

## Supporting First Generation Students from High School to College Completion

Rockford University Regents First Program Dr. Karen P. Walker, Dean of Academic Support kwalker@Rockford.edu



#### **Role at RU: Dean of Academic Support**

**Email:** Kwalker@rockford.edu

**Phone:** 815-226-4088

**Favorite Fun Food:** Mint chocolate chip ice cream

> Dr. Karen P. Walker, Dean of Academic Support, Rockford University





Proud to be First Generation

Interesting Fact: Dr. Walker is the youngest of 6 children, an avid reader, and moving from good to great with her gardening skills.







## **Effective Support for First Gens**

#### **SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO COLLEGE**

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#### **CONTINUED STRUCTURED SUPPORT**

#### **INCREASED RETENTION & COMPLETION RATES**



## **Regents First Retention Facts**

Summer/Fall 21 Inaugural Cohorts	Total Participants = 12	Fall21 to Fall22 retention rate = 92% Fall22 to SP23 retention rate = 83% Current Fall22 to Fall23 = 83% WD = 2 student
Summer/Fall 22 Cohorts	Total Participants = 16	Fall21 to SP23 retention rate = 100% Current Fall22 to Fall23 retention rate = 100% Possible AD = 1 student
Summer/Fall 23 Cohorts	GOAL = 25 participants	





## Summer/Fall 2021 Inaugural Cohort 83% Retention Rate



# Summer/Fall 2022 Cohort = 100% Retention Rate

Summer Retreat
Fall Retreat







## Regents First Program Overview



## WRAP AROUND

## STUDENT SUPPORT



CAREER





**FINANCIAL** 

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL



ACADEMIC



## Regents First Program Staff for 2023-24 Academic Year

- Dean of Academic Support
- College Life Skills Coach (currently part-time)
- Graduate Assistant (10 hours/week)
- 1 Peer Mentor (rising Senior)
- 2 Peer Mentors (rising Juniors)
- 2 Peer Mentors (rising Sophomores)



#### Participant Requirements

#### GOAL = 25 PARTICIPANTS

10 = Summer 2023 Start

#### 15=Fall 2023 Start

Pell Eligible/MAP Eligible

**First Generation** 

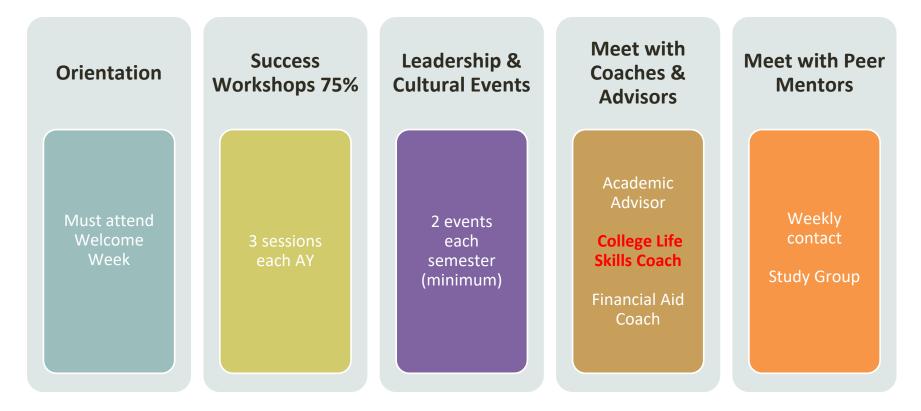
**Regular or Committee Admit** 

Complete Application & Interview for Program Participation

Summer or Fall Retreat



#### Non-Negotiable Requirements Can Foster a Sense of Belonging on Campus





## **Structured Support for First Gens**

#### **Encouraging Self Care**

- Professor office hours
- Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI)
- Meet with counselor at Lang Health Center
- Exercise
- Christian Fellowship Group

#### Facilitating Community Care

- Recognition and celebration of growth and accomplishments
- Mentor led study groups
- Time and space to be "real" with others who can relate
- Physical space to gather and have a "campus home"
- Group pages on social media and chat platforms



## **Executive Leadership Team Support for First Generation Students**





## Commencement 2023 Volunteers: We are NEXT!







#### Proud to Be First!

July 2021 Inaugural Cohort



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