

# FIRST-GEN IN THE FIELD

---

Carolyn Young Larmore  
AALS Section on the Empirical Study  
of Legal Education & the Legal Profession



**Fowler School of Law**

## 2 FIRST-GEN, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION

---

Externships and clinics are a key path toward professional identity formation



First-gen students may be at a disadvantage in these settings

### 3 DEFINITIONS

---

First-Gen Student:

neither parent with a 4-year college degree

Continuing Gen Student:

at least one parent with a college or advanced degree

First Gen Professional:

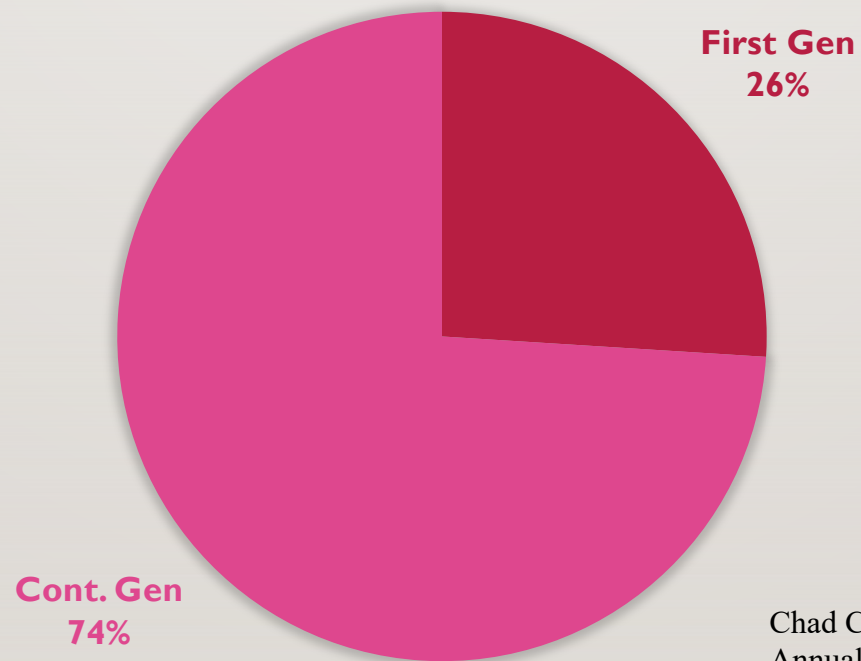
neither parent with a white-collar job

4

# HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE FIRST-GEN?

---

## LAW STUDENTS NATIONWIDE



Chad Christensen, Jacquelyn Petzold, and Meera E. Deo, LSSSE 2023 Annual Report: Focus On First-Generation Students (2023).

5

---

**MORE LIKELY  
TO BE**

Older

Non-white / Immigrant

Caring for family

Working / Loans

Lower grades / fewer co-curriculars

## 6 CHALLENGES

---

Lack

- Professional networks

Lack

- Family support

Feel

- Imposter syndrome

Unaware

- of “unwritten rules” acquired through experience

## 7 THE FIRST-GEN INTERVIEWS

---



10 ZOOM  
INTERVIEWS



6 LAW  
SCHOOLS



31  
QUESTIONS



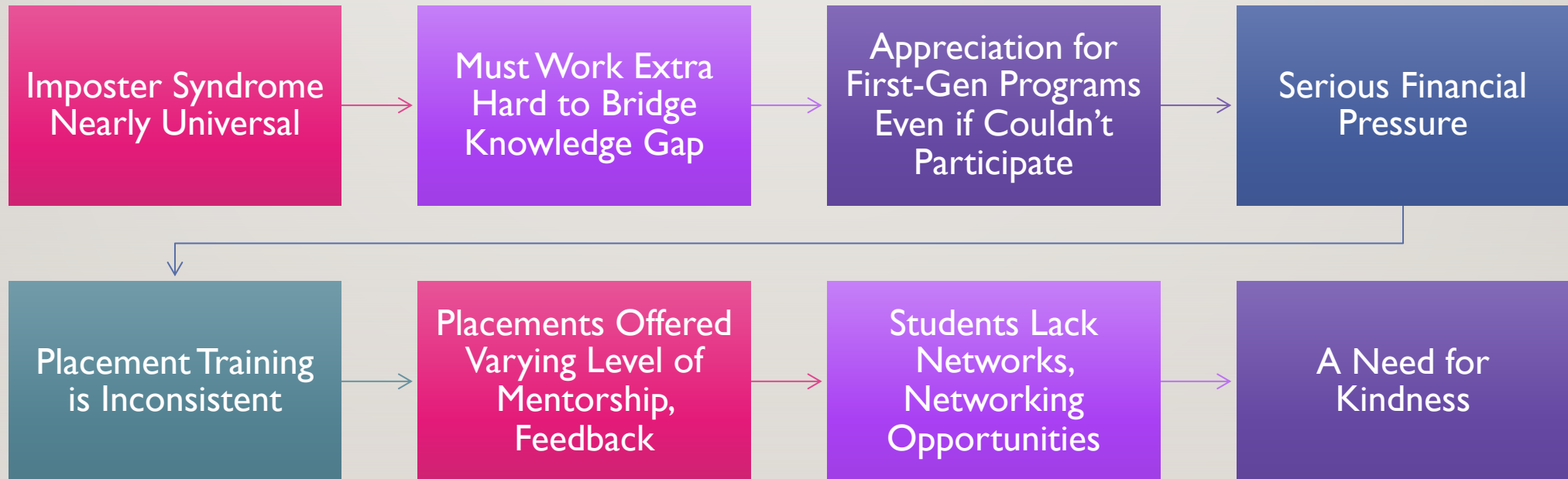
FOCUS ON  
EXTERNSHIPS



ANONYMITY  
PROMISED

## 8 INTERVIEW RESULTS

---





---

## WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Allow	Paid Externships
Create	– Or Make Use of– a First-Gen Program
Discuss	First-Gen Issues in Seminar, Journals
Address	Imposter Syndrome
Recruit	First-Gen Students to the Externship and Clinic Programs

## 10 WHAT SUPERVISORS CAN DO

---

Recruit First-Gen Students

Offer More Orientation and Training

Provide Mentoring and Feedback

Help the Extern to Network

Start a First-Gen Affinity Group

Temper Expectations and Be Kind