



National Honor Recognizes MCU's Commitment to First-generation Students

Marymount California University continues distinction.

RANCHO PALOS VERDES, CA, USA, July 9, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ --

[Marymount California University](#) has been named a First-gen Forward Institution by the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of the [National Association of Student Personnel Administrators](#) (NASPA) and The Suder Foundation.

The designation recognizes higher education institutions focused on continuing the success of and improving experiences for first-generation college students across the nation. Participation gives [MCU](#) the opportunity to build upon existing programs, explore solutions to institutional challenges and generate new knowledge alongside a community of peer institutions and like-minded professionals.

First-generation college students are generally categorized as those who are the first in their family to attend college. MCU reported 22% of its students earning undergraduate degrees from July 2019 through June 2020 self-identified as first-generation.

"First-generation students can face many unique hurdles during their college experience, so MCU is making investments in the creation of opportunities to help them achieve their educational goals," said Ryan Alcantara, vice president of student affairs.

For example, MCU offers a first-gen student support group led by the Student Wellness Center, in addition to a new community hour that carves out time in the class schedule for students to connect over common interests and an alumni mentoring program to help first-gen students better prepare for that next step after college.

MCU has the advantage of numerous faculty and staff who are also first generation and understand the kind of guidance and support a first-generation student may need to have a fulfilling experience from their first day of college right up to graduation.

"Small means more at MCU, and we want to show our first-gen students you're not a number here. We're here as faculty, staff and fellow students to help you at every step of your educational journey, and most importantly, feel a sense of belonging," Alcantara

said. "Knowing you have academic, social, personal and career support can mean a lot."

Marymount joins 76 other colleges and universities to receive the First-gen Forward Institution 2020-2021 designation. The Center for First-generation Student Success was launched in 2017 with the mission of being the primary source of best practices, professional development and information for the higher education community on the success of first-generation college students.

Marymount offers undergraduate and graduate programs that lead to associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees designed to prepare students for purposeful lives and careers. For more information, visit www.MarymountCalifornia.edu.

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