**Teaching First Generation Students – a few tips and resources**

**Tips**

* **Convey respect for socio-economic status** – in lectures, class discussion, and in written material indicate an awareness of the diversity of student living conditions, income, and background. For example, do not assume that your students live in houses; in fact, many live in apartments, condominiums, mobile homes, and a few may live in a tent or homeless shelter.
* **Facilitate social interaction –** design class activities that promote social interaction; jigsaw exercises can be an especially effective for accomplishing this (Aronson and Patnoe, 1997; Cohen, 1994).
* **Encourage study groups** – most students, especially non-majors, do better on assessments if the study with classmates.
* **Support a sense of belonging** – teach students that their worries about belonging in college are normal, not unique to them, and will dissipate with time (Walton and Cohen, 2007, 2011).
* **Promote a growth mindset regarding intelligence** – teach students that their brain is like a muscle, its functioning improves with exercise – new neurons develop and new neural pathways can form; intelligence is not fixed, but can grow with effort (Aronson and others, 2002; Blackwell and others, 2007)
* **Provide guidance on professional behavior and expectations** – be as clear and specific as possible on your expectations regarding in-class behavior and course requirements; first generation students may not be aware of many unwritten expectations of professionalism. These expectations can be provided as a handout (<http://serc.carleton.edu/files/sage2yc/studentsuccess/workshop2013/student_handout_professional_v.doc>) and by modeling the behavior. These expectations can also be taught as part of the requirements for student presentations and class projects.

**Resource**

Ward, Lee, Siegel, Michael J., and Davenport, Zebulun, 2012, First-generation college students: Understanding and improving the experience from recruitment to commencement: New York, Jossey-Bass, John Wiley and Sons. Chapter 1 of this book is online at: <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/tomprof/posting.php?ID=1224>