

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

WHAT YOU **NEED** TO KNOW TO **ENROLL** THIS STUDENT POPULATION

First-generation students face many more barriers compared to continuing-generation students whose parents have enrolled or graduated from college. They have greater financial need, are less likely to earn a degree, and are more ethnically diverse. All of these factors require a new approach to recruiting these students.

1 in 3 incoming freshmen are first-generation students¹



FINANCES are a bigger challenge for first-generation students



24% of higher ed students are first-generation AND low income¹

Household incomes under \$50,000:

77% First-generation

29% Continuing-generation²

39% have financial troubles that are very distracting and troublesome³

87% try to determine if they can afford an institution when looking at its website⁴

Their PARENTS lack “college knowledge”



Students whose parents did not go to college are less likely to:

- Talk about college plans
- Discuss preparing for entrance exams
- Search for financial aid information
- Attend information sessions⁵

2 out of 3 parents of first-generation students could not estimate the cost of one year of college, compared to 1 out of 4 parents with college degrees⁶

1 in 4 first-generation students are Hispanic or Latino² These students are more likely to come from homes where English is not the primary language, which creates additional challenges for communicating with their parents.

Half of first-generation students do not earn a DEGREE or certificate²



Earned a bachelor's degree

20% first-generation students

42% continuing-generation students

Earned a bachelor's, associate, or certificate

53% first-generation students

70% continuing-generation students

GUIDE FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO COLLEGE

7 ways to engage and enroll first-generation students and their families

First-generation students need a path to college that connects them with the resources they need to enroll and succeed. Institutions must connect with first-generation students who are the best fit and put them in position to persist, succeed, and graduate through smart engagement and tools to guide them along the way. These seven strategies help you identify, engage, and energize first-generation students by providing the information and connections they need at the moment they need them.



Prioritize students who are engaged

Use real-time, personalized engagement scoring to reveal which first-generation students are the most engaged and ready for immediate outreach.



Communicate across channels

Make sure students receive every critical communication by reaching them through every channel they use: digital, social media, email, print, and text.



Show how they fit

Help first-generation students explore their intellectual and career interests through interactive “fit finders,” and then connect that desire to your academic program offerings.



Make their exploration interactive

Create personalized interactive hubs that allow students to discover the most relevant information whenever they need it.



Engage their parents

Keep parents of first-generation students engaged and informed with their own personalized informational hubs so they can become enrollment advocates.



Respond to their choices

Use responsive communications triggered by student choices to connect students to the most appropriate information, personnel, and next steps.



Personalize their content and experience

Meet students' expectations for dynamic, customized content that provides a personalized experience at every stage of their journey to college.

LET'S TALK ABOUT STRATEGIES FOR ENROLLING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

Find out how to effectively engage first-generation students and tap into their motivations to attend college. Set up a time to talk with our experienced enrollment experts.

RuffaloNL.com/FirstGeneration | 800.876.1117

SOURCES

¹Opidee, I. (2015, February 25). Supporting first-gen college students. *University Business*

²Redford, J., & Mulvaney Hoyer, K. (2017). *First-generation and continuing generation college students: A comparison of high school and postsecondary experiences*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics

³Ruffalo Noel Levitz. (2018). *National freshman motivation to complete college report*. Cedar Rapids, IA: Ruffalo Noel Levitz

⁴Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2017). *E-Expectations trend report*. Cedar Rapids, IA: Ruffalo Noel Levitz

⁵Horn, L., & Nuñez, A. (2000). *Mapping the road to college: First-generation students' math track, planning strategies, and context of support*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics

⁶Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2017). *Perceptions and communication preferences of high school students*. Cedar Rapids, IA: Ruffalo Noel Levitz