OUR MISSION

The First to Go program at Loyola Marymount University offers students valuable resources and opportunities for academic, professional, and personal growth. It is our mission to emphasize the unique social capital first-generation college students bring into the university in an attempt to create a community that will help our students thrive during their tenure at LMU.

Transition

We believe a productive transition into the university is an essential component of academic success, and we are especially interested in first year and transfer students. The First to Go Scholars Program provides an intensive academic experience for a select group of incoming freshmen who take two classes together per semester—a course in the CORE and a 1-unit seminar that explores the first generation college experience. We also offer outreach programs for Transfer, Commuter, and Graduate students in an effort to foster community and aid transition within specific student populations.

Networking and Community Building

One important component of First to Go is the mentoring program, where students are paired with faculty and staff who are also the first in their families to attend college. These mentoring relationships can facilitate academic and professional development, as well as personal and spiritual growth. We also offer various networking events throughout the semester—from our annual welcome mixer to our spring publication night—designed to introduce students to faculty resources and to build community within the program.

Academic Discourse

We believe that it is important to prepare our students to participate in the academic discourses that surround them. As part of the First to Go community, students have opportunities to present research, publish personal narratives, co-facilitate FTG courses, and discuss their experiences with university administrators and department chairs. From providing public forums for expression to exposing hidden curriculum, we seek to familiarize students with the conventions of academic discourse that express the culture of the university, and we emphasize the connections between language, knowledge, and power in an effort to help our students develop strong voices that will prepare them for post-graduate work in research or graduate/professional school.

Social Capital

The First to Go program is designed to help students build social capital; however, we believe it is essential to challenge the stereotype that first-generation college students enter the university academically unprepared and ill-equipped to meet the demands of higher education. The various types of social capital these students possess—resilience, persistence, resourcefulness, and dedication, among many other valuable qualities—are powerful determinants of success at the university level. As an academic support program, we encourage students to draw from their supplies of social capital as we help ease transition, make visible useful resources, and encourage active participation in university culture.
Our Growing Program

- The First to Go program ended the 2012-2013 academic year with 142 students and 87 faculty and staff mentors, which represents a 40% community-wide growth from last year.

- We continued our support for first-year students through the First to Go Scholars’ Program and expanded our targeted outreach efforts to include commuter, transfer, and graduate student populations.

- This year our office welcomed the arrival of our new program coordinator, Danelle Dyckhoff, our graduate student assistant, Gabby Corona, and our graduate interns Blanca Martinez and Krysten Simms, who worked with our program Director, Dr. La’Tonya Rease Miles to develop increased resources for first-gen students at LMU.

- New programming this year included a graduate school info session, roundtable discussions with department chairs, and our inaugural First-Gen Awareness Week.

- First Gen is a new club initiated this year by first-generation students where new students are paired with upperclassmen for guidance. First Gen also coordinates campus-wide activities and events specific toward the first-generation experience (e.g. panels and workshops).
43% of our student population came through our office for services during the 2012-2013 academic year.

All students on our distribution list received regular bi-monthly emails on events, opportunities, and resources promoting academic and professional growth.
First to Go Scholars’ Program

Each year, a limited number of incoming first-gen freshman are invited to join the FTG Scholars’ program. Scholars take at least two classes together over the course of an academic year:

1 - UNIT SEMINAR: co-facilitated by Mr. Jonathan Gómez and FTG students Marisa Cervantes and Rene Silva:

- Exploration of the first- gen college experience
- Direct access to university resources
- Emphasis on academic engagement

ENGL 110 & ENGL 140: year of writing courses taught by Prof. Danelle Dyckhoff:

- ENGL 110 (Fall 12): College Writing
  - Focus on integrating student voices into academic discourse
  - Opportunities to present research and publish personal philosophies

- ENGL 140 (Spring 13): Intro to Fiction
  - Study of literature as exploration into diverse human experience
  - Focus on power, privilege, and narrative

Scholars entering Fall 2013 will enroll in a First Year Seminar taught by Prof. Bernadette Musetti and a course in American Cultures taught by Prof. Juan Mah y Busch in the spring.
### FTG Scholars’ Demographics

#### 21 Students in Learning Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>38%</th>
<th>62%</th>
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<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CFA</td>
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<th>14%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
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<tr>
<th>Cumulative GPA</th>
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<th>60%</th>
<th>15%</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.9-2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4-2.0</td>
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Academic Engagement in the Scholars’ Community

This year, four FTG Scholars were invited to present research completed in the First to Go section of ENGL 110: College Writing at LMU’s Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Engaging themselves in the academic community, Scholars:
- worked closely with faculty in research assistantships;
- applied and were admitted into academic enrichment programs (ACE) and service orgs (Sursum Corda, MESA);
- participated in Alternative Spring Break (Ecuador)
- applied and were hired as writing tutors in the ARC;
- served on panels for visiting student tour groups;
- presented and are preparing to publish personal narratives composed during the spring writing workshop;
- met with LMU Provost Dr. Joseph Hellige to discuss the ways in which LMU can continue to support its first-gen students.

Easing Transition: Reaching Out to Commuters and Transfers

**FIRST GEN COMMUTERS**

- “Commuter Chats” was started to build community within our population of first-gen commuters and to help all current and soon-to-be commuters get connected on campus.

- Lunch-time meetings are held the last Tuesday of every month, facilitated by our graduate assistant Gabby Corona.

- In the fall of 2012, the Academic Resource Center opened a new student lounge, where commuters can come to study, sleep, or connect with other students in between classes.

**FIRST GEN TRANSFERS**

- Our latest program, “Transfer Talks,” is designed to bring together our transfer students in the First to Go community for discussion on the ways in which we can better serve our first-gen transfer population.

- Beginning Fall 2013, Gabriela Pineda Hassan, FTG Senior and LMU transfer student, will support outreach and development of resources for the community.
FIRST-GEN GRADUATE STUDENTS

Increasing graduate school literacy for our undergrads and support for our current first-gen graduate students on campus were high priority initiatives this year.

- Fall semester we hosted a graduate school info session for our students considering post-graduate degrees.
  - Presenters from USC and LMU’s graduate admissions offices provided tips for successful applications.
  - Dr. Dexter Blackman, Assistant Professor of History at LMU, provided insight into faculty selections committees.
  - Current LMU graduate students discussed their experiences applying to graduate school.
  - George Turner, trial attorney at the Public Defenders Office, and Prof. James Kintz, instructor in the Philosophy Department at LMU, spoke about life after grad school and how students can prepare for their future careers.

- We plan to expand this 2-hour seminar into a 3-day graduate school academy next fall.

- Spring Semester Grad Student “Coffee Break”:
  - Co-facilitated by FTG grad assistants Gabby Corona and Krysten Simms.
  - Recruited 9 first-gen graduate students from LMU’s Counseling Program (School of Ed).
  - Students met for monthly roundtables on topics ranging from managing graduate coursework to mentoring students in the FTG community.

- Plans for next year include:
  - Graduate writers’ workshop.
  - Expanded internship and mentoring opportunities.
  - Outreach to diverse graduate programs on campus.
Several students experienced financial duress during the 2012-2013 academic year. Some students received insufficient financial aid packages and were overcommitted to loans, while others struggled with the decision to leave LMU and attend a less costly institution.

- First to Go partnered with the Office of Financial Aid to increase financial literacy and help students better understand their aid options.

Many students were confused about registration and were unsure of which classes to take to satisfy their graduation requirements. Registration for fall was particularly difficult for some students (especially undeclared) with the shift to the new Core curriculum.

- Special sessions on registering for classes were held for Scholars enrolled in LIBA 170. University Advising offered registration workshops and drop-in appointments for students with registration-related questions. Students were also encouraged to schedule appointments with the college advisors to ensure they were making satisfactory progress toward their degrees.

Students—especially our first-years—struggled with over-commitment to the number of extra-curricular activities and organizations available to them as students at LMU.

- We performed outreach to students whose grades were suffering to discuss strategies for balancing school work with extra-curricular commitments and emphasized the need for careful and critical selection of extra-curricular activities and organizations that would promote students’ academic and professional development.

Students tended to be interested in study abroad opportunities, but unsure of whether they could finance the travel or fit a semester abroad into their curriculum.

- Our partnership with the Study Abroad Office has helped our students to see study abroad as a reality, and we have a number of students who will be participating in study abroad programs throughout Europe this summer and fall. We are also working to pilot a First to Go Abroad program for next summer.

Other first-gen related challenges included navigating hidden curriculum, coping with imposter syndrome, coming to terms with the myth of meritocracy, and struggling with survivor’s guilt.

- Many of the events and activities we sponsor throughout the semester—from our roundtables with department chairs to our first-gen Mosaic—are designed to increase awareness about the unique challenges facing our first-gen students.
2012 – 2013 First to Go Community Events
Fall Highlights

**Fall Welcome Reception**
Faculty and staff mentors joined First to Go students at our annual Fall mixer. Keynote speaker, former ASLMU President Bryan Ruiz, shared his experiences at LMU over the last four years and discussed his run for office as a first-generation college student.

**Graduate School Info Session**
Presenters from on and off-campus and across various disciplines spoke to our potential first-gen grad students about the process of applying to graduate school, application dos and don’ts, and what students can expect after being admitted into a graduate program.

**Life of Pi Movie Night**
Sophomore FTG students who took ENGL 140 with Prof. Danelle Dyckhoff and read Yann Martel’s Life of Pi were invited to see the newly released film with their instructor.

**Other events included:** Junior Check-In with Dr. Rae Linda Brown; New Mentors’ Lunch; FTG Scholars’ Thanksgiving Dinner; Community Table in the Lair; and ARC Study Jam!
Spring Highlights

Ice Skating

There’s a first-time for everything, and this was certainly the case for many of our brave students who took to the ice for our spring study break!

CDS Etiquette Dinner

First to Go students and mentors joined CDS for etiquette training over a 5-course meal.

First Gen Publication Night

Min-Jung Kim, Valarie Nario, and Mary Ludwig read personal narratives composed during the FTG spring writing workshop facilitated by Dr. La’Tonya Rease Miles.
First-Generation Awareness Week

This spring, First to Go hosted our inaugural First-Gen Awareness Week to build community within and raise awareness about LMU’s first generation student population.

April 15th-18th

A special thanks to all our participants in this week-long program and to LMU’s Loyolan for covering our events and advocating for increased awareness about our community.
First Gen Club Fundraiser (Convo Hour)

Cast and crew of Against the Grain

Mosaic: Oral Histories of First-Generation Students and Faculty/Staff Mentors

First Gen Café featuring FTG student artists
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-2013 Goals</th>
<th>Progress toward Goals as of Spring 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early move in for FTG Scholars</td>
<td>Participants in our learning community moved in one day early last fall for a separate FTG orientation.</td>
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<td>Increased funding for program</td>
<td>This year our program was awarded a WACAC diversity grant as well as a substantial gift from an anonymous donor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First to Go LibGuide dedicated to resources relating to the first-generation college experience</td>
<td>With the help of FTG Scholar and research assistant Alexia Pineda, we were able to publish our FTG LibGuide this fall: <a href="http://libguides.lmu.edu/firsttogo">http://libguides.lmu.edu/firsttogo</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-gen journal at LMU</td>
<td>We are working with WHH Library to launch a journal of critical and creative writing devoted to the first-generation college experience.</td>
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<td>Increased interaction between students, faculty, and university administrators</td>
<td>This spring we successfully piloted our first “Roundtable for Majors” with Psychology Department Chair Dr. Ronald Barrett, and our First to Go Scholars attended breakfast with the Provost prior to First Gen Awareness Week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upgrade website, mission, and learning outcomes for program</td>
<td>Our website has been updated, complete with a new mission statement, donor page, and information about current research in the field of first-gen studies. Our learning outcomes are drafted and will be added to our website this summer.</td>
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Targeted Goals for Next Year
2013-2014

Graduate school academy

Mentor/mentee shadow program

Expanded summer orientation for Scholars (4-day program)

Launch first-gen journal

Build commuter, transfer, and graduate communities

First to Go Abroad
THANK YOU for another great year!

First to Go Program
Loyola Marymount University

We would like to thank the anonymous donor who has helped to support our program.

Please refer interested first-gen students or faculty/staff mentors to our office.

Office: Daum Hall, 2nd Floor
Tel: (310) 338-7698
Email: FirstToGo@LMU.edu

T H A N K Y O U
for another great year!