

Expressions^{1st}

THE NEWSLETTER OF

Thrive. Connect. Transition. Evolve. Advocate.

Generation
@Scripps College

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A Letter from the Editors

Hello everyone!

We hope that you have had a fabulous start to the semester and have a good rhythm going. To our first years, you are almost done with the first year (yay for being done with Core I)! To our seniors, we are so close y'all! Push through, do the things you always wanted to do before you graduate, because we have less than 100 days left!!

Thank you for all the support and feedback we received from the newsletters from last semester. We are both done with thesis this semester, so get excited for another round of ground-breaking newsletters (not really... but we are excited for this semester).

In this issue, our theme is Interpersonal Relationships. We know that the relationships we foster while in college are vital to our survival and sustenance. So, we wanted to hear from the community about their important relationships. You will find some thoughtfully written pieces by students, as well as first-generation faculty. Enjoy!

Evelyn Gonzalez '18 and Clarisse Salazar '18
Program Co-Interns

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Interpersonal Relationships: Words from Students

Andrea Flores

Class of 2021

Did your relationship with your family influence your college journey, applications, decision? If so, how so?

My family was a huge factor in my college process.

Although my parents never forced a dream school on me or pressured me to lean one-way or another, I knew I wanted to stay close because of the relationship we have. My family is incredibly, maybe excessively, close. We did everything together: grocery-shopping, dinner, dropping off someone at work, etc. Because of these dynamics, the transition to college was very hard for me. At the same time, I could not really complain because I am only 45 minutes away from home. I did not feel comfortable seeking out someone to talk to, because I felt that I was being such a baby. However, even 2 semesters in, I still miss my family and I have come to terms with that feeling. I do not think it is embarrassing to go home often, or to be homesick, because everyone has different dynamics back home. That is something I have learned during my short time at Scripps.



Has your relationship or your dynamic with your family changed since coming to college as a first gen student?

Being first-gen, to me, often means experiencing things alone, out of respect for the journeys my siblings are undergoing with full time jobs and community college. I've noticed that although I am very eager to share experiences, they can sometimes come off as arrogant because they are exclusive to private education (the physical distance from home, the gorgeous dorms, the ready-to-eat buffets, the fully-equipped gym, all the free events, the time to develop as an activist, and the privilege to sit in a classroom and be educated). I'm thankful that I have the opportunities I do, but at the same time I curse them for the wedge they drive between me and my family. They refer to Scripps as "my resort" and I'll be the first to admit that it is, but I find myself constantly reassuring them that I would much rather be in our home. I've learned that I constantly need to humble myself, even if my actions seem harmless, to stay grounded.

Loise Velazquez

Class of 2021

Did your relationship with your family influence your college journey, applications, decision? If so, how so?

The emphasis my family has always put on the importance of education has definitely influenced my college journey and decision. From an early age, I was taught that education is the key to a better life. This motivated me throughout high school to succeed academically and eventually apply to a college like Scripps. I think it is safe to say that my family is one of the main reasons why I'm here right now.

Has your relationship or your dynamic with your family changed since coming to college as a first gen student?

Since I am the youngest of three and the only one that has been put in private school for most of my education, the dynamic in my family has not really changed. My education had always been a sensitive topic between my brothers and I because they believe I have been given much more opportunities than they had at an early age. This sort of 'advantage' that I have been given by my mother who invested in my education comes with high expectations to graduate college and financially sustain my family in the future.

Do you think/in what ways does your first-gen identity impact the relationships you have on campus?

As a first-gen student, I think that I tend to gravitate towards people that have my same experiences and background. I met many of the people I talk to today through the first-gen pre-orientation program and we continue to interact due to our similarities as first-gen, minority students in a predominantly white institution.

How do you feel about your first-gen identity?

I am very proud of my first-gen identity because it is not something most students in this school have. I am conscious of the amount of additional work and dedication it will take to get through my four years at Scripps College as a first-gen student, but I know there will be many people to support and assist me throughout my journey.

Viviana Ayala

Class of 2021

Did your relationship with your family influence your college journey, applications, decision? If so, how so?

Not really. It did lead me to apply to more in-state colleges than out of state.

Has your relationship or your dynamic with your family changed since coming to college as a first gen student?

I believe that my relationship with my family has improved to an extent after coming to college as a first gen student, since I feel much more appreciative of them. There can be a bit of tension every once in a while when I attempt to explain to them about what I am learning about, especially when it is something that goes against traditions in my family.

Who has been a source of social support through your college experience?

My family and my friends at Scripps.

What communities have played a role in your interpersonal relationships?

Café con Leche, First-Gen, and CLSA.

Do you think/ in what ways does your first gen identity impact the relationships you have on campus?

I think that it has impacted my relationships on campus greatly. Most of my close friends are people that I met during First-Gen.

How do you feel about your first-gen identity?

I am very proud of my first-gen identity and I love the first-gen community on campus.



Lucí Díaz

Class of 2021

Did your relationship with your family influence your college journey, applications, decision? If so, how so?

My relationship with my family influenced me a lot in deciding to stay in California. Even though I applied to schools out of state, I think that I always knew I wanted to be able to go home on the weekends if I wanted to because I am very close to my family.



Has your relationship or your dynamic with your family changed since coming to college as a first gen student?

I think it has changed a little. Sometimes I feel like my parents don't fully understand that I have a lot of homework and studying to do and that it is hard for me to go home more often. I also feel that my younger sisters take a little bit of time to start talking to me again whenever I go back home. Even though we still text when I am away, I feel like they think I am somehow different every time I go back.

Who has been a source of social support through your college experience?

I feel like my friends that I met through the pre-orientation for first gen have really helped. Sometimes we have similar experiences and it is nice to know that I am not alone in this experience.

How do you feel about your first-gen identity?

I have mixed feelings about it but mostly proud of where I am as a first gen student. Sometimes I'll hear my roommate, who isn't first gen, get input from her parents about her possible major or having her parents edit her essays. That's something that I've never had and I think it would be nice to be able to talk to my parents about these things but it is just not possible for me. On the flip side, most of the time I feel proud that I am first gen. I am navigating the college process without advice from my parents and still able to have successes on my own. It just makes it all the more special when I can share these successes with my parents and make them proud.

First Generation Faculty

T. Kim-Trang Tran

Professor of Art



During your college experience, did you hesitate to reach out to faculty?

Yes, I was very shy and felt intimidated by some of the faculty. I do not think I used office hours or met with professors much at all, and when I did, I felt like I was in trouble.

What interpersonal relationships did you have that supported you through college?

My roommate and suitemates became my tight-knit group of friends. We were inseparable, from pulling all-nighters studying, then making runs for freshly baked donuts at the earliest morning hours, to spending the holidays together on campus.

Whom did you rely on during college?

Family for my foundation; friends to nourish my soul; and art teachers for inspiring me to reach creative heights.

Did your relationship with your family influence your college journey, applications, decision? If so, how so?

My family greatly values higher education, so there was never any doubt about going to college. Relatives pressured me to apply to elite schools, and when I decided to attend a small liberal arts college in the Midwest, they chided me. Our family was poor, so I had to take financial responsibility for my entire education, and that gave me the control and freedom to choose my own path.

Did your dynamic with your family change when you went to college?

Not much, because I was fulfilling expectations and did not discuss school.

What would you want to share with first gen students who may hesitate to reach out to faculty?

Please do not hesitate! We try our best to help however we can, and not all learning happens in the classroom.

Marino Forlino, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Italian



During your college experience, did you hesitate to reach out to faculty?

When I commenced my college experience, I was hesitant to reach out to faculty. Nevertheless, I did proceed to connect with professors via email and office hours. While I had concerns about being sufficiently articulate to convey my seriousness and sense of duty without sounding too pedantic, I initiated two-way communication. As the semesters

passed, I learned to confidently and courageously converge those fears into something more productive. I also realized that faculty members were always willing to help and were far more approachable than I expected them to be.

What interpersonal relationships did you have that supported you through college?

Studying in a city far away from my hometown was a real challenge for me. It is true that I was mesmerized by this whole new life and that I was not familiar with the bureaucracy of the university nor with idiosyncrasies of college life, but I had always dreamt of being part of an academic and college community. Some of my high-school friends were studying in the same university with me. Their presence, and the support of my peers that I befriended, definitely assisted me through the college experience.

Whom did you rely on during college?

Being a first generation student was difficult for me, as the behavior was not modeled at home. Not having someone to consult with, not being able to share the academic unknowns with my family, who never crossed a campus before, offered challenges. On the flip side, my family always supported me with their optimism and motivation, unconditionally reassuring me that I could become anyone I wanted to be. This unwavering support propelled me to rely more and more on my abilities, which in turn, boosted my confidence. In addition, I surrounded myself with senior students and administrators whose encouragement was an infinite source of role modeling and inspiration.

Did your relationship with your family influence your college journey, applications, decision? If so, how so?

Even though I was the first one to go to college in my family, my parents and siblings always played a pivotal role in my college journey. Every new step that I took forward in the academic world, was a step that I was taking with them by my side. As arduous as it was to leave home after summer and winter breaks, everyone in my family fully supported me in my academic

choices, from studying abroad to continuing my education in graduate school. They have always known and taught me that my accomplishments were worthy of the risk, as the reward was great and that would offset the time and distance away from home.

Did your dynamic with your family change when you went to college?

I have always felt responsible towards my family's expectations. Throughout my college experience, I have learned to transform the burden of responsibility, the fear of disappointing my family and the nightmare of failing into something more productive and constructive. Year after year, I was evolving, becoming more confident and more courageous. I was more aware of the fact that I was no longer the naïve eighteen-year old student who was about to write a new chapter in his life. More importantly, I knew that through sharing with my family anecdotes and stories on my experiences abroad and my daily college life events, I was able to engage them and to let them experience, even if only through words, the world I had left behind and the one I was learning to explore through my eyes and ears to theirs.

What would you want to share with first generation students who may hesitate to reach out to faculty?

Before becoming faculty members, professors have been students, and even if only some of them were first generation, they can relate and share to students on many levels. It's the preverbal "been there, done that." Providing context, texture and sharing each other's academic and collegiate experience is one of the many ways the faculty and students' dialogue can be enhanced and professor/student bonding is established. This in turn should pave the way for a more productive and formative teaching and learning experience, on both a personal and academic level for first generation students.

Julia Martínez: First Generation Experience Abroad

Julia Martínez, a first generation junior currently studying abroad in Yucatán, Mexico, keeps a blog titled [Querido Lindo](#) documenting her experiences thus far. Here's a few of the highlights, but please check out more insightful and inspiring words from the absolute star [here!](#)

"Dear me,
I'm so proud of you for making sure you made it here (And not self-sabotaging this opportunity). You deserve this. Thank you from the bottom of my soul.

*Ciudad de Mérida, Yucatán, México. Arrived on Sunday
January 7th 2018.*

My second time flying away from home. I had been anticipating the trip away from the Inland Empire for almost a year now.

I miss my cozy home, Netflix + couch 24/7 routine, the constant grocery store visits with my mom, my lil pup Paquita, & seeing my family while I was home, absolutely.

It still hasn't really set in that I am so far apart from my home, my mother, my grandmother, and their rest of my family and friends. Before I left my family kept asking me "Anyone else going with you?" "No, I'm all on my own".

I'm in a coffee shop whose latte is bitter as hell but I'm sipping away listening to Llorar by Los Socios del Ritmo, waiting for time to pass until night time serenatas en el parque de Santa Lucía at 9pm. I took the bus down to El Mercado Lucas De Galvéz all by myself and walked around El Centro, stumbled into a short film at the tourist center on my way over too."



"The weather had been fair at around the mid 70's since I had arrived. The perfect amount of sun, clouds, and wind. Cada vez que me puse feliz, deseaba que pudiera viajar el Yucatán y México con mi mama. A lo mejor un dia, pero no llega tan cerca ahorita. La quien ama la naturaleza, la tequila, y el aire libre.

I FaceTime my family every once in a while, they are always all telling me que orgullos estaban de mi, y que me amaban. Although I don't always hear it I know my family is always there for me and proud of me. Which has given me a lot of strength through the beginning of this trip.

The other students in my study abroad program are all pretty nice and interesting. I have made closer friends with the Latinx students of course and hope that if possible to foster those friendship here through experiences, discussions, and understanding. No room for anything but good intentions and peace to make only the best of memories!"



.....
"Why am I trying to document my journey through this blog and pictures?"

Dissemination of knowledge and experience, my experience, the experience of a Chicana, the experience of the first person in my family to study abroad, to go to a private-university and thinking critically of

myself and the world around me. Each word is a kindle for the advancement of thought and critical awareness that could lead to a better tomorrow.



When I go on instagram or google and try to search content that pertains to "study abroad in Mexico", "Merida", or any other key words on different search engines I see the same results. Streamlined "traveling guides" or pictures or blogs about how to "take advantage" of being in Mexico/Merida/other locations. I did not feel deep levels of relevancy or great importance in reading or seeing these blog posts from perspectives from people that were not similar to mine. Specifically, being a woman of color, studying the sciences, low-income, student in a new environment I hope that other students with similar interests or intersections may run into my content or pictures and can see themselves challenging themselves and the conceptualization of for who and for what purpose studying

abroad or visiting different locations is or should be.

In general, representation matters, it aspires, it challenges, it confronts the normative script of Eurocentricity around the world. My little brown self is out there making a mark and capturing that mark in photos of the validity of my being, my presence, and energy in spaces that have excluded people like me from these places historically.

I'm looking forward to the free time I have to indulge myself more so into my studies here and into myself as there are no programmed trips for about a month and a half.



Only hope for the best for you all,

Julia Alexandra Martinez "

Parting Words

“One of the most vital ways we sustain ourselves is by building communities of resistance, places where we know we are not alone.”

- bell hooks, “Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics”



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.