

## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



---

### In This Issue

- Save the Date: First2 Spring Conference May 16-18, 2024
- First2 Institutional Updates
- PDSA of the Month: University of Charleston's Fun Impromptu Lectures
- Help First2 Recruit
- Events and Opportunities
- News from the INCLUDES National Network



---

## Institutional Updates

### Blue Ridge Community and Technical College

Their First2 campus club is working on planning a Dinner with the Dean/IT faculty PDSA for early March as well as hosting a Dune movie night. Their club's current goal is to boost club attendance and they are also looking into the logistics of hosting a trip to the Smithsonian. Blue Ridge has been planning some exciting events for the spring semester; in addition to a Dinner with the Dean/IT they hope to plan VR Escape Room and Pi Day activities to help foster a community for their students and help them feel more comfortable with their professors as well as their peers. One of their First2 Student Directors has also been really enjoying their internship; that Director says, "I feel like it's just the type of internship experience I wanted. I knew that I wanted an internship that was a mix of education and software development, because that's the type of field I would like to go into, but I felt like that was so niche, what were the odds that I'd be able to find something like that, in West Virginia of all places too. And then I met them at the First2 Spring Conference. I'm so glad and thankful that I went! I even got to go to an EdTech (Educational Technology) Games Expo with them. Which was so informative and helped me see the different types of companies out there."

### Fairmont State University

At the start of the semester, Fairmont's First2 institutional team gave a presentation explaining all of the PDSAs for this year with updates on progress and results. At a recent institutional team meeting they reviewed faculty data from the SciTech Social and presented on the newest PDSA on cultural differences. Their campus club has discussed

going to the WV Academy of Science this spring. At a recent campus club meeting Bri DiBacco from the LEAD Center spoke with the club about the different resources the Lead Center provides as part of their Change Liaison PDSA; she provided club members with information about opportunities and resources related to topics such as employment and tutoring. They are working on planning a club trip and they met all of the new STAR grant students. Some First2 Scholars volunteered at the Science Fair and got to facilitate some interactions with young students and STEM resources.

### **Glenville State University**

Glenville had their First2 Quarterly Meeting as well as PDSA coaching meetings for math anxiety, campus club, and metacognition PDSAs. The campus club has met and are working on establishing a regular meeting time. The task force meets regularly every other week. They are planning for a department retreat and they are planning to submit an abstract for the WV Academy of Science. Their campus club hosted two mid-term study sessions and they are planning a Student-Faculty potluck PDSA for the end of March.

### **Marshall University**

Marshall's First2 Donuts with the Dean event went well, a few First2 Scholars helped with this event. Their campus club finished their most recent PDSA and are not working on their PDSA for this semester. In February they worked on preparing their ambassador projects.

### **University of Charleston**

The First2 institutional team at UC had their final coaching session for their Impromptu Lecture PDSA; they are planning to start a math fraction PDSA this spring. First2 students met for Valentine's Day Donuts and Plant Party; they also hosted a leadership training club February 20th. They had a coaching session for their BINGO night PDSA; they are excited to host BINGO and are also hoping to host another Impromptu Lecture sometime in April.

### **West Virginia University**

WVU had their First2 Quarterly Meeting on February 8th. First2 Co-Chair Keyzar Dominguez, Student Director Revan Buan, and Dr. Rita Rio hosted a table at the 2024 WV Science Bowl on February 3rd; they presented information on First2, handed out the "20 Things I Wish I Knew as a Freshmen" hand-out, and collected questions about college from high school teachers and their students. The campus club has continued to meet on a weekly basis with the business meeting every other week and workshops or other events other weeks; for example, their January 24th meeting was a hot chocolate social and several faculty and staff attended that event. One WVU First2 student has volunteered to be a Legislative Ambassador for the First2 trip to the Capitol on URDC day February 22nd. Ray King will represent First2 at the annual Appalachian Studies Conference. Faculty, staff and students expect to submit presentations at the WV Academy of Science meeting. A

recent campus club meeting featured volunteer opportunities for students and they are planning on hosting a study meeting. Their campus club hosted a Computer Skills workshop. Their institutional team has various PDSAs in progress at WVU including a Professional Development Workshop Series, a Professor Panel, an Embedded Student project, and a WVU Listserv.



*Left: The WVU-First2 Student Club hosted a table at the 2024 West Virginia Statewide Science Bowl on Saturday Feb 3, 2024. Club members (Keyzar Dominguez and Revan Buan) and club faculty member (Dr. Rita Rio) provided information about First2 to WV high school teachers and their students. Great job representing First2 at this event!*

### **West Virginia University Institute of Technology**

The WVU-Tech institutional team had their Quarterly Meeting and they have established a recurring meeting time for the rest of this semester. WVU-Tech club members and faculty participated in an ax throwing group outing for their institutional team to encourage further community building. They are also underway with a new PDSA that will focus on factors impacting first-generation students. First2 students Fayth Laxton, Josiah Baker, and Neveah Wooding presented their research projects at Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol February 22nd. First2 students gave hometown ambassador presentations during February. First2 Student Director Kaleb Cole competed in the Hack@Davidson Hackathon February 2nd-4th and won the category, "Best Use of Kintone." First2 Student Scholar Josiah Baker won WVU Tech Homecoming King at the recent Homecoming Game! Many First2 students volunteered at Engineering Day at the Charleston Clay Center.

---

### **PDSA of the Month: University of Charleston's Fun Impromptu Lectures**

This month we are featuring University of Charleston's completed Fun Impromptu Lectures; [click here for a summary of this PDSA!](#)

This PDSA focused on improving sense of belonging by having faculty give 5-minute

impromptu lectures on slides presenting content outside of their subject area. All groups increased in the percentage of positive (“very likely”) responses and students showed a strong increase in connection.

You can also access their full completed PDSA template [here](#).

The First2 Network uses improvement science (a systematic approach to testing high-impact practices in education) to test high-impact practices — “change ideas” — that improve retention of first-generation and other under-represented college students in STEM fields. First2 has developed a theory of change that identifies [four primary drivers](#) of success for these students. Institutional teams within the First2 Network plan, conduct, study and act on change ideas using a Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle, then share their findings throughout the Network.

---

### Help First2 Recruit

First2 Network is recruiting members for our Industry Advisory Board and for a Board of Directors!



The purpose of our Industry Advisory Board (IAB) is to bridge the gap between career development and the workforce needs of industry, support current college students to persist in STEM programs, identify professional opportunities to stay in the region, and mentor students to be academically and professionally successful in their field. Our Industry Advisory Board meets virtually for monthly meetings. Are you, or someone you know, interested in joining our IAB? [Click here for more information.](#)



We are excited to welcome letters of interest from potential Board members that are passionate about the First2 Network and our mission. The purpose of our Board of Directors will be to provide oversight for the First2 Network Steering Committee, advise the network regarding strategic planning and sustainability, and assess the work being done to ensure the network is focused on their overall goals and mission. Board members will meet quarterly; three meetings will be held virtually and one meeting will be held in-person. Priority consideration will be given to letters submitted by March 1, 2024.

[Click here for more information.](#)

---

## Events and Opportunities



### **Women LINK (Leading, Innovating, Networking, Knowing) Conference**

Morgantown, WV. March 20, 2024

"The inaugural Women Leading, Innovating, Networking, Knowing Conference will feature a robust lineup of speakers, presenters and panelists from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 20 at the Morgantown Marriott Waterfront Place. The PowerPoint-free event aims to create a support network across the state that empowers women to lead. A panel of three women leaders working in higher education will discuss imposter syndrome while panelists from NASA and other industries examine male-dominated occupations and solutions to these issues. Participants will also learn how to use the results of the CliftonStrengths® assessment as women leaders. All women or anyone interested in exploring ways to bridge gender gaps are encouraged to attend." [Click here for the full schedule or to register.](#)





## **First-Generation Student Success Conference**

Charleston, WV. April 9, 2024

“Tuesday, April 9, 2024 the Division of Student Affairs of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and West Virginia Community and Technical College System will be hosting the First-Generation Student Success Conference, which will be a day-long event held at the Embassy Suites in Charleston, West Virginia. Expect to engage in meaningful discussions, workshops, and presentations that focus on addressing the challenges faced by first-generation college students. By fostering collaboration among institutions and encouraging the exchange of ideas, the conference aims to create a supportive network that promotes the success and well-being of these students.” [Please register here by March 11.](#)

---

## **News from the NSF INCLUDES National Network**

### **New Model for NSF’s Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES (INCLUDES) National Network is launching!**

From the NSF INCLUDES Coordination Hub, “The new model for NSF’s Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES (INCLUDES) National Network is launching! If you haven’t already, consider reading about our new structure in the latest blog post [here](#).”

### **Evaluation Affinity Group Meeting Monday, March 19**

From the NSF INCLUDES Coordination Hub, “NSF’s Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES Coordination Hub (Hub) is delighted to invite you to a meeting of the Evaluation Affinity Group. The one-hour meeting will be held on Monday, March 19 at 3 Eastern/12 Pacific/10 Hawaiian time.

At this meeting, we will:

- Provide a brief overview of the new vision for the Hub and its support of the Network
- Describe the Hub's revised approach to Shared Measures
- Share how the revised approach will help to link Collaborative Infrastructure and systems change frameworks, to inform and support your efforts to broaden participation in STEM
- Clarify how information will be collected
- Highlight how this approach aligns with other NSF efforts
- Identify ways that project evaluations can be structured to include and be aligned with Shared Measures

All National Network members are welcome to attend. A recording of the meeting and related materials will be posted to the Evaluation Affinity Group page of the National Network's online community.

To receive the login link, [please register](#) here.”

## **SAVE THE DATE: NSF Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Program**

### **AGEP AT 25: Celebrating the Past, Creating the Future**

**Crystal City in Arlington, VA October 8-10, 2024**

From the NSF INCLUDES National Network, “In recognition of the NSF AGEP program's 25th anniversary, the AGEP at 25 Conference will bring together both current and past AGEP Alliances and projects, including former AGEP-funded students and fellows who are now faculty at institutions of higher education. Join us on October 8-10 in Arlington, VA as we celebrate the influence and impact of the program and share research to guide future work. Registration will be open by April 1, 2024...the conference is open to anyone interested in systems change efforts to advance STEM equity.”







---

*Copyright © 2024 First2Network, All rights reserved.*  
You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

**Our mailing address is:**

First2Network  
155 Observatory Road  
Green Bank, Wv 24944

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

