

# **Connecting First Generation College Students at Rutgers**

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# What is a first generation student?

A **first-generation** college student is defined as a student whose parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have not completed a bachelor's degree. This means that you are the first in your family to attend a four-year college/university to attain a bachelor's degree.

## **What was your project, and what did you do, produce, or accomplish?**

- I created a podcast sharing my personal experiences as a first generation student as well as statistics and resources available on campus to connect first generation college students at Rutgers.



[1stGen Podcast](#)

## **In what ways do you believe your project represent women's leadership for social change?**

- My voice represents women's leadership for social change in that I bring an unheard perspective to the table.
- Women's leadership to me starts with the individual and overcoming personal obstacles and using the lessons we learned to help others.
- This is exemplified in my project in that I use my personal experiences to relate to other students and provide them with solutions that can help other first generation students.

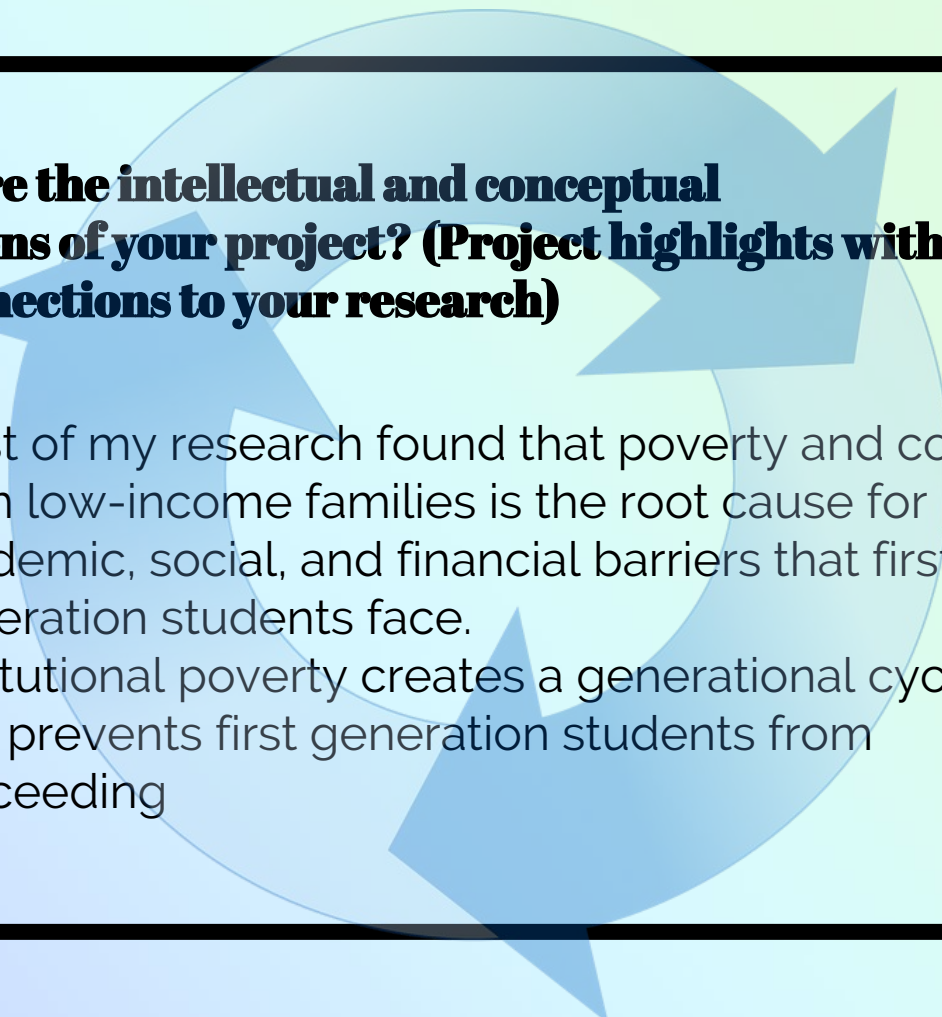
## **What I accomplished:**

-I partnered with organizations on campus such as RU1st and RU First Gen Student Union to gain first hand insight on first gen issues

-Focused the episodes on three major topics that first generation college students struggle with:

- Academics
- Home life/family support
- Finances

My podcast is a source of information about first generation struggles, how first generation students can mediate them, and included relatable narrative.



**What were the intellectual and conceptual foundations of your project? (Project highlights with clear connections to your research)**

- Most of my research found that poverty and coming from low-income families is the root cause for academic, social, and financial barriers that first generation students face.
- Institutional poverty creates a generational cycle that prevents first generation students from succeeding



## **Project highlights**

- Generational wealth and institutionalized racism is a cycle that is hard to break
- First generation students have a lot stacked against them and yet they can still rise and persevere
- Critiques of institutional disadvantages set against low income people are important in order to help students succeed.

**What lessons did you learn, what insights did you gain through this process?**

I learned that first generation students' experiences are not a monolith: Their experiences differ based on ethnicity, class, and race

Institutional racism and lack of funding for schools in low income areas affects the success of students in college

Simply providing financial sustenance through scholarships for first generation students is not a long-term solution. Academic foundations must be implemented



**What impact do you believe your project has had, or may have in the future? Are there ways future Leadership Scholars could build on your work?**

By partnering with RU1st my podcast will be available to incoming freshman

I hope it is informative and helpful to current and incoming students as well as to others who wish to help first generation students continue school.

Future Leadership Scholars can build on my work by hopefully continuing the podcast and discussing more topics that affect first generation students.

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