



*First Gen  
Symposium*

Monday, March 11, 2024

# CARDINAL FIRST

**Julie Carballo**

**Assistant Dean of Students for First-generation & Military-Affiliated Initiatives  
North Central College**

**March 11, 2024**

# First-gen Students at North Central

815

36%

44% transfer

# CARDINAL FIRST MISSION

The mission of Cardinal First is to provide a supportive and welcoming community for first-generation college students and their families, a campus culture that recognizes and celebrates first-generation student identity as an asset, and a program that intentionally connects first-generation students to faculty, resources, information and experiences that promote academic and personal success from enrollment through graduation.

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# Current Team

## THE OFFICE OF FIRST-GENERATION PROGRAMS Seybert Hall



**JULIE CARBALLO**  
ASSISTANT DEAN



**MARISSA GAIGALAS M'20**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



**KEN THOMAS M'25**  
GRADUATE ASSISTANT



**BRIAN GAMBUZZA '23 | M '25**  
GRADUATE ASSISTANT

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# The Model: Cardinal First Cohort Programs

- **Cardinal First Fridays** (first-year students)
- **Cardinal First Sophomore Suppers**
- **Cardinal First Penultimate** (juniors)
- **Cardinal First Homestretch** (seniors)
- **Cardinal First Transition** (transfer first-gen students)

# Essential Element #1

## First-Gen Programming from Day 1 through Graduation

### WELCOME WEEK FAMILY CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST



### GRADUATION RECOGNITION & PINNING CEREMONY



# Essential Element #2:

## Cardinal First \$1000 Scholarship

- Implemented to incentivize participation in the program
- Awarded AFTER one year of full participation\*
- Renewable, annual scholarship

\*attendance and participation requirements



# Essential Element #3

Meaningful and ongoing engagement of FG Faculty/Staff



# Essential Element #4: Upper-class #first-gen Student Leaders



# Essential Element #5:

First-gen identity is celebrated as an asset and point of pride



# Essential Element #6

Workshops are interactive, fun, purposeful—and include food!



A COMMUNITY OF PEERS

# First-gen Academic Groups

- Provide discipline-specific mentoring and community for first-gen students with a major, minor or interest in that academic area
- Facilitated by Faculty Mentors and Liaisons
- 19 undergraduate groups and 6 graduate groups
  - First-gen Cardinals in Biology, etc.
  - First-gen Cardinals in Physical Therapy

# Special Events to #CelebrateFirstgen

- First-gen Celebration Day
- Alumni Academy
- Graduation Pinning Ceremony



# Tri-Alpha First-Gen Honor Society



# First-gen Center





# Brief History of First-generation Initiatives at NC

- 2008 – Teach First launched (for first-gen education majors)
- 2012 – Began collecting first-gen status on application for admission
- 2014 – Office of First-generation Programs created with FT director  
Cardinal First Fridays launched for first-year, first-gen students
- 2015 – Scholarship added to incentivize participation
- 2016 – Cardinal First Pinning Ceremony
- 2018 – First-gen Center designated space
- 2018 – Assistant Director position created
- 2019 – First-gen Academic Groups launched; Tri-Alpha Honor Society chapter
- 2022 – Cardinal First Alumni Academy
- 2023 – Launched programming for graduate first-gen students

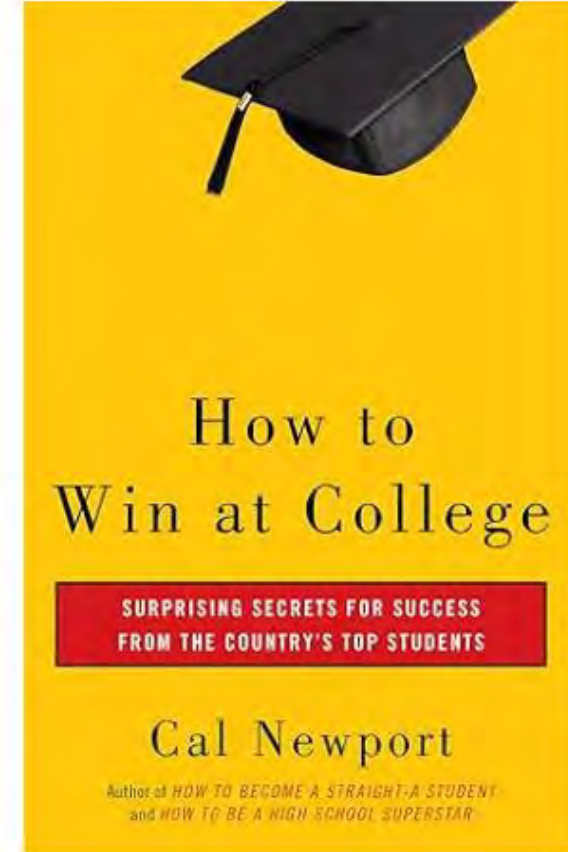
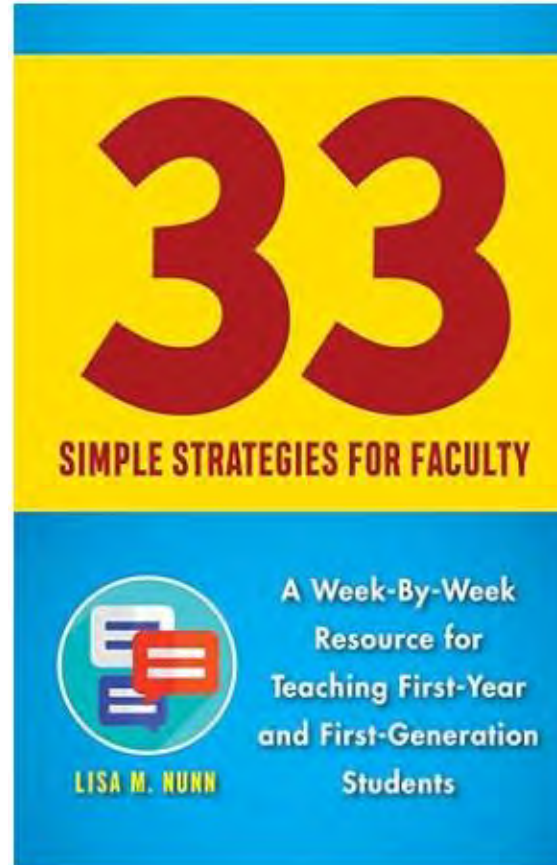
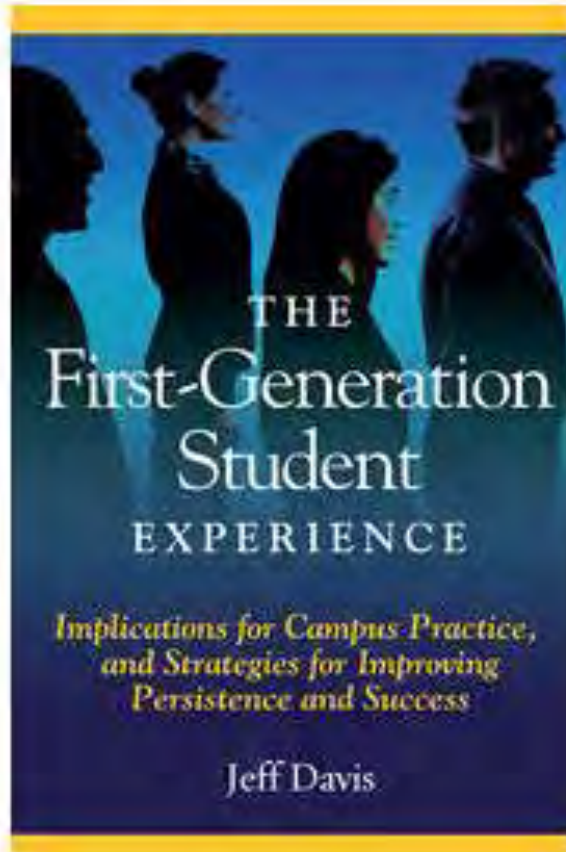
# Outcomes Overview

## Quantitative

- Engagement
- Retention
- Persistence
- Graduation
- Sense of Belonging

## Qualitative

# Wrap-up: Resource Sharing



# CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS



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WHY FIRST-GEN?

ADVOCACY & POLICY

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

JOURNAL & RESEARCH

ENGAGEMENT

NEWS & BLOGS

## CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS®

There are millions of past, current and future first-generation college students (first-gen) in the United States. **The Center for First-generation Student Success®**, created in a partnership between NASPA and The Suder Foundation, exists to transform higher education to drive first-generation student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life.



First Gen Symposium

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**First Scholars<sup>®</sup>**  
**NETWORK MEMBER**



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# For more information:



[www.noctrl.edu/cardinal-first](http://www.noctrl.edu/cardinal-first)



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Questions?