

Tulane joins network of higher ed institutions at forefront of first-generation student success

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Tulane joins over 400 higher education institutions nationwide as a member of the FirstGen Forward Network. The network is dedicated to bolstering first-generation student success by enhancing academic and co-curricular outcomes, and building more inclusive institutional environments. Pictured is a sign written by a student from Tulane's First-Gen Day Celebration answering the question: What are you the most proud of being a first-gen student? (Photo provided by Newcomb-Tulane College)

Tulane University has been selected to be a member of the FirstGen Forward Network, a group of higher education institutions dedicated to strengthening the experiences and success of first-generation students in education and future career opportunities.

Tulane joins over 400 higher education institutions nationwide in their commitment to first-generation student success by bolstering the student experience, enhancing academic and co-curricular outcomes, and building more inclusive institutional environments.

“We are extremely honored to be selected as a member of the FirstGen Forward Network,” said Mollye Demosthenidy, dean of Newcomb-Tulane College. “Our membership will support our existing efforts in striving for academic excellence and empowering our first-generation students.”

As a FirstGen Network member, faculty and staff at Tulane will have the opportunity to engage — via monthly calls, professional development, goal setting, annual reporting and more — with peer institutions also working to create environments that improve the experiences and success of first-generation students. Institutions that are part of the network can also receive an evidence-based and research-supported framework of actionable priorities supported through workshops, diagnostic tools, robust data sharing and guidance of expert coaches.

Membership to the FirstGen Forward Network further solidifies Tulane’s long-term commitment to upholding an inclusive, equitable and diverse environment where all students can thrive.

For instance, Tulane’s Center for Academic Equity (CAE) is dedicated to supporting first-generation college students, by providing numerous resources, staff and engagement opportunities to foster overall student success during their higher education journey at Tulane. Other efforts that contribute to a foundation in which Tulane students from all backgrounds feel empowered include academic advising, success coaching, access to grants and scholarship opportunities, and programming like First-Gen Fridays, a monthly event for first-generation students to socialize and build community with one another, along with faculty and staff who were first-generation students.

“I’m thrilled at Tulane’s acceptance into the FirstGen Forward Network. This is a testament to the great strides Tulane and the CAE have taken over the last few years to ensure that our first-gen students are supported, feel a sense of belonging and thrive at Tulane,” Tanya Mandishona, director of the Center for Academic Equity, said. “As we continue to build first-gen student support across campus, the knowledge and support from the FirstGen Forward Network will be invaluable.”

Currently, 14% of the incoming Class of 2028 identify as first-generation college students, a four percentage point increase from the Class of 2027. Shawn Abbott, dean of admission and vice president for enrollment management at Tulane, said, “Tulane has never been more committed to enrolling, supporting and graduating first-generation college students. In just two years, we have doubled the number and percentage of first-generation college students and in the Class of 2028, we just welcomed the arrival of a record-breaking number of first-gen students to Tulane.”

“This new partnership with FirstGen Forward only cements our commitment to first-gen students at Tulane,” Abbott said.