Harvard College Resources for First-Generation Students, Low-Income Students, and Students from Under-Resourced Backgrounds

Prepared by the Bureau of Study Counsel staff, October 2015, October 2016, September 2018

“The Usual Suspects”: Proctor/House Tutor; Advisers (First-year Adviser, Sophomore Adviser, Concentration Adviser); Peer Advising Fellow (PAF); Resident Dean; friends, roommates, teammates; peer counseling; professor/instructor; coach, chaplain, Bureau of Study Counsel, Office of Career Services, Office of International Education, 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 First-Year 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) (The “Am I the Only One Who . . . ?” series also includes a handout for sophomores, one for juniors, and one for seniors).

Harvard Primus (formerly known as First Generation Student Union) [grassroots Harvard student organization]
www.facebook.com/harvardprimus/

First-Generation Harvard Alumni Mentoring Program [started by Kevin Jennings ’85; for first-year students]

First-Generation and Low-Income Student Advocate. Support for first-year students through Dean of Students Office. fao.fas.harvard.edu/faq/faq/student-advocate.


Host Family Program. Through the Dean of Students Office (many first-gens have host families).


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.

Winter Coat Fund. Students who meet eligibility criteria are automatically awarded this assistance to buy winter clothes in mid-October of their first 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, 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
- Time Management
- Exam-Taking
- Peak Performance
- Problem Set Courses: Challenges, Approaches, and Strategies
- Getting Started Writing Papers
- Zen and the Art of Student Life
- Home from Harvard
- Many more . . .

Other BSC resources
- Individual academic counseling – 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
- ESL Peer Consultation – fee subsidized by Harvard to keep it affordable for all
- Cranium Corner – library of handouts in the corner of the BSC’s waiting room and online.
- Study @ S Linden – study room on the 2nd floor of the BSC billed as offering quiet, company, coffee, and cookies;
- First-Gen Voices of Harvard College Students and Their Families – bsc.harvard.edu/first-gen voices – excerpts from audiorecordings of StoryCorps interviews between first-gen students and family/community members.

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Bureau of Study Counsel, Harvard University, 5 Linden Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
617-495-2581 • bsc.harvard.edu