



casey family programs

fostering families. fostering change.

Improving College Access and Success for Students from Foster Care

NACADA

**32nd Annual Conference on Academic
Advising**

10/3/08



Graduating from college meant that I won. Most of all, it meant that I would gain the knowledge to use my experience to help other people. College meant freedom from my past and the ability to choose my future.

Maria, 2007 college graduate from foster care

Who are current and former foster youth?

- Children and youth who have been removed from their birth parents or other custodial adults by state authority because of abuse or neglect
 - 500,000+/- on any given day are in state foster care
 - **59% are children of color**
 - 39% in care less than one year
 - 28% in care three years or more
 - 48% have family reunification as goal
 - 46% live with foster licensed parents
 - **20,000+ age out ('emancipate') from foster care annually**



In the News!



- **Michigan Universities Asked To Help Foster Youth With Financial Aid**

Diverse Issues in Higher Education, Mar 12, 2008

- **Stanislaus State President Hopes More Foster Children will Enroll**
The Modesto Bee, March 6, 2008

- **Seattle University Receives Award for its Efforts to Aid Foster Youth: University's Fostering Scholars program serves as a national model**

Seattle University press release, March 18, 2008

- **Community Colleges Step Up to Support Foster Care Students**
Community College Journal, February/March 2008

- **California Colleges Help Foster Dreams**
Chronicle of Higher Education, November, 2007
- **Colleges Should Do More to Serve Former Foster Children, Report Says.**
Chronicle of Higher Education, 2006
- **Improving College Prospects for Foster Care Youth**
National Public Radio, February, 2006
- **Helping Foster Children Feel at Home in College**
Chronicle of Higher Education, 2005

Education Status of Youth in Foster Care

- High school graduation = <50%
- Receive special education services = +/-30%
- Seven or more school changes = 65%
- College enrollment rate = +/-10%?
- 4 year college completion rate = 2%/4%?

Listening to their voices!

*"No one ever talks to foster kids about college.
Why not?"*

Adam, foster care alumni, lawyer and Georgetown graduate

*"I just needed to hear somebody tell me I could
do it. I had never heard that before."*

Charvett, foster care alumni , California State East Bay student

*"I had no idea what college was or how to get
there. I didn't have a family to help me."*

DeShaun, foster care alumni, paralegal and College of Mt. St. Vincent graduate

Common Barriers to College Access and Success

K-12 school/placement instability

- Academic/learning gaps
- Few engaged in college prep courses
- Lack of educational and career advocacy
- Low high school graduation rates
- Emotional/mental health issues
- Records transfer and confidentiality issues
- Long terms effects of abuse and neglect – trust issues

Higher Education Education Success

- On their own ('Independence') at a young age
- Survival mode dominates
- Lack of knowledge about college
- Inadequate college aspirations and preparations
- Lack of role models, college advocates, mentors/coaches
- Long terms effects of abuse and neglect – trust issues
- Few college programs are aware of their support needs

Identifying College Students from Foster Care

- ✓ FAFSA data base queries (question #53)
- ✓ Work w/ your area independent living, child welfare/social workers, and agencies
- ✓ Brochures, posters, media spots
- ✓ Websites – both college, social services, and youth
- ✓ Foster care status question on applications & “sign in” forms
 - ❖ Seattle Central Community College application:
7. Have you been in Washington State foster care for at least one year since your 16th birthday? Yes___ No ___
- ✓ Outreach to area high school counselors
- ✓ Word of mouth – student/youth networks

Practice and Policy Exemplars

Financial Aid Options

- Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) – all states w/ = 10,000 recipients
- Federal Pell and state need grants
- Tuition waivers and state need grants – 17+ states
- Private scholarship expansion w/ 30+ local, state and national programs
 - Casey Family Scholars Program
 - Oregon philanthropist
 - WA Governors Scholarships

State Policy Initiatives

- Medicaid coverage extension to age 21 (IA, IN, WA, CO, KS, etc)
- Foster care to age 21
- Legislated college supports for students from foster care (WA & CA)
 - Passport to College Success (WA) - performance grants to colleges w/ “Viable Plans”

Passport to College Success (WA, 2008) –A ***viable plan*** will include providing the following foundational student and institutional support services to promote and increase access, persistence and completion of postsecondary education by former foster youth.

1. Dedicated campus support staff

Designate an assigned "home base" staff person who can knowledgeably guide youth toward (and, also, prepare staff to receive the youth), in the areas of financial, academic, personal, and career counseling/advising

2. Full financial aid package

Within available funding, agree to create adequate financial aid packages that may include on a case-by-case basis tailoring of student budgets so that actual living costs are covered in a manner that minimizes reliance on loans; awards all types of available financial aid the student is eligible for; and encourages youth to utilize resources such as federal Chafee ETV, Foster Care to 21, Medicaid to 21, etc.

3. Connections with social services and independent living providers

Connect and communicate with Department of Social and Health Services social services staff, and its contracted independent living providers, so that former foster youth receive the full-range of support services; and so that mutual education and training takes place to improve college preparation information and messages to current foster youth and their caregivers

4. Assurance of support

Create a culture of support and cultivate advocates throughout the campus by designating a president, chancellor, vice-president or other position of authority to anchor the institution's lasting commitment to serving this population

Targeted College Support Programs

- Guardian Scholars (30+ - CA, NY, CO, GA, FL & IN colleges)
- Renaissance Scholars (CA), College Success Program (WA), Fostering Scholars (WA), Foster Care Alumni (TX), Governors Scholars (WA), **Foster Youth Success Initiative (CA CC)**, Linkage to Education (CA), OFA (nationwide)
- Advocacy by national higher education organizations (COE/TRIO, NASFAA, NASPA, AACCC, NACADA, NSPA, Pathways to College Network, ECS, ABA, and NCAN)
- **Higher Education Amendments (HEA) of 2007 (S.1642 Kennedy) = TRIO focused outreach and services**
- **Statewide systems approaches (WA, VA, GA, CA and WY)**



**Fourth Annual Conference to Improve College Access
and Success for Students from Foster Care**

October 21-23

San Jose, CA

www.svcf.org

Higher Education Consortium for the Improvement of College Outcomes for Students from Foster Care



COUNCIL for OPPORTUNITY in EDUCATION





ACC Student Handbook, 2007-2008

- General Information
- Student Success & Support Systems
- Academic Guidelines
- Emergency Instructions
- Health & Safety
- Policies & Procedures
- Contact Information
- Student Resources Online
 - Table of Contents
 - PDF version
 - Blackboard Login
 - Apply Schedule Register

Austin Community College
 5930 Middle Fiskville Rd.
 Austin, Texas 78752-4390
 512.223.4ACC (4222)

Student Success and Support Systems

Financial Aid

The [Financial Aid Office](#) provides assistance to students in the form of grants, loans, work-study, and scholarships. The amount and type of aid depends on the availability of funds and a student's established financial need. ACC reviews financial aid applications on a first-come, first-served basis. Because financial aid resources are limited, students seeking financial aid should submit an application by the priority deadline. Priority deadlines are Oct. 15 for the spring semester and April 1 for the fall semester.

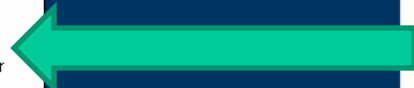
College Tax Credits: The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 established certain tax credits to which parents and guardians of college students may be entitled. To learn more about these tax credits, call 800-TAX-FORM (800.829.3676) and request IRS Publication 970 and IRS Form 8863. The [ACC Business Services](#) mails the IRS 1098-T form to all college-credit students by Jan. 31 of each year.

Foster Care Alumni

ACC provides personalized support for students who are foster care alumni (FCA). "Campus champions" provide FCA students academic assistance at each campus, and the student club LUV provides social and networking opportunities. For more information contact the coordinator at 223.5106 or see [Foster Care Alumni Campus Champions](#) for individual campus contacts .

Learning Labs and Tutoring

The [Learning Labs](#) offer free tutoring by qualified instructors and tutors. The campus Learning Lab hours vary; check the website for a schedule. Besides individual tutoring on a walk-in basis for most subjects, students may use the labs to access tapes, computer programs, and books for self-paced improvement.



Austin Community College's Foster Care Alumni Program: "Campus Champions"



ACC *Campus Champions* for students coming from foster care are advisors or counselors. All students are directed to the *Champion* on their campus when they first enroll and must see an advisor

Champions.....

- **receive training about students from foster care**
- **meet regularly w/ the program coordinator for updates and input**
- **“check-in” w/ students and their advisors**
- **rotate in attending the ACC *Foster Care Alumni (FCA)* Coordinating Committee which includes community agency members**
- **are co-advisors to the ‘*FCA Student club*’ w/ a faculty member**
- **have a website for the *FCA* audience**

continued.....

- **help students select a major, select classes, develop an educational plan**
- **have a good, strong referral network for housing, mental health, food, health care, employment, and other barriers the students encounter**
- **receive student academic outcome information from the *FCA* program coordinator a**
- **present issues at each Champions meeting to identify student support and advising strategies**

Note: ACC now has 116 FCA students - up 30% from 2007, and up from 66 in 2006.



Challenges

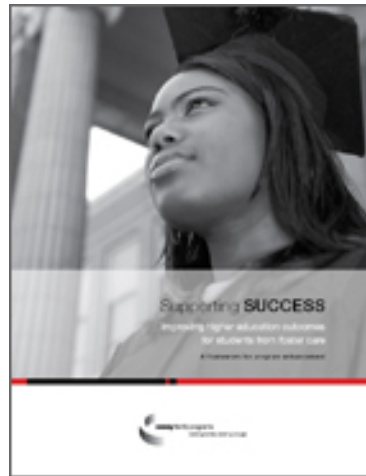
- Financial aid stream
 - Pell, part-time jobs, ETV, transitional funds
 - Money management/financial education training
- Housing
 - 12-month, on-going
- Academic performance
 - Career planning
 - Educational planning
 - Academic support
 - Student coaching

What can colleges do now?

- Recognize that improving postsecondary education *and training* access and success for students coming from foster care is a priority and aligns with your: **Mission, Core Values, Vision, & Strategic Action Areas and Goals**
- Address core support elements by advocating for the **implementation of a *Guardian Scholars* or *Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI)* type programs** at your school and/or state
- **Collaborate with child welfare stakeholders** to better understand the critical factors of student success for those coming from foster care
- Designate a **foster youth liaison** on your campus! Get them the new Casey program development guide – ***Supporting Success: Improvising Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care*** (www.casey.org; Jemerson@casey.org)

Supporting Success: Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care

A Framework for Program Enhancement



Available free from Casey Family Programs

www.casey.org/Resources/Publications

The Framework...

... borrows from and adapts the *Essential Elements of a Guardian Scholar Program* pioneered by CA's Orangewood Children's Foundation

The San Francisco Bay area advocacy organization *Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY)* reviewed and modified the essential elements for supporting college students from foster care.

HEY was assisted in this effort by *California Youth Connection (CYC)*

- development was greatly influenced by program visits and interviews, focus groups, and draft reviews by those pioneering this work

- *reflects promising practices and practice wisdom of early innovators (students, graduates, professionals, champions, and advocates)*

The 12 Core Elements

Six Elements Necessary for Program Development

Three Elements to Provide Direct Student Support

Three Elements to Provide Direct Student Support

Six Elements Necessary for *Program Development*

- 1. Designated leadership**
- 2. Internal and external champions**
- 3. Collaborations with community agencies**
- 4. Data-driven decision making**
- 5. Staff peer support and professional development**
- 6. Sustainability planning**

Three Elements to *Provide Direct Student Support*

Phase 1

7. Year-round housing and other basic needs

8. Financial Aid

9. Academic advising , career counseling and supplemental support

Three Elements to Provide *Direct Student Support*

Phase 2

10. Personal guidance, counseling, and supplemental support

11. Opportunities for student community engagement and leadership

12. Planned transitions...

...to college

...between colleges

...to employment

How to Get Started

Initial steps:

- 1. Administrative Support**
- 2. Assign a leader to the planning effort**
- 3. Meet, discuss, and assess**
- 4. Use a proven process model to develop the support program**
 - See *Program Planning and Improvement Guide* (end of handouts)

The most effective integrated support approach is one that is customized to the needs of your students, campus, and state!

- ❖ How are students from foster care doing at our school...in our higher education system?*
- ❖ What support service approaches are effective to maximize persistence, retention and successful program completion?*

Thank You!

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