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10 Things First-Generation Students Should Know

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10 Things First-Generation Students Should Know

University bridges gap for first-time college students

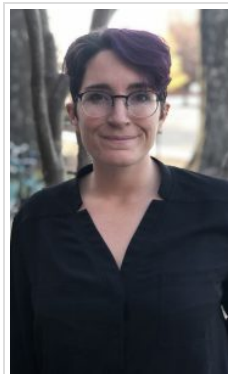
NOVEMBER 8, 2022 BY CLARA TURNAGE



University programs and communities are helping to bridge the resource gap for first-generation college students, who may not have the institutional knowledge that legacy students get from their families.

Ashleen Williams, faculty adviser for the **First-Generation Student Network**, and Annette Kluck, dean of the **Graduate School**, talk about 10 ways students can find the help they need:

- 1. The Office of Financial Aid:** Williams' first recommendation for first-generation students is to familiarize themselves with the **Office of Financial Aid**, where students can find help with applying for scholarships, utilizing federal aid and learning about grants for which they may already be eligible.
- 2. Just for You:** The **First-Generation Student Network** hosts events and provides resources to first-generation students across campus and introduces them to a community of their own, Williams said. "We create academic counter spaces and give support so that you can chat frankly with your peers," she said. "It's a space you can enter and ask questions and learn how to navigate campus life."
- 3. Speak Up:** Tell your peers, advisers and professors that you're a first-generation student, Williams said. Often, you'll find you're not the only one, and you'll find the help or advice you need, she said.
- 4. Office Hours:** Office hours are the time professors set aside to chat with students. Both Kluck and Williams stressed the importance of utilizing this time to ask questions, voice concerns or difficulties, and to get the help you need. "Some students think it bothers us," Williams said. "We have to explicitly say, 'Office hours are for bothering.' This time is for you."
- 5. Meaningful Mentoring:** Finding a mentor, Kluck said, will help navigate the difficulties of university life and help find resources you need. Whether it be for a project in class or a career goal, your professors want to help you, Kluck said. "It can be really hard to ask, but a lot of people do enjoy that opportunity to mentor someone," she said.
- 6. Apply, Apply, Apply:** Don't count yourself out, both Williams and Kluck said. Apply for internships, apprenticeships, work studies, mentor programs – anything that interests you. "Don't discount yourself from that process," Williams said. "Social capital can come from applying for things they think they'll never get."



Ashleen Williams

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's



Annette Kluck

7. Join, but Don't Over-Join: **More than 400 student groups are available on campus**, and Williams suggests students find one that fits their passion. Kluck noted that student groups are particularly important for graduate students, who will likely only take classes with peers in their department and may not meet students from other study areas.

8. Bit by Bit: Start a savings account, Williams said. Even if you're only putting \$5 or \$10 in the account each week, you're building up an emergency fund that will help when unexpected expenses pop up. The Center for Student Success and First-Year Experience offers the **StudentsFirst program**, which will help you find resources to succeed and be financially responsible.

9. Read Your Syllabi: Though normally skimmed through and forgotten, your class syllabus could be the key to organizing your responsibilities, Williams said. Read each syllabus thoroughly, understand the grading process, put tests and due dates on your calendar.

10. You Aren't Alone: Students often feel like they need to already have all the answers, Kluck said. This can lead to the imposter syndrome feeling, where students feel that everyone but them has a clear vision of what to do. Take advantage of the resources the university provides for first-generation students, and you'll likely find there are others who are facing similar challenges, she said.

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