

An Overview of Post-Secondary Support Programs for Former Foster Youth



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Preface

The Ball State University/Ivy Tech Community College (BSU/IT) Guardian Scholars program, after being in existence for 2 years, decided it was time to disseminate information regarding best practices and lessons learned to assist new programs in the development of post-secondary supports for former foster youth. The staff approached Lumina Foundation for Education about providing a Supplemental Grant to continue the program and complete this project. Lumina Foundation awarded the Supplemental Grant for use in calendar year 2006 - 2007.

The Guardian Scholars staff decided that the best written guide would include feedback from all of the programs providing post-secondary support for former foster youth. Staff interviewed the coordinators/directors of many of these programs and summarized the information into this document. It is important to note that this report does not include information from all post-secondary support programs serving former foster youth, as not all of these programs were able to participate in the study. This document includes an overview of the BSU/IT Guardian Scholars program, information on other programs, and recommendations for essential program components and pitfalls to avoid.

Post-secondary programs were identified by Orangewood Children's Foundation, contacts made by the BSU/IT Guardian Scholars staff at the second annual gathering of post-secondary programs serving former foster youth, and word of mouth. Sixteen programs were contacted and all agreed to participate. The project consisted of two phases. First, a questionnaire was designed and emailed to each program director/coordinator asking for general information about the program, such as number of students, staffing, and budget information. It was requested that the program director/coordinator complete the questionnaire and return it before the second phase. The second phase was a follow-up telephone interview with each program director/coordinator to obtain information related to strengths of their particular program, challenges to starting new programs and advice to those starting a program. All interviews were conducted by the same person, the coordinator of the BSU/IT Guardian Scholars program in Indiana. During the phone interview process, the general program information from the questionnaire was requested if it had not yet been received. The interviews were initiated in November of 2006 and completed in March of 2007.

The data from telephone interviews with the directors/coordinators of post-secondary support programs serving former foster youth were transcribed into word documents. There were two separate documents for each program: one for answers to open ended questions and one for programmatic information. The data were analyzed using the case study approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 1998). The "cases" included

programs in higher education that offered support (financial or other) for former foster youth in order to help them complete a degree program. In a case study, the “analysis consists of making a detailed description of the case and its setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 153). Stake (1995) recommends the study include four levels of analysis and interpretation (categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, patterns, and naturalistic generalization). The analysis included all four of these levels in the present study. Creswell’s (1998) fifth dimension (description) was also included in the analysis.

The five stage analysis began with data entry and “categorical aggregation.” Data were first entered into the qualitative analysis software program, Qualrus® (Idea Works, 2007). Microsoft Word documents were entered for each program interviewed. This stage of data analysis simply sought to find all relevant sources of data, and the collection of transcribed interviews with all program directors included a diverse sampling of programs. These programs have different approaches and methods for helping former foster youth succeed in college.

The second step in the analysis was to use “direct interpretation.” Each transcript was read entirely, before any formal analysis was conducted. The purpose of this process was to develop codes which were used to mark passages of text. Each transcript was coded using Qualrus software. Some of the codes included: strengths, needs, challenges, marketing, choosing and recruiting students, determining needs and services, trailblazing, planning, funding and growth, retention and tracking, and evaluation. Meaningful units of text were highlighted using the software. Each section of transcript usually had some kind of coding; some units were several sentences and others were only a phrase.

The third step in the analysis involved finding patterns within the data. After all the coding was completed, sheets with all of the codings (compiled for all the data) were printed. Each example of text that fit with a particular code (across transcripts) was included on the code sheets. Some codes had many examples (12 pages of units pertaining to each code) and some had only a few units that fit the code. The code units were analyzed to find patterns within the codes and across programs. For example, the code “challenge” was separated into 5 additional codes: structural challenges, systemic challenges, student needs and challenges, staffing challenges, and process challenges.

The fourth step in the analysis included “naturalistic generalizations.” This process included a separate section of “best practices,” which was a summary of what worked well for programs. The process involved returning again to the transcripts in their full form (constant comparative method) to be sure the example or illustration was not taken out of context and that it was a good illustration of the concept being used as an example.

The final stage of analysis involved giving a description of two types of programs. These “case studies” were used as summaries of two different approaches to the program. These descriptions included background of the program, challenges faced by each program, and strengths of each program. This final stage involved giving generalizations about each type of approach and the outcomes.

A Look at the BSU/IT Guardian Scholars Program

Overview

The Indiana Guardian Scholars program, coordinated by the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Ball State University, has been in existence since January of 2004. Guardian Scholars provides support and guidance to former foster care students (and future students) attending Ball State University and Ivy Tech Community College East Central (Muncie, Anderson and Marion campuses). Ball State University is a state supported 4-year institution, while Ivy Tech is Indiana's community college system. This pairing of both community college and traditional college settings provides the students with an opportunity for a seamless transition from the community college to the university (or vice versa, if the student is unable to be successful in a larger university setting).

When many college students would naturally turn to their parents or caregivers with questions, students in the program turn to Guardian Scholars for encouragement and guidance. Staff try to function as a stable support system for the students, connecting with them on a personal level by acting as advocates, role models, and mentors. The number of students in the program varies, but has generally stayed close to 30. Most of the students have been served on the Ball State University campus or Muncie campus of Ivy Tech. This is primarily because there is office

space for the program on both of these campuses and there are limited staff resources to cover the other two campuses (Marion and Anderson). A few students have been served on the Marion and Anderson campuses, but the contact is generally limited and the students' connectedness to the program is not at the same level as those who can just stop by an office when they need something. The Ball State University office consists of an office space for two staff members and a student workstation. In addition, students have access to a shared computer lab, conference room, kitchen area, and classroom space. Space at Ivy Tech consists of a shared office space with the Lifesteps program (a TRIO funded program).

Services include academic encouragement and guidance, soft skill improvement (e.g., professional etiquette, such as how to dress and proper hygiene), leadership development, access to community and campus resources (including tutoring), career exploration, and financial aid education and advocacy. Daily interactions with students vary and may include planned meetings, crisis driven problem solving, and simple drop-in services. Planned meetings might include a review of financial aid, budgeting, academic progress, assistance with homework, or planning for housing over breaks. Crisis interactions might include housing issues or evictions, students missing tests or doing poorly on a test, students feeling overwhelmed or lonely, and other needs that are emergency in

nature. Most other interactions are simple drop-in services. For example, the student may need to use a computer, phone, fax, get a snack, hang out between classes, or just need to talk.

How it started...

The Guardian Scholars program began as a pilot project funded by Lumina Foundation for Education. The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) was invited to respond to Lumina Foundation's request for proposals due to its work in the child welfare arena, including assistance around developing and implementing state policy for Chafee Independent Living services for current and former foster youth. The SSRC is an interdisciplinary research and service program sponsored by the Ball State College of Sciences and Humanities and the Department of Social Work. Established in 1981, the SSRC provides support to college faculty and public or private organizations for the development and completion of funded social science research or service projects. The Center also offers community organizations technical assistance in planning, research, and evaluation. The SSRC has a long and successful history of working with the State and has provided a variety of services to the Department of Child Services (formerly Division of Family and Children), local offices of the DCS, and service providers in the area of child welfare and independent living. The SSRC has served as Regional Child Welfare Services Coordinator since 1985. In this capacity, assistance has been provided for the development and evaluation of services targeting child abuse and neglect, as well as services for older teens who have or will be aged out of the child welfare system and are in need of skills and services to prepare them for independent living.



Staffing...

The BSU/IT Guardian Scholars program has gone through several different staffing configurations. In the early days of the program, the staffing included one full-time coordinator and two graduate assistants along with a portion of the SSRC Assistant Director's time and a portion of the SSRC Director's time for supervisory and administrative support. The original model was for the graduate assistants to provide the one-on-one service to the students, while the coordinator would handle building the model, other administrative duties, and speaking at or attending outreach engagements. The original coordinator of the program became very involved in student services and utilized the graduate assistants more for administrative activities. While this configuration seemed to be working for the program, the coordinator reported feeling overwhelmed and torn between handling administrative functions and providing student services. One of the graduate assistantships was dissolved and a part-time staff member was recruited to provide services to students on the Ivy Tech campuses. This staff member was already involved in the Ivy Tech system as an adjunct instructor and had many contacts within

that system. Both the original coordinator and the part-time staff member have moved on to other employment opportunities. Due to the difficult nature of recruiting quality part-time professional staff, especially one with connections on the Ivy Tech campuses, the new coordinator decided to go back to the original model utilizing two graduate assistants. The current graduate assistants are counseling psychology students who are closely supervised by the coordinator. Even though their training is in counseling, the graduate assistants do not provide professional counseling in this position; students are referred out for professional mental health services. The coordinator has a cellular phone line for the graduate assistants or individual Guardian Scholars students to call if they need emergency assistance. Students have rarely used the emergency number; and when they have, it was a true crisis. This configuration seems to be working well and offers great opportunities for the graduate assistants. It also frees time for the coordinator to handle reporting requirements, local and national presentations and to be directly addressing the sustainability of the program.

SSRC and Guardian Scholars staff members have backgrounds in social work, clinical psychology, sociology, adult education, and counseling; this provides a true interdisciplinary approach for the program. Staff members need to be able to assist students academically as well as socially and emotionally. This program is as much a human service program as it is an academic program. Specifically, the staff provides one-on-one attention to the students' needs and emotions which builds trust and self esteem. The staff members also introduce the students to supportive people in various departments and offices within the college or university and also in the community. By taking the time to introduce them to other people in the college, they are telling the students that they are important not only to Guardian Scholars staff but also to others who will

work with them. This contact encourages students to be proactive when problems arise because they know who to go to and who they can trust to truly help them. The one-on-one attention, in addition to contacts with key people on campus and in the community, and along with encouragement to be proactive in solving problems and planning for the future, fosters independence in these students.

Early Steps & Struggles...

One of the first steps taken by the Social Science Research Center and Guardian Scholars program staff included making contact with the Guardian Scholars program staff at CalState Fullerton in California. Since CalState Fullerton was the first program of its kind, it seemed important to gather their input early on. While their input was invaluable, the program Ball State University and Ivy Tech Community College wanted to build was significantly different than that of CalState Fullerton. BSU/IT wanted to develop a program open to all Ball State and Ivy Tech students who had been in foster care at some point after their 14th birthday.

Since the BSU/IT program did not have scholarship funding connected to it and the staff wanted to



maintain an open door enrollment policy, staff did not feel like an application based program model, such as that developed by CalState Fullerton, would be appropriate.

By working with the Ball State and Ivy Tech financial aid offices, staff set out to identify students eligible for the program. The first issue encountered was selecting students based on the FAFSA question which asked if the student was an orphan or ward of the court. It was found that students from the prison system were included in this selection; these students had been instructed to answer “yes” to that question. Financial aid staff had to go back and remove those students from the list. Information and recruitment letters were mailed to the remaining students informing them of the program and inviting them to make contact with the staff.

Setting up the network...

The next step taken was to recruit staff from each of the key offices on the different campuses to create a Stakeholders’ Committee. This group was to serve as an advisory committee to assist with program development and student issues. More importantly, these people would go on to become the main contact in each office that is aware of the issues facing former foster youth and be the “expert” in solving those issues as they relate to their particular area. For example, the financial aid stakeholder became an expert in scholarships, grants, and other aid specifically available to former foster youth. The Guardian Scholars students are able to schedule a meeting with her to address their financial aid concerns. It is essential that programs develop a network of campus staff who understand the specific needs of these students. This would include a key

individual in each of the student service offices on campus who agrees to be the contact person for the students. This helps eliminate the student’s need to explain their situation to a new person each time. The student can simply say they belong to the program and the individual will understand what that means and how to best serve them. Having this network in place ensures that each campus office is aware of the special needs of the students. Further, if for some reason a Guardian Scholars staff member cannot be reached, these individuals could assist the students. In addition, having “experts” in each office means the Guardian Scholars staff do not have to be experts in everything.

Stakeholders’ Committee

Representatives from the following offices are key to include in a stakeholders committee:

- Financial Aid
- Academic Advisors
- Academic Resources
- Student Affairs
- Counseling Services
- Health Center
- Development
- Local Independent Living providers
- On-campus Housing
- Multicultural center/program
- TRIO program (or other program targeting a similar population),
- Disabled Student Development
- Admissions
- Career Center
- Institutional Research
- Key funders, donors and community members

Originally, Stakeholders' meetings were proposed to be held monthly. The early meetings were held primarily to introduce the Stakeholders to the program and explain the special needs of former foster care students. After that time, when the Stakeholders were committed to the program, meetings were changed to once per semester. That time was used to inform the Stakeholders of current program issues or updates. Individual student issues were addressed one-on-one with the appropriate Stakeholder.

After developing the Stakeholders' Committee, the next step was to inform community agencies about the program. This included Independent Living providers, local residential placement agencies, foster parents, school counselors, and Department of Child Services staff. These community agencies would serve an important role in referring students to the program. The school counselors were an especially important link, since they were advising students on their academic path. The local community foundation, the Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County, funded a project entitled "Jump to College." This project involved dissemination of information on the Guardian Scholars program and post-secondary access for foster youth. It included developing an electronic resource list for high school students in foster care. The resource information was compiled and programmed to function through Internet Explorer as a website without the student needing to be online. If the student was able to access the internet, links were included to various resource pages. This format proved to be easy for students and high school counselors to navigate. The information was distributed in a "Jump to College" kit including a jump (USB) drive with the resource information as well as other college information all packaged in a carrying case. Guardian Scholars staff met with the local high school counselors and distributed the kits. The counselors passed this information on to current foster youth and several contacted the

Guardian Scholars program for more information and assistance. A CD version of this information was distributed at the Indiana Computer Camps for foster youth and to all attendees of the Indiana Independent Living Youth Conferences. The Computer Camps and Youth Conferences were sponsored by the Indiana Department of Child Services and the Ball State University Social Science Research Center.

Developing the Program Model...

In the early days of the program staff tried several different ways to make the program fit a "formal" process. They developed intake procedures and forms to complete during the initial meeting with the student. It seemed as though the students who transitioned directly from foster care into the Guardian Scholars program as first year students seemed to fit the "formal" process. A staff member would meet with the student, complete program enrollment paperwork, and the student would then become an official Guardian Scholar. But for other students, especially those who were already enrolled at Ball State or Ivy Tech, the formalized process did not seem to work well. These older students usually did not simply hear about the program and enroll. There was generally some crisis that resulted in them seeking assistance. These older students may have known about the program for some time, but did not believe they needed assistance until a crisis arose. Many of them had left the foster care system and felt reluctant to enter what they saw as another "system." The problems that first brought them to Guardian Scholars had usually reached a critical phase and had varied from homelessness to academic dismissal, financial aid suspension, relationship problems, child-care concerns, medical needs, depression, expressions of anxiety, suicidal thoughts and learning disabilities.

Many of the crises were not academic in nature; they were in essence basic need issues. One reason for the breakdown in basic needs might have been that prior to this program, these students did not have adequate social, life, or academic supports in place. Once these older students became involved with the program, the first thing that had to happen was to get them stabilized. Until these basic needs were met, students would not succeed academically. Staff were aware that these problems would arise when serving this student population, but were not aware of the magnitude of the problems. They tried to maintain a degree of flexibility within the program to allow for the best possible service to these students. Guardian Scholars staff learned early on that they must prove to the students that they were trustworthy individuals who were looking out for the students' best interests. A forced "formal" program early on with these students would have caused unnecessary road blocks to solving the urgent problems. Once the problems were solved, they could be expected to give back to the program in terms of taking a leadership role.

When developing this program, the staff were planning for the main focus to be on academics. The staff assumed there would be other foci, but did not predict the huge need for a social skills development portion to the program. Many of the students who enrolled in the program had social skill deficiencies which would make it difficult for them to transition into the workplace. The students needed to learn how and when to share stories about their past experiences, how to interact with others in a positive manner, and how to communicate with others professionally in order to get their needs met. For example, during the first year, one student shared his past with everyone on his dorm floor. The other students were afraid of him and his roommate ultimately moved to another room. While sharing these types of stories would have been acceptable, possibly even encouraged, in past placements (such

as a group home setting), it was not appropriate to share in a college dormitory setting nor would it be advantageous to share these stories in the workplace. The "system" had, in some cases, put foster youth in situations where they had little exposure to youths outside the foster care system. These students also needed to develop skills around appropriate dress, communication, teamwork, and punctuality.

Students also had major academic struggles. Many of the Guardian Scholars were academically unprepared even by community college standards and were using scarce financial resources in unproductive ways. The majority of the students in the community college setting had taken remedial classes (especially in Math and English). Some of these students were completing 20-30 hours of remedial classes, which did not count toward any degree certification or graduation. These non-accredited hours burned financial resources without counting toward any end result. Staff working with these students developed tutoring opportunities and assisted them in identifying academic supports. This situation highlights the need for an academic support program at the local high school level to help create a partnership of academic preparedness that is commensurate with the requirements and time frames of higher education.

Another area of concern that was encountered early on was that some students entering the program did not originally have a goal of going to college. Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds were very successful in encouraging the transition from foster care to college by providing funding for living expenses. It became so much more attractive than the alternatives that some students entered college for this reason, not because they were interested in post-secondary education. Indiana youth aging out of foster care can receive only limited assistance from the state for rent and utilities. Youth aging out of

foster care and entering post-secondary education can receive up to \$5,000 annually until they turn 23 (if they are enrolled in the ETV program at age 21). ETV funds, plus other state and federal aid, made going to college a safer alternative to youths who are sometimes on the verge of homelessness. Independent Living programs, foster homes, and residential placements have been educated and provided with literature on ETV funds and the benefits of encouraging youths to enter post-secondary education. Since the Guardian Scholars program has an open-door policy accepting all enrolled students who are former foster youths, the program sometimes serves students who have too many basic need barriers to be academically successful at this point in their lives.

Based upon observations, staff were also concerned about the effect of biological reunification with family members on some students' academic lives and success. In most cases, this was the first and only time that the Guardian Scholar has had contact with biological family members since "aging-out" of foster care and it placed the student in an at-risk situation for a number of reasons. The students were often not at an emotional or practical skill level to deal with all of the negative ramifications that could occur with this reunification or its ongoing effects. This was often a huge hurdle for these students. The biological family issues through which they have not worked, coupled with other unresolved psychological issues, added increased obstacles to students who were already struggling with living independently.

Many students were having a very difficult time transitioning into college life and adult life. As a result of this observation, the staff of Guardian Scholars began to look at areas where students exhibited high levels of need more closely. These areas were academic, financial and emotional needs. In terms of academics, GPA's, requests for tutoring

assistance and class attendance were monitored. In terms of finances, requests for emergency financial assistance, unmet financial aid need, and delays in the receipt of financial aid assistance were monitored. In terms of the emotional needs of students, requests for mental health services and students' perceived stress levels were monitored. Most students struggled in these areas; however, students who had withdrawn from school had a higher level of requested assistance than did those who stayed in school. More specifically, during the first two years of the program, four students threatened suicide to Guardian Scholars staff, seven students went off their mental health medication for various reasons, including the loss of Medicaid and inability to pay the high cost of these drugs, four students had unexpected pregnancies, ten students worked at jobs with hours that interfered with their academic success, and fourteen students failed all classes in at least one semester. Given these circumstances, it was not surprising that the students were operating in a constant "crisis orientation" mode. This crisis orientation and reactive behavior seemed to be having harmful effects on any consistent academic progress of the students. It was at this time that the staff decided there must be a higher level of commitment from the students in order to be able to plan ahead instead of operating in a crisis mode



all of the time. Beginning in the spring semester of 2006, the students were asked to sign a participation agreement called the Guardian Scholars Pledge. The purpose of the agreement was to increase the academic interactions and the leadership potential of the students. Students were basically signing a contract pledging their desire to be a Guardian Scholar, agreeing to attend regularly scheduled planning meetings with staff, and consenting to participate in group events and leadership activities. This new policy allowed staff to focus on those students who were truly committed to their academic career. Students who were not interested in being Guardian Scholars under this new definition were still provided services but mostly on a referral basis. As part of the pledge, new students were asked to meet with Guardian Scholars staff weekly. Students who had been active in the program for longer were expected to meet every other week or monthly depending on their individual situation. Those who followed the agreement were counted as “active” in the program and received special incentives, including additional leadership opportunities and student-focused motivational items (e.g., academic planners, backpacks, and celebrations for birthdays and graduation).

Active students are eligible for limited funding for emergency needs. Emergency funds are generally related to basic needs of housing, transportation, health care, prescriptions, or food. At times, these funds have been used for unexpected class costs, such as art supplies or supplemental books. Emergency funding is critical as it can sometimes be the difference between students staying in school and dropping out.

Active students are also offered leadership opportunities, which include attendance and even speaking engagements at national and local conferences. These conferences have included the Casey Family Program’s “It’s My Life Conference”, National Convening of Post-Secondary Education Support Programs, Indiana Independent Living Youth Conferences, Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association Annual Conference, Children Our Best Investment (COBI) Conference, and the Pathways to College Conference. For many of the students attending national conferences, this was the first time they had flown in a airplane or even traveled outside of Indiana. Not only do these opportunities teach them presentation skills, but they also teach the students how to interact in a professional setting.

Community Resources Utilized on a Referral Basis:

- Housing/Rent/Utility/Energy Assistance
- Food Pantry
- Medical/Dental
- Employment
- Mental Health Center
- Transportation

A key element to keeping students coming in and meeting with staff is food. Snacks and drinks are available in the BSU/IT offices for the students. This provides staff assurance that students are getting something to eat in case the students do not share their need for food or lack of money to purchase food. It also creates an opportunity to talk about food and nutritional needs and keeps the students connected to the program. The staff is in the process of building a relationship with a local food bank to purchase snacks, quick meals, dry food products, and drinks at a discounted rate.

In addition to ensuring that food is available in the

offices, staff work very hard to be sure that active students have adequate food over breaks, especially those living in the year round dorms when the dining halls close down. Many students do not have family with whom to spend holidays or breaks. Therefore, winter break boxes, which are given to all of the active students, are a way for the program to give gifts and celebrate winter in a non-traditional and non-religious manner. The content of the winter break box has varied over the years but has included food for break, gloves, scarves, socks, homemade cookies, fleece blankets and gift cards. Staff also work to make certain each student has a place to spend the holidays.

In the earlier days of the program, the Guardian Scholars program operated as a drop-in program. Students could drop in at any time, for any reason, and receive services. While this did get students connected to the staff, it tended to encourage their operation in crisis mode, as previously mentioned. As more students felt comfortable just dropping in and spending time in the office, it became increasingly difficult for staff to get non-student work accomplished or hold planned one-on-one meetings with students. The space at the Ball State University and Ivy Tech offices was just not conducive to a drop-in center and recently, changes have been made to encourage appointments and the use of that time to plan preventative measures to avoid crisis oriented behaviors.

Ongoing Challenges...

Guardian Scholars staff continue to struggle with challenges including mental health needs of students, developing lifelong supports for students, finding housing for community college students, space for the program, and determining effective evaluation techniques.

Mental Health Needs of Students

Students often have significant mental health care needs that are either not resolved or are beyond the scope of the BSU Counseling Center. The Center offers time limited counseling services to all Ball State students free of charge. However, few counselors at the university have had any experience with this population, and most of the students in the Guardian Scholars program are in need of long term counseling. Additionally, the Counseling Center utilizes student interns with very little counseling experience. The Ivy Tech students do not have an on-campus counseling center available. Many of the students in the Guardian Scholars program have had counseling in the past that was ineffective and some students have had counselors who did not understand the specific issues of former foster youth, which caused them to be reluctant in seeking counseling services.

Lifelong Support Needs for Students

Staff have struggled with setting up lifelong supports for the students. Staff found early on that they really needed to work with students and develop a plan for after graduation. There are several students who came to the program late in their academic careers and did not seem to be prepared to obtain and maintain a job and lacked supportive adults to assist them once they left the program. For many of these students, their support was the Guardian Scholars program. Staff needed to plan for these supports after college to help ensure a smooth transition out of the program and into adult life. The staff continue to research a best practice mentor program. At the time of this report, BSU residential hall directors were being considered as mentors for the students.

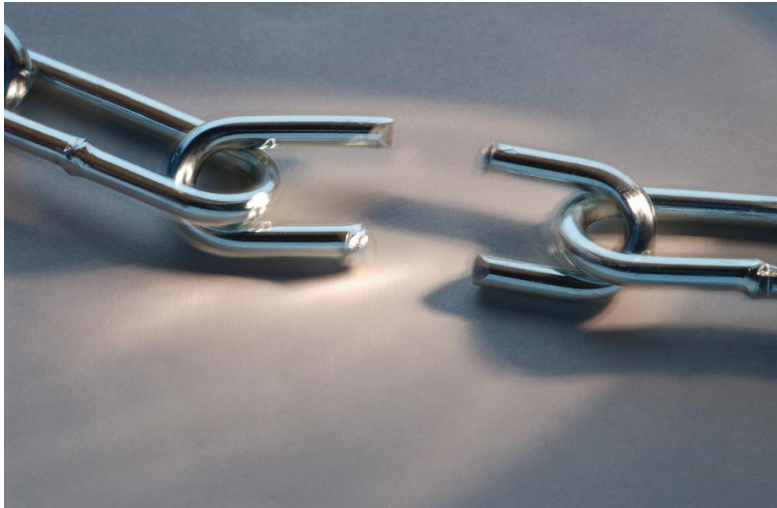
Housing for our Community College Students

Many times the community college students in the Guardian Scholars program do not have their own housing and are forced to live with others, some of whom may not be the best influence on their academic

success. Others have difficulty maintaining their housing once they have it or they are not safe in the areas in which they can afford to live.

Space for the Program

Staff continue to evaluate the appropriate placement of this program within the Ball State University system. While the Social Science Research Center was certainly the correct place to build the program, and currently provides essential administrative and supervisory support to Guardian Scholars staff, it may or may not be the best place to maintain the program in the long run. The staff are encouraging planned



meetings with students to reduce the amount of drop-in traffic, but some students have reported that they prefer drop-in services and would like workspace between classes, which is currently limited. An ideal location for the program would include a drop-in center where students can congregate and build their own supports with peers.

Evaluation of the Program

The staff continually struggle with the issue of how to evaluate the program. Because students may enter at any time, there is no cohort that moves consistently through the program. Students may enter the program as freshmen or even during their senior year. It is difficult to show (and take credit

for) retention rates and GPA's when a student enters the program as a senior and has been successful before entry. Students tell the staff that the program has been instrumental in their success at college, but it is difficult to show actual numbers without cohorts. Also, some students are very independent, have a strong support system and only come to the staff if they have a specific problem. There are others who have less of a support system and may come in to the office every day. Due to the range of needs and stability, staff have had difficulty identifying who to count as active in the program. Evaluation processes could be improved by having a comparison group of students who are attending a university without a support program. Staff have had difficulty finding a group of students similar to our students on the campuses to compare outcomes. Because the program accepts all students who were former foster youth and who self identify for the program, there is no comparison group on the campuses. It is also difficult to compare data between post-secondary programs targeting former foster youth, because many of the programs have an application process and are scholarship based. Open door programs who accept all students, will never "look" as successful as those which select their students from a pool of applicants.

Sustainability...

The BSU/IT Guardian Scholars program started with a grant of \$208,000 from Lumina Foundation for the period 12/31/03-12/31/05. An additional award of \$104,000 was awarded by Lumina Foundation in 2006. Since that time, the program has sustained itself through individual donor funding and recent grant support for 2007 and 2008 from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The 2008 budget is \$225,609 which includes a match from Ball State University for staff support and indirect costs as well as indirect cost

coming from Ivy Tech Community College.

Sustainability has been an ongoing concern from the very beginning of the program. Early meetings were held with the BSU Dean of the College of Sciences and Humanities who identified Guardian Scholars as the College's number one priority for benefactors interested in social philanthropy. A multi-prong approach was developed in conjunction with the Dean and the College's Director of Development. The approach included:

1. Based on demographics of current Guardian Scholars, the University will approach the Community Foundations in the Guardian Scholar's original counties of wardship to generate interest in supporting the students from their communities. In addition, conversations will be held with the foundations about funding an endowment that could support one student slot in perpetuity or an overall program endowment.
2. The University approached other foundations and will continue to investigate grant opportunities (a database of grant opportunities has been developed under the original grant and is continuously updated by project staff). University personnel will also approach a key alumnus of Ball State University who served on the Annie E. Casey Foundation for additional recommendations about funding opportunities. This alumnus is a natural partner for Ball State on behalf of the Guardian Scholars program.
3. The University and project staff will continue conversations with other Guardian Scholars (and similar) programs to identify solutions to sustainability issues (how they have sought and obtained donor contributions, effectiveness of endowed accounts, etc.). The University will also continue to avail itself of ideas, information and resources provided by Lumina Foundation for Education, such as Connected by 25 and attending national forums for programs providing post-

secondary support for former foster youth.

4. The University will target key donors who are motivated by special projects and students with special needs and who have a demonstrated giving history with the University. Corporate partners will also be included in this category if the corporation or company has a social justice component to its community support. The approach in this category is to secure their outright gift to support a Guardian Scholar and also discover their interest in simultaneously supporting an endowment for the program.

Formal presentations were made to six Indiana community foundations by the Director of Development, the Dean of the College of Sciences and Humanities, and the Guardian Scholars Program Coordinator. The main findings from those presentations was that in most cases the funding patterns were not a match for the operational expense needs of the Guardian Scholars program, but rather were geared toward providing direct scholarships. The exception to this situation was the Jump to College project funded by The Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County, Inc. (which was discussed earlier in this report).

High net worth individuals were identified by the Ball State University Development Office and were

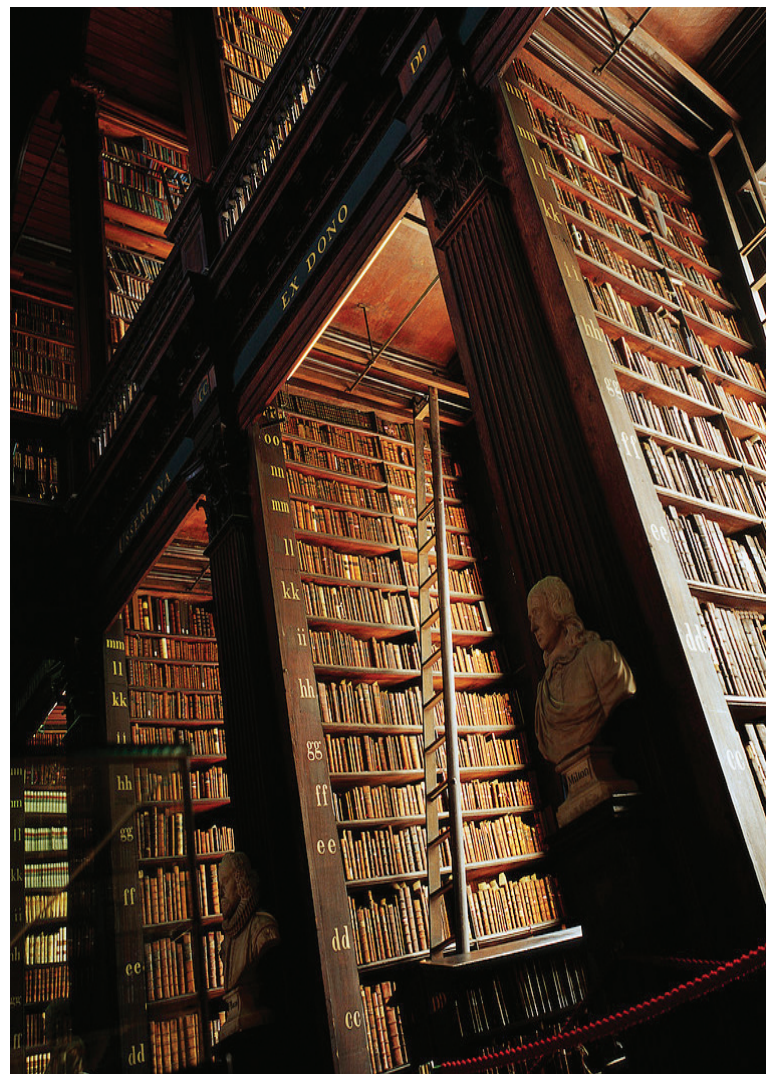


contacted for support. These individuals were financially capable of creating and sustaining an endowment and had the social consciousness, history and background to support such an endowment. A foundation account was established and donations have been made by private philanthropists.

In the same vein, the Guardian Scholars leadership began looking at appropriate national foundations and federal funding sources as a means of program support and sustainability. Annie E. Casey came on board with a commitment to fund a portion of the program for two years. Additional sustainability efforts included a proposal for the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) Comprehensive Program. This proposal included funds to assist with sustaining the current program as well as to develop a statewide advisory committee to ensure post-secondary access to former foster youths throughout the state. This group would have also worked to identify barriers to success and potential solutions. Organizations committed to serve on the advisory committee included: Lumina Foundation for Education, Indiana Department of Child Services, Casey Family Programs, and the United Way of Central Indiana. If the FIPSE proposal had been funded, funds would have been available to help develop two additional partnerships between Indiana 4-year universities and local community colleges. While the proposal received high scores and positive feedback from the reviewers, it was not funded.

In the spring of 2007, the multi-prong approach was revisited and revised. An endowment account was set up with interest earned on the Lumina Foundation supplemental grant. A Friends of Guardian Scholars program was set up to encourage gifts of \$1,200 or more. "Friends" are offered special opportunities such as attendance at an annual event. While giving is accepted at lower levels, of course, this is a way to encourage and recognize higher donations.

It was also decided in 2007, to bring together a group of key individuals in the community to serve on a Sustainability Task Force to review the current funding plan and the major issues surrounding the funding of this program. Participation in this group would be time-limited (approximately 60-90 days) and culminate with the identification of members to serve on a Sustainability Advisory Board to help guide the program financially and ensure its long term stability. The first meeting of the group was in September 2007.



Program Overviews

American Career College

Trevor Cevene
4021 Rosewood Ave.
Los Angeles, CA
90004
(323) 906-2285

Program Overview:

Established in 2001, this Guardian Scholars program operates in a private trade school for nursing and medical vocations. Classes are short, lasting just four hours per day for eight months. The program is run through the Admissions Office on the Anaheim Campus. Due to the small size of the campus, staff members are very close to students and it is possible to track student attendance and progress daily. The cost of classes is reduced for former foster youth and Orangewood Children's Foundation pays the cost for former foster youth from Orange County. Final payment is dependent on job placement, which is guaranteed. In addition, there is strong support from the President/CEO who is also a personal donor providing funds directly to students. Staffing for the program is blended into the duties of existing staff at the college. The point person for the program is the Director of Outreach for the college.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"I'd be honest and up front, go slow. Take only a few. Like in my case, I would only take one or two. Maybe at a bigger school if you have more staff...take more. But in the beginning, go slow and precise. You want to watch them."

-Trevor Cevene

Guardian Scholars: Ball State University Ivy Tech Community College

Alishea Hawkins
Social Science Research Center, AR201
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
(765) 285-5538

Program Overview:

Established in 2004, this Guardian Scholars program operates on both a 4-year traditional public university as well as three community college campuses. The program is under the umbrella of the Social Science Research Center under the College of Sciences and Humanities, however, it has staff devoted solely to the program. It is staffed by a coordinator and two graduate assistants. This program is described in depth earlier in this report.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"Build your circle of support first. Maintain a student focus and start planning for the future early."

-Alishea Hawkins

Guardian Scholars: CalState Fullerton

Giulii Kraemer
P.O. Box 6828
Fullerton, CA 92834
(714) 278-4900

Program Overview:

This program was established in 1998 as the first Guardian Scholars program. It is located on the Cal State Fullerton campus, a 4-year public university. The Guardian Scholars office is an independent program on campus under the umbrella of Student Affairs. The drop-in center is located behind the bookstore and consists of a lounge area with computers, a sofa and a chair, another room with a fax machine, copier and kitchen area, and a separate Director's office. The students are selected after an application process and interview. Selected students are provided a scholarship for tuition, housing and living expenses. The two fulltime staff members provide support services to students. The drop-in center also allows students to build community and provide support to each other. The program is supported at the highest levels of the university.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"Make sure you don't grow too fast and I really think the other key piece is...the staff. You have to pick the right person for the job. I do think selecting your staff is a key element and I do think that if someone is replicating the program, they make every effort to provide a drop-in center for the students. They really need somewhere to go... I know the students have really said that having this place to come to has made all the difference in the world."

-Giulii Kraemer

Guardian Scholars: Chapman University

Saskia Knight & Marcela Mejia-Martinez
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866
(714) 997-6982
(714) 628-7294

Program Overview:

This Guardian Scholars program was established in 2001 at Chapman University, a 4-year private liberal arts university. The program operates under the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment and Student Affairs and maintains support from the University President. Although there is no dedicated staff to this program, a small number of students are served through a network of stakeholders and mentors who have taken on this responsibility in addition to their other duties at the university. The group meets regularly to discuss student progress. Scholarship funds are available. The program also offers summer housing and study abroad options.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"I think that the key thing is you get your group of individuals together, your campus support group, make sure they're adequately trained, and you have to kind of be tough... I think initially we made some mistakes by being too lenient and those then made problems for us, those students who we gave too many chances to and didn't set the right kind of boundaries. We've learned our lesson and we've got a lot more feedback and input from folks who have been doing it a lot longer than us."

-Saskia Knight

Guardian Scholars: Concordia University, Irvine

Lori McDonald & Christina Lunceford
1530 Concordia West
Irvine, CA 92612
(949) 854-8002
EXT 1170 & 1454

Program Overview:

This Guardian Scholars program was established in 2002 at Concordia University Irvine, a private, 4-year university with a religious affiliation to Lutheran Church Missouri State. The university has high academic standards and those former foster care students from Orange County who meet these standards are typically accepted into the program. All expenses are paid for these students and most of them live on campus in the free year round housing. The program is very small and is run entirely by the Associate Dean of Students for Student Development and Leadership. The program has the full support of the university president.

Guardian Scholars: Cypress College

Rick Rams
9200 Valley View Street
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 484-7374

Program Overview:

This Guardian Scholars program was established in 2005 at Cypress College, a public, 2-year community college offering core curriculum and associates degrees. The program is run by the Dean of Students along with a committee of eight faculty members and staff who oversee and operate the program. There are no staff dedicated solely to the program and there is no budget. Scholarships are available for Orange County former foster youth through the Orangewood Children's Foundation.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"If you don't have a trained and willing staff to help administer this program, it's not a good idea to start. You have a lot of program directors or managers wrapped up in administering just their program and they forget the big student services picture...where foster youth or foster youth outreach isn't a primary goal... if programs aren't ready to deal with the issues and concerns that these students are going to have, it just won't work. You have to have trained staff. If you don't have trained staff it's not going to be effective."

-Rick Rams

Educational Success

Program:

IUPUI

Ivy Tech Community College

Derrick Barnett

IUPUI

The Stewart Center

518 Indiana Avenue

Indianapolis, IN 46204

(317) 274-7512

Program Overview:

This program was established in 2005 on two campuses in Indianapolis. IUPUI is a public, 4-year university in an urban setting and Ivy-Tech is a public, 2-year community college. In addition to providing support services to college students on these two campuses who have aged out of the foster care system, this program also serves foster youth who are still in high school and assists them with their educational plans, makes sure they are getting the correct classes to get into college, and exposes them to college via day trips to the campuses and connecting them to current college students. Staffing for this program includes a fulltime director and two fulltime educational advocates. The program operates as an independent office under the umbrella of the University College, Undergraduate Division.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"... would have been stronger support if it was a regional approach versus having these small, having these good programs like silos. I think that if it had been a regional approach, more area, more students it would have been stronger initially."

-Derrick Barnett

Foster Care Alumni:

Austin Community College

Loretta Edelen

Austin Community College

3401 Webberville Rd.

Austin, TX 78702

(512) 223-5106

Program Overview:

This program was established in 2006 and includes services to former foster youth on all seven Austin Community College campuses. Each campus has a Campus Champion who has taken on serving these students in addition to their duties as counselors or advisors. The students have organized a student club called LUV. The program operates under the umbrella of Student Support and Success Systems. College students who were former foster youth in Texas receive tuition waivers and all students who receive the waiver are eligible to participate in the program. The program has strong board and administrative support with the college supporting 100% of the budget for this program.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"...set up some kind of a strong mentoring system that they know they can come and tap into these resources."

-Loretta Edelen

Guardian Scholars: Fullerton College

Heidi Lockhart
321 E. Chapman Ave.
Fullerton, CA 92832
(714) 992-7543

Program Overview:

This Guardian Scholars program was established in 2003 at Fullerton College, a public, 2-year community college offering core curriculum and associates degrees. The program has the support of the campus president. It operates as a part of the Cadena Transfer Center, a center which serves students transferring to a 4-year university and also serves as the multicultural and diversity center. Staff of the Center serve Guardian Scholars students in addition to other students utilizing the Center's transfer services. The program has a drop-in area with computers and a study/lounge area. The program offers a Scholar-in-Training program where students can receive services without actually becoming a Guardian Scholar.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"Obviously one of the first challenges is just getting the word out about it. I think the other challenge is just working with the students themselves. Even though they have the common thread of being in foster care, they are all so unique and all have such very different issues and things that they have to tackle and overcome."

-Heidi Lockhart

Hope International University, Fullerton

Pricilla Schubert
2500 E. Nutwood Ave.
Fullerton, CA 92831
(714) 278-4900

Program Overview:

This program was established in 2004 at Hope International University, an urban private, 4-year Christian university offering traditional degree programs. The program is run solely by the Director of Student Life and Housing under the umbrella of Student Life. There is university presidential support and the university provides tuition reduction for these students. The students have a strong sense of community and help each other navigate the university. Staff members meet with students as a group once per week. Scholarships are available from Orangewood Children's Foundation and other sources.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"Students have to feel safe in their classes; they don't want everyone to know they are from foster care. Faculty has to be aware of the student needs. Their needs are special. The program manager has to be informed and understand the unique needs of the program...."

-Pricilla Schubert

Nina Mason Pullium Legacy Scholars Program: IUPUI, Ivy Tech Community College, Arizona State University, Maricopa Community College

Charlie Johnson
Nina Mason Pulliam Legacy Scholars Program
IUPUI
UC B10C
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 278-7878

Program Overview:

This program was developed in 2001 through a large trust established by the Nina Mason Pullium Charitable Trust on the campuses of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Ivy Tech Central Indiana Campus, Arizona State University, and Maricopa Community College in Arizona. These campuses are public 2- and 4-year institutions. Each of the programs has its own director. The programs have large space accommodations for studying and student interaction. The scholarship pays all college related expenses and offers a stipend for living expenses for the academic year to those accepted as Nina Scholars. The program targets three low income populations: former foster youth, disabled students, and students over 25 years of age with dependents. There is a strong student mentor program established within these programs.

Suggestions for New Programs:

“I think you have to have the right person running the position... I think you have to have had some kind of difficult experience in your background to fully appreciate the students, where they are coming from... to understand their needs. I think that is hard to find... And if you have that person who’s got an academic background they have to understand the social work side and if you get a social work person they have to understand the education side.”
-Charlie Johnson

Orange Coast College

Doug Bennett &
Rene Goode
2701 Fairview Road
Costa Mesa, CA 92628
(714) 432-5126
(714) 432-5749

Program Overview:

This program was established in 2001 on the Orange Coast College Campus, a public, 2-year community college in Costa Mesa, CA. The program is operated under the Orange Coast College Foundation and is run by the Executive Director of the Foundation and an administrative assistant. Scholarships are offered through Oranewood Children’s Foundation and other private funds. The staff members have extensive college connections which allow them assist students in gaining the help they need. This program has the support of the campus president.

Suggestions for New Programs:

“...be patient, to go in with the mindset that you want to be firm with the kids and you want to help them, but don’t be... overly optimistic. ...they come with so many complicated issues, unfortunately, that you can’t, as much as you want to, you can’t solve all of their problems. And to focus on the ones that want to help themselves...”

-Doug Bennett

Renaissance Scholars

Koji Uesugi &
Jenny Vinopal
3801 W. Temple Ave.
Pomona, CA 91768
(909) 869-4690
(909) 869-3169

Program Overview:

This program was established in 2002 on the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, a public, 4-year university. This program is a separate independent department under the Division of Student Affairs. The staffing includes a director, educational counselor and a 3/4 time administrative assistant. The program has a drop in center/lounge and computer lab for student use. Scholarships are available for students. There is strong administrative support for the program from the university. The program is backed by, the university president, as evidenced by 80% of the operating budget being provided by the university.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"... a great deal of thought must go into the thinking and planning before funding requests are made. Some programs put the emphasis in identifying potential donors and making promises to them without having thought through the infrastructure of the programs. Housing the program under a larger access and equity program like the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) can be a benefit for programs that are just starting out."
-Koji Uesugi

Guardian Scholars, Santa Anna College

Lilia Tanakeyowma
1530W. 17th St.
Santa Ana, CA 92706-3398
(714) 564-6971

Program Overview:

This Guardian Scholars program was established in 2005 at Santa Ana College, a public, 2-year community college. The program is under the Office of Student Life and the program staff also coordinate the Americorp program. There is an orientation to the program and ongoing student-to-student mentoring. The program has an open door policy and maintains monthly contact with students. Scholarship funds are available for Orange County former foster youth through Orangewood Children's Foundation.

Suggestions for New Programs:

"I think really what helps, and I think maybe that helps any program, is our open door policy. They don't have to have an appointment to come and see me. They can come in at any time, ask us any questions, need help with anything, we'll do our best to assist them at that point."
-Lilia Tanakeyowma

Taller San Jose, Santa Anna

Sister Eileen McNerney
801 N. Broadway
Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 543-5105

Program Overview:

Taller San Jose is a non-profit community based organization that provides job-training programs in construction, technology and health care. Each program is 15-16 weeks long and students are typically involved eight hours a day/four days a week. Students are paid minimum wage during their training period. Drug and legal counseling are available and 12 Step programs are held on-site. Job-placement is a key program component.

Guardian Scholars: University of California Irvine

Joe Maestas
2100 Student Services II
Irvine, CA 92697
(949) 824-7162

Program Overview:

This Guardian Scholars program was established in 2000, at the University of California Irvine, a public, 4-year university. The program operates under the Division of Undergraduate Education and is coupled with the Federal Trio Program. Staff have monthly contact with students and have developed strong relationships with the students. The university has high academic standards (accepting only the top 12% of any graduating class) and most students come to the university well prepared. Students are assigned faculty mentors for research and support. Staff encourage study abroad opportunities.

Program Summary Grid...

	American Career College	ESP!	Foster Care Alumni	Cal State Fullerton
Program Location	CA	IN	TX	CA
Year Established	'01	'05	'06	'98
Students Served 2005-2006				
<i>Former Foster Care Students</i>	5	70-75	40	40
<i>Non-Foster Care Students</i>	no	<10	no	3
Environment				
<i># of Campuses</i>	1	2	7	1
<i>Public 4-year</i>		X		X
<i>Private 4-year</i>				
<i>Community/Trade School (2 year)</i>		X	X	
<i>Trade/Vocational</i>	X			
Admissions				
<i>Formal Application</i>	X			X
<i>Percent Accepted</i>	99	95	90	25
	Chapman University	Concordia University	Cypress College	Fullerton College
Program Location	CA	CA	CA	CA
Year Established	'01	'02	'05	'03
Students Served 2005-2006				
<i>Former Foster Care Students</i>	9	3	4	10
<i>Non-Foster Care Students</i>	no	no	yes	no
Environment				
<i># of Campuses</i>	1	2	1	1
<i>Public 4-year</i>				
<i>Private 4-year</i>	X	X		
<i>Community/Trade School (2 year)</i>			X	X
<i>Trade/Vocational</i>				
Admissions				
<i>Formal Application</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Percent Accepted</i>	66	100	100	100

	Santa Anna College	UC Irvine	HIU Fullerton	Indiana BSU/IT
Program Location	CA	CA	CA	IN
Year Established	'05	'00	'04	'03
Students Served 2005-2006				
<i>Former Foster Care Students</i>	3	11	6	32
<i>Non-Foster Care Students</i>	no	yes	no	no
Environment				
<i># of Campuses</i>	1	1	1	3
<i>Public 4-year</i>		X		X
<i>Private 4-year</i>			X	
<i>Community/Trade School (2 year)</i>	X			X
<i>Trade/Vocational</i>				
Admissions				
<i>Formal Application</i>	X		X	
<i>Percent Accepted</i>	78	100	80	100
	Nina Scholars Pullium Scholars	Orange Coast College	Renaissance Scholars	Taller San Jose
Program Location	IN	CA	CA	CA
Year Established	'01	'01	'02	'95
Students Served 2005-2006				
<i>Former Foster Care Students</i>	6	25	31	6
<i>Non-Foster Care Students</i>	yes	5	4	yes
Environment				
<i># of Campuses</i>	4	1	1	2
<i>Public 4-year</i>	X		X	
<i>Private 4-year</i>				
<i>Community/Trade School (2 year)</i>	X	X		
<i>Trade/Vocational</i>				X
Admissions				
<i>Formal Application</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Percent Accepted</i>	ND	80	ND	60

Summary of Findings

Basic Overview of the Programs...

The interviewed programs were structured in two basic ways, each having its own advantages and disadvantages. One set of programs had dedicated staff and space solely devoted to providing support services to former foster youth and a budget from which they operated. These programs sometimes were under the umbrella of other offices and other times were considered separate departments. These programs were all started by a substantial donation or foundation support. This initial seed money allowed the programs to start up, but caused some of them problems when considering sustainability of these expensive programs.

The remaining programs were folded into or coupled with other existing services at the college or university. This structure was one in which the students were served by staff who had other positions within their colleges/universities. These other positions varied greatly across programs. Some were counselors, advisors, Deans of student affairs, Foundation directors, and other administrators. These programs tended to report struggling with having staffing or budgets to assist the students. Most of these programs did not have external funding coming in to support program costs. Few of these programs had a budget specific to providing support for former foster youth. Many of these programs were started by someone approaching the university or college administrators to gain buy-in

at the highest level of the university or college system. This upper level support seemed to open many doors within the system to allow for services to be provided to this population.

Most programs in both groups had an application process with some type of scholarship or tuition waiver associated with participation in the program. Many application processes included a written application, references, and face-to-face interviews. Most accepted a very high percentage of their applicants, greater than 75%. Some programs followed a model of accepting all students who were former foster youth. Some programs accepted students in cohorts, but others accepted students at any time during their time at the college or university.

Challenges & Strategies...

Throughout the interviews, several key challenges were identified by the 16 program directors/coordinators surveyed. The key challenges identified by the programs serving former foster youth have been categorized as follows:

- Process Challenges
- Structural Challenges
- Systemic Challenges
- Student Needs & Challenges
- Staffing Challenges

Along with identifying the challenges, this report summarizes the innovative and creative strategies used by various programs to overcome the challenges presented to them. The intent is to outline the tactics and successful strategies that programs have used to trouble-shooting issues and address challenges. These tactics and strategies may help existing programs strengthen their programs and help new programs avoid some of the pitfalls that other programs have encountered along the way. A few of the challenges remain unsolved and are presented at the end of this section as “issues still unresolved.”

Process Challenges

The first set of challenges identified by program directors in their interviews concerns the Process Challenges for implementing the program. There are eight subcategories of challenges in this area: 1) Trailblazing, 2) Planning, 3) Marketing, 4) Choosing and Recruiting Students, 5) Determining Needs and Services, 6) Retention and Tracking Students, 7) Evaluation, and 8) Funding and Growth.

Trailblazing was cited by some of the older programs that developed these innovations without the benefit of having models to use as a guide. Trailblazing centers on learning by trial and error partly because no one had done this type of program before. All programs were asked what problems they ran into during the startup phase. Many of the older programs were truly trailblazing in the sense that no one had provided this type of service before, and even if they had, it was in a different state, under a different system, or a different model; there was no “how-to” manual. These programs blazed their way, working through the politics of each university and developing some of the most successful and stable programs in the country.

Many programs used trial and error tactics before establishing their best practices. Four programs cited these challenges in several different ways. One of the trailblazers said it this way, “At the time, [program name] was the only other program of this kind in the 23 campus [state] system. Thus, it was a ‘learn-as-you-go’ process for the program staff to ensure we met the academic and personal needs of the student... There was a steep learning curve during that first year to understand how best to assist the students with their academic and personal success, since we essentially were the only ‘experts’ on this population at the university.” One said, “I admit that we had to feel our way in the dark that first year to provide the best support possible.” Another described it this way, “It was a horrible, chaotic first semester and then I discovered Diana LaMar [at Orangewood Children’s Foundation]. I didn’t know she was the resource person. She really saved the day. It was a rough start.” Another person said, “For me things are scattered and there is not a lot of documentation of what needs to happen... I didn’t get a binder saying, ‘this is what happens.’”

When addressing challenges of trailblazing, programs recommended the following:

- Build stakeholders groups (a group of experts) that staff can rely on for technical questions
- Build coalitions of programs in the area
- Seek feedback from older programs

Simply put, one program manager said it this way, “We’ve got a lot more feedback and input from folks who have been doing it a lot longer than us.” Planning includes challenges for setting up the program and problems that occurred due to

organizational issues. Four programs had these themes during their interviews. “One struggle that has been ongoing is trying to figure out where this program best fits at the University. While [the office] was the perfect place to start the program, because of staff expertise in the area of child welfare and independent living, it was never intended to house the program long term.” Lacking clearly defined financial management and implementation plans were cited by two program directors and a third cited planning infrastructure challenges: “Some programs put the emphasis on identifying potential donors and making promises to them without having thought through the infrastructure of the programs.”

Suggestions that programs had to overcome Planning obstacles were:

- Choose a Development Director and plan for sustainability from the start
- Get organized for outreach, retention, & services
- Work to garner support at the highest levels within the college or university
- Be intentional and build slowly
- Develop a mission or philosophy that guides programming and services
- Have an orientation for students at the beginning

Two statements that highlight these themes follow: “We have been very intentional over the years to build this program slowly by ensuring the [program name] staff and students fully grasped the concept of the program’s philosophy and service delivery.” The other

said, “I had full cooperation from everybody in all different components, for example, housing, financial aid. They were all on board and they knew the Chancellor wanted this to work and it was going to work. And so it was fairly simple for me at that point.”

Marketing the program was a challenge identified by four of 16 programs. Many more cited this as an area of strength, rather than challenge and outlined specific strategies. “Obviously, one of the first challenges is just getting the word out,” said one program director. Potential barriers to marketing included time and territorial issues. One person explained, “I should be pushing that message more, but I don’t want to step on the toes of our foundation director, because at my previous institution, when I had brought in a lot of money, he was like, ‘Wait a minute. You are making me look bad.’” Another said, “I need to get more aggressive in the marketing, but it is also a time constraint.”

Marketing and Recruiting Students was highlighted by four of the 16 programs and includes the challenges of “selling” the program and finding students to apply or participate. “Our first challenge was deciding how to best identify the students who were already on campus and eligible for the program. We accomplished this by coordinating with our financial aid offices and having them mail letters to those students who indicated they were an orphan or ward of the court on their FAFSA.” Time was again mentioned as one of the chief barriers for choosing and recruiting students. One program director’s statement lends significant weight to how large this challenge is for them, saying, “Our biggest challenge is recruiting people.”

Many programs have concrete strategies in place



for getting the word out on campus and in the community. Their suggestions for new programs included the following:

- Point out the investment & contributions for society
- Use posters & pamphlets with “scholar stories”
- Invite key stakeholders to recognition banquets
- Hire specialty consultants for outreach plans
- Make presentations on & off campus
- Seek special markets through PBS spots or public service broadcasts
- Do “small things” such as having students share their experiences
- Find ways to have students recognized
- Communicate through partnerships
- Go to high schools & social services

One program summed up the start of their marketing work in this way: “Our initial outreach efforts, which involved developing attractive brochures

and distributing them widely on and off campus as well as inviting key individuals from campus to join in our annual student recognition ceremonies and sharing stories of our students have proven beneficial.” Another stated, “We just kind of sell the program saying that these are foster youth that don’t have the regular opportunities and, you know, things available to them that the average student does.” Regarding the identification of students and recruiting them to the program, two programs offered these statements, “I have used financial aid data from the FAFSA application to run reports and get information on potential foster youth and then using that information, I have a coordinator who mines through that information further and follows up with [name] to see if indeed we have a few more students available.”

The other program said this about recruiting: “I have to go to their home at least once a month to make that rapport. I have to meet before they’ll try to connect with me, so I think it’s more on our end at first. Going to their home, going to their school, talking with their counselor.”

Determining Needs and Services was a challenge for five different programs. This includes planning for budgeting and growth, identifying needs and goals, responding to needs of students, and choosing what kinds of programming to offer. One program’s statement captured this theme, “I think in the initial grant there was little insight to the true needs of the students so that wasn’t really included in the budget.”

The following strategies were recommended:

- Use a case management approach
- Ask students what they want and need
- Think COMPREHENSIVE

Two different approaches were exemplified by these two statements from interviewees: “One of the key elements of the [program name] was to promote the concept that the students were co-creators of the program. Thus, everything from the name of the program, expectations of students and staff, input in the admissions process of incoming students, and planning of activities involves input by the students. This has led to students feeling ownership and pride in being involved in the program.” Another perspective is this: “I am a firm believer in ‘He who manages least, manages best.’ I think that sometimes people have a tendency to want to over manage these things and I think it’s better to not do that.”

Retention and Tracking of students in the program was mentioned as a challenge for five programs. Interestingly, every program mentioned some strategy for retaining and tracking students, so there was plenty of wisdom available for how to handle this issue. This challenge was exemplified by the words of one program director, “One of the problems I think we found early on... is you can have all the resources and students in the world, but when you haven’t seen a student for a long time and you have to go chase them down and you find out they are not doing well in class, it is often too late to do anything about it, or at least it is very difficult to do anything about it.” This can be a problem (especially for competitive scholarship programs); “It’s hard because you spend so much time looking for these students and it might take away from a student who has all the capabilities of being a [program participant] and maybe they missed out on that chance.” Another program put it this way: “Also, some students are very independent, have strong support systems and only come to us if they have a specific problem. We have others who have less of a support system and may come to the office every day. We have had difficulty identifying who to count as active in the program.”

Some programs advised that starting out without an application process caused them to accept students with too many issues to be successful. They struggled with developing the criteria for accepting students who were likely to be successful. Later, these programs worked with others to develop an application process that would better identify students who would persist through college. One program reported that their staff simply were not prepared to effectively deal with the complex issues the students brought. Staff were surprised at how far behind the students were academically. Many struggled with the remedial courses. Other programs reported that initially they were not prepared for the mental health needs of the students and did not realize staff would be spending so much time on nonacademic needs.

Every program had at least one strategy for keeping students actively involved and knowing how they



are doing. This section demonstrates the creativity and resourcefulness of these different programs. The strategies suggested by programs included:

- Provide orientations at the beginning of the school year to explain program expectations
- Use phone, email, and/or meetings to communicate regularly
- Connect students to mentors who follow up and monitor how the student is doing
- Contact professors or instructors to track student attendance and grades
- Provide Digital Storytelling opportunities- students who participate in this together often form a cohesive supportive group.
- Form a student club on campus (other programs reported trying this and their students indicated they did not want to be identified as former foster youth)
- Have charismatic and dedicated staff
- Divide students into “caseloads”
- Use a “coaching” approach
- Use group work as a tool
- “Carrots” (incentives and positives)
- Use contracts or withdraw financial help for lack of contact
- Get students involved in volunteer activities and community service events
- Use group social activities to keep students connected: professional sports tickets, food (e.g., “Nacho Thursday”), workshops, holiday parties, buy students’ lunch

Several programs had this to offer: “I think it is really great to have a drop-in center, like we have, and I know a number of other programs have that too, where students can just come in and do their homework and just to have a place to call home on campus. It is a good piece or component to have as well.” Another person said, “There are also some carrots and sticks that a lot of other programs don’t have. Frankly, this is the most lucrative scholarship on campus and that counts for a lot in the business of ‘Are you engaged? Are you participating?’” Yet another staff person had this to say: “We try very hard to say, ‘Hey, I’m kind of like a life coach. Someone who cares about your success. I’m kind of on this journey with you just to be helpful. So you set your own goals. I’m just here to help you achieve those goals and if you change them or revise them, that is all fine. I’m not here to judge anything about your success or achievement. I’m only here to say, ‘What do you want to do, OK?’ Let me see how I can help you do that.” One program director cites the importance of relationships in keeping students connected, “Perhaps one of the most important ways to keep students connected to these kinds of programs is relationship building. Many of these students have been let down by so many of the professional adults in their lives that they are reluctant to trust another one. Once they have connected to the staff, many of them do drop in, even without an appointment, just to share good news or get support on a problem or issue.”

Evaluation was mentioned by one program as a key challenge. This program reported having open enrollment which made evaluation efforts difficult. With students entering the program at different times in their academic careers, there are not cohorts which can be tracked through the program.

Others offered strategies about how they used evaluation tools in their programs:

- Use student and stakeholder focus groups
- Track “life” and academic outcomes
- Measure incremental change
- Compare student success with other at-risk students on campus
- Develop Scholar in Training program to allow students to “try out” the program before going through the application process

One respondent interviewed said this about evaluation, “But here we can look at students and we can say, ‘Alright, given the characteristics of the background of these students and we compare them to students who are not in the program, what kind of outcomes do we see, or what kind of outcomes can we expect?’ Just life outcomes, much less college success of academic success outcomes?”

Funding and Growth was mentioned by five of the 16 programs. Programs cited the high cost of this type of program as a pitfall, and the shortage of resources was also mentioned numerous times. Interviewees seemed to enjoy dreaming about what they could add to their programs if given more financial resources and they certainly perceived resource shortages as a hindrance to their development of additional programs or services. Those additional services or programs included:

- Develop a resource library of textbooks for students to borrow when they could not afford books
- Secure priority registration
- Provide leadership training
- Provide scholarship funds
- Find additional work study jobs
- Provide computer or other technology resources
- Expand services to other campuses
- Initiate regional supports such as the Council of Colleges
- Buy a house close to campus for students to live in
- Expand their office space for an area for students to congregate

One respondent put it this way: “While [program name] receives institutional support in the way of ongoing funding of its full-time staff members and spaces to house their offices and student social/study space, additional financial resources are necessary to meet the student’s financial and programming needs.”



Another person put it this way, “My first response about replication is this program is very expensive. I think this would be very hard to replicate unless you had some significant funding and that funding source is going to endure for a long time.”

Finally, many programs identified Funding and Growth as areas of challenge for individual programs. The interviewees had seven different suggestions for overcoming financial barriers:

- Seek funding from United Way
- Develop sustainability plans early
- Use success stories to sell the program
- Find KEY allies
- Market to key stakeholders
- Develop a sustainability committee whose primary focus is on fundraising in the community.
- Find corporate sponsors

As a closing statement, one program director said this about funding and growth, “As important as having a strong program is having active development staff in place to ensure the long term sustainability of the program. This must be started early in the process.”

Structural Challenges

Structural challenges included things such as navigation of the campus and physical space limitations. Two of 16 programs identified navigation issues on campus as being an important problem for students. One said, “I know a lot of them when they get on campus, they are really struggling. They don’t know how to navigate the campus... they are afraid. They are nervous.”

Key strategies outlined by programs to address acquainting students to campus included:

- Take time to introduce students to key people (stakeholders) on campus
- Enlist staff to serve as guides for students
- Pair students with mentors, either students, staff or faculty
- Hold a summer or presemester orientation
- Bring high school students to campus

Nearly one-third of the programs identified physical space issues as important challenges that they face. Issues of construction on campus and a lack of dedicated office space were included in these concerns. For example, “There are space limitations to [program] which are at times not conducive to drop-in services. Additionally, there is no area where the students are able to congregate to develop a cohesive group.”

Program directors offered the following strategies for dealing with space constraints:

- Utilize classroom space
- Utilize department computer labs to gain these students special access
- Meet students for lunch/coffee in an alternate location
- Pair with other oncampus support services to utilize their student lounge space

Systemic Challenges

Systemic Challenges comprised a group of problems identified by programs that included university and community partners. Six of the 16 programs identified either university or community partnership challenges during the interview. Problems included lack of financial support from the university, individual stakeholder's agendas that interfered with program goals, lack of formal agreements with community partners, issues of payment, and pressure from community partners to allow particular students into the program. One excerpt that exemplifies this challenge with community partners is the following: "I think we had too many folks who...had their own agendas and they were talking about, 'This is my kid.' Really [they] came to the table for funding and not trying to serve the kids. So I think they had a different objective." Another person summed up the barriers at his or her university this way: "I mean essentially, it's a program that is not going to be directly financed by the college...This isn't a program that the college is going to allocate resources for. It's just something

that student services has inherited that will need to be administered because we want to do it."

Regarding University Challenges, the following strategies were suggested:

- Invite faculty and staff to receptions or recognition dinners
- Get to know university staff and introduce students (social capital)
- Garner support at the highest levels in the institution
- Draw support from an advisory board
- Provide training for faculty & staff about the unique needs of former foster youth
- Develop networks of support from campus staff who understand the unique needs of these students
- Use formal & informal networking

One person said, "We know different personnel in each of the offices, whether it is financial aid or [program name] and we'll connect them right to that person instead of saying, 'Oh go to this department. It's right down the hall and make your way through the line.' We really try to give that extra helping hand." Forging partnerships with community agencies is also key for the success of programs. Strategies for



overcoming challenges with community stakeholders included:

- Involve KEY stakeholders
- Get stakeholders 'on board' early
- Ask stakeholders to help identify needs & develop a safety net
- Educate social service providers & child welfare agencies
- Form coalitions at the county, state and/or regional level
- Invite stakeholders to recognition receptions
- Host receptions on & off campus
- Have a multifaceted approach (ie., think SYSTEMICALLY)
- Get students involved in the community through volunteering
- Involve people with K-12 experience to go to the junior high & high schools for outreach
- Present at conferences or meetings of high school counselors
- Develop information packets for teenage foster youth to educate them on post-secondary opportunities

A good example of the benefits of partnerships with community agencies is outlined in this way by one of the program directors, "A great example of this is again, when I first started my tenure here, one of the things that I wanted to do was make our community service more intentional and make it more connected to the mission of the program. So we developed a partnership with a pre-school that is a [campus name] neighbor and they take kids who are referred by social services, child protective services, and other social service agencies that are three to five years old and are typically two years, on average, behind where they typically need to be for kindergarten. Eighty

percent of them are ready for kindergarten by the time they finish the program... But what we do is we go in there and spend time with the kids and we read to them and just like an uncle or a big brother or a big sister and say here's what you can be. Just develop that identity in a sense that college is the direction to go, even at three and five years old." By getting the students involved in the community, there are long-term benefits for the agency and the students.

Student Needs & Challenges

There were many Student Needs and Challenges identified by programs. The categories of student needs included: general and non-specific needs, mental health care, transportation, housing, multiple crises, educational deficits, jobs, career planning, scheduling help, financial mismanagement or poor decision making, computers, mentoring, and student groups. Some strategies for overcoming general student needs included:

- Keep a 'tight circle' around students for support
- Protect student privacy by not identifying them as program members
- Hold student networking events
- Promote socializing through programming & orientations
- Match students with mentors
- Look to college/university administrators to help meet student financial needs
- Work with high school students
- Develop study abroad options, alternative spring breaks

One person sums it up this way: “Listen to what they want and most often what they want is to blend in and be treated like everybody else, because all their lives they’ve been singled out for this and that kind of thing.”

Programs reported students having financial issues of managing crises and financial aid. Students often come to staff members with emergency financial needs including car repairs, rent assistance, books, special supplies for classes, or other emergent needs. Interviewees shared learning experiences (good and bad) about helping students with these financial things. One staff member mentioned helping a student and learning later that there were drug issues involved. “I have one student in mind. She was only here for the first two weeks. I didn’t know she was on drugs. She was on drugs; it was clarified and proved. She only wanted the \$250 to get more drugs and I didn’t know. Me being naïve as I am, I was like, ‘OK, I’ll get you the money.’” Overall, the challenges associated with money for living expenses were for legitimate things, but it continues to be an area of challenge for staff to help students meet their basic needs while in college. Some programs reported having special emergency funds in their budgets to address these kinds of needs, while others indicated they had limited financial support with which to assist with general student needs.

Program directors offered the following strategies:

- Work with local philanthropic groups (Rotary Clubs, Lions, etc.) to gain small donations for student expenses or holiday gatherings
- Partner with local food pantries to purchase snacks and food at a discounted rate to have available for students
- Develop a relationship with a local women’s philanthropic group to provide monthly home cooked meals and coordinate professional clothing donations
- Develop an email list network of people to send requests for services or student needs. (e.g., loaning a pickup truck for moving, donating a business suit for an interview, and assisting a student in finding part-time employment)
- Accept donations such as nonperishable food items, winter scarves and gloves to help students make it through break



Mental health care was overwhelmingly identified by program directors as a significant challenge. Nearly two-thirds of the 16 programs identified gaps in mental health care or special mental health needs of their former foster students. One respondent put it this way, “Although [university name] has a very effective counseling and psychological service department that works closely with [program name], there are mental health issues that some students bring with them as a result of their foster care experience that cannot be addressed by campus staff alone.” Another respondent indicated, “One of the

biggest problems our students face is the emotional drain of new-found relationships with biological family members. This greatly affects even our most successful students”

Some programs offered solutions for the issue of mental health care for students. They included:

- Work closely with campus counseling services to identify appropriate mental health professionals
- Set up partnerships with private medical and mental health facilities
- Bring in special presenters who are experts in mental health care
- Hire staff with backgrounds in social work, counseling, and education

In describing their contracted person for special programming, one director said, “She does sessions out in the community in the evening for domestic violence, abuse victims, family planning, and the things of that type and it’s just having those resources there. She is able to sit down with the student and provide them an extra level of assistance.”

In addition to special mental health needs, students often have academic shortcomings as well. One-third of the program directors mentioned these deficits in their interviews. “I guess there were challenges, the usual challenges of working with foster youth. They have a lot of complicated issues in terms of their educational things that happened to them in high school where many of them were bounced around to many different high schools, which is typical for a foster youth.” Another said, “Students have left the program because of academic issues and faculty not

understanding their needs.

There were seven strategies for addressing the academic needs and challenges that students in these programs face.

- Match students with a faculty mentor
- Connect them right away with faculty research projects
- Provide tutoring, especially for English and math
- Establish student mentoring (w/other students) early in the program
- Steer them toward campus-based assistance centers
- Give them support and encourage participation in academic areas
- Find ways to develop critical thinking

One person said this about his/her program: “We expose them to the full range of university services such as I match them with a faculty member real quick and the faculty member becomes a mentor and then we make sure they get involved in research. We start looking at this and these faculty mentors will actually meet with them from time to time and will work with them pretty close.” When developing a mentor program, one program director advised caution. “Be sure the mentors and those being mentored understand their roles. Mentor programs can do more harm than good if there are not a shared set of expectations.” Some programs reported having mentor programs, while others were in various stages of development. Some programs recruited faculty members in the students’ areas of interest to provide guidance and support. Others used faculty

or staff volunteers. Upper level students or students who had some experience with the program or campus were also assigned as mentors. One program was developing a mentoring component whereby residential hall directors would serve in this role to the students as an additional support.

Housing was another important challenge that was mentioned by half of the programs interviewed. Here is an example of the statements made by several program directors: “Housing’s definitely, I think, our biggest struggle then and probably still is.” Another said this: “The only one thing that keeps coming up over and over again is year-round housing.” This was an issue for both the community colleges and the university-based programs. Large and small programs struggled with the issue of locating affordable housing for students in the programs.

Program directors had some innovative strategies for dealing with housing problems:

- Develop partnerships with local churches to assist with housing
- Work with the local housing authority to provide year round housing
- Work with local transitional living programs
- Partner Community colleges with 4-year universities to provide dormitory housing

Unfortunately, there were several student needs/ challenges that were not matched with any strategies for overcoming them. These unresolved challenges included: employment, transportation, and developing lifelong connections for students. Employment challenges were highlighted by several programs in the interviews. Competition for work-

study jobs on campus and students being stretched too thin because of off-campus employment were cited by programs in the interviews.

Six of 16 programs identified transportation as a key challenge for their program. The challenge included getting licenses and registrations, finding affordable transportation, and simply finding a way for students who live off campus to get to their classes and jobs. One person said it this way, “Transportation, transportation, transportation! The BMV is almost three hours away and we have difficulty getting them what they need to get their license.” Transportation was a challenge for programs in community college settings as well as university-based programs.

One program director identified the ongoing need to set up lifelong connections for students and the challenges associated with doing that. This director reported that some students from the foster care system have issues trusting people and have difficulty developing relationships on their own. She further reported that the program had been trying different avenues, but had not been able to identify how to successfully assist students with developing these connections outside the program.

Staffing Challenges

Staffing Challenges of several different types were identified by the program directors. Some of these problems included finding the right staff for the program and conflicts such as territorialism and “misalignment.” Other staffing issues included training for the special needs of the program, boundary issues with students, and operating with less-than-enough time and resources. Eleven of the 16 program directors/coordinators interviewed identified some challenges with staffing for their respective

programs. One responded by saying, “I know that a lot of the challenges they had during the first year was actually finding the staff to...run the program.”

For staffing challenges and prevention of staffing conflicts and territorialism, the following approaches were recommended:

- Hire the “right people”
- Employ people who will advocate
- Hire staff with backgrounds in social work, counseling, & education
- Provide individual services whenever possible
- Ensure that program manager has good training and experience
- Remember that persistence is key
- Make sure staff know that they will need to assist academically



The staffing issue most cited by program directors (5) was setting boundaries for students. There were two different views on these boundaries, however. Some programs said that they were too lenient in the beginning and chose to take a more rigid approach with setting and maintaining boundaries with students; “I think initially we made some mistakes by being too lenient and those then made problems for us. Those students who we gave too many chances to and didn’t set the right kind of boundaries. We’ve learned our lesson.” Other programs wanted to set up boundaries for a supportive environment: “What we are trying to figure out is how do we provide some kind of really safe environment for students so they can interact with us and really find they have support without us being intrusive, but at the same time trying to figure out what is going on with them and how we can help them and show them the importance of staying in school.”

Yet another person had this bit of wisdom for programs: “I think a lot of times, some of these programs, we feel like moms and dads toward the students, and I think that is dangerous, because it’s the wrong kind of relationship and students get that sense that they are disappointing you.”

Establishing boundaries with students can be accomplished by using the following four strategies:

- Be a “coach”
- Watch for signs of students looking to you as “mom” or “dad”
- Work through progress reports & meetings
- Avoid punitive attitudes
- Support the students and allow them to make their own decisions as an adult

One program director said, “What I mean by that is, when you coach, you don’t do it for people. You show them and then you say, ‘Here, you try’ and you give feedback and it’s a process and people grow through that process and that is the approach that I took and I think it worked quite well.” Another said, “We work hard through our mentors and through progress reports and through monthly meetings. All these different points of contact, so we know when there is an issue and we try very hard to make the relationship—not a paternal or maternal relationship—because in those instances, students won’t come to you. They feel they are in trouble or they have disappointed you.”

Four program directors cited lack of time or resources needed to serve their students: “More staff time to adequately serve all [our] college campuses. Currently we have a half-time person serving these campuses, so the focus has been one [particular] campus.” Two other programs cited similar concerns. One said, “That was one of the things I was fearing... ‘Oh my gosh. Are there going to be enough resources and space? How many students are we talking about?’ and then I realized that within these programs, not just the plan, but if we do it right with staff timing, we could do this program without a budget, but it is a challenge.” The other said it simply this way, “The point person wears too many hats.”

To combat challenges of limited resources and time, respondents felt staff needed to:

- Be strategic
- Empower the point person to make decisions
- Demonstrate dedication
- Be creative in ‘crazy systems’

The final staffing challenge outlined by several programs was conflict of some kind among staff or university departments. One put it this way, “You

have a lot of program directors or managers wrapped up in administering just their program and they forget the big student services picture or they are not trained in that big student services picture... You get that territorialism that translates into practice with their staff and if programs aren’t ready to deal with the issues and concerns that these students are going to have, it just won’t work.”

Conclusion and Words of Wisdom

An overwhelming theme throughout the interviews is the dedication of the staff and commitment to serve the students despite difficult situations. In many programs, staff provide services to former foster care students in addition to their other jobs. Many do not have budgets and some end up spending their own money to hold holiday gatherings and assist students with emergency expenses. The experienced program directors who participated in this study were quick to offer advice to staff and those starting new programs. Many said to go slow and just take a few students at a time. The students enter the programs with multiple problems related to their history and time in care, such as unresolved mental health issues, financial problems, educational deficiencies, and the lack of knowledge of how to live independently of the foster care system. Many of them do not have drivers’ licenses and, even if they do, most do not have the resources to purchase a car or maintain minimum insurance. These multiple issues culminate into a student population that requires well qualified staff who are familiar with the child welfare system, understand the higher education system, and have some experience working with at-risk students. Experienced program staff advise new staff not to take student setbacks personally and avoid the temptation to take on a parental role with the students. By

taking on this role, students may be less likely to come to the staff member when they are struggling, fearing they might disappoint the staff. Program coordinators/directors advised new staff to take a coaching or advising role and make sure services are individualized.

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