

# Highlights of First-Year Retention and Student Learning in First-Generation Programs Participants

## Office of First-Generation Programs Northern Arizona University

### FIRST-GENERATION PROGRAMS

For over 30 years, Northern Arizona University (NAU) has been committed to the success of first-generation college students. Through TRIO grants and the development of a summer bridge program, first-generation students have had the opportunity to receive the support and guidance to be successful in postsecondary education. Today, NAU continues to strive to become a campus of excellence for first-generation students.

The office of First-Generation Programs (FGP) was formally established in the fall of 2014 and has served over 2,000 students through mentoring programs and critical services. The goal of FGP is to help improve the retention, persistence, and, eventually, graduation rates of first-generation students. We currently achieve this through the operation of the following programs:

- First Scholars
- STAR Program
- TRIO Student Support Service
- Blavin Scholars
- Lumberjacks Leaders Institute

### FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

Who are First-Generation Students?

- Parents never enrolled in post-secondary education (less than H.S., H.S. diploma, G.E.D.),
- Parents have a semester or two of college experience, but no post-secondary degree (e.g. Associate's degree or certificate), or
- Parents have several years of college experience but did not earn a Bachelor's degree.

What are their unique challenges?

- Limited access to information
- Lack of college knowledge
- Self-doubt
- Balance multiple responsibilities

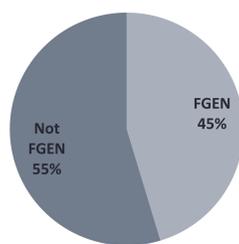
What are their needs?

- Academic, social, financial and personal support
- Help building their social and cultural capital

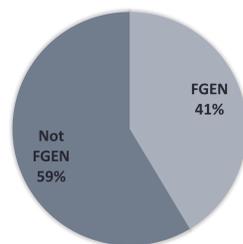
### FIRST-GEN STUDENTS AT NAU

The first-generation student population continues to grow at NAU. Currently, over 40% of our student population identifies as a first-generation college student, both on the Flagstaff campus and statewide.

All Undergraduates,  
All Campuses (Spring 2018)

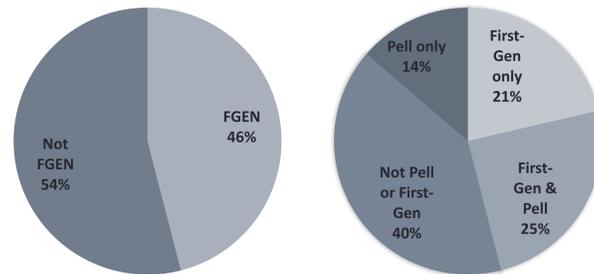


All Undergraduates,  
Flagstaff Campus (Spring 2018)

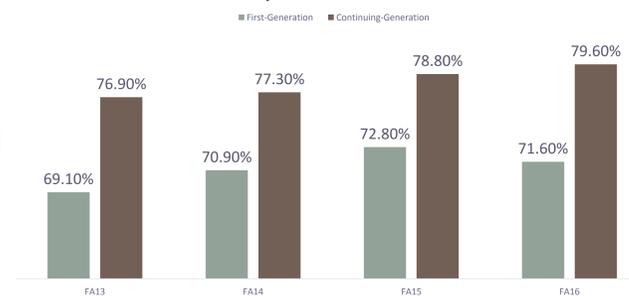


### FIRST-GENERATION FRESHMEN AT NAU

First-Time, Full-Time (FTFT) Freshmen,  
FLG Campus (Fall 2017)



FTFT Freshmen Cohort, Flagstaff Campus,  
1-yr Retention Rates



### RETENTION OF FIRST-GENERATION FRESHMEN

Overview of Freshman Retention,  
FTFT Freshmen, Flagstaff Campus  
(FA16 to FA17)



For the fall 2016 FTFT Freshmen cohort, First-Generation Program participants were retained at higher rates than the overall student population and comparable student populations.

Students (N=50) in the fall 2016 FTFT Freshmen cohort, who participated in both the STAR Program and Student Support Services (SSS), had a retention rate of 94%.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Each fall semester, EMSA Analytics and Assessment administers the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) survey to continuing students (excludes new Freshmen and Transfer students). The Office of First-Generation Programs (FGP) participates to gauge what our participants are learning in some key areas related to each program. Below are the learning outcomes for two programs, the STAR Program and Student Support Services (SSS). The percent of respondents who endorsed a learning outcome *somewhat/very* much are listed in each table below.

STAR Program Results (N=38):

Student Learning Outcome		14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
<b>Through my experience at NAU I have:</b>					
Learned about offices or programs on campus.	Participant	76%	86%*	83%	84%
	Non-Participant	71%	70%	73%	74%
Experience a smooth transition to living on my own.	Participant	82%	86%	85%	97%*
	Non-Participant	82%	82%	83%	81%
<b>Through my experiences at NAU I have developed:</b>					
An understanding of my rights and responsibilities as a student.	Participant	77%	79%	88%	90%*
	Non-Participant	72%	73%	79%	75%
<b>As a result of your experience at NAU, have you learned to do the following?</b>					
Communicate well with others.	Participant	79%	89%	81%	87%
	Non-Participant	82%	82%	85%	82%
<b>The ways in which I have been involved outside of the classroom at NAU have helped me to:</b>					
Prioritize the various demands on my time.	Participant	77%	86%	90%	87%
	Non-Participant	77%	77%	83%	80%
Manage the stress or demands of college life.	Participant	67%	82%	78%	76%
	Non-Participant	72%	73%	75%	72%

Student Support Services Results (N=119):

Student Learning Outcome		14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
<b>Through my experience at NAU I have:</b>					
Identified sources of support for financing my education.	Participant	76%*	67%*	75%*	66%
	Non-Participant	56%	56%	61%	61%
<b>Through my experiences at NAU I have developed:</b>					
Skills to manage my personal finances.	Participant	72%*	63%*	72%*	69%
	Non-Participant	57%	56%	63%	61%
<b>My experiences at NAU have helped me to:</b>					
Discover ways to become more involved on campus.	Participant	79%*	72%	84%*	80%*
	Non-Participant	62%	67%	70%	69%
Better evaluate my options before making a decision.	Participant	79%*	74%	83%	79%
	Non-Participant	62%	73%	76%	73%
<b>The ways in which I have been involved outside of the classroom at NAU have helped me to:</b>					
Prioritize the various demands on my time.	Participant	79%	79%	85%	85%
	Non-Participant	77%	77%	83%	80%
<b>The ways in which I have been involved outside of the classroom at NAU have helped me to:</b>					
Be successful academically.	Participant	82%	77%	85%	82%
	Non-Participant	80%	81%	84%	81%

### FIRST SCHOLARS

**Mission:**

The mission of The Suder Foundation (TSF) is to dramatically improve the graduation rate of first-generation college students and prepare each scholar for a life with self-awareness, success and significance.

**Student Population:**

First Scholars targets first-time, full-time students who are first-generation to participate in this program. Approximately 20 freshmen and 80 students total are served annually.

**Program Components:**

- Individual Strategic Plans
- Progressive Mentoring
- Living-Learning Community
- Freshmen Transition Course
- Retreats, Social Activities & Workshops
- Service Learning Opportunities



### STAR PROGRAM

**Mission:**

The STAR program is a 5-week summer bridge program designed to help participants make a successful academic and personal transition to the university environment by providing a supportive and nurturing living and learning experience.

**Student Population:**

The STAR program serves in-state freshmen who are first-generation and/or Pell Grant eligible. Approximately 150 new freshmen are served annually.

**Program Components:**

- Earn 6 credit hours & build academic skills
- Living-Learning experience
- Develop a network of support
- Participate in social activities
- Learn to navigate the campus



### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**Mission:**

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education and Northern Arizona University, Student Support Services (SSS) intends to increase retention and graduation rates for eligible students. Staff provide one-on-one mentoring with an emphasis on developing and achieving goals related to academic success. In addition to mentoring, SSS students attend cultural events to promote campus engagement and personal enrichment and participate in workshops on academic success strategies and financial literacy. Students who fully complete the program can earn a stipend.

**Student Population:**

SSS targets students who are low-income, first-generation, and/or have a documented disability(s) and serves approximately 200 new freshmen annually. SSS also serves approximately 250 non-freshmen annually.

**Program Components:**

- Academic tutoring
- Course to career planning
- Financial aid application guidance
- Financial literacy education
- Graduate school planning

