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First-Generation Symposium

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First-Gen Students: Finding Their Purpose

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Brown, Meredith and Booth, Lamont Eli, "First-Gen Students: Finding Their Purpose" (2024). *First-Generation Symposium*. 4.

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Rowan College
at
BURLINGTON COUNTY

First-Gen Students: *Finding their Purpose*

Rowan University First-Generation Symposium, February 2024

Eli Booth, RCBC Student

Meredith Brown, CCSP, Career Services Advisor, Career Preparation and
Experiential Learning

AGENDA

- I. Understanding purpose
- I. Benefits in academic and personal life
- I. Eli Booth's Testimonial
- I. Addressing challenges
- I. Strategies and best practices



***“Purpose, a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self, is one of these promotive factors”
(Lund 2022)***

Understanding Purpose?

- ▶ Common misconception: something you are passionate about
- ▶ 2 components:
 - ▶ Contribution (what you love doing)
 - ▶ How that contribution affects others
- ▶ Gives reason to action

Benefits of Finding Purpose for First-Gen's

- ▶ More likely than their peers to have greater levels of psychological well-being including hope, positive affect, and life satisfaction
- ▶ Markers of success: Academic achievement, degree commitment, and economic success
- ▶ Avoiding stressors, pressures, and barriers First-Gen's face is already hard enough
- ▶ “Research suggests that self-reflection of this nature may foster beneficial outcomes such as increases in goal-directedness and, in turn, life satisfaction” (White 2022)

Eli Booth's Testimonial

Eli Booth, First-Generation Entertainment
Technology student

- International Club
- Peer Mentor, Strategic Marketing intern
- Camp 2030



Addressing Challenges

- ▶ Navigating unfamiliar academic environments and family expectations
- ▶ Lack of peer relationships
 - ▶ “Peer relationships may play an important role in the cultivation of purpose, especially among first-generation students” (Lund 2022)
- ▶ Dropout rates
 - ▶ A 2022 report released by educationdata.org shows that first-generation students have a 92.2 percent higher dropout rate than their legacy peers. And those seeking a bachelor’s degree have a dropout rate that is 23.5 percent higher than average



Ways First-Gen's Can Find Their Purpose?

- ▶ Question, connect, and believe
 - ▶ *Why am I taking classes?*
 - ▶ Recognize and find things you enjoy
 - ▶ Trust your intuition
- ▶ Assess your values, strengths, weaknesses, areas of interest
 - ▶ Focus II
 - ▶ Purpose challenge
- ▶ Reflect
 - ▶ Valued Living Questionnaire
 - ▶ Personal Values Questionnaire
 - ▶ Portrait Values Questionnaire

Strategies and Resources to help address these challenges

- ▶ Mentorship and support system- from advisors, professors, classmates
 - ▶ Having open communication with family members about stressors or financial expectations (cultivate resilience)
- ▶ Extracurricular activities- becoming involved on campus
- ▶ Utilize college resources early on
 - ▶ Career Services, EOF, Student Life, Career Fairs
- ▶ Experiential learning opportunities

4 Tips to Enhance Purpose, Assist with Stride, and Have a Future

Michelle Obama was a former First-Gen; Tips from her

1. Don't ever doubt that you deserve to be in school
1. Don't be afraid to try new things
1. Whatever you do- Don't try to do this alone
1. Never forget people who believe in you



“There are so many people who believe in you”-Michelle Obama

References

<https://www.mdpi.com/2673-995X/2/1/2#:~:text=Benefits%20of%20Purpose,10%2C11%2C12%5D>.

[https://firstgen.naspa.org/scholarly-article/purpose-in-life-among-first-generation-college-students-friends-make-a-difference#:~:text=Peer%20relationships%20may%20play%20an,universities%20\(N%20%3D%20195\)](https://firstgen.naspa.org/scholarly-article/purpose-in-life-among-first-generation-college-students-friends-make-a-difference#:~:text=Peer%20relationships%20may%20play%20an,universities%20(N%20%3D%20195)).

<https://medium.com/change-your-mind/gen-z-the-first-generation-with-no-purpose-c6702e6ed889>

