



El Camino College

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For Immediate Release

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El Camino College Named Leader in “First Forward Institution” Program *ECC is the only community college in the nation tapped to join leadership program designed to advance the achievement and success of first-generation college students*

El Camino College will be the only community college in the leadership component of a nationwide program designed to support the success of first-generation college students. Recently named a participant in an inaugural cohort of First Forward Institutions, ECC is also the only campus out of the 115 California Community Colleges to participate in this new and innovative program.

The First Forward designation from the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of the NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation, recognizes institutions of higher education that have shown a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. The Center recognized early in the application process that a select number of institutions demonstrated a long-standing commitment to first-generation student success through systemwide and programmatic efforts. Through this demonstrated commitment and ability to serve as mentors to other selected institutions, nine institutions – including El Camino College – were tapped to serve in a leadership capacity for First Forward.

At El Camino College, the First-Gen Initiative was established in 2017 to help guide efforts in providing support for students whose parents did not graduate from a four-year college or university. Professional development opportunities and activities for students, faculty and staff have been implemented since then, with additional events planned for the future.

“At El Camino College, we are focused on responding to and supporting the fast-growing first-generation college student population on campus so they know that ECC is a place where they belong and where they can succeed,” said Dena P. Maloney, president of El Camino College. “Being one of the First Forward Institutions will provide additional resources collegewide that will, in turn, help our students in many ways.”

Recent first-gen activities at El Camino College included the First-Gen Faculty Campaign, a conference for faculty that covered topics that many first-gen students experience, such as academic impostor syndrome, hidden curriculum, and first-gen intersectionality. The college’s First-Gen Task Force, made up of faculty, staff, students, and administrators, coordinates additional efforts such as the

inaugural First-Generation College Day. A First-Gen Symposium last month offered more than 150 students the chance to network with other first-generation students and professionals, and a First-Gen Awareness Week in fall 2018 was full of activities where students, faculty, staff, and college leaders had the opportunity to engage with, advocate for, and support the ECC first-gen community. A successful First-Gen STEM Dinner for students was also part of the festivities.

“More than half of all ECC students and close to 80% of South Bay Promise students identify as first-generation students, so it’s important to build a network to help this student group succeed,” said ECC graduate and counselor Cynthia Mosqueda, who has led many of the college’s first-gen efforts. “Being first in your family often comes with many challenges and it’s important to create student programming that both supports and celebrates their first-gen status.”

As a First Forward Institution, select ECC faculty and staff will have access to opportunities to engage with peer and aspirational institutions that are also creating environments geared toward first-generation students. El Camino College will also send representatives to the First Forward Workshop in Orlando this June and will participate in monthly phone calls, virtual professional development, goal setting, blog development, annual reporting, and more.

“First Forward is an exciting opportunity for El Camino College to join an elite community of professionals prepared to share evidence-based practices and resources, troubleshoot challenges, generate knowledge, and continue to advance the success of first-generation students across the country,” said Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA. “We are excited to see a groundswell of activity from the First Forward cohort and know El Camino College will be a significant contributor.”

To learn more about first-generation programs and activities at El Camino College, view <http://www.elcamino.edu/student/academicsupport/first-gen-institute/>.

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Photo available online:

El Camino College students, faculty and staff recently participated in a First-Gen Symposium to celebrate first-generation students (those whose parents did not graduate from a four-year college or university) on campus. More than 150 students attended and were able to network, share their experiences, and learn about the resources available to help advance first-gen success.

<http://www.elcamino.edu/about/depts/publicrelations/photos/2019/First-Gen-Symposium.jpg>