

The Finish Line Project

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE TO HELP FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED

Funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant, The Finish Line Project initiates and evaluates innovative programs for student success at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Project findings will inform future practices at the University and across the nation.

CAROLINA FIRSTS

First-generation college students are from a family in which neither parent has a four-year undergraduate degree. At UNC, we proudly call these students "Carolina Firsts." The Finish Line Project supports all Carolina Firsts including:

RURAL STUDENTS
Eighty of the 100 counties in NC are rural. Studies indicate the number of rural students going to college is increasing.

NATIVE AMERICANS
American Indians in higher education have more than doubled in the last 30 years. Universities must intentionally engage students, families and communities.

MEN OF COLOR COACH APPROACH STUDY
This study describes the experiences of a cohort of undergraduate males of color participating in a program designed to engage students in academic coaching exercises such as goal setting, monitoring goal progress, developing a supportive networks, using resources on campus, and gaining a sense of belonging on campus.

TRANSFER STUDENTS
Innovative, educational programing is needed to support transfer students especially community college transfers.

INITIATIVES TO HELP FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

1 Connect And Communicate With First-Generation Students



SELF-ASSESSMENTS
Strengths-based assessments to enhance college knowledge and expectations.



COMMUNITY BUILDING
Cohort models to foster communication and share common experiences among underrepresented males.



PARTNERSHIPS
Partner with American Indian tribes to help support Native American students attending UNC.



NEW PROGRAMS
Develop programs and support to assist rural student access and transition to college.

THE CAROLINA FIRSTS EXPERIENCE



Students connect with supportive communities of students with similar backgrounds and experiences.

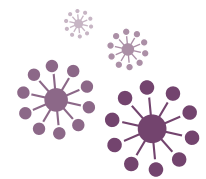
2 Enhance Curriculum Through Active Learning



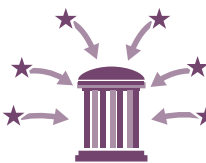
TRANSITION COURSES
Offer multiple courses to help students navigate critical transitions.



GATEWAY COURSES
Review and redesign gateway STEM courses.



LEARNING COMMUNITIES
Create faculty learning communities to support active learning.



COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Map STEM curriculum on campus and at local community college.



Students enroll in newly designed transition and gateway courses to aid their progress in STEM and other fields of study.

3 Advise And Support First-Generation Students



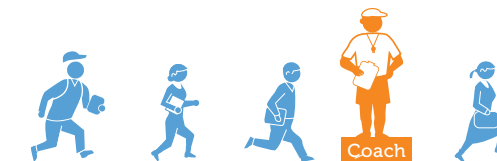
COORDINATION
Coordinate efforts for Carolina Firsts across campus.



ADVISING
Offer academic advising specifically to meet the needs of first-generation college students.



COACHING
Train academic coaches to support undergraduates.



Faculty, advisors, and academic coaches help students navigate the research university.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

MEASURE

- ▶ Academic and psychosocial factors among FGCS
- ▶ College knowledge and expectations
- ▶ Changes in student learning patterns, attitudes, and behaviors
- ▶ The acquisition of knowledge or skills as a result of interventions
- ▶ Changes in faculty instructional techniques, attitudes, and behaviors

DESCRIBE

- ▶ Academic success among FGCS overall and by subgroups
- ▶ Micro-aggressions and micro-affirmations among FGCS
- ▶ Pathways to degree completion in the sciences
- ▶ Faculty motives for course redesign
- ▶ Perspectives and behaviors among FGCS regarding applying to graduate school

ASSESS

- ▶ Strategies for enhancing college knowledge and expectations
- ▶ Models for academic coaching
- ▶ Strategies for promoting self-regulated learning
- ▶ Strategies for course redesign



Students fulfill degree completion requirements and move on to graduate school and career opportunities.

Efforts begin prior to enrollment to build college knowledge, set helpful expectations, and build resources for success.