



# **BEING FIRST GEN**

at Marquette University

a mini-guide with contributions from  
Marquette first gen students



Greetings, first gen Golden Eagle, and welcome to Marquette!

We are excited for you to join our community of scholars this fall and hope that the contents of this mini-guide helps you begin to imagine the possibilities of your next four years (or possibly more, if you're pursuing a direct admit advanced degree).

This mini-guide includes contributions from first gen Marquette students\* who have a desire to help their peers and to offer some tips towards success. There are also many other professors, staff, and students who are excited to personally meet you, hear your story, and assist with your needs. The important thing to remember is to get connected and communicate those needs.

The following pages offer a glimpse into the many ways you can get involved so we encourage you to dive right in this fall. As you establish your footing, you may also begin to explore other ways you want to give back to others. Please know my door, as well as the doors of many other members of our community, are always open to hear your thoughts. All you have to do is knock (or e-mail)!

As a first generation graduate of a Jesuit institution myself, I urge you to begin reflecting on what inspires you and to go after your dreams as you start your Marquette journey. These next four years are just the beginning.

Clara Dwyer, M.Ed.  
Alumni Memorial Union 111  
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\*We would like to extend a special thank you to Jasmine G., Chuck, Isabella, Michael, Julia, Michelle, and Jasmine B. for their contributions to this first gen mini-guide.

# Celebrating First Generation Students at Marquette



**We are our ancestors' wildest dreams**

In 2019, Marquette celebrated its inaugural First Gen Day, a national celebration honoring the signing of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In addition to creating federal grants and loan programs to help students finance their education, the legislation made key investments in institutions of higher education.

Much like other hallmark legislation of that era, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, HEA was intended to help level a playing field that for too long had been weighed against Americans from marginalized and low-income backgrounds.

At Marquette, First Gen Day has been celebrated with a week of festivities in November honoring our students who are the firsts in their families to pursue a college degree.

Source: The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, (2020).

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## Do you see a First Gen placard in your professor's office?

This signifies that they are a first gen college graduate or first gen ally and support your endeavors as a first gen student.



## Marquette University is recognized as a First Gen Forward Institution by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

The First Gen Forward designation recognizes institutions of higher education who have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students.



# FIRST GEN DEFINED... (WELL, SORT OF)

Marquette University formally defines "first gen" as students whose parent(s) did not complete a baccalaureate or four-year degree and the federal definition is similar -- students whose *biological* parents did not complete a four-year degree.

There are intersections of identity that require consideration of each student's personal journey to get to and through college.

Students who were uncertain of whether they can identify as first gen have asked:

- What if one of my parents graduated college but they were seldom or never a part of my childhood?
- What if my parents graduated from college outside of the United States but their degree does not transfer to the position of expertise in the U.S.?
- What if one of my parents completed college right before I started or as I am completing my degree?
- What if one of my grandparents graduated from college but not anyone else in my family?

If you identify as first generation because you lack the critical resources and tools that a continuing generation student possesses, there are supports to help you navigate the "hidden curriculum," and cheer you on throughout your time at Marquette.



# Wait...what's the hidden curriculum? Why and where is it hiding?

The curriculum is not hiding per se, but more so exists almost like a secret code. They are the unwritten rules, the “norms, values, and expectations” that govern interactions among students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

## Also, what's cultural and social capital?

Cultural capital is the cultural knowledge that serves as currency that helps us navigate culture and alters our experiences and the opportunities available to us.

Some examples of cultural capital include the cultural knowledge and exposure you receive during your college experience. Cultural capital is greater than college though so keep an open mind and observe the world around you.

Social capital is basically the people you know or the connections you possess.

You'll start to develop your personal networks through the relationships you form in college. For that reason, you'll want to do some digging about who and what you're about so that you leave that impression upon others.

They can be mentors or someone you go to with questions or for academic and professional advice. They can help you identify opportunities, such as recommending internships or jobs.

**Pro tip:** Consider joining Marquette Mentors through University Engagement. You are paired with an alumni mentor and have the opportunity to attend events to meet other professionals!



# Not just first gen: Daughter, sister, mother and spouse

By Jasmine G., Comm '22

## **On my motivation...**

As a first generation student, my mother preached the importance of hard work and achieving my goals. My mother always ingrained that I be the first to attend college and to have the honor of attending such a prestigious university such as Marquette. As a first generation student, I am the prime example for my sibling's successes. I have become a role model to not only them but to other teenagers to be the first to attend college.

## **On being a transfer student...**

The transition from transferring was extremely challenging during my first year. Everything was different, for example, the grading system, testing, and environment. However, it was a challenge that was worth it. It is a school I am proud of being a part of; the professors care about my success, and the academic challenges have made me accelerate myself to my full potential.

## **On finding support...**

I have the ultimate support from my fiancé, especially when I must complete projects and study for exams. Having a support system is so important because you want to have someone to depend on when you feel overwhelmed.

## **On being a non-traditional student...**

I am a mother of twins and a seven-year-old, which has been so difficult having to juggle also being a full-time student. Making a schedule and setting time for each task is key. I have certain times in my schedule for my kids, and time slots for schoolwork. Living up to my family's expectations is a lot of pressure, but I make it a priority to take breaks to help keep me sane.

## **On how my experience could be improved...**

I am attending all my courses online, and it would be helpful to have a support group specifically for other mothers who attend courses online. It's a daily struggle being a student and mother. A mentor for students like me could prove helpful\*.

*\*If you are interested in starting a mentoring program for non-traditional students, contact the Center for Engagement and Inclusion ([cei@marquette.edu](mailto:cei@marquette.edu)) to get started!*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can I ask for help?



When should I start going to office hours?



Where is a good place to study?



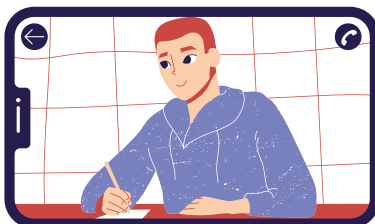
When will I hit my stride?  
How will I know?



How will I make friends?



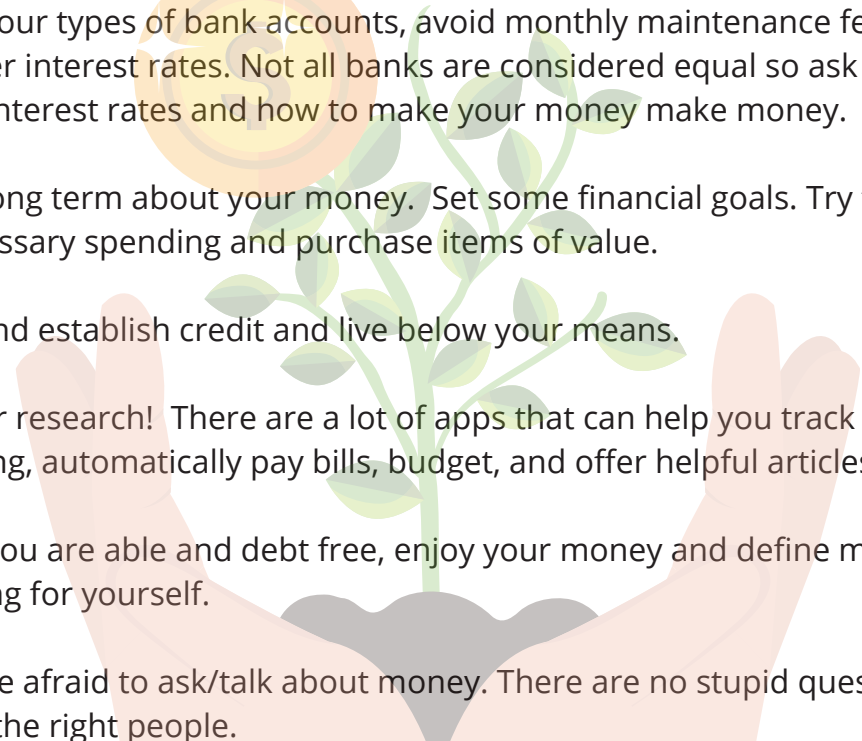
Why did going home feel different?



# MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL FINANCES

**Michael B. (Bus '22) provided these helpful tips for first gen students at a first generation student personal finance presentation.**

*Being a first gen student, many of us grew up without a lot of money. We all (at least I do) have this desire to grow up, make money, and take care of the people who helped us along the way. Managing your finances gives you the best possible opportunity to make this dream a reality.*

- Know your types of bank accounts, avoid monthly maintenance fees, and consider interest rates. Not all banks are considered equal so ask questions about interest rates and how to make your money make money.
  - Think long term about your money. Set some financial goals. Try to avoid unnecessary spending and purchase items of value.
  - Build and establish credit and live below your means.
  - Do your research! There are a lot of apps that can help you track your spending, automatically pay bills, budget, and offer helpful articles too!
  - When you are able and debt free, enjoy your money and define mindful investing for yourself.
  - Don't be afraid to ask/talk about money. There are no stupid questions when asking the right people.
- 
- A stylized illustration of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, cupping a small green plant with several leaves. A large, glowing yellow coin with a dollar sign is positioned above the plant, appearing to be part of the scene. The hands are rendered in a light skin tone, and the plant is in shades of green.



## Textbook reading: What a novel idea! Take this short quiz!



Do you spend hours reading, only to close the book and have no clue what you just read? Does your textbook have a lovely array of highlighter colors that you're positive you will re-read before the next test? Do you read the same sentences over and over again and then call it quits?

If you answered yes to any (or all) of the above questions, you may need some assistance. The following are a few tips to help you get the most out of your college textbook reading.

1. **Know what's important.** Read the outline and/or objectives at the beginning of the chapter, as well as the summary and key terms at the end of the chapter. This helps you to focus on what information you should know when you're done reading.
2. **Ask good questions,** and provide good answers. Turn each heading, section, or topic into a question before reading. This way you can focus your reading on answering that question, which in turn helps cement the information you've just read.
3. **Listen to the voice in your head.** As you complete each section, page, or paragraph, summarize what you've just read in your own words and write it down. Be sure not to leave out the main idea!
4. **Do over!** When you've completed your reading, review the main topics. Look at relationships between your lecture notes and reading notes, and try to predict potential test questions using the main themes as your guide.

Stop by the Coughlin Hall, Room 125 to make an appointment with a peer tutor or a professional staff member who can help you with textbook reading.

Taken from <https://www.marquette.edu/academic-services/textbook-reading.shtml>

# Building a Mindful Study Schedule

## Step One: Ideal Academic Week

The goal of this exercise is to see how long it takes you to do all the academic work you need to accomplish in order to keep pace with your classes. During your trial week, go to all your classes, do all your reading, study, and complete your homework. How many hours did it take you? The general rule is that students spend 2-3 hours of studying for each hour they are in class. Study time includes reading, reviewing, homework, office hours, and tutoring. This means for a 15-credit semester, you should be studying at least 30 hours outside of class. The number of hours is not the same for everyone. The ideal academic week exercise will help you find the right individualized number of study hours for you.



## Step Two: Manage your energy

When are you at your best? What time of day? What time of week? Identify these prime hours and do your most intimidating work at this time. A common mistake is to put off the work you dread doing which ultimately leads to doing your hardest work when you are at your worst. The goal is to strategically organize your schedule so that you are working at your best.

### ASK YOURSELF

- What restores you? Build recovery time into your schedule
- Are you getting enough rest? Keep a consistent sleep schedule
- Where are you most the productive? (your room, coffee shop, library)



## Step Three: Identify a workday

Once you have the number of hours it takes to complete your weekly work and have identified your prime work hours, figure out how you are going to divide your hours throughout the week. Enter these study hours into your weekly calendar and identify your workday. The key to having a workday is that you stick to this schedule like it's a job! If someone wants to get together during your study hours, tell them you can't because you have class. The benefit of having a workday is that you can truly relax after you complete your workday. You won't have to suffer from that nagging inner voice that you should be doing more. You can rest assured because you have a plan in place to complete all your weekly work

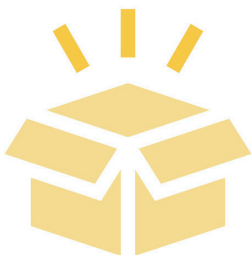


### TIPS

- Write down the specific class you are studying for in your schedule.
- If you are studying for a while, change the topic or class you are studying each hour.

## Step Four: Productive Procrastination

Realistically, sometimes you will not be in the right mindset to have an effective study session. When this happens, the goal is to engage in productive procrastination. Do work that doesn't require high level thinking but requires organizing materials. Productive procrastination is study preparation – copying notes, summarizing, gathering research articles, building study guides etc. The goal is to prepare to have a productive study session during your prime study hours. Don't waste time organizing and prepping during your prime time.



Check out the interactive Time Management Calculator here:

<https://www.marquette.edu/academic-services/time-management-worksheet.shtml>

# Fixed Commitment Schedule

Enter all your fixed weekly events into the weekly schedule below. A fixed event is something that you have to attend every week (class, job, important personal activity). You have 168 hours in your week:

Hours available for study \_\_\_\_\_

Hours needed for study \_\_\_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5:00 AM							
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM							
Midnight							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							

## First Nine Weeks Checklist

- Meet a Peer Educator in the Office of Student Educational Services to build your calendar and schedule.
- Grab a buddy and take a walking tour of campus with another student.
- Join a student organization at O-Fest.
- Find a study spot that maximizes your focus and attention.
- Ask questions of your advisor! They're there to assist! (For example: How can you help me as my advisor? Will I need to go to graduate school with my major? What tips or advice do you have for me?)
- Sign up for a TurboVote Account [marquette.turbovote.org](http://marquette.turbovote.org) as another way to stay engaged.
- Develop a wellness plan to keep a clear mind and healthy heart.

## To Do before Graduation

- Visit Career Services to perfect your cover letter and resume. Use their services to practice interviewing too!
- Develop a relationship with a faculty or staff who could serve as a mentor (and possibly provide a reference letter down the line).
- Consider your social networks. Have you developed long-lasting relationships that you will continue to foster post-graduation?
- Get your workplace feet wet! Try to land an internship to better know your skills and vocational desires.
- Use the resources at The Mic (College of Communication) to improve your public speaking skills.
- Use the resources at the Ott Memorial Writing Center (located in Raynor Library, 2nd floor).

# WHAT I WISH I KNEW...

- ✓ You're not alone! In 2020, 22% of undergraduate students at Marquette identified as first gen. That's more than 1,700 undergraduates!
- ✓ You have to complete the FAFSA every year!
- ✓ Getting a low score on your first midterm or exam is not the end of the world. DON'T drop the class. DO go to office hours. And if you have to, DO become familiar with the last date to drop before being penalized with a W (withdrawal).
- ✓ Getting involved is the best way to feel that sense of belonging. Some suggestions include volunteering in Milwaukee, doing research in your field, getting an on-campus job, and joining a student organization. (Marquette has hundreds of them!)
- ✓ There are people in your life who love you unconditionally. They care about your success! A simple call to a caring member of your circle or walk with a friend may help get you back on track.
- ✓ All of these suggestions are great, but it's also okay to say no when you have too much on your plate!
- ✓ If you don't know how to get started on any of these, ask a professor or staff member!

# INTERESTED IN STUDYING ABROAD?



As a first generation college student, you may be the first in your family to be offered the opportunity to study abroad. This opportunity comes with certain preparations to ensure your experience is thoroughly planned out, potentially fully funded, and is a fulfilling experience!

The best kept secret about studying abroad is...ask for help! If you have questions, seek out resources that will bring clarity and empower you to continue with the steps toward studying abroad.

1. Begin your research with Marquette's Office of International Education (OIE).
2. Make a list of countries you'd like to visit and explore.
  - a. This experience is about YOU! Your desires matter so be intentional when you decide the country you'd like to visit and learn.
  - b. RESEARCH is your best asset in this part of the journey.
3. Create a financial plan to fund your study abroad experience.
  - a. Scholarships are available so be sure to ask about them!
  - b. Look up flights and other costs to the destinations you have in mind.
  - c. Start saving money to fund your experience.
4. Schedule an appointment with an advisor in OIE.
5. Share your plans with your family and friends!



# who i am, where i'm from, where i'm going

(reflection space)

*I remember being asked to stand as a first generation college student at New Student Convocation. It was such a powerful moment for me because there were so many others and it was moving to know that I was going to be the first in my family to do this.*

Julia P., Edu '20

# PARTICIPATING IN SORORITY & FRATERNITY LIFE

Did you know in 2021 nearly 16% of our student community were members of Sorority and Fraternity Life (SFL)? Joining a sorority or fraternity gives you the ability to develop a brother or sisterhood, network widely with peers and alumni, participate in philanthropy and community service work, and to acquire leadership skills.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHICH ONE IS THE RIGHT ONE FOR ME?

I paid attention to how I felt after talking to some of the people from each chapter during recruitment. With some, I felt that I had to mold to fit in with the environment. For others, I felt that I could be 100% myself and completely welcomed with open arms! Understanding the philanthropies and what the chapters do to benefit those in need. We take a lot of time educating both ourselves and the Marquette community on our focus topic. Lastly, after learning about [my organization's values] I noticed they matched my personal values so I felt that it would be a great fit!

Isabella I., Nurs '23

## I'VE HEARD IT'S EXPENSIVE...CAN I AFFORD IT?

The dues vary from chapter to chapter, but the sorority or fraternity tries to accommodate people with special circumstances by giving extended payment plans. Many people in these circumstances often get on campus jobs to pay for their dues. While that is a privilege in itself, because not many people have the time in their schedule to work 10+ hours per week, I find that, in my personal experience, it makes a difference. In my case, I work 12 hours a week and I am able to use my paychecks to pay for my dues and have some money left over for myself.

*Greek life has allowed me to expand on my first gen college experience here at Marquette. It has allowed me to give back to the Marquette community through philanthropy and service work. Greek life has also granted me life long memories and friends to match.*

Chuck K., Comm ' 22

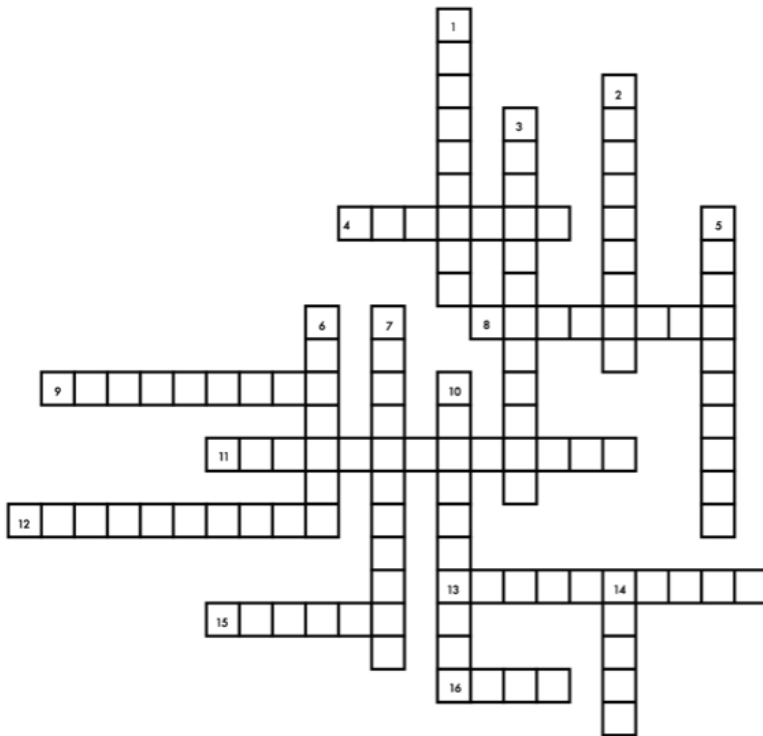
WANT TO  
LEARN MORE?  
SCAN THE CODE BELOW





# COLLEGE CROSSWORD

Guess the clues to learn more higher ed lingo!



## WORD BANK

CUM LAUDE  
REGISTRAR  
CENTRAL  
DEFER  
WORK STUDY  
PELL  
BURSAR  
WITHDRAWAL  
PROBATION  
INTERNSHIP  
MATRICULATION  
PREREQUISITE  
OFFICE HOURS  
JANUARY  
FELLOWSHIP  
SUBSIDIZED

### Across:

- 4.** The J in j-term; occurs between fall and spring semester  
**8.** Latin for "with honor" at graduation; based on GPA, summa being the highest followed by magna  
**9.** If a student is not passing enough courses, they will be placed on this  
**11.** Formal process of entering a university as a candidate for a degree  
**12.** Be sure to drop a class in time or it stays on your academic record as this  
**13.** Type of loan that does not accrue interest while you are in school at least half-time or during deferment periods  
**15.** Located within Marquette Central; keeps the financial student records  
**16.** A federal grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid, except under certain circumstances

### Down:

- 1.** College program that enables students to work a part-time on-campus gig while attending school  
**2.** Located within Marquette Central; keeps the official student records  
**3.** Before enrolling in a course, may need this  
**5.** A period of work experience, possibly unpaid, that supplements your learning  
**6.** Marquette \_\_\_\_\_ located on Zilber first floor, home to the Registrar, Bursar, Financial Aid, Student Employment  
**7.** Time set aside by professors for you to drop-in and ask questions  
**10.** Generally merit-based internal or external awards to support a student in a full-time course of study  
**14.** Put off to a later time; postponed perhaps for admission

# IN GRATITUDE TO PARENTS

## Salamat, Thank you.

By Michelle B., Ed '21

You left the Philippines for a better life  
and had to learn America's ways.

You traveled from Manila to Chicago  
and went from speaking Tagalog to English.

You put a roof over our heads  
as well as jasmine rice and meat dishes on the dinner table.

You told us to go to school  
so that we can have a better life.

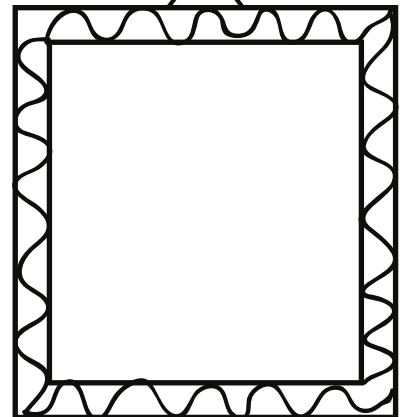
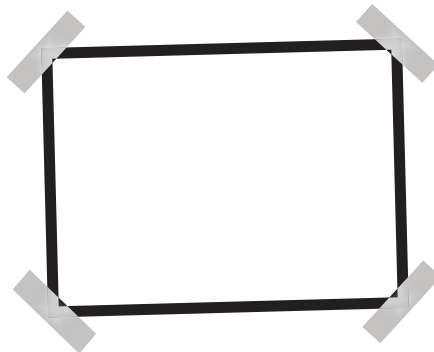
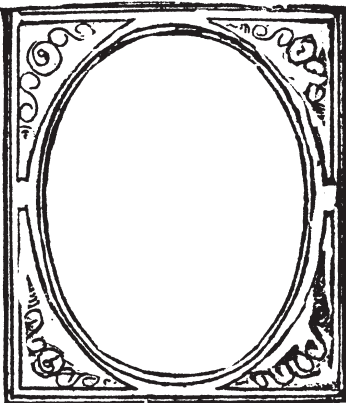
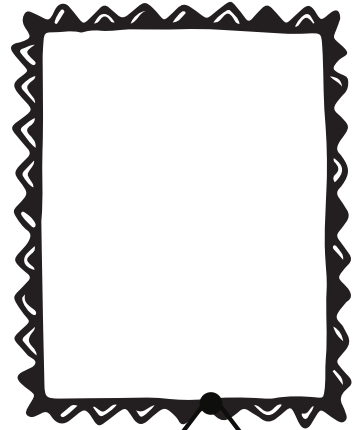
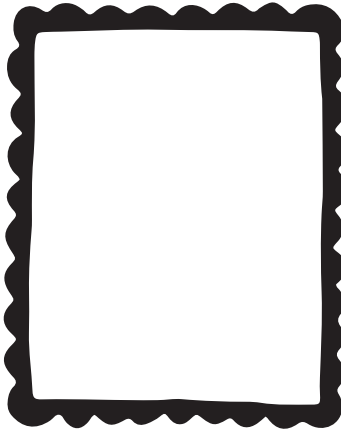
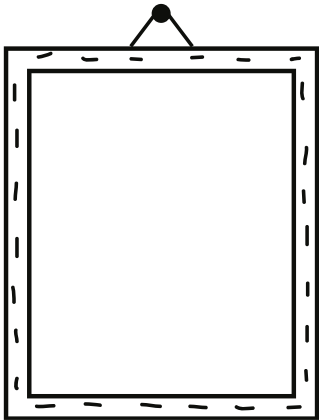
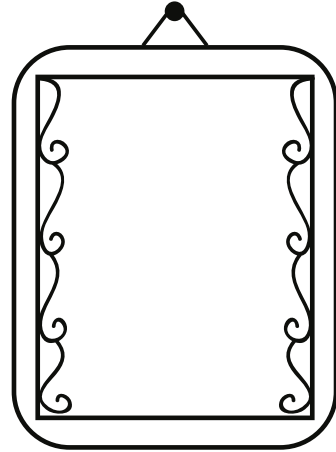
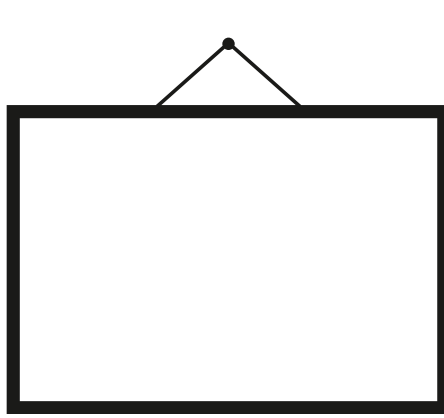
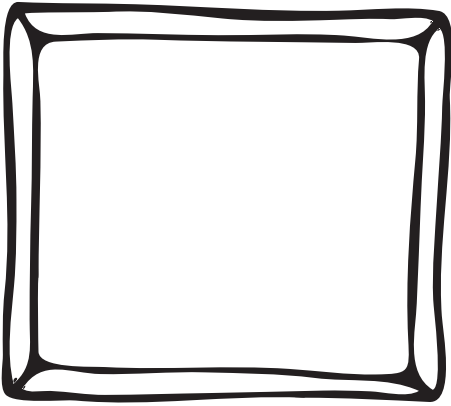
You told us to work hard  
so that we can be financially stable.

You work forty hours and never complain  
so that we can afford my college tuition.

Because of you, I will be the first in our  
family to walk across the stage.

Even though I don't say it as often as I should,  
Salamat, Thank you.

# A GALLERY OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR ME





## STAY IN TOUCH

Marquette University  
Alumni Memorial Union, 111  
Instagram: @firstgenmarquette



**MARQUETTE**  
UNIVERSITY

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## FIRST GENERATION

This mini-guide was created with the consent of first gen undergraduate and graduate students of Marquette. They share their stories to support first generation students, foster their sense of belonging, and encourage their will to succeed.

To learn more about the first generation programs at Marquette, visit  
<https://www.marquette.edu/first-generation-students/>.