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NASPA and The Suder Foundation Announce Center for First-generation Student Success

WASHINGTON, DC – NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation announced today a formal partnership to establish the Center for First-generation Student Success (Center). Led by NASPA with \$3M in seed funding from The Suder Foundation, the Center will be devoted to increasing the research, scholarship, and effective practice around first-generation student success and to expand both increased awareness in and presence of evidence-based programs.

“With over one-third of today’s undergraduate students being the first in their families to attend college and current literature presenting the barriers to success for these students, NASPA welcomed this partnership as a means to provide necessary leadership and support to our member-institutions and the higher ed community,” said Kevin Kruger, President of NASPA.

Early plans for the Center include a comprehensive landscape analysis to better understand the current state of first-generation student services and programming across institutions of differing types and establishment of an advisory board of institution leaders, scholars, and practitioners to shape the direction of the Center. Opportunities for scholarly and professional development related to first-generation student success through conferences, online learning, convenings, learning communities, and the NASPA Annual Conference will also be a priority for the Center. A convening of institutions actively engaged in first-generation student initiatives will be announced in coming months.

The Center will expand the work of the existing [First Scholars®](#) program. Concerned with the low completion rates of first-generation college students nationally, Eric and Deb Suder established The Suder Foundation and launched First Scholars as a platform for providing students the tools necessary to succeed. A priority of the Center will be the evolution and expansion of the First Scholars network along with development of First Scholars models and materials for availability to a breadth of institutions.

Eric Suder, the founder of The Suder Foundation added, “Deb and I are so pleased to announce this partnership with NASPA. Not only does this expand the success of First Scholars, but NASPA provides a central location for the production and growth of research and knowledge that is critical to the success of first-generation students. We are excited to provide funding to the Center, are committed to the strategic plan, and look forward to having an impact on first-generation success nationwide.”

Sarah E. Whitley recently joined NASPA as Senior Director of the Center for First-generation Student Success and will lead infrastructure development and programmatic efforts.

The Center is based at NASPA in Washington, D.C. Visit the [Center's website](#) to learn more about the evolution and share information about current institutional first-generation programs. An expanded website with content tracks by institutional type, a clearinghouse for scholarly research and effective practices, current conversations about first-generation student success, and opportunities to get involved will be announced soon. The Center is currently active on Twitter using the handle @FirstgenCenter.

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About NASPA

NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories. Visit [naspa.org](#) for more information.

About The Suder Foundation

The mission of The Suder Foundation (TSF) is to dramatically improve the graduation rate of first-generation college students and prepare each scholar for a life with self-awareness, success, and significance and to impact the culture of higher education for systemic first-gen student success.