

LANCE BECK, Dept of Natural Sciences, Forensic Science Program, Fairmont State University, Fairmont, WV 26554 and KRISTY HENSON, Dept of Natural Sciences, Forensic Science Program, Fairmont State University, Fairmont, WV 26554. First2 Network at Fairmont State University

First2 Network is an organization that focuses on underrepresented students in college. These underrepresented STEM students in First2 are first generation, persons of color, LGBTQIA+, Appalachian, low income, or financially disabled. First2 helps these students by increasing their likelihood of graduation by allowing students to do hands-on research with faculty, receive a stipend, and attend conferences at around the state. First2 also offers immersion programs throughout West Virginia. The immersive programs are available to high school seniors who plan on attending college and fit into one or more of the underrepresented groups. The immersive program places students on college campuses to conduct two-weeks of hands-on research and receive an educational stipend for their hard work. Upon completion of the immersive program students are eligible to become First2 Scholars. These scholars conduct research throughout the academic year, create lasting friendships, and attend scholarly conferences. The First2 initiative is beneficial for all underrepresented STEM students and a great opportunity.