



The University of Texas Permian Basin Receives First-gen Forward Designation

This designation proves that UT Permian Basin goes above and beyond to provide extra support to our first-generation college students.

ODESSA, TX - TEXAS, UNITED STATES, April 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation, recently announced the 2022-23 First-gen Forward cohort. The First-gen Forward designation recognizes institutions of higher education that have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. Selected institutions receive professional development, community-building experiences, and a first look at the Center's research and resources.

UT Permian Basin offers various programming that supports first-generation students. One of these programs is the First-Year Seminar. The semester-long class is attended by first-year students that learn about resources that are available on campus to enhance their experience at UT Permian Basin. Campus departments such as the Division of Student Affairs and Leadership and the Student Success Center, offer professional, leadership, social, and cultural programming that engages first-generation students. Through mentorship, clubs/organizations, resource fairs, the food pantry, and the newly established Center for Student Belonging and Inclusion, first-generation students will continue to feel a sense of belonging, encouraging them to remain enrolled and successfully graduate.

"The Center is pleased to welcome UT Permian Basin into the 2022-23 First-gen Forward cohort. Through the application process, it was evident that UT Permian Basin is not only taking steps to serve first-generation students but is prepared to make a long-term commitment to and employ strategies that foster an environment of success for this important population," said Dr. Sarah E. Whitley, assistant vice president, Center for First-generation Student Success.

"The majority of the students we serve are first-generation students here at UT Permian Basin. It can be quite challenging and fearsome for a student without much knowledge about the college experience to step into the unknown. I am also a first-generation student; I know the barriers and challenges a student might face when first attending college. There are so many questions and sometimes we have no idea where to begin. Therefore, having the opportunity to provide those resources and guidance I once needed is of immense enthusiasm. Obtaining this recognition is of great excitement that will help us move forward with a better approach and

help our students achieve success.” - Yaminah Miranda, Director of Retention.

“First-generation students face challenges that can limit their campus involvement and impact their academic goals. Being the first in their family to take on this journey, first-generation students can feel overwhelmed, unprepared, and doubt their capabilities. As a first-generation student myself, I am excited to take part in this initiative that will support the efforts UT Permian Basin currently offers to our first-generation students. I look forward to helping break barriers that make our students feel limited and have them feel seen, heard, and capable. Furthermore, having the opportunity to collaborate with other institutions that face similar challenges and the capability to work together to identify solutions through our partnership is a benefit both the UT Permian Basin and I will value.” - Diana Ortiz Balderrama, Director of the Center for Student Belonging and Inclusion.

“First-gen Forward is an exciting opportunity for UT Permian Basin to join a dedicated community of professionals prepared to share evidence-based practices and resources, troubleshoot challenges, generate knowledge, and continue to advance the success of first-generation students across the country. We are excited to see a groundswell of activity from the First-gen Forward cohort and know UT Permian Basin will be a significant contributor,” offered Dr. Kevin Kruger, president, and CEO of NASPA.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The Center is the premier source of evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community to advance the success of first-generation students. Based in Washington, DC, the Center aims to acknowledge the intersectional experiences of first-generation college students. It offers an outlet for sharing cutting-edge research and current media conversations, opportunities for engagement through online learning, conferences, and events, and access to a bevy of programs and services intended to improve first-generation initiatives across higher education. To learn more about the Center for First-generation Student Success, visit firstgen.naspa.org.

ABOUT NASPA

NASPA is a member-centered association supporting a diverse and passionate network of 15,000 professionals and 1,200 institutions across the globe. It is the professional home for the field of student affairs and is dedicated to cultivating student success in collaboration with the missions of its institutional members—a network of colleges and universities representing every sector of higher education.

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