



Hello,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you to celebrate the new year, a new semester, and, even though you have a lot of time left before college, we also wanted to tell you a little bit about what it means to be a First Generation college student!

A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college (meaning that their parents or guardians did not go to college). The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges.

Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

We hope that you will continue to work hard when it comes to your education and one day will be an outstanding college student yourself. Best of luck in the future and keep up the great work!

**Sincerely,**  
**The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn**

Dear Edward,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

Sincerely,

The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. How many years would it take to graduate from college?

- It depends on what you want to study, but normally it's around 4-6 years!

2. How much experience would I need to get into engineering?

- None at all! For reference, I originally wanted to go into art but last minute I decided I wanted to be an engineer, so I applied and got in! College is your time to learn, but they do want to make sure your grades are good (you will submit a transcript of all your grades when applying to college). Any experience you may need to be a good engineer you can get during college with co-ops and internships, but if you'd like, you can start getting experience now by joining science clubs and robotics teams!

3. What courses do I need when I get to college

- You'll have a list of general education classes (classes everyone has to take to graduate like math, biology, chemistry, and a writing course), and then you'll have the freedom to choose what classes you want to take depending on your major requirements!

- It will depend on your major! You will definitely still take english, math, social studies, and science when you first arrive at college, but after your first or second year you will start to take classes in what you are majoring in!

- To get into a college, you don't need to take specific classes in high school. Just make sure that you graduate high school or similar. In high school, you can prepare for college by taking AP classes or advanced classes.

Dear Christian,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

Sincerely,  
First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. What is college like now?

- My experience is unique to 2020, as I have had to attend UM-Dearborn from my house. I've tried my best to make it feel like a true college experience by joining student organizations and participating in homecoming week, but nothing compares to the real thing (being on campus).

- My college experience was rocky at first because I was afraid to get involved and ask for help when I needed it. Once I was able to push myself out of the comfort zone, I was able to make the most out of my experience and have a lot of fun! I also didn't have a major, so I didn't know what I wanted to do after college. I struggled a long time to figure it out, but I was guided by awesome people on campus and finally found my passion.

2. How many years do you plan on staying in college?

- It depends on what you want to study, but normally it's around 4-6 years!

3. Is it fun there, If so in what ways?

- Yes! Being in college gives you the freedom to choose what time you want to take your classes (morning/night), what kind of classes you want to take, and what you want to major in. You can also join clubs and organizations that host fun events and informational workshops that help you navigate your way through college!

- I loved college because I was able to have fun and meet new people while learning more about the world/my passion. I worked on campus, played a sport, was involved with clubs, and went to classes. I stayed busy - but I always made sure my grades were good!

Dear Tyrell,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

Sincerely,  
First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. How does it feel to be in a dorm room?

I used to live in a dorm! It was a lot of fun - but also made me an adult really fast. I had to learn how to take care of a "home". Cleaning, cooking, laundry, everything. I had 3 roommates - one was from China, one from Brazil, and another from the US. It was so cool to learn about their cultures and try different food! But living in a dorm is not like living with your siblings - you can't just yell at each other if you don't like something. I had to do a lot of communicating to make sure we were all on the same page.

2. How hard is college to you?

- College can be hard if you don't take the time to put in the effort to do your homework and study!
- It's a lot of work, but studying the things you're interested in can be so fun!

3. What profession are you trying to be to succeed in life?

- I went to school to work in college! It sounds weird - but there is a whole major in college about learning how to work on a college campus. I didn't know that was going to be my career until I decided on it in my 3rd year. I was undecided up until then.

- I want to be a scientist who studies cells and tissues under a microscope!

Dear Raemere,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

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First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. Who is your principal?

- In college, we do not call the head of the school a "principal," we call them a "Chancellor," but they pretty much do the same sorts of things that a principal does. The Chancellor of the University of Michigan-Dearborn is Chancellor Grasso.

2. Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend?

- Many students on campus have a girlfriend/boyfriend and many do not. I personally do not have a girlfriend.

3. Do you have a dorm?

- I used to live in a dorm! It was a lot of fun - but also made me an adult really fast. I had to learn how to take care of a "home". Cleaning, cooking, laundry, everything. I had 3 roommates - one was from China, one from Brazil, and another from the US. It was so cool to learn about their cultures and try different food! But living in a dorm is not like living with your siblings - you can't just yell at each other if you don't like something. I had to do a lot of communicating to make sure we were all on the same page.

Dear Cianna,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

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First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. Will I be able to show some of my fashion skills?

- Ohhhhh yes! College is your time to be you! Take advantage of it. Dye your hair! Wear that outfit and those shoes! I feel that as long as your fashion isn't harming someone else or yourself and follows the code of conduct on campus, you do what you want!

- Definitely!! College is a place to express yourself :)

2. Can I get a really cool and helpful teacher/associate?

- Most professors are down to earth! I still talk to most of my professors today (I graduated 2 years ago), and they even support my small business! Sometimes you may get one that isn't all that great - but I think we will eventually run into someone that may be hard to work with in life.

- Most professors are extremely cool and helpful! They enjoy their jobs and look forward to teaching us everyday, and most of them tell pretty good jokes :)

- Yes, but only if you make an effort to meet them and ask lots of questions.

3. Will college be hard?

- College can be hard if you don't take the time to put in the effort to do your homework and study!

- It's a lot of work, but studying the things you're interested in can be so fun!

Dear Jermani,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

Sincerely,  
First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

#### 1. Is college a fun thing to go to?

- Yes! Being in college gives you the freedom to choose what time you want to take your classes (morning/night), what kind of classes you want to take, and what you want to major in. You can also join clubs and organizations that host fun events and informational workshops that help you navigate your way through college!

- I loved college because I was able to have fun and meet new people while learning more about the world/my passion. I worked on campus, played a sport, was involved with clubs, and went to classes. I stayed busy - but I always made sure my grades were good!

#### 2. What is a scholarship?

- A scholarship is money given to you to use for school (like to pay for your classes and books!). A lot of Universities give out scholarships based on your grades in middle and high school, but some organizations will give you scholarships based on your needs or how much you participate, a lot of them will require you to write essays too.

- A scholarship is like free money that a school or organization pays for you so that you can focus on your studies! It is a great opportunity if a scholarship is offered!

#### 3. How does it feel to graduate?

- Amazing. I was not nervous to graduate or walk across the stage until I entered the graduation ceremony. There were so many of us. It didn't hit me that I was graduating until I went to walk across the stage. It was so awesome. I am so proud of myself for being the first in my family to earn a degree from college.

Dear Azariah,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

Sincerely,  
First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. Is college hard?

- College can be hard if you don't take the time to put in the effort to do your homework and study!
- It's a lot of work, but studying the things you're interested in can be so fun!

2. Are the fraternity parties really like how they're on TV?

- No, college is usually not that extreme and the people in college are actually a lot nicer than they are in the movies. College is still very fun though and has a lot of other things going on than just parties.
- Not at UM-Dearborn! We hold ourselves to a different standard. We still have fun - but parties are definitely different than what you see in movies. I can't speak for all colleges across Michigan or the USA.

3. How much of a difference is college from grade school?

- VERY different, in college you have much more freedom than you do in middle school and you'll get to meet lots and lots of new people. In college you only have to go to each class once or twice a week, so you have the rest of the week to do homework, study, meet new people, and participate in clubs and events. The professors will also not tell you if you are missing any assignments for your grades, so it's up to you to make sure you are turning in everything on time.

Dear Raesean,

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### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. Is college hard?

- College can be hard if you don't take the time to put in the effort to do your homework and study!
- It's a lot of work, but studying the things you're interested in can be so fun!

2. How does it feel staying away from your parents?

- It feels freeing but also sad. I am a family person - so I cried when I moved out. However, I got used to it and would recommend trying it if you can afford to! You learn a lot about yourself and living on your own (cleaning, cooking, etc). It also makes you appreciate your parents cooking haha

3. What do you want to be when you all get out of college?

- I want to be a scientist who studies cells and tissues under a microscope!
- I went to school to work in college! It sounds weird - but there is a whole major in college about learning how to work on a college campus. I didn't know that was going to be my career until I decided on it in my 3rd year. I was undecided up until then.

Dear Jacob,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

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First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. How do you pay your college funds and your bills?

- You can pay your tuition (your bill) many ways! If you have scholarships, grants, or loans, you work with the financial aid office to make sure those are applied. You can also pay with credit card, check, etc.

- I found a job and worked part-time while attending college.

2. How did you get your job?

- I got my first on campus job at the start of my sophomore year! I was an orientation leader - I was talking with people on campus and heard about the job opening. I would recommend working on campus!

- I looked at job sites for opportunities.

3. How do you ease up your stress and deal with your problems?

- Time management is key as the more organized you are with your time, the less likely you are to be stressed. Giving yourself time to relax and hang out with friends also helps.

- I talk with my friends or classmates! I also really love fitness and would exercise to get my mind off school. It's okay to take a break :)

- I would finish up my homework as soon as possible and make some time for me to relax. I ask for advice and help when I need it.

Dear Ja'leel,

We wanted to send this letter to tell you a little about what a First Generation college student is! A first gen student is someone who is one of the first in their family to attend college. The First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn connects, informs, supports, and celebrates first gen students as they prepare for and navigate college. We celebrate first gen students because of their hard work, even when they face challenges. Many first gen students sometimes have a hard time getting used to college. However, these students still push themselves towards success and to their degree. They don't give up even when things are difficult and, for that, we are so proud of them and have every reason to celebrate first gen students (and future first gen students) and their accomplishments!

Sincerely,  
First Gen Student Organization at the University of Michigan-Dearborn

### **Your Questions and Answers from University of Michigan-Dearborn First Gen Students:**

1. How is your college experience?

- It was rocky at first because I didn't know how to ask questions or study! Once I learned how to do these two things, it got a lot better! I would also recommend getting involved (but not too much) - I was really bad at this my first year and I was really lonely.

- Great! I can study only the subjects that I like the most!

2. What is it like now that covid- 19 is around?

- College is a lot of fun! It can be stressful though. With COVID-19, everything has moved online. Your classes are online through Zoom or other video calls. Sometimes students will form study groups (a lot of students used to meet up at the library to study, but that isn't an option right now). So they all join a chat or video call to study with each other.

- As a first generation student who started college during prime COVID time, college was very stressful at first. Trying to navigate our online learning platform was difficult at first, but after the first week or so things got so much easier. Finding a good schedule and giving myself time to relax helped a lot with the stress of due dates!

3. How is the work? Is it easy, hard, or you just have to pay attention?

- College can be hard if you don't take the time to put in the effort to do your homework and study!

- It's a lot of work, but studying the things you're interested in can be so fun!