

The Finish Line Project

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE TO HELP FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED

The Finish Line Project at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) is designed to ensure more first-generation college students (FGCS) access, persist, and complete postsecondary study through the implementation and investigation of multifaceted programs and supports. The project is funded by an over 3 million dollars grant awarded through the U.S. Department of Education's competitive program called The First in the World. This program provides grants to higher education institutions to spur the development of innovations that improve educational outcomes and make college more affordable for students and families, and to develop an evidence base of effective practices.

On average, 3,000 undergraduate First-Generation College Students (FGCS) enroll in UNC-CH each year. FGCS contribute to the great cultural and intellectual life of our vibrant and diverse undergraduate community. The Finish Line Project is dedicated to making UNC-CH a place where FGCS thrive. The Finish Line Project will serve as a model to be replicated at other institutions of higher education.

Project Contacts:

Abigail T. Panter, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator and Project Director
panter@unc.edu

Cynthia Demetriou, Ph.D.,

Executive Director
cyndem@email.unc.edu

Key Partners & Collaborators:

Kim Abels, Ph.D.	Academic Coaching	kabel@unc.edu
Patrick Akos, Ph.D.	Transition Course: Thriving In College & Beyond	pakos@email.unc.edu
Katie Cartmell, M.A.	Transfer Programming	kcartmell@unc.edu
Fred Cave, M.A.	Academic Advising	fcave@email.unc.edu
Marcus Collins, Ed.D.	Academic Coaching, Tutoring, Mentoring	collinsm@email.unc.edu
Lisa Corwin, Ph.D.	Curriculum Mapping and Transfer Programming	lcornwin@email.unc.edu
Deborah Eaker-Rich, Ph.D.	Transition Courses	eakeric@email.unc.edu
James Ellis, Ph.D.	Research and Evaluation	jajames1@email.unc.edu
Chris Faison, M.A.	Underrepresented Male Initiative	cdf@unc.edu
Rebekah Freed, M.A.	Transition Course: The Science of Learning	rfreed@live.unc.edu
Amy Germuth, Ph.D.	External Evaluation	AmyGermuth@EvalWorks.com
Carmen Gonzalez, M.A.	Self-Assessments and FGCS Programming	cdgonz@email.unc.edu
Jeffrey A. Greene, Ph.D.	Transition Course: The Science of Learning	jagreene@email.unc.edu
Marc Howlett, Ph.D.,	Academic Coaching	mhowlett@unc.edu
Carmen Huerta-Bapat, M.A.	FGCS Programming	chuerta@email.unc.edu
Sharon Levine, M.A.	Transition Courses	splevine@email.unc.edu
Amy Locklear Hertel, Ph.D.	Native Student Programming	amy_hertel@unc.edu
Jeannie Loeb, Ph.D.	Transition Course: The Science of Learning	loeb@unc.edu
Qua Lynch, M.A.	Native Student Programming	qual@email.unc.edu
Theresa Laurie Maitland, Ph.D.	Academic Coaching	tmaitlan@email.unc.edu
Lee May, Ph.D.	Academic Advising	lee_may@unc.edu
Judith Meece, Ph.D.	Rural Students Study	meece@email.unc.edu
Brooke Midkiff, Ph.D.	Research & Evaluation	bmidkiff@email.unc.edu
Terrell Morton, M.S.	Rural Students Study	mortont@live.unc.edu
Matt Osment, M.A.	Course Redesigns	matto@email.unc.edu
Candice Powell, M.A.	Underrepresented Male Initiative	candicef@email.unc.edu
Kristen Rademacher, M.Ed.	Academic Coaching	krademacher@unc.edu
Nestor Ramirez	Rural Students Study	naramire@email.unc.edu
Dexter Robinson	Underrepresented Male Initiative	dexrob@email.unc.edu
Jessi Streib, Ph.D.	FGCS Graduate School Application Study	jessi.streib@duke.edu
Molly Sutphen, Ph.D.	Course Redesigns	msutphen@email.unc.edu
William Vizuete, Ph.D.	Underrepresented Male Initiative	airquality@unc.edu
Ada Wilson, J.D.	Project Advisory, Underrepresented Male Initiative	adaw@email.unc.edu
Jan Yopp, M.A.	Transition Courses	jan_yopp@unc.edu

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THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

The Finish Line Project

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE TO HELP FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED

Funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant, The Finish Line Project initiates and evaluates innovative programs for student success at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Project findings will inform future practices at the University and across the nation.

CAROLINA FIRSTS

First-generation college students are from a family in which neither parent has a four-year undergraduate degree. At UNC, we proudly call these students "Carolina Firsts." The Finish Line Project supports all Carolina Firsts including:

RURAL STUDENTS
Eighty of the 100 counties in NC are rural. Studies indicate the number of rural students going to college is increasing.

NATIVE AMERICANS
American Indians in higher education have more than doubled in the last 30 years. Universities must intentionally engage students, families and communities.

UNDERREPRESENTED MALES
Underrepresented males are among the least likely to graduate. In particular, African American, Latino, and Multiracial males experience unique challenges on their path to graduation.

TRANSFER STUDENTS
Innovative, educational programming is needed to support transfer students especially community college transfers.

INITIATIVES TO HELP FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

1 Connect And Communicate With First-Generation Students



SELF-ASSESSMENTS

Strengths-based assessments to enhance college knowledge and expectations.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

Cohort models to foster communication and share common experiences among underrepresented males.



PARTNERSHIPS

Partner with American Indian tribes to help support Native American students attending UNC.



NEW PROGRAMS

Develop programs and support to assist rural student access and transition to college.

2 Enhance Curriculum Through Active Learning



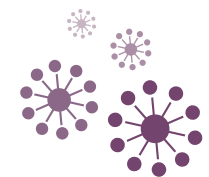
TRANSITION COURSES

Offer multiple courses to help students navigate critical transitions.



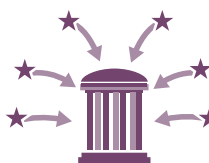
GATEWAY COURSES

Review and redesign gateway STEM courses.



LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Create faculty learning communities to support active learning.



COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Map STEM curriculum on campus and at local community college.

3 Advise And Support First-Generation Students



COORDINATION

Coordinate efforts for Carolina Firsts across campus.



ADVISING

Offer academic advising specifically to meet the needs of first-generation college students.



COACHING

Train academic coaches to support any undergraduates.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

MEASURE

- ▶ Academic and psychosocial factors among FGCS
- ▶ College knowledge and expectations
- ▶ Changes in student learning patterns, attitudes, and behaviors
- ▶ The acquisition of knowledge or skills as a result of interventions
- ▶ Changes in faculty instructional techniques, attitudes, and behaviors

DESCRIBE

- ▶ Academic success among FGCS overall and by subgroups
- ▶ Micro-aggressions and micro-affirmations among FGCS
- ▶ Pathways to degree completion in the sciences
- ▶ Faculty motives for course redesign
- ▶ Perspectives and behaviors among FGCS regarding applying to graduate school

ASSESS

- ▶ Strategies for enhancing college knowledge and expectations
- ▶ Models for academic coaching
- ▶ Strategies for promoting self-regulated learning
- ▶ Strategies for course redesign

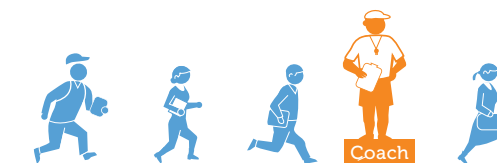
THE CAROLINA FIRSTS EXPERIENCE



Students connect with supportive communities of students with similar backgrounds and experiences.



Students enroll in newly designed transition and gateway courses to aid their progress in STEM and other fields of study.



Faculty, advisors, and academic coaches help students navigate the research university.



Students fulfill degree completion requirements and move on to graduate school and career opportunities.

Efforts begin prior to enrollment to build college knowledge, set helpful expectations, and build resources for success.