Whereas: A first generation college student is someone whose parents never attended college or may have attended college but did not complete their bachelor’s degree; and

Whereas: The unique challenges faced by first generation students on college campuses is well-documented scholarly literature, and many campuses around the state and nation have begun to take steps to meet this need; and

Whereas: Local universities such as UC Berkeley and San Francisco State University provide first generation students with the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) that provides mentoring, advising, financial support, tutoring services, and workshops specifically geared to their specific needs; and

Whereas: Following the Jesuit tradition of cura personalis and being men and women for others, Georgetown University, Loyola University Chicago, and Santa Clara University provide first generation students with year-long peer mentorship programs, summer bridge programs, seminars, advising, financial support, priority registration, and many other benefits; and

Whereas: USF prides itself in being ranked “sixth on U.S. News & World Report’s 2016 list of top universities for undergraduate student ethnic diversity” and as number one on its 2013 list of non-historically black colleges and universities that have excellent programs for minority students by DiverseEducation.com; and

Whereas: USF’s mission is to “distinguish itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice”; and

Whereas: In Fall of 2015, 34 percent of the students in the freshman class came from families whose parents or guardians did not complete a college degree; and

Whereas: In a survey sent out to the USF community in September 2016 regarding the need for a First Generation Student Center, 39.5 percent of the 43 students that responded did not know of any programs on campus specifically for first generation students; and

Whereas: In a survey sent out by the Residence Hall Association in October 2016, 80.7 percent of the 88 students that responded did not know of any programs on campus specifically for first generation students; and

Whereas: Currently the only program dedicated to first generation students is the Muscat Scholars Program, “a community designed to provide incoming first-year, first-generation USF students with mentors, structured support, previews to the academic and social experience, and seamless transition through the first year and beyond”; and

Whereas: Muscat Scholars Program is capped at approximately 50-60 students per cohort; and

Whereas: Muscat Scholars participants are housed on two floors on Hayes Healy Residence Hall during their first year to help foster community and support from fellow first generation students; and
Whereas: After their first year, Muscat Scholars do not have a structured housing arrangement for them to continue to foster and grow that community; and

Whereas: During ASUSF Fall Summit, student leaders expressed that they did not apply to the Muscat Scholars Program either because they could not commit to the early arrival required by the program or because they found out about it way too late; and

Whereas: First Generation Student Collective takes place in the Cultural Centers and serves as a space to create community with other First Generation Students, however it is only once a month; and

Whereas: Based on the survey, 0 percent of the students that responded felt like there was sufficient resources on campus to support them; and

Whereas: Only 3 percent of the students that responded felt like there are many faculty/staff on campus who are knowledgeable about the first generation student experience; and

Whereas: 2.7 percent of the students that responded felt there was a space on campus for them to engage with other first generation students; and

Whereas: 100 percent of the students that responded would find an office dedicated to first generation students useful on our campus; and

Whereas: A student, who was part of the Muscat Scholars Program, response to why there is a need to have a First Generation Student Resource Center was:

“I was a part of MSP, but I know that many students who identify as first-gen and did not do the program do not feel very supported at USF. Also, I think that it would be a good way to continue supporting students (even if they did MSP) because the issues they address can be more specific. Char and MSP is amazing, but sometimes the support offered is very geared towards first year students. As a senior about to graduate, my needs are much different than a first year student, and I think that having a specific office for first-gen students can address these differently than MSP. MSP is amazing, but I do understand that it is a lot of needs for one person to address practically alone (Char).”

Whereas: Students feel there is a need for an office that understands the unique struggles of being a first generation student and that can provide a comfortable space, this is the response of another student:

“I think the office would be useful because administrative support is important. Instead of reading everything online, we can communicate with an individual who is passionate and understands our situation. We wouldn't be seen as some statistic or some clueless student. I've been to One Stop to ask for help for financial aid and I did not feel welcomed. I do not think the people I was talking to were sensitive to the fact that I could've been a first generation college student. Honestly, I still do not understand a lot of logistical stuff like how financial aid works and tuition. The office would provide another space for first generation college students to receive the support and empathy we need to foster better relationships with USF faculty.”
Whereas: First Generation students need a space where there is a staff dedicated to help them with financial aid questions and assistance, graduate school process, life after graduation, creating events for community building, workshops on basic life skills such as filing taxes or how to write an email to a professor, and how to navigate college as a first generation student; therefore, be it

Resolved by ASUSF Senate of the University of San Francisco, representing all the undergraduate students of the University: That the University of San Francisco support the current and growing number of first generation students by establishing a First Generation Student Center that will be overseen by the Division of Student Life and Diversity Engagement and Community Outreach dedicated to the support of the specific and unique needs of the first generation student population; furthermore, be it

Resolved: Within this office, there will be a full-time staff of at least 3 people, 1 graduate student intern, and at least 2 student staff workers that are dedicated to helping first generation students through not only their first year transition but throughout their four years at the university; furthermore, be it

Resolved: The staff that is hired for this office be first generation students themselves or have knowledge of working with first generation students, be a person of color or identify with other traditionally underrepresented and marginalized groups, be culturally competent, and have a strong passion for social justice and equity; furthermore, be it

Resolved: After a year of this office being established, there will be additions to the full-time staff so that the responsibility of many students doesn’t fall on a small group of people; furthermore, be it

Resolved: A physical space to be placed on UC 3rd or 4th floor that has enough room for the number of staff suggested, as well as, space for a small lounge and lending library; furthermore, be it

Resolved: A continuing student’s floor should be established in one of the residence halls to allow first generation students to continue fostering community and have strong support during their unique college challenges and experiences.

Resolved: That these above statements be completed and implemented by Fall 2019.

Submitted by: Anjelica Zamora, ASUSF Senior Class Representative
Presented: Tuesday, March 7, 2017
Signed: Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Shaya Kara, ASUSF President