

Expressions^{1st}

THE NEWSLETTER OF

Thrive. Connect. Transition. Evolve. Advocate.

Generation
@Scripps College

Scripps College

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A Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers –

Thank you for all the support and feedback we got after the launch of our newsletter last month! Our October newsletter theme is *Scary Situations* courtesy of Leonida's lovely brain and our love for clichés. We came about this theme upon the realization that often students that we interact with are constantly faced with challenging situations but are hesitant to speak up. Drawing from our personal experiences, sometimes it can be hard to ask for help. Our intention with this issue is to reach out to all of our community and provide them with the support to seek out help when they encounter their own *scary situations*.

In this issue you'll find some thoughtfully written pieces by our staff members Lindsey Martinovich, Niah Grimes and the lovely Gaby Ochoa, one of our First-Gen students. We want to thank our contributors for their bravery to not only tackle these *scary situations* but also to have the courage to share their experiences widely with our community. In addition to our contributor pieces, we hope you enjoy the articles we found pertaining to first-generation struggles outside of Scripps!

Enjoy!

Leonida Radford '17 and Vivian Yu '17
Program Co-Interns

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Scary Situations: Lindsey Martinovich & Niah Grimes

Lindsey Martinovich

Assistant Director of the Laspa Center for Leadership

“The first-gen girl that didn’t know she was first-gen”



I started working at Scripps almost exactly six months after I graduated with my bachelor’s degree from California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). I was elated; I managed to land a “big kid job” when the majority of my peers were still waiting tables and/or actively on the job hunt. I am still not too sure what they saw in me when I interviewed to work here in the Dean of Students Office; I had minimal experience and no clear idea of what I wanted to do with my newly obtained degree, let alone my life. Regardless, the stars aligned and I got the job, yay! That being said, nothing could have prepared me for the culture shock I was about to experience. To give you a [brief overview](#) of where I came from, CSUSB has roughly 20,000 students, 84% of the students are the first in their families to attend college, 57% are Hispanic, 15% White, 6% African American, 6% Asian, and 7% international students, 66% of the undergraduate students are low-income (Pell Grant recipients), and there is a four year

graduation rate of 10%. That being said, can you begin to see why I felt such an intense culture shock at Scripps?

During my first few months at Scripps I heard lots of talk about the first-generation program from my then supervisor, Sonia De La Torre. After a couple of months I worked up the courage to ask her what “first-gen” meant. She explained to me it meant that you were the first in your family to attend college and I thought, “hey, that’s me!” It then dawned on me that that was also the majority of my friends and almost all of my peers at CSUSB, yet I never thought twice about it because that was the norm. Still being fairly unfamiliar with the Scripps culture, it seemed so odd to me that Scripps would have a group specifically made up of first-gen students, since that was pretty much the only type of students I knew existed. Realizing that I was first-gen myself I wanted to become involved in the program, and being in the Dean of Students Office, I was lucky enough to work closely with the various First-Generation Student Coordinators. As time went on, I began to see how important this group truly was on campus, and how important the program was. Now, after four years of working at Scripps, three positions within the department of student affairs, and a master’s degree later, all I can say is DAMN! You are all truly an inspiring and courageous group of individuals.

It was easy for me to be a first-gen student, mainly because A) I didn't know I was (LOL) and B) I was just like everyone around me, but at Scripps I acknowledge that it's different. When I started here, I felt like a fraud, like any minute someone would walk into my office and tell me I wasn't good enough to be here, even as a professional. Happy ending spoiler alert: That never happened, quite the contrary actually. Everyone I have met here has pushed me to be the best version of myself. They've encouraged me to pursue a graduate degree, to ask for that promotion, to apply for that position, to believe that I am anything BUT a fraud. So on that note, I commend you all for getting to where you are today. I commend you for being a first-generation student and for owning it. For paving a way for yourself in what seems like uncharted territory. Should you ever find yourself with doubt, I hope you know that Scripps is full of resources and people that care about you and your personal and academic success. Lastly, if you ever find yourself in your own "scary situation," I hope you find comfort in the fact that at least you know what a first-generation student is, which is more than I could say at your age (hits palm to forehead).

Níah Grimes

Career Counselor and First Generation Student Liaison, CP&R

"Perfectionism is Scary"

Luckily, I haven't been in any scary situations since being at Scripps, however, something I continually find challenging is the concept of not working for my worth. At times, I really struggle with appreciating myself despite my performance. For example, whenever I am planning an event or leading a project I have the tendency to set unrealistic expectations for myself and when those expectations aren't met I interpret that failure as a direct reflection of my self-worth. This is a scary pattern for me to be caught in for multiple reasons. First, it doesn't allow me to see what success came from the event or program. Second, it takes a toll on my energy and causes more harm than good. Lastly, I am feeding myself a lie because my work is not a reflection of my worth as a human being.

I was raised under the notion that in order to succeed I had to work twice as hard as everyone else. Basically, my dad was like Poppa Pope in Scandal, except he did not run a secret government agency. So perfectionism was drilled in me at a very young age. Reflecting on it now...yes, sometimes I do have to work twice as hard but that doesn't mean I can't also appreciate myself flaws and all. Because whether I am on the top of my game or not, I am worthy, we all are.

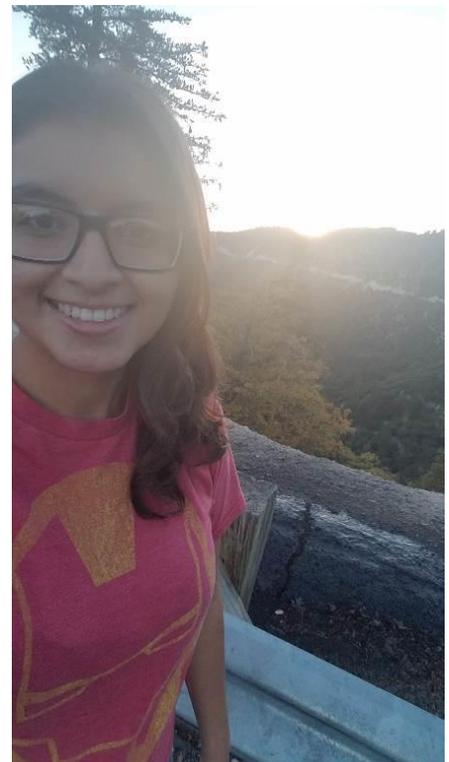


Scary Situations: Gaby Ochoa

One situation that I feel like I am continuously encountering is struggling to find the confidence and reassurance in myself to succeed academically. My first year at Scripps, I was quickly welcomed into the First Gen community. Through them, I could access a plethora of resources that I would have never known existed and thus was helped when I encountered problems my first year [and even now]. However, even with all of these resources, all of these amazing people I can call my friends and mentors, I still could only do so much without self-confidence. They can give me their advice, they can give me a plan of action, lining the way with check-in times and promises that it will all be worth it in the end. But at the end of the day, when I returned to my room, I would have to force myself to remember that the battle was worth it.

It was very easy for me to assume that I wasn't worth the fight, that things wouldn't work out the way that they needed to and thus I shouldn't waste time trying in the first place. I honestly still struggle with this every now and then on a dark and stormy night. However, I have learned that I am worth it, that the stories of upper classmen aren't much different than my own in the sense that I also could succeed. It's truly a frightening thing to have a path designed for you, with the best intentions for your success, and still feel as if it were the impossible, as if it were all an illusion.

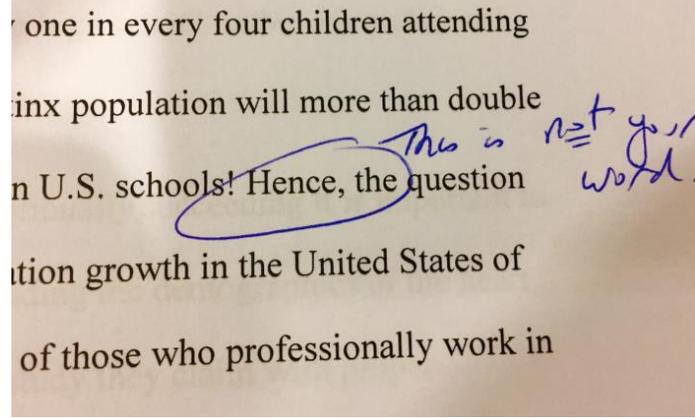
My friends help me get by, as do faculty members, but in the end, I had to learn how to put value in myself and know that I was worth the battle to success.



First Generation in Higher Education

Academia, Love Me back

Tiffany Martinez



one in every four children attending
inx population will more than double
n U.S. schools! Hence, the question
tion growth in the United States of
of those who professionally work in

Tiffany Martinez, a First-Generation undergraduate student in her last year at Suffolk University, encounters a scary situation of her own. Read about her personal struggles in academia and microaggressions that went viral. Her blog post is hauntingly relatable and resonated with how we, at one point or another, have felt in an academic setting.

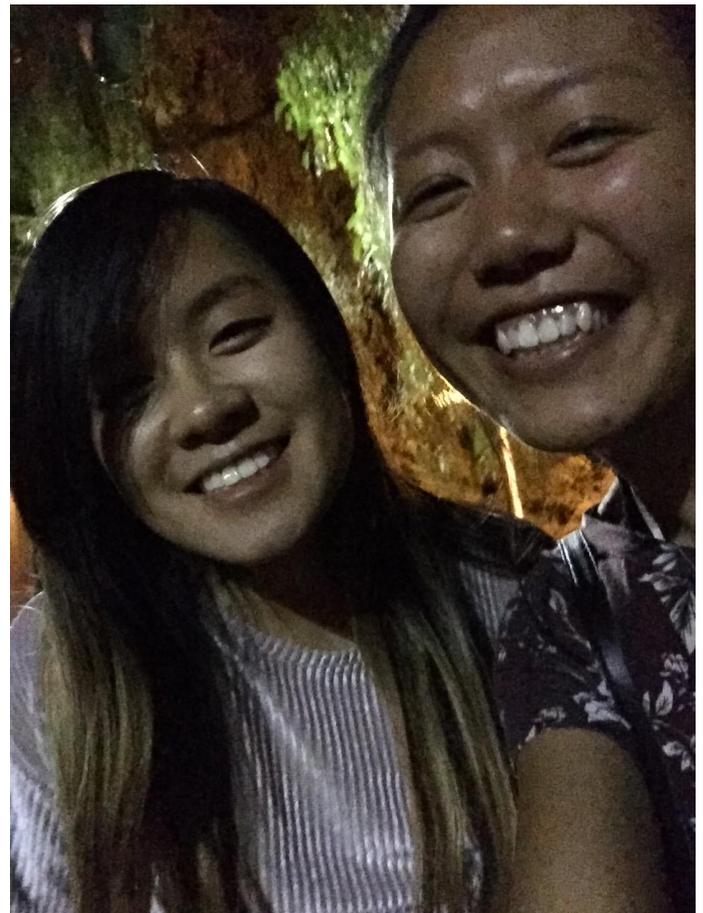
Micro-Barriers Loom Large for First-Generation Students

Eric Johnson



Eric Johnson highlights the memoir of J.D. Vance, a first generation student trying to apply to law school. This article highlights how there are often times unspoken rules and micro-barriers in higher education that first-generation students are not so acquainted with. Vance's barriers to law school can be insightful for many post-grad life endeavors.

Mentor-Mentee Froyo Outing!



Parting Words

“Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the judgement that something is more important than fear; the brave may not live forever but the cautious do not live at all.”

- Queen of Genovia, *The Princess Diaries*



UPCOMING FIRST-GEN EVENTS:

- Faculty Liaison Lunch
 - Thursday, December 1st 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM, Malott South Room
- Mentor-Mentee Dinner
 - Tuesday, December 6th 4:45 PM, Bua Thai in the Village
- Study Break
 - Wednesday, December 7th 7:00 PM, Kimberly Living Room

We Want to Hear From You!

To inspire our readers and recognize your accomplishments, we would like to feature your story in one of our upcoming newsletters. Please email us a personal article or poem depicting your experience as a first-gener to firstgeneration@scrippscollege.edu.