First Generation Cougs

They constitute 41% of WSU’s freshman class. And they are:

Willing to Take Risks
Being a trailblazer is risky.

Resilient
They have overcome obstacles to be here.

Optimistic
They have taken risks and overcome obstacles because they are hopeful and confident about the future.

What teaching strategies support their success?

Clarity About Expectations
They have not received clear messages about the demands and expectations of college while at the high school level.²

An Environment of Interdependence
Being part of a community (as opposed to paving one’s own path) reduces the sense of difficulty and eliminates the performance gap without adverse consequences for continuing-generation students.³

Engagement and Involvement
Despite being significantly less likely to be engaged, involvement with faculty and peer networks has stronger positive effects on critical thinking, degree plans, sense of control over (and responsibility for) academic success, for first generation than for other students.⁴

Connection to Resources
First generation students have greater time demands and financial commitments, often coming from families with lower incomes. Help them discover campus resources through course assignments.⁵

Principles of Good Teaching Practice Apply
What works for first generation students, works for all students.

For more information and resources, visit faculty.wsu.edu/first-gen


