

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS



Swarthmore provides programs to assist first-generation students in building community, finding support, and utilizing college resources. At Swarthmore, the title first-generation means different things to different people. We foster the sense of belonging at Swarthmore.

This is an exciting time for students who are first in their families to attend college. We encourage students to explore their identity as first-generation students, and empower them to give voice to their experiences and opinions while in Swarthmore's diverse and inclusive environment. By leveling the playing field for students early, we help to strengthen the sense of community on campus.

Swarthmore's First-Generation/Low-Income (FLI) Program encourages students to host events, take trips, and bond overall. We support students in reaching their goals, building academic confidence, all while promoting healthy personal development. This adds to the array of skills necessary to grow and thrive at Swarthmore and beyond. Our staff is committed to making all students feel warmly welcomed and quickly connected to faculty, staff, and student resources.



Tiauna Lewis '19

B.A. in history,
minor in Black studies, religion

“The program is remarkably valuable in forming a stable community for first-gen, low-income students. FLI was central to my Swarthmore experience.”

SUPPORT & GUIDANCE THROUGH FOUR YEARS

- “Being a part of FLI has been empowering,” says Edna Olvera '21, from Houston, Texas. “Dean Henry quickly became part of my support system. I was late to Move In and Orientation because of Hurricane Harvey, so I missed the job fair. She offered me work as an FLI program intern. It's made me more comfortable with my FLI identity and learning that it is an asset because I have valuable perspective.”
- Jasmine Betancourt '20, is a political science and educational studies special major and QuestBridge Scholar from Mesa, Ariz. “In the midst of self-doubt, I knew a place like Swarthmore was possible because there were always people pushing me forward.”





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FIRST-GENERATION?

At Swarthmore, we define first-generation student broadly to include students whose parents and/or guardians did not graduate from a four-year institution. In addition, we include students with a parent and/or guardian with some college experience as well as students with a parent/or guardian who graduated from a college or a university outside of the United States who has limited experience or knowledge of this country's college experience, mentors, internships and research opportunities.

BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH CAMPUS PARTNERS

First-generation student initiatives are highly collaborative and our campus partners generously lend their expertise and support. The Richard Rubin Scholar Mentoring Program connects freshmen and sophomores from underrepresented backgrounds with faculty or staff mentors, internships, and research opportunities. Students develop relationships with their mentors, as well as with those in their workplaces or research centers. "There are many ways to connect with other first-gen or low-income students including Swarthmore Organization for Low-Income Students and QuestBridge Scholars Network," says Nakia Waters, program coordinator.

"Swarthmore is a very caring community. That was true when I was a student, and as an administrator, that's still true. We're committed to student success."

— KAREN HENRY '87 (ABOVE), DEAN FIRST YEAR STUDENTS,
DIRECTOR OF FLI STUDENT INITIATIVES

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Cash-Free Campus

Swarthmore is proud to be a "cash-free campus," which means that the annual activity fee covers campus events, printing, and laundry, so students don't need to carry cash to pay for them. In addition, Swarthmore is a free store on campus with donated items for students who may face cost or transport barriers in obtaining supplies. Swarthmore carries room decor, school supplies, books and more.

Academic Support

Swarthmore offers peer-to-peer resources for students who need academic help. These include: student academic mentors, teaching assistants, writing associates and private tutors.

Student Emergency Fund

Swarthmore also provides support in emergency circumstances. Priority is given to students with the highest financial need.

Opportunities

Funded internships and summer opportunities are available through Career Services, the Lang Center for Civic & Social Responsibility, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, and the Richard Rubin Scholar Mentoring Program, among others.

