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Fearless Friday: Raegan Gawronski

Raegan Gawronski
Gettysburg College

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Fearless Friday: Raegan Gawronski

Abstract

This week, we are honoring Raegan Gawronski '19. Raegan is a Women and Gender Sexuality Studies and Philosophy double major from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On campus, she works as a senior intern for the Office of Multicultural Engagement, and is currently in the process of starting a First-Generation Student Organization on campus. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Fearless, Fearless Friday, first generation, Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, office of multicultural engagement, Surge

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement

Comments

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS FRIDAY: RAEGAN GAWRONSKI

October 26, 2018

This week, we are honoring Raegan Gawronski '19. Raegan is a Women and Gender Sexuality Studies and Philosophy double major from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On campus, she works as a senior intern for the Office of Multicultural Engagement, and is currently in the process of starting a First-Generation Student Organization on campus.

As a first-generation student herself, Raegan took part in Philadelphia Futures when she was in high school. Philadelphia Futures is a nonprofit organization that helps low-income, first-generation students get to and through college. When Raegan first came to Gettysburg, there was the Intercultural Resources Center, and now the Office of Multicultural Engagement, but there was no specific programming for first-generation students. Raegan brought this up with directors of OME, and ever since they have been working together to create better resources for first-generation students.

For Raegan, one of the most difficult parts of getting the first-generation students programming going is “getting over the stigma of being first-generation. You never immediately know if someone is first-generation, and it’s not really a question you would ask to another student. Many people aren’t comfortable saying they are first-generation.” However, one of the easiest parts of the process is that “lots of students are really thrilled that they are starting this program, everyone is so passionate about it.”

With this programming, Raegan hopes to “raise awareness of first-generation college students, lots of people have different backgrounds and experiences and it is often overlooked.” At the beginning of this year, Raegan started having pop-up hours, a set block of time when any first-generation student could come ask a question, such as “How do I declare a major?”, “What is an academic advisor?”, “How do I manage my time?” Raegan would sit and help them and there was a lot of people at the beginning of the year, but now the need is less. Instead, Raegan has been working on marketing and determining exactly what programming is needed. Some of the possibilities she hopes to see in the future is “getting faculty involved and having a mentorship aspect, working on a first-generation website, providing easier access to the funds available to first-generation students.”

Before she graduates, Raegan would love to see “some sort of signature event centered around first-generation students.” After graduation, she hopes that “awareness around first-generation students

improves, more people become aware that there are first-generation students on campus, and people feel more comfortable identifying with being first-generation.” For Raegan, she is a firm believer that you can choose your own family, and she has had many people in her life who have gotten her where she is now. Her experience in Philadelphia Futures, the high school mentors and counselors, and many others have always cared about her, and she wants to be that to someone else. She hopes that first-generation students always feel like there is somebody within reach, and that they never feel like they have no one.

Working with these students has pushed Raegan to look to applying for Teach for America after graduation, as working one on one is something she’s passionate about and how she hopes to affect change in the future. After furthering her education, one day, Raegan would love to be director of an Office of Multicultural Engagement or a similar program at another college.

Thanks for all of your great work Raegan, we wish you the best in the future!