

PEOPLE

## Graduating Seniors Give Warm Reflections of Time at Fontbonne



BY QUINN WILSON

MAY 2, 2018

COMMENT 1



With graduation around the corner, Fontbonne prepares to send off a class comprised of diverse students. With 416 students receiving their degrees, there will be many faces walking across the stage at Chaifetz Arena who have walked the halls at Fontbonne for the past several years.

For those set to don their caps and gowns on May 7, their time as students at Fontbonne will be coming to a close. Six graduating students were asked to share their experiences from their time here at Fontbonne, and each of them gave very warm recollections of their time here.

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**“Fontbonne has been very good to me. Everyone from the janitors, to cooks, to teachers and coaches have welcomed me with open arms, while also providing me with well-needed lessons to shape me into the person I have become today.”**

**—James Wiggins**

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**“My experience at Fontbonne has been a life-changing experience for me, because coming from Louisiana and spending the past four years here I have had the opportunity to explore different topics on race and race relations that I wouldn’t have gotten to do when I was at home with our school system there. This has led me onto the path to figure out what I want to do and that is becoming a criminal defense lawyer. I’m really grateful to Fontbonne for everything they’ve done.”**

**—Fannie Terrell**

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**“Fontbonne has allowed me to make lifelong friends through soccer, while also receiving an excellent education. The professors are always incredibly helpful and over the past 3.5 years, Fontbonne has become home to me.”**

**—Madeline Redohl**

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**“Incredible, going to Fontbonne for 4 years has truly allowed me to find and grow into myself. I learned more from the people around me than I would’ve learned in a lecture hall, and it offered me opportunities that I otherwise would’ve never had the chance to reach for.”**

**—Clayton Bond**

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**“Fontbonne gave me the opportunity to not only excel in academics, but to keep playing the sport I love while being an actively involved student leader.”**

**—Blake Wisniewski**

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**“The community of Fontbonne has been like a family to me. I’ve made life long friends here some I consider family.”**

**—Justin Marks**

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ISSUES

## Beyond the First Year: How Fontbonne Combats First-Generation College Students' Struggles



BY CATHY MASCHMEYER  
MAY 2, 2018

COMMENTS 0



College opens up doors. A degree gives you the opportunity to create multiple possibilities and to explore a field you love. But for first-generation college students, the path towards success is plagued with uncertainty and doubt.

First-generation college students are defined by the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) as, “students whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education.” In

their first year, first-generation college students are thrown into an environment that may cause a range of feelings, from excitement to embarrassment. First-generation college students' troubles follow them all the way until they cross the stage, and even afterwards, but Fontbonne has multiple resources to combat first-generation student stress.

## The Struggles

First, what are the struggles first-generation students face? Being a first-generation college student myself, there are “college things” that I struggled to learn. I didn’t know how to apply to colleges, complete a FAFSA, or what “college” was in general. First-generation students also struggle with graduating on time. [Universe Narratives](#) stated, “A 2011 study from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA indicated only 27 percent of first-generation students earn a degree after four years and only 50 percent of them after 6 years, compared to continuing-generation students who graduate at a rate of 42 percent in four years and 64 percent in six years.”

I am now a senior and I thought my times of “first-generation college student problems” were behind me. But soon, I discovered that I didn’t know how to apply for a professional career, complete a resume or cover letter, or what a “career” meant in general. Thankfully, there are resources on campus to combat these issues.

**FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT STRUGGLES**  
Graduation and Beyond

**GETTING TO GRADUATION**  
Sounds so simple right? Choose your classes, do well. However, first-generation students often feel like “imposters” in the college classroom and feel like they are always playing catch up.

**APPLYING TO JOBS**  
Often left questioning what jobs they qualify for, first-generation students must learn what skills they have acquired, as well as how to market themselves to employers.



### NEGOTIATING PAY

How much are they worth? How much is standard? Without someone with a college degree to assist them, first-generation college students sometimes struggle with how much they should be compensated for their education and experience.



### NEGOTIATING BENEFITS

What is a high deductible? What is a low deductible? Which one is the right fit? What even is a 401k? These questions are often struggled with for first-generation college students as they step into their career.



### CAREER PATH

A career path is a winding road leading to the perfect job, not a straight path. For first-generation college students it can be hard to visualize just how windy this career path can be. Your major and skills learned from college can lead to many different opportunities down the road, not just one.

## Fontbonne's Program Dedicated to First-Generation Students

Amy Simons, the Director of Student Success and Engagement, is the woman behind the [1G Collective at Fontbonne](#). She states first-generation students suffer from “imposter syndrome”, in which college students feel they do not belong in their own college environment. The 1G Collective program at Fontbonne was founded two years ago, aiding first-generation college students in their time at Fontbonne. The 1G Collective program helps acclimate first-generation college students into college, but aids in helping those who are graduating as well.

Simons stated that graduating first-generation college students have difficulties applying to jobs, knowing how their skills transfer, and choosing benefits when they do get a job. The first-generation college student does not stop feeling like an “imposter,” merely transferring their feeling to the work world. Looking at a list of qualifications

for jobs can be daunting, but not knowing what jobs to apply for and how to advertise yourself is just as daunting. The 1G Collective also aims to help first-generation students become knowledgeable about negotiating pay and benefits. Overall, the 1G Collective program offers a safe environment for those who feel they are an imposter in college life and beyond.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for first-generation college students, according to Simons, is envisioning a career path. Often times, first-generation students are unaware of the paths their majors and college experience can take them. Looking only at the linear career path, first-generation students struggle to realize that where they start in their careers may often not be where they end up. Their major can be applied to multiple fields, not just the most obvious option. Without exposure to this first hand, the students expect their careers to follow exactly what they majored in.

### **Other Fontbonne Resources**

So what are other ways to combat first-generation student struggles? Using Fontbonne resources wisely! According to Simons, first-generation college students tend to perceive asking for help as a sign of their own failure. However, asking for help is a natural part of learning and being a student. The 1G Collective is a great program to get involved with and use as a resource. However, the 1G Collective is just one of the great resources available here at Fontbonne.

[The Career Development](#) office, located in Student Affairs, aids in resumes, interview prep, and even job applications. It's as simple as setting up an appointment. While trial and error may be effective in the long run when it comes to doing job interviews, resources are right on campus to avoid the "error" part as much as you can. Set up an appointment or come to their walk-in hours: Either way, Career Development is there to help Fontbonne students succeed outside the classroom.

Don't want to set up a meeting? Talk to a professor you trust. Overall, Fontbonne is filled with great resources to arm you with the best resume and interview skills you can possibly have. Most of the time, the professors you confide in know you on an individual level, allowing more personal advice to be given. Office hours are there for academic help, but can be used for any other personal mini crises as well.

Fontbonne's 1G Collective is a unique way to get involved and receive help as a first-generation student. Thanks to the program, first-generation college students strip their "imposter" identity, stepping into their careers with confidence. The career world is a new frontier for first-generation college students; Fontbonne has the ability to arm students with valuable information as they enter it. First-generation college students may have to jump through hoops others do not, but Fontbonne's resources allow them to step into a post-graduation world fully prepared to jump through them.



OPINION

## 5 Fun Things To Do With Your Diploma

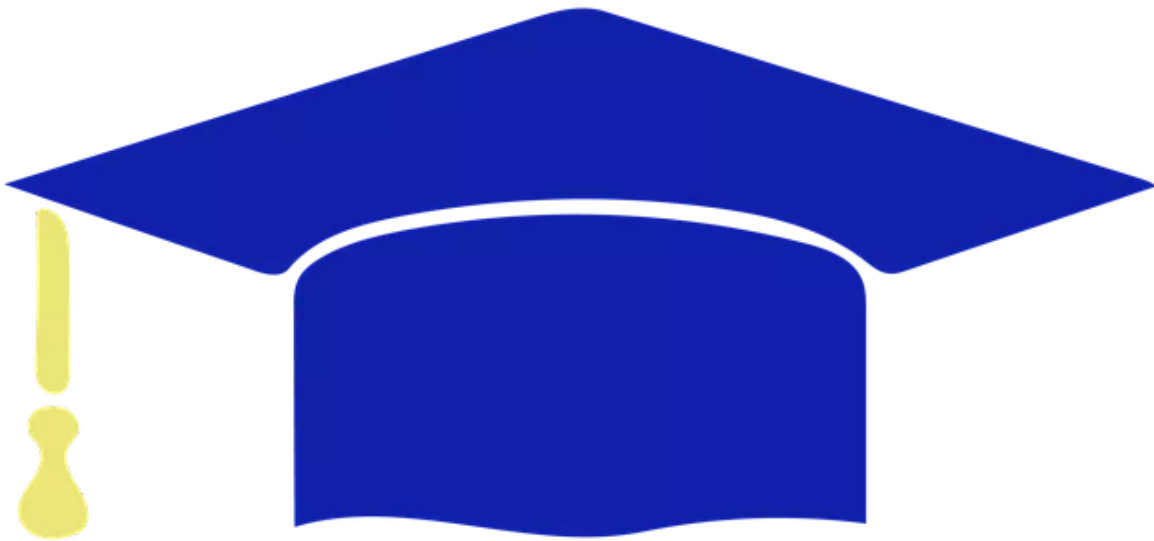
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BY AMETHYST BROCK

MAY 2, 2018

 COMMENTS 0



Finally.

After years of dedication, late-night study sessions, a large accumulation of debt, and the other joys that college brings, you are finally going to graduate and obtain a diploma. The diploma may seem like a single piece of paper that you are to just hang up in a frame on your wall, but that is not all that you can do with it. You've spent a lot of money and time to obtain it, so you need to get as much use out of it as you can.

### **1. Take it out on the town**

You've basically spent thousands and thousands of dollars on it, so you might as well show it off to the world! Take it out to a nice restaurant and go wine and dine with it. Make sure you wear your fanciest attire and that your diploma is in that nice frame you got from the store for \$10. Let it order anything off the menu and let the good times roll!

### **2. Talk to others about your diploma**



No, I don't mean talk about your degree, but just talk about the fact that you have a college diploma. Talk about the sleek style of font, and that it is a physical representation of your accomplishment that you need to share with everyone and anyone that passes your path. Make a game out of it! See how many times you can slip

it in normal conversation before the person just stops talking to you and walks away. It is fun for everyone, and you will be sure to get a laugh out of it.

### **3. Make it your therapist**

Everyone has their issues but let's be honest, therapists are expensive. Especially when you have yet to find a job that will either let you have insurance or pay you enough to go see one. Your diploma will be the perfect therapist, just without the psychology degree. It will sit quietly as you pour your heart out about the many problems in your life. There will be no worry of judgment, either. Sure, it won't be able to provide you with any worthwhile advice or guidance, but how often do you take the advice you are given anyways?

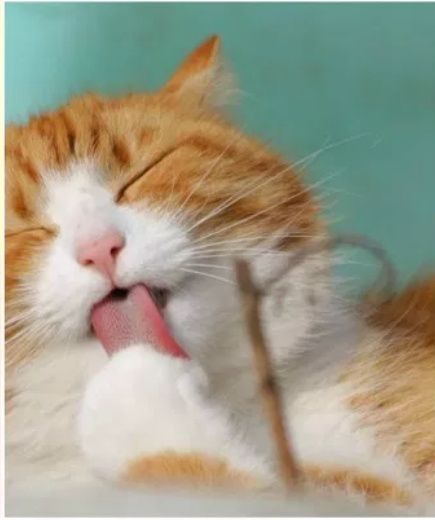
### **4. Befriend it**



Remember your friends that you haven't talked to in years because you were buried under papers and textbooks? Well, you don't need them or any type of human interaction. You already have the perfect friend: your diploma. It won't ever interrupt you or talk over you. You never have to worry about having to listen to stories about

their awful significant other or their conspiracy theories about the lizard people. You won't run the risk of having an argument about opposing political views.

## 5. Make it your pet



You may be thinking that if you wanted a pet, you would get a real one. That may be true but having a diploma as a pet is by tenfold superior to Fido or Mr. Whiskers. You never have to feed or water it. It will never chew up your favorite shoes and pee on your blankets. It won't hog your bed or couch. You can also dress it up in cute costumes! There will be no loud barking or meowing in the middle of the night, and you will wake up every morning smiling as it stares at you silently from its place on the wall. It will stare deeply into your soul as it serves as a reminder that [they who should not be named] will be coming to your door in 6 months. Doesn't that make it the perfect pet?



ADVICE

## Graduation, the Most Important Part of College: 5 Life Lessons Learned from Commencement Speeches



BY CHELCIE LEWIS  
MAY 2, 2018

 COMMENTS 0





As graduation approaches, many of you may be reflecting on your past four years here. You might think of the friends you've made or the obstacles you've overcome. Perhaps the lessons you've learned come to mind as well, and although you may have learned many that hold important value to your success in your career field, there are some lessons you won't learn in any classroom or internship. In fact, there are many lessons that can only be learned through experiencing the journey called life. Although no one really knows how life will play out, wouldn't it be nice if someone gave us a heads-up? Well, these five commencement speeches, given by some of the most well-known people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, do just that.

### **1. Say "yes and..."**

In 2015, former SNL cast member, Maya Rudolph, gave the [commencement speech](#) to Tulane's graduating class. Her advice? Always say "yes, and...", a lesson she learned in thespian school. When asked a question, say yes. Be open to new adventures and experiences, but never leave it at yes. Simply saying yes has a way of finalizing things, of closing the door on so many opportunities before they even have the chance to begin. Instead, say "yes, and..." This leaves the door open to endless possibilities, not just career wise, but life in general. The idea of saying "yes, and..." keeps you moving forward.

## **2. Let others speak**

Former President Barack Obama left the 2016 graduating class of Howard University with many tips for a successful life during his [commencement speech](#). One of the most useful tips was to let others speak. The take away here is this: Regardless of whether you agree with someone, you should still give them the podium. Allow them to speak their mind; to express their stand on opinions, even if they are wrong. During the speech, Obama recalls advice his grandmother gave him saying, “every time a fool speaks, they are just advertising their own ignorance. Let them talk. If you don’t, you just make them a victim, and then they can avoid accountability.”

## **3. Be true to yourself**

In her [comedic commencement speech](#) to the graduating class of 2009 at Tulane University, Ellen DeGeneres advises the graduates to be true to themselves. Although this is the most common advice given, it is often seen as easier said than done. Ellen uses her own life experiences to give a real-life example of how much better life can be when you “live your life with integrity and not to give into peer pressure to try to be something that you’re not. To live your life as an honest and compassionate person.” The outcome of being true to yourself always outweighs that of attempting to be someone that you’re not. The idea might seem scary, because let’s be honest, not everyone will like who you are, but you will and that’s all that matters. When you stay true to yourself, you feel better about the things you accomplish. So, remain authentic. Your successes hold so much more meaning when you don’t compromise your integrity.

## **4. Fall forward**

The key point of actor Denzel Washington’s [commencement speech](#) to the University of Pennsylvania’s graduating class of 2011 was the idea of “falling forward.” Often in life people tell you to make sure you have a backup plan; something to fall back on in case things don’t go the way you plan. Washington expressed his dislike of this popular concept stating, “if I’m going to fall, I don’t want to fall back on anything, except my faith. I want to fall forward. At least this way I’ll see what I’m going to hit.” Washington wanted the graduates to embrace their failures as a step forward, not a step backwards, because “every failed experiment is one step closer to success.” He encourages the class of 2011 to take risks; it’s the only way to reach success through failure.

## **5. Embrace your place within the many**

Writer Zadie Smith’s life tip to [The New School’s graduating class of 2014](#) was to acknowledge and embrace “your place within the many”. Far too often we find ourselves entertaining the idea of solipsism – the idea that we are better off on our own, the more private, the better. Smith encourages the graduates to embrace being a part of the world. “Don’t let your fellow humans be alien to you, and as you get older and perhaps a little less open than you are now, don’t assume that exclusive always and everywhere means better. It may only mean lonelier,” she says. Instead, see your connection to others as a privilege; a way of correcting what is wrong in society.

In a perfect world, you have the next chapter of your life all mapped out, but that’s not how life works. At some point, you’ll make pit stops or wrong turns; you’ll encounter detours or bumper-to-bumper traffic. But regardless of what you plan to do with your life, or what life plans to do with you, these lessons, along with the ones you’ll learn during your own commencement ceremony, can help you along your journey.

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#### ABOUT CHELCIE LEWIS

I'm a senior and a Professional Writing major. I most enjoy writing about others, as well as giving helpful advice.

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