



CHADRON STATE COLLEGE



Enhancing Support for First-Gen College Students at Chadron State College

PRESENTED BY:
TEACHING, LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATION CENTER AT
CHADRON STATE COLLEGE

Introduction

As we prepare for the upcoming term, the Teaching, Learning, Professional Education Center (TLPEC) at Chadron State College (CSC) is creating this manual so instructors can find out if they have first-generation (first-gen) students enrolled in their courses. Identifying these students early allows instructors to tailor their teaching strategies to address students' specific needs, such as gaps in academic preparation and unfamiliarity with college norms.

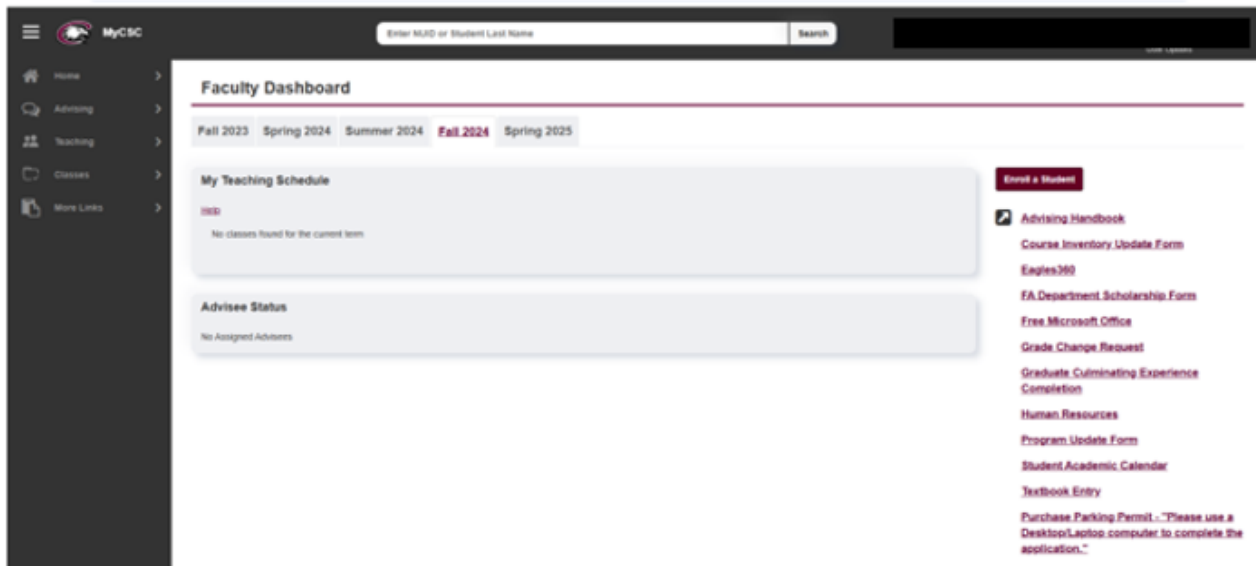
Included are steps to determine if a student is first-gen via MyCSC along with campus resources. Also included are suggestions from Dr. Joyce Hardy (recognized as having successful first-gen teaching strategies by CSC TRIO Office) and Tamam Waritu (a motivational speaker and first-generation student trainer who graduated from Harvard) offering practical approaches and course design elements to enhance first-gen students' success, which helps our institution with our retention and enrollment levels.

Your support and dedication to these students are greatly appreciated.

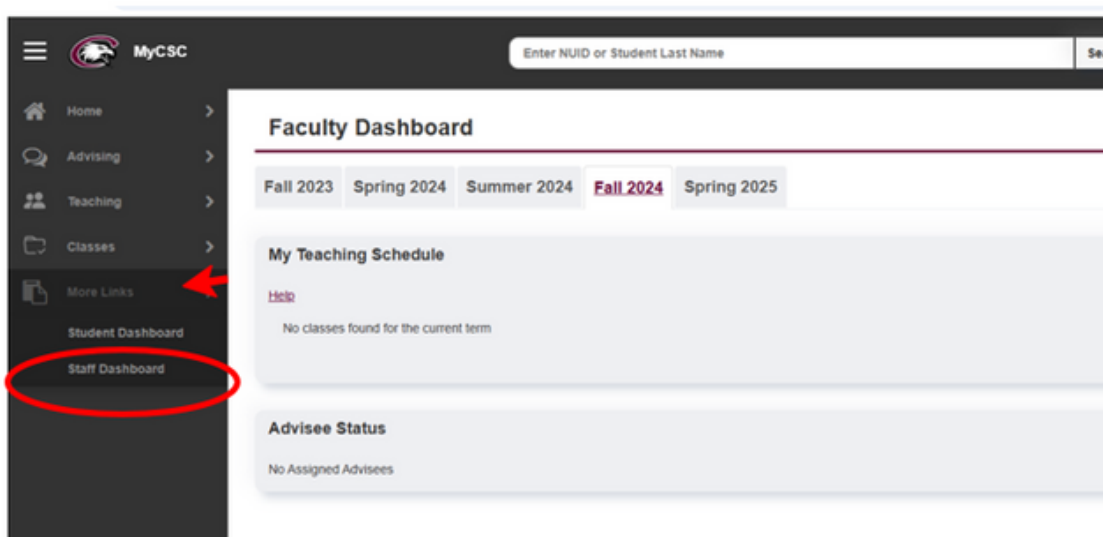
How to Know if a Student is First-Gen

Plans are in development stages to have an automatic process to notify instructors if they have first-gen students in courses. Until that time, instructors can find out if students enrolled in their courses are first-gen by checking students' Student Center page on MyCSC. Follow the instructions below.

When instructors access their MyCSC account this is what they first see



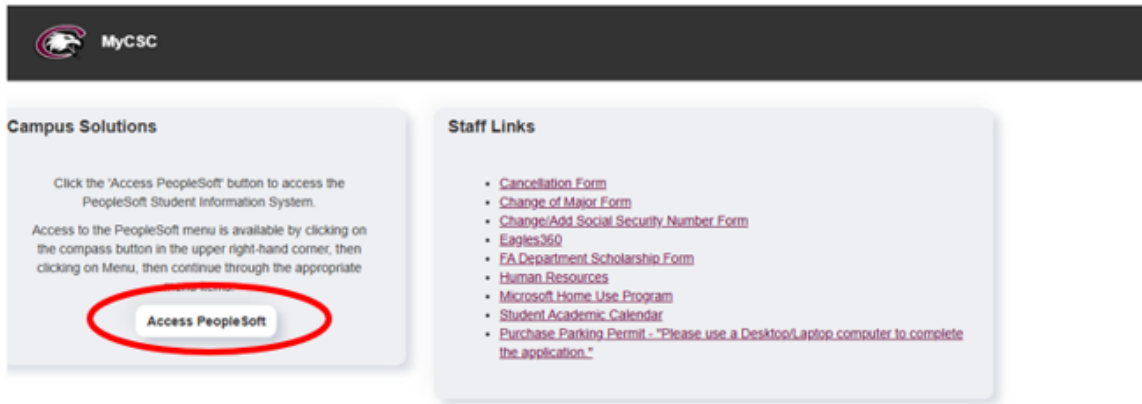
To see a student's information, on the left-hand side click on More Links, then select Staff Dashboard.



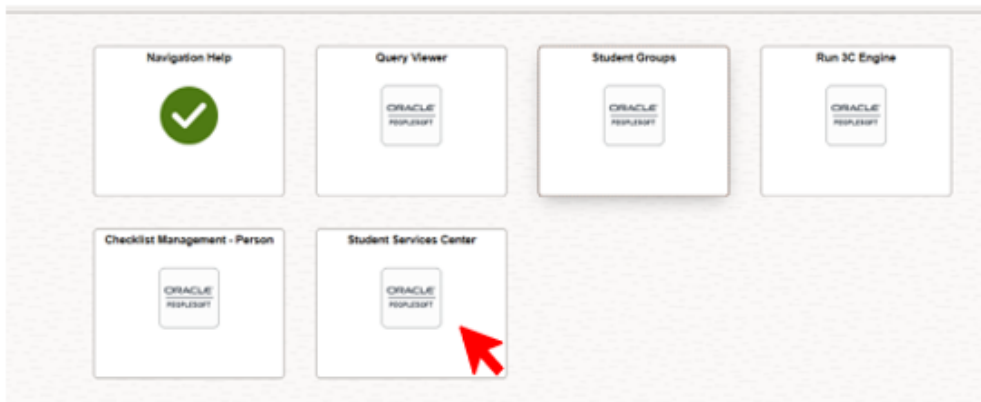
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How to Know if a Student is First-Gen *continued*

On the next screen, click on Access People Soft.



Click on Student Services Center.



The next screen will prompt the user to enter in the student's information. Type in either the student's name (first & last) or NUID.

Find an Existing Value

▼ Search Criteria

Enter any information you have and click Search. Leave fields blank for a list of all values.

Recent Searches Choose from recent searches Saved Searches Choose from saved searches

ID begins with Campus ID begins with National ID begins with Last Name begins with First Name begins with

Show fewer options

Case Sensitive

Search Clear

Enter in either the student's NUID or Name

Continued on next page

How to Know if a Student is First-Gen *continued*

Click on the General Info tab. Under the Student Groups section, if the student has self-identified as first-gen there will be a code for it in this area.

The screenshot shows a student profile page with a navigation bar at the top containing tabs: Student Center, General Info (highlighted with a red arrow), Admissions, Transfer Credit, Academics, Finances, and Financial Aid. Below the navigation bar, there are two columns of links: Service Indicators, Student Groups, National ID, Addresses, Email Addresses on the left; and Initiated Checklists, Personal Data, Names, Phones on the right. To the right of these links are two buttons: Collapse All and Expand All. Below the links, there are three expandable sections: Service Indicators, Initiated Checklists, and Student Groups. The Student Groups section is expanded and highlighted with a large red star. It contains a table with the following data:

Student Group	Description	Institution	Status
GENY	First Generation=Yes	Chadron State College	Active as of 2020-10-01
TRIO	TRIO Student	Chadron State College	Active as of 2023-01-30

A red arrow points to the GENY row in the table. Below the table is a Go to top link. The other sections (Service Indicators and Initiated Checklists) also have expand/collapse arrows and Go to top links.

Chadron State College First-Gen Resources

Below are resources that can be found on CSC's campus to help first-gen students.

[Project Strive TRIO](#)

Project Strive, located in the Lower Level of the Reta King Library, offers free services to those who are eligible and currently enrolled in the program designed to motivate and support qualified college students. This academic enrichment program is committed to helping college students persist to graduation through encouragement, support, and a wide range of activities. The Project Strive program may also provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a first-generation college student (neither parent/guardian has a 4-year degree)
- Have financial need based on U.S. federal income requirements
- Have a documented disability

Their goal is to increase the academic success, retention, and graduation rates of our participants. Additional objectives include career exploration, cultural and social enrichment, and self-awareness.

[Office of Academic Success](#)

Located in the east wing of the Reta King library, the Office of Academic Success is available to all students. Services include:

- Tutoring, Study Hall, Writer's Corner
- Academic Planning
- Success Workshops
- And More

[START](#)

Located in Crites Hall, START's mission is to assist each student in reaching their educational goals by providing quality financial aid, advising, and enrollment services.

6 Tips to Enhance First-Generation College Students' Learning Experiences

1. Be Organized and Predictable

Example: Use a consistent structure for course modules. For instance, each week's module could include a "Week at a Glance" overview, followed by sections for readings, assignments, and discussion posts. Clearly communicate due dates and expectations in both the syllabus and weekly announcements.

Example: Provide a welcome video and navigation guide for Canvas. Explain how to access course materials, submit assignments, and participate in discussions. Reduce clutter by hiding unnecessary Canvas tools and focusing on essential resources.

Example: Use backward design to align activities with learning outcomes. Start with the desired outcome and plan activities that build towards that goal. Reinforce the importance of class attendance by taking roll and integrating class examples into exams.

2. Clear, Proactive Communications and Expectations

Example: Set a friendly tone with early communication. Send a welcoming email with introductions, office hours, and resource links before the term begins. Include a brief introduction, office hours, and links to campus resources. Be explicit about academic norms, such as how to email professors and what to expect during office hours.

Example: Explain how to email professors, what to expect during office hours, and the importance of class participation. Provide clear guidelines and examples to help students understand academic norms.

Example: Include reminders about academic, financial, and mental health resources in the syllabus and revisit them throughout the semester.

Example: Be precise about what students need to know and do. For example, outline specific learning objectives at the beginning of each class: "By the end of today's session, you should be able to explain the key concepts of photosynthesis."

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6 Tips Continued

3. Accessible Resources

Example: Use Open Educational Resources (OER) and affordable materials. For instance, replace expensive textbooks with free online resources or library books.

Example: Avoid publisher website materials to ensure long-term access. Provide links to resources directly in Canvas or upload files for students to download.

4. Active Learning

Example: Start classes with a review of previous material and a preview of the day's topic. Use quick activities to focus students' attention, such as asking what they know about the topic or what was unclear from previous lessons.

Example: Use diagrams, charts, and mind maps to organize information visually. For instance, create a compare-and-contrast chart on the board and have the class help fill it in.

5. Reflective Practice

Example: Continuously refine your teaching methods based on student feedback and performance. For example, if students struggle with a particular concept, find new ways to explain it or provide additional resources.

Example: Adapt your approach to meet the needs of the current student population. Reflect on what works and what doesn't, and be flexible in your teaching strategies.

6. Building a Sense of Belonging

Example: Share personal challenges and successes to create a supportive environment. Highlight the importance of belonging and community within the classroom.

Example: Encourage students to share their experiences and support each other, fostering a sense of community.

Conclusion

By incorporating these strategies into their teaching practices, CSC instructors can create a more supportive and effective learning environment for first-gen students. These approaches not only help students navigate the academic landscape but also foster a sense of belonging and community, which are crucial for their success and retention.



Resources to Support First-Gen Outreach Efforts

Pascarella, E. T., Pierson, C. T., Wolniak, G. C., & Terenzini, P. T. (2004, May 01). First-Generation College Students: Additional Evidence on College Experiences and Outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*, pp. 249-284.

Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre. (2020). Pedagogical Strategies to Support First-Generation Students. Retrieved from University of Toronto-Mississauga:

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/rgasc/faculty-instructors/teaching-and-learning-resource-hub/pedagogical-strategies-support-first>

Schelbe, L., Swanbrow Becker, M., Spinelli, C., & McCray, D. (2019, December 1). First Generation College Students' Perceptions of an Academic Retention Program. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, pp. 61-76.



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