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lst gen Yale

Nationwide College and Alumni Group FGLI Survey

By Nick Randos 1stGenYale Intern September 10, 2021

Overview

This report is the culmination of researching over 240 universities and the resources they offer First-generation and/or Low-income students. The majority of institutions surveyed received recognition from the Center for First-Generation Student Success' First-Gen Forward Initiative, which celebrates colleges for their commitment to first-generation student success. The remaining institutions were selected based on similar admissions selectivity to Yale. The resulting recommendations are by no means exhaustive; we recognize that there are likely other resources not mentioned, either from institutions not surveyed or because they were not publicly advertised.

Recommendations

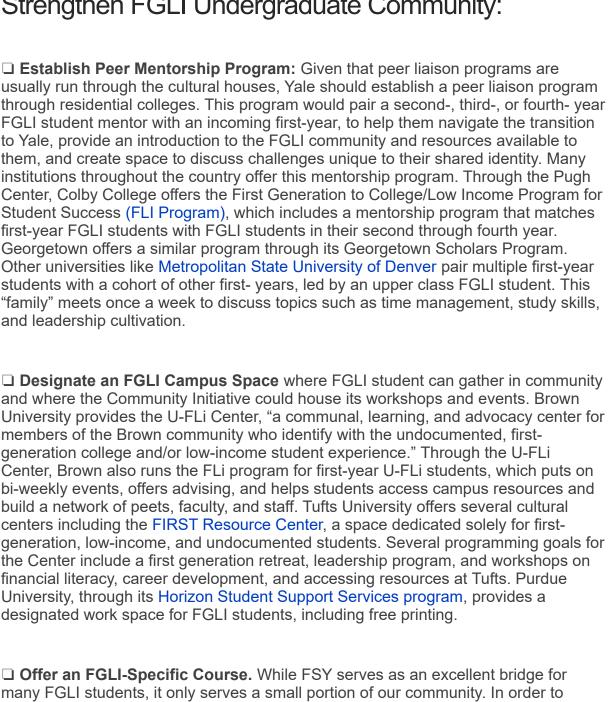
Foster Greater Accessibility and Community with First-Generation Faculty and Staff

Permanize Faculty Mentorship Program. Under the leadership of formerCo-President, Karen Li, and with the help of Dean Marvin Chun, YFAM put together a Faculty Tea that brought together FGLI students and faculty to discuss the first-generation, low-income college experience. A main goal of the event was to foster community and mentorship with FGLI faculty. Making a formal faculty mentorship can further solidify this community. The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), under its First-Gen Forward Mentorship Program, matches first-generation students with first-generation faculty members to provide one-on-one mentorship. Similarly, the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), through its Panther Partners Program, first-generation students are paired with a first- generation faculty or staff member. Together, they navigate workshops on finances, goal setting, asking for help, and academic success. Offering a formal program like that of UAF, through either the Deans office or the Community Initiative, would offer another crucial form o institutional support as FGLI students navigate faculty relationships at Yale.
□ Publish FGLI Staff Directory and Allies. During the same FGLI Faculty Tea initiative, the Dean's office shared a survey with YFAM that listed FGLI faculty. Another survey should be sent out across all departments, to reflect updated faculty composition, and then published as a directory for student access. Harvard University's Academic Advising page contains a "First Generation Advising Faculty Directory" with a list of faculty who identify as a first-generation college student. Colby College published a guide for FGLI students, "The Complete Guide to College for First Generation to College Students," that included a list of faculty, administration, and staff who committed to "help [FGLI students] navigate the FGCS experience"—many of whom are first-generation students themselves. Ferris State University generated a First-Gen Ally page that divides frequently asked questions into topics and provides links to resources and contact information for a First-Gen ally who can help.
□ Implement FGLI Competency Training for Faculty. Whilemanyprofessorshave committed to making their classroom more accessible to FGLI students, others might not recognize how their syllabus disadvantages FGLI students. To remedy this, all faculty should undergo a FGLI Competency Training as part of their yearly onboarding. The training curriculum should be written in collaboration with a committee of FGLI students to most comprehensively detail best practices. The University of Arizona provides faculty a free First-Gen Intro Training as part of professional development that equips "faculty and staff with knowledge, tools and ideas for how they can center the experience of first-generation college students in their work." Colorado State University offers a page dedicated to tips on how to best support FGLI students, including for professors on how to best mentor and construct a syllabus to ensure FGLI students do not get left behind.
□ Organize a FGLI Psychology and Counseling Team. FGLIstudentsoftenface

unique adversity prior to and during their time at Yale. These same students, due to

financial barriers, may not have received mental health care. In order to best treat and ensure a mentally-healthy time at Yale, Yale Mental Health should assemble a team that is specifically trained and equipped to help FGLI students navigate struggles specific to their background. Columbia University offers a six-member team through its Mental Health Department that specializes in helping students navigate the First-generation and/or low-income experience.

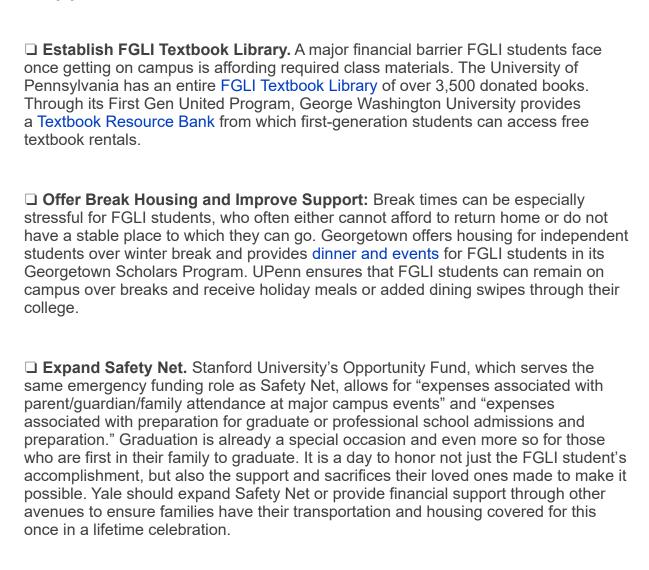
Strengthen FGLI Undergraduate Community:



☐ Offer an FGLI-Specific Course. While FSY serves as an excellent bridge for many FGLI students, it only serves a small portion of our community. In order to ensure all FGLI students receive a proper foundation, Yale should offer a formal course. Georgetown University offers FGLI first-years a Pass/Fail Course, "Mastering the Hidden Curriculum," which arms students with the necessary understanding of the academic terrain and the corresponding resources to navigate it. The curriculum was informed by upper class FGLI students and team-taught by four Georgetown professors. Georgetown, however, only offers two sections of 16 students each. In

order to avoid further stratification—of only some FGLI students getting access to key knowledge—Yale should offer an uncapped lecture course, or one with multiple sections.

Support and Resources



Areas for Partnership with 1stGenYale

□ First-Generation Celebration Week: November 8th is nationally recognized as a day to celebrate First-Generation College students, coinciding with the anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Universities around the country have used this day to throw formal, week-long celebrations for their first-generation students. Northeastern University, for example, hosted a First Gen week that included over 20 different events and workshops—how to lead, networking with FGLI alumni, financial aid information, and more. Ferris State University also hosts a week-long celebration for its first-generation students. Celebration not only honors the immense work it took for First-generation students to make it Yale; it also shows that the university sees us, hears us, and is willing to do what it takes to support us.

□ Financial Wellness Counseling. Yale provides strong financial aid for FGLI students during their time at Yale. Many in the community, however, are uncertain how to structure their finances after graduation. The University of Washington offers a Financial Wellness Cohort that students can apply to for one-on-one financial coaching. Given its application base, many students will again be left out. A partnerships between Yale—potentially through the Office of Career Strategies— and 1stGenYale can help bring together both FGLI alumni and financial coaches to help FGLI students prepare their financial future.
□ Alternative Break Trips. Often due to financial circumstances, FGLI students are unable to participate in extravagant break plans like their more privileged counterparts. Affinity groups at Claremont McKenna College plan alternative break trips specifically for FGLI students. Potentially, the Yale Administration, 1stGenYale and YFAM could partner, with 1stGenYale helping to provide potential opportunities with alumni, YFAM with planning and infrastructure, and Yale securing funding.
Additional Recommendations for 1stGenYale
□ Publish a 1stGen Alumni Directory: Dartmouth published a first generation alumni list, broken down by career category. 1stGenYale including a similar directory would allow FGLI students to self-initiate mentorship opportunities with alumni who wish to help undergraduates.
☐ Initiate Formal Mentorship Program: First Generation Harvard Alumni offers a formal mentorship program that pairs FGLI students with mentors in their field of interest. With such a vast network available, 1stGenYale has the personnel to launch a similar program. This would be especially crucial for first-year FGLI students as they navigate applying for summer opportunities.
□ Establish Summer Opportunity Fellowships: One of the ways UCLA's FirstGen Alumni Network supports students is through offering scholarships. Yale's financial aid is robust but they lack need-based fellowships for career opportunities. Establishing grants for FGLI students would pair nicely with the Summer Experience Award and International Study Award, potentially ensuring funding for each of the students' three summers. This is especially important for areas not traditionally supported from these grants such as campaign work.
☐ Organize Events for Prospective FGLI students: Most universities organize recruitment programming to attract students, typically in the form of informational sessions and college fairs. To continue expanding the FGLI community at Yale, 1stGenYale could rely on regional networks to provide similar informational sessions and application tips for prospective FGLI applicants.

Conclusion

With each resource included in this report, we have made recommendations on how Yale can offer similar support for its FGLI community. Yale already offers the FGLI students a solid foundation of support—from robust financial aid to Community Initiative programming. In order to avoid falling behind its peers, however, it should work to adopt these measures and continue finding innovative ways to support its FGLI students.