

Expressions^{1st}

THE NEWSLETTER OF

Thrive. Connect. Transition. Evolve. Advocate.

Generation
@Scripps College

Scripps College

April 20, 2015

Edition 2, Volume 5

A Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

"Imaginations of the Future" is how we are choosing to conclude this final newsletter to our community. As your co-interns, we wanted to express remaining sentiments that we have towards this program and its members. At the same time, this newsletter includes a reflection and poetic piece by one of our wonderful professors, as well as incoming news for the program.

These reflection pieces are forms of gratitude and celebration. We have been overwhelmed with pride at the support and dedication that the first-gen community has received... because of ALL YOUR EFFORT. As we take the time to reflect, we are also taking time to *imagine the future* as one that will motivate this community in continuing to grow and prosper.

As our fearless first co-interns Shane Zackery and Maria Ceja Rodriguez said in their final address to newsletter-reading folks here on campus and elsewhere last year, we're not leaving so much as we are giving others the opportunity to love this community as we have had the privilege to do. Thanks, everyone, for inspiring our radical imaginations for a better future and an ever-stronger first-generation family.

Until next time,

Leah Hughes '15
Beatriz Maldonado '15
Program Co-Interns

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*"I don't like to gamble,
but if there is one thing
I'm willing to bet on,
it's myself."*

-Beyoncé

Imaginations of the Future:

“We are strong, we are bold, and we are beautiful.”

A Reflection by Bea Maldonado, Co-Intern, Class of 2015

Throughout each year at Scripps, I felt overwhelmed by the potential of students to rise above the politics, flaws, and misconceptions of institutionalized higher education and fight for themselves. Amongst these students, I have grown closer to the first-generation community: as an intern and a friend. I can honestly say it is a reciprocated community full of determination, love, and commitment. I began to learn more about identity, and what it means to be part of a community that truly demands the best for people. And that very presence astounds me: the various narratives of each Scripps student and their unique resilience. I have revered the growth that was as daunting as it was successful. After all, this program explores the representations of agency and will. We encourage others to pursue their goals, while challenging their thoughts on inclusivity, intersectionality, and care for one another.

Thank you Scripps College and the first-gen community for advocating for such an incredible program. I also want to thank the First-Gen Team at the Dean of Students office for allowing me the opportunity to work alongside you. Thank you Lindsey and Deborah for always being committed to our well-being and success within and outside the program. Thank you Mary for each moment of support; I feel honored to have witnessed your impact and empowerment on your students. Thank you Sonia for your incomparable support; I admire you beyond what words can express, and I am more than grateful to have spent my last year at Scripps being a part of your team. Leah, you are a beautiful gem whom I am proud to call my friend. I really could not have made it this senior year without you; you deserve all the love and goodness in your future journeys.

And to the students. Thank you for sharing memories, conversations, and pictures with Leah and myself. We had so much fun in this process – learning about your experiences and sharing our own with you all too. I found another home here at Scripps, a home that is so welcoming and supportive, I wonder why I doubted my sense of belonging here in the first place. All of my appreciation extends to my dreams of the future: I know that I will keep succeeding because of the foundational support system I have here at Scripps.

We are strong, we are bold and we are beautiful. We are beautiful because we want to be ourselves as we explore the various levels and intricacies of our identity. We are bold because even as we plunge into the unknown in academia, we keep moving forward. We are strong because we can identify the potential in ourselves and others, to build a lasting community. **We are and will remain strong, bold and beautiful.**

“I have revered the growth that was as daunting as it was successful. After all, this program explores the representations of agency and will. We encourage others to pursue their goals, while challenging their thoughts on inclusivity, intersectionality, and care for one another.”

Imaginations of the Future:

Gratitude, Amended

A Reflection by Leah Hughes, Co-Intern, Class of 2015

Being a first-generation student in name means very little in and of itself. The experience is intersectional and varied, defined by the individual experiences of those who behold this identity. For me, being first-generation has come to describe a myriad of my experiences here at Scripps, some demoralizing and some overwhelmingly beautiful—however, if I really think about it, being first-generation over these last four years has come to mean something entirely outside of myself. Being first-gen means giving part of yourself to a community. Being first-gen means trusting those around you (such as my co-intern and friend Beatriz Maldonado) to floor you with generosity of time, spirit, and insight, and to inspire you with their passion. Being first-gen means giving others the opportunity to hold vulnerable parts of who they are within their hands—from personal histories to demons to insecurities about being at school—in order to understand how to love you more thoroughly, and to surprise you with overwhelming compassion, as in the case of my boss Sonia de la Torre-Iniguez, office mates Deborah Averette and Lindsey Martinovich, and faculty mentor Mary Hatcher-Skeers. Most significantly, though, it's meant being first-gen for three: both of my parents and me.

The reality is that I was always going to go to college. It was not a choice for me; my parents fostered my love of learning so much that there was nothing I wanted more for myself. They encouraged me to think independently about where I would like to go and always supported my choices and suggestions, even when I aspired to go to an out-of-state or Ivy League university. I wanted a different experience than I had had in Kentucky and knew that there was more to life than what I had seen during my short life living in one place. My fearless parents were totally supportive of my choice to go to school across the country in California. Only now do I appreciate this effort on their part so fully. The process of deciding my own future in the unknown universe of higher education at 18 was intimidating at times, but very empowering in general. It helped me to trust myself and my decisions more fully in the end, and I have them to thank for who I am today.

Frankly, a place like Claremont is not necessarily designed for the lifestyles and expectations of working class people, and though this is neither exclusive to the first-gen experience or a necessary part of the first-gen identity, working class is what I am. Once I got to college, I didn't even know how to articulate those experiences and started to feel shame about my background and how hard it was to relate to people. However, over the years here in Claremont, the biggest reward I've reaped has been making my parents proud by continuing to love learning and remaining resilient through struggle. Though we are all sharing a different first-generation experience, this resilience and continued intellectual curiosity is a form of personal success that my parents can see tangibly, understand, and appreciate. Additionally, though, the amount that I have learned in this community in particular has given me a vocabulary with which to articulate my experiences and the empowerment and purpose to want to help other people do the same thing. I still love learning and I'm proud of that. So I'm sharing the first-generation experience, and the gratitude that comes along with it. Thank you all for walking with me as we evolved together.

Imaginations of the Future:

Bold Visions

A Reflection by Sonia De La Torre-Iniguez

Imagine the future. I thought about this phrase for a long time as I contemplated the last issue of the first-gen newsletter for this year and found myself drawn to reflecting on the past year of the program. So often what the future looks like is informed by what existed in the past.

This past year for the First-Generation @ Scripps Program has been filled with exciting new milestones valiantly lead by the efforts and gumption of co-interns- Bea and Leah. These amazing young women had a vision for a first-gen program that boasted a retreat like so many other programs at Scripps. They felt strongly that a retreat would serve as a great opportunity to build deeper connections among the first-gen community and allow the intersectionality of first-gen identity to be articulated. With no budget to its name, I wasn't sure how the program would pull something like this off. With unlimited creativity and determination, Bea and Leah conceived of an on-campus retreat that would cement the first-gen identity on the Scripps walls. The retreat left a mark at Scripps. Its presence echoing...

We are here. We are bold. We will be heard.

Their bold vision for strengthening and supporting the first-gen community this year has been inspiring. Through their efforts, Bea and Leah pushed me to think about more ways to expand the program. They have taught me to aspire and to reach. They have taught me to ask unabashedly for support.

More so, they have taught me to continue to push the boundaries of how we conceive of first-gen identity. Like so many other identities; first-gen is fluid and dynamic. It is an identity that intersects other critical identities like race, class, gender and ability...

As I imagine the future of this program, I most look forward to the new ways in which it will grow to continue to meet the needs of our ever-changing first-gen students. I am looking forward to figments of new ideas that will develop into full blown creations for programming. While the work we do for this program is much needed and powerful- it is never enough. The first-gen program isn't just about transitional support and access, it is about empowerment and ownership. It is about supporting students in their journey to owning their place at Scripps.



Sonia, our fearless leader, second from left

I look forward to next year with great excitement working alongside the new interns- Daniela and Juliana Baena Canas.

Bea and Leah- Thank you for an amazing journey!

The First-Gen Radical Imagination from Faculty:

“Imagination, Insurgent.”

Written by Professor Marina Perez de Mendiola

As all of you kindly invite me to write a few thoughts about the “future of imagination,” I realize that as a “vocational” reader of literature I have the privilege to think about “imagination” as a timeless faculty while also as a product of its own circumstances, whose past, present and future relentlessly merge, collide, reinventing themselves, as a faculty that embroiders, deforms, colors, wanders, arouses and gives rise, rages and fires up, gallops, bursts its banks, divagates unbridled and ardently, a faculty governing its flights, fertile, frenzied; it possesses like a Loa mounting our mind and body, so that our earth transcends its flatness and narrowness. If it is by “our imagination that words become for us things,” it empowers us to determine what these things will be beyond their material abstraction, brushing on our world a reality that actively disrupts consented designs, assuring us of nothing, blissfully creative never reproductive.

Imagination is fruit, picked green, sharp in its beginnings so that it can endure the long and arduous journey until dehiscence, eluding climatic fates and parasitic assaults. It is green, scrippsy green, unlike the forbidden fruit, and it “extends to us,” as Jean Jacques Rousseau notes “the measure of all possibilities (...), and that therefore, excites and nourishes the desires by the hope to satisfy them” (*Emile*). Once dehiscent, it can, to use Gaston Bachelard’s words, “forsake the ordinary flow of things. To perceive and imagine are as antithetical as presence and absence. To imagine is to absent oneself, to thrust upwards into a new life” (*Air and Dreams*). Once we “absent ourselves” we can finally bite into it, into that fruit, fully filling our craw and “so succulently so that its juice penetrates all the way to the heart” (Flaubert). Then it goes stale, wrinkles, dries up, fades, tricking us into thinking that it has exhausted its effervescence and turbulent exertion until it finds more lives, in the “absenting of oneself” that invites it in, again.

Imagination

--its signifier although hackneyed by totalizing times, when its invocation can be as performative as that of other signifiers can be, namely “social justice,” “solidarity,” “collaboration,” “leadership,” resulting from the ultimate perverse neoliberal hijack of signifiers —

stands tall in the face of its abusive summons, not as a keepsake (the “vice of banality”) but as “never limited by other people’s limited imaginations” Mae Jemison.

Imagination, insurgent, beyond the then, the now, and the tomorrow.

	“I
	slid
“Resbalé	down
por	the smile
la	of
sonrisa	a word
de una	drilled
palabra	That is my origin...

taladrada.
Ese es mi origen...
 Pero,
 no
 recuerdo
 si fui
 expulsada/o
 o
tomé mis cosas
 y
me descolgué
 pensando...

Fueron
palabras
 las
 que
 nos
crearon.

 Nos
formaron,
y desplegaron
 sus
 hilos
 para
controlarnos.

 Pero
 yo
 sé
 que
algunas
personas
se reúnen
en cavernas
y callan...

Lo/as zapatistas no estaremos sola/os nunca más..."

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.
Primera Generación Scripps.

But,
 I
don't remember
 if
 I
Was expelled
 or
 if
I took my things
 and
I unhooked
 myself
thinking...

 It was
 words
 that
created
 us.

They
shaped us
and deployed
their threads
to control
 us.

But
 I
know
 that
a few people
 gather

inside caverns
and are silent

Never again will the Zapatistas be alone..."
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.
Poem for First Generation Scripps.

First-Gen in the News:

“Your Race, Your Pace.”

Felicia Harris (University of Georgia) for *Vitae*



Author Felicia Harris

Harris is a recent doctoral graduate in Journalism and Mass Communication at Grady College within The University of Georgia. Harris describes her experience as a first-generation college student navigating the world of academia, particularly in graduate school. Remarking on the challenges rising from the “do’s” and “don’ts” in academia, Harris additionally emphasizes the lack of literature around the first-generation narrative. Harris then provides brief but crucial steps in addressing the first-gen journey.

“Rules* of First-Gen as told by Felicia Harris:

1. Never be afraid to ask questions.
2. Always allow your perspective to be heard.
3. Your race, your pace.
4. Abandon imposter syndrome.

*Rules not set in stone. After all, I’m still figuring it out. “

To learn more about these steps, click [here](#) to read the article!

Farewells and Congratulations

A Celebration of some First-Gen Community Members

Shout out to **Lesley Bonds**, who has accepted a new position at her hometown in Bakersfield. Lesley will be the Student Success Program Manager at Bakersfield College. Lesley has been our Career Counselor and Student Employment Coordinator within the CP&R Team and close first-gen ally. We will miss Lesley dearly, but we are beyond proud of this next step in her journey. As she mentioned to us, “I have a passion for working with first-generation students, and this promotion offers me a chance to direct a program developed in response to a charge that all California community colleges create curriculum that support the success of low-income students.” Congrats Lesley!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAND....

Congratulations to the 2015-2016 First-Gen Interns, **Daniela Canas-Baena** '16 and **Juliana Canas-Baena** '16! We are excited to welcome you to the First-Gen community with resilient and confident students. We believe in your impact and dedication in having this program succeed, thrive, and improve throughout the year. Cannot wait to have you on the First-Gen team!

Parting Words

We have loved the opportunity to serve as your First-Gen Interns. It has been an incredible journey that made the difference in our last year here at Scripps. Whether near or far, we know that this program has created and will keep lasting friendships and connections amongst its members. Let us celebrate the history, progress, and imaginations of the future as we culminate the last month of this academic year. May we continue to prosper.

Many thanks,
Leah '15 and Bea '15
First-Gen @Scripps // 2014-2015 Program Co-Interns



We Want to Hear From You!

To inspire our readers and recognize your accomplishments, we would like to feature your story in one of our upcoming newsletters. Please send us a personal article or poem depicting your experience as a first-gener to firstgeneration@scrippscollege.edu. We know that the year has come to an end and that this is our final issue of the 2014-15 school year, but next year, there is so much more to come! Stay tuned!