

2018-19 Guardian Scholars Program Annual Program Plan

I.A. Program Profile: Purpose

Describe the program(s) to be reviewed. What is the purpose of the program and how does it contribute to the mission of Skyline College?

Narrative

The Guardian Scholars Program's purpose is to create a network of support that will meet the academic, social, emotional, and financial needs of college-bound students who are transitioning out of the foster care system. Due to the lack of familial support, historically foster youth have significantly lower degree attainment. Skyline College has identified foster youth as a population in need of extra support in the Skyline College Student Equity Plan. The creation of the Guardian Scholars Program was a direct response to the need of individual, trauma-informed case management model to support foster youth at Skyline College to Get in...Get through and Get Out...On Time.

I.B. Program Planning Team

Annual program planning is intended to be a collaborative process which promotes dialogue and reflection. Please identify all individuals who contributed to or shaped the narrative. Include names and the title or role of each person.

Narrative

- Tia Holiday, Program Services Coordinator, Guardian Scholars Program
- Linda Allen, Retention Specialist, Guardian Scholars Program

II.A. Analysis: Progress on Prior Program Objectives (Goals) and Activities

Describe the progress made on previously established program objectives (goals) including identification of achievements or areas in which further effort is needed. New programs which have not yet established CPR/APP objectives should discuss progress on program implementation or activities.

Narrative

The Guardian Scholars Program (GSP) was developed to provide a network of support for current and former foster youth transitioning out of foster care. The program is designed to address the academic, financial, social and emotional development of aging out foster youth while they work towards graduation and transfer at Skyline College. The GSP program has dedicated staff members, Program Services Coordinator (PSC) and a Retention Specialist (RS).

Recruitment & Intake

- Through close, collaborative relationships developed with San Mateo & San Francisco county health and human services, Independent Living Program, transitional housing, probation and various foster youth serving agencies, the majority of our new student populations are recruited through direct referrals. Internally, Sparkpoint, Financial Aid, EOPs, TRiO, DRC and faculty referrals are referred to our department through a warm handoff or 1-1 introductions via email. Additionally a comprehensive list of self-disclosed foster youth are obtained from the Skyline College PRIE and Financial Aid department. For new students not referred via warm handoff; each student is contacted via e-mail and phone to discuss the Guardian Scholars Program benefits and interest in joining the program. Upon completion of the Guardian Scholars Program application, each new student is required to meet with the Retention Specialist and Program Services Coordinator to determine an allocation of resources and referrals to various campus and off-campus departments and agencies.

Academic Development

- Each student enrolled in the Guardian Scholars Program is required to complete a mid-semester progress report. Student achieve a C- or below in any course must meet with the Retention Specialist to determine an intervention plan that best suits the students and their learning style. This meeting generally yields a referral to the Disability Resource Center to enroll in the program, or alter accommodations. Additionally, students are walked to the Learning Center to meet with Raymon Gutierrez, TLC Retention Specialist, to begin tutoring in the respective subject they are struggling in. Students with a C or above, they are also met with the Retention Specialist to ensure they have the resources necessary to continue passing their courses.

- Each student enrolled in the GSP program are required to meet with the Retention Specialist twice a semester. Ideally, within 3 weeks of the semester beginning and directly after the return of Mid semester progress reports.
- Beginning Fall 2017 the GSP program hired a student assistant to tutor students in math up to Math 200.

Financial Development:

- Financial Aid: Upon receiving a student's GSP application the GSP staff and a representative from Financial aid ensure their FAFSA is completed and all financial aid resources have been exhausted. If FAFSA is incomplete or gaps are determined in their financial aid packages, the student is referred to a 1-1 meeting (via email or phone call) with a financial aid representative. Students are followed up with within one week of the meeting to ensure all financial aid gaps have been addressed.
- Scholarship & Textbook assistance: Since Fall 2016 the GSP program partnered with two organizations, Educate Tomorrow and Silicon Valley Children's Fund to secure extra funding sources for foster youth enrolled in the Guardian Scholars Program. Additionally, since Fall 2015, the Guardian Scholars Program partnered with The John Burton Advocates for Youth to be recipients of the John Burton Book Fund.
 - Educate Tomorrow: Recipients of the Educate Tomorrow funding receive funding up to \$2,400 in emergency funds to be disbursed to the student directly upon receiving a quote of services to the Educate Tomorrow representative. This program also awards course completion and good grade and stipends at the end of each semester. Finally, this fund awards a stipend upon degree completion and follows each student when they transfer to a 4-year institution.
 - Silicon Valley Children's Fund - YES Scholars: Recipients of the YES scholarship are awarded up to \$5,000 (determined by part-time/full-time enrollment). Additionally, each student is provided funds to receive 1-1 tutoring in a struggling subject. Upon transferring to a 4-year institution, the YES scholarship follows them through their BA program.
 - John Burton Book Fund - Recipients of the John Burton Book Fund receive funding up to \$250.00 per academic year, to purchase textbooks from the Skyline College bookstore. The John Burton Advocates for Youth have allotted 30 students to utilize these funds. Students who are not EOPs or Promise Scholars eligible are first to receive these funds.

- Sparkpoint: GSP students are required to attend at least one SparkPoint financial coaching appointment per semester. This ensures each student has an opportunity to check their credit health, screen for public benefits and learn financial literacy before they graduate or transfer.

Social Development:

- The Guardian Scholars Program coordinator send weekly electronic newsletters promoting various events across campus to encourage students to interact with the campus community at large. Additionally, since its establishment in Fall 2015 The Guardian Scholars Program has hosted various workshops to cultivate independent living skills, not typically developed during a foster youth's time in foster care: cooking on a budget, developing a budget, scholarship writing, self-defense, stress management, hair and personal hygiene, healthy relationships, ACLU know your rights series, exercising on a budget and more.
- The Guardian Scholars Program office is located in a centralized location in the Student Services building to ensure all GSP students have direct access to services such as counseling, psychological services and financial aid. The GSP program office has also created a sense of belonging at the Skyline College campuses at large, because of the student's ability to interact with each other and create friendships in a safe space.

Emotional Development:

- Historically, foster youth have a history of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and a range of other coexisting conditions that can significantly impact a foster youth success in their courses. Therefore, since Fall 2017 the Guardian Scholars Program has a designated psychological services counselor located in the health center to serve foster youth students in crisis. Additionally, students who disclose they would like additional assistance are referred to the Disability Resources Center to determine services that will assist them in their courses.

II.B. Analysis: Program Environment

Describe any recent external or internal changes impacting the program or which are expected to impact the program in the next year. Please include when the specified changes occurred or are expected to occur.

Narrative

- **Internal Changes**
 - Beginning Fall 2017 Due to lack of funding the Guardian Scholars Program has to significantly decrease or discontinue programmatic services and resources provided to GSP students. Prior to Fall 2017, each GSP student was allotted 3 meal vouchers, textbook assistance up to \$300.00 and were provided grab and go snacks in the office lounge. Currently, in Spring 2018, GSP students are allotted 1 meal voucher per week, the textbook assistance has been discontinued and grab and go snacks are now sparse as they are provided by community donation.

- **External Changes**
 - Due to the extreme cost of living in the surrounding area, foster youth students are becoming homeless due to evictions, or no stable housing. Due to these extreme financial disadvantages many foster youth students drop out, despite having a maximized financial aid package, GSP and other campus resources. to discontinue their time at Skyline College because they cannot afford to live in the area. Additionally, San Mateo County has seen a significant decrease in AB12 youth (extended foster care) in the county, due to their placements out of county that are more affordable, such as Fresno, Sonoma County or out of state.

II.C. Analysis: Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs and PSLOs)

- (1) Instructional Programs Only: Describe what was learned from the assessment of course SLOs for the current and past year.
- (2) Student Service Programs Only: If PSLOs are being assessed this year (3-year cycle), describe what was learned. If no assessment was done because this is an off-cycle year, please state that this item is not applicable.

Narrative

III.A. Reflection: Considering Key Findings

Consider the previous analysis of progress achieved, program environment, and course-level SLOs or PSLOs (if applicable). What are the key findings and/or conclusions drawn? Discuss how what was learned can be used to improve the program's effectiveness.

Narrative

The Guardian Scholar Program PSLOs were developed as a direct response to the low achievement and financial aid completion rates amongst former foster youth up to Fall 2015. According to the 2015 Student Equity plan, foster youth are the lowest achieving student group in course completion, degree attainment and retention. Each Program Service Learning Outcome were created upon analyzing data collected from PRIE, Banner and students participating in the Guardian Scholars Program.

PSLO 1: To address student retention, the Guardian Scholars Program (GSP here after) determined 80% Students enrolled in the Guardian Scholars Program will enroll in the subsequent semester would not only significantly improve the Skyline College foster youth success rate, but also begin to put foster youth students enrolled in GSP back on track to graduate. During the 2016/2017 academic year, 72% of students persisted to the subsequent semester. During the 2017/2018 academic year, 74% of students persisted to the subsequent semester.

While the GSP program fell short on the 80% mark the steady increase over the next academic year, is a positive indicator. Upon completing research on barriers affecting former foster youth from enrolling in the next academic term included lack of stable transportation and food insecurity. The implementation of food vouchers and transportation assistance to students in need can be a contributing factor into steady increase. Additionally, each student is required to complete a mid-semester progress report to track their progress in their courses. This has allowed for early interventions including tutoring, faculty assistance and resource referral (i.e. Disability Resource Center), to counteract students struggling in courses.

PSLO 2: To address low degree attainment as outlined in the 2015 Student Equity Plan, the Guardian Scholars Program developed the following Program Service Learning Outcome -- Upon entering the program, Guardian Scholar Program Students will complete the requirements to graduate with a certificate, an associate degree and/or transfer, within four years.

Analysis of this PSLOs cannot be completed until 2019.

PSLO 3: Maximizing financial aid packages for foster youth are crucial, as they can impact a student's enrollment in the following semester. The Guardian Scholars Program has set a goal of 100% of Students enrolled in the Guardian

Scholars Program will complete the FAFSA for the upcoming academic year by the end of Spring of the previous academic year.

- 2017/2018 FAFSA Completion: At the completion of the 2016/2017 academic year, 76% of students in the GSP program completed their FAFSA. Upon investigation of students who have failed to complete their FAFSA are students who have not responded to outreach efforts via email, text or phone call by GSP staff. Two GSP students were unable to submit a FAFSA due to delinquent loans and therefore, made them ineligible aid.
- 2018/2019 FAFSA Completion: As of April 2018 70% of students in the GSP program have completed their FAFSA. Upon investigation of students who have failed to complete their FAFSA are students who have not responded to outreach efforts via email, text or phone call by GSP staff.

III.B. Reflection: ISLOs

If your program participated in assessment of ISLOs this year:

- (1) What are the findings and/or conclusions drawn?
- (2) Does the program intend to make any changes or investigate further based on the findings? If so, briefly describe what the program intends to do.

Narrative

Not applicable

IV.A. Strategy for Program Enhancement: Continuation/Modification

Indicate whether the program is continuing implementation of the last CPR strategy or revising the strategy. Please describe the modifications if revisions are intended.

Note: Any new strategies should be linked to Institutional Goals through creation of objectives in the next section. If the program has not yet participated in comprehensive program review, an annual or multi-year strategy can be defined in this item.

Narrative

- Due to the dependency of financial aid for foster youth students, it is crucial that the GSP program sustains a financial aid liaison to provide 1-1 financial aid support to apply for FAFSA, CHAFFEE grant, scholarships and assist in the Financial Aid appeal process. Furthermore, financial aid federal policies and Skyline College financial aid procedures change frequently. It is likely that GSP students will not receive aid if changes are not related to the GSP staff in a timely manner. Foster youth are required to provide verification of Foster youth status, however due to the complexities of the individual student's circumstances this verification requirement can be difficult to fulfill. The Financial aid liaison should remain knowledgeable and sensitive to these complexities to determine the best form of verification without causing unnecessary delay or re-traumatizing the student disclosing their personal circumstances. It should be standard practice to include the GSP staff on obtaining verification if it becomes a burden upon the student to obtain documentation.
- Historically GSP has not focused on targeted career readiness. With the introduction of Meta Majors and Guided Pathways student will students automatically receive career development. Guardian Scholars Program would like to build on the experiences in Guided Pathways and Meta Majors by providing additional career readiness support in collaboration with Nova Job Center, SparkPoint Career Center and WorkForce Development.
- Historically, GSP has been a tight-knit community with high participation, over the last academic year, large participation of scheduled events has significantly dropped. While the exact reason has not been determined, students have expressed interest in doing more community service oriented events. During the 2018/2019 academic year, the GSP program will identify a series of community service events for students to participate in.
- Currently the Retention Specialist provides an introduction email of GSP students in their courses with a variety of reasons they can contact her, should they need support with a GSP student in their course. An electronic

mid-semester progress report is sent to each professor to complete on behalf of each student. This process has yielded a total of 142 responses in two semesters. These responses do not include email received directly to the Retention Specialist or paper Mid Semester Progress Reports provided to the students from TRiO and EOPS. Overall, this process is extremely effective because it assists GSP staff understand where students are in each class and addresses barriers early in the semester that can affect the student academically and financially. Furthermore, it has created an effective feedback loop between GSP staff and faculty on strategies to assist foster youth in their classrooms. This process provides transparency between GSP students, GSP staff, faculty.

- While there are many programs at Skyline College that provide laptops (DRC, EOPs, TRiO), due to the limited quantity each program has, many times foster youth students who enroll after the semester begins are unable to secure laptop loaners. Therefore, GSP would like to exploring funding opportunities to obtain 10-15 Chromebook to loan to students should campus resources are unable to support their request.
- GSP students have enrolled into the program without proper identification. While at Skyline College they can use their school ID, many times foster youth students are required to provide documentation such as residency, foster youth verification, social security numbers, etc. to complete the enrollment process. Delays in the enrollment and financial aid awarding process has been delayed due to not having proper identification to obtaining the above documents. Therefore, the GSP program would like to explore options for foster youth students who are not eligible for extended foster care to receive identification at a discounted cost or explore emergency funding options to provide funding to obtain California identification.

IV.B. Strategy for Program Enhancement: Action Plan and Resource Requests

Based on the most recent CPR and any desired modifications, develop an annual action plan with related resource requests. No narrative response will be entered in this section, but the objectives you create will be printed automatically in the APP report under this item.

- (1) To begin, click on PLANNING at the top of the page, then CREATE A NEW OBJECTIVE. To view previously created objectives, click PLANNING at the top of the page, then VIEW MY OBJECTIVE.
- (2) IMPORTANT! Make sure to associate each objective to this standard in the APP. Need help? Contact the PRIE Office for further instructions. Institutional Goals. Need help? Contact the PRIE Office for further instructions.

Narrative