



First Gen Proud Research Report

Texas State University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First Gen Proud at Texas State University assists first-generation students in their collegiate educational journey. First Gen Proud aims to understand what challenges first-gen students are facing and their needs. The purpose of our research conducted for First Gen Proud was to answer, “What can the First Gen Proud organization do to raise awareness about First Gen Proud and instill a sense of belongingness among first-gen students at Texas State University?”.

Participants in our study were first-gen students at Texas State University who were pursuing an undergraduate degree. Our research utilized surveys that First Gen Proud issued in the spring and fall of 2020. Our research group conducted six individual in-depth interviews, and one focus group discussion consisting of three participants. One researcher attended a First Gen Proud event to observe and interact with first-gen students in attendance. Lastly, First Gen Proud issued another survey in the fall of 2021, allowing responses from first-gen and non-first gen students. We utilized thematic content analysis to interpret and visualize our qualitative data.

First-gen student awareness of First Gen Proud varied. Some first-gen students were involved in first-gen organizations, while others were unaware of any resources. Although awareness varied, the students believed that First Gen Proud would be a good resource for first-gen students. Regarding communication, we found that, although students preferred email, they did not interact with First Gen Proud emails. Students recommended different forms of direct advertising to connect with First Gen Proud. Students also suggested utilizing first-gen professors to advertise for the organization. First-gen students’ needs feedback ranged from resources and information the students felt that other first-gen students could benefit from, to the need for more guidance for first-gen students.

Our recommendations include utilizing the feedback students provided in the interviews and surveys to create solutions to help First Gen Proud achieve its goals. First Gen Proud should create and advertise more support programs and resources geared towards first-gen students. These programs could include mental health support and first-gen student information. By providing the resources and information first-gen students need, First Gen Proud could provide the guidance for students that they currently lack, to increase their sense of belonging to Texas State University.

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1 ORGANIZATION INTRODUCTION

In 1965, President Lyndon Banes Johnson signed the Higher Education Act "to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities," (Kagan, 2020) as he put it. Within the Higher Education Act, were provisions meant to assist those who were considered "first-generation College Students." This is defined as, "An individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree." (U.S. Dept of Education, 1998). The organization that is responsible for the assistance of First-Gen students at Texas State University is called First Gen Proud. First Gen Proud, Texas State University, Lydon B. Johnson, and the Higher Education act are all deeply connected to one another, due to Johnson's experience as a teacher in the small town of Cotulla, TX and as a student at Southwest Teachers College, now Texas State University.

Because of these connections, First Gen Proud takes its job to heart and strives to provide the best experience it can for first-generation students at Texas State University. Proof of this commitment can be seen in First Gen Proud's Mission Statement (Texas State University, 2021).

What We Want to Do

Texas State First Gen Proud Committee is dedicated to supporting our first-gen population by welcoming and celebrating their successes. We focus on cultivating students' strengths and accomplishments while providing individual mentorship and other forms of institutional resources—from college to commencement to career. These are the guiding priorities of the Committee:

- ☐ *We will create and host events that welcome, celebrate, and support our first-gen students*
- ☐ *We will generate and implement training and professional development for faculty, staff, and students to best support the individual needs of Texas State's first-gen population*
- ☐ *We will champion affiliated student organizations, including FLIP*
- ☐ *We will provide marketing to spread awareness about the unique obstacles and successes of first-gen students*
- ☐ *We will welcome and provide resources at New Student Orientation*

First Gen Proud is seeking to better understand the needs of Texas State University's first-generation students. They want to identify the struggles of first-generation students caused by the global, COVID-19 pandemic. First Gen Proud also hopes to foster a greater sense of pride and belonging in first-generation students, in hopes that it will bring them greater success in their academic careers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SENSE OF BELONGING

Literature on college experience among first-gen students and non-first-gen students suggests significant statistical differences (Terenzini et al., 1996). To reach optimal levels of subjective well-being, humans require a sense of both belonging and individuality (DeRossett et al., 2021). Compared to their traditional peers, first-gen students tend to typically come from a lower-income family, to be Hispanic, and to possess lower cognitive skills (Terenzini et al., 1996). Furthermore, First-gen students are less engaged with their peers and teachers, possess lower degree aspirations, receive less encouragement from family, and have dependents to take care of (Terenzini et al., 1996). As a result, they need to work more off-campus than their traditional peers. Furthermore, first-gen students and traditional students also differ in the college climate, as first-gen students report to be more likely to be discriminated against based on their race/ethnicity or gender. Bassett (2021) conducted a study with in-depth longitudinal interviews with 8 female low-income first-gen students in their first year of study at college. The study revealed low-income first-gen students complete college at a disproportionately lower rate than their traditional counterparts due to a wide range of financial, academic, and health issues. The study also revealed that students engaged with a support program play a critical role in their student success (Bassett, 2021).

Qualitative research can provide us with a better understanding of the nature and intricacies of the contexts that shape first-gen students' sense of belonging (Museus & Chang, 2021). The campus environment is directly correlated to the sense of belonging among first-gen students (Museus & Chang, 2021). Greater common ground, a collectivist campus environment, and relevant learning opportunities lead to a greater sense of belonging amongst first-gen students (Museus & Chang, 2021). Another qualitative study conducted in the UK brought out an interesting finding of the sense of belonging among first-gen students and the elitist culture in the Universities, especially ones that predominantly consist of white students (Hindle et al., 2021). Amongst other factors, university reputation and culture of elitism play a negative effect on first-gen students' sense of belongingness (Hindle et al., 2021). A level playing field must be

achieved for first-gen students to thrive and enhance a sense of belongingness (Hindle et al., 2021).

2.2 SUPPORT

Professors play an influential role in the academic success of first-gen students (Bañuelos & Flores, 2021). In another study by Capannola and Johnson (2020), family support plays a vital role in instilling a sense of belongingness among first-gen students in college. Positive interactions with faculty members are linked to a high degree of integration into university life, which promotes success and perseverance in higher education, which is crucial for keeping students in school until they graduate (Tinto 1987). Motivations among first-gen students include “setting a path” for future generations (siblings). Support from family works as a motivation and stress reliever for first-gen students (Capannola & Johnson, 2020). Another big study conducted on Mexican first-gen students and non-first-gen students reveals the importance of family support in their college life. A higher level of family support is heavily linked to better mental health and persistence in college for Mexican students (Jimenez et al., 2021). Hence a focus on college-supported programs to develop a bond with the family will increase a sense of belonging and better mental health for first-gen students as well (Jimenez et al., 2021).

Support from the University body in promoting an inclusive culture is important (Hindle et al., 2021). Sense of exclusion could also arise from the cost of the University lifestyle defined by sports, societies, drinking (Hindle et al., 2021).

2.3 THE TRANSITION FROM COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Covid-19 had an almost equal impact in terms of first-gen students and traditional/continuing generational students (DeRossett et al., 2021). However, it is found through research that Covid-19 institutional support is positively correlated with a sense of belonging, academic motivation, and self-efficacy (DeRossett et al., 2021). Universities can learn from this and be prepared for future events.

3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 THE TOPIC

First-Generation students (FGS) are defined as those whose parents did not earn a four-year bachelor's degree (Elissa, 2019). First Gen Proud is a unified community of faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students at Texas State, which is committed to bringing awareness, support, and shared resources to the University by providing an inclusive learning environment for first-gen students (First Gen Proud, 2021). The First Gen Proud organization hosts numerous events throughout the year dedicated to first-gen students, advocating and providing opportunities to students (Texas State University, n.d.). Texas State also participates in and celebrates First-Gen Day to recognize and bring awareness to the First-Gen community on campus. The First Gen Proud organization helps to create a collective identity of first-gen students (First Gen Proud, 2021).

3.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

First-gen students make up 46% of all undergraduate students at Texas State University (Texas State University, n.d.-a). They are growing in numbers across the US colleges but at the same time, they are at a higher risk of not completing their degree (Ishitani, 2016). First-gen students face significant difficulties than non-first-gen students to continue and complete their four-year college degree. Finding a sense of belonging in college is a key driver to promoting success, well-being, and engagement (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NAS], 2017). For first-gen students, it is crucial in completing their graduation (Gopalan & Brady, 2019).

The First Gen Proud organization at Texas State is looking for ways to enhance the sense of belongingness among first-gen students and increase their involvement with their organization to promote their agendas successfully. Their data suggests many first-gen students at Texas State are not aware of the First Gen proud organization, and outreach from the organization is failing to attract them to join the events to promote the first-gen students' community and enhance the sense of belongingness. The study will address the problem of low reach and engagement of

first-gen students with the First Gen Proud organization and how the organization can reach out to them more effectively.

3.3 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

First-gen students are at higher risk of a lower sense of belongingness at college compared to non-first-gen students (Terenzini et al., 1996), which leads to dropping out or delay in graduation. Literature review suggests various meanings of a sense of belongingness for first-gen students including, feeling like they matter to their classroom (intrinsic motivation) as well as extrinsic motivation (Thibodeaux & Samson, 2021). No substantial research was done on Texas State first-gen students on their sense of belongingness and the ways to better communicate with them. There is also a lack of research from the First Gen Proud organization on differentiating the needs of first-gen students to non-first-gen students to truly understand their differences in sense of belongingness.

3.4 AUDIENCE

This study will benefit the First Gen Proud organization and Texas State University as a whole, to implement and revise policies and actions to reach out to first-gen students and enhance their sense of belonging, based upon the results. The organization may take initiatives to change its marketing tactics in promoting events as well as find new ways to get its message across to the students here at Texas State. Finally, the study will benefit first-gen students to enhance their experience at Texas State and improve their sense of belonging.

3.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the sense of belongingness amongst undergraduate first-gen students at Texas State University and explore the best methods of communication to reach out to first-gen students which increases awareness of the First Gen Proud organization. To do this, the researchers will carry out full exploratory research which includes in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, observational research (participant observation), and open-ended surveys.

3.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central question is, what can the First Gen Proud organization do to raise awareness about First Gen Proud, and instill a sense of belongingness among first-gen students at Texas State University?

The following are sub-questions:

1. Are first-gen students at Texas State aware of First Gen Proud?
2. What resources does first-gen students need to aid them in their success at Texas State University?
3. How could First Gen Proud effectively relay information to & contact first-gen students?
4. What are things which positively/ negatively affect first-gen students in college?
5. How much does first-gen students feel supported by their families? How much by the university?
6. How are the general feelings of belonging among first-gen students? Are there ways to improve it?

4 TARGET MARKET

4.1 SALIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The primary and secondary research conducted on students at Texas State University was specified to students who were primarily first-gen and aiming to achieve their bachelor's degree. Because our research project's primary focus pertained to college students, our target market was relatively aged 18-23. Race/ethnicity, gender, and the year in the student's educational journey were the demographics that participants in the research were probed for.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEYS

First Gen Proud issued three surveys from 2020 to 2021 to first-gen students at Texas State University that we leveraged. The demographics for these surveys were as follows. In the Spring of 2020, the survey was sent to a sample of 10,890 students. This survey yielded 1,293 responses, and 1,311 participants provided their race/ethnicity. Of those responses, 52% were

Hispanic, 33% were White (non-Hispanic), 12% were Black/African American, and 4% were Asian American/Pacific Islander. As for gender, the survey yielded 1,277 responses. 74% of participants were female, 26% were male, and 1% were gender variant/non-conforming. As for the educational journey, 8% were first-year students, 16% were second year, 34% were third year, and 41% of students were fourth year.

The follow-up survey issued by First Gen Proud in the Fall of 2020 yielded 602 responses. The race/ethnicity breakdown and age of the survey participants were unavailable to include in this report. By educational journey, 8% of participants were first-year students, 29% were second year, 19% were third year, and 22% of students were fourth year.

First Gen Proud assisted our research class by issuing another survey this semester in the Fall of 2021. This survey was sent to first-gen and non-first-gen students and yielded 93 responses. Of those responses, 34% were first-gen responses and 66% were non-first-gen students. As for race/ethnicity, 33% were Hispanic, 51% were White (non-Hispanic), 4% were Black/African American, and 3% were Asian American/Pacific Islander and 9% were other. As for gender, 44% of participants were female, 55% were male, and 1% were gender variant/non-conforming. As for the educational journey, 17% were second-year students, 65% were third year, and 18% of students were fourth year.

Our research group issued one survey on a smaller scale to probe student awareness of First Gen Proud on Texas State University's campus and received 12 responses. Of those responses, 50% were white (non-Hispanic), 25% were Hispanic, and 25% were Asian American/Pacific Islander. By gender, 17% were female, 58% were male, and 25% were gender variant/non-conforming. Lastly, for the educational journey, 33% were first-year students, 25% were second year, 33% were third year, and 9% of those students were graduate students.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHICS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

As a research group, we completed six individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) and a focus group discussion (FGD) where three participants took part. The demographics for the IDIs consisted of four Hispanic participants and two White (non-Hispanic) participants. Three of the participants were female and the remaining three were male. One participant was a first-year student, one was a third year, and four were fourth year. The FGD consisted of one White

(non-Hispanic) participant, one Asian American/Pacific Islander, and one Hispanic. One of the participants was female and the other two were male. As for classification, there was a second-year student, a third-year and a fourth year.

4.4 PSYCHOGRAPHICS

The Postsecondary National Policy Institute (PNPI) provides policymakers in the U.S. with information for building federal education policies. According to the PNPI who uses data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), first-gen freshman students come from lower median-income families, with a median family income of \$37,565. Families with freshman students who aren't first-gen had a median income of \$99,635 (Factsheets, 2021). This data demonstrates that first-gen students do face different obstacles such as financial struggles when compared to non-first-gen students. Because this wealth demographic is so impactful on students' lives, we are using lifestyle segmentation to describe our target market's psychographics. First-gen students' lifestyles consist of them attending a college or university while facing financial instability due to not having significant financial support from their families. Many of these students support themselves and are more likely to have dependents than a non-first gen student (Factsheets, 2021). These students are determined and motivated to complete their postsecondary degrees.

4.5 GEODEMOGRAPHICS & BEHAVIORGRAPHICS

As first-gen college students attending Texas State are the focus of our research, Texas State University student geodemographic data is descriptive of where first-gen students attending Texas State reside. According to U.S. News which used data from Texas State University itself, 17% of students live in college-owned or affiliated housing, while 83% live off-campus. To segment behaviorgraphics, we used the four types of behavioral segmentation (Behavioral Segmentation, 2021). Behaviorgraphics of first-gen students is like that of non-first-gen college students. The students decided to attend a post-secondary degree (purchase behavior) and are young adults pursuing education (occasion). These students are pursuing a degree in a field they decided to pursue (benefits sought) and are loyal to the university as the cost of switching schools is high. Switching schools entails many factors that students must consider, such as relocating and enrolling at a different institution (loyalty).

4.6 PRIMARY COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION APPROACHES

Our research group leveraged the use of written communication between each other and also with research participants. Within our research group, GroupMe was the primary communication platform used to exchange messages to complete work. When communicating with interview participants, the written exchange was through emails. Using Texas State University's email platform on Outlook, we sent interview requests to our potential interviewees and maintained communication with possible participants. Our professor also leveraged Outlook emails to contact her colleagues and their students searching for possible interviewees. Professors also utilized word of mouth (WOM) to directly communicate with their students about participating in our research project. Our research group also made use of WOM by looking for interviewees at First Gen Proud events that were happening on Texas State University's campus.

5 RESEARCH PROCESS REPORT

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of the study is to get a deep understanding of the feelings, attitudes, interactions, and experiences of first-gen students at Texas State University. Hence, qualitative research methods are used (Kalra et al., 2013). There has been substantial research done on first-gen students in the US and their sense of belongingness at colleges. Yet, in order to get fresh perspectives and explore more into this topic, we chose to conduct exploratory research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

More specifically, to truly understand our research participant's mindset, In-Depth interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Open-ended Surveys, and Participant Observation techniques are applied. IDIs are one-on-one interviews where we have selected volunteer participants who are first-gen students of Texas State. IDIs are a great way to gather insights and allow flexibility for the researcher to allow probing while conducting exploratory research (Hunter, 2006). FGDs are conducted in a group of three undergraduate first-gen students who volunteered to participate. FGDs are also useful to get an in-depth understanding of social issues and obtain data from a purposefully selected group of individuals (O.Nyumba et al.,

2018). Finally, a Participant Observation technique was applied by attending First-Gen events at Texas State University to gather valuable insights by talking to undergraduate first-gen students at the event (Ajayi, 1994).

For exploratory purposes, an inductive approach was taken while conducting this study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The inductive content analysis helped us to explore deeper and form codes and themes based on the content alone instead of just theory testing ((Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This helped us dive deeper and get a better understanding of the phenomenon of the research questions at hand.

5.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

A face-to-face interview was conducted for IDI. Each of the three researchers in this study conducted two IDIs from a convenience sampling method. A structured interview method is utilized for ease of study and effective probing. Participants were notified via email in advance and a dedicated private room had been selected for the interview to take place. According to ethical requirements, their identities are confidential. Some participants were given extra credit for participation with the help of the First Gen Proud organization. FGDs are conducted with a similar protocol, except it was held via Zoom instead of the traditional face-to-face method. This was done purely out of the convenience of the participant and time constraints. The same structured set of questions was used as IDIs with effective probing. The convenience sampling method is used for choosing participants, and only undergraduate first-gen students have participated in this study.

Finally, during the First-Gen week, one of the researchers participated in a First-Gen event held at McCoy, where a complete participant observation technique was used to gain insights into the study. The researcher spoke at length with several undergraduate first-gen students as well as observed them talking to other First-Gen Professors and students. Mental notes were taken at first stance, later on, written down to form credibility and reliability of the method. In addition, an Open-Ended Survey was released to volunteer participants of undergraduate students at McCoy. Open-ended questions were selected by the researchers under the guidance of Dr. Gail Zank. The survey was released to both first-gen and non-first-gen students using a convenient sampling method.

5.3 SAMPLE

As discussed in the research process, a convenient sampling method was used in all research methods. For IDIs, FGDs, and Participant Observations, our target sample group represented undergraduate students who are First-Gen Students. On the other hand, the Open-Ended Surveys were conducted with a sample of undergraduate students which consisted of both first-gen and non-first-gen students. This was done purposefully to compare and contrast the two groups for the exploratory nature of the study.

<i>Qualitative Research Method</i>	<i>First-Gen participants</i>	<i>Non-First-Gen participants</i>
In-Depth Interviews	6	N/A
Focus-Group Discussion	3	N/A
Participant Observation	~4	N/A
Open-Ended Survey	35	63

5.4 DATA INTERPRETATION PROCESS

Thematic Content Analysis is applied for interpreting the data obtained from IDIs, FGDs, and surveys. The thematic analysis offers researchers a systematic approach to analyzing a qualitative dataset, to uncover hidden trends and inferences based on themes and codes set by the researcher (Gareth & Nikki, 2017). To effectively analyze qualitative data, the steps mentioned by Gareth and Nikki (2017) are followed while conducting thematic analysis.

Firstly, the researchers recorded the IDIs and FGDs and later transcribed them verbatim. Here, the researchers themselves were moderators of the interviews conducted. Hence, familiarization of data was achieved. This is also known as the preparation phase (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Secondly, the data was then coded using an inductive method, by a single researcher, and reviewed by two other researchers in the study. This helped them code with reliability and credibility. After coding, initial themes were identified and reviewed for accuracy. This method allows for a comprehensive perspective of the emergent themes while preserving the small differences in each respondent's perceptions and activities. The themes that emerged revealed similarities and contrasts within and between groups. Open coding helped the researchers develop themes and codes which may not have been discovered if the deductive thematic analysis method was used (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

Appendix 1 refers to the set of questions of the IDI and FGD conducted by the researchers. Finally, Appendix 2 shows the coding process of the IDIs, FGDs, and the Survey in separate Excel sheet links attached.

1.1 VALIDITY OF RESEARCH PROCESS

The qualitative study conducted has fulfilled the basic criteria for trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) (Fossey et al., 2002). In terms of methodological rigor, the chosen theoretical approach to conducting research fits the research questions we have found. All of the research methods we undertook were designed to adapt to the social setting. Since the researchers themselves are students of Texas State, it helped them to engage with the participants, and become familiar with the study context. Finally, transparency was followed throughout the entire research process. The research methods used, and data gathered gave privilege to the perspectives of the participants, and it was authentically represented in the research process and interpretation.

Ethics is an important factor when it comes to qualitative research (Fossey et al., 2002). In terms of interpretive rigor, a range of voices, views, and verbatim quotes are presented to present the findings and interpretation. This provides authenticity to the study (Fossey et al., 2002). The findings fit the data well, and the perspective of all researchers are taken into account. This solidifies the coherence of the report (Fossey et al., 2002). Finally, the researchers' role in the study was transparent throughout. The researchers' personal experience is not expressed in the report, and it is done purely in the subjective context of the participants' experiences.

6 FINDINGS

6.1 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation is a qualitative research method to gain insight and collect data about people, processes, and culture (Kawulich, 2005). In this study, the researcher attended the First-Gen Networking Event, which was the inaugural event for first-gen students at McCoy College. The researcher observed the participants over a period of two hours, involved in a variety of activities that enabled him to observe the first-gen students in their daily lives and participate in activities that facilitate a better understanding of their behaviors and activities.

The event began with a greeting by the host followed by respected McCoy First-Gen professors, who shared their journey being a First-Gen. The researcher sat at a table with three other First-Gen students. One undergraduate student, in particular, was a Latina who is the first in her family to go to college. She has four siblings in her family all live together. The researcher found the student to be very enthusiastic about her journey as a college student and her family is supportive of her decisions.

The researcher moved on to sit at another table with three other first-gen students. This table had two Latino students and one Thai American student. While all of them are First-Gen, they all do not face the same journey in terms of financial struggles and hardship. The Thai American student comes from a financially affluent family, compared to the Latinos who have a different story. Although, they all share a passion and pride for being the first to go to college and set an example for their future generations. The researcher observed all first-gen students at the event to be very welcoming and open-minded to sharing their stories of success and struggles. The need to talk and share their stories seemed evident from the event. Collectivistic nature could be formed as a source of inspiration for these first-gen students. Furthermore, the support from Faculty members going through each table and talking to the students motivates them to do better in college and succeed as their professors did. The role of professors goes beyond academic norms and should be empowered to have a more active role in the lives of first-gen students.

Demographic data of the first-gen participants observed in the study:

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Program
Female	18	Hispanic/ Latina	Management
Male	19	Thai-American	CIS
Male	19	Hispanic/ Latino	Management
Male	25	Hispanic/ Latino	Int. Business

7 TARGET CONSUMER ANALYSIS

7.1 MARKET AWARENESS

First Gen Proud described to our research class the situation in which the organization was having difficulty getting responses from students after information had been relayed. First Gen Proud shared that emails weren't sufficient for communicating. This situation became evident before and during our group's process of completing interviews with students. When communicating through email with students, our research group and class had difficulty receiving responses from possible interview participants. Once we secured interviews, it was also evident that a participant's awareness of First Gen Proud was unpredictable. As mentioned earlier, the responses from interviewees ranged between having no awareness and being highly aware of First Gen Proud. From the FGD, when participants were probed on their awareness of First Gen Proud, one student had been aware of the organization for an extended period of time while the other two weren't aware or had just learned about the organization during the week of the FGD. The student who had awareness of the organization was a second-year student at the time of the interview. The student who had just learned about the organization was a third-year student, and the student without any awareness of First Gen Proud was a graduating fourth-year student. Although the third-year student had just learned about First Gen Proud, he did provide the following statement when asked about his awareness of the organization. This statement signifies that he had been exposed to the organization but wasn't fully aware of the value First Gen Proud aims to provide first-gen students like himself.

"I kind of heard about it, like, through a networking event I went to last Friday. But I really don't know that much about it."

This statement can be useful to First Gen Proud in the organization's aim to increase awareness. First Gen Proud could make sure to have a presence at different campus events where outreach can take place between first-gen students and the organization.

7.2 NEEDS AND WANTS ASSESSMENT – WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW

The third survey issued by First Gen Proud where both first-gen and non-first gen students responded allowed us to compare the two groups side by side. One of the questions asked of first-gen students was, "How do you think being a first-gen student affects the college

experience?”. Similarly, the non-first-gen students were asked, “How does having a parent/guardian who has completed college affect your college experience?”. The responses to these questions are pictured below with the first-gen students’ responses on the left and non-first-gen students’ responses on the right.



These word clouds demonstrate the challenges that first-gen students face by being first-gen, including the lack of guidance which was the most recurring theme from first-gen students when asked this question. As for non-first-gen students, the most recurring theme was that the students had guidance from their parents. This data can be used to answer our fifth research sub-question, "How much do first-gen feel supported by their families? How much by the university?". First-gen students feel they are lacking guidance and support.

Through the same survey, the question “What do you think you or other first-gen students need from Texas State to be successful?” was also asked. The breakdown of the responses is pictured in the chart below. The two overarching themes of needs in the eyes of first-gen students are the need for a support system and more resources.

Needs from Texas State University	
Financial support	3
Mental support	2
More resources	6
Scholarship	4
Recognition	3
Academic guidance	3
Support system	9
Personal growth	3
Awareness of resources	2
Total # of responses	35

Students who stated the need for a support system stated their need for a resource or person they could reach out to for assistance. Examples of these statements are below.

“Having the option to ask for help”

“More information and guidance on the most important aspects of college”

“Outreach for help”

Students who stated the need for resources had responses requesting specific resources such as degree information or advising/counseling.

“Resources to stay informed and how to be successful on campus academically and socially”

“More information on degree and career without reaching out to advisor”

“Better PACE advising and counseling”

7.3 SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS

During the FGD, the participants were asked, “What are ways Texas State can help first-gen students to find belonging at the university?”. This led to a discussion of communication platforms that could be used by the university to reach out to students to foster a sense of belonging through student engagement in organizations. When asked about whether social media would be a good platform for the university to use, one of the participants stated that it could be helpful.

"I feel like that would also be really helpful, cause like, they always look at Instagram and all the different social medias."

The participants were probed further, to discover what social media platforms the participants felt university organizations could use, that students would look for. Two of the participants mentioned "Instagram". This feedback can be connected to quantitative research that shows the use of social media platforms by our target market (college students). According to the Pew Research Center began tracking social media usage in 2005, as of April 2021, 72% of the American public is active on social media. Pew Research Center's data also demonstrates that 70% of U.S. adults between the ages of 18-29 are active on Instagram and Facebook. Our target market can be represented by this statistic because college students fit into that age group.

7.4 CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND FEELINGS

Our research group utilized the use of our focus group discussion but also the open-ended survey First Gen Proud sent out, to complete research for our sub-question, "How are the general feelings of belonging among first-gen students? Are there ways to improve it?". Research into the belonging/connectedness of first-gen students allowed us to also answer our sub-question "What are things which positively/negatively affect first-gen students in college?". We determined that a first-gen student's belonging can both negatively or positively affect these students depending on their levels of belongingness. When first-gen students were asked to explain the "sense of belonging/connectedness to Texas State" for first-gen students, the responses were mixed in terms of there being a sense of belonging, to this sense of belonging not existing at all, or at first, during the college experience. One important point to note is that through the open-ended survey that First Gen Proud issued, we were able to also ask non-first-gen students how they thought "most students would describe their sense of belonging/connectedness to Texas State?". Non-first-gen student feedback differed because this group of students had no negative themes associated with their responses. When looking at the first-gen student responses, we found four negative themes in response to this question. There were 32 first-gen responses that generated 33 themes, which meant that the 4 negative themes accounted for 12% of first-gen students' response themes. Listed below are the themes generated by the question asked for first-gen and non-first-gen students. Followed by the themes are two quotes from first-gen students who provided responses that generated the negative themes.

First-Gen Responses

Themes	Frequency
Strongly connected/ Positive	9
Campus involvement	4
Special events for First-Gen	3
Diverse and welcoming	9
Accomplishment	4
Negative	4
None	1

Non-First-Gen Responses

Themes	Frequency
Diversity and inclusiveness	6
Campus involvement	11
Positive/ Very connected	13
Academic achievement	3
None	1

“Unfamiliar and a bit intimidating.”

“I think now with covid not very high. I think that since covid happened and things went online and everyone has gotten weird about doing things in person that most people do not feel as connected anymore.”

It’s important for First Gen Proud to note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a sense of belonging was impacted due to social distancing. While this may be an uncontrollable factor, the other response a participant provided can allow First Gen proud to take action. Again, we had a student speak of the college experience being “unfamiliar and...intimidating” for first-gen students and this theme can be related to the lack of guidance these students feel, especially at the beginning of their college education.

The same trend regarding the sense of belonging among first-gen students was noted in our focus group discussion. Two of the three interviewees responded. The first response was about how the participant got involved in a campus organization and made friends.

“...I'm part of a girls' community club delight, which is like an all-girls Christian community... that's been very helpful this past year; like, because college is stressful.... and then like making friends through school... so mine is more through like the people of Texas State...”

The next interviewee disclosed that at the beginning of the college journey, first-gen students may have a more difficult time earning this sense of belonging, but they mentioned that these students will gradually find others they “connect” with.

“Oh, well, for First-Gen students, it might be harder to get a sense of belonging at first, but I feel like over time you like, find people that you can connect with, and it'll make your college experience way easier and you'll feel like you actually belong in the community.”

This interviewee then stated that first-gen students could benefit from the use of resources to assist first-gen students throughout their college journey.

“I was gonna say maybe just have like more programs or funding dedicated to like supporting First-Gen students, and like helping them throughout the college experience.”

Our research found that first-gen students have a mix of various feelings, perceptions, and experiences when compared to non-first-gen students. Lower levels of belongingness amongst first-gen students do have a negative impact in the same way that higher levels of belonging or connectedness can positively impact these students. First-gen students have mixed positive and negative experiences, and mixed feelings of belonging/connectedness to Texas State University. When these feelings of belongingness are compared to non-first-gen students, there is a noticeable difference because first-gen students faced difficulties that non-first-gen students didn't in our research.

8 MARKETING COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

8.1 RESEARCH QUESTION FINDINGS

Through our multiple in-depth interviews, focus groups, and surveys, we sought to identify first-generation students' awareness of First Gen Proud. We found a mix in awareness, with some first-generation students being heavily involved in first-gen organizations, such as FLIP, while others were completely unaware there were any resources available for first-gen students. Interviewees recommended reaching out to students more directly and letting news of the organization spread by word-of-mouth, as that is how many students who were aware of First Gen Proud discovered it.

“First-gen students can pass it along by word-of-mouth maybe, alongside with that.”

“I found out mainly through word of mouth”

“I think I heard about it during bobcat preview week”

We further asked questions about the delivery of information and how students preferred to be contacted. We found that most first-generation students preferred to get their information via email, however, we also discovered that an overwhelming majority of these students do not

interact with the emails previously sent by First Gen Proud. We also found that students like to be reached through Instagram because many of them check their Instagram in the morning when they are first waking up. Finally, many interviewees mentioned more physical promotion, such as tabling, to raise awareness and make First Gen Proud feel more personable.

“Easiest way to reach me is by having me follow your social media account as... as sad as it is to say, social media is unmatched to reach a wide audience of people. If you have an audience. I think the best way to go at that is probably tabling to get a big social media following for the audience that you definitely want, which would be first-gen students in this case.

I know most of times like I wake up first thing I do is go on my phone, and scroll through social media for 30 minutes, maybe, just try to catch up and see what I can do before my day starts. And often I find things to do on campus, so it definitely does help, and the resources that I see and the events at Texas State are always pushed through social media. So I'm able to go before my day starts, and actually go to the events.”

Another focus of our research was to find what first-generation students needed from Texas State University and First Gen Proud to be successful in their academic careers. Many of those results have either already been covered or will be covered in the proceeding sections. Regarding needs and the best way for First Gen Proud to meet these needs, there was one valuable insight we uncovered in an in-depth interview. One of the interviewee's suggestions was a PDF document that contained the most important, condensed information about things that first-gen students should know. Some of the information recommended were things regarding FAFSA, financial aid, dorms, and the cost of living.

"Oh, the perfect thing that I could have encountered would have been like a two or three pages long. No bullshit. No fancy shapes, no colors, no gooey, no, like fruity infographic. Just a hard few paragraphs, explaining, step by step, what each individual step of applying and managing every process in college would be like.

[...]

Everything starting from making sure you get the maximum financial aid set up. Then, making sure you have all your taxes in order, making sure you know every single deadline, making sure you understand the class sign-up thing.

[...]

Also, I would like a page that explains dorms and, like, living in general, maybe just a nice little chart, a little graph. This is, this can be the one image in the entire page that I want. But I want them to show like how much money the dorms cost. Whether or not you need to go in the dorms, cuz it's not necessary for everyone.”

8.2 SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

First Gen Proud utilizes both Instagram and Twitter for their social media promotions. They have almost double the followers on Instagram compared to their Twitter account. This is expected, as Instagram is the more popular social media platform of the two. First Gen Proud does an excellent job of keeping the two social media coherent, without repeating the same content across both platforms. On their Instagram, they also highlight first-generation students and alumni from Texas State University. This helps first-gen students following the account to see that they are not alone and that many others are a part of the first-gen community.

The student and alumni feature used to be the only content shown on Instagram until other information and events were added to the post mix.

Engagement on Instagram (@txstfirstgen)

Last 30 days

Date Range	Posts	New Followers	Engagement Rate	Likes	Comments	Shares	Saves
August 3rd - September 1st	3	+110 (940)	22.8%	237	0	7	4
September 1st - Sept 30	3	+11 (951)	25.5%	198	3	4	5
October 3rd - November 1st	7	+12 (963)	24.0%	375	1	6	14

When examining the information above, it is important to take into consideration that the new Fall semester starts at the end of August, so there is always a rush of new students to university clubs and organizations at this time. The diversification of Instagram post content seems to be working in First Gen Proud's favor, as follower engagement has been on the rise. The posts showcasing First Gen Proud tabling, hosting events, or hosting giveaways are the most popular with the target audience so far. One of our interviewees stated that these new promotions were how they heard about First Gen Proud.

“I gonna to be very honest with you. The only reason I know about First-Gen... is because on the Texas State Instagram, they were giving away free T-shirts. And I was like "cool free T-shirt", and I went to go get a free

Texas State First Gen T-shirt. I didn't even know it was an actual resource. So, that is the only reason I know about First-Gen at Texas State.”

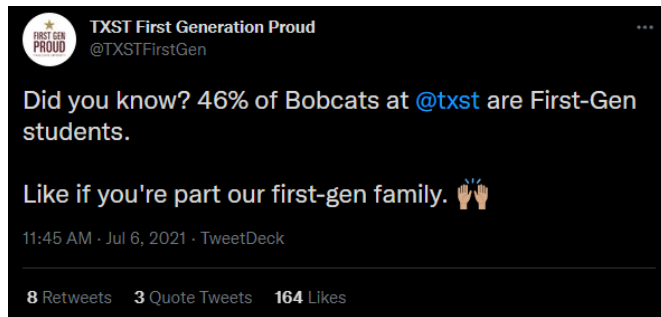
When asked how they preferred to be reached, one interviewee stated, they would prefer more physical methods, such as tabling, to be reached.

“Yeah, Yeah. Like, tabling, posters, or anything that’s more... there’s more interaction of than an email. If there’s more interaction, then it’s more likely to succeed more, in my opinion, and reach first-gen students.”

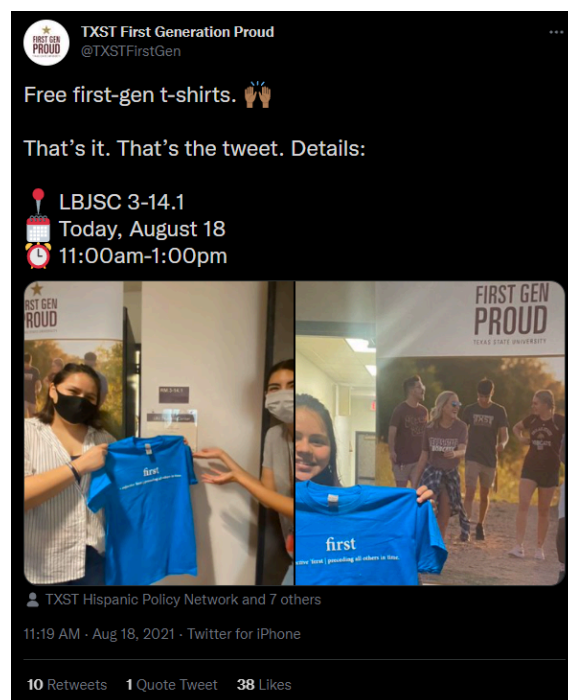
These two respondents’ feedback shows that First Gen Proud is on the right track with their current social media strategy on Instagram.

As stated previously, First Gen Proud’s Twitter has fewer followers than their Instagram account, and the same goes for the amount of interaction on posts. Posts with some kind of media, whether it be a picture, video, or link, facilitate more engagement than posts with only text. Also, posts that include either “#TXST” or “@TXST” tend to get more engagement, as people affiliated with Texas State University tend to use the #TXST hashtag to communicate and share posts on Twitter. In the case of using “@TXST” to tag the main Texas State University Twitter, this is primarily useful if the @TXST account retweets the tagged tweet, allowing it to be seen by a larger audience. Assuring that tagged accounts retweet with or engage in posts is something for First Gen Proud to consider going forward when using both Instagram and Twitter.

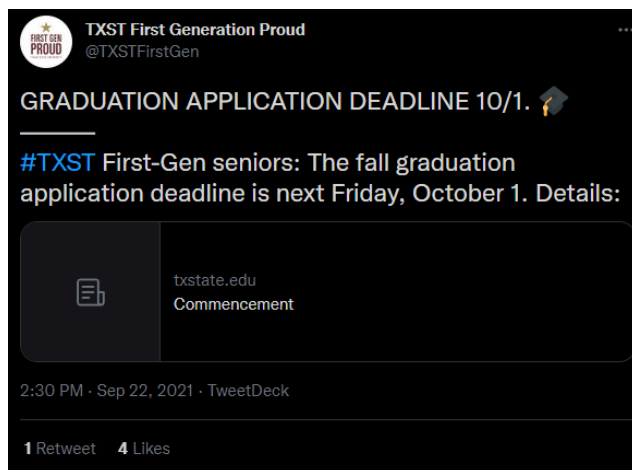
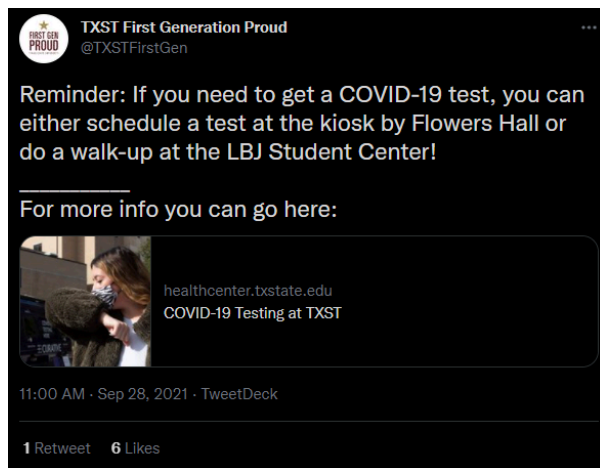
First Gen Proud was kind enough to share their Twitter analytics data from July 2021 to November 2021 to aid in the evaluation of their social media strategy. While this data alone cannot tell First Gen Proud exactly what to do, it is still important to observe what posts are doing the best, and which are being ignored by the audience. In July 2021, the most engaging post was one that included a first-gen fact, tagged the @TXST account, and encouraged followers to “like” the post if they are first-gen. It was a quote tweeted by the @TXST account and gained a large amount of engagement from students and alumni alike. The least engaged post was one reminding students of the last day to register for classes. This post received no engagements. It included no additional media, hashtags, or tags to other university accounts.



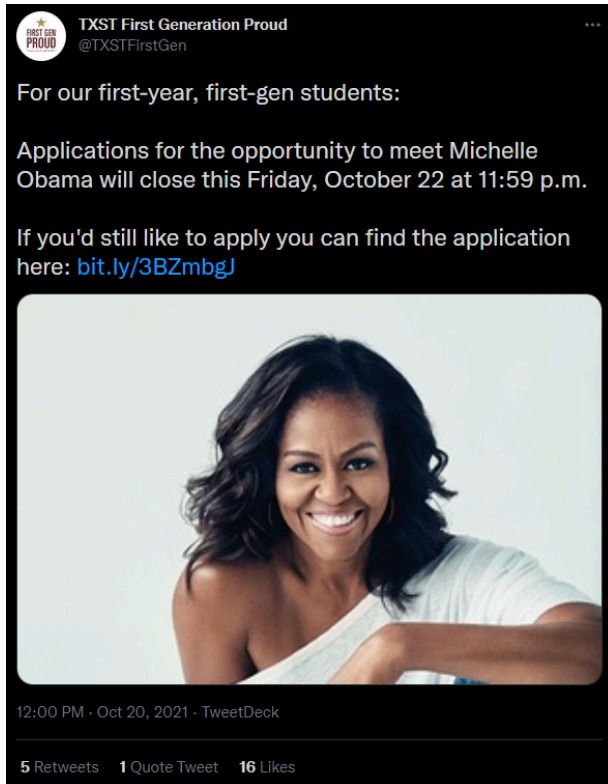
In August, the most engaged tweet was how promoting free first-gen t-shirts. It featured two images of the shirts as well as First Gen Proud members. As with the previous popular tweet, it featured limited to text and was easy to read. The only tweets with limited engagement were those in which First Gen Proud was replying to someone who tagged them.



Compared to July and August, September had a significantly lower engagement. The majority of the tweets this month were reminders about various things. While most of these posts feature links, not all of them included a call to action for users to click the links provided. These reminder tweets did not have the same feelings of uplifting first-gen students and pride, causing the audience to be less engaged.



October saw an improvement in audience engagement from September. The most popular tweet was about an application to meet Michelle Obama for an upcoming event. This application was linked on the post and was preceded by a call to action. There was also an unanswered question on the replies of this post, which could have further generated engagement if answered. The least interacted tweet was, once again, a reminder that did not feature any additional media.



In November, once again, a tweet about the upcoming Michelle Obama event was the most engaged with. This one featured a quote and an image of her. Because this was all it included, it was highly shareable for followers. Keeping with the ongoing trend, the least interacted with tweets were reminders about events previously announced. The repetitive nature of these posts tends to be less shareable and uninteresting, especially to followers who saw their proceeding tweets.



As stated previously, these tweets cannot tell us everything, but they can give some insights on ways to improve. One recurring theme is that tweets that are reminders tend to be ignored. This could be due to them not being as interesting as other topics, or simply that first-gen followers do not expect or are not interested in this kind of information on Twitter. A way to improve this would be to make the reminders more engaging with images or animated graphics. Another solution could be to post this kind of information elsewhere. On multiple occasions throughout our interviews, the interviewees stated that they got general information about things like events on campus from Instagram. For more important information, such as FAFSA or academic deadlines, they used Google and the Texas State website to find their information. This could indicate that Twitter and Instagram might not always be the beneficial channels for First Gen Proud to share reminders of deadlines or info on how to complete these processes, because their audience is not expecting it to come from that channel. It would be more

beneficial to make this information available in places, such as the First Gen Proud website, where First Gen Proud can optimize the SEO for people searching for said information.

8.3 MARCOM ANALYSIS

When analyzing First Gen Proud's marketing communications, it is important to first know the MARCOM process.

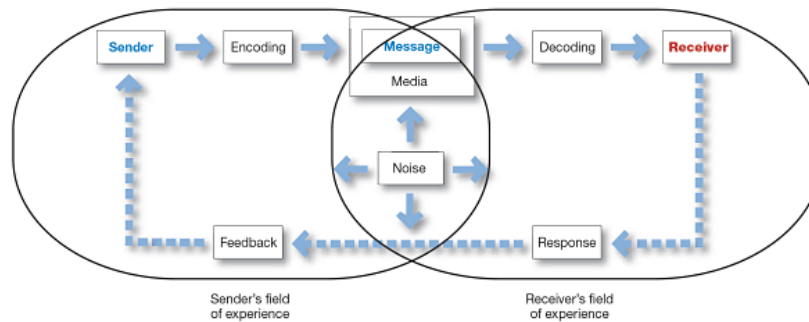


Figure 1 (Paperflite, 2019)

The MARCOM process is similar to the widely known communication process. In the case of First Gen Proud, they are the sender, their marketing efforts are the message, and those who come across these marketing efforts are the receivers.

1. **Target Audience:** First Gen Proud's primary target audience consists of currently enrolled first-generation students at Texas State University. This, however, is not their entire audience. First Gen Proud also engages with first-generation alumni and the families of first-gen students. Finally, First Gen Proud's audience includes non-first-gen students, faculty, and staff, who can help distribute information to first-generation students who need it.

2. MARCOM Objectives

1. Give first-generation students the information they need to be successful in their college career at Texas State University
2. Create a community for first-generation students to meet each other and become more involved with the university
3. Support first-generation students and their families in adapting to distanced learning

4. Identify and meet any additional/unknown needs of first-generation students
5. Obtain more followers and interaction across marketing channels

3. Communication Channels

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Tabling | 4. Social Media |
| 2. Events | 5. Website |
| 3. Direct Connections | 6. Email Marketing |

4. Communication Strategy

First Gen Proud has a very helpful and tame brand voice. From seeing their promotional efforts, viewers can tell the main objectives of First Gen Proud right away. Their emails and social media are full of helpful advice, reminders for upcoming events and deadlines, and features where they uplift first-gen students. Some of these promotional efforts also tend to come off as somewhat unimaginative and carefully curated by the university, making them less relatable to the students they are trying to reach. This can be seen in the previous Twitter examples, where carefully worded reminders gained little interaction from the audience.

Many interviewees mentioned feelings of not being able to connect with Texas State University because they felt that they didn't matter. Many also commented about receiving promotional material that looked as if it was sent out to the masses and not for them.

"I want to say, at some point, at the end of the year I had a few emails for first-gen students, but nothing that I felt was specifically for me. It was more of a cookie-cutter email, probably sent out to all students."

"[...] sometimes read the emails but I kind of filter 90% of them out as trash."

"Yeah, I did get those emails and I thought they were just sending them to everyone like shotgun effect, you know, make sure everyone knew to tell their friends. To tell their first-generation friends."

Unfortunately, due to the highly curated nature of some of First Gen Proud's promotional material, first-generation students are missing out on important information and opportunities. Working on having a more relatable brand voice could help First Gen Proud connect with first-generation students. For example, on Instagram, instead of taking a planned, posed photo

with everyone looking at the camera, try and capture moments from events where first-generation students are enjoying themselves. Permission to post the image on Instagram can be asked for after-the-fact, allowing First Gen Proud to capture genuine, candid moments.

Regarding the emails, some interviewees had suggestions on how to reach them better. One suggested more physical advertising, as it would be more impactful if there was more interaction between First Gen Proud and the students it's trying to reach. Another interviewee suggested having information come from professors. A single, important email from First Gen Proud sent through professors at the beginning of the semester could help raise awareness, which should increase the open rates of proceeding emails.

"Outlook is a great way to reach out to first-gen students about events that are going on. On top of that, I think, like, physical advertisements would be great. [...] It's more involved. I think it's just more, like, personal, for them to advertise it outside of like, an email, and it just attracts more people in my opinion."

"Yeah, Yeah. Like, tabling, posters, or anything that's more... there's more interaction of than an email. If there's more interaction, then it's more likely to succeed more, in my opinion, and reach first-gen students."

"Umm... and I sometimes would like information, like, to come through professors as well."

5. Measuring

The final part of the MARCOM analysis is to observe the results of your marketing efforts. In the case of First Gen Proud, this can be done by recording metrics from across social media platforms and their Texas State webpage. For the webpage, First Gen Proud should keep track of the clicks, interactions, and time spent by users who visit the site. They should also use a site such as Google Analytics to record where their traffic is coming from, then optimize their marketing strategy accordingly. For social media, views, likes, shares, impressions, comments, and replies are the main metrics to focus on. It is important not to get too caught up in the number of followers on social media accounts, but to ensure that the people following your account are your correct target audience. In First Gen Proud's case, the majority of their social media followers fit into their ideal target audience. The final way First Gen Proud can measure their MARCOM objectives is through attendance at their online and in-person events.

8.4 CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS & REACTIONS

Responses to interview questions were fairly mixed when asked about their awareness of First Gen Proud's email and social media promotions. Of seven first-generation students interviewed, only one of them had heard of First Gen Proud. Of these six who were unaware, five of them believed that First Gen Proud would have been a good resource to know about. Almost all the first-generation students interviewed remembered receiving emails for first-generation students, but none of them opened, nor had any intention of opening, said emails. In a later survey, first-generation students answered that they heard of First Gen Proud from emails. The following word cloud was generated from responses by first-generation students when asked the question, ***"Where do you currently get most of your information regarding university services, events, and activities and what could the university do differently or better to reach students?"***



Figure 2 (Zygomatic, 2021)

The results of this data show that, while email is the most preferred method of communication for first-generation students, there is an issue with the opening and reading of these emails. Going off the in-depth interview responses, the reason why first-generation students do not open emails is that they feel that they are not tailored for them. Interviewees had no negative feelings towards First Gen Proud, and the ones who had heard of the organization had only positive things to share. First Gen Proud needs to express more of the personable aspects of the organization in these emails. It would also be beneficial for Texas State University

to send out some of these emails specifically to first-generation classified students only, to decrease the perception that they are being sent to everyone.

9 LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, the duration of the research might be too short to conduct a qualitative analysis. Secondly, qualitative research requires strong and experienced researchers who can interpret and analyze qualitative data with validity and reliability (Fossey et al., 2002). The researchers for this study are inexperienced, hence their study might be unreliable. Thirdly, the sample size may be widened to get a diverse and broader opinion about the sense of belonging among first-gen students at Texas State. Finally, the sampling method can be more diverse and some more incentive to participants to actively get involved in qualitative studies may get better quality data for such a study. The researchers did not take into consideration how different genders, ethnicities, and minority groups shape their journey differently as first-gen students (Bañuelos & Flores, 2021). To guarantee that each gender and racial grouping was represented in the sample at rates comparable to their presence in the entire first-gen population, proportional weights based on gender and race can be used for future studies (Museus & Chang, 2021).

10 MARKETING AND DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Marketing efforts should be directed towards the communication channels found through this study. The recommendations based on primary and secondary research are as follows.

10.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the primary and secondary studies conducted, the First Gen Proud organization should put in more support programs geared toward first-gen students. Creating a culture that promotes collectivism around campus, more mental health support programs, and involvement from First-Gen Professors will empower first-gen students to create a stronger sense of belonging. Here are some of the support programs the First Gen Proud organization can undertake:

1. Bobcat First: A year-round workshop and lecture series designed to support first-gen students to break down the secret language of college. Lessons about add/drop policies, academic advising, peer mentorship, and direct communication with First-Gen Professors and staff to ask for any kind of advice and mentorship. The goal is to create a welcoming environment for first-gen students to just go in and ask for help that they can't get from their families.
2. Weekly free lunch with First-Gen Professors: Through secondary and primary data, it has been established the importance and power Professors hold to shape the future of first-gen students towards completion of the degree, instill a sense of belongingness and pursue higher education. An incentive like free lunch or more cash rewards to just go and have lunch with fellow first-gen students and Professors will instill a sense of community and build a better belonging in college.
3. Website: The website should hold more information about the counseling center and mental health awareness. Through primary research, we know first-gen students are concerned about finance. Hence, direct information about Scholarship opportunities and one-on-one chatting service with a counselor/mentor will help first-gen students. An interactive website with chat functions might also be helpful for first-gen students to connect and acknowledge the First Gen Proud organization.
4. Tabling: Tabling in the quad, and in other hotspots around campus weekly showcasing their services would be very helpful for first-gen students, as well as the organization getting recognition and promoting their agenda.
5. In-class: First-Gen Professors and representatives from the First Gen Proud organization can take initiative to place their services outside classes and even an in-class presentation once every semester to get all first-gen students familiar with the organization.

10.2 PROMOTION MATERIALS

Our study suggests the following promotional strategies to be conducted for better reach by the First Gen Proud committee:

1. Posters and flyers across campus: Appendix 3
2. Email marketing: Appendix 4
3. Interactive social media presence: Appendix 5

4. First Gen Proud merch: Appendix 6
5. Revamping website: Appendix 7

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12 APPENDIX

12.1 APPENDIX 1

Thank you for agreeing to help with my class assignment. This assignment will help me develop my skills as a researcher. The interview will take 20 to 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary. This assignment is investigating First Gen students' attitudes and perceptions of Texas State, in hopes of making it an even better place to be a student. You are being asked to participate because your opinion matters. Understanding this, please answer the following questions as competently as you think is necessary for me to understand your opinions. Remember, there are no wrong answers. This is a confidential interview; your name will not be associated with your responses when I submit my assignment. By answering my questions, you are consenting to participate. If you have any questions about this assignment, please contact my professor, Dr. Gail Zank at gailzank@txstate.edu.

1. Can you please tell us about a positive experience being a student at texas state?
2. Do you have any negative experiences being a student here at texas state?
3. What do you think are the biggest challenges here being a student at texas state?
4. Do you think being a first gen student affects the college experience?
5. What services on campus are helpful for first gen students?
6. What do you think you are other first gen students need from texas state to be successful?
7. Do you think financial issues are common among first gen students?
8. Do you think, a sense of belonging, or connectedness to texas state university is important to students?
9. How do you think most first gen students would describe their sense of belonging, at texas state?
10. Do you think feeling isolated is an issue for first gen students at texas state?
11. Were there ever an incident of discrimination or prejudice you felt from other students, being a first gen?
12. How does being a first gen student make you feel?
13. How do you get most of your information regarding university services, events, activities?
14. Are you aware of first gen proud?
15. Do you recall ever having received emails from first gen proud, since you first enrolled at Texas State? Specifically, ones during the COVID semester.
16. Did you participate in the university seminar class?
17. Looking back, when you were a first-year student here at texas state, are there any services you wish you had known of at the time, that you think would have made things easier, that you now know of?
18. Is there any other information you'd like to share today?

Thanks for your time today. Your opinion matters and we appreciate your help with our class project.

12.2 APPENDIX 2

IDI and FGD coding:

https://txst-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/sbh70_txstate_edu/Edd9nLwswXtEqJtGRat3wZQBA4ru8xYokW9uw8zpQg1gA?e=jEAo6n

Survey First-Gen coding:

https://txst-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/sbh70_txstate_edu/EVxltqsROZKmUwH08Na6WoBIkdIW5tD19N6ldV2Cz7JAw?e=gJrkRD

Survey non First-Gen coding:

https://txst-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/sbh70_txstate_edu/ETdsZOIUqCBJiiDZMjc8mIEBw99rfatB1WT2YzmLxMqO8g?e=VTzcuS

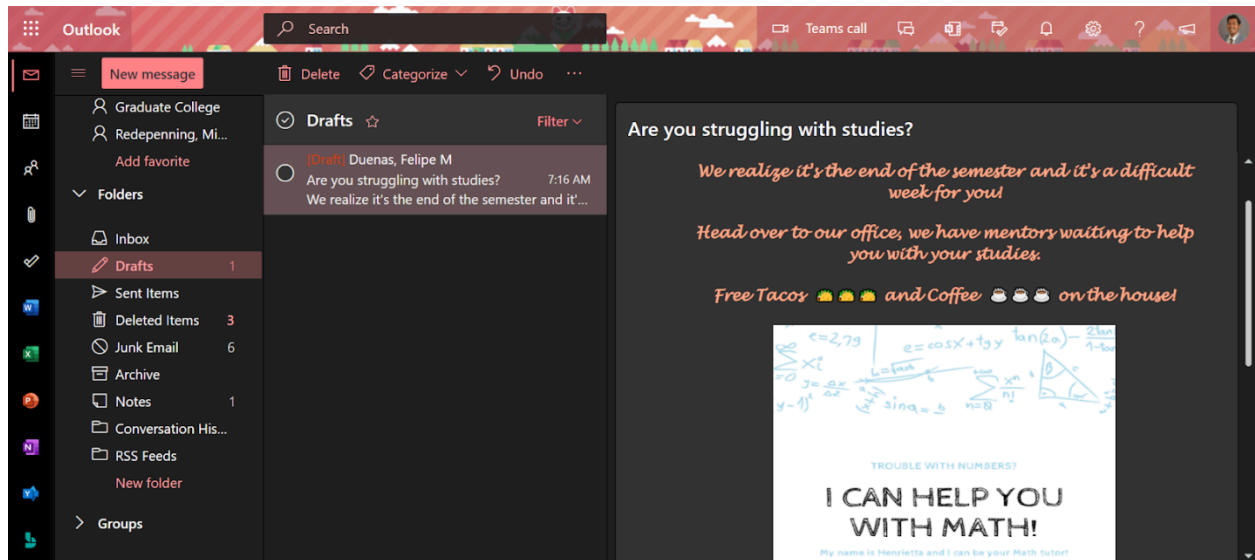
12.3 APPENDIX 3

Posters and Flyers/Digital banner



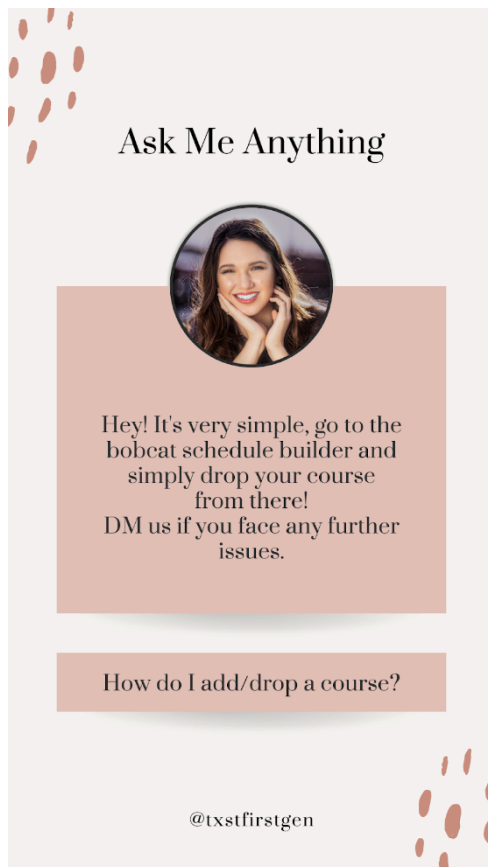
12.4 APPENDIX 4

Email Marketing



12.5 APPENDIX 5

Instagram story/ Interactive media presence



Instagram post



12.6 APPENDIX 6

First Gen Proud Merch



12.7 APPENDIX 7


Revamp website

MENU

SEARCH

TEXAS★STATE

Chat with a Counselor



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mental health.

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TODAY?