



USC First-Generation Student Summer Program

Information kit

Prepared by

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To: Nahid Razavi, assistant dean of Student Development Programs
From: Kelly J. Peterson, PR coordinator of USC Office of Orientation Programs
Re: The First-Generation Student Summer Program
Date: Dec. 16, 2019

Dear Ms. Razavi,

This summer marks the launch of USC's First-Generation Student Summer Program, a very exciting development for first-generation students at the university who will now receive a tailored orientation experience to meet their unique needs. Spearheading the program is Jessica Frey Nielsen, director of Student Development Programs.

As the new semester quickly approaches, so does the launch of the summer program. I assembled an information kit that I believe will be effective to alerting the student and administrative bodies at USC and media outlets of our office's newest development as our office's PR coordinator.

We've received positive response from a sampled group of current first-generation students at USC. Their input is vital because, as you know, the program creation rides on the wave of student concern regarding the resources and support available for first-gen students at USC. We want to ensure that the whole student population is aware of our office's concern for the first-gen experience at USC.

In the class of 2023, 15% of the enrolled students are the first in their family to go to college. Going forward, this program provides the opportunity of employment and professional development for current first-generation students while also helping future first-gen Trojan students with their college experience.

As you understand, USC needs to build rapport among its students and support minority populations at the university. This program is one of a kind, and its service to first-generation college students attending our elite university is of great importance, and this information kit is the first step in making our concern known.

I believe that the assets listed below in this information kit are the most effective means to communicate to both students and faculty of USC that the university and Office of Orientation Programs supports first-generation college students.

The information kit includes:

- A press release announcing the creation of the summer program.
- A media advisory to alert local media outlets of our program.
- A newsletter to be emailed to USC students and administration.
- A frequently asked questions page to answer questions about the program.
- A charticle including statistics to explain the first-generation student struggle.
- A profile of Jessica Frey Nielsen.

I would also like to include a video element, specifically a panel interview with three first-generation students here at USC. They will be asked to speak about their experience as first-gen students here at the university, and how they believe this program will change the experience for future Trojans.

Please review the information kit I've assembled and let me know about your thoughts and concerns. With your approval, we plan to distribute this December 18, the last day before winter recess.

Sincerely,

Kelly J, Peterson
PR Coordinator
USC Office of Orientation Programs
(307) 575-0349
kellypet@usc.edu



USC University of
Southern California

Office of Orientation Programs

USC orientation announces first summer program for first-generation students

LOS ANGELES, Dec.18, 2019 -- The University of Southern California's Office of Orientation Program announces today the university's first summer program for first-generation college students. The First-Generation Student Summer Program utilizes 12 first-gen students to develop and implement curriculum at orientation sessions over the summer for incoming first-generation students.

The new summer program hopes to aid one of the largest student populations on campus by exposing the next generation of first-gen Trojans to vital resources to ease their experience at the university. The program guides students towards resources available to them and discusses problems like financial aid, imposter syndrome and other struggles the population faces.


"I am so excited to announce this program that we [the Office of Orientation Programs] have been working on over the last year," says Jessica Frey Nielsen, program spearhead and director of Student Development Programs, "I truly believe that his program will have a positive effect on the first-generation student experience here at the university and build a greater community for those students."

In USC's class of 2023, 15% of the enrolled students are the first in their family to go to college. Across the four classes of undergraduate students currently at the University, first-generation students compose 3,000 students. The summer program hopes to create rapport among incoming classes of first-gen students.

The program provides opportunities for first-gen students to have employment in a professional environment and develop as young professionals. A main focus of the program is to ensure that all first-generation students are supported in college, but also prepared for what happens after graduation.

"I think that working in this program will provide a lot of opportunity for me to have first-hand experience helping others in a big transitional part of their lives," says Seth Mitchell, a recent hire of the program, "as an Occupational Therapy major here at USC, I think the benefit of this program for my career will be incomparable. I wish the program was around sooner!"

Orientation has previously included first-generation information program during orientation sessions, but the office has decided that a more focused approach would be more effective.



About the University of Southern California

The University of Southern California is one of the world's leading private research universities. An anchor institution in Los Angeles, a global center for arts, technology and international business, USC's diverse curricular offerings provide extensive opportunities for interdisciplinary study and collaboration with leading researchers in highly advanced learning environments.

For more information

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USC University of Southern California

Office of Orientation Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY:

USC announces new summer program for first-generation college students

WHO:

Jessica Frey Nielsen, director of Student Development Programs
Lisa Starr, director of the Office of Orientation Programs
Carol Folt, president of the University of Southern California

WHAT:

The Office of Student Development Programs and Office of Orientation Programs at USC launches the first program for first-generation college students for the summer. The First-Gen Student Summer Program employs 12 first-gen students at USC and allows them to develop and implement programming this summer about life as the first-in-the-family student. The curriculum is directed towards incoming freshmen and transfer students to the university.

WHEN:

Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2019 signifies the start date of program implementation

WHERE:

The University of Southern California Office of Orientation Programs
More information can be found online at <https://orientation.usc.edu/first-generation/>

WHY:

The University of Southern California is committed to providing the most supportive environment for students, including the roughly 20% of undergraduates who identify as first-generation college students. The First-Generation Student Summer Program fosters an inviting environment for incoming first-generation students and their guests.

HOW:

Please navigate to the website noted above for more information, or contact Kelly Peterson, PR coordinator for the Office of Orientation Programs, at (307) 575-0349, or kellypet@usc.edu. Interviews with Ms. Nielsen, Ms. Starr, or President Folt can be arranged through Mr. Peterson as well.

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FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS AT USC

USC Student Development Programs monthly newsletter

USC's new summer program for first-generation college students

The USC Office of Student Development Programs announces a new summer program for first-generation college students. Spearheaded by Jessica Frey Nielsen, director of SDP, the First-Generation Student Summer Program hires a dozen first-gen students to help develop relevant programming about the first-gen experience at USC for incoming students over the summer.



A group of first-generation college students at USC

"We're excited to see how this program will affect first-generation students here at USC," says Nielsen, "this summer program is the first step in creating the most supportive and impactful environment for first-gen students at USC."

Orientation has already included sessions for incoming first-generation students, but the new program builds the first-generation community at USC. The information presented to students includes information about imposter syndrome, financial aid, paying for college, campus resources and information about internships, jobs and the like.

In this issue

USC's new summer program for first-generation college students

First-gen student spotlight: Seth Mitchell

USC student leaders propose a new first-generation student resource center

Event recap

Announcements

Fisher Fellowship program

If you are a first-generation student majoring in Dornsife, you may qualify for the Fisher Fellowship Program! The program allows recipients to participate in international travel, research, education and service to diverse communities.

Applications are due Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2019.

For more information:
<https://dornsife.usc.edu//fisher-fellows-program/>

USC student leaders propose a new first-generation student resource center

Student senators from the Undergraduate Student Government, representatives from the Questbridge Scholars Society and the Norman Toppings Student Aid Fund propose a new first-generation student resource center. The center helps first-generation students at USC find resources and services they can use and build a support network among the community.

Visit usg.usc.edu/press for more information



Students and administration spearheading the first-generation student resource center



First-gen student spotlight:

Seth Mitchell

Seth Mitchell is a first-generation college student at the University of Southern California. He is a recent hire of the USC Student Development Programs new First-Generation Student Summer Program. The program will allow first-gen students at USC development and implement programming during orientation sessions for incoming freshmen and transfer students.

"I'm so excited to be able to work first-gen students because I know how much of an impact this will make," says Seth, "I know that this program will be amazing because the sessions we are making are filled with information that I wish I knew before I came to USC. I'm so grateful for this opportunity."

The past two summers Seth has also spent working closely with orientation programs. He worked as an orientation advisor after his freshman year where he helped all incoming students acclimate to student life here at USC. The next summer he was promoted to an orientation coordinator where he served in a supervisory role for the new orientation advisors.

Seth is pursuing a progressive degree at USC in Occupational Therapy with a minor in LGBTQ+ Studies. In the future, he hopes to use his degree to improve quality of life for transgender, gender variant and other queer folks either clinically or in resource centers. He is from Sylvania, Ohio, where he graduated high school with honors.

Event recap

First-generation student holiday party

Friday, Dec. 6th, 2019

The First-Generation Student Union hosted a holiday party for first-gen students to celebrate the end of classes and the season. They were pleased with over 50 students in attendance, countless laughs and approximately 14.5 gingerbread houses!

Norman Topping Student Aid Fund meeting

Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019

The Norman Topping Student Aid Fund, a scholarship many first-gen students have received, hosted an open meeting discussing the long-term policies and procedures of the NTSAF. The governing board is pleased with the support and opinions they are receiving from first-gen students.



First-Generation Student Summer Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is a first-generation college student?

A first-gen student is someone who is attending college when neither of their parents have a bachelors degree

How can I get involved with the program?

Unfortunately, hiring for the inaugural year of the First-Generation Student Summer Program has come to a close. The Office of Orientation Programs is very excited to begin working with the new hires in the coming spring. To become involved next year, please sign up for our email list here, <https://orientation.usc.edu/student-employment/>

What is the First-Generation Student Summer Program?

The First-Generation Student Summer Program is a new development by the University of Southern California's Office of Orientation Programs. The program tackles relevant issues for first-gen students at USC by utilizing current first-gen students to develop and implement curriculum over the summer at orientation programs. The curriculum tackles issues like paying for college, imposter syndrome, how to find support at the university and other resources available to students.

What other resources are there for first-gen students at USC?

USC provides many resources for first-gen students at USC:

- *The First-Generation Student Union* hosts regular community social and professional events that range anywhere from "Friendsgiving" to resumé workshops.
- *Questbridge* and the FGSU annually send students to the national first-generation, low-income student conference at Cornell University for professional networking and community building among first-gen students. For more information, please contact Arleth Cespedes at (862) 290-2128.
- Parents can support their students through the *First-Generation Student Parent Program* where they learn how to access resources and advocate for their students.
- *The USC Career Center* is open for all students to develop skills and learn how to present their accomplishments to potential employers.
- *The USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity* is a resources to teach students how to best manage their time and deal with stress.
- *USC Student Health* provides counseling services for all students.

What do first-gen students struggle with?

College readiness

Financial stress

College adjustment

Lack of support

Lack of resources

Imposter syndrome

General uncertainty about the future

The USC Office of Orientation Programs is committed to easing these struggles in every capacity within their reach.

How many students at USC are first-gen?

Around 1/3 of all students at the University of Southern California are first-generation students. This accounts for roughly 3,000 undergraduate students.

The first-generation

A glimpse into the lives of first-gen college students in the U.S.



First-gens are students whose parents have not earned a four-year degree

33%

of U.S. students are first-gen

27%

will earn their bachelor's in 4 years

But only



50%
attend a
community
college

26% attend
a public
4-year
university

Only **7%**
attend a
private 4-year
university

But overall,

33%

of first-gens will leave school within 3 years as compared to

14%

of non-first-gens

\$5,912 / 10%

average earnings less per year of first-gen students after graduation than non-first-gens

Why?

Provide resources
Emphasize mental health
Mentor first-gens
Provide adequate college readiness courses
Encourage involvement

How to help

College readiness
Financial issues
College Adjustment
Lack of support
Lack of resources
Imposter syndrome

First-gen struggles



JESSICA FREY NIELSEN

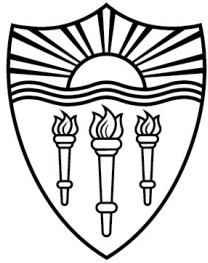
Jessica Frey Nielsen is the director of Student Development Programs at the University of Southern California. She is working on developing and implementing the new First-Generation Student Summer Program at USC, the first program of its kind to allow first-gen students to share their firsthand experience with incoming first-gens.

In her current position, Jessica advocates for both first-generation and spring admit students to receive university-wide support. She has initiated many new programs for both populations like the First-Generation Success Workshop and the Spring Admit Ambassador program.

Before working as director of the SDP office, Ms. Frey Nielsen worked as the senior assistant director of the Spring Admissions Program and as the assistant director of Undergraduate Admissions. In both these positions she was exposed to the USC population as a whole and realized the support needed for first-gen students.

She attended the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business for her master's in Social Entrepreneurship, where she graduated in 2018. Before that, she attended USC for her undergraduate studies and received her bachelors in 2012.

Jessica was born and raised in the eastern Los Angeles area where she attended high school and graduated in 2008.



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