KEENE STATE COLLEGE ADDRESSES THE NEEDS OF FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

BACKGROUND

I’m First, a national organization of more than 170 institutions of higher education, predicts that 9 out of 10 of the 3.5 million students considered low income or first generation will not proceed to degree. As the state’s public liberal arts college, Keene State College takes seriously the need to provide exceptional educational opportunities for all qualified students, to offer them the programming and support services that facilitate their success, and to prepare them, through the values and competencies of the Liberal Arts tradition, with the skills that position them for a lifetime of professional opportunities defined by innovation and transformation. Keene State College’s president, Anne E. Huot, a first generation college graduate, recognizes the tremendous potential of first generation students to provide leadership, contribute to a robust economy, and carry on the tradition of service that have been cornerstones of a Keene State College education since its founding in 1909.

PROGRAMS

Keene State College offers a variety of educational and co-curricular programs designed to enhance the success of all of our students. Certain initiatives address the particular needs of first generation and first time students at the College:

ASPIRE – Provides Keene State students with academic support services that have been designed to improve their performance and enhance their success. Students gain the skills they need to thrive in their academic environment. Through Aspire, students access peer tutoring and workshops on a variety of relevant topics including study skills, time management, and organizational support.

THE LINKS PROGRAM – A six-week summer program designed to introduce first-time students to the academic and social aspects of the college experience. The supportive learning community enhances college level skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and communication. Learning takes place in classrooms, residence halls, campus locations, and in the City of Keene with the goal of providing students with the skills to become active, contributing members of the Keene State College community.

COLLEGE SUCCESS STRATEGIES – The transition from high school to college is one of the most significant changes that students will experience in their lifetimes and can often be complex and difficult to navigate. This two-credit course, offered by Aspire and the Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism, provides insight into the new living environment, the sense of independence inside and outside of the classroom, and the academic expectations that accompany the college experience.
TUTORING – Tutoring is available through the Center for Writing and the Math Center. In addition, Keene State College offers individual and small group tutoring through the Aspire program. The College hires and trains over 100 tutors each semester and financially supports the tutoring program. Students and tutors meet weekly to review course materials and assignments.

UPWARD BOUND – This federally funded, year-round college preparatory program is designed to prepare students for success in high school and enrollment in college. Students attend weekly sessions to work on grades, college planning, career choices, and personal goals. High school seniors receive assistance throughout the college application and financial aid process.

CAMPUS CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS
Keene State College offers a number of student organizations and offices dedicated to enriching and supporting a diverse campus experience.

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CONCLUSION

As a preeminent public liberal arts college, Keene State College continues to seek opportunities to increase accessibility to higher education for all students and to provide particular attention to first generation, low income, and at-risk students. Through the continued refinement of existing programming, the introduction of national research and best practices, the personal attention of staff and faculty mentors and scholars, and the incorporation of these elements into its strategic plan, Keene State positions its students for success as they enter the professional world.