



Nov. 7, 2022

Dear UMB Community:

The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) joins many other institutions of higher education in celebrating first-generation college students. First-Generation College Celebration Day tomorrow, Nov. 8, is an annual opportunity to honor the contributions of first-generation students while also committing to support the success of those who are the first in their families to pursue four-year and advanced degrees.

First-generation students are often, but not solely, defined as those whose parents or guardians did not complete a four-year degree. First-gen graduate students are former first-generation undergraduates who have progressed to earning an advanced degree. However, at UMB, we understand that there are varied definitions of what it means to be first generation. If you feel connected to this identity, we welcome you to participate in the upcoming [week of events](#).

Due to the collaborative efforts and programming of the University of Maryland School of Social Work and UMB Intercultural Center, UMB was recognized in March 2022 with a 2022-2023 First-gen Forward designation that can be viewed [here](#). The designation was awarded by the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and the Suder Foundation. The First-gen Forward designation recognizes institutions of higher education that have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. We are proud of the School of Social Work, UMB Intercultural Center, and our first-generation students and professionals.

The University is committed to expanding access to higher education, through programs like the [UMB CURE Scholars Program](#), and supporting first-generation college students in achieving an advanced degree. The [School of Social Work's First-Generation Student Success Program](#) is an example of an outstanding initiative designed to support its graduate and professional students who are the first in their family to attend college. If you want to participate in First-Generation Community Building Circles and learn about other events and opportunities for first-generation students, please complete the interest form on the [Intercultural Center's website](#).

Each of us may have our own personal and professional reasons for wanting to increase the access and graduation of diverse student communities across the educational pipeline. For Dr. Alvarez, her firsthand experience and research on Latina first-generation college students have shown that being the first in your family to navigate higher education can be a great source of pride, but it also can feel confusing and isolating.

The University is committed to creating educational environments that are accessible and inclusive of first-generation students to ensure that all students at UMB feel welcomed and supported. We join each of you in celebrating the accomplishments of first-generation students during First-Generation Celebration Week beginning today, Nov. 7, and every day.

In partnership and collaboration,

Patty Alvarez, PhD, MS

*Chief Student Affairs Officer and Associate
Vice President of Student Affairs*

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*Vice President and Chief Equity, Diversity,
and Inclusion Officer*

This note was authorized for distribution to the University of Maryland, Baltimore community by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion & Student Affairs
