



Dear Students:

Let me start by congratulating you on joining the Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS) family and for pursuing a college education. We are thrilled that you have chosen to become a part of the HWS community, and we look forward to getting to know you better over the next four years.

I am reaching out to make you aware of the **First Generation Initiative (FGI) at HWS**. This is an institutional initiative that strives to build a connected community of first generation students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae who support one another. Through the HWS application materials you have been identified as a first generation college student. ***At HWS, we define first generation students as students who are the first in their immediate families (not including siblings) to attend a four-year college or university in the United States.*** It is important to us that all HWS students are welcomed, supported, and encouraged to succeed to their full academic potential. First generation college students are many things: proud, humble, ambitious, tenacious, trailblazing, talented, and resilient. At HWS, roughly 15% of our students are first generation college students.

Since I was also the first in my own family to graduate from college, I understand well the importance of finding a warm and welcoming community to belong to while away from home. I recall feeling both scared and privileged during my first few weeks at college. There will be challenges to face and obstacles to overcome, and we have a support network here to help. At the same time, there will be many opportunities for celebration and leadership.

The FGI has a wide variety of programming and events that focus on connecting first generation students with the support and guidance that they need to make the most of their HWS experience. ***We are hoping to kick off our program this academic year with a one day Pre-Orientation program for students and their families to take place on Wednesday, August 19, 2020.*** Each student who attends the pre-orientation will also receive a computer laptop backpack filled with useful information, a t-shirt, and some school supplies to get you off to a good start at HWS. More information about the Pre-Orientation program will be forthcoming.

We hope that you will join us at this first opportunity to meet other first generation students and their families and friends as well as current students, faculty and staff who are also part of our first generation community.

Welcome! I look forward to meeting you on August 19. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

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