



## Media Advisory: For Immediate Release

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### April 21<sup>st</sup> National Summit Addresses Inequalities among First Gen College Students/Peers

BOSTON, April 15, 2018: In less than a month, colleges and universities across the United States will confer more than four million degrees.<sup>[i]</sup> But first generation college and graduate students (first gen) will be woefully underrepresented in this group of graduates, limiting job opportunities and their ability to repay school loans. That is why 250+ first gens, accompanied by faculty and program administrators from more than 30 institutions of higher learning across the United States, will take part in the [Class Action 6<sup>th</sup> Annual First Generation College Student Summit](#). The summit will feature **strategies and programs that are working** to make campuses more welcoming for first gens, integrate their strengths into the fabric of institutions, ensure successful outcomes and improve graduation rates.

**When:** Sat., April 21, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm

**Who:** Hosted by Class Action and Mount Holyoke; more than 250 students, faculty and advisors from [30+ institutions](#) from across the United States

**Where:** Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass.

**The Issue:** While 42% of students whose parents attended college graduate within four years, only 27% of first-generation students graduate within four years. First gen students are often from lower socioeconomic class backgrounds and have challenges beyond financial ones, including arriving with little knowledge about what to expect, how to navigate their college experience or who/how to ask for assistance if problems arise.

**This summit is not about “fixing” first gen students:** It is instead a forum for these students to take the lead in creating programs and solutions, with the support of faculty and administrator allies, which transform today’s college campuses to better fit their needs. Some of the first gen programs featured at this year’s summit were developed after college representatives attended an earlier Class Action First Generation Student Summit.

**Co-hosting Institutions:** Amherst College, BOW OneGen (Babson, Olin and Wellesley Colleges), Bridgewater State, Five College Consortium, Hampshire College, Monmouth University, UMass University Without Walls, and Williams College.

**Interview Opportunities:** Student leaders, administrators and faculty planners are available for interviews before the summit by contacting Denise Moorehead, [dmmoorehead@gmail.com](mailto:dmmoorehead@gmail.com). Attendees will be available at the summit.

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[i] According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, there were approximately 4.5 million college degrees conferred in the U.S. in the 2016–17 academic year.