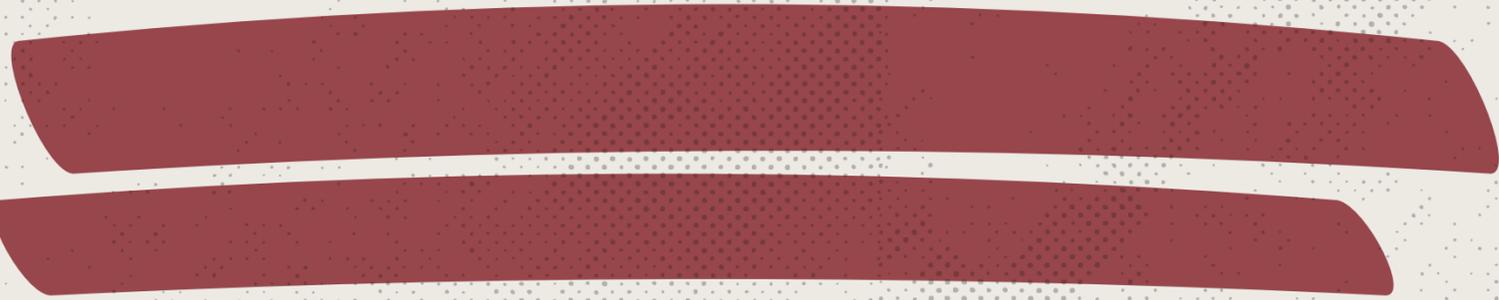


# **SUPPORTING FIRST-GEN. COLLEGE STUDENTS THROUGH YOUR SPHERE(S) OF INFLUENCE**



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**Ready vs**



**Ready**

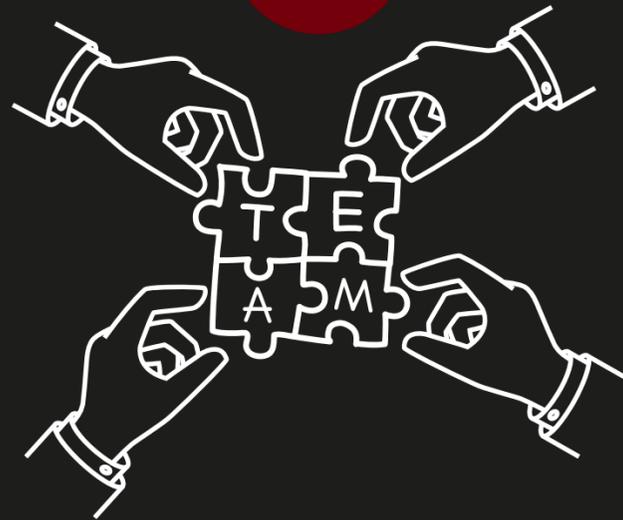
# BECOMING FIRST-GEN. COLLEGE STUDENT READY

1



**as individuals**

2

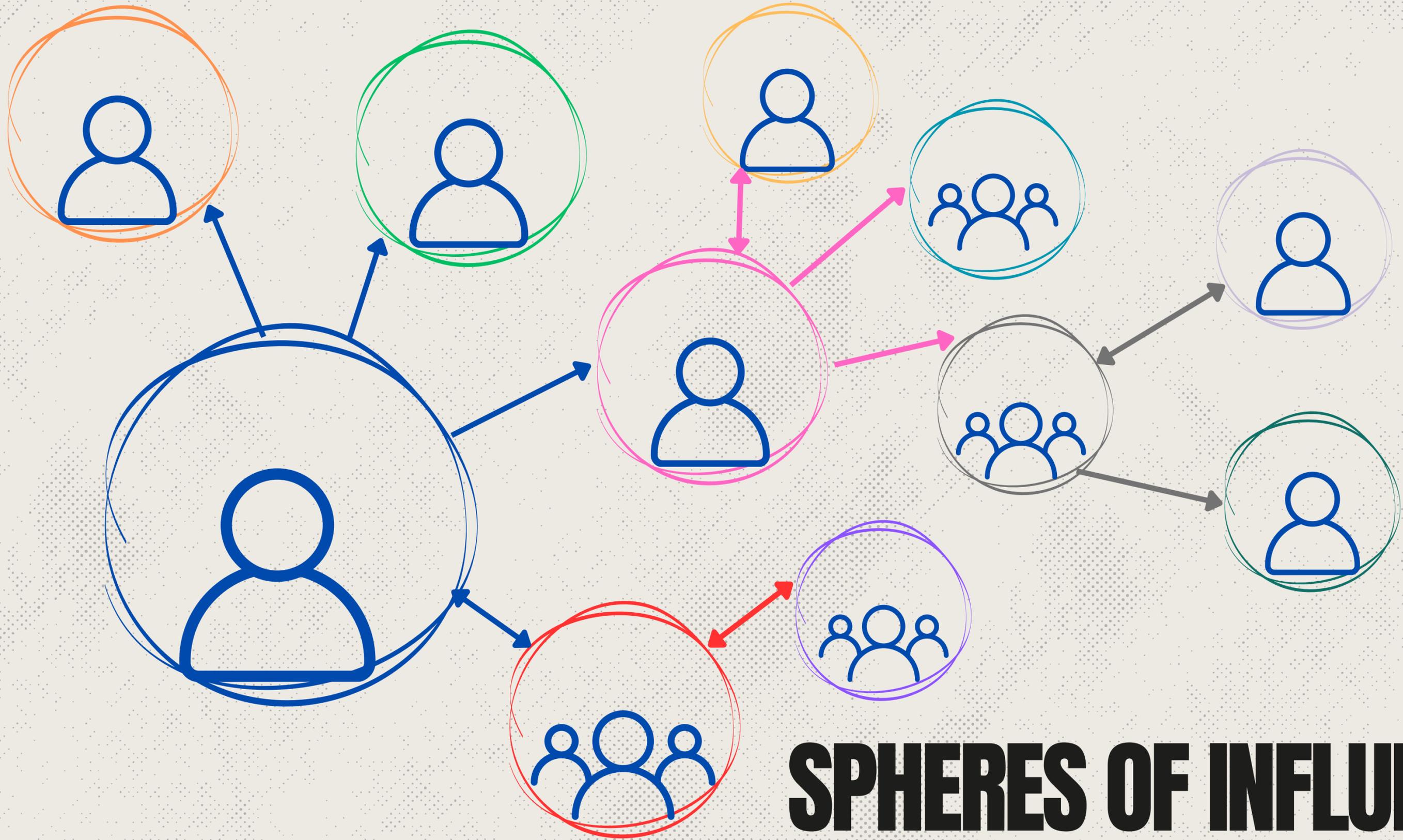


**as units**

3



**as institutions**



# **SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**



# LEARN WHO **FIRST-GEN.** COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE.



Where are they joining us from?



What is their background?



How do they identify?



Where on our campus might they feel connected?



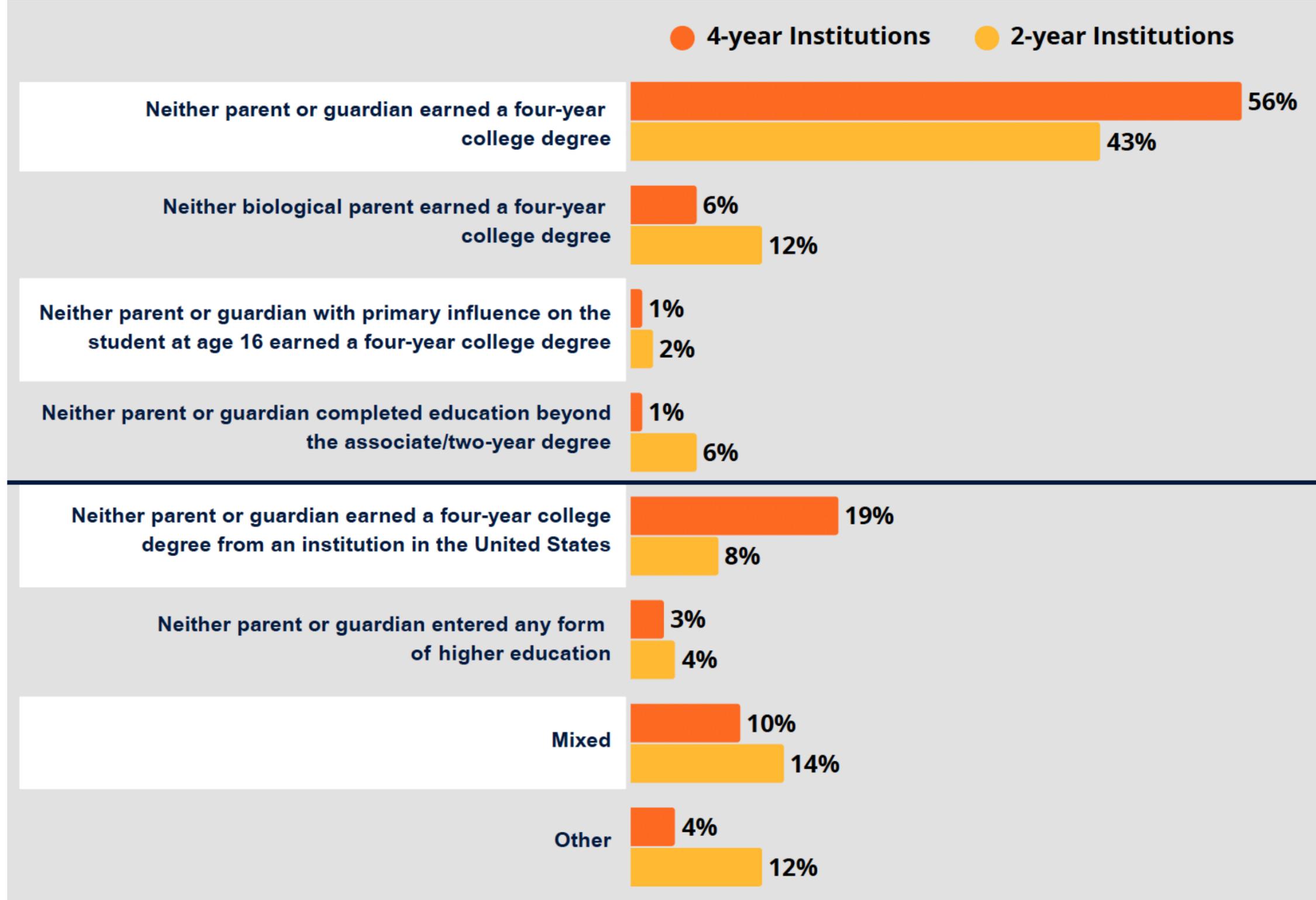
How might we create supportive learning environments for them?

# Who Are First-Gen. College Students?

(Lyons et al., 2025)

**FIGURE 2**

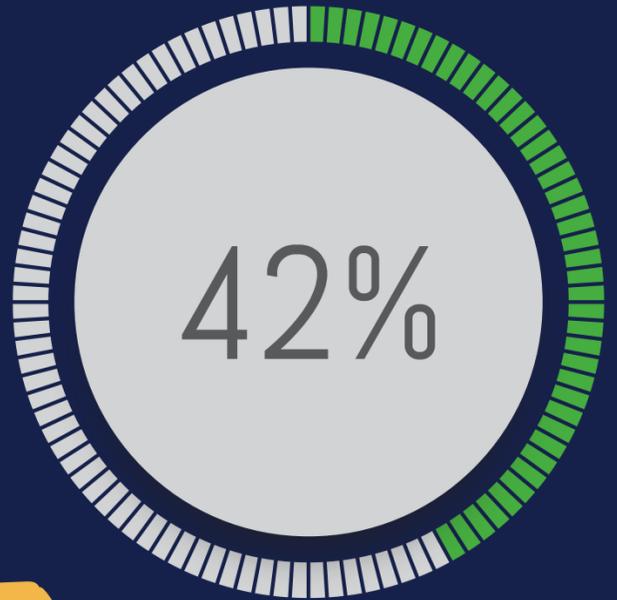
Please select the response most closely aligned with your institutional definition(s) of an undergraduate first-generation college student. (2024 Institution-level Responses)



# How many students are first-generation college or graduate students?

National data provides a general guide; campus-based and disaggregated data provides more nuance.

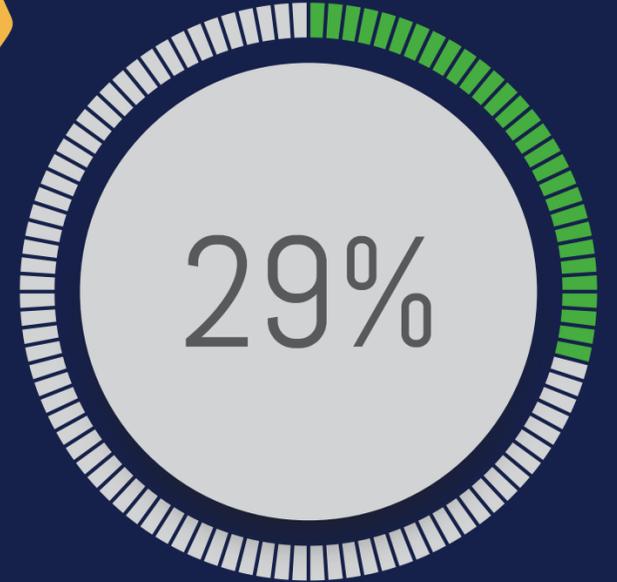
**Bachelor's**  
(NCES, 2022)



**Master's**  
(NCES, 2018)

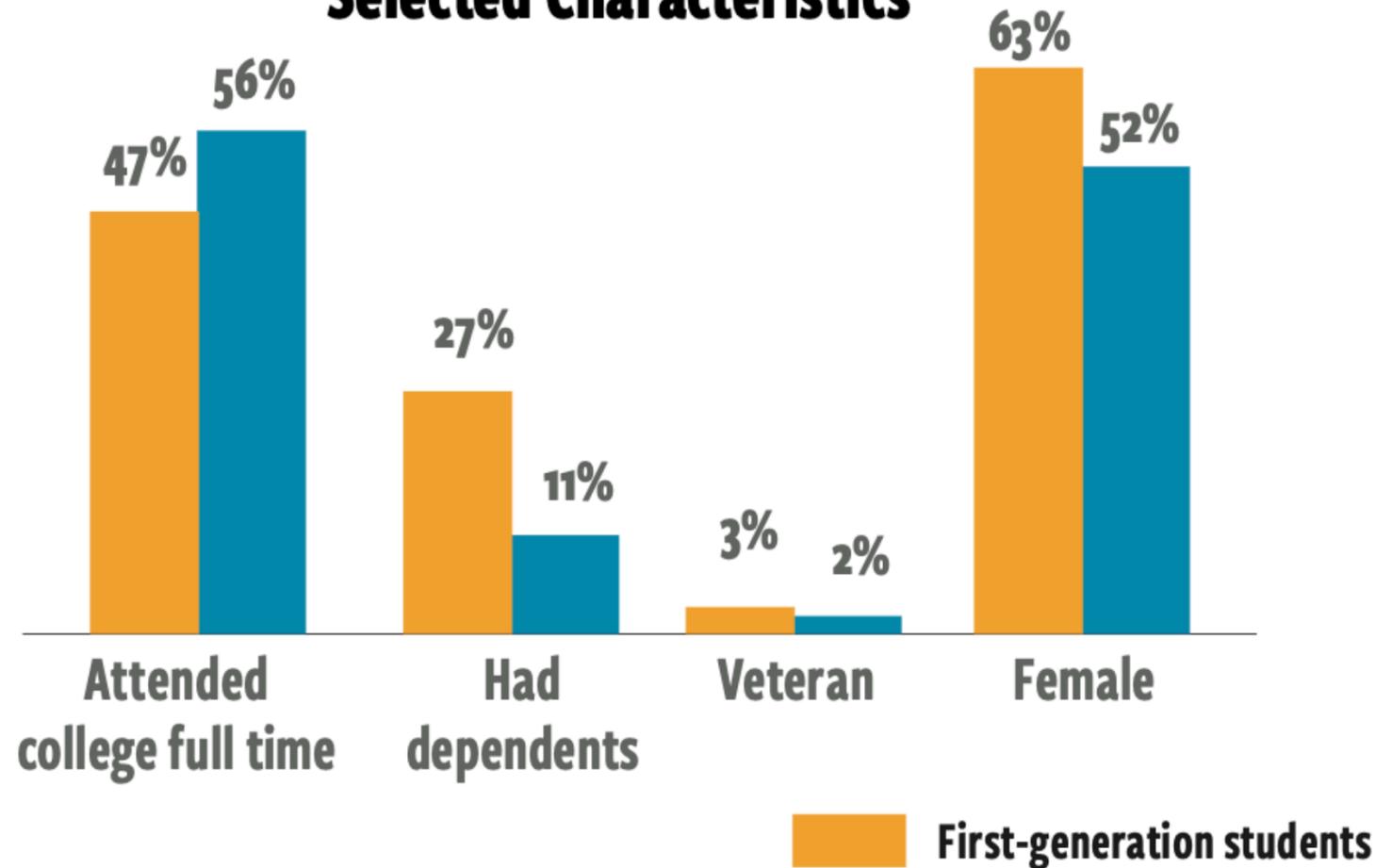


**Doctoral**  
(NSF, 2022)

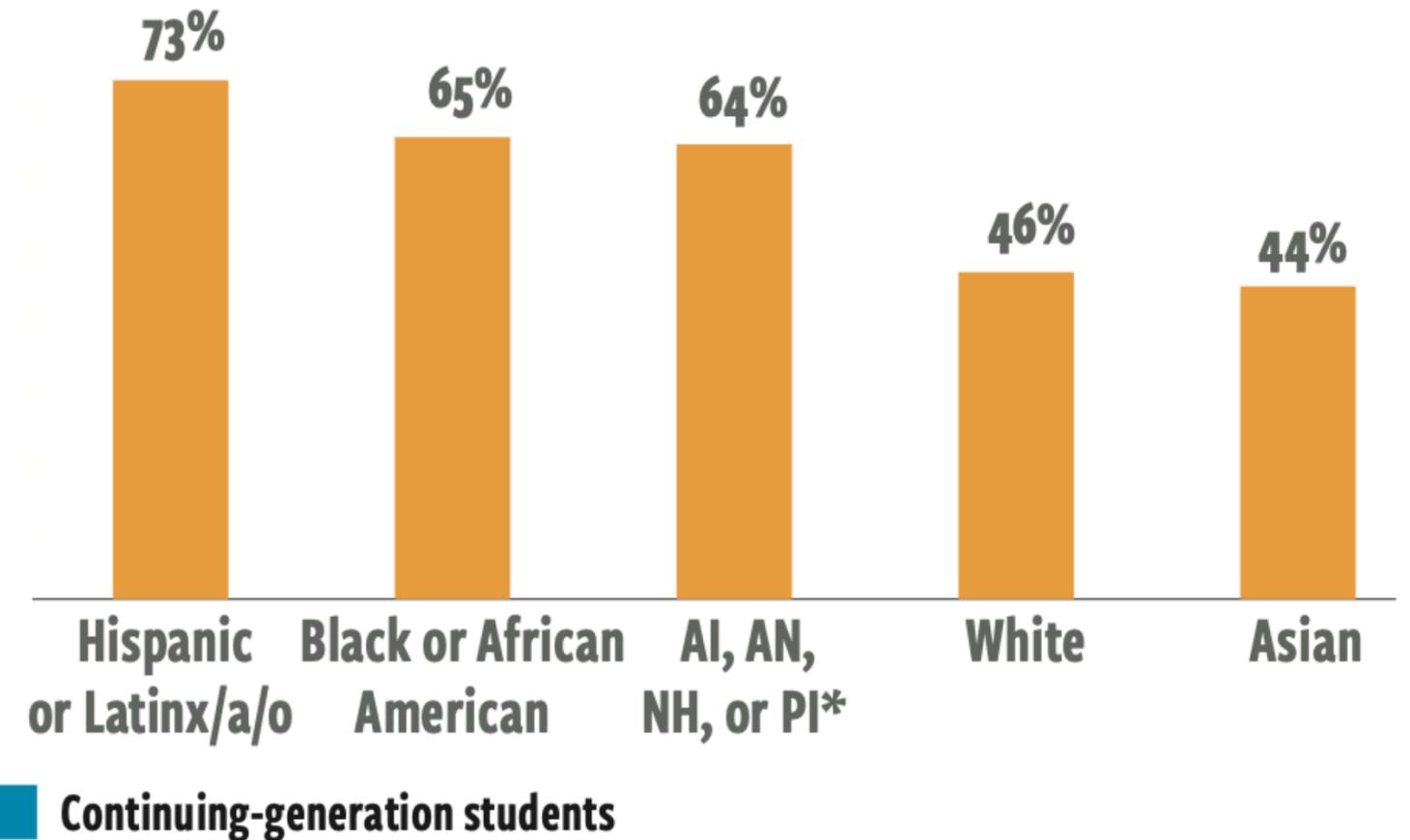


# Who Are First-Gen. College Students?

## Percentage of Undergraduates with Selected Characteristics



## Percentage of Undergraduates who were First-generation, by Race/ethnicity



# Who Are First-Gen. College Students?

## MEDIAN PARENTAL INCOME OF FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT STUDENTS

**First-generation** students' parents' median income was **\$41,000** in both 2016 and 2020.

**Continuing-generation** students' parents' income increased from **\$90,000** in 2016 to **\$103,000** in 2020.

## PERCENTAGE WHO WERE AGE 30 OR ABOVE

**28%** of **first-generation** students

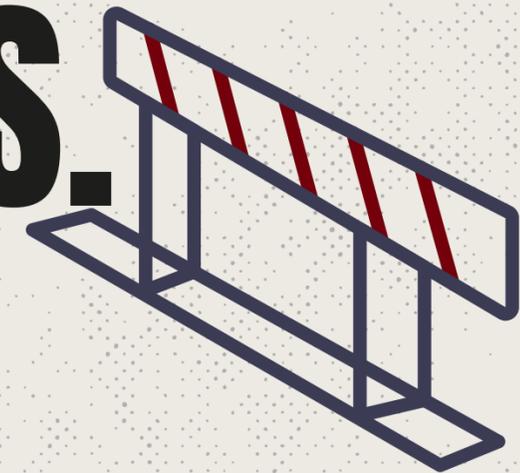
**16%** of **continuing-generation** students

**“Schools don’t cater to first-generation college students. There is an assumption that you should already know what you need to do and how you should do it, but we don’t. We don’t know, our parents don’t know.”**

**-First-Gen. College Student**

(Abdul et al., 2020)

**RECOGNIZE FIRST-GEN.  
COLLEGE STUDENTS'  
ASSETS AND BARRIERS.**





# COMMON BARRIERS



# COMMON ASSETS

# CREATE ENVIRONMENTS THAT SEE AND VALIDATE FIRST-GEN. COLLEGE STUDENTS.

UPON ENTRY

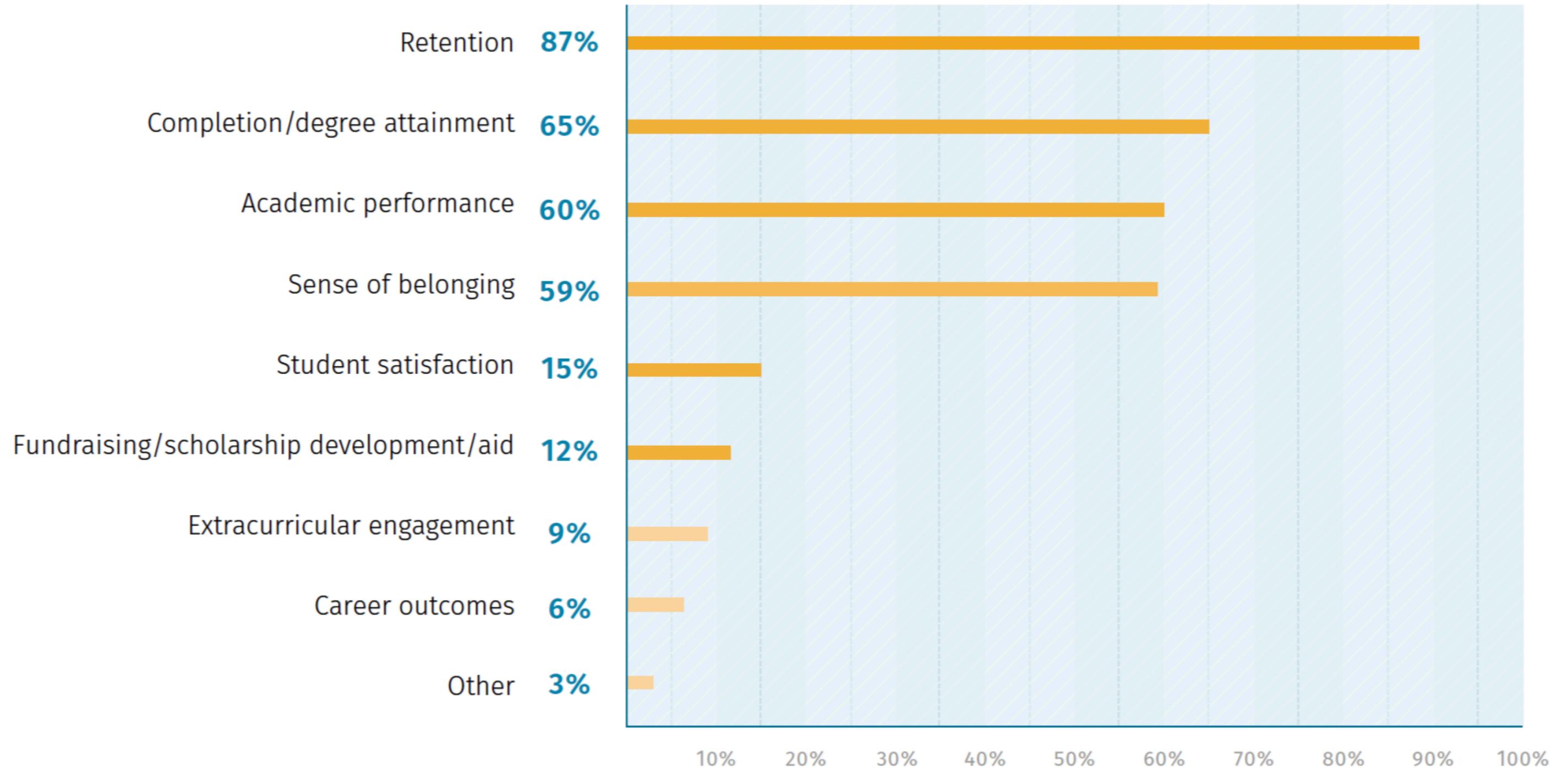
IN ACADEMIC SPACES

WITH PEERS AND  
POSSIBILITY MODELS

AT TRANSITION POINTS

# Q11

What are the three most important student success factors driving institutional decisions on offerings for first-generation students?



(Whitley, Benson & Wesaw, 2018)

# WHAT ARE CAMPUSES DOING TO SUPPORT & VALIDATE FIRST-GEN COLLEGE STUDENTS?



## T06 | Priority Content Areas Among Supports for First-generation Students at Survey Institutions (N = 92) (Whitley et al., 2020)

Support Content Area	Percentage
Academic success/study skills	88%
Advising/major selection/degree planning	80%
Navigating campus resources	71%
Time management	70%
Understanding financial aid	63%
Financial literacy	58%
Building community/support	50%
Career/postgraduation preparation	50%
Building faculty relationships	49%
Résumé preparation/interviewing	47%
Mental and physical health	41%
Self-advocacy	41%
Utilizing strengths as a first-generation student	33%
Study abroad	12%
Other	11%
Don't know	7%

Note. Percentages total more than 100%, as respondents were allowed to "select all that apply."

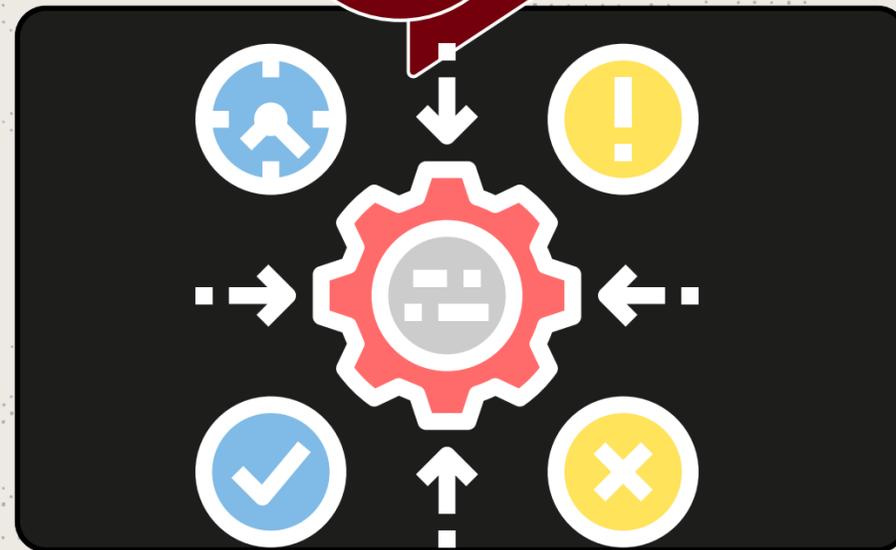
# EVALUATING YOUR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

1



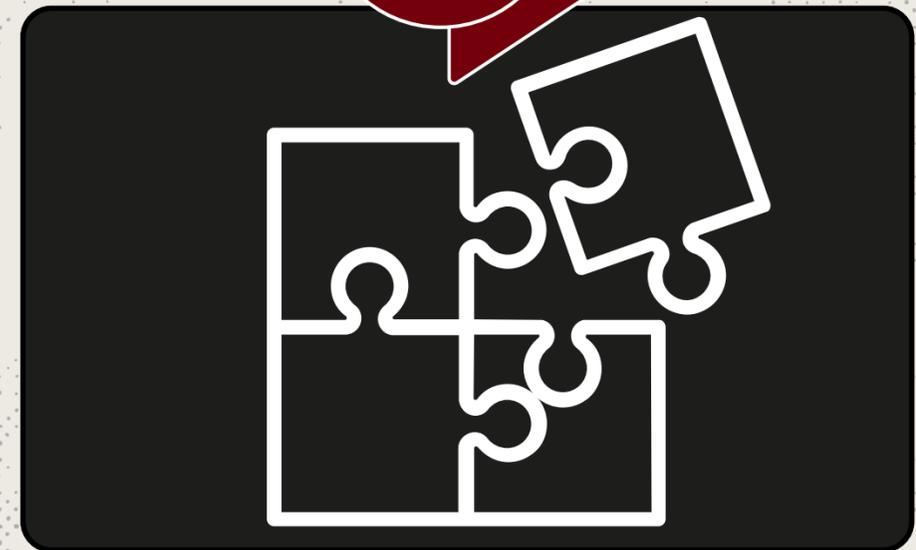
**consider your  
points of contact**

2



**assess your  
context**

3



**determine your  
contribution**

# EVALUATING YOUR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE



**Step 1:**



**Consider Your Points of Contact**

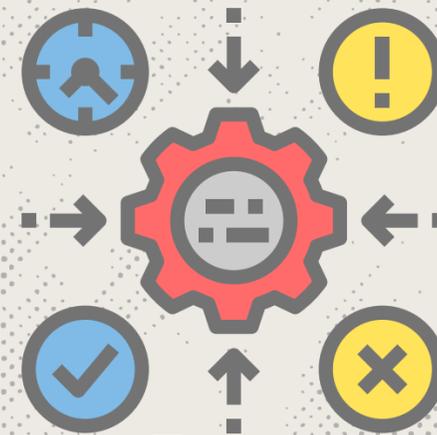
**When, where, and how do you connect and learn with first-gen. college students?**

# EVALUATING YOUR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE



**Step 2:**

**Assess Your Context**

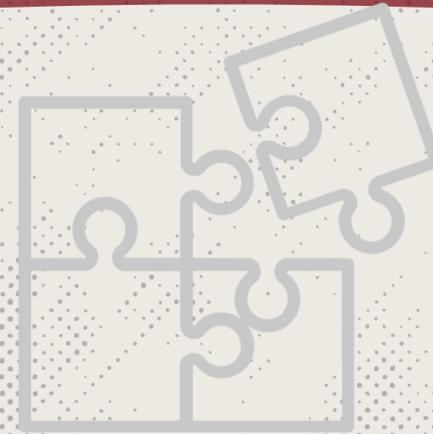


**What policies, practices, services, events, activities, facilities, or interactions intersect with your role?**

# EVALUATING YOUR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE



**Step 3:**



**Determine Your Contribution**

**What is one way (e.g., policy change, practice shift, service enhancement, event, activity, facility use, or every day interaction) you can better support first-gen. college students?**

I have no idea what  
you're talking about  
but I promise to  
nod accordingly.



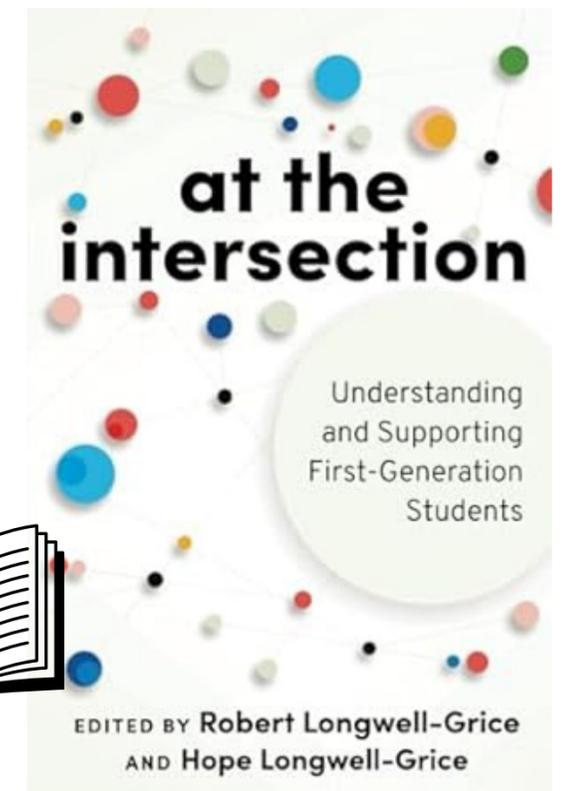
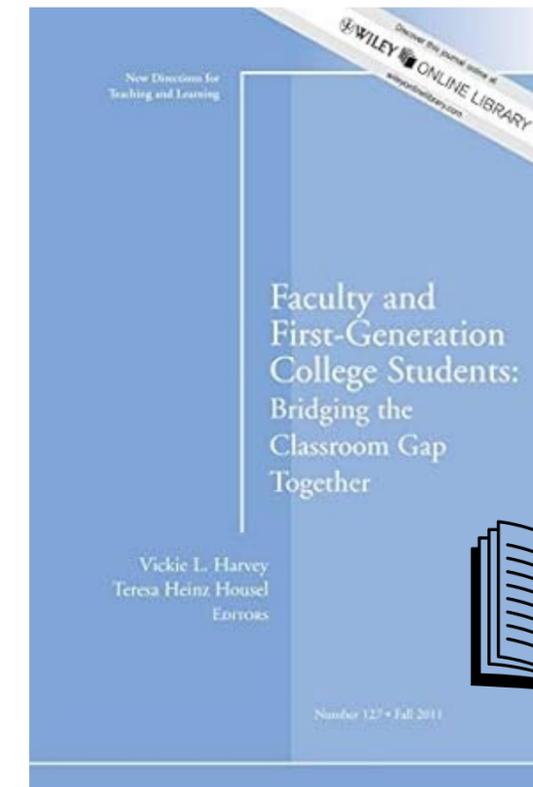
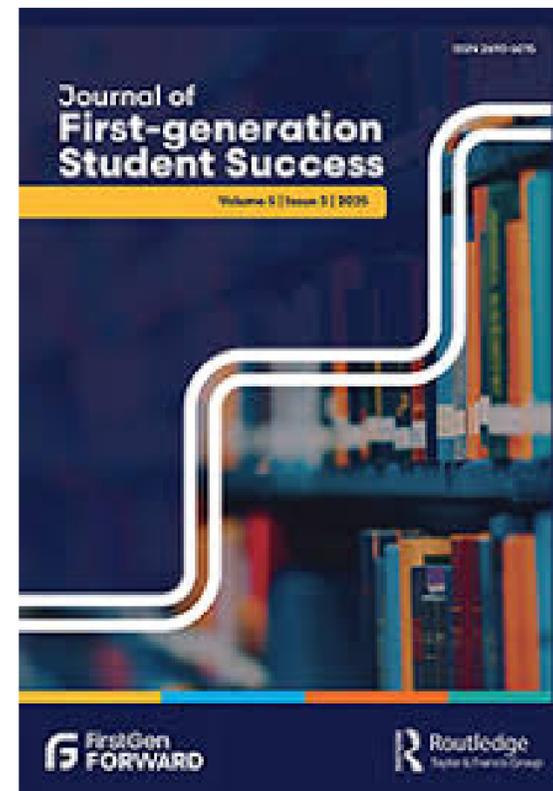
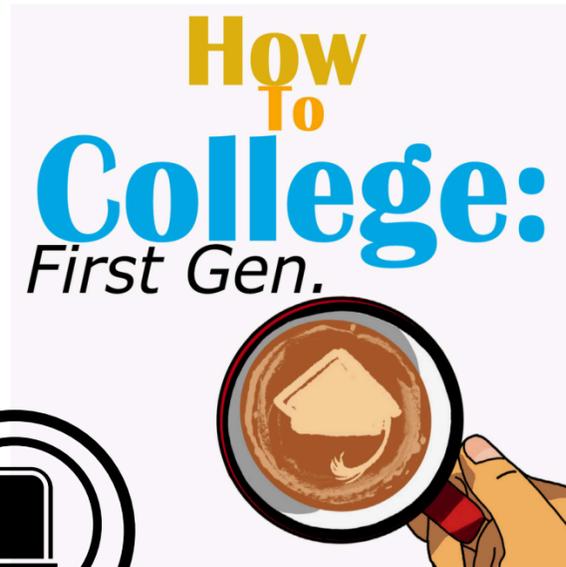
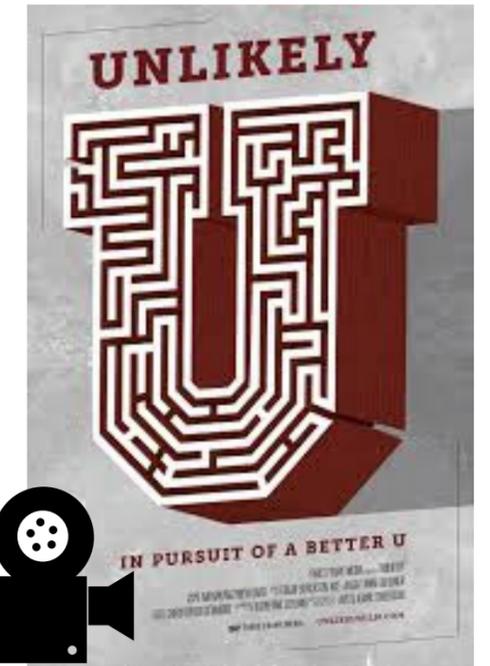
# Jargon & Acronyms

The Enemies to Clarity and Understanding in Higher Education ... and many other spaces.

# 2025 FIRST-GEN FORWARD CHAMPION INSTITUTIONS



# RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS





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