



Engaging Your First-Generation Students From

Orientation to Graduation

Introductions



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Agenda

- Programming Best Practices
 - On-boarding/Orientation
 - Ongoing Support
 - Graduation
- Support During COVID-19
- Q&A



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PROGRAMMING BEST PRACTICES

Onboarding and Orientation

- Collaborate with Admissions colleagues
- Scrutinize new student website and other materials
- Develop and share “law school lingo” document
- Consider separate pre-orientation/orientation programs



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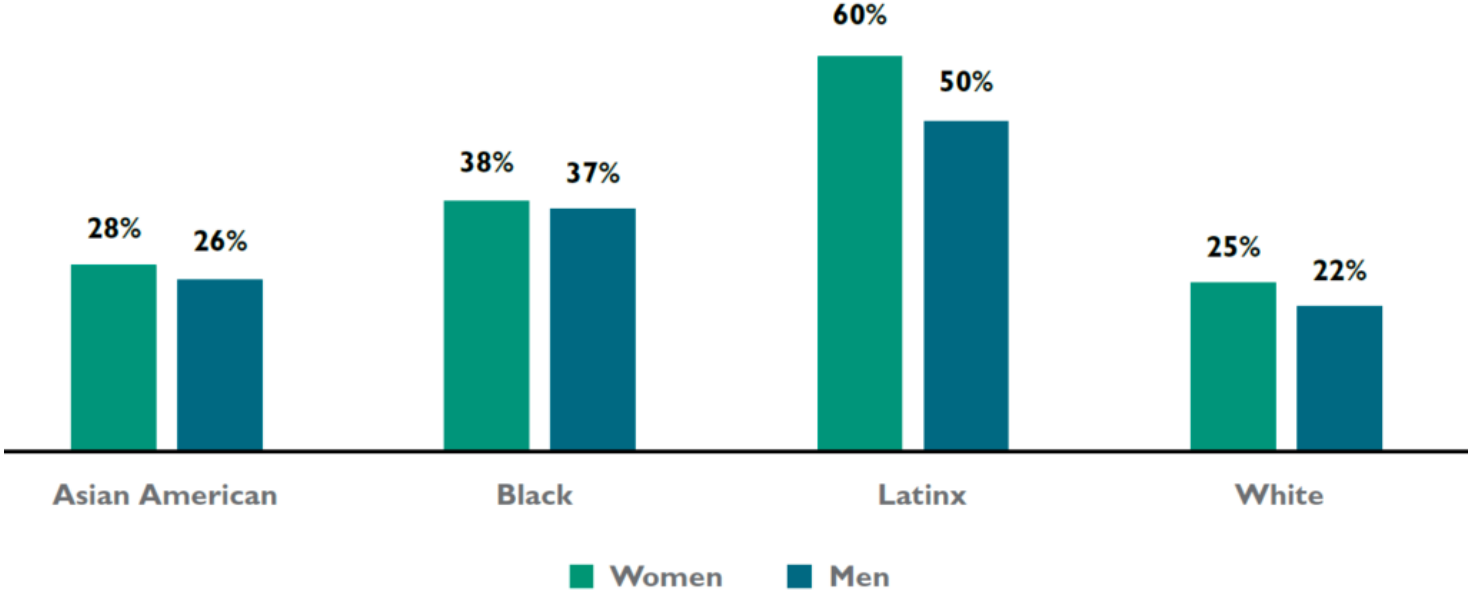
Ongoing Support

- Cultivate a sense of belonging
- Help students acclimate to law school:
 - Time constraints
 - Financial management
 - Bar preparation
 - Summer clerkships
- Establish peer and alumni mentoring opportunities
- Schedule family and friends events



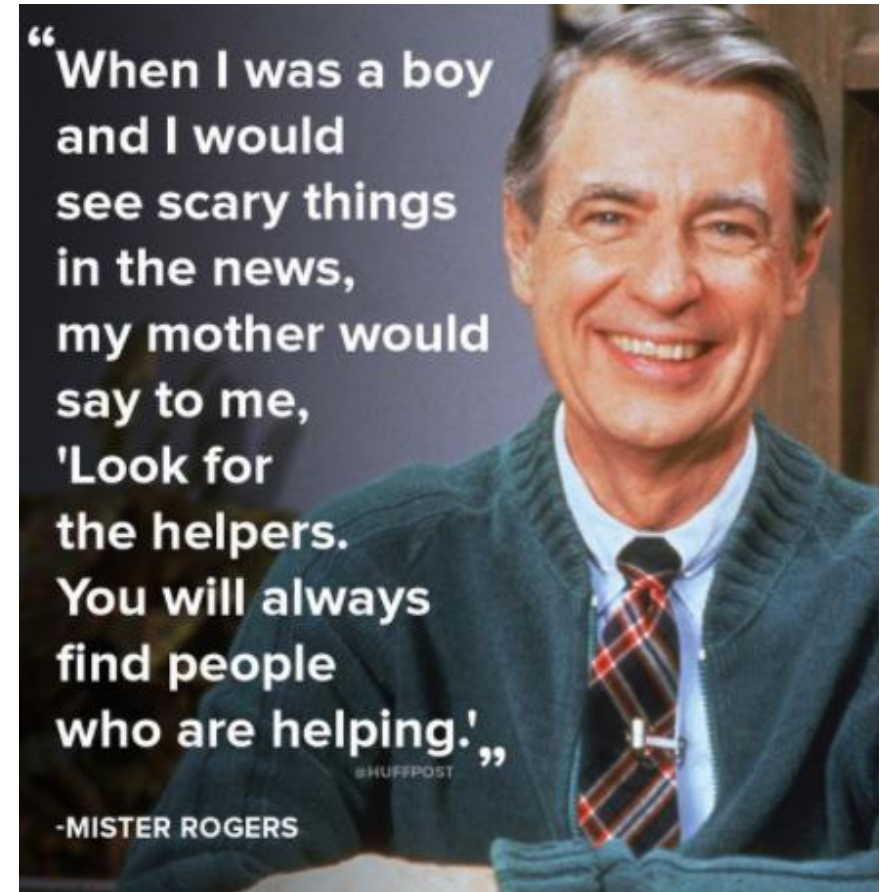
Intersectionality of First-Gen Students

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT



Working with Faculty: “Look for the Helpers”

- Identify, highlight and strengthen relationships with faculty allies and leaders
 - First Generation Professors
 - DEI Faculty Experts
 - First-Year Faculty



Mental Health and Wellness



Suffering in Silence: The Survey of Law Student Well-Being and the Reluctance of Law Students to Seek Help for Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns

66 J. Legal Educ. 116 (2016-2017)

“Although many students will only rarely see the dean of students, every student interacts with faculty. Students look up to faculty and meet with them regularly for academic and career development support. Faculty, if properly educated and willing to play this role, can spot potential issues before they become a crisis.”



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Mental Health and Wellness

- Prioritize first generation students' mental health and wellness throughout their law school career.
- Develop and/or strengthen partnerships with mental health providers in order to expand campus access and resources.

MA Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers and New England Law | Boston

- Create and strengthen peer-support communities and meet regularly with first-generation students.



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Working with Staff

- Identify systemic and institutional needs/opportunities
- Build dynamic partnerships beyond the Dean of Students Office
 - Admissions
 - Alumni Relations
 - Communications/Marketing

<https://www.nesl.edu/blog/detail/how-a-first-gen-program-will-shape-your-law-school-career>



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Starting a Program on Your Campus

Take that
first step!



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Starting a Program on Your Campus

- Work with students to define “first gen” and embrace intersectionality
- Allow for independence and safe spaces, while also understanding what students won’t always know
- Offer first-gen contacts (faculty and staff)
- Check in during pivotal law school moments
- Find special ways to honor graduation



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Graduation and Bar Admission

- Start sharing bar admission details early including application process, timeline, steps, and post-grad financial planning
- Schedule special informal event for first-gen graduates
- Identify alumni mentors to check in with graduates during bar study



SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Support During COVID-19

- Cultivating a sense of belonging is essential
 - Zoom Fatigue
 - Repository of Resources
 - Individual Check-ins
- Caregiving responsibilities



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Q&A