



Realigning Expectations & Practices for First-Generation Student Success

2026–2027 Faculty Workshop Series

For faculty only: [Submit your application today!](#)

This ongoing workshop series for the 2026–2027 academic year is designed to empower faculty to improve the academic success and sense of belonging for first-generation (FG) students. The program encourages a shift from a "student-deficit" mindset—which focuses on what students lack—to a "course-deficit" mindset, which identifies structural barriers within the course or institution itself.

The *Realigning Expectations & Practices for First-Generation Student Success* series is partially funded by the MiLEAP Sixty by 30 Grant, aiming to increase degree attainment by addressing equity gaps through asset-based, transparent pedagogical practices. To accommodate faculty workloads, the series is offered as a repeating monthly program; the three core workshops offered in the Fall semester (September–November) will be repeated in the Winter semester (January–March), culminating in an idea sharing session at the end of each term.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this series, participants will be able to:

- Move beyond deficit thinking to recognize the unique strengths and navigational capital FG students bring to the classroom.
- Apply strategies to demystify the hidden curriculum by making unwritten academic rules explicit, including transparent syllabus and assignment design.
- Use Moodle analytics, the Academic Alert system, and midterm grades to identify and support students proactively.
- Integrate best practices for normalizing help-seeking and building student-instructor rapport to foster a culture of belonging.
- Design a course structure that is transparent and inclusive, balancing high- and low-stakes assessments with timely, formative feedback.

Series Details

- Monthly one-hour hybrid (in-person & Zoom) workshops
 - Interactive workshops with instruction, discussion, & design project activities

- Sessions held 12:00pm - 1:00pm in September/January, October/February, and November/March
- In-person location: KL430R
- Lunch will be provided for in-person attendees
- Final two-hour in-person idea sharing sessions
 - Redesign plan presentations and peer review
 - Sessions held 3:00pm - 5:00pm in December/April
 - Location: KL430R
 - Lunch will be provided for in-person attendees
- Estimated time commitment:
 - 10 hours: 5 hours in workshops, plus 5 hours outside of sessions for project development
 - Series requirements can be completed across the Fall 2026 and Winter 2027 semesters

Stipend Requirements

To acknowledge the time committed to workshop attendance and project development, faculty who complete the requirements below will earn a \$500 stipend.

To earn the \$500 student success series stipend, faculty must fulfill three requirements:

1. **Application:** [Submit your application](#)
2. **Attendance:** Participate in at least three workshops within the series (either semester).
3. **Project:** Complete one of the following high-impact deliverable pathways:
 - *FG Student Success Portfolio:* A redesigned transparent syllabus, one major redesigned assessment incorporating series concepts, and a plan for early-semester formative feedback.
 - *Mentoring Conference:* A one-on-one session identifying course bottlenecks and proposing a "deep-change" intervention.
 - *Field Presentation:* A live or recorded presentation demonstrating the application of workshop concepts within a specific academic discipline.
 - *CETL Resource:* Creation of a "Quick Note" guide or blog post connecting success concepts with practical teaching strategies.

Eligibility

Any OU instructor of record (i.e., lead instructor of any course at Oakland University) who can complete the program requirements is encouraged to apply.

Workshop Schedule & Descriptions

To provide flexibility, the three core workshops offered in the Fall 2026 semester will be repeated in the Winter 2027 semester, and they are offered in a hybrid format (in-person and via Zoom). The culminating idea sharing session at the end of each term will be in-person only.

Small Teaching Changes that Support First-Generation Students

Wednesday, September 16: 12-1pm (hybrid in-person & Zoom)

January workshop date TBD (hybrid in-person & Zoom)

As the percentage of first-generation (FG) students increases, it's our responsibility to create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students can receive support, feel a sense of belonging, and pursue equitable pathways to success. This workshop explores how refining our course environments can help us address the hidden curriculum, improve accessibility, and actively build upon the unique strengths that first-generation students bring to our classes. This workshop is part of the series ["Realigning Expectations & Practices for First-Generation Student Success."](#) The series consists of four workshops offered in Fall 2026 and repeated in Winter 2027. To earn the \$500 stipend, faculty must attend at least three workshops and complete a project that applies workshop concepts to a current course. Facilitated by [Daniel Brengel](#), CETL Educational Development Specialist for first-generation student success initiatives.

Using Course Data to Support First-Generation Students Early

Wednesday, October 14: 12-1pm (hybrid in-person & Zoom)

February workshop date TBD (hybrid in-person & Zoom)

This workshop helps faculty use the information already available in their courses to recognize when first-generation students may need support and respond early. Participants will discuss ways to make student progress more visible, provide helpful feedback, and use Moodle tools, academic alerts, midterm grades, and transparent gradebooks to help students stay on track. This workshop is part of the series ["Realigning Expectations & Practices for First-Generation Student Success."](#) The series consists of four workshops offered in Fall 2026 and repeated in Winter 2027. To earn the \$500 stipend, faculty must attend at least three workshops and complete a project that applies workshop concepts to a current course. Facilitated by [Daniel Brengel](#), CETL Educational Development Specialist for first-generation student success initiatives.

Normalizing Support & Building Relationships to Foster First-Gen Student Belonging

Wednesday, November 11: 12-1pm (hybrid in-person & Zoom)

March workshop date TBD (hybrid in-person & Zoom)

This workshop focuses on cultivating a sense of belonging with "relationship-rich" strategies (Felten & Lambert, 2020), such as hosting mock office hours and creating opportunities for student-driven interactions. Faculty and staff will learn how to normalize help-seeking for all students to reduce the stigma often associated with tutoring or success coaching. Strategies include promoting campus resources through "light-weight" incentivization and building connection via learning communities. This workshop is part of the series ["Realigning Expectations & Practices for First-Generation Student Success,"](#) which consists of four workshops offered in Fall 2026 and repeated in Winter 2027. To earn the \$500 stipend, faculty must attend at least three workshops and complete a project that applies workshop concepts to a current course. Facilitated by [Daniel Brengel](#), CETL Educational Development Specialist for first-generation student success initiatives.

Idea Share: First-Generation Student Success Redesign Plans

Wednesday, December 2: 3-5pm (in-person)

April idea share date TBD (in-person)

In this final, in-person session of the [First-Generation Student Success series](#), participants present their Redesign Projects to their colleagues for peer feedback. The showcase highlights the practical application of the series' core concepts (such as asset-based pedagogy, early formative assessment, data-driven targeted interventions, and fostering sense of belonging) within specific academic fields. These projects serve as a deliverable for the program and may include a redesign portfolio, a plan for course application from discussion with facilitator, a disciplinary presentation, or a new CETL resource. Faculty are encouraged to attend this session whether or not they have attended other workshops in the series or completed the Redesign Project. This series consists of four workshops offered in Fall 2026 and repeated in Winter 2027. To earn the \$500 stipend, faculty must attend at least three workshops and complete a project that applies workshop concepts to a current course.

Facilitated by [Daniel Brengel](#), CETL Educational Development Specialist for first-generation student success initiatives.