Harvard College Resources for First-Generation Students and Students from Under-Resourced Backgrounds
Prepared by the Bureau of Study Counsel staff, October 2015

“The Usual Suspects”: Proctor/House Tutor; Advisors (Freshman Advisor, Sophomore Advisor, Concentration Advisor); Peer Advising Fellow (PAF); Resident Dean; Peer Counseling; friends, roommates, blockmates, teammates; professor/instructor; coach, chaplain, Bureau of Study Counsel, Counseling and Mental Health Services.

“I’m a First-Gen Student: Am I the Only One Who . . .?” handout in the Cranium Corner in the Bureau of Study Counsel waiting room and online (bsc.harvard.edu).

“I’m a Freshman: Am I the Only One Who . . .?” handout in the Cranium Corner in the Bureau of Study Counsel waiting room and online (bsc.harvard.edu) (The “Am I the Only One Who…?” series also includes a handout for sophomores, one for juniors, and one for seniors).

First Generation Student Union (grassroots Harvard student organization) www.facebook.com/harvardfirstgen.

First-Generation Harvard Alumni Mentoring Program (started by Kevin Jennings ’85; for first-year students) www.firstgenerationharvardalumni.com.

Host Family Program. Through the Freshman Dean’s Office (many first-gens have host families).

Harvard Financial Aid Office (FAO): student’s own financial aid officer. 617-495-1581: faoinfo@harvard.edu; https://college.harvard.edu/financial-aid; Niki Johnson is a financial aid officer who serves as the first-gen liaison in the Financial Aid Office (applebaum@fas.harvard.edu).

Beneficiary Aid. The Beneficiary Aid Program provides additional financial assistance to students who are faced with emergency term-time costs that will prove to be an extreme financial hardship for their families. Students receiving Harvard Scholarship assistance who incur unforeseeable, non-recurring expenses may apply for Beneficiary Aid to help cover a portion of those costs. The application for Beneficiary Aid is available on the website of the Financial Aid Office: www.fao.fas.harvard.edu.

Freshman Coat Fund. Students who meet eligibility criteria are automatically awarded this assistance to buy winter clothes in mid-October of their freshman year. Awarded to students with high financial need, as determined by the Financial Aid Office.

Student Events Fund. Funded by scholarship dollars, SEF (run jointly through the FAO, the HBO, and the OSL) demonstrates a commitment to removing financial barriers that might prevent a student’s participation in campus activities. The Financial Aid Office emails SEF-eligible students each year to inform them of eligibility and to instruct them on use. Any questions about the program can be emailed to sef@fas.harvard.edu.

Shoestring Strategies for Life @ Harvard. Once a booklet and now a helpful website – https://shoestring.college.harvard.edu/. Also a mobile app, Apple App Store or Android Marketplace (search for “Harvard shoestring”).

Course resources. Office hours, sections, review sessions, course-organized study sessions.

Bureau of Study Counsel (BSC) workshops – not designated exclusively for first-gen students but highly relevant
- Speaking Up in Class
- Maximizing Your Approach to Learning
- Time Management
- Exam-Taking
- Peak Performance
- Using Reading Period Wisely
- Problem Set Courses: Challenges, Approaches, and Strategies
- Making the Grade in a Harvard Classroom: For International Students
- Getting Started Writing Papers
- Zen and the Art of Student Life

Other BSC resources
- Individual counseling for academic and personal development – conversations about students’ experience of living and learning at Harvard
- Harvard Course in Reading and Study Strategies – fee subsidized by Harvard to keep it affordable for all
- Peer tutoring – fee subsidized by Harvard to keep it affordable for all
- Cranium Corner – library of handouts in the corner of the BSC’s waiting room; most of those handouts, as well as other resources, also available online at bsc.harvard.edu. Topics range from time management and preparing for exams to procrastination and how to navigate health care at HUHS (“Navigating Health Care: Accessing and Participating in Medical and Mental Health Care at Harvard University Health Services (and elsewhere in life, for that matter”)"
- Study @ 5 Linden – study room on the 2nd floor of the BSC billed as offering quiet, company, coffee, and cookies; Tuesdays and Thursdays during the term; every day during Reading Period and Exam Period