared vision to drive a team's improvement efforts and ultimately achieve the overarching goal.

Note: Driver diagrams are not intended to be set in stone. Driver diagrams should evolve as you learn more about the problem/gap you want to address, the change ideas you are trying, and how best to achieve your aim. We encourage teams to revise driver diagrams to reflect your most current thinking/focus and to keep track of versions 1.0, 2.0, etc., so you can reflect on the evolution of your learning.

Definitions:

- **Institution Focus Area:** Institution-level objective that supports the overarching aim of closing completion gaps between first-gen and continuing-gen students. Informed by institutional strategic plans, data, insights, and Insights Tool report.
    - SMART Goal: A high-level improvement goal. Specific. Measurable. Achievable. Relevant. Timed. Specific objective set within the broader institution focus area.
    - Metric: The specific metric(s) you are seeking to address. What data is relevant to the SMART goal?

- **Primary Barrier:** The biggest issues blocking progress toward your goal.

- **Improvement Projects:** The "work" that drives change. The project should directly address a primary barrier.

ACTIVITY STEPS:

1. Clarifying/Refining the Institution Focus Area Statement (15 minutes)
As a group, craft/refine your goal: What do you want to accomplish, for whom, and by when?

Begin by having each person, individually or with a partner, craft a focus statement. Follow this with a share-around, where each person/partnership shares their goal with the group. Then the group can adopt/adapt from these to create a focus statement that everyone feels good about. Write your group's focus statement on the left side of your poster.

For Consideration:
Is your goal measurable? To help ensure your aim is measurable, it can be helpful to ask yourselves this question: "If X was the best it could be, what would it look like?" It can also help to get baseline data related to the issue/gap your team is working on.

Sample goals:
- By Spring 2027, reduce the retention gap between first-generation students and their continuing-generation student peers.
- By Spring 2028, reduce the graduation gap between first-generation students and their continuing-generation student peers.
- By Spring 2029, close the achievement gap between first-generation students and their continuing-generation student peers.

2. Identifying Primary Barriers (Primary Drivers) (20-30 minutes)

- ***Individual (no more than 5 minutes)***: Each person identifies the top 4 drivers (i.e., *high-leverage areas*) they think the team needs to focus on to impact the goal, and writes each driver on a separate index card.

    - **Facilitation Move**: It can help to think of drivers as X in the following statements: "If we figured out X, we could achieve our aim," or "If we don't figure out X, it is unlikely we would achieve our aim."

- ***Share Around and cluster***: Each person shares their most preferred driver with the group. If others wrote down a similar driver, group these cards together on the table.

    - **Facilitation Move**: As your group shares and clusters, it can be helpful to organize the "stacks" with the most cards to the top of the table and those with the least to the bottom. This gives the group a visual indicator of which drivers might be most important.

- ***As a group, select 3-5 drivers*** that you think are essential for impacting your focus area. Write those drivers on your driver diagram poster. This is your "theory of action" (i.e., if you could move these drivers, you could achieve your overarching goal).

    - Questions for the team to consider:
        - Is this driver specific enough that we all understand what to focus on?
        - Is this driver impactful enough that it will move the work forward?
        - Is this driver within our locus of control, meaning we can do something about it?
        - Are these drivers necessary and sufficient for achieving our goal?
        - Which driver do we think is our greatest lever for change? (*Star* this one.)
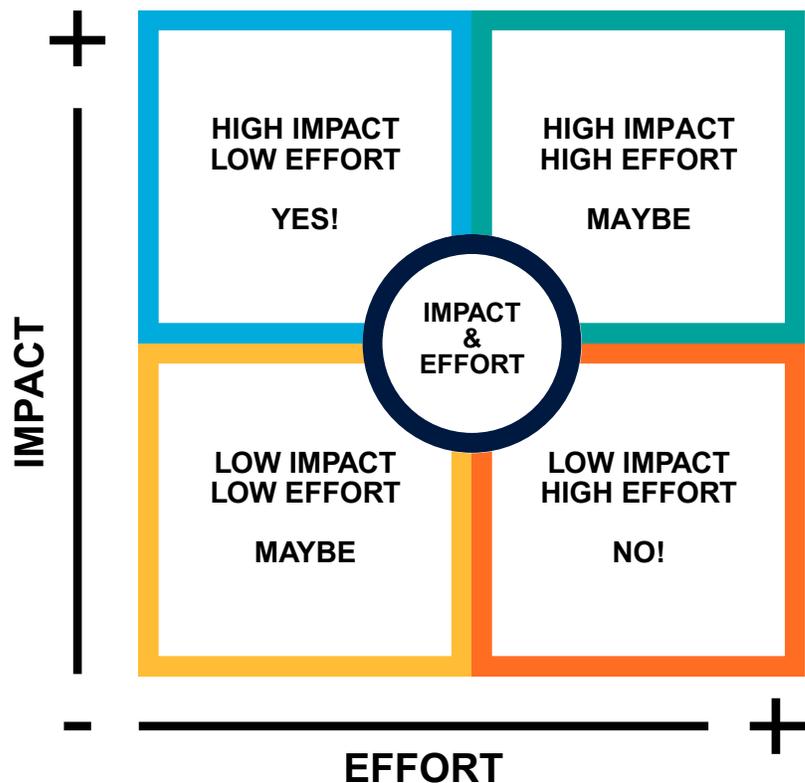
3. Generating Improvement Projects (20-25 minutes; you will need another poster for this part.)

- **Individual Brainstorm (3 minutes):** What could we try that would impact the drivers we identified? What does the research say we should try? Where is this happening well already (bright spots) and what are they doing? Write each idea on its own Post-it.

- **Chart Your Improvement Project–Change Ideas (15-20 minutes):** On another large chart paper, draw an effort vs impact axis (see example below). Using your best collective guess, place each of the change ideas in the quadrant in which it fits best. Start by having each person share their favorite idea and cluster similar ideas as you continue to share.

I**t can be helpful to ask:**
- How much effort (time, energy, resources) would it take for us to test this idea?
- If we are successful, what is the size of the likely impact?
- Will this idea impact issues of equity in our system?

- **Identify high-leverage change ideas (5 minutes):** As a group identify 4-6 change ideas that you think are most impactful, that you could get moving on quickly and that are within your team's locus of control (i.e., usually those in the upper two quadrants). **Add these change ideas to your driver diagram, drawing arrows to show how they are aligned.**

HIGH IMPACT LOW EFFORT — YES!

HIGH IMPACT HIGH EFFORT — MAYBE

IMPACT & EFFORT

LOW IMPACT LOW EFFORT — MAYBE

LOW IMPACT HIGH EFFORT — NO!

IMPACT

EFFORT

- Questions for the team to consider:
  - What do we notice about the alignment (or lack of) between our change ideas and drivers?
  - If your change ideas don't align with your existing drivers, this could suggest a new driver is needed.
  - If you have a driver without any change ideas, this driver may not be helpful to your current "theory of action."

4. Alignment Check (5-10 minutes)

5. Debriefing the Process (5 minutes)

Institution Goal-setting Recommendations

Institution Focus Area:

An institution-level objective that supports the overarching aim of closing completion gaps between first-gen and continuing-gen students. Informed by institutional strategic plans, data, and Insights Tool report.

- **Option 1:** Increase the graduation rate for first-generation students
- **Option 2:** Decrease the completion rate gap between first-generation students and continuing-generation students
- **Option 3:** Increase the year-to-year retention rates for first-generation students
- **Option 4:** Decrease the year-to-year retention rate gap between first-generation students and continuing-generation students

S.M.A.R.T. Goal

A specific objective set within the broader Institution Focus Area.

- **Goal:** What do you want to achieve?
- **Measurement(s) of completion:** What will you need to measure to know if you've achieved your goal?
- **Timeline to completion:** Identify a target date for achieving your goal.

Metrics:

What data is relevant to the SMART goal? Achieving the SMART goal will impact this metric. Used to track progress toward an overarching goal.

Attainment Metrics:

- **Degree Completion:** The percentage of students who complete their degree within a single institution.
- **Retention Rates (term/year):** The percentage of students who return to an institution for subsequent term/year of academic study.

Examples of Early Momentum Metrics:

- **First-year Enrollment:** The count of students beginning their enrollment at an institution.
- **First-year Retention:** The percentage of students who return to an institution for their second year of academic study.
- **Year-to-Year Retention (Fall to Fall):** The percentage of students who remain enrolled from one Fall term to the next Fall term.
- **Term-to-Term Retention (Fall to Spring; Spring to Fall):** The percentage of students who remain enrolled from one term to the subsequent term.
- **Credit Completion Ratio:** The ratio of the total number of credits earned by the total number of credits attempted in the first year of academic study.

Continuous Improvement: Driver Diagram Development Example 1

Institution Focus Area:

An institution-level objective that supports the overarching aim of closing completion gaps between first-gen and continuing-gen students. Informed by institutional strategic plans, data, and Insights Tool report.

- **Example Focus Area/Institution Goal:** Graduation Rate
  - *"Increase graduation rates for first-generation students."*

S.M.A.R.T. Goal

Specific objective set within the broader Institution Focus Area.

- **Example S.M.A.R.T. Goal:** "For the entering Fall 2023 cohort: Increase first-generation four-year graduation rate by X% over the baseline of X% for the entering Fall 2019 cohort."
  - **Alternate phrasing:** *"Reduce the completion gap between first-generation students and continuing-generation students by X% over the same period of time."*

Metrics:

What data is relevant to the SMART goal? Achieving the SMART goal will impact this metric. Used to track progress toward an overarching goal of increasing graduation rate.

- **Example Metrics:** *"Track Fall-to-Fall retention rate of first-generation students in the Fall 2023 entering cohort for five (5) years, comparing future rates to those for the previous Fall intervals."*

	Target	Actual
Entering Fall 2023 cohort	-------	68%
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2024)	70%	
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2025)	72%	
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2026)	74%	
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2027)	76%	
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2028)	78%	

NOTE: *You may also want to measure Fall-to-Spring retention rates as additional interim metrics in addition to the Fall-to-Fall rates.*

Considerations:

- Consider using data you are already collecting. Are you already able to capture this? Can you use these as momentum metrics?
- Define the cohorts here: First-year students? First time in college (FTIC)? Transfers? How are you defining first-generation?
- Completion Gap: if using this, define what the current gap is and what your target is (e.g., Reduce the gap by X% using the same timeline).
- Graduation/completion: define graduation/completion (e.g., degree type, certification)

Continuous Improvement: Driver Diagram Development Example 2

Institution Focus Area:

An institution-level objective that supports the overarching aim of closing completion gaps between first-gen and continuing-gen students. Informed by institutional strategic plans, data, and Insights Tool report.

- **Example Focus Area/Institution Goal:** Completion Gap
  - *Decrease the completion gap between first-gen and continuing-gen students.*

A. Fall 2019 Cohort   Overall 4-year graduation rate is 65%

Within the overall rate:
- First-gen student graduation rate is 60%
- Continuing-gen student graduation rate is 70%

B. Fall 2019 cohort	Actual
Fall-to-Spring retention rate (2019/20)	81%
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2020)	78%
Fall-to-Spring retention rate (2020/21)	71%
Fall-to-Fall rate (2021)	63%

*(*Continue F-to-F and F-to-S until grad year)

S.M.A.R.T. Goal

Specific objective set within the broader Institution Focus Area.

Example S.M.A.R.T. Goal:

- **Option #1:** For the entering Fall 2023 cohort: Increase the first-gen 4-year graduation rate by 5 % by 2027.

- **Option #2:** Reduce the completion gap between first-gen and continuing-gen students by 1% in 2024, 2025, and 2026 and by 2% in 2027 for a total of 5% by 2027.

Metrics:

What data is relevant to the SMART goal? Achieving the SMART goal will impact this metric. Used to track progress toward an overarching goal of increasing graduation rate.

- **Example Metric:** *"Track retention rate of first-generation students in the Fall 2023 entering cohort compared with those for the Fall 2019 cohort at the following intervals:"*

	Fall 2019 cohort	Fall 2023 cohort (target)
Fall-to-Spring retention rate (2019/20)	89%	90%
Fall-to-Fall retention rate (2020)	78%	80%
Fall-to-Spring retention rate (2020/21)	71%	74%
Fall-to-Fall rate (2021)	63%	67%

*Continue tracking term-to-term metrics until the 4-year graduation time frame target.

Considerations:

- Consider using data you are already collecting. Are you already able to capture this? Can you use these as momentum metrics?
- Define the cohorts here: First-year students? First time in college (FTIC)? Transfers? How are you defining first-generation?
- Define retention rate: registered? progressing toward a degree?
- Completion Gap: if using this, define what the current gap is and what your target is (e.g., Reduce the gap by XX% using the same timeline).
- Graduation/completion: define graduation/completion (e.g., degree type, certification)

Driver Diagram Development

STEP ONE: Institution Focus Area

Institution-level objective that supports the overarching aim of closing completion gaps between first-gen and continuing-gen students. Informed by institutional strategic plans, data, and Insights Tool report.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Specific objective set within the broader Institution Focus Area. Specific. Measurable. Achievable. Relevant. Timed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Metrics

What data is relevant to the SMART goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Momentum Metric Specific Goal

Goal connected to one of four momentum metrics: first-year enrollment, retention, credit completion ratio, and degree completion rates.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

STEP TWO: Primary Barriers

The biggest issues blocking progress toward your goal.

Barrier 1	Brief description of the barrier.

Barrier 2	Brief description of the barrier.

Barrier 3	Brief description of the barrier.

Barrier 4	Brief description of the barrier.

Barrier 5	Brief description of the barrier.

STEP THREE: Improvement Projects

The "work" that drives change. The project should directly address a primary barrier.

Barrier 1	Project(s) to address/minimize barrier.

Barrier 2	Project(s) to address/minimize barrier.

Barrier 3	Project(s) to address/minimize barrier.

Barrier 4	Project(s) to address/minimize barrier.

Barrier 5	Project(s) to address/minimize barrier.

STEP THREE: Improvement Projects

The "work" that drives change. The project should directly address a primary barrier.

Task name:			
Assignee:			
Others Involved:			
Cycle (circle):	30	60	90
Due Date:			
Comments/Notes:			

Task name:			
Assignee:			
Others Involved:			
Cycle (circle):	30	60	90
Due Date:			
Comments/Notes:			

Task name:			
Assignee:			
Others Involved:			
Cycle (circle):	30	60	90
Due Date:			
Comments/Notes:			

STEP THREE: Improvement Projects

The "work" that drives change. The project should directly address a primary barrier.

Task name:			
Assignee:			
Others Involved:			
Cycle (circle):	30	60	90
Due Date:			
Comments/Notes:			

Task name:			
Assignee:			
Others Involved:			
Cycle (circle):	30	60	90
Due Date:			
Comments/Notes:			

Task name:			
Assignee:			
Others Involved:			
Cycle (circle):	30	60	90
Due Date:			
Comments/Notes:			

ImproveEDU Outline & Instructions

Introduction to ImproveEDU

ImproveEDU elevates the way that FirstGen Forward and partner institutions operate by offering a streamlined virtual home to drive system change through enhanced campus coordination and visible prioritization of strategic goals.

In collaboration with Expert Guidance, the integration of the ImproveEDU platform allows institutions to collaboratively prioritize goals while also affording users the capability to make visible barriers or obstacles and devise strategies to support goal completion.

The ImproveEDU platform operates along two fundamental principles. First, it serves to coordinate institutional endeavors by providing a structured framework to articulate and document their continuous improvement initiatives. Secondly, it fosters a virtual environment for this work, allowing users to oversee task progression and coordinate work.

The user experience within the system mirrors that of a project management interface. ImproveEDU users gain visibility into all assigned tasks and task owners and can engage in collaborative discourse related to tasks. Additionally, automated reminders encourage timely completion.

Through ImproveEDU, institutions are empowered to drive system change in a sustainable and scalable manner that leads to elevated student success with clarity and effectiveness.

Building a Driver Diagram and Assigning Tasks

In this video, ImproveEDU users will be guided through the process of building a driver diagram and assigning tasks. By the end of this video, you will have a clear understanding of how to effectively use the driver diagram builder and assign tasks to drive your projects forward.

- Introduction
- Creating Presets for Driver Diagrams
- Viewing the User's Perspective
- Creating a New Driver Diagram
- Building the Driver Diagram
- Assigning Tasks to Action Plans

Instructions

This section will focus on building an institution driver diagram and assigning tasks.

To create or make edits to a driver diagram, follow these steps within the CIC section of the platform:

1. Begin by selecting "Driver Diagram" to access the driver diagram builder.
2. Click on "+ NEW DIAGRAM" to start a new driver diagram. You have the choice to either use an existing template or create a new one.
3. Create an "Institution Focus Area" and input the SMART Goal along with associated metrics. If you have a pre-existing driver diagram, you can easily copy and paste this information.
4. Next, input the institution's barriers. Each barrier should have a title and a brief description. To add a barrier, use the plus sign (+).
5. Once a barrier is created, you can add improvement projects related to that barrier. Add a title and description for each improvement project. You can include multiple projects using the plus sign.
6. To add another primary barrier, select "Add another Primary Barrier" and repeat the process to input all barriers and their associated projects.
7. Remember, you can move, edit, or remove any entries as needed.
8. Make sure to click "Save" to save your driver diagram for future reference.
9. To generate and view the completed diagram, click "Generate Diagram." Save the diagram once again and proceed to view it.

This creates a color-coordinated driver diagram with all the elements from the paper version visible. This includes the Institution Focus Area, SMART Goal, metrics, primary barriers, and improvement projects.

From this view, you have several options:
- Return to the builder to make further edits
- Print a copy of the driver diagram
- Begin building out action tasks
- View action plans
- View comments

To create action tasks:
1. Click on the horizontal ellipsis (three dots) in the top-right corner of the improvement project.
2. Select "Add Task."
3. In the task frame, provide the task name and assign the individual(s) responsible for the task.
4. Choose the cycle duration (30, 60, or 90 days) for this task and set the due date.
5. Add any necessary comments to support the task.
6. Click "Add" to complete the task creation.

To view action plans associated with a task:
1. Click on the horizontal ellipsis and choose "View Tasks."
2. Use filters to sort tasks by due date, creation date, or last update.

Additional features:
- You can create new tasks from this view.
- Navigate to the "My Tasks" link on the left side of the page to return to the task view.

By following these steps, you can efficiently create, edit, and manage driver diagrams, along with their associated improvement projects and action tasks.

Communicating within ImproveEDU

This section explains the different ways of communicating within the institution hub and previews the key points institutional users need to know. The video emphasizes the importance of using a centralized platform to avoid losing information and ensure effective collaboration. Additionally, this demonstration will walk users through how to comment on tasks and use @ mentions to trigger email notifications. This video will also show users how to view and comment on action plans, driver diagrams, and task discussions. Finally, it will discuss the importance of updating task statuses.

Instructions

To maintain a consistent workflow and facilitate communication among users within ImproveEDU, we have implemented various features such as tasks, action plans, driver diagrams, and more. These tools enable users to collaborate effectively and stay informed about project-related activities.

Accessing Tasks and Comments:
- To get started, go to the "My Tasks" section. Here, you can access your tasks and engage in discussions.
- Users can comment on tasks and view comments made by others. This feature allows for questions, specific pointers, additional context, and more.

Notifications:
- When a user is mentioned with "@username" or when someone comments on a task (even without including a mention), an email notification is triggered. This email will be sent to your contact's inbox, informing them that they've been mentioned or there's a question.

Viewing Task Discussions:
- To view comments or questions related to a driver diagram, click on the "Driver Diagram" link.
- Select the specific driver diagram you want to view and click on the horizontal ellipsis on the right.
- From the dropdown menu, select "View Comments."

Navigating to Project or Task Level:
- For a more detailed view, navigate to the "More Specific" section in the top right-hand corner of the page.
- Select "Project" to access project-related information.
- From there, choose "Task" to see task-specific details, including comments, user assignments, current health status, and due dates.

Updating Task Health:
- In the individual task view, you have several options:
  - Delete a task using the red "Delete Task" button.
  - Mark a task as complete using the green "Mark Task Complete" button.
  - Update the task's health status by clicking the blue "Update" button.
- You can indicate whether you're "On Track," "Behind Schedule," or if you "Need Help." Save your response.

Task Health Display:
- The refreshed page will display the updated health status in the "Current Health" section.
- Task health, along with the due date, will also be visible in the "My Tasks" area.

Visibility:
- These updates are visible not only to all users involved in the improvement project but also to FirstGen Forward staff and the Expert Guide.

Status Updates by FirstGen Forward Staff:
- FirstGen Forward staff or institutional representatives have the authority to update the status of any task at any time.
- When a task's health is updated, users will receive an automated email prompt every Friday, reminding them to check in.

Weekly Check-In:
- Clicking on the provided link in the email will lead you to a URL with links to all your active tasks.
- This process helps communicate the status of the work, prompting assignees to take necessary actions to ensure project success.

By following these steps and utilizing these features, ImproveEDU facilitates effective communication, collaboration, and task management within your institution's improvement projects.

Personalized Hub/Institution Settings

To customize and add additional users:

As a user, you can upload a picture, and edit your first and last name, role, or title.

To have additional users created, please contact your Expert Guide directly.

Institution Work Time Day 1 & 2

Outcome for the Institution Work Time Sessions:

Guiding reflections:

What is your overarching focus area (GOAL)?

(TIP: Align with your institutional strategic direction!)

What are some barriers to achieving your goal?

Key steps to achieve the outcome:

1.

2.

3.

4.

To Do

WHAT	WHO	DUE DATES	NOTES

Network Knowledge:
Leveraging Peer Networks to Advance Institutional Success

Exercise Instructions

Groups will take turns sharing and discussing a challenge they are experiencing in their first-gen focused work. This can be a future innovation or something you are currently managing that is related to your FirstGen Forward Network milestones.

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Presenter:	Institution:
Their role in the work	
Their idea/challenge	
Due Date:	
My notes/advice	

Closing Session

Reflection Questions

What was your "aha" moment during the Leadership Academy/Champion Convening?

What is one action you feel ready to take when you return to campus?

What part of your work feels most energizing after this time together?

**Complete the Leadership
Academy Survey**

Appendix

FirstGen Forward Resources

Welcome to the Network Leader-specific resource list! This list includes a range of FirstGen Forward resources designed to meet the unique needs of first-generation college students.

Basecamp
FirstGen Forward Network institutions receive access to an institution-specific learning hub. This hub is only accessible to colleagues from your institution and provides curated resources, messaging, and to-dos. Network institutions also have access to a Cohort-specific Learning Hub that allows them to connect with cohort colleagues, view announcements, seek support, and collaborate.

E-Learning Modules
Accessible modules that integrate multimedia resources and highlight diverse college partners who are champions in the field. Topics include institutional mapping and guidance in engaging work groups and steering committees.

Community of Practice and Monthly Content-based Workshops
Monthly content and peer networking workshops to advance knowledge and progress across actionable priorities. Contact your Expert Guide to learn how to join these informative sessions.

ImproveEDU
ImproveEDU is an online tool that empowers educational institutions to identify and prioritize critical challenges. With ImproveEDU, users can systematically map out barriers and obstacles, enabling them to develop strategic courses of action for continuous improvement.

Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC)
The CIC is what guides our work. The framework is rooted in an overarching institutional goal and assists in planning and keeping activities focused and on target. This model, designed with strategic stops at 30-, 60- and 90-day intervals, allows for reflection and assessment and ensures the work aligns with the larger institutional goal.

Insights Tool Report
The Insights Tool is a survey administered to a diverse group of staff, faculty, and administrators at each institution. The resulting data represents a collective insight into the institution's ongoing efforts to support first-generation students.

Dedicated Expert Guidance
Expert Guides serve as partners to address your institution's specific concerns, aspirations, and first-generation student population. Your Expert Guide can connect you with this valuable resource.

Toolkits and Guiding Documents
Toolkits are documents that outline the purpose and guiding principles of the topic for FirstGen Forward Network institutions. Topics include stakeholder identification, institutional mapping, financial literacy, a sense of belonging, and paths to graduate and professional schools. Toolkits typically include an executive summary of the topic and examples of mechanisms to complete the outlined activities (meeting agendas, email templates, or data organization sheets).

FirstGen Forward Publications

First-generation College Students' Career Entry: College Perspectives

Many first-generation students attend college to prepare for stable careers and pursue social mobility, while navigating unfamiliar social, economic, and professional landscapes. While much has been written about their educational experiences, less is known about their career development and the challenges they face transitioning into the workforce. This brief addresses that gap, highlighting both the institutional support available and the often-overlooked cultural aspects of boundary-crossing and imposter syndrome.

First-generation Student Success: A Landscape Analysis of Programs and Services at Four-year Institutions

The report, *First-generation Student Success: A Landscape Analysis of Programs and Services at Four-year Institutions*, details how institutions serve first-generation students, the challenges institutions encounter in providing support, and how first-generation students perceive their institutional experience.

National Data Fact Sheets on First-generation and Continuing-generation College Students

These fact sheets provide national statistics about the background characteristics, postsecondary experiences, and outcomes of first-generation and continuing-generation college students in the United States from 2019.

National Fact Sheets About First-generation College Graduates' Transition to Graduate School and Employment in the Year After Earning a Bachelor's Degree

These fact sheets provide national statistics about first-generation college graduates' transition to graduate school and employment in the year after earning a bachelor's degree in 2021.

An Annotated Bibliography on First-generation College Students: Research from 2008-2019

This annotated bibliography examines hundreds of entries, placing each into chapters centering on eleven topics: career readiness; classroom teaching and pedagogy; graduate and professional school students; intersections of identity; low-income & working-class students; student refugees; mass media and popular culture; memoirs and fiction; parents and families; social and cultural capital; and student success.

Journal of First-generation Student Success

The Journal of First-generation Student Success joins other publications of NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, adding another robust resource available to NASPA members. The Journal is managed by FirstGen Forward and seeks to publish practice articles grounded in research and literature and, reciprocally, research articles that speak to practice.

National Data Fact Sheets on First-generation College in 2020

These fact sheets provide information about first-generation college students' demographic characteristics, enrollment characteristics, and experiences during the early COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the findings are similar to those in the National Data Fact Sheets from 2019.

News & Blogs

Find the latest fromFirstGen Forward, learn new and innovative approaches from colleagues, and engage with current mainstream media conversations on first-generation student success.

FirstGen Forward Network Leader-specific Resources

Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP)

The Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) empowers institutions with comprehensive data, easier analysis, and better visual representations to help users understand, improve, and communicate student momentum metrics, outcomes, and equity.

FirstGen Forward Programs and Services

CatalystFIRST

CatalystFIRST is central to the FirstGen Forward's strategic priority to advance critical first-generation student success conversations through national convenings, advocacy, and policy influence. We provide talented speakers to elevate your event—big or small—while remaining an affordable option for all institution types, sizes, and geographic locations.

Webinars and Events

Engage with in-person and virtual conferences, professional development, and networking and collaboration platforms. Specific offerings for first-generation student success are infused throughout each offering. These fee-based offerings include developing and implementing programs for first-generation college students, utilizing data to support first-generation student success, and enhancing knowledge and skills for working with first-generation students.

Vocal Video Activity Challenge

Vocal Video is the easiest way to remotely capture, edit, & publish video testimonials. The Vocal Video platform streamlines the process by allowing users to request video responses via a link, without requiring respondents to download an app or schedule a meeting.

The Activity Challenge:

Create a video about your experience at 2025 Leadership Academy & 2025 Champions Convening

VIDEO LENGTH	TOOLS NEEDED	TIPS FOR PARTICIPANTS
90 seconds	**Laptop or smartphone to record.**	• **Pick a quiet and well-lit place** • **Relax & be yourself – it doesn't have to be perfect** • **You can redo your recording if you're not happy with it**

The following prompt is provided to guide your response:

What is the most valuable thing you're taking away from your experience at Leadership Academy or Network Champion Convening?

Thanks in advance for your time in providing feedback. We use this information to make sure we're providing the best experience for our institutional partners and colleagues!

SCAN ME

Scan the QR code to capture your video!

Extra Space Parking Lot

FirstGen Forward

LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

Contact the FirstGen Forward Network at
Network@FirstGenForward.org

FirstGen FORWARD

f in X o

@FirstGenForward

FirstGenForward.org

NASPA Events App

Scan the QR code and download the NASPA Event App today!

You can also search NASPA Events in your mobile app store.