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2019 National First-Generation College Celebration



This event was made possible by generous support from the following individuals, campus partners, and community members, many of whom participated in the 1stGen@Iowa GOLDrush crowdfunding campaign through the University of Iowa Center for Advancement.

Thank you!

45 Individual GOLDrush Campaign Contributors

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First-Generation Student Awards & Recognition Ceremony

On behalf of the UI First-Generation Task Force,
thank you for attending today's ceremony and supporting first-generation
students at the University of Iowa.

Friday, November 8, 2019

3:00pm - 5:00pm

Stanley Café, Hancher Auditorium

 THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Awards Ceremony

Opening..... Cody Pritchard, Project Director, TRIO Student Support Services
Mashyra Taylor, Undergraduate Student, Psychology BA

Welcome..... President Bruce Harreld

Keynote Address.... Dr. Kevin P. Campbell

Presentation of the 1stGen@Iowa Awards

- *First-Generation Student Achievement Award*
- *Award for Outstanding First-Generation Student Advocacy*

Closing Remarks.... Provost Montserrat Fuentes

2019 1stGen@Iowa Award Recipients



Lucille (Luci) Howard grew up in Clutier, Iowa, a small, rural town with a population of 200 people. The daughter of a cake decorator and iron manufactory worker, Lucille was the first in her family to pursue higher education. She attended the University of Iowa and majored in psychology, graduating in 2014 magna cum laude. While at the University of Iowa, Lucille was the vice president of First Generation Iowa, an organization dedicated to supporting first-generation students. Following graduation, Lucille began attending the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine.

Throughout medical school, Lucille has been involved in the global health distinction track, traveling to Haiti to assist with cervical cancer screening efforts and rotating with the Oxford University Hospital in England. During the 2018-2019 academic year, Lucille moved to Baltimore, Maryland where she earned a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health with a focus on women's and reproductive health. Her capstone project examined racial disparities in quality of life among women diagnosed with breast cancer and she took a position as an outreach worker in southwest Baltimore, providing resources and support to individuals engaged in street-based sex work. Lucille returned to medical school in June 2019 and is currently applying for residency in obstetrics and gynecology. Her career goals include providing inclusive and equitable care to underserved populations and remaining involved with reproductive rights advocacy.



Cindy Seyfer is a proud first-generation student who is passionate about helping others achieve their goal of earning a degree from the University of Iowa. She is a firm believer in the importance of student employment and the ability of this employment to connect students to campus and help them refine their career path. Cindy earned a B.A. in Biology from Cornell College but her Work-Study job in the Admissions and Financial Aid offices launched her career path. She started at the University of Iowa as a graduate assistant in 1982 while earning her dual Master's degree in Higher Education with an emphasis in Administration and Student Affairs.

Cindy started as a financial aid counselor in 1985 and has remained at the Office of Student Financial Aid progressing from Assistant Director to Associate Director, Senior Associate Director and currently serves as the Interim Director. One of the highlights of her work is being able to collaborate with others on campus to problem-solve on individual student issues and to improve global processes to better serve students



Alexia Sanchez is a fourth-year undergraduate student pursuing degrees in Political Science, Social Justice, and Philosophy at The University of Iowa. Alexia is an experienced Resident Assistant with a demonstrated history of working in the higher education industry. She is skilled in administering campus initiatives through The University of Iowa Student Government to improve student life on campus. In 2018, Alexia studied abroad for the summer semester for three months in Verona, Italy with a focus on intercultural communication and also invested time in volunteering at a local children's center to help teach English. Upon her return, she directed the 2018 Homecoming Parade and hosted the second annual "I'm the First" First-Generation Summit. Alexia is passionate about social justice issues through policy and culture and challenges herself to learn about issues and be an agent for future solutions. Currently, Alexia is working to implement a Latinx Living-Learning Community on the UI campus called Unidos, which means 'United' in Spanish. She is currently the youngest serving President in Iowa for a LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) Council in which she hopes to serve and support the local Latinx Community in Iowa City. This Winter, she was invited to attend the Global Women Leaders Forum in Iceland and then traveled to the Dominican Republic for a second study abroad experience. In May 2020, Alexia plans to graduate from the University of Iowa and hopes to one day work in the immigration field to continue helping marginalized communities.



Miguel Angel Jacobo is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in Spanish and Interdepartmental Studies on the Pre-Med track. Miguel was born and raised in West Liberty, Iowa. This small town, which has a population of fewer than five thousand residents, is situated just outside of Iowa City and was the first town in Iowa to have a majority Hispanic population. Miguel, who is the oldest of four siblings, has long dreamt of coming to the University of Iowa, especially given its close proximity to his home town. Growing up in a household where neither parent had attended college made the reality of enrolling at the University of Iowa somewhat intimidating. Even though Miguel had always excelled in high school, he arrived at the university feeling uncertain with whether or not he could be just as successful in college. However, because of the numerous academic resources and developmental opportunities available to students, Miguel has continued to excel academically. In addition, upon his arrival Miguel struggled to meet peers with similar interests as his, and he initially found it difficult to connect to campus. Eventually Miguel discovered organizations like the Association of Latinos Moving Ahead (ALMA), the Iowa Edge (TIE) student organization, and other minority-based communities on campus that helped him successfully transition to his new surroundings. Now, as a third-year student, Miguel is president of the Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Director of Public Relations for TIE, a 3rd year Peer Leader for the Iowa Edge Program, a mentor through ALMA, a tutor for TRIO Student Support Services, a Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) Scholar, and a proud student leader that helped push the social media campaign, #DoesUiowaLoveMe. While Miguel has received numerous awards for his academic achievements and service to the University of Iowa and its surrounding communities, he attributes much of his success to the many mentors he has been blessed to cross paths with.



Shaun Vecera has been a professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences since 1998, and he is also a first-generation college graduate. After graduating from the University of Oregon, Professor Vecera received his PhD from Carnegie Mellon University. In addition to his research on visual attention and perception, Professor Vecera have been involved deeply in undergraduate education. In 2016, he was appointed as the inaugural Herman J. and Eileen S. Schmidt Chair for leadership in undergraduate education, and he received the 2017-18 President and Provost Teaching Award for Teaching Excellence. His classes are of all sizes, from large lecture classes, such as Elementary Psychology (in which he has instructed more than 12,000 students to date), to a first-year seminar titled "How Psychology Can Save the Planet," to an on-line course titled "Learning About Learning" that helps students learn to learn more effectively.