

# TennACADA Times

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## Celebrating First-Gen

First Generation Celebrations are an opportunity to support and celebrate faculty, staff, and students who are the first in their family to attend college. This year the National First-Generation Celebration was on November 8th; our campus celebrated with events the week of November 4-8. Events were planned by a committee with representatives from the Division of Academic Success and Transitions, Multicultural Student Life, Herbert College of Agriculture, and the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, along with volunteers from across campus. The week-long celebration began with Dr. Laura Rendon's presentation on "Intersectionality and the Role of Educators Working with a Multidimensional Student Culture".

On Tuesday, November 5, there was a social media campaign focused on sharing stories from students, faculty, and staff about their first-gen experiences using #CelebrateFirstGen. On Wednesday, students unified by painting and placing handprints on the rock, then connected over pizza. Thankful Thursday included a hot chocolate station and materials to write thank-you letters to supportive parents, friends, and mentors. The final event at Frieson Black Cultural Center brought together students and staff for BBQ, cake, and music. The events served nearly 1000 students and staff members.



Dr. Laura Rendon and Dr. Karen Sullivan-Vance



## Celebrating First-Gen (continued)



## Dr. Talisha Adams, First-Generation College Student

Dr. Talisha Adams serves as the Interim Director of TRIO Student Support Services and Assistant Director at the Student Success Center. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Georgia State University, her Master's from University of South Carolina, and her Doctorate from Georgia Southern University.

*How do you think your background influences your work with students?*

My background as a first-generation college student is very much intertwined with my professional interests and journey. I am very passionate about the work we do at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to serve students from first-generation backgrounds and from underrepresented areas across the state of Tennessee. As a scholar practitioner, my research interests include topics on first-generation college students, student retention, students of color, student success, and transfer students.



NaQuaina Moore and Dr. Talisha Adams

*What is most important to you in your work with students?*

That they are being equipped with necessary education, soft skills, and social and cultural capital to be successful in their future careers and able to become productive members of society.

*What is some of the best advice that you ever received?*

As a first-generation student of color, one of the best pieces of advice I received was that my education is the one thing in life that no one can ever take from me. This piece of advice has been with me since I was a child. It motivated me to continue my educational journey in pursuit of a terminal degree. Additionally, it was my first motivation to become a life-long learner.

## NaQuaina Moore, First-Generation College Student

NaQuaina Moore is a Student Success Advisor for Animal Science in the Herbert College of Agriculture. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Eastern Michigan University.

*What was your experience like as a first-generation college student?*

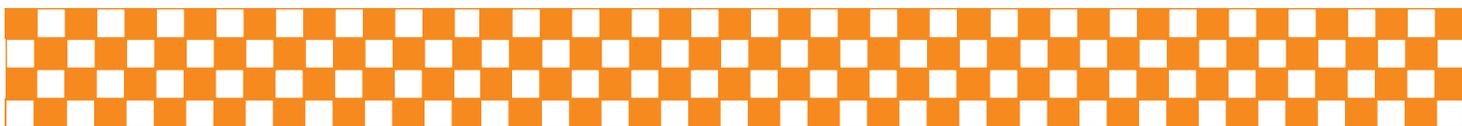
As an undergraduate it was scary, challenging, and confusing. I was naïve to everything; I did not know what questions to ask or even who to ask. A lot of the time I just had to learn by making mistakes and trying again or asking my peers for help. Sadly my peers did not know either so we all had to learn together. I struggled to navigate the educational system. I believe my inner motivation, determination, and grit propelled me to finish my first degree.

*What is most important to you in your work with students?*

One of the most important aspects of working with students is for students to know that they can ask me questions about anything. I want to be relatable and approachable for students to feel comfortable talking with me about their fears, challenges, and successes. A lot of times students just want someone to listen to them and to feel like they are being heard.

*What is some of the best advice that you give to students?*

"You do not grow in comfort." I use this to encourage students to get out of their comfort zones and get involved in other activities they would not normally do to learn a different aspect or perspective.



## Dr. Megan King, First-Generation College Student



Dr. Megan King (on right) pictured with LaDawna Williams

Dr. Megan King is an Academic Coach at the Student Success Center and works with UT LEAD and UT LEAD Summer Institute. Her Bachelor's degree is from Buffalo State College and her Master's, and Doctorate degrees are from UTK, in anthropology. She was an academic coach at the SSC during her Master's program and served as an instructor while completing her doctorate.

*What is most important to you in your work with students?*

Building relationships that are based on trust, honesty, and mutual respect. I want my students to know that I care about them as individuals and that I will be here as a support system, accountability partner, and coach when they need it.

*What was your experience like as a first-generation college student?*

I made a lot of mistakes. This was mostly because I was too scared to ever ask for help. I tried to do everything on my own, and I spent a lot of time just trying to figure things out. While I was a good student, I never went above and beyond. I was too scared to get involved and didn't know how important it was to make connections on campus and become an active member of the campus community. It wasn't until I found a faculty mentor in my junior year that I began to receive the guidance and support I needed to excel both inside and outside the classroom.

*What is some of the best advice that you give to students?*

I think that it is important to tell students not to give up. The path to success is not always linear, and the curves and the bumps in the road are part of the journey. Each and every person's path is different, and it is important to embrace new experiences. Whether good or bad, these are opportunities for learning and growth.

## 9 Tips on Supporting First-Generation College Students by Alecea Standlee

Alecea Standlee, first-generation college student and assistant professor of sociology at Gettysburg College, writes about specific ways that advisors and professors can empower first-gen students.

1. Provide appropriate support.
2. Be transparent in the classroom.
3. Teach study skills.
4. Organize students into groups.
5. Develop personal relationships.
6. Engage parents.
7. Facilitate connections.
8. Fight invisibility.
9. Keep an open mind.



Full article can be retrieved here: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/04/11/policies-and-practices-help-first-generation-college-students-succeed-opinion>



## Spring Events

Event Name	Date	Time	Location	Type of Event
CSRDE webinar: The Effects of Institutional Behaviors on UG Degree Completion	1/15/2020	2:00–3:00	OIRA conference room, 5th floor Dunford Hall	Webinar
Advising and Success Spring Retreat #1	1/24/2020	8:30–1:00	SU 272A	Retreat
Green Zone Training	1/29/2020	9:00–11:30	SU 272C	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
*Honors & Scholars Programs Open House	2/5/2020	3:30–4:30	Howard Baker Center, Room 118	TennACADA
NACADA webinar: A Deeper Look at Incorporating Coaching Conversations into Academic Advising Practice	2/11/2020	2:00–3:30	SU 362B	Webinar
CSRDE webinar: Peer Coaching: A Model for Supporting the Persistence of First-Generation College Students	2/19/2020	2:00–3:00	OIRA conference room, 5th floor Dunford Hall	Webinar
*Thornton Center Information Session followed by an Open House	2/19/2020 (tentative)	TBD	Thornton Center	TennACADA
*State of the Campus Panel	3/4/2020	2:30–4:00	SU 169	TennACADA
NACADA Webinar: Successful Advising Strategies for Supporting Student Academic Recovery	3/19/2020	2:00–3:30	SU 362B	Webinar
NACADA Webinar: Academic Advising for Social Justice: Theory, Reflection, and Practice	4/15/2020	2:00–3:30	SU 362B	Webinar
CRSDE webinar: Fleets, Captains, and Crews: Creating Programs to Help New Students Navigate the Stormy Seas of the First Year	4/22/2020	2:00–3:00	OIRA conference room, 5th floor Dunford Hall	Webinar
Advising and Success Spring Retreat #2	5/5/2020	12:00–4:00	SU 272A	Retreat
*TennACADA events new to the calendar!				

