

Generation: FIRST

To date, 114 members of UC Riverside's faculty have self-identified as first-generation college students. Here are some of their stories, in their own words. Visit firstgen.ucr.edu for more information on UCR's First Generation campaign.

Cynthia K. Larive

Provost, executive vice chancellor

"As a first-generation student, I was always worried about, 'Was I good enough, could I do it?' To be a first-generation student means that you are a pioneer. That you are blazing a trail for you and for those in your family that come after you, and it's an exciting opportunity to be the first. My advice is to realize that you are good enough, you can do it, and that the whole of UCR is here to support you."



Sharon Oselin

Associate professor, sociology

"I didn't really know what I wanted to do in terms of my major. I had a lot of anxiety about that! I switched majors a lot. I had this fantasy that I was going to be a doctor — a medical doctor. I am a doctor now, but I had no idea I wanted to be a professor. That idea never crossed my mind, especially coming from a household like I did. The first two years, especially, are the time to try different courses, get exposed to different disciplines, and not necessarily rush into a major."



Flip Tanedo

Assistant professor, physics

"Many of the high-achieving people around me were a step ahead because they had parents who were academics or professionals. They had stronger math and science backgrounds, already did research, knew how to talk to professors, and knew how to succeed in college. It didn't seem fair that other people already knew the roadmap to do well before they even came here. I had to figure those things out from watching other people and finding the right mentors. One thing I came to appreciate, though, is that the race we're running is a marathon and that these ended up being small differences in starting position."



Carole-Anne Tyler

Associate professor, English

"One of my very first classes was French. It met at 8 a.m., and my teacher asked how many of us had been to France. Everyone in the room but me raised a hand. I never talked in class because of that. I thought my classmates really knew the language and culture because they'd been to France. Meanwhile, I had a perfect score on the national achievement exam in French and all A's in my high school French classes. It never occurred to me that my classmates had probably gone with mom and dad on a two-week vacation to France, which hardly made them experts."

