

OCTOBER 2023



FIRST2 NETWORK



Student Updates

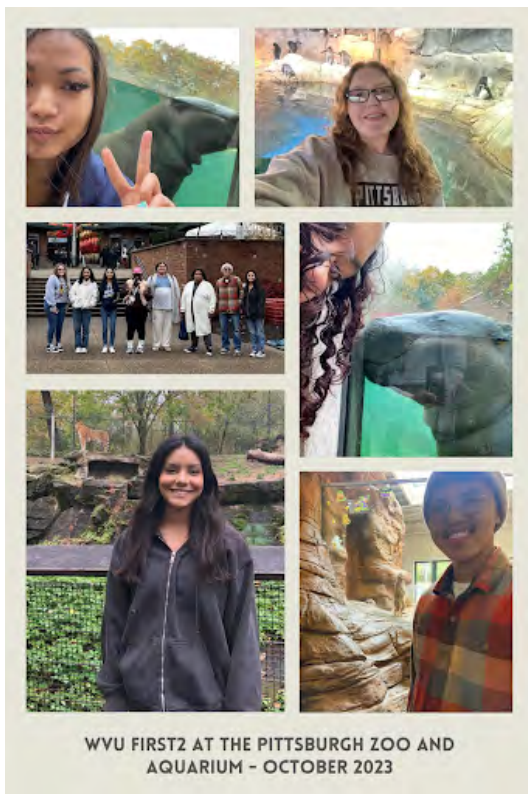
Blue Ridge Community and Technical College – Their campus held a club meeting 10/11/23 that included a guest speaker; they will also have a guest speaker at their next meeting, an engineer who will be speaking about their career. Their institutional team also held their first meeting. They are planning a PDSA outing and are working on creating marketing materials for this.

Fairmont State University – First2 at Fairmont is continuing to work on accessibility change work. Jay Bow was invited to present at the American Society of Engineering Education Conference. Dr. Mark Flood presented at their First2 club meeting about the Forensics and Biology departments and research opportunities. Their club will be hosting a Halloween party and movie marathon as a club fun night and they hope to co-host a potluck with the Forensics Club. They are preparing materials to set up a First2 table at the West Virginia Science Teachers Association Conference. Three First2 scholars also attended Maroon and White Day.

Glenville State University – Glenville's First2 members are working on establishing their campus club and starting their first PDSA cycle. They are distributing informational flyers to help recruit for their club. They have been planning a hot chocolate social with students and professors to build stronger connections between faculty and students. Addison Aguiniga attended the First2 Leadership Training in Morgantown October 14-15, 2023 and said “[I] learned tons of things such as the three legged stool, and how to be a great facilitator! I will be applying these to our club here in Glenville.”

Marshall University – Marshall's First2 club members were invited to volunteer with the Central Ohio Valley American Chemical Society; they got to teach children about science and lab safety by guiding them through experiments, as well as help prepare goodie bags that the chemistry department gave out to the kids who wanted to participate. Club members attended the Pumpkin Festival in Milton, WV together and they had a med student visit Marshall to speak to the First2 members on campus about medical school. They are planning a Faculty Networking Dinner for November.

University of Charleston – First2 members at the University of Charleston are preparing slides for their campus PDSA event, surprise lectures for professors! The students had a lot of fun coming up with funny topics to have their professors present. They will also be starting their chemistry lab revitalization project soon. Student Directors Emily Hissom and Hailey Cox attended the First2 Leadership Training in Morgantown October 14-15, 2023.



West Virginia University (left) – First2 members at WVU took a trip to the Pittsburgh Zoo; it looks like a great time was had by all! Director Oscar Enriquez is working for Casa for Kids and P2A; they have just finished the second part of the nonprofit program working for children in the court system. Scholar Sarah Titta was in Pittsburgh for the Geological Society of America 2023 Conference to present their research. Scholar Angelina Duriez is having a bake sale for her new club (Helping Hands) during Halloween and some of these proceeds will be going to the Children's Hospital.

Tier 2 scholars are continuing to plan out two PDSAs: Donuts with the Dean and Peer Mentors. They are continuing to have bi-weekly work meetings and bi-weekly study meetings. Their campus club has elected club officers for next semester. They continue to have great attendance at their regular club meetings and they are working on their workshop series which should make up the bulk of their remaining regular club meetings. Career services will be visiting their club to talk to their scholars about professional development.

West Virginia University Institute of Technology – WVU Tech's First2 campus club is on top of their academics: all their members received passing grades for midterms! They have been working on decoration ideas for their participation in the WVU Tech Trunk or Treat. They are planning to have a meeting later in October to get more WVU Tech faculty involved with First2 and they are planning a student panel for first-generation week in partnership with WVU Tech's TRIOSSS and Diversity Coordinator. They have several club events coming up, including Trunk or Treat and a haunted house tour. They are continuing to work on their PDSAs and several club members attended the First2 Leadership Training in Morgantown October 14-15, 2023.

On the Road with First2: The First2 Leadership Training



On October 14th and 15th a group of 17 First2 Student Directors and Scholars, in addition to support faculty and staff, met in Morgantown to participate in a Leadership Training program facilitated by High Rocks and First2 Network leaders. Participants of this program got to talk about the focus areas of the First2 Network and how this relates to systemic change; practice their strategies for making a strong 'elevator speech'; learn tips for marketing and communication; identify and critically think about styles of leadership, including their own leadership qualities; discuss the role of students within Institutional Teams and how students can help Institutional Teams be successful; improve their mentoring, conflict resolution and team building skills; and further their understanding of improvement science and how that informs the 'Plan, Do, Study, Act' cycles they are implementing to test change ideas.

First2 Student Director Revan Buan from West Virginia University said the training "gave me the opportunity to better understand my role in the First2 Network." First2 Student Director Damian Lowe from Blue Ridge Community and Technical College said "The leadership training was very insightful for me; I'm very grateful to be able to work with the network to improve my own skills."

Throughout the program, students and staff also learned about and discussed the various facilitation techniques being used, and the rationale for using these techniques, to further their active learning experience. First2 Student Director Keyzar Domínguez from West Virginia University said, "The leadership training exposed me to a number of facilitation styles and leadership techniques that I now feel comfortable using in any future meetings I lead."

As an added bonus, those in attendance got to witness a solar eclipse; special thanks to First2 Lead Principal Investigator Sue Ann Heatherly, from Green Bank Observatory, who of course came prepared with eclipse viewing glasses!



After reflecting on the program Sue Ann noted, “We had so much fun and learned some great facilitation techniques while expanding our understanding of First2. But what sticks with me most were the nuggets of ideas and wisdom that were organically dropped in our path by our students. By the end of the weekend we all had high priority ‘to-dos’ that sprang directly from our work together.” First2 Network Improvement Science and Data Manager Brigid Brown from Fairmont State University said, “I admire the passion and vision of the First2 students, and their perspective and efforts for systems change.”

Kudos to these inspiring First2 students that pushed themselves to think big about this important work and how they are leaders in moving it forward...we can't wait to see where the network goes next!

Student Spotlight - Kaleb Cole



Kaleb (far left) and other First2 Student Directors took a walk to enjoy the slightly chilly fall weather while attending the First2 Leadership Training in Morgantown, WV.

For our October Student Spotlight, we spoke with First2 Student Director Kaleb Cole from Pennsboro, WV who is a junior majoring in Computer Science at West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVU Tech).

When asked what inspired his interest in technology, Kaleb said he has loved technology ever since he was a little kid and then in high school had the opportunity to attend the Mid-Ohio Valley Technical Institute. He said his instructor there, Mr. Lopez, was “phenomenal; he helped me so much to get me to where I am today.” While attending that program Kaleb learned about computer hardware systems, built his own computer and earned a TestOut PC Pro Certification which is a nationally recognized certification. In his senior year of high school, he was the only person to ever take a computer programming course through that program.

Kaleb was first introduced to the First2 Network by Dr. Rai, a professor at WVU Tech who was part of bringing the First2 program to their campus, who encouraged Kaleb to apply for their summer immersion program. As part of that program Kaleb learned AI and participated in other lectures related to computer science. “I really enjoyed the program and I still talk to people from there to this day,” Kaleb said. “That brought me right into the school year where I joined the First2 club and made a connection with them.”

Kaleb is currently serving as the President of his First2 Campus Club and feels proud that this club has been voted the best club on campus for two years in a row. He says the club is, “active on campus in terms of doing...events that [bring] faculty together with students.” he also feels that providing a network of support and opportunity for first- and second-year

students is what the club is meant to foster, so he makes it known that it is an inclusive club and that he is there to help with any questions that any of the club members have.

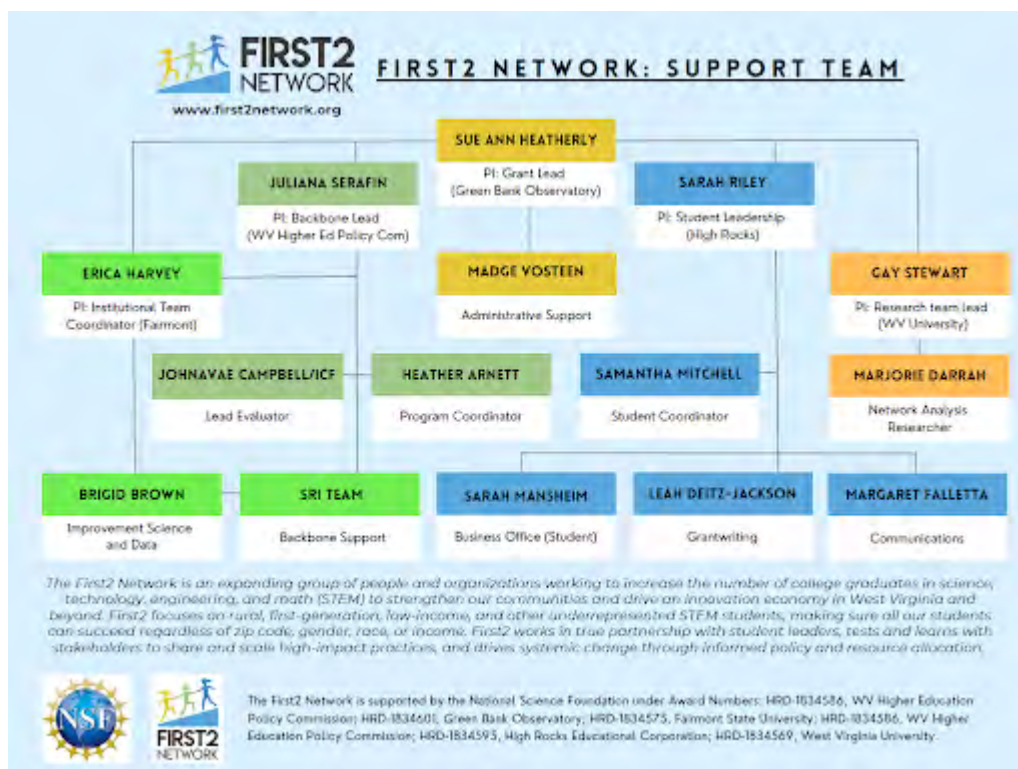
He attended the First2 Leadership Training held in Morgantown, WV October 14th and 15th and talked about how a big takeaway for him was, "...observing the amazing speakers that we had there. I was really keying in and thinking about the details of why people were speaking the way they were...gleaning some things from them and looking out to see what I could use...like doing a check-in and the way they were able to navigate that by starting with the context. There were a lot of instances where people would just hit the mood of the room, they would stop what they were doing and do some sort of facilitation question like, 'close your eyes and let's see if we agree on this.' he also noted that meeting together in-person helped "develop an environment where people [could] press the needle forward...we're all here, we're all trying to accomplish this thing, let's do it together."

We spoke about what the First2 Network can offer future members and Kaleb said, "I think that the First2 network is a great organization for giving opportunities. Having students that wouldn't have the ability to be exposed to the things that they're exposed to, like meeting with professors or networking with professors, building relationships with professors and other people from different areas, because you don't know what you don't know. When you have connections with faculty, and students, you then get to build an idea of what [your] major entails and how college life is supposed to be...First2 is great at exposing those that don't know what to expect to what they should expect, or to people that can help them navigate that."

Interested in First2 communication? Kaleb's last thoughts were, "Get in touch with Margaret and be on the Communication Team! It's a great opportunity." Contact margaret@highrocks.org or first2networkmarketing@gmail.com for more information and to help us tell more stories about the First2 Network.

Get to Know the First2 Team

The First2 Backbone and Communications Teams have developed an organizational chart to identify various roles that support the First2 Network:



Upcoming Events and Opportunities

SAVE THE DATE: The First2 Network Virtual Fall Conference will be held November 17th and 18th, 2023. Program and registration information are coming soon!



West Virginia University
OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The 6th Annual
**Fall Undergraduate
Research
Symposium**

**Saturday,
December 2nd**
Mountainlair

**Calling For Abstracts!
Due by November 2nd**

Participants of RAP,
EXCEL, 497-Level
courses, First2 Network
or faculty mentored
research at any Higher
Education Institution in
West Virginia are
welcome to submit



STEM Speaker Series: As part of the Chancellor's STEM Speaker Series, "Dr. Bernard Schreurs, professor of neuroscience at West Virginia University and director of the West Virginia Alzheimer's Disease Registry, will present his talk titled, 'Alzheimer's Disease and the Importance of Neuroscience Research' at the Kanawha County Public Library in downtown Charleston on Thursday, November 9 at 6 p.m.." [Click here for more information or to register.](#)





rvatech/Richmond Technology Council is hosting a one-day conference November 17, 2023 at the Science Museum of Virginia dedicated to “all things JavaScript.” From their website, “The 2023 RVAJS Conference will offer a range of sessions that provide JavaScript Developers and the overall amazing + vibrant RVA developer community the opportunity to interact, engage + further their skills together.” [For information and to register, click here.](#)

Inclusive Graduate Education Network (IGEN), another NSF INCLUDES Alliance, is offering a session titled, “Developing High Quality Interviews” as part of their Equity in Graduate Education (EGE) Community Discussion Series on November 29, 2023 3pmET (with an optional pre-reading, [Stop Eliminating Perfectly Good Candidates by Asking Them the Wrong Questions](#) by Nilofer Merchant). Their website states, “Each session will start with a brief presentation of principles and/or research evidence about equitable, lawful use of these tools. It will be followed by a 30-40 minute breakout session where you can brainstorm with colleagues from around the country. Breakout rooms will be by discipline, recognizing that there are field-specific ways that programs engage with applicants. Finally, we will have 15-20 minutes of discussion in a large-group format that is led by members of the EGE



leadership team and steering committee.”

[Click here to register.](#)



**/ MOUNTAINEER UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH REVIEW**

MURR is accepting submissions for original research articles, literature reviews, and policy briefs for *MURR Volume 9!*

Submissions accepted until
NOVEMBER 30th

For more information visit:
<https://undergraduateresearch.wvu.edu/research-opportunities/wvu-opportunities/murr>



SCAN ME

 West Virginia University
OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Abstract submissions for the Nineteenth Annual Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol (URDC) are due November 17, 2023. Undergraduate Research Day will take place in the West Virginia State Capitol Rotunda (<http://www.wvculture.org/agency/capitol.html>) on February 22, 2024. "This event features posters on research/creative endeavors from student attendees of colleges and universities around the state and will help members of the WV State Legislature and Executive Branch understand the importance of undergraduate scholarly activities by providing members with an opportunity to speak directly with the students whom these programs impact." [Click here for more information.](#)

News from the INCLUDES National Network

The NSF INCLUDES National Network Introduces a New Vision: “We envision the National Network as a go-to entity for people across the country to learn about strategies, practices, and models to create equitable opportunities in STEM fields.”

[Click here to read more about this new vision.](#)

Check out the [INCLUDES Coordination Hub Podcast Series, “Collaborative Strategies for Inclusive Change”](#); their most recent episode is an interview with Dr. Donald Gillian-Daniel and Robin Greenler, co-leaders of NSF’s Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES Aspire Alliance National Change Team. Each episode is about 15 minutes long...great to listen to while enjoying your morning coffee!



The First2 Network is supported by the National Science Foundation under Award Numbers: HRD-1834586, WV Higher Education Policy Commission; HRD-1834601, Green Bank Observatory; HRD-1834575, Fairmont State University; HRD-1834586, WV Higher Education Policy Commission; HRD-1834595, High Rocks Educational Corporation; HRD-1834569, West Virginia University.



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