

FIRST- GENERATION DRAGONS



Meet: Beth Leary, Senior Financial Aid Counselor at TU and First-Generation College Student

Hometown: Tiffin, OH

Advice for first-generation students: My advice to new First Gen students is get out and mingle! Join clubs, sign up for trips--don't just hang out in your dorm room all the time. Also, remember that many of our offices here on campus are here to help you make that adjustment from home to college. We want you to be the Best Dragon you can be!

Campus Involvement: When I was a student, I was also working full time in Financial Aid, so I didn't have time to join any groups--but I did get to present with other students for the Research Conference my Senior Year!

Motivation to go to college: I wanted to show my kids that anything was possible if you just believed in yourself and followed your dreams

Biggest collegiate accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment was finishing my Master's Degree with a 4.0 while still being a full time employee, mom and wife. Now, onto my next dream: I was accepted into a Doctoral program that starts this Fall.

Fun Fact

In 2015, 66% of first-generation college students were employed in a paid job or internship while also going to college full-time.

Meet: Charlie Massi, Director of
Club and Rec
Sports/Transportation
Supervisor at TU and First-
Generation College Student

Hometown: Medina, OH

Advice for first-generation
students: Never give up on your
dreams and goals! I am a first-
generation American, and I
speak English, Italian, and
Spanish

Campus Involvement: Track &
Field/Cross Country student-
athlete and Vice President of a
fraternity at Ashland University.

Motivation to go to college:
Receiving athletic scholarships
to assist in paying for my
education.

Biggest collegiate
accomplishment: Earning my
Bachelor's of Science in
Business Administration degree
and MBA degree!



Meet: Jamie Marinis, Dean of Student Success and Assistant Professor of English

Hometown: Oregon, Ohio

Advice for first-generation students: Ask ALL the questions! There are so many valuable resources at your fingertips, mainly a ton of people who have been through what you are going through and are anxious to help you navigate the process. As a college student, I was intimidated at first to talk to professors and/or staff, but once I let my guard down, I learned that faculty and staff are extremely down to earth and are always willing to take the time to listen and give practical and helpful advice.



Campus Involvement: I teach COM130 and DEC100 on-campus, I am an academic advisor, and I am a TU super fan (love supporting our Dragons in the classroom/court/field/stage). I am also a mother to two active tweens.

Motivation to go to college: Both of my parents. Growing up, I watched them work long and hard hours to provide a stable and loving home for us. They always pushed my sister and I to forge our own path. It was their dream for us to have more opportunities than they were provided. Making them proud was always in the back of my mind.

Biggest collegiate accomplishment: Shortly before finishing my bachelors, I realized there were very few career prospects in my field. Rather than settle, I made a life-changing decision to pursue a career in higher education. I was determined to help lost students like myself find their way. I enrolled in a graduate program, landed a Graduate Assistantship that helped fund my masters degree, and I hit the ground running as both a full-time grad student and part-time professional in student activities and admissions. It was the greatest risk I've ever taken, and nearly 20 years later, I am here helping students figure out their future.

Meet: Dr. Ali Yurekli,
Assistant Professor of
Cybersecurity and First-
Generation College
Student

Hometown: Eskisehir,
Turkey

Advice for first-generation
college students: If you
have come this far, you
can go even further!

Motivation to go to
college: To use my
intellectual skills and to
also have a better future.

Biggest collegiate
accomplishment: To
graduate from the BSc
Physics major on time
with no failed courses.



Meet: Georgianne Ward, First-Generation College Student

Hometown: Pataskala, Ohio

Advice for first-generation college students: Don't give up! It will get easier, and you'll make some pretty amazing memories.

Motivation to go to college: To become better at the thing I love doing the most and make a career out of it.

Biggest collegiate accomplishment so far: My biggest accomplishment is getting a 4.0 and staying on top of my work. In high school, I tried so hard and could never accomplish this goal. But I finally can, and I'm so proud.



Meet: Candelaria
Herrera, First-
Generation College
Student



Hometown: San
Antonio, Texas

Advice for first-
generation college
students: You're
never alone!

Motivation to go to
college: My
grandparents!

Biggest collegiate
accomplishment so
far: Making it to
graduate school!