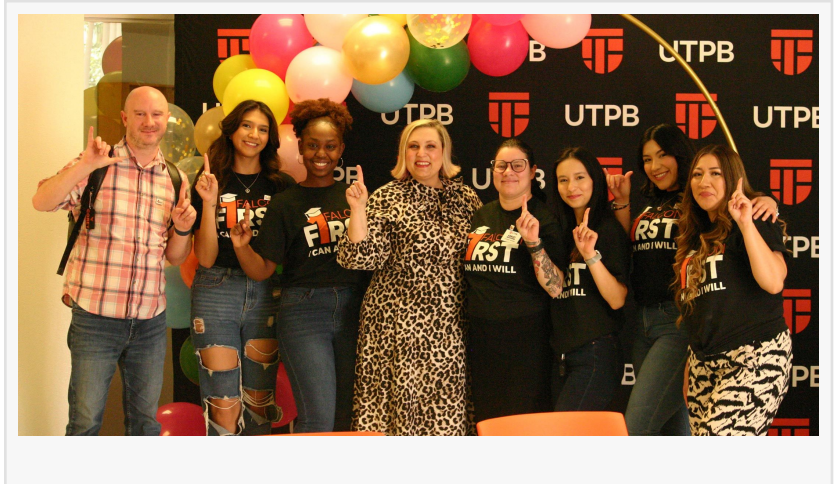


UT Permian Basin recognized for dedicated commitment to advancing first-generation student success

ODESSA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, January 24, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Center for First-generation Student Success](#), an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation, announced the advancement of The University of Texas Permian Basin to the First Scholars phase of the First Scholars Network. UTPB was chosen based upon its demonstrated commitment to advancing the outcomes of first-generation students through improving both first-generation student success initiatives and institution-wide approaches.



“UTPB has been committed to serving first-generation students since our start 50 years ago. We are proud to be the alma mater of so many graduates who are the first in their family to graduate from college. Our selection as a First Scholars institution will only deepen our long-standing commitment and help us continue to be the best home for first-generation students as possible,” said UTPB’s Senior Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Dr. Becky Spurlock.

Powered by the Center for First-generation Student Success, the First Scholars Network is a four phase approach that allows institutions of higher education to advance outcomes through establishing communities of practice, gaining knowledge of resources, and establishing peer networks. To date, 349 institutions of higher education have entered the Network, representing 49 states and the District of Columbia. The Center recently announced a commitment to serving over 700 institutions through the Network in the next five years.

Through their outstanding work, UTPB has been selected to join the third phase of the Network journey, First Scholars, that signals an unprecedented commitment to serving first-generation students. First Scholars serves as the Center’s customized approach to intentional institutional transformation in an effort to advance student outcomes. This work establishes an environment where direct student supports can be established, scaled, and sustained.

“When a first-generation student attends an institution that is developed with them in mind, and has appropriate supports and resources, outcomes will improve,” said Dr. Sarah E. Whitley, vice president with the Center for First generation Student Success. “First Scholars institutions have demonstrated this commitment at the highest level on campus.”

“After seeing such exciting Network progress and leadership, the Center is pleased to welcome UTPB as a new First Scholars institution,” Whitley continued. “Through every step, it was evident that UTPB is not only invested in serving first-generation students, but is prepared to make a long-term commitment to radically change the way first-generation students are served and to employ strategies for sustainability and scale that result in intentional impact.”

Through a phased approach designed to scaffold learning and achievement of institutions over time, First Scholars provides institutions with the opportunity to engage in student-centered, systemic transformation through an ecosystem of resources.

Benefits of participation in First Scholars include:

- an evidence-based and research-supported framework of actionable priorities supported through monthly workshops;
- diagnostic tools providing critical institutional insight;
- robust data sharing as part of the national Postsecondary Data Partnership;
- guidance of expert coaches along each step of the experience;
- and customized solutions and continuous improvement plans personalized to allow each institution to meet its first-generation student success goals.

Upon meeting milestones in the First Scholars phase, institutions are eligible to earn the Champion Campus designation.

“First Scholars provides a unique balance of bringing first-generation student initiative scaling into focus while drilling down into how UTPB recalibrates institutional systems to elevate potential and advance outcomes for first-generation students, positioning them to be a real leader in first-generation student success,” said Dr. Kevin Kruger, president and CEO of NASPA. “I look forward to seeing their success as they drive national change and advance success outcomes for first-generation students.”

To learn more about the First Scholars Network and the Center for First-generation Student Success, visit firstgen.naspa.org.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The Center is transforming higher education to drive first-generation student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life. We provide data, training, and expertise for a growing network of colleges and universities around the country to scale and sustain the important work of serving first-generation students.

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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