



HARVARD  
Alumni Association

CLUBS & SHARED INTEREST GROUPS

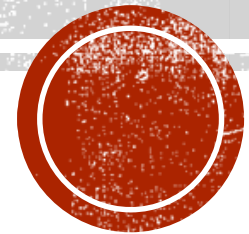
# Alumni Leadership Conference



# **FIRST GENERATION HARVARD ALUMNI (FGHA) PRESENTATION ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Harvard Alumni Leadership Conference

February 7<sup>th</sup> 2020



Presented by  
Paul Martin, FGHA Director & Vice President  
Andrea (Andy) Esposito, FGHA Director External Affairs

# AGENDA



## Overview & Current Program

- Establishing FGHA: who, when and why

- Who FGHA Serves: Students and Alumni

## Expanding our Programs: The 2019 Survey Project

- Motivation and methodology for survey

- Student survey results: more mentorship – upper class, alternative models

- Alumni survey results: more programming – local chapters for alumni-alumni, engaging with students

- Future ambitions and goals

# FIRST GENERATION HARVARD ALUMNI

- The Start:** University Aid Initiative results in First Generation students making up a substantial portion of today's undergraduate student body – 17% of the Class of '22
- Mission:** Make Harvard a better place for current First Generation students and help them to navigate Harvard successfully
- Goals:** Mentor students, advocate for services for first gen and limited-income students and provide networking opportunities for students and alumni
- Membership:** Harvard alumni who are the first members of their families to attend college and who seek to support First Generation students and alumni

Harvard Gazette Article:

<https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2020/01/first-gen-alumni>

# BACKGROUND

**Founded:** By Kevin Jennings '85, piloted in 2012, incorporated in 2013

**HAA:** Newest Harvard Alumni Association Special Interest Group

**Key Partners:** HAA, Harvard clubs, other SIGs, Freshman Deans Office, Admissions and Financial Aid, OCS

**Assists:** Primus, FYRE

University: FGHA assists in recruiting and enrolling first-generation undergraduate candidates

**2019 Project:** FGHA & HAA published the first SIG Red Book of essays on reflections from Harvard's First Generation Alumni.

Further reading on FGHA & Red Book:

<https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2019/11/harvard-first-generation-student-alumni-stories>

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/11/first-generation-harvard-red-book-helps-bind-a-community/>

# SUPPORTING PRIMUS & FYRE

## PRIMUS (formerly First Generation Student Union)

Established for students for whom attending college is significant to their families and communities and who come to Harvard with a set of shared experiences and challenges.

**Founded:** By Dan Lobo '14, current President of FGHA, in 2013

**Membership:** First Generation, low income students.

**Mission :** Hold events that build community, connect students to resources and opportunities, and advocate on behalf of under-resourced students.

## FYRE (First Year Retreat & Experience)

Piloted in 2018 and Harvard College officially established in 2019 by Harvard College, this pre-orientation program aims to orient under-resourced incoming students to life at the University

Harvard Gazette Articles:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/08/at-harvard-the-first-time-for-first-year-student-retreat/>

<https://www.harvardmagazine.com/node/62725>



# FGHA MENTOR PROFILE

475 alumni mentors since 2012 | 50% Female / 50% Male

1<sup>st</sup> Time Mentors: more than 50% annually

2020 Mentors from US Public High Schools: ~80%

## Professions:

Non-Profit	16%	Education	6%
Policy/Gov't	13%	Law	6%
Academia/Research	13%	Medicine/Health	5%
Business	11%	Law	5%
Tech/Engineering	11%	The Arts	3%
Entrepreneurship	10%		

## Where they are from:

N. America	74%	Africa	5%
Europe	10%	S. America	3%
Asia	7%	Middle East	1%



## Within the United States

West	25%	Midwest	15%
Northeast	22%	Southwest	11%
Southeast	15%	Territories	1%

# STUDENT MENTEE PROFILE

First Year FGLI Students Total (percent of class):

2020: 272 (17%)                      2019: 288 (18%)

First Year Mentees Total (percent of FGLI):

2020: 118 (43%)                      2019: 134 (47%)

Top Primary Mentee Concerns:

Academics/Coursework                      21%

Friends/Social Life/Fitting-in                      14%

Balancing Student Life                      9%

Being Away from Family & Home                      9%

Making the Most of Harvard's Resources                      6%



Preferred Match Criteria with Mentors:	Career Interest	61%	Academics	16%	Personality	1%
	Background	20%	Hometown	3%	Ambition	1%



# PROGRAM EXPANSION

## 2 KEY OBSERVATIONS:

1. First Gen students are under-served
2. First Gen alumni are under-valued & under-utilized

How can we use data to validate these observations and illuminate a forward path?

How can we frame the survey to include both meaningful quantitative and qualitative data to inform our future direction?

Designed questions to identify:

- What are the overall needs of the groups we serve?
- What specific services or programs would best support these groups?
- How can we facilitate engagement and measure impact?

How can we use survey results to provide a voice to our constituents – both students and alumni – and to tell a story?

# SURVEY LOGISTICS

2 Surveys – Student Survey & Alumni Survey

Administered using Qualtrics, in cooperation with the First Generation Program (FGP)

Survey Groups:

	Population	Total Population	Respondents	Completed Surveys
Student Survey	FGP-identified FGLI students	1,050	360 (34%)	195 (19%)
Alumni Survey	FGHA Membership	500	159 (32%)	121 (24%)

Timeframe: Oct 2018 – April 2019

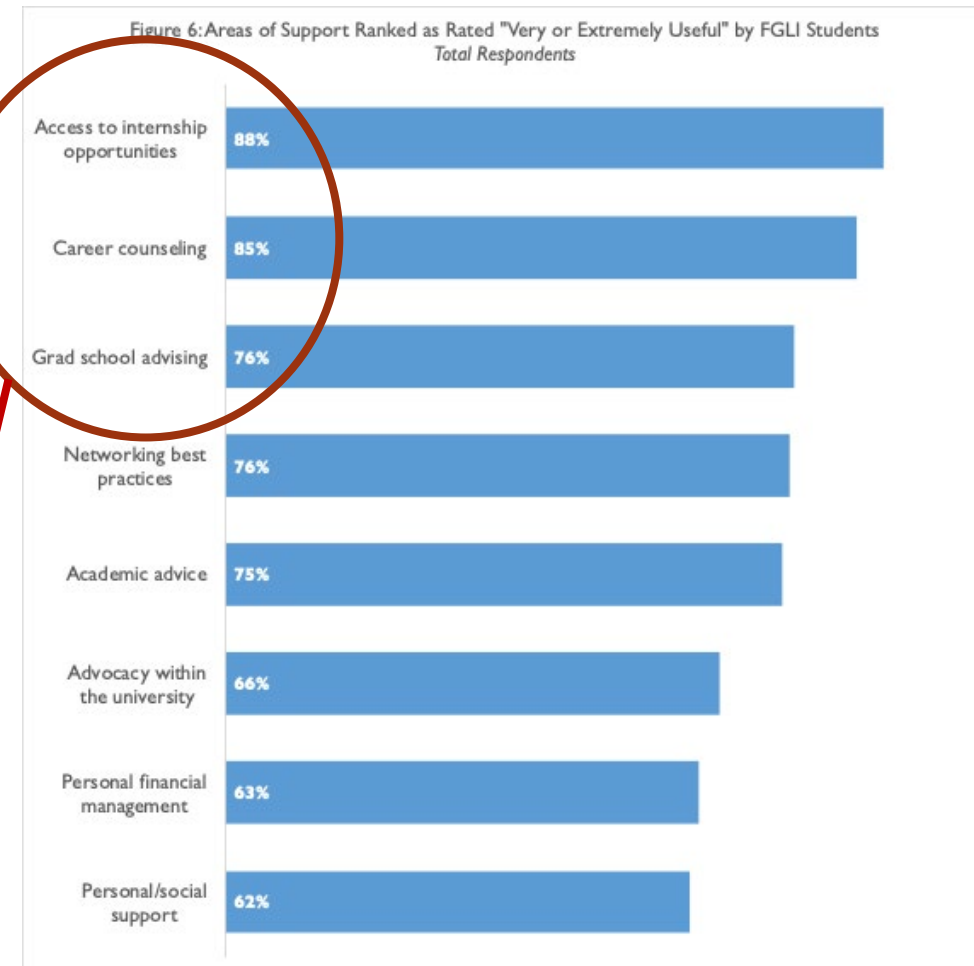
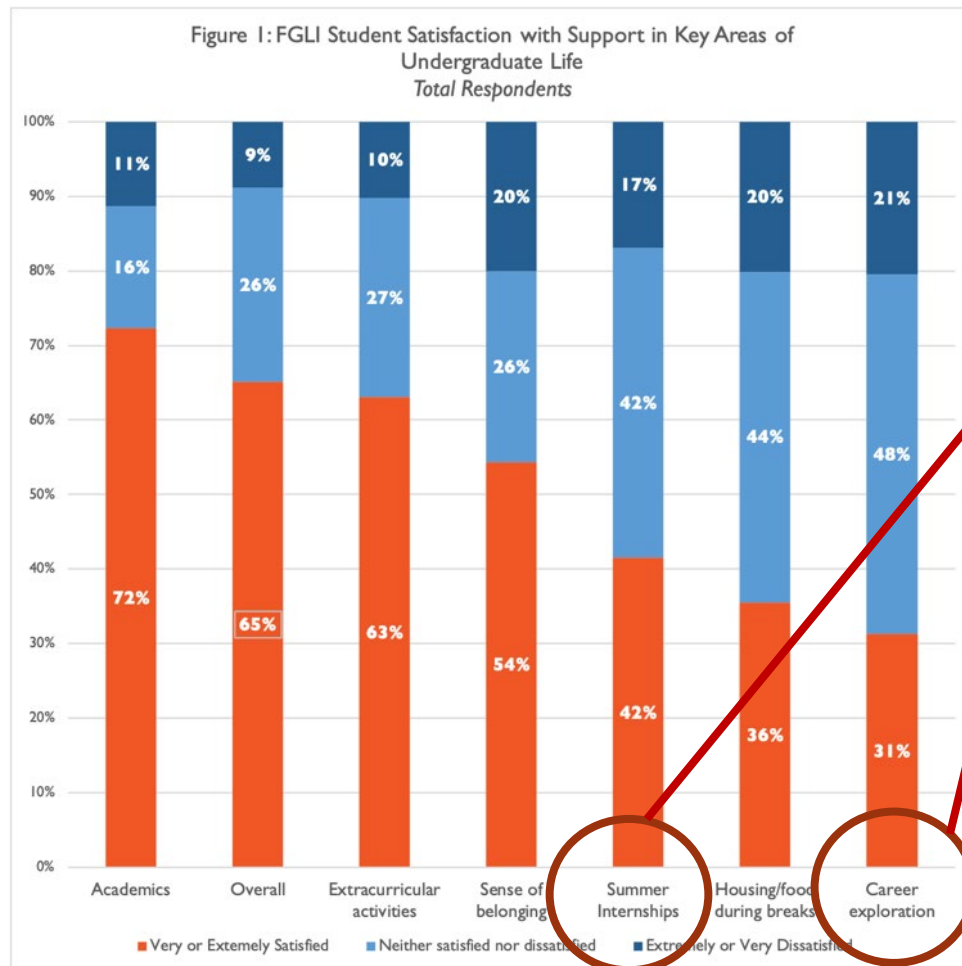
Data collection: Oct 2018 - Jan 2019

Analysis: Jan 2019 – April 2019

Results to Board: April 2019

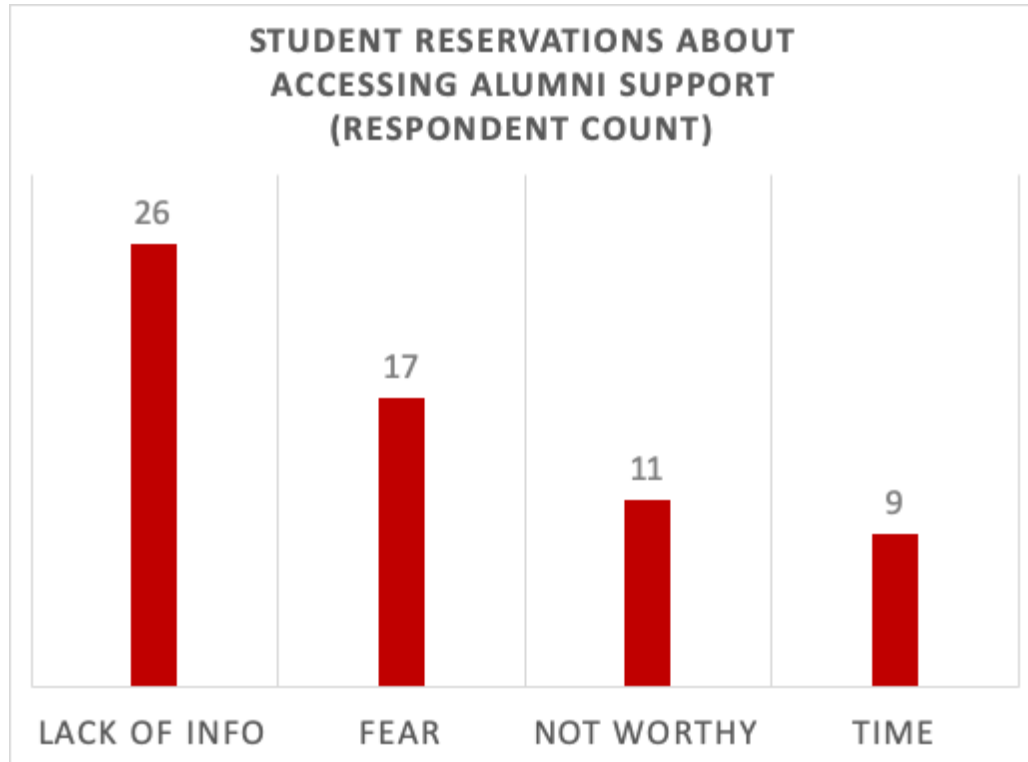
# STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

- Correlation between dissatisfaction with support services within Harvard and need for FGHA alumni support
- Strong desire for mentorship beyond the first-year experience and focused on career



# STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

- Student engagement with alumni was limited by lack of awareness and fear



*"I did not know we had created an alumni network that I could access, and I think I have been unsure about how I can access these alums"*

*"I also hesitate because there are some areas, such as internship and career advising, that I sorely lack information and would appear very uninformed."*

*"I haven't accessed alumni support due to the personal fear of asking for help which is due to the lack of resources I had during my years in high school."*

# ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

- Professional development and networking were the highest needs
- Strong desire to give back, particularly through mentorship of students and fellow alumni

Figure 7: Areas of Support Ranked as Rated "Very or Extremely Useful" by FGHA Members  
Total Respondents

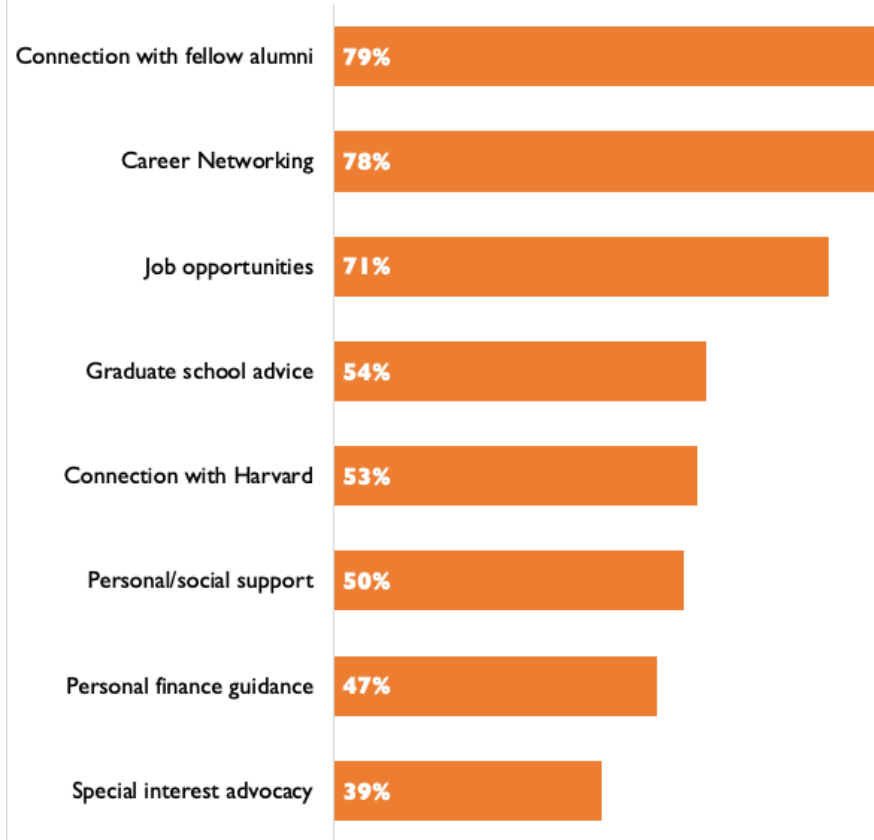


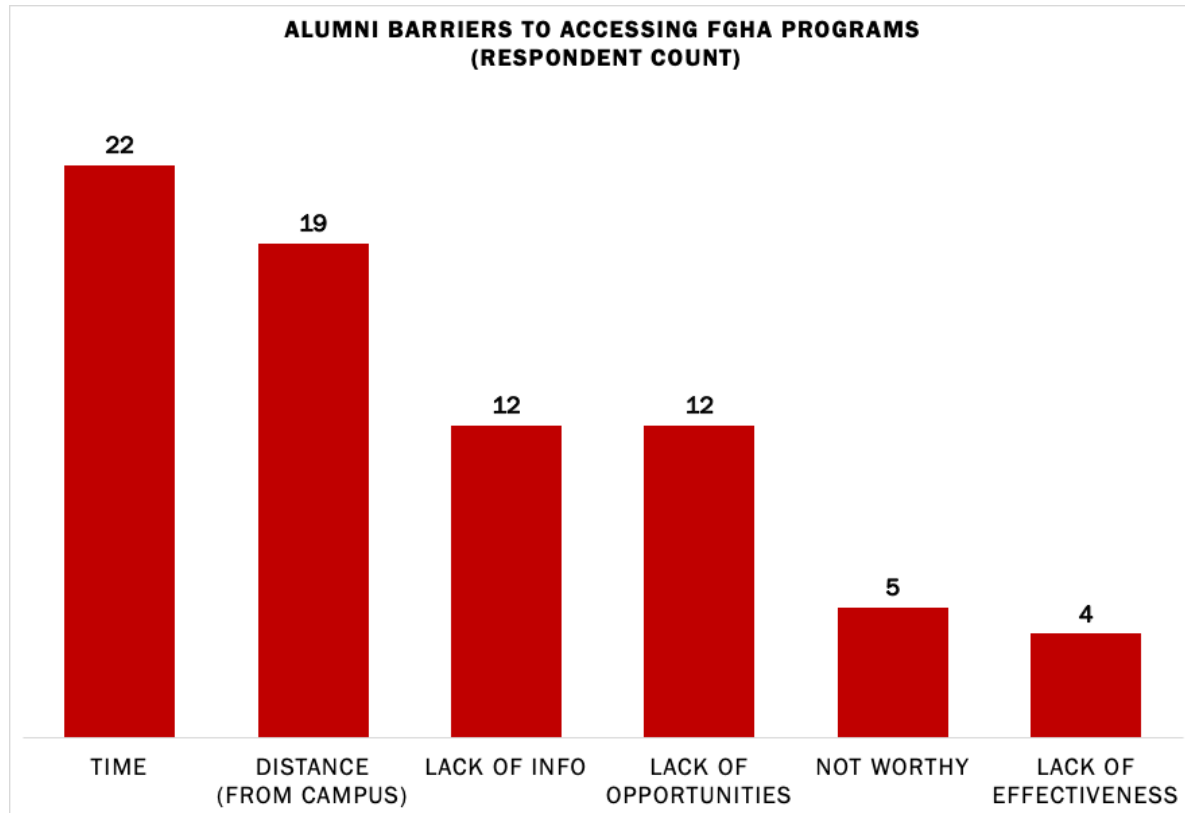
Figure 9: FGHA Volunteer Opportunities ranked by Alumni Member Interest

FGHA Alumni Volunteer Opportunity		% Interested in Volunteering
Attend alumni-to-alumni events		60%
One-to-one mentoring of students		54%
Attend alumni-to-student events		51%
Group mentoring of students based on affinity group		50%
One-to-one mentoring of alumni		44%
Group mentoring of alumni based on affinity group		40%



# ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

Alumni engagement is low due to time available for FGHA activities and given limited opportunities provided through programming beyond Cambridge



*“Time and not being fully aware of all the programs FGHA does outside of Boston since I’m in CA”*

*“Mainly being in a remote location. It would be helpful to have a more digitally based community to enable non-location-specific interactions.”*

*“The location of most events/activity seems to be Cambridge.”*

# USING SURVEY RESULTS FOR PROGRESS

- Promoted transparency and inclusion:
  - Report released to FGHA members, students and Harvard community in September 2019
  - Held video meetings to discuss results with members

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/rRuvpChNrbkNi/>

- Restructured organization to include student affairs, alumni affairs, external affairs
  - Added Board positions with paired directors for each area
  - Held successful elections in December 2019

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/Hb8pB2aIC5R6S/>

- Expanding student mentorship program
  - Adding mid-year on-boarding for first year mentorship
  - Extending mentorship to upper classes via FirstHand
- Increasing variety of alumni-student engagements
  - Using FirstHand platform for individual connections
  - Formalizing internship/externship opportunities



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR FGHA?

- Expanding student mentorship program
  - Adding mid-year on-boarding for first year mentorship
  - Extending mentorship to upper classes via FirstHand
- Increasing variety of alumni-student engagements
  - Using FirstHand platform for individual connections
  - Formalizing internship/externship opportunities

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

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