



NEWS RELEASE

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**Drake University and Iowa College Aid Partner to Break Down Barriers for
First Generation Students**

Collaboration conference on Friday, November 14 seeks to identify best practices

Des Moines, IA., November 10, 2014 – Drake University and the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) announced today their partnership to identify, address and break down the unique barriers faced by first generation and underrepresented students. Through this partnership, The First Generation Collaboration Conference on Friday, November 14 will be a free event focused on discussing research-based evidence and addressing the specific issues faced by this growing segment of Iowa’s student population.

Members of the media interested in speaking to sponsors and attendees of The First Generation Collaboration Conference should arrive before or after the documentary screening:

Location: First Christian Church

2500 University Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50311

When: Friday, November 14, 2014

Time: 8:30 a.m. registration

9:00 a.m. welcome and introductions

9:05 a.m. assembly activity

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. documentary screening

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. large group discussion

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A viewing of the documentary “[FIRST GENERATION](#)” will set the tone for the discussion to take place later in the day. Narrated by Golden Globe nominee Blair Underwood, “FIRST GENERATION” tells the story of four high school students – an inner city athlete, a small town waitress, a Samoan warrior dancer and the daughter of migrant field workers – who set out to break the cycle of poverty and bring hope to their families and communities by pursuing their college educations.

“Iowa College Aid is committed to ensuring that all Iowa students are prepared for and have access to higher education,” said Karen Misjak, executive director Iowa College Aid. “We are proud to work with Drake University to sponsor The First Generation Collaboration Conference to bring together middle and high school educators, administrators and higher education experts who can learn from each other and develop early intervention strategies to better assist underrepresented student populations in Iowa.”

The afternoon sessions will be held in Meredith Hall on the Drake University campus and will provide attendees the opportunity to participate in specific sessions related to curriculum, success and support strategies, non-cognitive factors impacting college readiness as well as insights from data, theory and practice.

More information about The First Generation Collaboration Conference, including the online registration and conference agenda, is available on Iowa College Aid’s website, www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa’s students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$70.0 million annually, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being used to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa’s students and families. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

About First Generation

Filmed over the course of three years and featuring some of our nation's top educational experts (Richard Kahlenberg, The Century Foundation; J.B. Schramm, College Summit; Dr. Bill Tierney, University of Southern California), First Generation is a 95-minute documentary that explores the problem of college access faced by first generation and low-income students and how their success has major implications for the future of our nation. For more information about the film visit www.firstgenerationfilm.com